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Monsoon Journal

A parfait media publication VOL 4 ISSUE 12 May 2010

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Minister Kenney Launches Asian Heritage Month

All Canadians are invited and encouraged to join in the celebration of Asian Heritage Month, said Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney during an official launch ceremony on Parliament Hill. The theme of Asian Heritage Month 2010, organized in partnership with the Ottawa Asian Heritage Month Society, is Asian Canadians: A Proud History, A Promising Future.

"This month helps all Canadians appreciate the important role that Canadians of Asian ancestry have played and continue to play," said Mr. Kenney.

More details in Pg17



The fifth annual Tamil Studies Conference

Organized by the University of Toronto and the University of Windsor, will be held at the University of Toronto from May 13 – 15, 2010.

For More Info and to Register please visit the website <http://tamilstudiesconference.ca/>

Plenary Speakers:
 Raj Gauthaman
 Sanjay Subrahmaniam

Amnesty International demands justice for survivors of the conflict in Sri Lanka

In reiterating the call for independent UN investigation in Sri Lanka, the global human rights watchdog says in a recent media release:

"19 May marks the first anniversary of the end of the internal conflict between Sri Lankan government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) which lasted for more than 30 years.

Despite massive violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by both sides, impunity remains the norm. Survivors and family members of those killed have no hope of justice, truth and reparations at the national level. Amnesty International is calling on the UN to establish an international independent investigation to collect information from all relevant sources as a first essential step to establish accountability."

Marking the anniversary and its call for independent investiga-



tion, Amnesty International is holding a panel discussion at The Human Rights Action Centre in London, England on 19th May, 2010. Speakers include Alan Keenan, (Senior Analyst, International Crisis Group), Mr. Iqbal, (formerly Secretary to two Commissions of Inquiry into Disappearances in Sri Lanka) and Yolanda Foster, (South Asia team, Amnesty International).

Monsoon Journal has completed 4 years in circulation and is now marching into its 5th year.

We thank all our readers, advertisers and well wishers.

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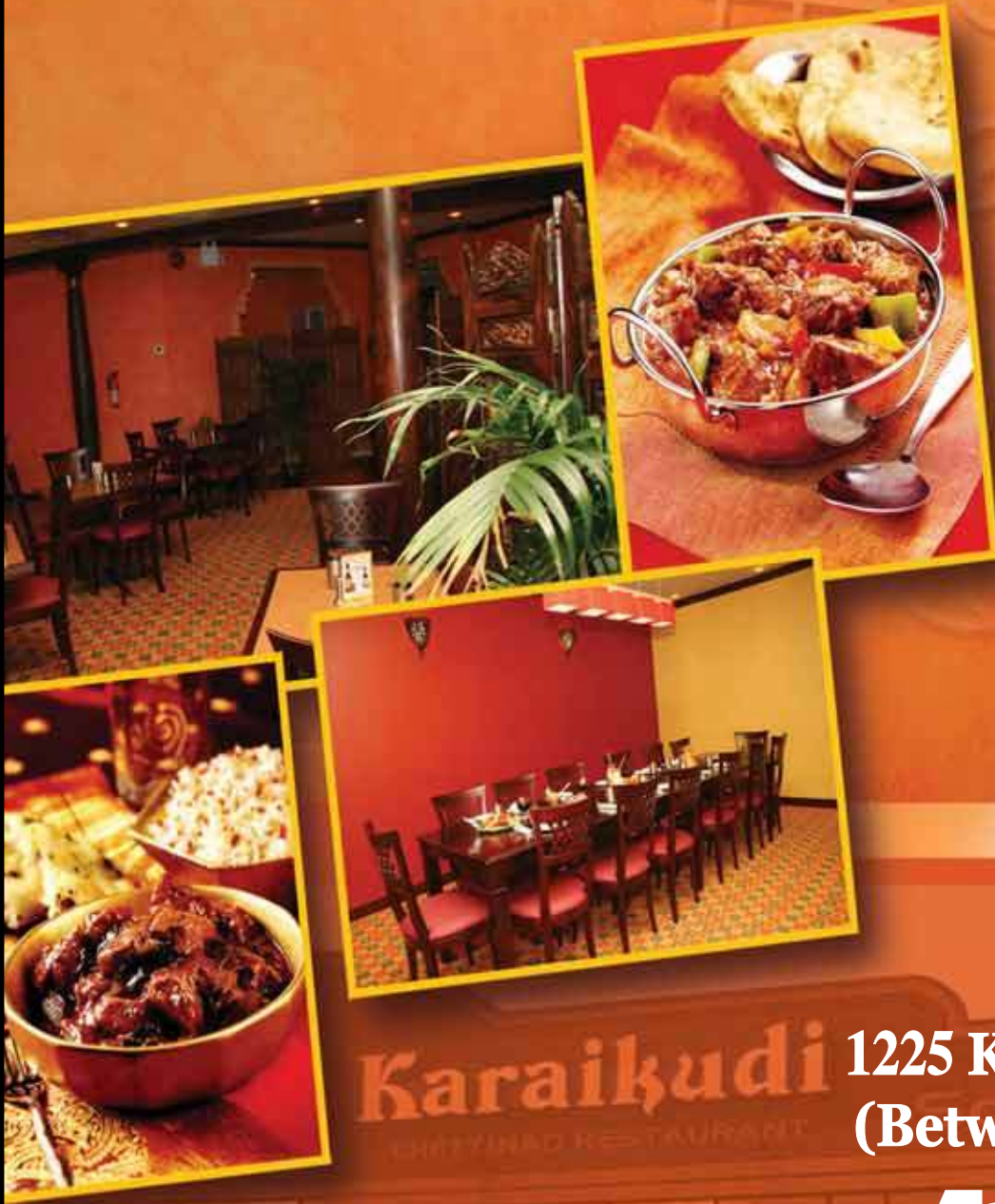
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- Thirukural # 221

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From the Publisher's Desk ...

May 15th is International Day of Families

While Canada had declared Family day on Monday February 15, 2010; the United Nations deems May 15, 2010 to be International Day of Families establishing a new theme every year. This year's focus is on "The impact of migration on families around the world" which reflects the increasing migration of families in the global world and the challenges they face.

While last year's theme focused on mothers and families and their challenges in a changing world, this year attention was brought on a new but important subject. Migration on families is highlighted and discussed at the various activities and events that take place at the local, national and international levels. This

year's theme of migration on families is a key focal point in helping to shed light and bring awareness to the conflicts and difficulties that arise when families migrate and discusses ways to resolve these challenges.

Celebrating International Day of Family assists in promoting a healthy and well- balanced family. This global observance began in 1994 when it was proclaimed as the International Year of Families by the United Nations. Attention was brought to this matter because of changing social and economic structures, which have affected and still affect the structure and stability of family units in many areas of the world.

The International Day of Families, on May 15, is an occa-

sion to reflect on the work started during 1994 and to celebrate the importance of families, people, societies and cultures around the world. It has been held every year since 1995. Monsoon Journal hopes you all celebrate and promote International Day of Families not only on May 15, but everyday and commemorate the underlying message that this day symbolises.

May is a full month celebrating a variety of people. For many of us our mothers or motherly figures are one of the most important people who have shaped us into the person we are today and on Sunday May 9, 2010 we celebrate these exceptional women who have sacrificed and worked hard to offer a better life to their

child/children. Mothers Day falls annually on the 2nd Sunday in May.

In Canada the month of May is officially recognized as Asian Heritage Month to acknowledge the long and rich history of Asian Canadians and their contributions to Canada.

To everyone of Asian decent and to those that wish to celebrate the extensive and valuable Asian Heritage, Monsoon Journal wishes you all a great month full of special occasions and opportunities to celebrate history and people that have led the path and continue to lead the path of a growing globe.

By: Krishni Loganathan,
BA (Hons.) Political Science,
History

Media Rights Group asks if journalist J.S. Tissainayagam will be allowed to travel within and outside of Sri Lanka

In Welcoming the announcement on May 3rd of "pardon" to Journalist J.S. Tissainayagam by the President of Sri Lanka, Media Rights Group-Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has called for details and clarifications on the announcement.

CPJ released the following press release:

The Committee to Protect Journalists is heartened by news reports today that President Mahinda Rajapaksa has issued a pardon to Sri Lankan journalist J.S. Tissainayagam, left. CPJ is waiting for official clarification, however, concerning several important details.

The country's recently appointed external affairs minister, G.L. Peiris, announced the pardon at a press conference in Colombo. "President Mahinda Rajapaksa has decided to pardon journalist J.S. Tissainayagam, who was convicted on 31 August 2009 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act," Peiris told reporters. He noted that the announcement was timed to coincide with World Press Freedom Day, May 3.

"CPJ is waiting for a detailed explanation of the terms of the government's announcement. We remain concerned about our colleague's safety while he lives in seclusion in Sri Lanka," said Bob Dietz, CPJ's Asia program coordinator. "While this is potentially very good news, our enthusiasm is muted until the details are made clear."

Tissainayagam's attorneys were not notified of the pardon prior to the announcement, leaving several questions about the official details. Among its concerns, CPJ said, is whether the



pardon will allow Tissainayagam freedom to travel within and outside of the country and whether the government will return the journalist's passport. CPJ is also concerned that Tissainayagam be able to live and work without fear of reprisal. Unpunished violence against journalists is very high in Sri Lanka, CPJ research shows.

Tissainayagam was released on bail in January and has lived in seclusion since. At the time, CPJ welcomed Tissainayagam's release from a sentence of 20 years, but called on Rajapaksa to extend a full pardon.

Based on its research, CPJ has concluded that Tissainayagam was imprisoned in retaliation for his critical journalism. CPJ named Tissainayagam a recipient of an International Press Freedom Award in 2009.

The Tamil editor was first jailed in March 2008 and eventually indicted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in August 2008. The government said today that it would relax some restrictions put in place under a state of emergency first declared in August 2005. There was no mention of easing the Prevention of Terrorism Act, however.

Canadian Tamil Congress urges Amitabh Bachchan to cancel Sri Lanka visit

"Amitabh Bachchan is a great hero for us in the Tamil diaspora, but we are very disturbed and profoundly saddened by our hero's proposed visit to a regime which has perpetrated crimes against Tamils," said the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) in a statement recently.

CTC released the statement after the announcement that Amitabh Bachchan will travel to Sri Lanka to be the chief guest at the India International Films Awards (IIFA) function in July.

"By visiting Sri Lanka, Amitabh Bachchan will be lending credibility to a regime which has destroyed Tamils ruthlessly and committed horrendous human rights violations," said Canadian Tamil Congress national spokesman David Poopalapillai.

"When Tamils continue to suf-

fer in Sri Lanka and numerous human rights bodies have implicated the regime in crimes against humanity, we plead with a person of Bachchan's stature not to go there to help a government that is desperately seeking recognition from the world community in spite of its crimes," he said.

Seeking solidarity from the Bollywood super star, David Poopalapillai said, "We want to bring to his notice the decision of the Commonwealth nations last year not to allow Colombo the right to hold the next meeting. If the Commonwealth can snub Sri Lanka, why not Amitabh Bachchan? He should respect our feelings. We love him and we are great fans of his whole family, particularly his daughter-in-law Ashwariya Rai."

Elections held for Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

25 representatives have been elected by 31,072 voters who took part in the elections held on May 2nd for Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) across Canada, according to a media release.

In a report on The Globe and Mail about TGTE, Rudhramoorthy Cheran, academic and poet who

teaches at the University of Windsor said, "I see it as a very positive move that the international community should support and encourage."

He further said, "It's an experiment in democracy and I'm looking forward to seeing how this is going to evolve."

Submit letters to Monsoon Journal at:

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M & M Twins expands market under EDRO brand

M&M Twins has been catering to the Sri Lankan and South Asian market in Canada for the past 30 years and was the pioneering company to import Sri Lankan food products to Canada. This has enabled the Sri Lankan community to have easy access to products they have grown up with and having the 'taste of home' always near to them. With the view of providing more to the community in terms of products, M&M Twins has recently expanded their product range under the EDRO Brand. The EDRO brand has been in the Canadian market for well over 20 years and is renowned for high quality Spices and Curry Powders.

With changing market trends in terms of cooking and more people looking for easier and faster ways of cooking an authentic curry, the EDRO brand has developed a range of high quality

curry mixes. You can now prepare your favourite curry by just using 2-3 table spoons of these mixes. The mixes are available in Chicken, Beef, Mutton, Pork, Crab, Prawn, Fish, Ambulthiyal and Tandoori flavours. In addition, they have also introduced a range of Ready to eat products under the same banner. A favourite would no doubt be the Dry Fish range (Karawala Thel daala) which is in bottled form where you will not have to worry about the strong smell which will stay on your cloths, curtains and carpets, days after cooking it at home! In addition, firm favourites such as Coconut Sambol, Katta Sambol, Seeni Sambol and Cashew Curry are also available. They also carry a range of rice mixes such as Yellow Rice Mix and Biriyan mix.

As Mohan Perera, the owner of M&M Twins points out, the key

features of these new items in the range is that these products are 100% compliant with all the food safety and labelling regulations in Canada. As Mohan points out, there are many regulations set by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), especially for fish products. He affirms that all these products have been tested by the CFIA and have been found to be compliant with all regulations such as for chemicals like mercury and histamine which are found in excessive amounts in most fish imports from South Asia. M&M Twins hope to further expand their range of products and would like to get feedback from the community on what they would like to see available. You can email your comments to feedback.mmtwins@gmail.com

Gods Own Children Foundation - Canada is organizing fund raising Dinner to benefit the disadvantaged children of Sri Lanka

Gods Own Children Foundation - Canada is organizing its first annual fund-raising dinner – "Illuminate the Journey" on June 5th, 2010. All proceeds will benefit disadvantaged children in Sri Lanka.

Gods Own Children Foundation – Canada a Canadian not for profit organization, is a group of dedicated individuals who have been sponsoring and supporting a number disadvantaged children and youth in the corners of Sri Lanka through Gods Own Children – Sri Lanka.

Gods Own Children – Sri Lanka has brought much needed hope and light of knowledge in areas that have seen frequent war and where sub-par living conditions have become the norm of life. The organization has also made notable and substantial contributions in times of catastrophes and natural calamities. The members are all non-salaried indi-

viduals, coming from all walks of life, who strive in earnest to see each penny submitted in contribution, getting used to make a difference.

Their upcoming Fund-Raising dinner is the first annual event where volunteers, patrons and people new to the activities of Gods Own Children Foundation come together to share details about the organization's activities and how their valuable contributions are being used. The evening typically features lively entertainment, animated socializing and a gala dinner buffet. 100% of all proceeds directly benefit Gods Own Children Foundation's ongoing efforts to support the education, rehabilitation, employment and health initiatives targeted towards the disadvantage children of Sri Lanka.

This year's events promises to be a hit with rollicking music,

dance and cultural presentations made by noted local talents, a delicious buffet and an evening of overall family fun. The entry fee is \$50 per person. All are cordially invited to attend and support as each penny raised during this event will be spent in providing health, education, critical life support and emergency relief to people who need it the most.

For more information about Gods Own Children Foundation please go to www.GodsOwnChildren.com.

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Join us for a lecture on Women's Health

The Scarborough Hospital Foundation is hosting a lecture on Women's Health Matters. The public is welcome to attend this casual and informative discussion. The lecture is free, but those interested in attending are asked to register as seating is limited.

When: May 18, 2010, Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: The Scarborough Hospital Auditorium, General campus, 3050 Lawrence Avenue E., Toronto, ON M1P 2V5

Experts and Topics of Discussion:

Dr. Victoria Davis, Obstetrician and Gynecologist and Medical Director, Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Care Centre

Topic: Menopause

Dr. Sharon O'Brien, Obstetrician and Gynecologist

Topic: Cervical Cancer

Dr. Georgina Wilcock, Corporate Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Topic: Breast Health

Please register online at www.tsh.to/pages/TSHF-Calendar-of-Events or RSVP to Laura Botond at 416-431-8200 ext. 6660 or donorevent@tsh.to.

They save lives every day and provide you comfort when you are sick.

The doctors and nurses at The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) are highly skilled at their work, but did you know many of them have equally impressive singing and dancing talent?

That's why The Scarborough Hospital Foundation presents TSH Has Talent. This exciting new event will showcase the talents of the hospital's healthcare profes-

Doctors and nurses put on a talent show in support of The Scarborough Hospital

sionals while they compete for the title of most talented. Proceeds from the event will go toward purchasing new medical equipment for the hospital.

"We are fortunate to have a talented healthcare team with internationally recognized physicians, nurses and healthcare professionals," says Michael Mazza, President and CEO of The Scarborough Hospital Foundation. "But when we sent out a call for talent in the arts to support the hospital, we were overwhelmed by the response. Our team always goes the extra mile to make our hospital a better place."

For months, employees and physicians from all departments of the hospital have been auditioning with the hopes of making it to the final show.

On May 13 at 7 p.m., the top ten acts will take centre stage at



the Chinese Cultural Centre on Sheppard Ave. E. near Markham Rd. The top three acts will win shopping sprees courtesy of Sears Scarborough Town Centre.

"We invite members of the community to buy tickets for this



fun event and support the hospital. I've seen the quality of the acts and it is going to be a fantastic show," says Michael.

Tickets for the event start at \$55 and include two pre-show cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, an unforgettable show, voting privileges, post-show sweets and dancing.

To purchase tickets, please contact Jody Birnstingl at 416.438.2911 ext. 6661 or jbirnstingl@tsh.to. Tickets can also be purchased online at <http://www.tsh.to/pages/TSHF-Calendar-of-Events>.

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[IRIN News] Healthcare services in Sri Lanka's conflict-affected east should not be forgotten as humanitarian agencies focus their efforts on rebuilding the country's north, the World Health Organization (WHO) says.

Since the end of the civil war in May 2009, agencies have concentrated on assisting hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Vanni, an area comprising a number of northern districts.

"With the international community focused on the rehabilitation of the Vanni area in the north, support needed for the rehabilitation work in the east will remain difficult," Edwin Salvador, WHO's technical officer for emergency humanitarian action, told IRIN.

"As programmes to rebuild public infrastructure, food securi-

Don't forget healthcare services in Sri Lanka East

ty and livelihoods have been prioritized ahead of health in the east, delivery of essential services to the people will remain a big challenge," he added.

Sri Lanka's war was based on demands by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who fought for an independent Tamil homeland in the country's north and east.

The Eastern Province was retaken by government troops from the LTTE in July 2007, with more than 200,000 displaced people returning after the conflict, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Recovery and development measures were announced for the area, which suffered heavy damage during the conflict.

But Salvador said shifting funding priorities and a lack of human resources were undermin-



Outside Nilaveli divisional hospital in eastern Sri Lanka
-pic: Udara Soysa/ IRIN

ing efforts to provide health care for scattered communities of resettled people.

"International NGO partners, including health partners that had played an important part during the emergency phase during the eastern conflict, have been forced to abandon the east and concentrate on the north due to funding constraints or due to lack of

development work experience," said Salvador.

According to WHO, of the numerous health-related international NGOs initially operating in the east, only the Comité d'Aide Médicale (CAM) remains. It provides mobile medical clinics for resettled communities and support for government mental health programmes.

Provincial and central health authorities are trying to repair damaged health facilities but only have limited funds to do so, WHO says.

Health facilities, especially those outside major towns, suffered collateral damage during decades of fighting in the east.

"Rehabilitation of damaged health facilities in the east has taken place at a slow pace. This has resulted in [the] resettlement population needing to travel long distances in order to access health services," said Salvador.

"Mobile clinics and outreach services are in place to provide primary health care services but due to the many [small resettlement areas], it has been difficult to reach all of them through mobile clinics," he said.

Finding enough health workers to service communities is also a challenge.

"There are also many health posts that remained vacant in the health systems. As a result, doctors and nurses are required to rotate amongst the different health facilities," he said.

Sri Lanka's New Parliament Must Drop Emergency Laws

Sri Lanka's first post-war parliament must get rid of draconian emergency laws that have allowed for decades of widespread human rights abuses, Amnesty International said in a press release on April 20th.

Ahead of the first sitting of Sri Lanka's first post-war parliament on 22 April, Amnesty International is calling on Sri Lanka to lift the State of Emergency that has been in force almost continuously since 1971, and to abolish the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other associated emergency security laws and regulations, replacing them with human rights-friendly laws.

The emergency laws grant state authorities sweeping powers of detention and permit the use of



secret prisons, a practice that encourages human rights abuses like enforced disappearances, torture and death in custody, which could constitute crimes under

international law. In the last thirty years, thousands of Sri Lankans have spent years in detention without trial.

Over the past year, the gov-

ernment has increasingly used these laws to crack down on journalists, political opponents, and trade unionists.

"Sri Lanka must repeal these laws and end impunity for human rights violations if it wants to move forward," said Madhu Malhotra, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Deputy Director. "The Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Public Security Ordinance and other emergency provisions in Sri Lanka enable security forces to systematically violate human rights."

Since the war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended almost a year ago, Sri Lankan legislators have continued to extend the State of

Emergency on a monthly basis. Successive governments have ignored calls for repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

"The war is over. Perpetuation of the emergency is now just being used as a weapon against political opposition, and as a quick fix for poor law enforcement practices and a dysfunctional justice system," said Madhu Malhotra.

Amnesty International is calling on the new parliament to press for the release of people detained under Sri Lanka's emergency laws unless they are charged with an internationally recognized criminal offence, and are tried in regular civilian courts to international standards for fair trial.

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Chandra Kumaran contests for Ward 2 Councillor position in Town of Ajax

Community activist Chandra Kumaran will be contesting for ward 2 councillor position in the forthcoming Ajax town council elections scheduled for October 2nd this year.

Chandra, as he is popularly known has been an active community worker and social activist over the past years in the town of Ajax. He has worked with the Rotary Club, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Durham Regional Police Advisory Committee, Town of Ajax Multi cultural committee and the Durham West Arts Center.

Chandra was also associated with fund raising activities for the Rouge Valley Hospital Foundation, Big Brothers, Sisters of Ajax-Pickering and Autism-Ontario(Durham).

Chandra has been a resident of Ajax for over twenty years and actively involved in community betterment activities ranging from all levels of Government and local bodies.

Among some of the community betterment services he has associated himself are:-better council services and lesser taxes, traffic management relating to bottlenecks, community investment, three year plan, communication and improving quality and accessibility to council services.

He has also been responsible for better working relationships with the Durham Police and also worked with the Durham West Arts center. Chandra has also actively involved himself with local, provincial and federal government politics.



Chandra handing Nomination



Chandra with Friends & Supporters



Canadian sailor killed in Afghan bomb blast

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — A Canadian Forces sailor has died in a Taliban bomb blast virtually at the doorstep of Canada's front-line base, bringing to 143 the number of Canadian troops killed in the Afghan war. Two other Canadian soldiers were injured, one very seriously, in the improvised-explosive device (IED) attack.

Petty Officer Second Class Craig Blake had been on foot with other members of his explosives-disposal team around 4:30 p.m. Monday, a few hundred metres from the gate of the Sperwan Ghar base in Panjwaii district. Blast investigators determined that the IED was "command detonated," meaning it was set off by a watching insurgent. Blake was the fifth Canadian soldier to be killed this year.

Blake, 37, of Simcoe, Ont., arrived in Afghanistan last month for his first tour of duty in the country.

As an explosives-disposal operator, he was tasked with defusing IEDs.

Time magazine honours Toronto paramedic

TIME named GlobalMedic Founder Rahul Singh to the 2010 TIME 100, the magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

The list, produced annually, "recognizes activism, innovation and achievement." Singh is mentioned as a global leader in the area of disaster relief.

The quick response by Singh and GlobalMedic to this year's earthquake relief in Haiti was the catalyst for the recognition.

In the past 12 years GlobalMedic has helped at 50 disasters in all corners of the world: among them Haiti, China, Chile, Pakistan, Honduras, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

In January Monsoon Journal joined members of the Tamil community and teamed up with GlobalMedic in a campaign for financial donations to assist the people of Haiti after the devastating earthquake.



Gas Tax Fuels Better Public Transit

McGuinty Government Investments Mean More Service, Hybrid Buses

Ontario's Gas Tax Program is getting more people out of their cars and onto public transit.

This year, 93 municipal transit systems will share \$316 million in gas tax funding. This investment will help purchase more conventional and specialized accessible transit vehicles, add more routes, extend hours of service, and upgrade transit infrastructure.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has invested approximately \$9.3 billion in municipal public transit systems, contributing to:

- An increase in transit ridership of approximately 110 million passenger trips.
- 91 million fewer car trips, reducing traffic congestion and allowing people and goods to move more quickly.
- An estimated reduction of 350,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions from cars.

Ongoing investments in public transit are part of the Open

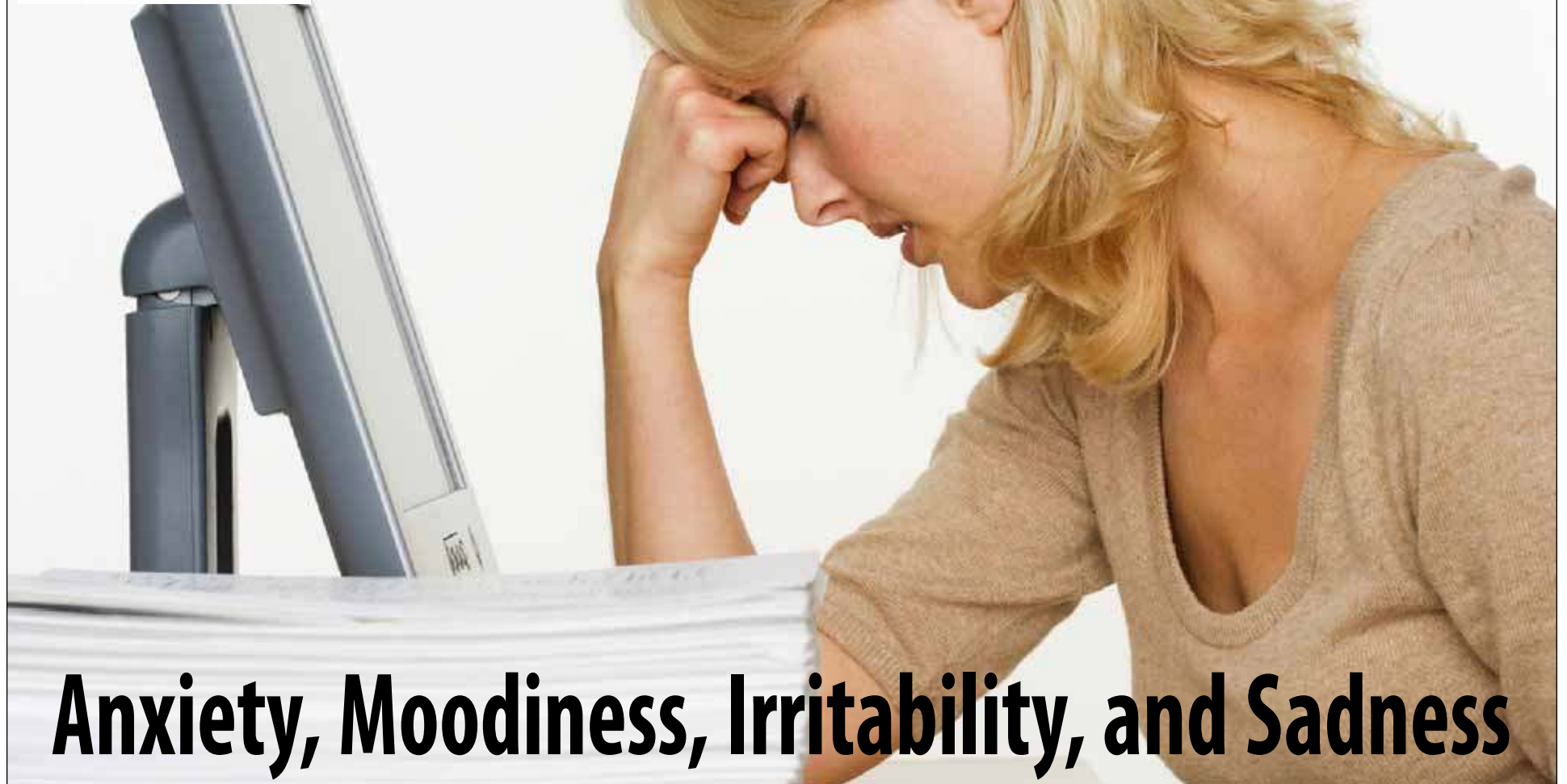


Ontario plan to build infrastructure and create jobs.

In addition to this year's \$316 million investment, municipalities have received more than \$1.3 billion in provincial gas tax funding since 2004.

Ontario shares two cents per litre of provincial gas tax revenues with municipalities to expand and improve their public transit systems.

Ontarians took almost 748 million trips on municipal public transit in 2008, according to the Canadian Urban Transit Association.



Anxiety, Moodiness, Irritability, and Sadness

By Dr. J. Douglas Salmon, Jr.

Adapted with permission from Multi-Health Systems & Dr. J. Douglas Salmon, Jr. from Rehabilitation Education and Coping Pamphlet Series

It is important to recognize that a certain degree of moodiness and depression is not unusual in response to an illness or accident that has altered one's lifestyle. Symptoms of anxiety and depression may also be common when one is going through a difficult time due to stressors or any traumatic events that have occurred in life. As a person adjusts to his or her change in lifestyle and goes through the normal recovery process or overcomes the stressful event, many of these symptoms should gradually resolve themselves.

The following are common symptoms related to anxiety, depression, and emotional upset: sleep disturbance, worry, sexual disturbance, reduced appetite, social withdrawal, poor emotional control (e.g., crying easily, losing one's temper), increased heart-beat, increased perspiring, and reduced activity. The strategies listed below may be helpful in dealing with these symptoms:

Anxiety, Moodiness and Irritability

Identify Sources of Aggravation

By identifying the factors that cause your moodiness or irritability, you may be able to find a simple solution. Factors such as tiredness, certain topics of discussion, certain times of the day, certain

medications, certain situations, or certain people, may be the primary triggers of your aggravation. Once you have determined these factors, you may be able to avoid them or develop specific ways of dealing with them.

Practice Self-Talk

When you feel yourself growing upset, try repeating to yourself statements such as, "stay calm", "relax", "cool down", "I don't have to get mad." Praise yourself for your success with statements such as, "that was good", "good job", or "I did it."

Leave the Situation

When you feel that you are becoming angry, frustrated, or upset, leave what you are doing and return to the task later. If these uneasy feelings occur during a discussion, tell the individual(s) that you need to relax and that you will discuss the topic after you have calmed down.

Use a Relaxation Technique

You may try one of several programs available in books, on tapes, or through counselling, which have proven to be effective methods to assist in relaxation. Less formal techniques include counting to ten, taking a few long and deep breaths, taking a walk in a serene place, listening to soothing music, sleeping, or just finding a nice, quiet spot in which to relax.

Exercise

Regular exercise, and exercising when you are feeling upset, can help to reduce tension, frustration, and anger, which often lead to moodiness and irritability.

Discuss or Write Out Your Problems

Discussing or writing down your problems and your feelings about things may make you feel better. You may wish to consult with a religious leader, family doctor, or professional for counselling. If your anger is at the point where either physical violence or injury to others is a concern, please seek professional help immediately.

Depression: Feeling Sad or Down

If you feel that your sadness is not a serious problem for you and that professional help is unnecessary, the following suggestions should be sufficient to assist you in dealing with your sadness. If you have experienced

thoughts of suicide or feel that depression is a serious concern for you, seek professional help immediately.

Exercise regularly.

Remain active.

Make a list of positive thoughts upon which to focus and negative thoughts to avoid.

Do things that you are good at and that usually make you happy.

Discuss or write down your problems and how you feel about them.

Seek out those things in life that are meaningful to you (e.g., friends, family, religion, volunteer work, devoting time to a cause).

Avoid people who are negative, critical of you, or who are often depressed themselves.

Change to a more pleasant

environment (e.g., visit or call on a friend who is usually in a good mood, go to a late night movie, or take a pleasant walk).

Have fun and think of things that are funny.

Do something to help someone else.

Take on simple, manageable tasks to focus your attention and give you a sense of accomplishment (e.g., clean up, organize a room, or mow the lawn).

If you have experienced thoughts of suicide or feel that these emotional difficulties are becoming a serious concern for you or are lasting too long, seek help from your family doctor or a qualified mental health professional.

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I love to eat cucs, but haven't paid attention to how I feel afterwards or tried them for the uses below; wouldn't be surprised of multiple uses though.

AHEM!!! NOT TO CONFUSE YOU WITH ANYTHING ELSE

I'VE USED CUC'S FOR TO KEEP ANTS AWAY, FOR SOME REASON AND IT SEEMS TO CONTROL THEM

The Amazing Cucumber

This information was in The New York Times several weeks ago as part of their "Spotlight on the Home" series that highlighted creative and fanciful ways to solve common problems.

1. Cucumbers contain most of the vitamins you need every day, just one cucumber contains Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B6, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc.

2. Feeling tired in the afternoon, put down the caffeinated soda and pick up a cucumber. Cucumbers are a good source of B Vitamins and Carbohydrates that can provide that quick pick-me-up that can last for hours.

3. Tired of your bathroom mirror fogging up after a shower? Try rubbing a cucumber slice along the mirror, it will eliminate the fog and provide a soothing, spa-like fragrance.

4. Are grubs and slugs ruining

The Amazing Cucumber

your planting beds? Place a few slices in a small pie tin and your garden will be free of pests all season long. The chemicals in the cucumber react with the aluminum to give off a scent undetectable to humans but drive garden pests crazy and make them flee the area. (WOW)

5. Looking for a fast and easy way to remove cellulite before going out or to the pool? Try rubbing a slice or two of cucumbers along your problem area for a few minutes, the phytochemicals in the cucumber cause the collagen in your skin to tighten, firming up the outer layer and reducing the visibility of cellulite. Works great on wrinkles too!!! (DOUBLE WOW)

6. Want to avoid a hangover or terrible headache? Eat a few cucumber slices before going to bed and wake up refreshed and headache free. Cucumbers contain enough sugar, B vitamins and electrolytes to replenish essential nutrients the body lost, keeping everything in equilibrium, avoiding both a hangover and headache!

7. Looking to fight off that afternoon or evening snacking binge? Cucumbers have been



used for centuries and often used by European trappers, traders and explorers for quick meals to thwart off starvation.

8. Have an important meeting or job interview and you realize that you don't have enough time to polish your shoes? Rub a freshly cut cucumber over the shoe, its chemicals will provide a quick and durable shine that not only looks great but also repels water.

9. Out of WD 40 and need to fix a squeaky hinge? Take a cucumber sliced rub it along the problematic hinge, and voila, the squeak is gone!

10. Stressed out and don't have time for massage, facial or

visit to the spa? Cut up an entire cucumber and place it in a boiling pot of water, the chemicals and nutrients from the cucumber with react with the boiling water and be released in the steam, creating a soothing, relaxing aroma that has been shown to reduce stress in new mothers and college students during final exams.

11. Just finish a business lunch and realize you don't have gum or mints? Take a slice of cucumber and press it to the roof of your mouth with your tongue for 30 seconds to eliminate bad breath, the phytochemicals will kill the bacteria in your mouth responsible for causing bad breath.



12. Looking for a 'green' way to clean your faucets, sinks or stainless steel? Take a slice of cucumber and rub it on the surface you want to clean, not only will it remove years of tarnish and bring back the shine, but it won't leave streaks and won't harm your fingers or fingernails while you clean.

13. Using a pen and made a mistake? Take the outside of the cucumber and slowly use it to erase the pen writing, also works great on crayons and markers that the kids have used to decorate the walls!!

Dr. George I. Traitses

D.C., B.Sc.(Hon.), M.Sc., C.H.N., C.C.R.D., C.N.M., A.C.R.B. 1, C.R.A.

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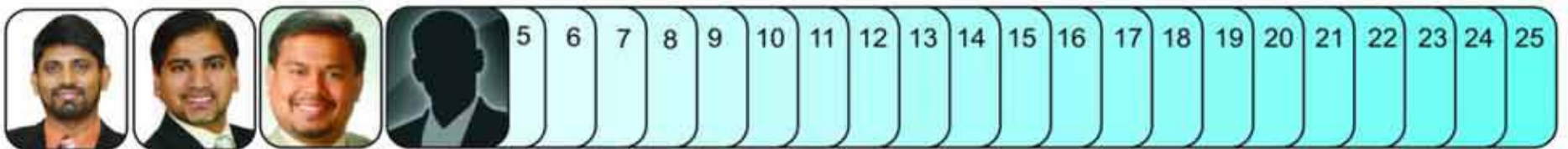
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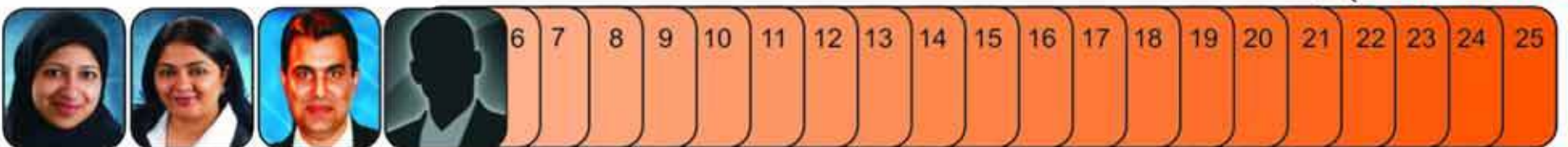
Plan 1: Platinum Plan for Re/Max/Royal LePage Agents

21 MORE TO GO



Plan 2: Gold Plan for Coldwell Banker/Sutton Group Agents

21 MORE TO GO



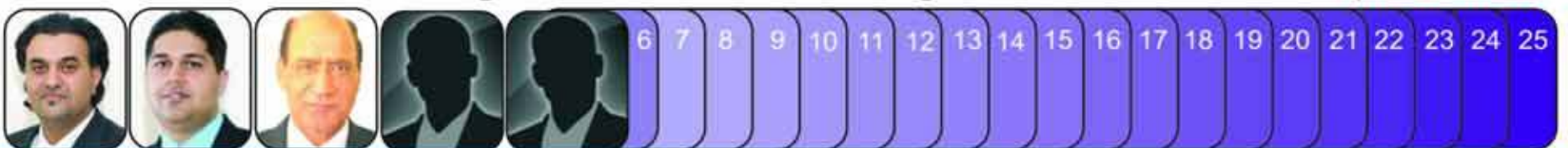
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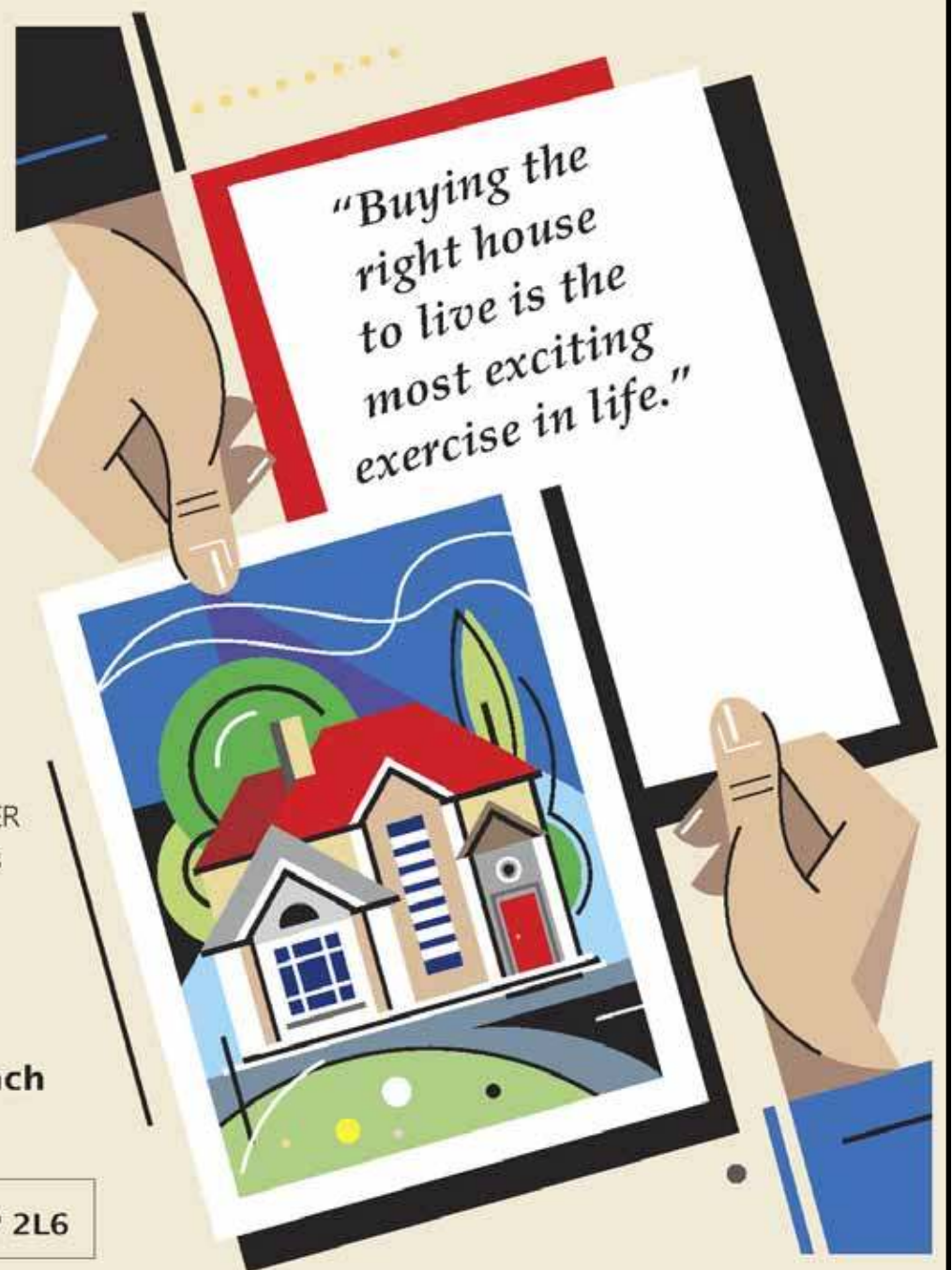
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Inaugural Mississauga Mayor's Cricket Festival

**Saturday, July 17, 2010
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Corporate Canada Cricket Club (C4) is pleased to present the inaugural Mississauga Mayor's

Cricket Festival on July 17, 2010 at the Courtney Park Cricket Field in Mississauga.

The objective of the festival is to raise the awareness of the corporate, adult & youth cricket as well as support the community charity partners, Heart & Stroke Foundation and Canadian Cancer Society, to raise the awareness of their causes in the Mississauga Community.

Highlights

- Mayor, Honourable Hazel McCallion, will be the Chief Guest.
- Corporate cricket teams such as that of BMO Financial Group, CIBC, Ernst & Young, RBC Financial Group & Scotiabank will be participating in the exhibition games

About Corporate Canada Cricket Club

Special
Supplement in
July issue by
Monsoon Journal

Corporate Canada Cricket Club (C4) is an alliance of the Cricket Clubs of Financial Institutions, Consulting and Technology Companies in Canada. It was formed in 2008 and incorporated in 2009.

The vision of Corporate Canada Cricket Club is to promote interest and participation in the sport of cricket on a sustainable basis in Corporate Canada & communities across Canada and to provide a platform to Group Members to network with each other for games, jobs and business.

For details, please visit www.corporatecricket.org



Monsoon Journal will be bringing out a special Supplement in the July 2010 issue. Any businesses, professionals or well wishers want to send their support by advertisements, promotions or any cricket related articles are welcome to contact Corporate Cricket Board Members or Monsoon Journal.

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Tel: 416-358-3235

Email: toronto@monsoonjournal.com

Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce 12th Annual Awards Gala at Fairmont Royal York Hotel to honour outstanding Tamil Business & Community Leaders on Saturday, April 10, 2010



Best Entrepreneur Award sponsored by RBC Royal Bank was presented by Lisa Gallacher, Regional Vice President, Scarborough, Pickering & Ajax to Koneswaran brothers of S & B Pallets Ltd. RBC Branch Manager Mohan Sundaramohan and Chamber President Ken Kirupa for presentation.



Outstanding Community Service Person(s) Award presented by John Tory to Devi Arasanayagam and Ravi Sreedharan. Gary Anandasangaree, Past President of Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce and Chamber President Ken Kirupa for presentation.



Left: Most Outstanding Professional Award sponsored by Industrial Alliance presented by Rob Carter, Director of Sales to Prof. Chelva Kanaganayakam. Roland Chan of LILand Insurance in photo. **Right:** Best Marketing Award sponsored by TD Bank Financial Group was presented by Al Ramsay, Senior Manager, Marketing (Diversity) to Meleni David of The Law Offices of Meleni David. Shamala Kumar, Small Business Advisor-TD Canada Trust was also associated with the presentation.



Left: Best Woman Entrepreneur Award sponsored by Scotiabank was presented by Ahmed Dajani, Vice President, GTA West to Eili Pathmanathan of Datta Manufactory. **Right:** Jeyasegaran Kanagasabai and Thushani Ruberu of Jay Brand Food Products were the winners of the Best Young Entrepreneur Award for the year 2010. The award was sponsored by Industrial Alliance. Rob Carter, Director of Sales & Roland Chan of LILand Insurance during presentation.



(From L to R) Vice President Sritharan Thuraiarajah, Past President Logan Velumallum and President Ken Kirupa.

Above Photos by : Gnane

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Lanka born Sumi Kailasapathy runs for City Council in Michigan



Sumangala Kailasapathy, currently a resident in the city of Ann Arbor, has announced in a press release that she officially filed her nominating petitions recently to appear on the Aug. 3 primary ballot for City Councilperson in Ward 1. She will challenge incumbent Democrat Sandi Smith, media in the City of Ann Arbor reported.

The City of "Ann Arbor," said to be bearing the names of spouses of the city's founders and its stands of trees gained a reputation in the 1960's as a hub of the Civil Rights Movement and a forerunner against the Vietnam War.

City of Ann Arbor, home of the prestigious University of Michigan is still a bastion of liberal democratic activism and traditions.

Ms. Sumangala Kailasapathy, a former student of University of Jaffna, writes as follows on her campaign website soliciting the support of the voters in the ward:

I am Sumangala ("Sumi") Kailasapathy and have been an Ann Arbor resident for 13 years. I am originally from Sri Lanka, but have been living in this country for the past 19 years. I received my undergraduate degree (magna cum laude) from Wellesley College in economics and political science. I also have

an MA and an MPhil in political science from the New School for Social Research.

I taught courses in Gender Studies, International Political Economy and Globalization at Eastern Michigan University for 10 years. Currently I am a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) at a downtown Ann Arbor firm.

I moved from Sri Lanka to the USA in 1991. While an undergraduate at Wellesley College, I worked with the local Chapter of Amnesty International to create awareness about the illegal incarceration of my fellow students back home. We also demanded AI change its mandate to agitate for the release of persons incarcerated by non-government actors.

I lived in Jaffna, Sri Lanka during 1980s when a civil war was raging there. After finishing high school, I went to the University of Jaffna to pursue my undergraduate degree in business. I was the treasurer of the University Students' Union and was an active student leader defending not only the democratic, civil and human rights of the student community, but also that of the larger society under the dual threat of the military as well as the rebel group Tamil Tigers. The Students Union played a courageous role in

defending the space of the civilians in an authoritarian environment. Many of my brave colleagues and teachers lost their lives in the process of defending human rights and dignity. Their courage and selflessness continues to inspire me to stand up for issues of greater good.

While I was an undergraduate in Sri Lanka, I also co-founded a women's organization called the Poorani Womens' Organization. I was the treasurer of this organization after it was formed. In the initial stages, Poorani ran a safe house for the women who were victims of military rape. Then it metamorphosed into promoting and undertaking micro financing in order to empower war-widows and destitute women who wanted to set up their own small businesses and projects that would provide them and their families with a livelihood.

Until Poorani inserted itself into the development arena, most NGOs were satisfied with donating sewing machines to war-widows and destitute women. Needless to say, this was informed by their limited imagination of gender stereotypes of womanhood. But a village that faced a massacre and ended up with 20 widows could not sustain

20 seamstresses. In the end most widows sold their sewing machines in the second-hand or used equipment market and ended up where they began: dependent and poor.

We at Poorani believed women's capacity and interests were limitless. We asked the women themselves as to what they wanted, and their answers were varied: one wanted seed money to set up a bicycle repair shop that had been run by her father and brothers before they were killed, one wanted to continue farming the fields that she and her husband had been doing and so on. Not one of them asked for a sewing machine!

How does all this link-up with the Ann Arbor City Council? It has many connections. First and foremost we need to listen to the constituents and find out what their priorities are and what they want. When everyone wants better roads and bridges why do we spend millions on a giant underground parking structure? When

neighborhood committees want to preserve their single home character why do we force all these PUDs on them?

Jaffna, the civil war, and all my experiences seem a life time away from Ann Arbor in certain instances. But in certain other ways it seems like deja vu all over again. Accountability, transparency and a commitment to self determination are some of the core values that I bring to my political practice from my past experiences from back home. I give you my pledge that I will uphold these values as a City Councilperson if I am elected to office in November.

I have two sons, Ashwin and Keshav who attend Clague middle school and Logan elementary school. My husband Giri Jogaratnam is a professor at Eastern Michigan University and has taught there for the past 17 years.

Ann Arbor has provided us with a stimulating and nurturing environment for us to thrive. Running for City Council is a small way of saying thank you to all of you.

I hope you decide to vote for me in the August 3rd primaries so that I can work for you.

Minister Kenney Launches Asian Heritage Month

OTTAWA, ONTARIO--(April 29, 2010) - All Canadians are invited and encouraged to join in the celebration of Asian Heritage Month, said Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney today during an official launch ceremony on Parliament Hill. The theme of Asian Heritage Month 2010, organized in partnership with the Ottawa Asian Heritage Month Society, is Asian Canadians: A Proud History, A Promising Future.

"This month helps all Canadians appreciate the important role that Canadians of Asian ancestry have played and continue to play," said Mr. Kenney. "It is appropriate that we acknowledge the contributions of Asian Canadians in this year, the 60th anniversary of the start of the Korean War, where so many Asian Canadians fought against communism."

"It is with a great sense of personal pride that Canadians of Asian descent can reflect on our

rich history and contributions toward Canada, our country," said Commodore H.W. Jung, Canadian Forces Surgeon General, Commander of Canadian Forces Health Services Group, one of the highest ranking Asian Canadians in the Canadian Armed Forces. A number of Asian-Canadian veterans of the Korean War attended the ceremony.

"Asian Heritage Month highlights the significance of this history and provides an occasion for all Canadians to celebrate the advances and successes of the Asian community in Canada."

Asian Heritage Month was first celebrated in May 2002. In December 2001, the Senate of Canada adopted a motion to designate May as Asian Heritage Month in Canada, a time to celebrate the contributions by Asian Canadians to our society.

For more information on Asian Heritage Month, please visit the CIC website at www.cic.gc.ca/asianheritagemonth.

Asian Canadians
A Proud History, A Promising Future

www.cic.gc.ca/asianheritagemonth



Full Text of GTF Press Release

London -- The Global Tamil Forum views the parliamentary election in Sri Lanka, conducted on April 8, as an election that was imposed on the Tamil-speaking people of the island. The Tamils living in a highly militarized, oppressive condition continue to undergo many forms of immense suffering, deprivation of the basic necessities of life, denial of freedom, fear and intimidation. There are still about 100,000 Tamils housed in military-run internment camps and their rights have been denied. Thousands of Tamils have been denied their right to vote in this election.

The very low turn-out at the polls by the Tamils in Northeast Sri Lanka, clearly due to fear, mistrust and despise for these elections, have sent a clear message to the international community that they have hardly any faith in

Low Tamil Turnout Reflects their Disillusion in the Sri Lankan Political System



this Sri Lankan form of ethnic-majoritarian democracy and its mode of elections. The government of Sri Lanka, in its attempt to justify itself as a democratic government and to deceive the international community, imposed the election on Tamil people in an environment of oppression and occupation.

The Tamil people that partici-

pated in the election, however, have elected the political party, the Tamil National Alliance, that has been championing for their legitimate political aspirations. While congratulating the elected members of the TNA, the President of GTF, Rev. Dr. S.J. Emmanuel said "the Tamil people have sent two messages very eloquently: one of them is that they



do not believe in the Sri Lankan political system that is imposed on them, and the other is by electing a party that has been voicing for their freedom, they are conveying their desire for liberation." He added "GTF will be working closely with TNA in addressing the day-to-day needs of the Tamil people as well as their political aspirations."

GTF calls upon the Tamil peo-

ple to sink any differences caused by the election, and unite under the common goal of freedom. It calls upon the Tamil Diasporas and their organisations to unite and engage themselves with the international institutions and governments and work towards achieving a political resolution where all the peoples of the island can live peacefully side by side with freedom and dignity.

"We have to move on"

[IRIN News] Kilinochchi: Ragavan Sinnathurai, 15, was a resident of Kilinochchi during Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war between government forces and the now defeated Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who had been fighting for an independent Tamil homeland for more than two decades.

When the conflict intensified in 2008, he and his family fled their homes and escaped into the jungles of Mullaitivu. Today he is one of thousands of returnees to the former rebel capital looking to rebuild their lives.

"I don't even want to think about the war now or the things we endured. It was really very bad. I lost my parents and I don't think anything can be worse than that.

"October 2008 was probably one of the worst months of my life. It was a month that changed my life, as well as the lives of so many others.

"The war was particularly fierce between October and

December. People were dying mainly because of shell attacks.

"I do not know who is to blame, nor do I want to blame anybody now. It was a painful period.

"I am sitting for my exams next year and now living with my older brother in Kilinochchi. I am lucky to have him. I'm trying to get a good education; to have a good future. I am going to school but sometimes it's hard with all the bad memories.

"I missed out on a lot of school, but it was a really bad time.

"Today the big thing around here is housing. That's our main need now. We need better housing conditions. Although it is better than conditions we have lived in, we need a lot of help.

"Of course I miss my parents a lot. But what can I do by thinking about them everyday...

"My brother tells me that we have to move on and that is what I will do. Move on."



Ragavan Sinnathurai

"There'll be no New Year until I find my daughter"

[IRIN News] (Kilinochchi) Uthayakumari, 39, lost her husband and a son in fighting between Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and government forces in 2009, and is still searching for her daughter who went missing earlier the same year.

The girl was aged 16 when she was forcibly recruited by the Tigers in 2007. Uthayakumari and her family made an ill-fated decision to stay in LTTE-controlled areas to remain in contact with her.

"People in the country are celebrating the New Year this week. For me, every hour that goes by is an hour of suffering and weeping for the death of my loved ones, and trying to locate my lost daughter.

"They [Tamil Tigers] were on a child-abducting spree - they wanted to expand their ranks. My daughter never wanted to join the LTTE. They abducted her in December 2007 from Kilinochchi town and kept her in their camps on the war front. She was a beautiful child who never liked violence, but the LTTE took her away.

"We were helpless. In those days, the LTTE controlled all these areas [in Kilinochchi], so we couldn't do anything about the abductions.

"We didn't want to leave the war zone because our daughter was held by the LTTE. I didn't feel it was right for our family to run away, leaving her. As the war and LTTE moved from Kilinochchi to



Uthayakumari, 39, of Kilinochchi lost her husband and son in the war. Today she continues the search for her daughter-pic by: Udara Soysa/IRIN

Mullaitivu areas, we also moved with the LTTE.

"Later on, in April 2009, we decided we had to leave as the war became unbearable. A lot of shelling was going on.

"While we were fleeing Mullaitivu to government-controlled areas, a shell fell between my husband and my son. They both died on the spot; I saw my husband's body being torn into pieces. I was very near to them. My spirit died that day, and I'm now living like a dead person.

"Soon after the last New Year,

I lost the people I loved the most. How can I celebrate another New Year? Nothing feels new or fresh to me.

"I have contacted the authorities to find my daughter. I cannot locate her at all. Please help me to find my daughter. Many LTTE-abducted children were rehabilitated and released by the government, but my child was not on any of those lists.

"For me, there will no New Year until I find my daughter. But I just don't know where to look for her."

Ferry service from KKS Harbour & Flight from Palali Airport to South India Indian aid to assist Jaffna's development

India is looking forward to revive the air transportation between Jaffna and destinations in India, along with beginning a passenger ferry service, Indian envoy Ashok K. Kantha said.

Speaking at the opening of the Jaffna International Trade Fair last week he said that Jaffna was traditionally rich in fisheries, livestock, agriculture and agro business and most importantly in human recourses.

"These opportunities have once again opened up, creating numerous openings not only for Sri Lankans but also for Indian companies," he said.

He said that the recently concluded Jaffna International Trade Fair was a golden opportunity towards the revival of the Jaffna business sector.

He also said that a proposal to redevelop Atchuveli Economic Zone has been forwarded to New Delhi. "I am following up on this".

He said that the government, private sector as well as Indian government would have a major role to play towards rebuilding the infrastructure and help bring back prosperity to the North and the East.

The Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has already pledged Rs. 12.5 billion to meet this objective. India also provided a mobile hospital which treated over 50,000 patients while over 250,000 family packs too were distributed.

In addition 40,000 families were provided roofing material and over 400,000 bags

of cement were provided to over 40,000 families under this program.

He said the Indian government has now shifted gear and is assisting in the reconstruction and resettlement process.

"Assisting in the housing sector especially in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu area too is a priority of the Indian government while vocational training is another aspect we would look at.

"We would also consider developing the cultural aspect and is planning to redevelop the Alfred Duraiyappa stadium in Jaffna," he said.

"Infrastructure too is one of the Indian government's priorities. We are assisting in rebuilding the railway line to Jaffna. Extension of railway line from Jaffna to Talaimannar and also to Omanthai and Palali are also other priorities.

The Indian government has already provided US \$ 25,000 million for this and in addition two Indian companies are directly involved in the rebuilding process. "We will provide more assistance as and when needed," he added.

The building of the railway will also create much opportunity for the local contractors. Kantha said that they are also happy with the developments taking place in the Kankasnthurai harbour and Palali airport."

We hope very soon there would be a ferry service starting from KKS to India and flights taking off from Palali to South Indian destinations," he said.

BP planning Tuesday launch of dome to cap oil leak



NEW ORLEANS - BP said it would launch an unprecedented effort Tuesday to contain the gushing oil well in the Gulf of Mexico by shipping out a state-of-the-art dome to place over the leak.

"We expect to load out the fabricated containment chamber tomorrow and we hope to have the system up and operating within a week," British Petroleum's Chief Operating Officer Doug Suttles told reporters Monday.

The dome is designed to be placed "over the leak sources and allow us to collect the oil, funnel it up through pipework to a drill ship called Enterprise on the surface," he said.

An estimated 210,000 gallons of crude a day has been streaming from three leaks at the wellhead below the Deepwater Horizon rig that sank on April 22, threatening the U.S. Gulf Coast with environmental catastrophe if the well cannot be capped.

BP, which leases the sunken rig, meanwhile has been racing to contain the leaks under high pressure from the White House and U.S. lawmakers, who have repeatedly pointed out that the British oil giant is legally bound to cover the cost of the disaster and spearhead the response.

Over the next week BP will be connecting the systems to capture the oil, first with the main dome over the first

leak and another two for the other leaks, and funnel it to the waiting Enterprise on the surface, Suttles said.

With rough seas over the wellhead, Suttles reassured that weather conditions were forecast to be more favorable over the weeks ahead.

The main containment chamber — "essentially a very large metal building with a dome top" — weighs some 65 tonnes, he said, and warned such an effort has never been tried before on this scale, or at this depth.

"There's a number of technical challenges . . . This has been done in shallow water, it's never been done in deep water before, so we're trying to get through those final challenges to make sure that we can actually get that oil to the surface through the pipework," he said.

At a depth of around a mile (1,500 meters), conditions at the leaking wellhead are extreme for employing this level of delicate engineering — it is pitch dark and pressure at that depth is around 2,500 pounds per square inch.

"What allows this to work is the fact that oil is less dense than water and wants to float, so essentially an oil column exerts less pressure than a water column, so that helps push the oil to the surface," Suttles said.

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By Fr. Lasantha de Abrew s.j.

The North-South Dialogue Desk of The Lanka Centre for Social Concern organized a Medical Camp conducted by the recently passed out doctors of Colombo Medical College from 5th April to 7th April 2010.

All the four doctors were Sinhalese and Sewwandi was a Catholic doctor from All Saints' Parish, Borella. Rev. Fr. Sudam Perera, Assistant Parish Priest of Ragama church, Lasheen the Secretary at NSDD, and Sajith a volunteer of NSSD joined the exposure program.

In Vavuniya, we had a visit to VAROD (Vanni Rehabilitation Organization for the Disabled-Differently Able). The Sinhalese doctors were thunder struck to see the young wounded inmates and listen to their stories of agony during the war. Sewwandi was so immersed in their stories of pain; we had to extend our stay at VAROD by a half an hour.

"They are like us. Their wounds although healed or is healing but their hearts need to be healed. Today I realized the cruelty of war especially the gravity of cluster bomb attacks and haphazard shelling. I could not bear the pain of the youngster who is paralyzed forever and more than that his losing all of his loved ones. Still some of them carry the pieces of shells in their bodies and that shows they carry the pieces of hatred towards us in their bodies. We need to remove these pieces of venom from their hearts".

These were the on the spot comments of the doctors on their first exposure to the realities of war. Anuradha, who works in the rehabilitation Centre for the War-Victim Sri Lanka Soldiers said, "I too treat the soldiers who are going through wounds of war. But these Tamil war victims look really hopeless, depressed as many have lost all they possessed including their loved ones and surely their suffering is more acute".

The A-9 journey was a special attraction for these medical doctors on their first visit to Jaffna. "I felt that A9 is neither a pathway to Jaffna nor a link between North and South of Sri Lanka. I could see only army sentry points and extended army camps throughout the journey to Jaffna. Why are there so many Buddha statues along the A9 route? Are they in memory of the Army personnel engaged in war?"

Were there Buddhists along this path other than the Sri

Four 'New' Sinhala Doctors Conduct a Medical Camp in Mandaitheevu

Lankan forces?

We could see Army sentry points every two hundred meters, some are newly done. Kilinochchi town seems to be an Army village, so many personnel, army run shops, army vehicles, and army men playing cricket leisurely. Rarely did we see Tamil people." These were the comments of these Sinhalese – Buddhist doctors as we drove on the A9.

On the way we had a break at the Holy Cross Convent in Paranthan. It was a heartwarming scene for the young professionals to see the religious sisters mending their fences with the people around. They welcomed us so warmly; these southerners were touched by the hospitality of the nuns, they themselves had gone through immense suffering in displacement and were putting their religious house in order after the abandonment.

There we were able to meet Clinton Anandeshan and Vishnunathan, aged sixty and sixty two respectively. Both of them are related through marriage, had come to Paranthan after the 1983 July riots from Kandy. They were estate Tamils and had to find a safer place for their children and their cultivation.

They related their story of displacement with laughter, fear, anger and some moments in tears, "We lost everything we had bit by bit in this displacement and at last we became beggars. Now we are beggars."

Clinton has three girls and a boy. Vishnunathan had lost two sons, aged nineteen and twenty two in the final battle, those who were conscripted four months before. His son in law lost his hand and the old aunt's stomach was ripped open in a shell attack.

"From Paranthan, as other people were leaving, we too joined. It was terrible as the air attacks were fierce and the ground attacks were merciless. Some of our relations were killed with their little ones. Attacks were random and haphazard. We collected all our belongings including the asbestos sheets, door frames, furniture and the sacks of paddy, loaded them in a tractor and moved towards Murasumottai. We just settled there for a few months, amidst heavy shelling. We put up a small hut for us only to sleep and built a bunker for safety. When it was unbearable we collected all we could take and moved towards Dharmapuram. On this journey we did not have a vehicle, so we had to take all we could on foot. The journey to



Udayarakattu was very hard.

Some of our own people, three of them died due to the tiresome, hard journey and bombardment. A few weeks there and we moved to Suvandirapuram. Every displacement reduced our traveling baggage.

Then to Vaikkal, Vattuwal and Rettai Vaikkal (Double Canal) were the last places of our displacement till we crossed over to the Army controlled areas. In all these places we suffered."

They narrated the Prices of the commodities during those days in Vanni.

- A bottle of Coconut oil – Rs. 500.00
- A kilogram of Rice – Rs. 3500.00
- A kilogram of Sugar - Rs. 3000.00
- A kilogram of Chillies - Rs. 15,000.00

"The LTTE was reluctant and angry as we were planning to leave their territory. They shot at us. We had to hide for more than three days in the jungles to escape from the LTTE."

They answered two of our questions posed to them, "Do you enjoy peace now? What do you expect from the Sri Lankan government?"

"There is some kind of normalcy, no more arms and fierce war but there is no peace. Still we are struggling to live. There are so many of our children in detention camps, some more in the IDP camps. There are armed groups and the Chavekachcheri incident (A seventeen year old boy was murdered by unknown persons) proves the point. There is continuous checking in our resettled areas in Paranthan. We are suspected. Then do you think we enjoy peace in freedom?"

"We want the government to compensate our loss. We lost everything. At least the government must help us in self employment by income generating projects. We were not beggars but today we have been made beggars. Recently we had to come to

the convent to beg for some cash to buy some food to survive. We need employment"

Just before arriving at Paranthan, we stopped at the Killinochchi Catholic Church and met the Assistant Parish Priest. He explained to us the present situation in Killinochchi, two hundred of his parishioners had come back from the Welfare camps and are getting resettled. Those persons who are resettled in and around the church have the basic needs attended to in a minimum way and their number is very small.

Those who are in adjoining villages are facing a lot of difficulties attending to their basic needs and their number is big. He said the Church organizations provide as much as they could as relief.

In Jaffna, we enjoyed the warm welcome of the Claretian Fathers and pitched our tent over there for a few days. Their hospitality was excellent and the Southern doctors were surprised.

Next day was our Medical Camp at Mandaitivu. Rev. Fr. Paul Rohan, the Parish Priest cum Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in St. Xavier's Major Seminary in Jaffna organized the program with the assistance of Rev. Sr. Priscilla of the Holy Cross Convent Hospital. Just before the camp the doctors visited the Mandaitivu village and the people in their own displaced huts. For the past twenty years, the Sri Lankan Navy has captured the Mandaitivu village with these peoples' houses and made it a High Security Zone.

The people were displaced several times in different places and have last come back but they are staying outside of the naval camp in huts just gazing at their own homes occupied by the Navy. The doctors spoke to the people and observed their utter poverty.

There were about sixty patients, infants, children, young and old. These young doctors attended to the patients with care and concern. Rev Fr. Paul and Sr. Priscilla acted as translators.

These were the comments of some of the patients as they were leaving the camp.

"We were treated very gently. They were very attentive to us. For the first time we met some kind Sinhalese people. They were very kind to us. We are really grateful to them for coming all the way from Colombo to see us.

We will always remember them" During the visit to the Mandaitivu village, the southerners met some excombatants.

They listened to their stories of struggle and the life in the detention camps. In one house, we discovered a photograph of a young man garlanded. The young doctors inquired about it from the lady who was at home. She said, "This is my eldest son. He was in the Sea Tiger unit. He was killed in battle. He is my beloved son".

When we were returning after the visit to the village, some of them were arguing, "Why did they join the movement? Why does this mother venerate her son who was in the LTTE?"

Within the group we could hear the whisperings, "Surely there must be a reason for the Tamils to take up arms. They saw it as a Struggle for liberation. That is the reason for these youngsters to volunteer and commit for the cause. As we see in our villages, the war heroes are honored, roads named after them and statues are made, these people honor their young leaders who sacrificed their lives for a cause".

The Mandaitivu Community hosted a delicious sea food lunch for us. It was grand. After the camp, as Darshana, Anuradha and Pasindu are Buddhists we accompanied them to Nagadipa (Nainativu) by boat.

On the same day late at night the youngsters met a first year student from the Faculty of Arts in the Jaffna University. He explained his life story of running away under the orders of the LTTE, the forced recruitment and how the priests rescued him from the LTTE, in Iranaipalai, Mullivaikal, the last hours in Vanni with shelling and LTTE counter attacks, a few months in the IDP camp in Zone 5 of Cheddikulam and his release to be in the university to pursue his studies.

He recalled with deep pain that his parents are still in the IDP camp and he had visited them recently. There were a lot of questions from the southern youth. All of them agreed that they need to be educated and transcend ethnic barriers to be more human and civilized.

Contd. in Next page...

Tamil Canadians Launch Campaign to Get Conversation Going about Cancer

By Vathany Uthayam

Tamil Canadians kicked off their fight against cancer at the Scarborough Civic Centre on April 20, 2010 to get the conversation going about cancer within the community. The initiative, with all proceeds going to the Canadian Cancer Society, aims to raise awareness about the disease within the community by telling the untold stories of cancer and Tamil Canadians. Ontario Minister of Citizenship Dr. Eric Hoskins attended the launch as a guest of honour and delivered a speech. Bharathi Arts president Seeni-

vasagam Mathivasan delivered a moving speech as a special guest at the event. It is important to note that he lost his wife only one and a half months back to cancer. During her lifetime, she was one of the well-known Tamil Canadian fundraisers for various charities.

Canadian Cancer Society Senior Manager of Special Events Sherry Lamb attended the launch and delivered a speech as well. The campaign is being coordinated by the Canadian Tamil Congress.

"Tamil Canadians are no less affected by cancer as the general population but there are distinct

differences when it comes to our knowledge base and understanding of the resources that are available to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer," said Dr. Meera Selvakone, a family physician in Richmond Hill, Ontario and a Canadian Tamil Congress Board of Director. "There is fear around the issue of cancer in our community. Many equate cancer with death and consequently many do not want to talk about it let alone participate in screening programs."

Dr. Priya Jeganathan, the campaign's coordinator, said the community must work hard to raise awareness about everything

from prevention to the importance of early diagnosis to the effect on loved ones.

"It means addressing the reluctance that exists to go for screening tests," said Dr. Jeganathan.

NDP Leader Jack Layton, who is fighting a public battle with cancer, also wrote a message for the event and Tamil Canadians that was read by Rathika Sitsabaiesan from the NDP party.

The event was emceed by Mr. K. Nadesan.

Organizers also launched the campaign's marquee event, the Walk to Save the Ones We Love.



The Walk will take place on September 20, 2010 at Thomson Park and all community members are invited to participate.

During the evening, several outstanding community organizations and individuals were recognized for their contribution to last year's Walk-A-Thon for SickKids Foundation. Last year, the community raised \$42,500 for the SickKids Foundation. That campaign was also coordinated by the Canadian Tamil Congress.



Four "New" Sinhala Doctors...

Contd. from previous page

The Tamil young one praised the southerners for their enduring spirit to visit Jaffna and expose themselves to the hard realities. In return the Sinhalese Doctors welcomed them to visit Colombo and experience the hospitality of the South.

On our way back to Colombo, we visited The Holy Family Sisters at Kilinochchi. It was a revealing episode. We could see their convent just taking shape after their displacement. One sister shared with us, "Seventy one of my students from Kilinochchi Maha Vidyalyayam were killed in this recent war. Many are missing. When I go to school, I feel the loss and the immense pain.

Recently I asked the children, who had survived, displaced, lived in the IDP camps and just returned to Kilinochchi, to write about their memories of the final stages of war. I meant it to be a therapeutic exercise. They wrote so many pages in tears, sobbing

and some moments with anger and fear."

We had an opportunity to glance through these letters of pain and anguish. Almost all of these were ended with "Nandri" (Thank You Sister). That means the writing of the letters initiated by the Teacher sister of these little ones had brought some kind of relief to relieve their pain.

As we coming out of the Holy Family Convent we were introduced to the lady cook of their house. She had lost two of her children in the recent displacement. She lost her son as he was a victim of a kfir attack. She had to bury her son hurriedly as they were running away in fear and in the dark. She does not know where he is buried and how he was buried.

The loss of the daughter she was unable to recall. She was lost in the rush in the final hours as they were walking back into the Army controlled area through the waters. Although her relations pacify her saying that the eighteen year daughter is still living, she believes that she is no more on earth. She says that she experi-

ences sense of a deep loss.

This mother, a widow was gazing at Fr. Sudam for awhile and began to weep and wail. She cried, "He looks like my son, my own son who is no longer on earth. My son was killed"

The way they experienced.....

Dear Father Lasantha,

We must also thank you for giving us an opportunity to witness the fate of some of our brothers and sisters living in Jaffna and Mandaitivu Island. We would have never seen their lives so closely without you and Fr. Rohan Paul.

Also I must thank you for your kindness and hospitality to us considering the fact that we are Buddhists. We always felt as we all were in a single team all determined to do the best service to the needy.

Looking forward to working with you in the future as well. All the best in all your future endeavors and keep up the good work...!

May the blessings of the Triple Gem be with you..!

Regards,

Dr. Darshana Chandrakumara.

Physical Healing Vs Healing of Attitudes

On 6 April 2010, people of Mandaitivu (all the people without any difference of religions) had the opportunity of being benefiting from a team of young doctors from the South who conducted a free medical camp. The medical camp was organized and the team of doctors was led by Fr. Lasantha, SJ who had already been to Mandaitivu several times to visit the IDP returnees.

For the people of Mandaitivu this was a new experience. In the recent past, there were several medical services organized by different NGOs for these people. But this particular medical service was with the young volunteer doctors from the South. The civilian habitable places of Mandaitivu are under the control of the security forces for the last 20 years and in particular Mandaitivu is called a Navy Village for last 15 years. (Whenever there is an emergency the Navy dispensary gives the first aid facilities for these people.) But in this medical camp with the volunteer young doctors

from the South, the people of Mandaitivu came to know the other side of the Sinhala community.

For these people up to now, Sinhalese means soldiers who came to occupy their land and inhabit their houses. However, these people realize that there is another side to the Sinhala community. This dimension was manifested in this medical camp.

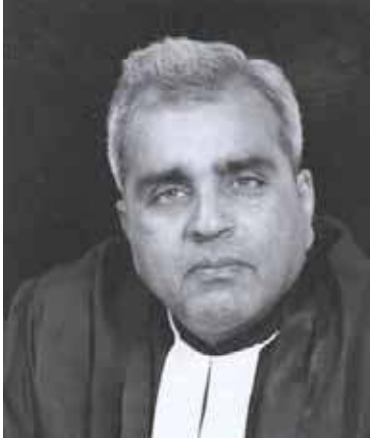
The team was very much dedicated. The doctors found time to spend with the people and were very attentive to their feelings in spite of the weltering heat of Mandaitivu on that day. They also brought a lot of valuable medicines with them and the other medicines were bought and distributed later.

I would say more than the physical healing, the healing of attitude was achieved through this medical camp. It was an exposure for the people with the kind hearted volunteer doctors from the South.

May God bless these Doctors!
Rev. Fr. Paul Rohan from Mandaitivu



Rajinder Sachar, former Chief Justice of High Court of Delhi, has said that conditions in Sri Lanka cannot improve unless the Tamils are given a respectful place in society as equal citizens.



Former Chief Justice of India voices concern for Sri Lanka's Tamils

Rajinder Sachar former Chief Justice made the remarks during a conference on Sri Lanka's war crimes held at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) held on 15th of April.

"Unfortunately, that is not happening" he said, according a media report on the conference. The report also says that he pointed out that the Tamils may be forced to take other courses of action if in the immediate future the Lankan government did not give them an equal and respectful place.

VR Krishna Iyer, former Judge of the Indian Supreme Court, seconded Sachar's point by adding that the concept of human rights was absent for the Tamils suffering in Sri Lanka.

U Anand Kumar of India's Express Buzz News service reported on the conference as follows:

Participating in a convention on 'The unspoken Genocide: War crimes in Sri Lanka,' Justice Sachar said that though the war

was over, the situation was yet to change and the Tamils were yet to get their due respect as fellow citizens.

Justice Sachar, who was a member of the People's Tribunal, which submitted its report on genocide of Lankan Tamils, said that the island Tamils should decide what they should do now.

Maintaining that there were no human rights as far as Sri Lankan Tamils were concerned, Justice V R Krishna Iyer suggested that human rights should be restored in the island nation. Since Justice Iyer could not attend the convention due to health reasons he had sent a video message.

He also advocated for a federal system of the government in Sri Lanka so that Tamilians would get their due share in all aspects.

Kolathur Mani, president of Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam, in his address described the Sri Lankan refugee camps in Tamil Nadu as nothing but illegal prisons.

HRW: Discriminatory Policy Against Afghans and Sri Lankans by Australia Violates International Law

Promptly Process All Refugee Claims

(New York, April 15, 2010) – The Australian government should reverse its decision to suspend the processing of new asylum applications from Sri Lankan and Afghan nationals, Human Rights Watch said in a letter to Immigration Minister Chris Evans today.

Human Rights Watch said that the new policy, announced on April 8, 2010, fails to recognize the serious threats to security for certain groups in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka and violates Australia's obligations under international law not to discriminate in the treatment of refugees.

"The Australian government shouldn't cherry-pick among nationalities when deciding whose refugee claims get heard," said Elaine Pearson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Australia should be setting a positive example for refugee protection in the region, not undermining international standards."

The Australian government said it would suspend new asylum applications from Afghans for a period of six months and from Sri Lankans for a period of three months, in an apparent effort to deter unauthorized arrivals by boat.

Human Rights Watch said that

the blanket suspension of all applications from nationals of specific countries is discriminatory under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, to which Australia is a party. Even if human rights conditions have improved in a country of origin, Australia is still obligated to provide individuals with an opportunity to claim asylum and to examine their refugee claims.

In the cases of Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, however, Human Rights Watch's research shows that human rights conditions are far from stable or adequate, and that individuals and certain groups continue to face significant threats and to lack effective protection. For instance, women and girls, ethnic and religious minorities, media workers, civil society activists, opposition party members and supporters, and alleged militants may be at risk of persecution in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

In the letter, Human Rights Watch said the April 8 announcement about suspending asylum procedures alongside an announcement of enhanced measures to stop the crime of "people smuggling" implied criminality on the part of asylum seekers.

"Individuals under threat in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan sometimes

have no choice but to turn to smugglers to escape persecution," Pearson said. "While smuggling is a crime, the Australian government seems to confuse smuggling with asylum, tarring the victims with the stigma of crimes committed against them."

Human Rights Watch noted that in 2008 the then-new Labor government initially made good on its election promises to protect the rights of refugees. But over the past two years, the government has changed course. Today, asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat remain subjected to mandatory detention, Christmas Island's detention centers are again filled with asylum seekers, and now newly arriving Afghan and Sri Lankan boat people, including children, will be made to endure the hardship of additional months of detention, regardless of the merits of their refugee claims.

"In the heat of an election year, the Rudd administration is choosing politically expedient refugee bashing over the principles of refugee protection," Pearson said. "It is a sorry reflection on Australian public opinion that the government thinks it must discriminate against Afghan and Sri Lankan refugees in the hope of winning votes."

Australia's Tamils Voice Visa Suspension Concerns to Top Officials in Canberra

By Phil Mercer

[VOA News] Sydney:

Representatives of the Australian Tamil community have held talks with senior Australian officials to discuss the recent freezing of asylum requests from Sri Lanka.

Canberra has said it will not process applications for three months while it reviews the security situation in Sri Lanka, a move that has angered activists.

Representatives from several Tamil community groups were invited to Canberra for talks with officials from Australia's immigration and foreign affairs departments.

A range of issues was discussed, including Australian aid to Sri Lanka. They also considered how the Tamil diaspora can support reconciliation and lasting peace in their troubled homeland, where decades of civil war have only recently come to an end.

But the main point of discus-

sion was Canberra's decision to freeze for three months the processing of asylum applications from Sri Lanka.

Australia says the move is the result of improved security in Sri Lanka.

But Tamil activist Sara Nathan, who attended the meeting in Canberra, says community representatives made it clear they opposed Australia's decision.

"Almost everyone commented that they were not happy with the visa suspensions because there is lots of inconsistencies," said Nathan. "For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has not changed its guidelines on Sri Lanka. It is still risky in Sri Lanka. There are 88,000 Tamils still held in internment camps."

Australia has also suspended the processing of asylum claims from Afghanistan for six months, again insisting that the situation there was becoming less haz-

ardous.

Australia reopened mainland immigration detention facilities following a surge in boats ferrying asylum seekers, including many Sri Lankans and Afghans.

A purpose-built camp on Christmas Island, a remote Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, is over-capacity.

Conservative opponents of Australia's left-of-center government say what it calls "soft" immigration policies have failed to deter boat people. Government ministers have strongly rejected that point of view.

The vast majority of people seeking asylum in Australia arrive by air, but community groups worry that the debate about illegal immigration will become more uncompromising as an election due later this year draws closer.

About 13,000 refugees are allowed to resettle in Australia each year as part of official international humanitarian schemes.

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**HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THE
EVENT**

VILLA KARUNA CELEBRATES

ITS 7th ANNUAL APPRECIATION GALA

On Saturday May 1st 2010 at New Jaasmin Banquet Hall, Markham



Photos by: Gnane



By Col. R. Hariharan

Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa has scored a double whammy with his thumping success in the parliamentary elections April 2010 after his triumph in the presidential poll in January 2010. With this Rajapaksa has emerged as the most powerful man in Sri Lanka. Already he enjoys wide powers of executive presidency. This is further boosted now by the majority his ten-party United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) enjoys in the new parliament.

Nine months after the defeat of the LTTE in May 2009, President Rajapaksa has emerged as unchallenged national leader with the massive public support demonstrated in the two elections. The opposition is now more muted than ever before although United National Party (UNP) despite its internal wrangling has not performed as badly as the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in the parliamentary poll. The JVP rout has shown the limited political appeal of General Sarath Fonseka, projected by the JVP alliance's Prime Ministerial candidate.

His strength is further increased as he has at his disposal an oversized armed force that could help his power projection in the region. Considering this, the successive electoral victories have also created a first rate 'power problem' for the President – how to wield the enormous power?

President Rajapaksa's journey to the top had been mired in controversies on many counts. Although this is not uncommon in politics, a few 'unhealthy' trends have been seen in his style of wielding power. These could set a dangerous precedence.

Systematic image building

There had been a systematic effort to build Rajapaksa as the SOLE national leader responsible for the victorious war against the Tami Tiger insurgents. Well planned national campaign to build up his image as a modern day Dutugemunu came to fruition with the deaths of Prabhakaran and the LTTE leadership. There is nothing wrong in projecting a national leader in the image of such historical heroes. But such projection, in an ethnically split and sensitive society, can provoke divisive tendencies.

The nearest modern day contender for this haloed status was General Sarath Fonseka, who led the army to victory. As army commander he successfully overcame the problems that had been dog-

President Rajapaksa's highly personalised politics and Sri Lanka's future

ging the army all these years and systematically planned and executed the military operations. His public image as a national hero had been growing ever since the war. However, his military success would not have been possible without President Rajapaksa's total support of the government to the military effort.

After the war, President Rajapaksa saw the enormous popularity of Fonseka as an inconvenient obstacle to his own elevation as the sole national leader. So the process of dethroning of the General from the pedestal of a national hero started taking a firm shape with the non extension of his term as the Chief of Defence Staff. The President's fear was strengthened when Fonseka rallied the support of the UNP and the JVP to emerge as the common opposition candidate against Rajapaksa in the January 2010 presidential poll. After winning the election, Rajapaksa continued with the process of cutting Fonseka to size with arrest and prosecution. As many as 37 associates of Fonseka including retired army officers have been rounded up. Serving officers considered close to the retired General have come under scrutiny.

In the bargain, Rajapaksa has courted a lot of criticism from not only civil society organisations, but also from international community for practising vindictive politics. And these accusations have been piled up on the President's long list of aberrations of governance that include human rights violations, lack of humanitarian policies, war crimes etc. It has also led to avoidable embarrassment for the country in some of the UN forums. And these are likely to increase.

Flawed policy prescriptions

The President has fulfilled his electoral promises, made in 2005, as far as ending the peace process and the ceasefire, and elimination of the LTTE are concerned. However, he has chosen to ignore his own promises in acting upon some others like enforcing some of the amendments to the Constitution. For instance, he has not fulfilled his repeated promises to implement the 13th Amendment (devolving powers to provincial councils) and the 17th Amendment (for providing the Constitutional Council and Independent Commissions). Similarly he had put into cold storage the recommendations of the All Party Representative Committee (APRC) he had formed

with a lot of fanfare to work out a frame work for devolution of powers to minorities.

As a result of such acts of political expediency, the President's credibility has suffered. His policy prescriptions on a number of contentious issues including rule of law, freedom of the press, violation of human rights and acts of political violence have become skewed suspect. Without bothering about the niceties of credibility, the President appears to have adopted political opportunism as the only criterion to achieve his ends.

Downsizing international opinion

President Rajapaksa had been consistently ignoring international opinion on many key issues of governance and public conduct of his government discussed earlier. This started with the dismantling of the peace process which was enjoyed the support of 48 nations and international bodies. Such issues of international sensitivity include alleged war crimes, human rights violations, threat and intimidation of free media, short circuiting rule of law, and lack of transparency in commissions of inquiry. As a result, Sri Lanka which had once enjoyed a fairly high international reputation has repeatedly come under criticism in international bodies like the UN High Commission for Human Rights and even the UN Security Council.

In spite of this, Sri Lanka's attitude had been aggressive rather than conciliatory towards international community. On more than one occasion diplomats, foreign dignitaries and have been brusquely handled by bureaucrats without even conventional diplomatic norms.

The developments leading to the European Union's non renewal of the GSP+ tariff conditions extended to Sri Lanka in the wake of the 2005 tsunami strike is a case in point. The European Union did not take kindly to Sri Lanka continuously ignoring its pleas for greater sensitivity and accountability in handling human rights issues. Although the withdrawal of the GSP+ concessions had struck at Sri Lanka's exports to the European Union, the President had been defiant on this issue. He had said the Government would never bow down to conditions detrimental to the wishes of people in order to get financial or other support from outside.

Even after the turbulence of war, Sri Lanka has continued to



Mother and child at a President Mahinda Rajapaksa campaign rally in Jaffna - pic: affe.lk

orchestrate a strong propaganda campaign seeing an international conspiracy to downgrade its achievement in the 'war against terror.' Evidently these are targeted against some of the Western nations which demanded greater Sri Lankan accountability to international concerns on war crimes and human rights issues. Repeatedly Sri Lanka ministers have spoken on this. In particular the U.S. and Norway have been singled out for such criticism.

There had been other irritants as well. During the course of war, President Rajapaksa took initiative in meeting countries known for their strong anti-American stance like Iran, Myanmar and Venezuela. This was probably his way of sending a "hands off Sri Lanka" message to the U.S. which he perceived as meddling in the war to bale out the LTTE leaders. While this might have helped projecting the President as a leader of international status at home, the move was ill timed. The only fall out was negative: it probably soured the first contacts with the President Barak Obama and his U.S. administration that had just taken over.

Even after the war, Sri Lanka has continued to be vocally belligerent towards the U.S. The latest in the series is the comment of the Sri Lanka Defence Spokesman made on April 6, 2010 following a U.S. air force video splashed in international media showing the U.S. planes strafing a group of persons alleged to be innocent civilians, including Reuter's photo journalists. While diplomacy had never been Sri Lanka's strong suite, such a provocative comment from a government official to an embarrassing news story about another nation was neither warranted nor helps international relations.

President Rajapaksa, riding the crest of popularity with suc-

cess after success, does not appear to be fully conscious of the importance in maintaining a cordial, rather than confrontational, relationship with the U.S. In the emerging strategic setting in this region, U.S. and India are the two important players, with China breathing down their necks to get into this league. Big power play is likely to increase in the Indian Ocean region after the U.S. lessens its commitments in Afghanistan. Once the U.S. sheds the shackles of its skewed Af-Pak policy as unworkable, there could be increased strategic security convergence between the U.S. and India increasing further. If Rajapaksa does not give a course correction to his foreign policy prejudices, it could affect Sri Lanka's strategic security.

Uncertain future

President wields enormous powers under Sri Lanka's executive presidency system. With his re-election for a second term (to commence in November 2010), Rajapaksa will rule the country for a total duration of 11 years. Added to this the UPFA coalition led by the President has a majority in parliament now. On the positive side this provides him an unprecedented opportunity to take positive action including constitutional amendments, if necessary, to resolve the vexing issue of devolution of powers to Tamils. Thus he is at the helm at an important stage in Sri Lanka's political with the muscle to extinguish the simmering ethnic confrontation and unite the nation as a whole.

The future of Sri Lanka now depends upon how President Rajapaksa exercises power authority during these years. The armed forces give him added muscle.

Contd. in next page

Improve your eating habits

by Kanayalal Raina

A secret of your beauty, longevity, health and energy

Cultural or religious beliefs have nothing to do with the actual diet and the food we consume. The average person is more likely to die from a lifestyle disease than from a roadside accident or infectious disease like pneumonia. Here we are discussing the wholesomeness of two categories of food-- the vegetarian and the non-vegetarian.

Vegetarian diet

A vegetarian diet is one wherein a person consumes all types of plant products along with milk and dairy products, but completely avoids consuming meat and animal-derived foods and by-products. A non-vegetarian diet includes all plant foods as well as foods and by-products derived from animals like meat, poultry, fish, etc. Studies carried out on vegetarians have shown that vegetarians are at an increased risk of iron deficiency anaemia, zinc and Vitamin B-12 deficiency. Vegetarians, however, can get adequate nutrition from an exclusively vegetarian diet. If they consume a variety of foods along with the right quantities



from each food group, a vegetarian diet can meet the recommendations for all nutrients.

Non-vegetarians

Non-vegetarians are consuming more of high fat-content pork, chicken, beef and seafood than they did decades ago. A study that tracked more than half a million Americans, aged 50 to 71 for 10 years showed interesting results; those who reported eating the red meat were roughly 30 percent more likely to die of cancer or heart diseases than those reported eating the least. Chicken and fish have not been shown to cause chronic diseases, but when they are deep fried in hydrogenated oil, they become the cause of

heart disease, as they then contain trans fatty acids.

Studies have also found that non-vegetarians have a shorter life-span and are more prone to chronic diseases as compared to vegetarians. On an average they are more at risk from heart disease, hypertension and diabetes.

So, what is better?

Today, both these categories- vegetarian and non-vegetarian are falling short. The veggie-lover and the non-veggie lover, are both consuming more of refined cereals (white bread, white rice etc.) as compared to whole grains (whole wheat bread, brown rice etc). In fact, the refined cereals are devoid of their vitamins and fibre, due to the polishing process. Presently, we are consuming more of processed and ready-to-eat foods that are baked and fried instead of wholesome foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.

Both vegetarians and non-vegetarians need to start consuming more serving of fresh vegetables and fruits daily- blended with a regular exercising regimen. More importantly, we need to change from 'fast, fried and tastes best' to a 'fresh is better' approach.

To stay young

Olive oil: Various studies have proved that the mono saturated fat found in olive oil, result in low rates of heart disease and cancer besides its antioxidants and polyphenols that play a role in warding off age-related disorders.

Curds: There is no denying the fact that curd (yogurt) is a rich source of calcium, which reduces the risk of osteoporosis, especially among the women. The beneficial bacteria that yogurt contains also help to deal with intestinal diseases that become common as we age.

Fish: Fish is rich source of omega-3 fatty acids. It helps keep your cholesterol levels in check. As a result there are less chances of blockages in arteries and this leads to better cardiac health.

Nuts: A recent study that has been conducted, has proved that those who have nuts on a regular basis, somehow, manage to add

up an extra two and a half years to their average lifespan. The consumption of nuts offers benefits of unsaturated fats, vitamins, minerals and other antioxidants.

Red wine: Alcohol protects against heart disease, diabetes and memory loss, but only if it is consumed in moderation. For example, red wine contains resveratrol, the compound responsible for the above cited benefits

Eating fruit- Fruit is the most important food. We all think eating fruits means just buying fruits, cutting it and just popping it into our mouths. It's not as easy as you think. It's important to know how and when to eat. What is the correct way of eating fruits? It means not eating fruit after your meals. Fruits should be taken on an empty stomach.

If you eat fruit like that, it will play a major role to detoxify your system, supplying you with a great deal of energy for weight loss and other life activities. Let's say you eat two slices of bread and then a slice of fruit. The slice of fruit is ready to go straight through the stomach into the intestines, but it is prevented from doing so. In the meantime the whole meal rots and ferments and turns to acid. The minute the fruit comes into contact with the food in the stomach and digestive juices, the entire mass of food begins to spoil.... So please eat your fruits on an empty stomach or before your meals! You have heard people complaining - every time I eat watermelon I burp, when I eat durian my stomach bloats up, when I eat a banana I feel like running to the toilet etc - actually all this will not arise if you eat the fruit on an empty stomach. The fruit mixes with the putrefying other food and produces gas and hence you will bloat!

Greying hair, balding, nervous outburst, and dark circles under the eyes all these will NOT happen if you take fruits on an empty stomach. There is no such thing as some fruits, like orange and lemon are acidic, because all fruits become alkaline in our body, according to Dr. Herbert Shelton who did research on this matter. If you have mastered the correct way of eating fruits, you have the Secret of beauty, longevity, health, energy, happiness and normal weight. When you need to drink fruit juice - drink only fresh fruit juice, NOT from the cans. Don't even drink juice that has been heated up. Don't eat cooked fruits because you don't get the nutrients at all. You only get to taste. Cooking destroys all the vitamins.

But eating a whole fruit is bet-



ter than drinking the juice. If you should drink the juice, drink it mouthful by mouthful slowly, because you must let it mix with your saliva before swallowing it. You can go on a 3-day fruit fast to cleanse your body. Just eat fruits and drink fruit juice throughout the 3 days and you will be surprised when your friends tell you how radiant you look! This is a good source of potassium, magnesium, vitamin E & fiber. Its vitamin C content is twice that of an orange.

Apple: An apple a day keeps the doctor away? Although an apple has a low vitamin C content, it has antioxidants & flavonoids which enhances the activity of vitamin C thereby helping to lower the risks of colon cancer, heart attack & stroke.

Strawberry: Protective Fruit. Strawberries have the highest total antioxidant power among major fruits & protect the body from cancer-causing, blood vessel-clogging free radicals.

Orange: Sweetest medicine. Taking 2-4 oranges a day may help keep colds away, lower cholesterol, prevent & dissolve kidney stones as well as lessens the risk of colon cancer.

Watermelon: Coolest thirst quencher.. Composed of 92% water, it is also packed with a giant dose of glutathione, which helps boost our immune system. They are also a key source of lycopene - the cancer fighting oxidant. Other nutrients found in watermelon are vitamin C & Potassium.

Guava & Papaya: Top awards for vitamin C. They are the clear winners for their high vitamin C content. Guava is also rich in fiber, which helps prevent constipation. Papaya is rich in carotene; this is good for your eyes.

For those who like to drink cold water, this article is applicable to you. It is nice to have a cup of cold drink after a meal. However, the cold water will solidify the oily stuff that you have just consumed. It will slow down the digestion. Once this 'sludge' reacts with the acid, it will break down and be absorbed by the intestine faster than the solid food. It will line the intestine. Very soon, this will turn into fats and lead to cancer. It is best to drink hot soup or warm water after a meal.

The more we know and accept good eating habits, the better chance we would survive... and enjoy longevity, health and energy.

President Rajapakse's highly...

Contd. from previous page

The problem in wielding this kind of enormous power is the tendency to ride rough shod over contrarian opinions from the conscience keepers of nation. As a result the temptation to misuse armed forces to further political power increases. However, the President has become so powerful that he has no need to do so. But as the cliché says 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.'

Rajapaksa thrives on divisive politics that has created a lot of distrust both at home and abroad about his intentions. So there is a feeling of uncertainty about how he is going to perform in his second term particularly when he has no military agenda to pursue. The leadership style and highly personalised politics he had been practising does not encourage positive expectations for the future. His first tenure as president has been marked by gross violations of norms of governance and human rights and lack of accountability. As U.S. Assistant Secretary of State and former Ambassador to Sri Lanka Robert Blake puts it, "it is important for the administration of President Rajapaksa to reach out to the Tamils... It is important that they feel that they are going to be able to live a future of hope and of

opportunity." But will he do it, amidst other pressing political priorities?

Unless he builds bridges with all sections of people and take deliberate action improve his governance, economic recovery is going to be difficult as assistance from the West could dry up. If that happens Sri Lanka is likely to face a difficult passage. This could make him move closer to the Chinese. Though India is an equally important and economically powerful entity for Sri Lanka and has excellent relations with the country increased Chinese role in Sri Lanka could change all that. And such a development coupled with the unfulfilled promises in resolving the ethnic issue has the potential of affecting India-Sri Lanka relations during 2011, when Tamil Nadu goes to polls.

So we come back to the question how will the President handle his "power problem"? Only the President can answer this; but will he?

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



JOHN BODDY HOMES PRESENTS 'EAGLE GLEN'



John Boddy Homes has been voted 'Best Builder' in Ajax/Pickering for the thirteenth year in a row for this year's Readers' Choice Awards and has now 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 townhouses. Homes start at 1,700 square feet and range up to a spacious 3,858 square feet, some with three car garages. 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 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.

For a limited time only John Boddy Homes is offering an incentive package including \$5,000 in free upgrades and one year of Rogers 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.

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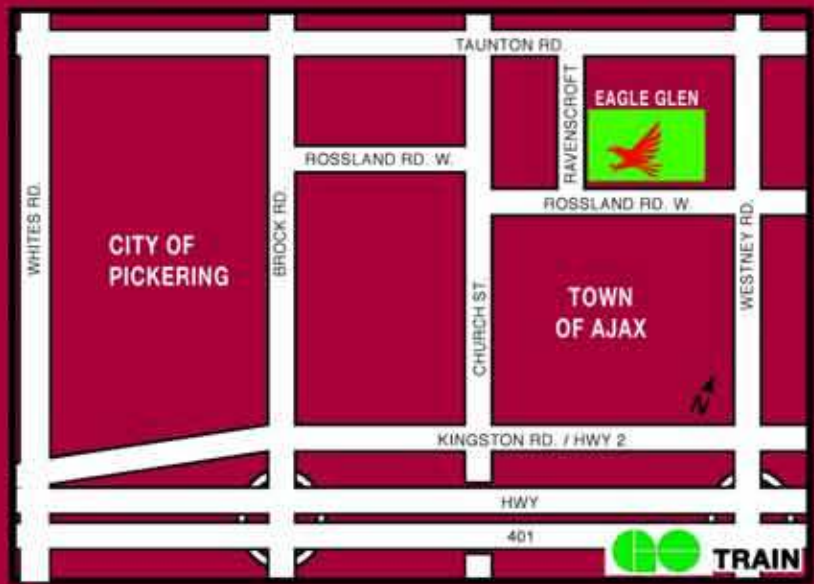
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MONSOON FEATURE

Time to learn, grow and play

Starting in September 2010, the government will begin phasing in full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. In the first year, nearly 600 schools will offer full-day learning for up to 35,000 students five days a week.

A complete list of the selected schools for 2010-11 is available at ontario.ca/earlylearning

Full-day learning will be expanded each year, and the goal is to have it available in every school by 2015-16.

Here's what you can expect.

Enriched learning during the school day

Teachers and early childhood educators will work together in the classroom to help young students learn and grow. This team approach will bring out the best in your child through activities and play, guided by a new full-day learning program.

Before- and after-school programs

During the school year, schools will offer an integrated before- and after-school program led by early childhood educators. The program will be optional and available for a reasonable fee. Subsidies will be available for some families, based on financial need.

Where there is enough demand from parents and the board has the capacity, some school boards may extend these programs to other times of the year, including summertime and March break. They may also make them available to children from six to 12 years old.

Stronger start on learning

Research shows that early learning has long-term benefits for your child's academic and social skills. A full day of learning early in life can help improve your child's reading, writing and math skills later on. It also makes the transition to Grade 1 easier – for you and your child.

How schools were selected for September 2010

School boards worked with other local boards and municipalities to recommend schools that would be ready to offer full-day learning in September 2010. For example, the selected schools had to have space available already and consideration was given to what kind of child care programs best served the com-

munities.

Good for kids, good for parents, good for Ontario

Full-day learning across the province is an investment in our future. It's part of the government's plan to give our kids the tools they need to succeed and help us build a stronger Ontario.

Learn more, For more information, please visit ontario.ca/earlylearning or

call: toll-free in Ontario, 1-800-387-5514 or from Toronto and from outside Ontario, (416) 325-2929 or TDD/TTY: 1-800-263-2892

Scott Harrison's Biography

Scott Harrison serves as Trustee for Ward 19 -Scarborough Centre, for the Toronto District School Board. Scott works with trustees from Toronto's other 21 Wards in governance of Toronto's public school system.



Scott was elected as the Ward 19 trustee in November 2000. During his first year, he became a member of the Board's Human Resources and Staff Development Committee, now known as the Human Resources and Labour Relations Committee. He was also a member of the Pool Working Committee, Negotiation Steering Committee, Audit Committee, Director Search Steering Committee, and the TDSB-Toronto City Council Liaison Committee. In addition to these responsibilities he has also participated in several work groups.

During his second term (2001-02), Scott became Vice-Chair of both the Business and Facilities and Property Management Committees. In December 2005, Scott assumed the role of Chair, of the TDSB Operations and Facilities Management Committee.

Scott was born and raised in Scarborough. His late father Brian Harrison was a former Metro Councillor for Scarborough Centre. Scott's children started their education in the public school system in Scarborough, and continue to be educated in the public school system. They



are now in high school. Scott himself spent his entire education years in Ward 19 schools. He attended North Bendale Junior Public School, J.S. Woodsworth Senior Public School and went on to graduate from Woburn Collegiate Institute.

Scott spent approximately 10 years with the Toronto Police Service prior to becoming a Scarborough Fire Fighter.


The TDSB was created on January 1, 1998 following the amalgamation of six individual Boards of Education. It is the

largest and most diverse school board in Canada and the fourth largest in North America. It serves more than 270,000 students in 560 schools and oversees a budget of approximately \$2 billion dollars.

Jill Worthy's Biography

Jill Worthy has provided exemplary leadership in public education throughout her career. She has done extensive work in the area of the Early Years. Jill developed and implemented the first Toronto District School Board

Early Years Policy along with procedures to support it. These procedures included the expansion of child care and parenting programs in schools. She has also supported and implemented programs focused on early intervention through integration of services for children aged 0 to 6. This work included the Toronto First Duty program which provided a unique full-day, early-learning model as well as forming a foundation for the Best Start initiative. Jill is a sought-after presenter who has made numerous presentations at the local, provincial and national levels. Other areas of influence and expertise have included establishing programs to increase equity of opportunity both for students and teachers. Jill has also demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting leadership growth and development in public education as well as numerous projects related to environmental sustainability.



ALL DAY KINDERGARTEN SEMINAR

MAY 29TH, 2010

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**Join Trustee Scott Harrison, Ward 19
and a Special guest speaker from the
Ministry of Education: Jill Worthy**

**Discuss the impact of the All Day Learning Program
and how it affects you and the community.**

**Location:
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10:00 – 2:00 p.m.**

**A light lunch will be provided from the students
at Bendale BTI food program**

**Schools in Scarborough Centre that will have All Day
Kindergarten program starting September 2010:**
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CHURCHILL HEIGHTS, 749 BRIMORTON DR.
ELLESMERE-STATTON, 739 ELLESMERE RD
GLEN RAVINE JR, 11 GADSBY DR.
NORTH BENDALE JR, 29 AVELINE CRES
WEXFORD PS, 1050 PHARMACY AVE.



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Monsoon Journal

Baila beat of Nithi Kanagaratnam



BAILA BASICS

- Baila music is Sri Lanka's signature sound. In truth, it was born of an international music collaboration that took place in an atmosphere of informality many centuries ago.
- It is traced down to 'kaffir', a mixed community influenced by the Portuguese, African and Sinhalese ethos; the buoyant dance music of this community was known as 'kaffirhina'.
- While it existed in the island for many centuries, kaffirhina gained prominence only in the mid-Twentieth century. After a large number of Sinhalese songs was set to racy kaffirhina, a new name was coined for the genre —Baila, which drawn from the Portuguese verb for dancing.

'Chinna Mamiye' and "kallu kadai pakkam pokathe": These Tamil pop songs bring so many memories to many, and still has its place among Tamils all around the world, particularly of those from Sri Lanka.

Recently Prince Frederick featured Nithi Kanagaratnam in the columns of Indian daily The Hindu, as follows, introducing the pioneer Tamil Pop Music Artist to a wider audience:

Remember 'Chinna Maamiye' — that hugely popular song among generations of college students in Tamil Nadu? But, not many Tamil music listeners have heard of Nithi Kanagaratnam, who composed and sang it. Tamil Baila music is his forte, however, Nithi has not received recognition in proportion to his talent. Not surprising, since his contributions to Tamil music came mostly while he was living in Sri Lanka and Australia, and at a time when he was balancing music and academics.

Nithi composed 'Chinna Maamiye' in the mid-1960s,

and put it to the test during a cricket match in Jaffna. As this Tamil song set to racy Baila music was greeted with enthusiasm, Nithi felt encouraged to concentrate on the genre. Nithi started off with English bands in Colombo as a singer who could also play the drums and the guitar. He specialised in singing cover versions of Tom Jones and Engelbert Humperdinck. Following 'Chinna Maamiye's resounding success in Tamil Nadu as well as in Sri Lanka, Nithi began to focus on Tamil pop.

While studying agriculture at Allahabad University in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he composed music prodigiously. "I put together six solo albums," says Nithi. Colleges in Tamil Nadu were a testing field for his songs, but he did not totally ignore the North. He displayed his music skillsat singing competitions up North, and won several trophies.

Music took a backseat after Nithi finished his Masters in Plant Pathology, and immersed himself in research work. Responsible

'Chinna Mamiye' and "kallu kadai pakkam pokathe": These Tamil pop songs bring so many memories to many, and still has its place among Tamils all around the world

and prestigious positions such as the Head of the Department of Agriculture at the Eastern University of Sri Lanka meant Nithi had to constantly squeeze out time for music. As he believed social reformation could be effected through music, Nithi wrote, composed, arranged and sang songs despite a hectic academic career.

Nithi discovered that

the peppy Baila was a reliable vehicle to reach social messages to people. Nithi's song 'Kallukada Pakkam Pogatha' is a Baila classic against alcoholism. "M.G. Ramachandran, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, used this song in the campaign against alcohol consumption," recalls Nithi.

In the 1980s, Nithi migrated to Australia, and at present, teaches pharmaceuticals at Victoria University. He continues to compose songs in English and Tamil, and translate from Sinhalese to Tamil. He is credited with writing the Tamil version of the Australian national anthem. His Tamil Baila songs have been broadcast on Music Deli, a programme on Australian national radio, on Songs In Language (BBC) and Songs Of The World (Voice of America).

Sixty-five-year old, Nithi now devotes much of his leisure to an etymological and philological research of the Tamil language and to visit Chennai. During a recent visit, he spent most of his time expounding Tamil Baila at various forums.

Sridevi's painting to be auctioned at Christie's



A painting made by yesteryear actress Sridevi would be sold at Christie's, one of the world's biggest auction houses, for charity.

The proceeds for the work of art entitled 'Thoughts' would benefit Christie's 'Green Auction: A Bid to Save the Earth', which also has support from global personalities like Bill Clinton and Oprah Winfrey.

The auction for her painting, due on May 6, will open at 25,000 USD and is expected to fetch anything in between 40,000 USD to 50,000 USD, Sridevi's husband Boney Kapoor said.

"She has been into painting since her very early days. Whenever she finds time she paints. She has made many paintings since the last few years and some of them have been gifted to her sister, and even our family friend Salman Khan," Kapoor told reporters.

The family also plans to hold an exhibition of her paintings in the city within the next few months.

"Its her passion and an exhibition will give her a good platform. We will select 25-30 paintings for an exhibition very soon," he said.

After establishing herself as one of the leading actresses of her time, Sridevi left the industry in 1997 to raise her children and spend time with her husband and successful film producer Boney Kapoor.

[PTI]

'Raavan' is the most challenging role of my career

AISHWARYA



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan during the shooting of the movie 'Raavan' in North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. File photo: PTI

She has played a mystic, a con woman and a demure Bengali beauty in the past but Aishwarya Rai Bachchan who plays a modern day Sita in 'Raavan', says that it is the most challenging role of her career.

The 36-year-old actress stars opposite her husband Abhishek Bachchan in 'Raavan', director Mani Ratnam's upcoming film.

"This is the most challenging role of my career. What is unique about Mani is that he draws you in his world through the narration. Ragini is a unique woman and a strong character which I personally can relate to," said Aishwarya.

Draped in a cream colour saree with red embroidery, the actress was the host to introduce the film at its music launch here on Saturday which also saw spirited performances by Abhishek Bachchan and A. R. Rahman among others.

The former beauty queen admitted that as Mani narrated the film to her, she was hooked on to play the role which she says is not that of a typical heroine.

"We shot with snakes, rabbits, leeches moving around us. This has been the best adventure experience," Aishwarya said.

Recalling her experiences working on the film, Aishwarya said Mani Ratnam had given her a fair idea of his 'Raavan' concept while shooting for 'Guru' three years ago.

"For the song Nanna re, I was dancing in full abandon in the rain. Little did I know that Mani was in the process of making a decision, that I will be his new character Ragini for Raavan," she said.

Talking about shooting in two different languages back to back, Aishwarya said that dealing with languages is a challenging task and keeps one's faculties charged up. [PTI]

ACTRESS RAMBHA TIES KNOT AT TIRUMALA



Popular south Indian film actress Rambha today entered into wedlock with a Canada-based businessman in nearby Tirumala temple.

Rambha (33), who has acted in over 100 films in Telugu, Tamil, Kanada and Hindi, tied the knot with Indra Kumar at a private marriage hall.

The couple offered prayers at the hill shrine. Rambha had offered worship at the temple last evening also.

They got engaged in January in Chennai, they said. Immediately after the worship the newly wed couple and their family members left for Chennai. [PTI]



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Education chaos in Pakistan's northern conflict zone

Schools across the conflict-zone in Pakistan's northern areas are open, but many are damaged, and there are concerns about the quality of education and funding for schools for displaced children in camps.

In Swat District, where Taliban militants destroyed 356 schools according to government officials, pupils are back in class.

“**THE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BEEN BADLY DAMAGED. RECORDS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED AND MANY BUILDINGS ARE IN RUINS**”

“My son's school was badly damaged in 2009 by fire. Now the children sit outdoors, or on the floors of gutted classrooms that lack walls or roofs,” Imdad Hassan, 40, told IRIN from the town of Kabal in Swat.

He said many schools operated in similar

fashion after they were re-opened last year. The situation is also chaotic in the Bajaur tribal area, where schools re-opened in March.

“The school infrastructure has been badly damaged. Records have been destroyed and many buildings are in ruins,” said Ibrash Pasha, who works in Dir District in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) with the local Khwendo Kor NGO which sets up schools for girls. He said parents were eager to educate children but were hampered by the slow effort to restore buildings.

“The sight of the bombed-out school buildings scares my daughters. They don't

“**THERE IS ALSO A RISK THAT 19,000 DISPLACED CHILDREN MAY BE AFFECTED BY A LACK OF MONEY TO RUN SCHOOLS AT CAMPS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)**”



Many schools have been damaged and need to be restored – pic: Ibrash Pasha/IRIN



like to go there. In private schools such as the one they attend, some of the teachers have not returned either, preferring to stay away from Swat or give up work,” Dilbar Bibi, the mother of three school-going daughters, told IRIN.

“**OF THE 1.3 MILLION PEOPLE STILL DISPLACED BY CONFLICT IN NWFP AND TRIBAL AREAS, 60 PERCENT ARE ESTIMATED BY UNICEF TO BE CHILDREN**”

“Frankly there is chaos. Schools have no funding and massive work is needed to restore buildings. Even furniture not destroyed by militants has been vandalized,” an education official who asked not to be named told IRIN. He said “huge amounts of money” were needed to restore the education sector.

There is also a risk that 19,000 displaced children may be affected by a lack of money to run schools at camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Fawad Ali Shah, education officer (Emer-

gency) for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Islamabad, told IRIN that while education needs in camps, host communities and areas of return were being responded to, “projects in the PHRP (Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan) 2010, for interventions in camps have received very limited funding.”

“This means some very critical educational activities in IDP camps as well as in host communities have been affected. The situation is getting even more critical in view of the ever-rising numbers of IDPs coming in to Kohat, Hangu and other southern districts [of NWFP]. It is likely UNICEF may have to scale down operations if funding for this project does not materialize soon,” Shah said.

UNICEF said in a 16 April statement in Geneva it had received only 6 percent of the US\$1.4 million it had requested for educating children in camps. This could result in a closure of schools by the end of April.

Pirkko Heinonen, UNICEF's acting deputy representative for Pakistan, said: “At present we only have funding to support primary schools in one camp, Jalozi, benefiting 5,000 children, till the end of the year.”

Of the 1.3 million people still displaced by conflict in NWFP and tribal areas, 60 percent are estimated by UNICEF to be children.

Government forces have been engaged in intermittent fighting with Taliban militants in parts of northern Pakistan since 2004.

OXASIANS: Celebrated Oxford graduates brought to life

The little known sides of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Indira Gandhi and eight other famous alumnus of Oxford University from Asia was brought to light in a unique exhibition at their alma mater from 24 April – 29 April.

The exhibition focused on 10 Oxford graduates from south Asia, including Manmohan Singh, who has a D.Phil from the ancient university.

The exhibition focused on 10 Oxford graduates from south Asia, including Manmohan Singh, who has a D.Phil from the ancient university.

The exhibition, titled Oxasians, shows the lives of ten individuals who came to Oxford to study between 1889 and 2009.

The unusual and unknown sides of the 10 individuals were brought to life through a combination of dramatisations by actors with life-size hologram style projections and exclusive film interviews alongside archival material.

Besides Singh and Gandhi, the unknown sides of Cornelia Sorabji, the first woman to study law at Oxford and the first female Indian barrister, father-son cricketer duo Ifthikar Ali Khan Pataudi and Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi and former Pakistani Premier Benazir Bhutto were brought to life.

Oxford's south Asian community has long been an important part of the uni-

versity's diverse student body, and the ten individuals featured in the exhibit span 120 years of this history.

Indian students are today the sixth-largest national population at Oxford. The university currently has around 450 South Asian students, along with more than 1,100 alumni and six alumni branches in India alone.

The Oxasians exhibit also looked

to the future by featuring British Indian Rajeeb Dey, a 2009 graduate and former president of Oxford Entrepreneurs. In 2005 Dey founded Enternships.com, a venture providing 'entrepreneurial internships' to students.

Oxford's South Asian history traces back around 400 years: The first recorded Englishman to arrive in India was from Oxford (Father Thomas Stephens from New College, in 1579).

His letters lay the foundation of Anglo-Indian literature. The University's relationship with South Asia remains stronger than ever in the 21st century.

In 2008, the University of Oxford launched the one-year MSc in Contemporary India, the first of its kind in the world.

It also offers master's degrees in Contemporary South Asian Studies, Tibetan and Himalayan Studies, and Classical Indian Religions, among others.



Cornelia Sorabji
courtesy of Oxford University

Fifth Annual Tamil Studies Conference

The Universities of Toronto and Windsor, in conjunction with the Munk School of Global Affairs

May 13-15
Trinity College
University of Toronto



Constructing Tamil Worlds: Circulation, Plurality and Marginality

Plenary Speakers:
Raj Gauthaman (Head, Dept. of Tamil, Kanchi Mamunivar Centre of Post Graduate Studies, Pondicherry)

Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Navin and Pratima Doshi Chair of Indian History, University of California Los Angeles)

Over 50 presenting academics, artists, and activists from South Asian Visual Arts Centre, University College London, Columbia University, Lynn University (Florida), University of Michigan, Pondicherry Centre for Post Graduate Studies (Tamil Nadu), National University of Singapore, University of Mysore (Karnataka), Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi), UC Berkeley, Johns Hopkins University, University of British Columbia University, Princeton University, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), University of Madras (Chennai), University of Westminster, McGill University, and UC Los Angeles.

www.tamilstudiesconference.ca

Projects and Biographies: Special panel on "Envisioning a Sri Lankan Constitution"

This panel explores the political and constitutional situation in Sri Lanka after the war's end, featuring Rohan Edirisinha presenting on "Post Elections Prospects for a Political Solution in Sri Lanka." Rohan Edirisinha teaches at the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. He is also a founder, Director and Head of the Legal Division, Centre for Policy Alternatives, an independ-

ent public policy institute engaged in research and advocacy on conflict resolution, constitutional and law reform, human rights and governance related issues.

He was an unofficial advisor to the Chief Government negotiator, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, during the peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in 2003/4 and attended the last 3 rounds of talks during that period. The panel also features Sornarajah and Vasuki Nesiya who presents "Back to the Future: Federalism and the Promised Land." Nesiya is Senior Associate at the International Center for Transitional Justice at Columbia University. She heads the Center's work in a range of countries, including India, South Africa and Ghana and its Gender Program.

Mobilizing Diaspora: Tamil Activisms at War's End – Kitana Ananda

Displaced and dispersed by over thirty years of war and political violence, Sri Lankan Tamils have not forgotten their former and imagined homes in the process of remaking their lives across the globe. On the contrary, while exiled activists have been instrumental in the production and dissemination of competing narratives about the war from its very beginnings, new generations born and/or raised outside the island have emerged to redouble their efforts.

As a 2002 ceasefire disintegrated into total war, these activists mobilized thousands of diasporic Tamils to non-stop public protest in metropolitan cities around the world. Through an ethnographic study of diasporic activists, Ananda discusses how and why Tamils in Canada and India protested the war in Sri Lanka, soliciting their states, fel-



low citizens and other Tamils to "take immediate action" on behalf of a suffering people. She explores how experiences of displacement, migration, and resettlement constitute Tamil diaspora as a set of contentious political practices on the margins of modern liberal states. Kitana Ananda is pursuing her PhD in socio-cultural anthropology at Columbia University. She is currently writing her dissertation, "Politics After a Ceasefire: Becoming Tamil Subjects in Diaspora."

The Sinhala "Voice:" Ethnic Conflict and the Configuration of Difference in Sri Lanka – Christina Davis

This paper contributes to an understanding of how ethnic difference is interactionally configured, as well as to the study of everyday violence in Sri Lanka. Drawing on ethnographic research in Kandy, Sri Lanka, Davis explores how speakers in social interactions employ the voices of others to construct ethnic difference. She considers how the speakers draw on multiple resources such as codeswitching, shifts in volume and pitch, reported speech, and poetic parallelism to sharpen the distinction between the "voice" of the person reporting, and the speech that is being reported, thus creating a saturation of difference.

She argues that emergent with the employment of these "voices" is a moral stance, where speakers, through language, distinguish the "voices" of others

from their own. Christina Davis is a PhD candidate in linguistic anthropology at the University of Michigan.

Confessions of a Sri Lankan Customs and Immigration officer: Reflections on Race and Space at a major Canadian airport – Sangeetha Navaratnam

This paper uses Critical Race Theory and Spatial Theory to examine how issues of belonging, power and privilege are manifested in the day-to-day practices of boarder crossings. Using personal examples and an auto ethnographical approach, Navaratnam reflects on her experiences as a Sri Lankan Tamil Boarder Services Officer at a large Canadian airport. She uses her experiences as a Sri Lankan Tamil woman to better understand the ways in which race and space intersect at a major international airport.

She is informed by her experiences, and those lived experiences also inform her social reality. At the border, it is not only the passengers, who are classed, raced or gendered, but the officers as well. In this paper she examines the ways in which the space she occupied in the airport can offer insight into the ways in which these collisions occur and how they are experienced from a Sri Lankan Tamil perspective. Sangeetha Navaratnam is a M.Ed. Candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto enrolled in a collaborative program in South

Asian Studies. She is also an elementary school teacher who has a specialization in urban education.

Negotiating Marginality: Transgender Communities in Tamil Nadu – Elaine Craddock

Male-to-female transgender people in Tamil Nadu are most commonly called "aravanis." Aravanis have historically been economically, socially, and culturally marginalized; they have difficulty finding jobs that will support them outside of sex work and begging for alms.

Yet unlike in many parts of India where hijras are regularly invited to bless new babies or attend weddings, in Tamil Nadu aravanis do not perform any socially pervasive roles, reinforcing their marginality. Aravanis construct and maintain their own dynamic kinship and social network, have their own language, and come together regularly for life cycle events and celebrations. Within the last couple of years the Tamil Nadu government has become the first state in India to officially recognize a third gender, to pay for gender reassignment surgery, renamed "tiranangai," or auspicious women.

These moves acknowledge and support a marginalized community that falls outside of normative gender and social roles, but also attempt to bring this transgressive community from the margins into the center by constructing the individuals as women. Elaine Craddock is currently a professor in the Department of Religion and Philosophy and Chair of the Feminist Studies Program at Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX, USA.

Some of the pictures from 2009 Conference are shown below.



India's Automotive Ambassador Refuses to Yield the Road

By Steve Herman

Much of the recent attention paid to India's automotive sector has been on ultra-affordable cars, such as the \$2,500 Tata Nano, or the latest expansion of joint ventures with foreign manufacturers. But there is one indigenous car, on India's roads since the late 1950s and still in production, which refuses to completely yield to the sleeker competition. It is the Ambassador, manufactured since 1958 by Hindustan Motors.

The Ambassador once monopolized In-

“THE AMBASSADOR ONCE MONOPOLIZED INDIA'S ROADS AND, FOR DECADES, WAS THE SPEEDIEST CAR IN THE COUNTRY. NOWADAYS, NO MORE THAN 10,000 ARE SOLD ANNUALLY, NEARLY ALL TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND CAB COMPANIES WHICH, IN TOTAL, ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 0.5 PERCENT OF DOMESTIC MARKET SHARE”

dia's roads and, for decades, was the speediest car in the country. Nowadays, no more than 10,000 are sold annually, nearly all to government agencies and cab companies which, in total, accounts for about 0.5 percent of domestic market share.

That is a huge fall from the early 1990s when the Ambassador held a 70 percent share.

The Ambassador has changed little during its half-century plus production run, still retaining the boxy shape of a 1948 Morris Oxford sedan. There is ample interior space to allow passengers to stretch their legs and enough headroom for tall, turbaned drivers. The Ambassador has a solid pig iron steel body, high ground clearance and big,



A 2000cc diesel Ambassador at the Ashok Motors showroom, Wazirabad

rounded windows. It is easily bullet-proofed, making it a favorite among security services tasked with protecting VIPs.

The Ambassador's unique leaf-spring rear suspension allows it to bounce gracefully over the inevitable bumps and potholes on Indian roads. It is a package appealing to 15-year veteran taxi driver Baljinder Singh Bagga, who says the maintenance on an Ambassador is also cheaper than other cars.

"It's a very comfortable car. It's very safe," he says while parked at his cab stand adjacent to a hotel in New Delhi.

Beyond comfort and safety, the Ambassador has become a symbol of Indian pride. Hindustan Motors' chief general manager for sales and marketing, Rattan Singh, explains, "If someone comes over here in India, he can't go without seeing the Taj Mahal at Agra. When the foreign tourist comes over here he can't go away without sitting in and driving the Ambassador car. That's the pride."

Fashion designer Alecca Carrano, born in Lebanon and raised in Austria, is one of those foreigners who moved to India and fell in love with the local legend. She says most Indians think she's crazy for owning an old Ambassador.

"They really don't understand it because,

“FASHION DESIGNER ALECCA CARRANO, BORN IN LEBANON AND RAISED IN AUSTRIA, IS ONE OF THOSE FOREIGNERS WHO MOVED TO INDIA AND FELL IN LOVE WITH THE LOCAL LEGEND. SHE SAYS MOST INDIANS THINK SHE'S CRAZY FOR OWNING AN OLD AMBASSADOR”

of course, to them, it's such an old, crap piece. [Indians think] it should be thrown in the dumps and only new cars should be allowed on the road," says Carrano with a laugh as she sits in the driver's seat of her red Ambassador of uncertain age.

Some auto critics share such sentiments, calling the rust-prone Ambassador archaic with vague steering, sluggish transmission and weak brakes, worth little more than scrap metal on the used car market.

Golf writer Meraj Shah, another rare private owner of a late model Ambassador, cau-

tions prospective buyers to look elsewhere if they're seeking the fuel efficiency or reliability of Japanese or Korean engineering.

"I used to work on an Enfield, that's the motorcycle I have, and it's very similar to an Ambassador: a lot of oil leaks, a lot of bad engineering and a loosely constructed engine. So I'm kind of used to getting my hands dirty," says Shah as he brought his silver Ambassador in for a tune-up at the Safdarjang garage in New Delhi.

Under the hood of the newer petrol-powered models is a 1.8-liter engine designed by Japanese carmaker Isuzu. Taxi fleets prefer the more fuel-efficient models powered by a compressed natural gas kit that fits in the trunk.

Sher Singh, a mechanic at the garage, who has been working on Ambassadors for more than a decade, says using just his "hands and feet" he can practically fix anything on the car.

"The older models used to have a lot of problems but the automaker listened to the complaints [from owners and mechanics] and the problems have been rectified. So it's a relatively trouble-free car nowadays," he says.

The mechanic's boss, Sharad Mehra, managing director of Safdarjang Motors (which sells and repairs Ambassadors) chimes in that the car "can be repaired at any place in the country" unlike pricier foreign imports which may not have extensive parts networks throughout India.

Mehra laments that the Ambassador is now seen as a vehicle primarily for government bureaucrats and taxi fleets causing it to lose appeal among private buyers. (In decades past it was also a favored form of transport for villains in Bollywood films, perhaps because the trunk is large enough to hold several corpses).

"It has that feeling of vintage," says Mehra. "It's like an old wine."

Mehra, who has two Ambassadors in his corporate fleet, acknowledges he drives to work in a Hyundai.

Despite occasional reports Hindustan Motors is planning to discontinue the car, affectionately known as the Amby, the automaker insists there are still enough orders from government buyers and taxi fleets to continue making it worthwhile. It says it plans to continue manufacturing Ambassadors for at least another 50 years. [VOA News]

INDIA INTEGRATING MORE WITH REST OF ASIA: IMF



Kalpana Kochhar
International Monetary Fund

“YOU HAVE A VERY RAPIDLY GROWING LARGE ECONOMY IN THE SOUTH ASIA REGION, AND THAT IS INDIA, AND INDIA IS NOW ALSO INTEGRATING MUCH MORE WITH THE REST OF ASIA”

India is now integrating more with the rest of Asia and will play a major role in the Asia's growth, top officials of the International Monetary Fund has said.

"You have a very rapidly growing large economy in the South Asia region, and that is India, and India is now also integrating much more with the rest of Asia,"

Kalpana Kochhar, IMF Deputy Director of the Asia Pacific Department told reporters on April 24th.

"For example, trade between China and India is growing rapidly. Of course, it is mostly imports from China-but it has grown very rapidly in recent years. So prospects for integration both in the South Asia region amongst themselves and with the rest of Asia I think have greatly improved and will continue to do so," she said. [PTI]

Indian Government Vows to Press Ahead with Government Offensive

By Anjana Pasricha

The Indian government has vowed to press on with an offensive against Maoist rebels, after the guerrillas mounted their biggest attack on security forces in early April. The Maoist rebels are considered as the biggest internal security threat to India.

Home Minister P. Chidambaram told parliament Monday that the government is determined to quell the Maoist rebellion in two to three years.

"A determined, organized armed liberation struggle cannot be allowed in this country. It strikes at the very root of democracy," Chidambaram said. "It strikes at the very root of our concept of nation, therefore it has to be squarely and fearlessly met."

His statement came nearly two weeks after Maoist rebels killed 76 paramilitary troops

returning from a patrol in the dense jungles of Chattisgarh state. The bold attack raised questions about the effectiveness of a big government offensive mounted last year against the rebels in several eastern and central states.

Critics, including human rights groups, have also questioned whether a security operation would be effective in tackling the guerrillas, without tackling the lack of development in areas where they have gained influence.

They point out that there is virtually no government presence in these areas, which are among India's poorest.

Home Minister Chidambaram says the government will pay more attention to the development needs of areas where the Maoists - also known as Naxals - are active, so that it can win the confidence of local people.

"At the same time, we must show greater compassion, greater concern for the poor,



Colleagues watch the cremation of Ranjit Yadav, one of the Indian government soldiers killed in Tuesday's rebel attack, at Dalitpur village, in Pratagarh district, Uttar Pradesh state, India, 8 Apr 2010

greater dedication in taking development to the places where the Naxals seem to have some dominance," added Chidambaram.

The government says the rebels are deliberately targeting infrastructure to prevent development in many of these areas and have destroyed scores of school buildings, telephone towers and exchanges and power houses. Since 2008 the rebels have killed more than 400 people whom they describe as "police informers."

The government has said thousands of additional paramilitary forces will join the anti-Maoist operation. It has won wide support from opposition parties, which say that the rebellion must be crushed.

The rebels have spread their influence in 20 of India's 28 states and are considered a growing threat in a country battling several other insurgencies. [VOA News]

Google Launches Tool That Reveals Government Requests

By Ira Mellman

Finding out which countries are trying to censor what their citizens can find on the Internet is now as easy as surfing to a website.

Google Vice President Nicole Wong said that the new tool shows requests Google has received from governments around the world to remove content from the company's search results. Wong said the company has created a map that can toggle back and forth between two views. One view shows the number of government requests Google has received to remove content from its services; the second shows the number of requests for user information in the various countries.

Google says the top five countries requesting removals are Brazil, Germany, India, the United States and South Korea. When it comes to data requests the top country is Brazil, followed closely by the United States, the United Kingdom, India and France.

China is not listed among the countries on the Google list. Wong says on the site's

map of China, there is actually a notice that Chinese officials consider censorship demands to be state secrets, so Google cannot legally disclose that information at this time.

In fact, Google removed its China search this January in the face of mounting censorship in the country.

Wong said the type of material countries want removed varies from country to country. For instance, German laws deem Nazi propaganda and Holocaust denial material illegal, so requests from Germany often involve that kind of material.

"What I'm hoping is that a lot of academics, researchers, policymakers around the world look at this data and are able to start a conversation," she said. "I think that the internet is a global platform, it's something that we all need to focus on in terms of how do we continue to have a free flow of information around the world while respecting the laws of local jurisdictions. And that's a very complex conversation." [VOA News]

GO AND WIN CANADA-G20

Samy Appadurai

It was a very lovely and pleasant evening at the Valentine's Day dinner party. It was organized by my friends in honor of my media services and held at a beautiful restaurant called Chucky Tomatoes around the corner of Woodbine and Steeles Avenue just north of the city of Toronto. Around twenty of us were in one of the party rooms that was located beside the colorfully displayed variety of foods, the sight of which would not allow you to stop the flowing of saliva from your mouth and your eyes from growing larger from the spectacle. We were inside the waiting area for a while until at least half of our guests arrived so we could be seated at our reserved area. I noticed that the restaurant was fully packed with not only youngsters, but guests from all ages and social backgrounds filled all the available seats. While waiting, most of the guests were keenly watching the Winter Olympic Games on a 42 inch wide television. I noticed that there was a remark passed by a gentleman about the negative comments made by some of the British and American media on the winter Olympics 2010 held on our soil. In fact, I had already condemned the negative attitudes held by the foreign media on my television show and in news commentaries on Tamil One Television. I could not contain myself and joined these gentlemen with whom I never had any contact before in their happiness and our patriotic feelings of Canada brought us together as though we were members of the same family. We shared our opinions very objectively. A few days later on the 18th February 2010, I had gone through an article entitled "Shut Up and Enjoy the Games" along with the accompanying editorial in the Toronto Star. I was very pleased and happy about it. It is our moral obligation at a time when the unique country and legacy that our forefathers left behind for us to be patriotic and supportive even when the emphasis in the international media stage is negative. We should not allow foreign media to spoil this beautiful country with their words.

However, I do not disagree with some of the comments. Indeed there are areas where we could have done a little better than what it was. But due to the circumstances we were in, the nature of the winter Olympics and some other factors might have contributed to the arrangements. Some of the comments made by the foreign media were that Canada could have done much

better in terms of organization compared to the previous 2 Olympic Games in Montreal in 1986 and Calgary in 1988. But I do not see any justifiable reason to compare apart from expressing personal opinions.

Let us take a closer look at some of the opinions presented by those media outlets:

1. The Games were not well organized and the opening ceremony was not done very well.

2. The accidental death of the Luger from Georgia could have been avoided and that wrong steps were taken in the aftermath.

3. The inadequate arrangements made for training the foreign athletes

4. Our home work was not done on the publicity front, and as a result we had only a few thousand instead of one hundred thousand views.

5. Overall it was the worst Olympics that we have ever had.

6. The complaint was made by some Quebecers that the French language was not given due place in the opening ceremony.

7. Some First Nations leaders took this as another opportunity to express their long standing grievances by saying that the Winter Olympics was going to take place on stolen land.

I do not want to go into each and every complaint but I wish to call your attention to what the International Olympic Committee who is in charge of the planning, operating and overseeing the entire program said about the Games. In their humble opinion, the 2010 Olympics were well organized and that there was nothing much to worry about. However, we must all take into consideration that the cooperation we got from nature was not very helpful and we expected more snow, not rain. That being said however, the weather is still one thing that is beyond our control. I would like to go behind the presentation of these comments and flesh out some of the hidden motives behind them. The Canadian security and border officials denied entry visas for two critical reporters from United States of America. These incidents might have contributed to the negative comments as well as promoting the idea that criticizing the Games was not allowed. This idea is false because in some Canadian newspapers, there were many pieces critical of the games that were published. As far as the Canadian public is concerned, the winter Olympic games are primarily a sporting event, not an event that has a hidden agenda in terms of exploiting a given issue.

Let us now examine the other



factors that may have prompted some of the world's critics to arrive at such unattractive comments about Canada. The recent report that the image of Canada in the international world scene has diminished compared to the past. The primary reason given is that Canada has not committed sufficient resources for protective measures pertaining to global warming and the human right violations by the Afghanistan government to the detainees who were handed over to them by the Canadian Armed Forces, and the recent independent moves on international issues where the USA has played a vital role is not very pleasing to other western nations, particularly the United States. For example, the Canadian Prime minister announced the decision unilaterally on the withdrawal of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan in mid 2011. This decision would not have pleased some on the world stage and in some cases it would have antagonized them.

The victories of the Olympics for Canada are many; the first of which I point out is that Canada won more gold medals (8 to be exact) than any other host country in the history of the winter Olympic games. Also, whenever there were some negative and inappropriate criticisms in some of the international media, strong patriotic feelings and sentiments aroused many Canadians and this is another victory for us. On the international level, the image of Canada has been well represented and painted with the right colors and Canada has been placed as a role model to most of the developed and potentially developing nations. Though it has not been part of the games, efforts that have been achieved by government and the strength of the Canadian economy have paved the way for a respectful and heavy presence in the upcoming G20 and G8 summit in Ontario Canada scheduled to take place in the summer. The security and other preparations have been going very well. This is a very beautiful time for Canada because

the two summits will be hosted within the same year, so this is our time to shine.

Canada has been in a recession but is now showing early signs of recovery. Our financial policies, the guidance of the government, the Bank of Canada and its institutions are and were in a very sound position, even at the initial stage of the recession when almost all of the developed nations were in a very shaky position, including our neighbor in the south. Compared to Europe and the United States, we have fared well.

The test of security passed with fine marks and could have achieved excellence, if not for some remote incidents that occurred during the Olympics in Vancouver. Though there are no guarantees at any Olympic Games that terrorists might not try to cause problems, still the efforts made are remarkable. In this case the Olympic organizers spent almost a billion dollars. Maybe such a huge amount of money is not required come this summer. Venue wise Toronto is more convenient but security wise it is more complex, due to the reason that it is populated with new immigrants who have migrated from over 170 nations, around the world. The penetration of negative forces in Canada has been watched and monitored by the mighty nations of the globe even before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States of America. It is not only a question of immigration and security of the lives of local Canadians; rather it is a global concern; Canadian foreign policy is liberal and impartial, not 90 degrees inclined with any super power. Even today we have not earned the enmity from any nation, race, religious group or ethnicity. However it is unavoidable to be allied with other nations and that may cause some discomfort and challenges for national security. For example, there was a time when supplying crude oil sand to the States made us a potential terrorist target.

At this critical time, other than



LETTERS & OPINIONS

a political party that has been backed by trade unions, the political forces in this country is more or less inclined in one direction. I do appreciate the politicians who, despite their differences in many local policies and their bitter fights in parliament and outside, give top most priority to national security and back up necessary actions to prevent any negativity that can arise. There is some criticism on the handing over of the detainees by the Canadian forces to the Afghanistan government that tortured them unduly and inhumanly and Canada should have conducted operations in a different manner. We should also acknowledge that Canada had not joined as a member nation in the American joint force in the war against terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan from the beginning of Mr. Chretien's, Mr. Paul Martin's or Mr. Harper's leadership. As a nation, we have always acted out of our accord. Canada has always condemned human rights violations in any part of the world, even at the cost of creating a situation where it may earn us some economic losses.

There are some global issues that may crop up at this time in the form of demonstrations or media coverage. Take for example global warming. At the Copenhagen summit all these nations proclaimed their commitments very seriously but in terms of actions they have done nothing tangible. Another issue is human rights. Many aspects regarding human rights violations such as our participation or not are bound to come up. Our support of poor developing countries, the side effects of the war in Afghanistan, these are bound to come up as well. There might also be some local issues mentioned but nothing serious that can be expected.

It is a golden opportunity for Canada to capitalize on these summits in multi dimensional ways. Canada has earned a very high reputation over the years of many sacrifices and its unique qualities and we have not over reacted or have been partially inclined with certain international states. This needs to be made clear to the current leaders around the world and we will reinforce their political and economic plans due to our solid reputation.

Canada has abundance in valuable minerals including the second largest crude oil deposit, uranium, gold, and diamonds and so on.

Contd. in Pg 40

TROOPS GUARD WATER PUMPS AS BANGLADESH'S

LARGEST CITY GRAPPLES WITH WATER SHORTAGE



Army personnel stand guard outside a water tank

Troops are guarding water pumps in parts of Dhaka as a severe water shortage grips the capital, causing a rise in water-borne diseases, officials say.

The move follows angry protests earlier in April by residents over what many see as a deteriorating situation.

"The army will work in coordination with the water authority to properly manage water distribution in the city," Golam Mostafa, chairman of the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (DWASA), told IRIN.

Since the end of March, Bangladesh's largest city has been grappling with an acute water shortage.

Water shortages are an annual occurrence during the peak of the dry season in April and May, but have proven particularly bad this year.

Regular power shortages due to years of under-investment in electricity infrastructure have made it impossible for the authorities to pump what is needed. At the same time, groundwater levels have dropped due to lack of rain and unusually high temperatures.

As a consequence, the city has witnessed a recent spike in water-borne diseases, health experts say.

Since 1 April, the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) has admitted 900-1,000

“ DHAKA REQUIRES 2.2 BILLION LITRES OF WATER A DAY, BUT CAN ONLY PRODUCE 1.9 BILLION

patients a day, compared to a normal average of 250-300.

"Normally, from April to May, we have more patients compared to other times. But for the last two years, the increase started in March," Azharul Islam Khan, the head of the hospital's short stay unit, told IRIN.

About 87 percent of Dhaka residents receive piped water, mostly from deep tube wells, according to DWASA, with the rest dependent on surface water that is treated.

But ongoing power shortages have made it impossible to pump from lower depths what is needed, with an increasing number of residents complaining about the quality and smell of water coming out of their taps.

"For the last two months, we have been receiving dirty and bad smelling water," said Monir Hossain, a resident of Shantibagh sub-district. "Many people have fallen ill after drinking the dirty

“ THE ARMY WILL WORK IN COORDINATION WITH THE WATER AUTHORITY TO PROPERLY MANAGE WATER DISTRIBUTION IN THE CITY

water," the 25-year-old said.

Dhaka requires 2.2 billion litres of water a day, but can only produce 1.9 billion, according to the country's national Water Supply and Sewerage Authority.

The city has an official population of 12.8 million, but unofficial estimates put the figure at closer to 15 million.

DWASA has 545 water pumps throughout the city to pump ground water, but only 293 generators.

"We cannot utilize our full production capacity due to a lack of power and a fall in ground water levels this dry season. I hope the crisis will go when there is rain and there are no power outages," said DWASA chairman Mostafa.

Some believe the city is already far too dependent on ground water, and needs to change course.

"Dependency on ground wa-

“ 2010 GLOBAL ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF SANITATION AND DRINKING WATER BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, MORE THAN 30 MILLION PEOPLE IN BANGLADESH STILL DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

ter is responsible for the crisis... WASA should increase the use of surface water," Shah Alam Khan, director of the Institute of Water and Flood Management, told IRIN.

"The use of ground water is also harmful to the environment," said Ainun Nishat, a senior adviser on climate change to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asia Pacific region.

According to some estimates, groundwater levels over the last decade have been declining by up to three metres a year. At the current rate of urbanization, experts feel things could worsen if proper steps are not taken now.

"When we face a water crisis every year in the dry session, we arrange crisis management steps.

“ REGULAR POWER SHORTAGES DUE TO YEARS OF UNDER-INVESTMENT IN ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE HAVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE AUTHORITIES TO PUMP WHAT IS NEEDED. AT THE SAME TIME, GROUNDWATER LEVELS HAVE DROPPED DUE TO LACK OF RAIN AND UNUSUALLY HIGH TEMPERATURES

But the government should go for a long term solution," said Nishat. "We have surface water. Why don't we use the surface water?" he asked.



Residents queue up for water

"We should look for the alternative source now. We can use rain water. Also, we can reuse the water we use in the house after treating it," Khan said.

According to the 2010 Global Annual Assessment of Sani-

tation and Drinking Water by the World Health Organization, more than 30 million people in Bangladesh still do not have access to safe drinking water.

WORDS OF PEACE

A Celebration of Life

"The nature of a human being is that we are always trying to find something," says Maharaji. "Trying to find comfort, trying to find joy. Searching for an undefined peace. Looking for freedom, looking for a friendship that feels real. Looking for stability in a world that is always changing.

"If you are looking, then look—but know what you are looking for. If you are searching, then search—but know what you are searching for."

For most of his life, Maharaji has been talking about a feeling in the heart that he says can satisfy that endless craving. It's the place, he says, where real peace and joy can be found. It's where human beings can discover who they really are.

"It's within you," he says. "What I say to people is, search. Search for it. If you don't find it, come to me. I can help."

While he doesn't charge money for his assistance, Maharaji does request that those who ask him for his help do so out of a real thirst to understand, not just idle curiosity. To explain what he means by thirst, he tells a simple story.

"When a traveler is starting out in a desert," Maharaji says, "you might ask him, 'Where are you going?'"

"He says, 'Oh, I want to go to that town to buy a few camels.'

"Assuming he has no water and he keeps walking in the desert, he will get thirstier and thirstier. If, after a few days, you ask him again, 'Where are you going,' what will the answer be? The destination has changed. What is the destination now?"

"I am going to find water. Do you have water?" That's all. Or if he's really, really thirsty, just, 'Water!'"

"That is thirst. This is what thirst does. It clarifies. It removes all ambiguity."

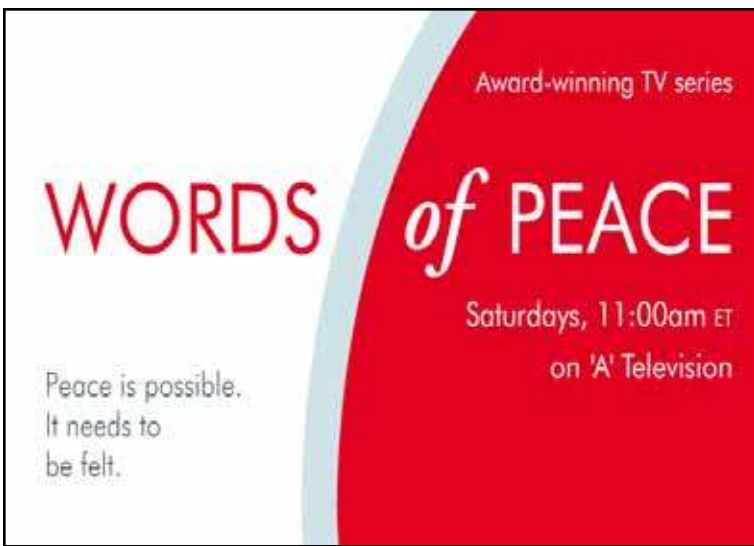
In the same way, Maharaji says, people know how important this life is, but until they understand what they know, they tend to ignore it. When we do under-



For someone who has understood what this life is all about, it's clear every single day. "Today, I'm going to live. I'm going to celebrate my existence. Yes, I will go get the milk, and yes, I will go to my office and do whatever I have to do, but none of that is going to stop me from celebrating today." That is the quintessential difference between clarity and ambiguity.

Q: I like what you say, but how do I know it's credible? Do you have something to back it up?

A: Consider for a moment what you know to be true—not from hearing, but from feeling. What do you know about your life? This is not an easy task,



stand, he says, something special happens in our lives.

"The day you begin to understand what you know," he says, "is the day you truly, truly begin to live. Not just survive, but live, celebrate—because living is a celebration of existence."

Maharaji often answers questions from those interested in his message.

Q: Is that really practical? How can we spend every day celebrating?

A: I'm not talking about parties. I'm talking about clarifying a need.

We wake up in the morning and we think, "Oh, I have so many things to do! I have to go shopping, I have to go to the office, I have to make these phone calls, I have to ..."

because trying to separate what you know from what you have heard is almost impossible.

There is a way to truly know. To know firsthand—not by hearing, not by hearsay, but to truly, truly know. This is how your life should be—and it is possible. Why is it possible? Because what I am talking about is already inside of you. If you decide not to investigate it, that will not change a thing. If you do decide to investigate it, then you will know. And in knowing, you will be able to live—to celebrate.

To learn more about Maharaji, visit:

www.wopg.org
www.tprf.org
For a free DVD call 1 877 707 3221

In the history of this humanity, many truly scintillating human beings have happened - they have shone brighter than the stars in the sky. Why, a few human beings are of this capability, and why so many other aimless millions of people, just come and go? I'm not trying to compare their lives against somebody else's and say this is useless, that is useful - not in those terms. But why is it that somebody seems to have come with enormous capability? Why is it that somebody else has to struggle with every little thing in their lives? People always say, 'he's gifted.' Nobody is gifted; there is really no gift about anything - everything you have to earn. Either you earn joyfully, or you earn miserably - that is all the choice.

There are different ways to

Grace and Devotion



Sadhguru Vasudev is a realized master, yogi and mystic, who has founded Isha Foundation, an international public service organization that strives for ultimate human well-being. For world-wide program information, visit www.ishafoundation.org Toronto local contact 1-866-424-ISHA (4742) or email Toronto@ishafoundation.org

earn this. There are a variety of sadhana through which one earns. But the simplest way, and the easiest way, and it is also the most self-destructive way, is devotion. What is Grace, first of all? If you look at yourself as a machine; you have brains, you have body, you have everything. But what you call as 'Grace' is the lubrication. Without the lubrication you have a great engine but you get stuck at every point. Any number of people like this are there on the planet - they are intelligent, they are capable, but at every corner in their life they get stuck, because there is no lubrication. Whatever is considered as 'Grace', seems to pervade some people's lives, and for somebody else, everything is a struggle.

To become receptive to this Grace, so that the process of life becomes graceful, the easiest way would be devotion. But, this is a very cunning mind; it cannot devote itself to anybody or anything. You can sing songs of devotion, but you have your own calculation. All that is okay, but what has God done for me? Calculating minds cannot be devout. Trying to be devout will be just a waste of time, and life. I hear any amount



of so-called devotional songs and music, and everything. This is too calculated; there is no devotion in it.

A devotee is not somebody's devotee; devotion is a quality. Devotion means a certain single-pointedness - you are constantly focused towards one thing. Once a person has become like this that his thought, emotion, and everything has become in one direction; now Grace will naturally happen to that person; he becomes receptive. What you are devoted to; whom you are devoted to is

not the issue. 'No, I want to be a devotee, but I have a doubt whether God exists or not.' These are all the predicaments of a thinking mind, you know. What you need to know is, God does not exist. But where there is a devotee, God exists.

So the power of devotion is such that it can create the Creator. The depth of what we refer to as devotion is such that it can - even if God is not existent - bring it into existence. Thinking minds always have an allergy to devotion, because devotees have made such fools of themselves. This is simply because, fear is passing off as devotion.

Extreme deviousness is passing off as devotion right now, with a large population. If one knows the joy of devotion; devotion is truly for the intelligent, not for the stupid because without devotion there is no profundity to your life. Nothing is worthwhile if you analyze it with your thought. The whole existence, you yourself, nobody in the world is worth anything if you just cut it down with the knife of your intellect. Only when devotion arises, depth comes into one's life. Devotion does not mean going to the temple and doing 'Ram, Ram.' Anybody who is one-pointed; anybody who can absolutely give himself to whatever he is doing is a natural devotee. He need not have a deity to become a devotee - he is a devotee. God will happen. It is not because there is God, devotion has come. Because there is devotion, God has happened.

Just knowing devotion as an emotional experience is one thing. Knowing devotion as an overpowering dimension of life is a different thing. Knowing devotion just as an emotion, maybe makes your life a little sweet; but devotion is not intended to make your life sweet; devotion is intended to completely demolish you the way you are. If you just become a little better - that is not the intention of the devotion; devotion means dissolution. The root word for 'devotion' is 'dissolve'. Only one who is willing to dissolve himself can be a true devotee. In what and how is not the point.

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Thank you All Mothers

By: Nekita D'souza

Every year, usually on the second Sunday of May, everyone around the country celebrates Mother's Day. This particular day has been set aside to honour and give the mothers around the world a day off and although there is no way we can ever really thank our mothers for all that they do, it's an opportunity for loved ones to show them how much they truly appreciate them and everything they do. On this day, mothers can sit back and relax, put their feet up and not worry about cooking or cleaning or doing any other chores around the house.

As this day approaches the stores are filled with paraphernalia for Mother's Day making it an extremely commercialized event. There are many different gifts you could give your mother on this day which includes:

If you're mother likes and enjoys gardening, a suitable gift would be a gardening basket which includes tools for her garden, and a gardening book.

Since mothers are always on the go and rarely have time to do things for themselves a beauty package with beauty products, or a gift certificate to the spa or salon would be an ideal gift for your mother.

Of course, flowers are always a wonderful gift for Mother's Day.

If you're not looking to spend that much money, because after all it is the thought that counts, a poem or a picture frame with a family picture in it would be a wonderful gift idea as well.

Breakfast in bed, or cooking lunch/dinner for your mother would be a great present

All these gifts would be great, and your mom would truly appreciate any one of these presents however when you ask your mom what she would like for mother's day she usually responds with, "Nothing." For those who don't believe in buying presents for their mothers on this day or feel that they deserve way more than a gift could express, the simplicity of taking that day off and spending it with your mother would mean so much more than a material present.



Mothers truly deserve this day off because they are our friends, our nurses, our strength, and our hope. Without them who knows where we would be today, or if we would be as successful as we are today. They have truly been the backbone of civilization and I don't believe that just one day is enough to show them how much we care about them and how thankful we are for everything they do. Mothers should be appreciated day after day. The gestures we do to show them that we care and appreciate them don't have to be grand, they can

be miniscule but we shouldn't ignore them most days and only show them how much we care once a year.

Whether we say, "I love you" everyday or "I really appreciate everything you do" they will be extremely happy to hear it. We can show them we care by helping out around the house more, spending more time with our mothers, and just taking the time out of our busy schedules to have a conversation with them or to make the effort to see them. On every occasion we get we should make our mothers feel the way

they do on Mother's Day. Thank-you to all the mothers out there, we truly appreciate everything you do and everything that you have helped us to become. You gave us life, and words cannot express how thankful we are for everything that you have given us and continue to give us.

I leave you with a poem about Mother's Day by Herbert Farnham:

God's Masterpiece Is Mother
by Herbert Farnham
God took the fragrance of a flower...

The majesty of a tree...
The gentleness of morning dew...

The calm of a quiet sea...
The beauty of the twilight hour...

The soul of a starry night...
The laughter of a rippling brook...

The grace of a bird in flight...
Then God fashioned from these things

A creation like no other,
And when his masterpiece was through

He called it simply - Mother.

Sold Out premiere for "9 dollars and 50 cents"

The title of the film seems to boggle the mind of many. Its significance is made apparent early on in the film, and it is the catalyst that plummets its two leading protagonists into a 24hr whirlwind adventure. The journey undertaken by Jiggy (Suthan Kamal) and Gogu (Kokilan Maheswaran) is quite comical, perturbing, heart warming and shocking. The film is written and directed by Ranjith Joseph and produced by G3 Abstract in collaboration with the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre. The film acts as a vehicle to highlight key issues among Canadian Tamil youth and brings to the surface taboo issues that require further attention by parents and the broader Canadian Tamil community. However, the plot is not just relevant to the Tamil audience; the issues tackled are pertinent to youth across all ethno-cultural communities.

The film is a creative exploration into the complex lives of Canadian Tamil youth and the Tamil community. The high quality of the artistic cinematography, filmed in Red One, and original film score and soundtrack heighten the overall experience of the film. The authentic portrayal of the lives of youth comes from the rawness of its actors, who are



young people from the community. The use of profanity rages rampant in the film, and although it created some discomfort in the audience, it lends to the accurate depiction of youth culture by Joseph. These young actors naturally depict their characters and truly brought to life the sensitive issues tackled by Joseph in the film.

Despite being a short film, the movie skilfully touches on a number of issues, eliciting a wide range of emotions within its audience. The film's opening scenes brilliantly and simply portrays the discord that exists between some young Tamil men's dream or desire to be "gangstas" and the rest of the movie contrasts it to the harsh realities that can plague

a young life upon following that path. The film touches on the allure of money, especially easy money and illustrates how much cultural capital materialism provides the youth.

There is an absence of positive role models within the lives of the two young protagonists and the film suggests the need for more positive role models for the youth. The exposure of negative role models influence and steer the actions of the two main protagonists throughout the film; this is said to reflect today's reality. The experiences of the Canadian Tamil community from the late 90s had negatively influenced many young people at that time. Subsequently, the stereotypes of Tamil youth as gangsters and the

influence by those still caught within its realm continue to affect the youth at present.

The film does not hold anything back and paints a sincere moving image of the insecurities that afflict the young people's lives and the temptations and dangers that surrounds them. The film implicitly suggests the need for action as well, by way of greater parental engagement and community support for the youth.

The movie was well received by the audience at the sold out premiere at 10:30am on March 27th at the Coliseum at Scarborough Town Centre Famous Players. The engaging

discussion with the cast and crew after the film provided the audience a chance to voice their feedback and ask questions. The afternoon came to a close with smiles, hugs and handshakes wishing the young team on their successful film. The audience was also eager to purchase copies of the music soundtrack, which was also created by budding young Tamil artists.

The film is primarily intended for the teenage audience, but it also advocates for the youth and educates a wider audience on a number of critical issues that require further contemplation and action.

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Government-guaranteed loans often overlooked and misunderstood

There are many financing vehicles available for your business or franchise: bank loans, personal savings, and equity investors. However, there is another highly advantageous source of financing that is often overlooked and frequently misunderstood: the Canada Small Business Financing Program (CSBF). Loans made under the CSBF are guaranteed by the Canadian government. They are available for small businesses and franchises across Canada. Since 1961, thousands of small businesses have used this program to obtain financing that might otherwise have been unavailable to them. The following are some tips to help you better understand the CSBF and decide if it is the best financing vehicle for your franchise.

So, what exactly is the Canada Small Business Financing Program? Do not let the long name intimidate you. Under the Canada Small Business Financing Act (CSBFA), the government encourages your financial institution to provide small businesses with a business loan that is partially guaranteed by one or more principals of the business and partially guaranteed by the government.

Under a CSBF loan, personal liability is limited to only 25% of the original loan amount. If your business received a conventional bank loan, you would typically be required to personally guarantee 100% of it. A CSBF loan allows you to put fewer of your personal assets at risk.

From the financial institution's point of view, it is willing to take a smaller personal guarantee in the CSBF program because the government may reimburse some of its eligible losses. Of course, this government guarantee comes at a price, and there are some other factors you need to take into account when considering this type of loan for your business.

Is the CSBF loan for you?

The CSBF program is designed to help small business owners like yourself expand, renovate, and improve. The CSBF may be a good option if you are:

- Purchasing a new franchise, including the equipment, building, leaseholds, and property;
- Improving existing leaseholds. For example, renovating the kitchen or storefront;
- Purchasing equipment, such as new refrigerators for restaurant franchises or new display units for retail stores.



Keep in mind the CSBF program does not assist your franchise with the financing of:

- Working capital;
- Franchise fees;
- Appraisal and legal costs;
- Goodwill and most other types of intangible assets; and
- Inventory.

How much money is available to you?

You can receive up to 90% of the cost of eligible assets you are purchasing, with a maximum value of \$500,000. In other words, you may only need to provide 10% of these purchase costs from the business. This low equity requirement is one of the major benefits of the program. With conventional loans, lenders usually require a higher percentage of down payment.

Does your franchise business qualify?

Most franchise systems will qualify for the program. However, there are some government restrictions¹ including:

- Your annual gross revenue must be less than \$5 million in the year you apply;
- You are or will be operating in Canada;
- The assets you purchased or improved are used in your business; and
- Your business is not a farm, charity, or religious enterprise.

How many years do you have to pay it back?

Repayment is related to the life expectancy of your asset, which is up to a maximum of 10 years, subject to other criteria. For example, if you use a CSBF loan to purchase an oven for your pizza franchise and the oven is expected to last five years, you will have five years to repay the loan. On the other hand, if you use a CSBF loan to purchase a new building for your store and expect to operate in the building for 20 years, you have a maximum of 10 years to repay the loan. Your financial institution can arrange a monthly payment plan for you.

What is the interest rate?

Similar to other types of bank loans, CSBF allows you to choose between a floating and fixed interest rate.

Floating rate

Under this option, the standard interest rate is prime plus 3%, of which 1.25% is for insurance paid to the government and the remaining is interest charged by the lenders. This option allows you to repay the loan at any time without penalty. However, your interest rate may change periodically depending on your lender's prime rate. In an increasing interest rate environment, you may end up with a higher interest rate than you had originally planned for.

Fixed rate

Under this option, your interest rate is set by your lender at a fixed rate, depending on the type of security and repayment term. With this option, you will always know how much interest you are paying. However, you may be limited in your ability to repay early.

Some lenders allow you to switch between these two rate options. Make sure you consult prospective lenders about their interest rate options and service plans.

Are there any hidden costs?

The government charges a one-time loan registration fee, which is 2% of the total loan amount. You can pay the fee up front or include it in your loan amount, provided you do not exceed the maximum of \$500,000. For example, if you borrow \$100,000, your fee will be \$2,000. You can choose to either pay the \$2,000 up front or repay \$102,000 over the amortization period.

Are there any other security requirements?

Besides the personal and government guarantee, the lender may take security in the property, equipment, or leasehold being financed (similar to other types of business loans). If applicable, lenders may require a copy of the franchise agreement.

Where do I get a CSBF loan?

Many banks, credit unions, and leasing companies offer CSBF loans. However, not all of them are equally experienced in the process. Look for a lender who has small business banking and/or franchise banking specialists to help you ensure your application process goes smoothly and comfortably. You should also consider a lender with experience in financing your franchise system.

How do you get the loan?

The approval process for a CSBF loan is similar to the approval process for other types of loans. You will need to provide the lender with personal information, business documents, and franchise information, such as: personal income, historical financial statements or business projections, letter of incorporation, and any franchise agreements.

After your lender approves the loan, funding will be provided based on the presentation of invoices. Upon receiving the completed documentation/invoice, the lender can process the funds in one of three ways:

- Payment made directly to the supplier;
- Payment in trust to a solicitor; or
- Reimbursement of an invoice previously paid by you.

In the latter situation, you need to provide proof that you have paid the invoice. Examples of proof include a credit card statement or a copy of a cancelled cheque.

Are there disadvantages to this program?

Some critics believe the CSBF program has three major disadvantages. Firstly, a CSBF loan usually costs more than a conventional loan. With the government guarantee, you are paying a one-time 2% fee and sometimes a higher interest rate. Secondly, there are strict documentation requirements, such as providing detailed invoices in acceptable formats. Any mistake in documentation and invoice could hinder the lender's ability to claim a loss. Finally, not all financial institutions have the expertise in or are willing to provide CSBF loans. Your neighbourhood financial institution may not be able to provide you with the services you require. Make sure you do your homework before choosing a lender.

To help your CSBF application and funding processes go smoothly, keep the following tips in mind.

- Ensure that all your franchising documents are accurate.



Inaccuracies in the franchise agreement, business-incorporation papers, or invoices can prolong the CSBF loan application and funding process. Consider this: Mr. Smith purchased a new franchise and signed the franchise agreement under his personal name. However, he later decided to incorporate a business and received a CSBF loan under the business name, ABC Inc. Consequently, all of the leases and invoices were signed under ABC Inc. In this case, Mr. Smith must change the franchise agreement to ensure the borrower's name, ABC Inc., is on it. He can also execute an assignment agreement that assigns the franchise agreement to the corporation ABC Inc. This may take a long time, depending on the franchisor's or solicitor's process, and it may ultimately delay funding.

- Ensure that all your invoices are accurate and contain the required information. The invoices must be in the name of the borrowing business, including its full address. The invoices must also include a detailed listing of the items being purchased, the number of items, the serial numbers, and/or any services provided. Any missing information or errors will have to be corrected by your suppliers, thereby prolonging the funding process.

- Remember, items such as the franchise fee, goods and services tax (GST), transaction per second (TPS), share purchase, legal fee, goodwill, appraisal fee, inventory/supplies, and permits and licences are not eligible under the program. Therefore, when you purchase a franchise, you must pay for these fees and costs with other funds.

- Some franchise systems require payments on a turnkey basis. This will reduce the number of advances required. Make sure your lender is aware of any turnkey requirement.

- The 180-day rule: When determining the total loan amount, you can include all your eligible costs made within 180 days prior to the day on which the loan is approved.

For more information, contact:

Shamala Kumar
 Small Business Advisor
TD Canada Trust
 Parkway Mall
 85, Ellesmere Road
 Scarborough,
 ON. M1R 4B7
Ph: 416 441 2041 x 251
Fax: 416 441 0427



HNB MD/ CEO Rajendra Theagarajah awarded QFC Asian Banker Leadership Achievement Award for Sri Lanka for 2010

Rajendra Theagarajah Managing Director/CEO of Hatton National Bank (HNB) was awarded The QFC –Asian Banker Leadership Achievement Award for Sri Lanka 2010. The award is part of Asian Bankers commitment to promote the importance of leadership in developing a sound and sustainable financial services industry. The research study for the award programme is backed by the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC). The award is testimony to the pivotal role Theagarajah had in building HNB as one of Sri Lanka's best performing banks with a sophisticated business that straddles a broad range of business lines with strong fee generating capabilities. HNB's well paced expansion, a leap that has challenged all other financial institutions and its dedication to financial education and other social initiatives have been key factors in winning this award.

The Board of Advisors and Selection Committee comprising an esteemed and distinguished panel headed by Mr David Eldon the current Chairman, Board of Directors, Dubai International Financial Centre Authority and formerly Chairman of HSBC Asia Pacific, Sir George Matthewson, Chairman of Cheviot Asset Management and former Chairman and CEO, Royal Bank of Scotland, Dr Jeffrey Carmichael, CEO of Promontory Australasia and founding Chairman, Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, Mr Byung –Chul Yoon, the Chairman of Financial Planning Standards Board Korea and former Chairman of Woori

Achievement Award for Sri Lanka for 2010



Picture shows (left to right) Mr Peter Hoflich - Managing Editor, The Asian Banker, Mr Desmond Holmes - Managing Director, Qatar Financial Centre, Mr Rajendra Theagarajah - Managing Director/ CEO, HNB, Mr Neel Kashkari - Former Interim Assistant Secretary at the US Treasury for Financial Stability heading the implementation of the TARP Programme and currently Managing Director at PIMCO, Mr David Eldon, Former Chairman, HSBC, Current Chairman of Dubai International Financial Centre

Financial Group and Mr Cesar Virata, the Corporate Vice –Chairman of Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation and former Prime Minister of the Philippines has recognized that as a result of Theagarajah's leadership Hatton National Bank qualified through stringent criteria to qualify as "Strongest Banks in Country 2010. The award was received in Singapore from Mr Neel Kashkari, former Assistant Secretary at the US Treasury Heading the TARP Programme.

The Asian Banker is pioneer-

ing this programme also as part of its investor audit programme to help the investor and counter party community in Europe and the US to understand the features of strong domestic franchises that may well not be fully appreciated on the global stage.

Rajendra Theagarajah is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) UK. Having obtained a MBA from the Cranfield school of Management UK he joined the

Chase Manhattan Bank (now known as JP Morgan Chase) in London and served in the bank's Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region. He joined the Colombo Branch of Banque Indosuez (now part of the CALYON Group) and served as its Deputy General Manager and continued as a member of the HNBs corporate management team after the take over of Indosuez Colombo by HNB in 1997. Theagarajah was appointed Managing Director/CEO of Hatton National Bank in December 2004

and also serves on all subsidiary boards of the HNB Group. During his tenure as Managing Director /CEO, HNB received the prestigious "Bracken" award naming Hatton National Bank as the Bank of the Year 2006 for Sri Lanka, won the best retail bank in Sri Lanka award for three consecutive years for its performance in 2007, 2008 and 2009 by the Asian Banker Magazine and was named the Best Bank in Sri Lanka 2009 by the Euromoney Magazine. Theagarajah was profiled as one of the 25 Bank CEO's in the Wileys publication "Asia's Banking CEOs" – The future of finance in Asia (a collection of profiles of leaders who have guided some of the most successful banks in the worlds most dynamic region of Asia). Rajendra Theagarajah is a Past President of the Association of Professional Bankers in Sri Lanka and serves as the current chairman of Sri Lanka Banks Association. He is the Chairman of Lanka Financial services Bureau Limited (a company formed by FI's to own and operate a Swift Service Bureau in Sri Lanka), member of the Sri Lanka country Board of CIMA, council member of the Sri Lanka Institute of Directors and a member of Sri Lanka Accounting Standards Monitoring Board. He also serves as the Vice Chairman of the board of directors of The Asian Banks Association and chairs its sub committee on "Convergence towards IFRS".

GO AND WIN CANADA-G20

Contd from Pg 35

It is the best time to engage in marketing. The Canadian government is also making some smart moves in investing with countries such as India, China, the potential world powers in the east and South American countries. But to some extent, the changes are somewhat limited in Europe due to the 27 member European Union which is a superb economic grouping with investments and trade to non member states.

Canada in terms of immigration is quite literally the world in one country. The Canadian natural increase in population is declining and the rate of increase

in seniors has gone up pretty high and the gap between the two has to be bridged by the immigrants. It appears that Canada is very much interested in hiring more skilled workers, so that they can easily fill up the vacancies, if not instantly, in the near future. We can make use of this opportunity even though it may not be a part of the agenda but this point can be made in many other ways. In this matter Toronto is the most appropriate venue than any other part of the country.

However the cooperation from the opposition parties is highly required at this junction. The Liberal party leader recently

indicated very clearly that he would not vote against the budget, because he is not interested in bringing down the Harper government and because Canadians are not favor of an election. He had learned a bitter lesson when he brought in the no confidence motion last year and after the defeat, the reaction from Canadians. I would prefer even if the time was ripe for an election that in the best interest of the nation let them help this government continue for a while and earn some goodies for Canada where they are the active partners.

I would not want to over emphasize these summits and other international conferences

that are going to be held in Canada, like some other developing nations who take such opportunities as a wonderful time to paint a colorful picture of their nation to world leaders. But Canada needs better and stronger foreign markets for exports and investment venues. Although America is a strong trade partner, after I predicted even before the U.S Presidential election, that Obama's economic protectionist policy is harmful to us. It has been exhibited by the recent moves that Obama's administration and he himself has taken on global and Canadian trade matters. The recent moves coupled with George W. Bush on their interest in the economy, global

politics and the way they reacted certainly alarmed Canada that they acted in a way that comforts them. Why we should rethink our relationship with them and act accordingly does not mean that we are taking a different road completely, but we are slightly deviated from the traditional path in accordance with the current global changes and the best interests of our nation.

In conclusion, we have gained a smart and unique status around globe. Let's keep it up and work not only hard but wisely so that we can still maintain it and climb up to the top. Oh Canada win Canada!

Samy Appadurai is a renowned broadcast journalist, author, educator and public speaker who makes his home in Toronto.

Durham Tamil Association (DTA) Women's Wing helps Herizon Shelter

Herizon House is a shelter for abused women and offers free confidential services 24 hours a day. They provide a place for safety, support and hope for abused women and their children.

The Durham Tamil Association

recently organized a get-together of their women members for a toiletry drive to support Herizon House. The evening event was hosted by Mrs. Anusha Hariharan at her residence in Ajax. The event was a success with nearly

150 pieces of toiletries collected and to be distributed among those at the Herizon House. The women's wing also decided to come up with a donation to purchase much needed undergarments for the inmates of Herizon

House. The evening proved to be entertaining to the women members of DTA who enjoyed the refreshments served and also participated in the games that took place. The evening gave the women members a break from their usual household chores and provided fun and laughter in a relaxed atmosphere.

Seen here are pictures taken at the evening function.



DTA Women's Supportive Evening



DTA's WOMEN for HERIZON



TOILETRIES FOR HERIZON

Durham Tamil Association Elects new Board for 2010

Durham Tamil Association which is a non-profit organization formed for the Durham Tamil community to unite and participate in activities that enhance Tamil culture has elected a new Board of Directors for the year 2010.

The new members elected are as follows:

Board of Directors:

- President: Sinnadurai Mahendranathan
- Vice President: Kangatharan Sivanathan
- Treasurer: Joshua Suresh
- Secretary: Dinesh Subramaniam
- Assistant Secretary: Selvakumar Arasendran

Youth Coordinator:

- Thaventhiran (Ravi) Kandiah
- Cultural Coordinator: Amirthalingham Karunakaran
- Public Relations and Media Coordinator: Kalyani Sathianathan
- Membership Coordinator: Thayanandan (Sasi) Rajaratnam

Executive Committee

- Members: Nandakumar Mylvaganam
- Sinnathurai Gukathasan
- Uma Suresh
- Nanthini Kailanathan
- Rajini Kailainathan
- Raj Ravindrakumar
- Thushi Thurairatnam
- Rajathurai Rabindranathan

To coincide with the 10th year of founding, the Association will be hosting the Annual Dinner/ Dance on June 12th at the Crown Plaza Hotel located at DVP and Eglinton. The original date was changed from May 15th as a respect to the Month of remembrance.

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What you need to know about Heart disease
What to do in a Medical Emergency-CPR workshop

Venue: Canada Kanthasamy Kovil Cultural Centre
 Date: May 9, 2010 (Sunday)
 Time: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. fhiy 10.00 kzp – 2.00

Admission free – Enrolment Preferred-Lunch will be provided
 Contacts : On behalf of the Board of Directors and the members of The Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario and CMDDA, We take pleasure in inviting you to join us in the above event.
 Kohila Viveganathan 416 496 2897- Secretary- Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario
 Email: oriolestc@yahoo.ca
 Dr Rajes Logan-CMDDA 905 944 0100- CMDDA coordinator/Dr V Santhakumar-
 CMDDA 905 273 7946

Ilankai Tamil Sangam presents

Kalai Vizha 2010

Crossroads North Middle School Auditorium
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Saturday, June 5th 2010
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A Conference

On

War Crimes, Genocide and Crime against Humanity

Organized by
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Papers will be presented on the following Topics:

- * Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes, and Genocide
- * Preventing Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes, and Genocide - The role of the UN - The Role of Canada
- * International Humanitarian Law - * Geneva Convention
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IN TRIBUTE AND REMEMBRANCE



Tamil civilians are held against their will in internment and denial of livelihood by the Government of Sri Lanka

These paintings are creations of Shan Sundaram. Mr. Shan Sundaram also known as Selvendra has been living in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, USA for over three decades. An Alumni of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New

Jersey, Mr. Sundaram graduated in 1980. He is an active member of the United States Tamil Political Action Council (www.USTPAC.org). Mr. Sundaram Volunteered in 2008 Presidential campaign for Barack Obama and had an oppor-

tunity to meet him during campaign. He enjoys paintings as a hobby and maintains two web sites, www.free-tamil.com and www.sundaram-art.com.



Tamils surrendering with white flags with United Nations assurances were massacred by Sri Lankan Army in May 2009.

United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions has called on to investigate the killings of blind folded Tamil Political Prisoners by Sri Lankan Armed Forces



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“TRAUMA”: What is it?

The Greek word for wound call 'trauma' used by the medical profession to refer to physical wounds, but is also used in psychology and the caring professions to refer to a psychological wound. Physical trauma includes the body's response to serious injury and threat and mental trauma (psychological trauma) includes frightening thoughts and painful feelings.

Psychological trauma can produce strong feelings and also the mind's response to serious injury. The harm done to a person's psychological well-being by one or more events that causes major levels of distress. Such events include; divorce or other significant relationship breakdown, experiencing a significant bereavement, being assaulted, raped or robbed, experiencing a significant loss or series of losses, being abused physically, sexually or emotionally witnessing a death or major accident.



tressed this is a good starting point for you in considering how to be helpful. The disorientation of trauma means that the person concerned may struggle with some practical tasks and may therefore need help at a very down-to-earth level. The feelings of isolation in Trauma are 'being there' for someone can often be helpful, even if there is nothing you can say or do at the time. Traumatized people may want to talk about their experience. Being able to listen without making judgements or trying to take over the situation can be very helpful. Some traumatized people will prefer to remain silent not all traumatized people will want to talk. It is therefore important to give them the opportunity to talk but without putting them under pressure to do so.

Helping Young Trauma Survivors in general adult helpers should; accept/ do not argue about their feelings, attend to



Trauma can also produce extreme behavior; such as intense fear or helplessness, withdrawal or detachment, lack of concentration, irritability, sleep disturbance, aggression, hyper vigilance or flashbacks. Emotional symptoms; such as shock, denial, or disbelief, anger, irritability, mood swings, guilt, withdrawing from others, feeling disconnected or numb, shame, self-blame, feeling sad or hopeless, confusion, difficulty concentrating, anxiety and fear. Physical symptoms of trauma; such as insomnia or nightmares, being startled easily, racing heartbeat, aches and pains, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, edginess and agitation and muscle tension. The effects of trauma in physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural are so

clear cut that there can be little doubt about the situation.

The psychological effects of trauma can be far more significant and divided into Cognitive, behavioural and Emotional. An individual exposed to a traumatic experience can find it difficult to 'think straight' and may have a degree of memory impairment, on a short-term basis at least. Cognitive effects refer to thinking processes and memory. Emotional effects of trauma can be very distressing; generating very profound and far-reaching emotional reactions. Human behaviour can be significantly affected by a traumatic experience. Sometimes outgoing person can become quite withdrawn in trauma.

Children face many other traumas, they are injured, harmed by violence and suffer

sexual abuse, lose loved ones or witness other tragic events. Children struggle to make sense of trauma and they are very sensitive. Children's may have emotional reactions and they also respond differently to traumas. Children's may hurt deeply and they may find it hard to recover from frightening experiences.

Most traumatized children recover within a few weeks. Some need help longer. A deep emotional response to loss with children (Grief) may take months to resolve. Grief could be for a loved one or a teacher. Grief could be for a friend or pet. Helping children begins at the scene of the event may need to continue for weeks or months. Identify Children who refuse to go places that remind them of the event, who seem numb emotionally, who



show little reaction to the event or who behave dangerously. As an example the North-Eastern part of Sri Lanka had already been affected by civil war when the 2004 Tsunami wave hit the region, leading to high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in children. Five million children are exposed to a traumatic event in the United States every year, amounting to 1.8 million new cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some 36% of children who experience traumatic events develop PTSD, compared with 24% of adults. The younger a child is at the time of the trauma, the more likely he or she is to develop PTSD. Thirty-nine percent of preschoolers develop PTSD in response to trauma, while 33% of middle school children and 27% of teens do. These children may need extra help.

There are various ways in assisting someone experiencing with trauma. Trauma brings distress; help someone who is dis-

children, listen to them and help them cope with the reality of their experiences. Do allow children to cry, allow sadness, let children talk about feelings or let them write about feelings and let them draw pictures. Don't expect children to be brave or tough, make children discuss the event before they are ready and get angry if children show strong emotions.

More information
fricanada@gmail.com

Dr. Fonseka – Clinician

Pic: Traumatized children
2004 TSUNAMI





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- A Review By

Arun Senathirajah

On a mild breezing spring evening of Saturday, April 10th, 2010 Canadian Tamils Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) celebrated the 12th Awards Gala and Dinner in recognition of the contributions, leadership talents and high-flying spirits shown by the Tamil entrepreneurs, business leaders, community volunteers and professionals at Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto. The event was sponsored by Industrial Alliance, Royal Bank of Canada, Scotiabank, TD Bank Financial Group, the Co-operators, Cable Shoppe, The Law office of Gary Anandasangaree and Liland Insurance. About 600 people attended the function which was hosted at the prestigious Fairmont Royal York Hotel. MC Manjula Selvarajah made the function enjoyable with her mastery of announcements spiced with wit and humour. The Canadian National Anthem was sung by Roveena Gnanabakthan and Sai Bruntha Arunthavashanmuganathan chanted the Thamil Thai Vaalthu. It was followed by a two minutes tribute to all those who passed away in wars around the world.

In his welcome address President Ken Kirupa reminded the role played by the chamber in its 19 years of dedicated service. He commended the contribution made by the Tamil community towards the Canadian economy and the services rendered by the CTCC to advance Canada's development. President further added: "New entrepreneurs from the Tamil community are taking part in a very aggressive way in the economic activity of the country. Referring to the fund raising efforts of the CTCC he pointed out that CTCC has raised \$150,000 and donated the proceeds to the Scarborough General Hospital and that it was a sign of its strong commitment to the community

Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce 12th Annual Awards Gala at Fairmont Royal York Hotel to honour outstanding Tamil Business & Community Leaders

we live in. It is a significant achievement of our volunteer members through their dedicated time and efforts and the Tamil community through their generous contributions. Our goal is also to increase the membership of the chamber and expected more active participation from the community. Tamil youths who follow postgraduate courses are showing keen interests in becoming fully qualified professionals in order to provide fullest contribution to the economy through their professions they are dreaming of. I see the future contribution as a promising one. My best wishes to the award winners, he remarked.

Special Guests and speakers - Patrick Brown MP Barrie, Gerry Philips Sacrborough Agincourt MPP, Julia Murrow MP, Lisa Gallacher, Regional Vice President RBC, Michael Thompson city councilor and Keynote Speaker John Tory QC. delivered valuable speeches. Special guests and speakers in their speeches appreciated the CTCC for its service and put forward many valuable suggestions to improve the future role of the chamber for the benefit and advancement of the community and the contribution the Tamil community could make in the future to the national economy.

John Tory's Keynote Speech

John Tory QC appreciated the achievements of four brothers opening up of a wooden pallets company and employing 45 people now and praised Meleni David and her achievements, saying how she started with one person and employing 35 staff at her professional practice, while other lawyers are looking for jobs elsewhere. He appreciated the volunteers of CTCC and the Tamil community for the \$150,000 fund raising for the Scarborough Hospital Foundation. Mr Tory welcomed the success of the people

emerging from the Tamil community in various fields such as business, accounting, legal, dental, medical etc. While appreciating the accomplished successful businesses contributing to socio-economic goal of the Greater Toronto Area, he pointed out that there is a long way to go in the path of business development and community involvement. The CTCC has to reach out for different organizations, reach out other communities and other cities where it sees opportunity to develop business relationships. The CTCC has to find ways to grab the potential capabilities of the community to contribute to the national economy. 'Canadian Tamils are honouring very accomplished business people at Fairmont Royal York' -remarked Tory at his Talk show - CFRB 1010 on Monday, April 12th after attending the Gala as a guest of Honour. He pointed out that 'opportunity comes from diversity and we should be prepared to recognize and appreciate it.'

Toast

Logan Velumailum, A Former President of the Chamber invited Toast to the award winners and the Toast of the night. Dinner was served after this.

Presentation of Awards

Presentation of awards which was the climax of the celebration took place after the dinner. The following are the details of the Awards Presentation. Umesh Vallipuram, CA, one of the Advisory Council conducted the presentation so well and the audience gave standing ovation to all the winners.

Best Entrepreneur Award

Best Entrepreneur Award sponsored by RBC Royal Bank was presented by Lisa Gallacher, Regional Vice President, Scarborough, Pickering & Ajax to Koneswaran brothers of S & B Pallets Ltd. RBC Branch Manager Mohan Sundaramohan and

Chamber President Ken Kirupa during presentation

Best Woman Entrepreneur Award

Best Woman Entrepreneur Award sponsored by Scotiabank was presented by Ahmed Dajani, Vice President, GTA West to Eilil Pathmanathan of Datta Manufactory.

Best Marketing Award

Best Marketing Award sponsored by TD Bank Financial Group was presented by Al Ramsay, Senior Manager, Marketing (Diversity) to Meleni David of The Law Offices of Meleni David. Shamala Kumar, Small Business Advisor-TD Canada Trust was also associated with the presentation.

Best Young Entrepreneur Award

Jeyasegaran Kanagasabai and Thushani Ruberu of Jay Brand Food Products were the winners of the Best Young Entrepreneur Award for the year 2010. The award was sponsored by Industrial Alliance.

Most Outstanding Professional Award

Most Outstanding Professional Award sponsored by Industrial Alliance presented by Rob Carter, Director of Sales to Prof. Chelva Kanaganayakam.

Outstanding Community Service Person(s) Award

Outstanding Community Service Person(s) Award presented by John Tory to Devi Arasanayagam and Ravi Sreedharan. Gary Anandasangaree, Past President of Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce was also associated with the presentation.

Vote of Thanks

The Vote of Thanks was presented by the Vice President of the Chamber Mr Sritharan Thurairajah. He thanked the sponsors - Industrial Alliance, Royal Bank of Canada, Scotiabank, TD Bank Financial Group, the Co-operators, Cable Shoppe, The Law office of Gary

Anandasangaree and Liland Insurance, Key-note speaker John Tory and other guests, volunteers, organizers, participants and the well wishers.

Future Challenges for CTCC

The Board of Directors has the responsibility to build business relationships with the senior level of executives and officers whether it may be corporate, financial, community or government sector in order to fulfill the needs of the Tamil community. While current level of support from these sectors cannot be underestimated, building the leadership role surpassing the relationship and dealings in operation level to decision making level is far more important in the future, if Tamil business community has to play significant role in the global competitive marketplace. We should not think why one from our community could not reach a position in the corporate or public sector to enlighten the governing body of any organization to understand the weight the Tamil community can throw in their decision making process. We should make others to realize the community as a socio marketing segment and the importance of the Tamil community. Corporations, bankers, and government departments should be willing to come out to help our community. CTCC can also get engaged with the international business community through memberships in the World Trade Centre Toronto and Toronto Board of Trade. The CTCC board members should take initiative in this direction so that we become an economically viable community, and make sure that our voices are heard in the political arena in our adopted motherland Canada and in the native motherland to eradicate sufferings of our brethren and bring equality in their life.



Barrie MP Patrick Brown with message from Hon. Jason Kenney to President Ken Kirupa



Chamber President Ken Kirupa



Hon. John Tory with his keynote speech



Umesh Vallipuram presenting the winners

Juanita Nathan Kicks Off Campaign for Markham School Board Trustee To Put "Students First"



More than 250 people gathered to support Juanita Nathan as she kicked off her election campaign for Markham Public School Board Trustee Ward 7 & 8 on April 16, 2010 at New Jasmine Banquet Hall. Nathan is a long time resident of Markham, a community youth outreach worker, senior support staff, and a counselor for abused women. Nathan dedicates her time and energy striving to make positive changes in the lives of youth, parents and seniors. Nathan, who graduated from Brock University with a BA in psy-

chology, currently works with YOUTHLINK, Family Services of York Region, and Social Services Network of York Region. The event was a fundraising event for Nathan's campaign.

Chair of Social Services Network Naushad Hirji, Chair of Middlefield Seniors Wellness Club Velauthapillai Manickampillai, Candidate for Toronto City Councillor and Current Markham School Board Trustee Neethan Shan, Reintegration Social Worker with the African Canadian Legal Clinic Peter Amponsah, and

Manager of Family Services of York Region Kathie Rideout were among the speakers at the event.

Performances were given by students of Dance Teacher Rajini Mathivaranan and the Orient Dance Company. The event was emceed by Piragal Thiru.

In her speech in front of the packed crowd, Nathan said she was aware of how much education is valued, not only in the Tamil community but in all communities. She noted her decision to run came in part from her own experience as a newcomer in

Canada when she was put two grades behind and was told it would take 7 years to master the English Language. She wasn't

given ESL as an option and was bullied because her kilt was below her knees.

"I was accused of cheating because my Chemistry knowledge was far advanced for Ontario's grade 11," said Nathan. "Through my lived experience I am well aware of the many challenges and barriers newcomer students and parents face day to day when dealing with the school system."

Nathan's priorities include improving the engagement between schools and parents, increasing the allocation of funding for ESL programs, increasing access for community to the use of school space.

"Schools are part and parcel of community you live and a resource you have already paid for through your taxes," said Nathan. "In order to improve the relationship between the community and schools, we have to open the doors of our schools to the community."



"St. John's & Chundikuli Alumni Association - Canada" Presents **Eagle Night₂₀₁₀** Eagle Night₂₀₁₀
 Dinner Dance with SKY LINERS LIVE BAND
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MAY 8TH 2010 @ 6.30 PM
 \$50
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By: Pudhuvai Raman

With a healthy membership, tremendous participation of younger generation and support by renowned artists from India, Toronto Bharathi Kala Manram (1969) a registered non-profit cultural organization with its glorious cultural and social activities celebrated its 40th year in divine manner during last week. Being supported by Ontario Arts & Council as well participation of artists from India in festival series financially supported by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations of the Government of India are the salient features of this cultural organization in Toronto. Almost all genius and well renowned carnatic musicians have staged their performances under this banner. Thus it has achieved a lot by promoting Indian traditional classical carnatic music to great extent.

Most of the songs, composed by Mumoorthigal viz Shri Saint Thyagarajar, Shri Muthuswami Dikshadar and Shri Syama Sastrigal are still revolving the musical sky by the unique performances of the Carnatic musicians throughout the world. To highlight the proud of this Manram's activities in the past, it started first with Ethnic Language instructions in Tamil and Telegu and distant education course, formal celebration of Saint Thyagaraja Festival by public organization in North America in 1973, forming the template and impetus for more than 30 organizations in Canada and USA to conduct the Aradhana. This is the first and the only organization in North America to institute annual scholarship for students of York University (Indian Music) in the name of Saint Thyagaraja for the past ten years. This is the first and foremost in bringing Indian Music concerts to Canada as the premier Indo-Cultural organization in Canada and continues to be the coordinator for concerts in Canadian centres. This is the first institution to bring Tamil-Telegu movies from India and distributing to non-profit organization in

38th Annual Sri Satguru Thyagaraja Music Festival Toronto – April 16-18, 2010 BHARATHI KALA MANRAM, CANADA



Canada and USA, individual talent presentation in music from the budding young artists that too from South Indians and Sri Lankan Tamils. Manram's record of services is beyond the words of appreciation.

Presently its support with Sringeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation, Canada is adding an additional victory by conducting regular performances in SVBF Auditorium as well coordinates for the grand celebration of Maha Kumbabishekam of Sri Sharathamba Temple, which is to be held during the third week of June 2010.

This year Music Festival was conducted in an excellent manner for three days from 16th April to 18th. The festival began on 16th April with the music concert of famous carnatic musician Madurai Sri T.N. Seshagopalan (Vocal), Sri V.V. Ravi (Violin), Prof. Trichy Sankaran (Mrithangam) and Sri Giritharan Sachithanathan (Kanjira).

On 17th the main event of Saint Thyagaraja Aradhana music festival was really impressive as such all the arrangements by the Board Members and volunteers of manram's were unique and traditional, which admired the viewers, participant musician's students and other VIPs who participated and enjoyed well.

At the reception hall in the main entrance, Mrs Chitra Dadu, Radha, Chitra Thiagarajan, Preeti, Nimalan, Nathan Iyer and volunteers welcomed everybody and presented BKM's membership form, music festival special program Tickets and music C.D Sale etc, future programs informative handouts, SVBF Background folder, Pledge & Donation Form, Grand opening of Sri Sharadambal Temple Mahakumbabishekam brochures at one side and the other side promotional booths of State Bank of India, Handi-Care International Charity Organization representatives had displayed their business materials in addition to various flyers of

music schools, Acharyanet, Brindhavan Society of Canada and Sankara Vedic Culture & Arts Inc etc were displayed. The whole credit of success of this three days event goes to the President Mr. S. Thiagarajan, K. Venkatraman, Secretary, Dr Lakshmanan, Dr Krishnan and Dadu Ramanathan. Bharam Bhutt, Sri Ram, SVBF Trustees Mr Ravisubramaniam, Mrs Rama Subramaniam who were actively involved with other board members and volunteers of BKM. The auditorium with well furnished seating arrangements like banner of BKM in the middle of the stage plus the portraits of Saint Thyagaraja, Sri Ramar with Seetha, Hanuman and Lakshman colourfully decorated with garlands, holy lamp and Prasad attracted the music lovers.

Mr S. Thiagarajan, President of the manram welcomed all, introduced the special musicians and guests who have come from India. In his welcome address he briefed the salient features of Sri Thyagraja music festival and highlighted the achievements of manram as well the services of SVBF.

The music festival began with Nadaswaram music. The chief priest Sivasri Balakrishna Shastriji performed the pooja & Aarthi, which was followed with the dedication of ardhana by group singing of the Pancharatna Kritis by the leading musicians which includes Indian Artists, teachers, students and instrumental players.

The guests artists from South India viz T.N. Sheshagopalan, Trichur Brothers, Sunder, Violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan, Gunabooshani Kalyanaraman, as well Toronto leading musicians like Trichy Sankaran, Danatevi Mitradeva and other music teachers, students and instrumental players paid tributes through their music with wonderful pancharatna kritis jointly.

The next event of individual rendering of Thyagaraja's compositions went till 3 pm. in which



nearly 60 young boys and girls sung Sri Thyagaraja kriths in various ragas with their talented voice. Percussions like flute, violin, veena & mridangam were also played by the youngsters in the series of this program. Mementoes were presented to all of them after their individual singing as well Breakfast and lunch also were provided to all during the forenoon session.

In the evening the special music concert by Trichur Brothers, Sri Srikrishna Mohan and Sri Ramkumar Mohan (vocal duet), Sri V.V. Ravi (violin), Trichur Sri Mohan (Mridangam) & Sri Karthik Venkatraman (Kanjira) with tambura by Mrs Lavanya and Miss Vaarahi was held in the presence of chief guest Dr Preeticharan, the Indian Consulate General and Mendez Green, (Immigration Lawyer-Multiculturalism). This year souvenir also was distributed to all at the reception by Mr Nirmalan.

The Secretary of the Manram Sri K. Venkatraman welcomed and thanked all. In his introductory speech he briefed out the festival events, introduced the chief and special guests, scholarship recipients of two music students of York University and the Indian Artists as well said that the local Indian and Sri Lankan talented young artists also are being offered to perform their concerts now and then on various music concerts conducted by the Manram. Dr Krishnan highlighted the scholarship for two students,

who learn Indian music in York University as well the concept of music festival. Mr Ravi Subramaniam one of the Trustee of SVBF detailed the activities of the

Foundation and the salient features of Maha Kumbabishekam of Sri Sharadambal Temple to be held in June 20th, 2010, requested moral support of all for the success of the event.

Indian Consul General Mrs Preeticharan extended Tamil New Year greetings to all, presented the scholarship to the students, welcomed the Indian music artists and felicitated the event. Appreciating the activities of manram representing the preservation of Indian traditional classical music, promoting to the younger generation etc, she stated that next year Canada and India celebrates India Festival throughout the year by inviting eminent scholars and famous musicians from India.

The main event of music concert by Trichur Brothers with accompanied instrumental musicians was wonderful since the songs composed by various scholars with variety of ragas were really a delicious feast to the carnatic music lovers in total, As such from varnam to Ragam Thanam Pallavi, these two brother's melodious voice was like lullaby to the children.

Contd. in next page...

The Montréal Bike Fest takes to Montréal streets from May 30 until June 6!

Summer is on its way, and just as it has for the last twelve consecutive years, with it rides in the Montréal Bike Fest. From May 30 to June 6, cycling fans will have no lack of things to do, thanks to the extensive array of event choices included in the festival's 2010 edition.

All in a spirit of good-natured fun, thousands of cyclists will participate in three main recreational activities, according to their preferences and endurance, throughout this seven-day festival dedicated to two-wheeled fun: the Metropolitan Challenge, the Tour de l'Île de Montréal and the Tour la Nuit. Operation Bike-to-Work, an initiative that encourages Montrealers to use their bicycle as a means of daily transportation, is back for its tenth year.

"Montréal is not only renowned for its prominent biking culture, but has also established an esteemed reputation throughout the world as the 'Best Cycling City in North America', as dubbed by the prestigious American publication, *Bicycling Magazine*," underlines Charles Lapointe, President and CEO of Tourisme Montréal. "We are extremely proud of this reputation, as it pays homage to the passion and dedication exhibited by thousands of Montrealers for a healthy, eco-



nomic and environmentally-friendly method of transportation as well as the city's avant-garde nature as a forerunner for thinking 'green' and establishing an extensive network of urban cycling paths," concludes Charles Lapointe.

Every year since its inception in 1985, the Tour de l'Île de Montréal has attracted thousands of cyclists from across the province of Québec who wish to mix fun, exercise and discovery while riding along a specially-dedicated urban circuit. Following in 1999, the Tour la Nuit has become increasingly popular over the years with both young and mature riders. Finally, the Metropolitan Challenge, inaugurated in 2002, is comprised of a circuit that criss-crosses the Greater Montréal region, covering a distance of 75 to 150 kilometres.

Montreal Tea salons

Tea rooms have been always been a part of Montréal's cultural history, thanks to the Brits, who brought their cherished traditions from across the pond to here. From the downtown core and radiating out, the choice of places to enjoy a cuppa in Montréal, from upper crust to cool and casual, has never been more tasteful.

Hip and ready to sip La Maison du Thé Cha Guan

Relatively new to the tea scene, Cha Guan ("tea house" in Chinese) on Monkland Avenue has great service and a relaxed ambiance. You can park it on chairs or relax on traditional floor cushions, order your tea with dessert (the green tea red bean cheesecake is a must) and enjoy the good stuff in your cup along with the laid-back feel. With its knowledgeable staff and reasonable prices, a repeat visit to this sweet tea salon is definitely worth it.

L'Esprit du thé

Not to be outdone in the tea department, trend-setting Mile End is also home to some excellent tea salons. In fact, owners Bettina and Fabrice Perrin have given this hipster enclave a polished touch with L'Esprit du thé, which offers more than 200 flavourful brews to thrill your palate. They also serve tea-infused chocolates—yum!—and regularly host tea workshops.

Camellia Sinensis

Now a bastion of the Quartier



latin, *Camellia Sinensis* continues to give tea aficionados reason to sit and sip. With more than 150 teas that regularly cull from China, Taiwan, Japan, India and Sri Lanka to choose from, it's impossible not to find a tea to suit your taste buds. Pop in for a cup before or after a movie at the Cinéma Quartier Latin, right across the street, or try their workshops and tea tastings on the weekend. They also have a boutique kitty corner to the Jean-Talon Market.

Kusmi Tea

From Russia to Paris and now Montréal, the over-140-year-old Kusmi Tea house now boasts a brand-new home, the first in North America, on fashionable Saint-Denis Street. Inhale the fragrant aromas of more than 125 infusions as you linger in its bright-white boutique stacked with colourful round tins or choose a delicious blend to brew chez vous. While the teas feature their signature Russian blends (Saint Petersburg, Prince Vladimir, Anastasia, etc.), they have excellent greens and invigorating herbals you'll also want more of.

The classics

The Ritz-Carlton Montréal (closed for renovations until the end of 2010)

The British upper crust might



have brought the afternoon tea ritual to Montréal, but it's the Ritz-Carlton, one of the city's oldest hotels, that carries on the custom. The classy hotel on Sherbrooke Street is a perennial favourite among guests who come to enjoy a bit of England's high tradition, which includes tea served in fine porcelain cups, tiered trays topped with cucumber sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and an assortment of sweets. To be enjoyed in the sophisticated Café du Paris or the lovely Jardin du Ritz, next to its lovely duck pond on warm-weather days.

Fairmont the Queen Elizabeth

At the heart of downtown, the "Queen E", as Montrealers call it, lives up to its name, serving tea in its refined and tasteful setting. Guests can sit back and enjoy this afternoon pick-me-up along with an assortment of sweet cakes and pastries. If your company prefers coffee, this prestigious hotel also keeps up the delectable Viennese tradition with a wide range of roasts to choose from. And if you can't resist giving in to your inner gourmand, wander over to the Beaver Club Restaurant's Boutique Gourmandise for sweets and treats to take away.

Sri Satguru Thyagaraja Music Festival

Contd. from Pg. 50

The first song in the raga kanna signified the Indo-Canadian cultural relationship giving the value of Unity in Cultural Diversity of this Nation. Songs with various ragas and taalās viz., Nera nammithi - Kaanada - . Gajanana yutham - Chakravagam - Amba Kamakshi - Bhairavi - Sadha chaelae Boopalam - . Sajana jeevanaa - Kamas - Kaa vaa vaa - Varali - . Chetha sri Bala krishnan - Sahana - Rupakam, Jagajanani, Tillana and Vante madaram were like the showers of honeydews drenched the whole audience with immense ecstasy. Similarly the Thani avarthanam also was excellent in one word.

The third day music concert on 18th evening by famous vocalist and South Indian Film play back singer Sri P. Unnikrishnan (Vocal), Sri Embar Kannan (Violin) Sri Arjunkumar (Mridhangam) was also wonderful. The selective songs and Ragam Thanam Pallavi from the beginning with Hamsawatwani ragam followed with many sahits as well the Thani Avarthanam etc were really

great since all the kritis, raga alabanai etc were beautiful, for nearly 3 hours the whole audience were in tranquil of musical Yangjam, as such each and every composition of carnatic magnets attracted all. Thus this year Music festival concluded with great success.

On 24th as a special fund raising program for the newly constructed Sri Saradhambal Temple Mandolin Music concert by Padma shri U. Srinivas & U. Rajesh with Sri Madrimangalam S. Swaminathan (Mridangam), Sri S.V. Ramani (Ghatam) on 18th April sponsored by SVBF held on 24th April with full packed audience was also beyond words of appreciation. Padma shri Gowri Sankar, CEO & Trustee of Shringeri Mutt, India Mr & Mrs Preeti Charan and Mr Venketesan, Indian consul, Dr Azhagananda of Sambiradhya Dance Academy, The President of State Bank of India Mr Arunkumar, and Presidents of various cultural associations (Kannada, Telegu) were the important participants. The whole auditorium with full of Kannada speaking people and dedicated volunteers was really great as such the volunteers from entrance to main hall did all the best by receiving the music fans.

Media representatives with cheerfulness and respect.

Dr Latchmanan welcomed all and introduced the program followed with three times of divine Beejam Mantra sung by the volunteers group followed with felicitation address by the Indian consul Mrs Preeticharan. Who lighted the Holy Lamp auspiciously thanked all and expressed with great admiration manram's this year music festival for its richness to unite the strength the inter relationship between India and Canada, particularly promoting the Indian Cultural Heritage of Arts and Music.

Padma shri Gowri Sankar, CEO & Trustee of Shringeri Mutt, India in his special address praised the high credits of the musicians as well highlighted the SVBF and Sri Sharadambal Temple Maha Kumbabishekam. When he mentioned that the Indian consul General represents as the Indian Prime Minister of Canada to bring unity in strength among Indo Canada relationship which impressed all.

Mrs Akhila Bavaani introduced the musicians and then U. Srinivas thanked everybody with Tamil New Year Good wishes.

The main program of Mandolin Maestro Srinivas &

Rajesh and percussion players team really thrilled the whole audience from beginning to end with pin drop silence and clapping of hands for every song, which echoed the roof like thunder.

The program started with varnam in the raga Bairavi, followed selected melodious songs composed by music stalwarts like Sri Thyagarajar, Purandaradoss, Suppraya Sastri, Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Oothukadu Venkatasubramanyam, etc in various ragas. The Raagam, Thanam, Pallavi set with Raagamaliga inspired everybody as such the fingers were playing soccer game. Similarly the instrumental players of mirdhangam and chatam also proved their whole talents to an extreme mount of incomparable words in Thani Aavarthanam like travelling in GT Express (Madras to New Delhi) and above all in conclusion as Deepavali 1000 wallah crackers their performance was great.

Songs like Thulasithala, tatv-mariatharama, Alayipayuthe, Enthro Mahanubavulu, venkat-achala nilayam. Raghuvam-sasudha, Kurayondrumillai, sayee bajan and at the end Ragupathi Ragava Rajaram will remain forever in the memory of audience.

Dr Alakananda, in her felicita-

tion address appreciated the musicians at length and stressed the need of preserving our Indian Traditional Art & Music throughout the world since India is the Holy Land, from where the Hindu Religion flourished with admiring heritage of our culture, which admires the western countries to great extent. As Prof. Dr Krishnan pointed out as the curtain raising event for the Maha Kumbabishekam of Sri Saradambal Temple, the wonderful music concert of Mandolin Srinivas Brothers has raised the curtain with Nadha Homam in the presence of sages of audience.

Mr Daddu Ramanathan proposed a vote of thanks. In short this year Music festival and special music concerts of BKM will be remembered by the music lovers forever. For further details of VKM please contact 905 696 0768 - website: www.manram.org.

Monsoon Journal congratulates Bharathi Kala Mandram and SVBF for their great success in cultural and spiritual services and extend good wishes to the Indian Artists who made this year music festival to an another record of victory to BKM. Let our younger generation get involved to inculcate their talents and skills in Arts and Fine Arts in the same way.



MONSOON FEATURE

Since we started this current series of articles on business we had been inviting Professionals and Business Persons like Insurance Agents, Real Estate Agents, Mortgage Agents, Debt Solution Experts, Financial Advisors to come forward and share their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the newcomers to Canada and for others who want to switch their businesses or professions. You

Auto Body Repairs – An Evergreen Business

are also well aware that Universal Business Chambers is dedicated to spread your message and create a network of various businesses and professions who are keen and ready to help each other. This gives us great pleasure that people are reading these articles with attention, they contact us to obtain more information, ask questions and register.

As our regular practice, we interviewed some professionals and business people during last

few weeks about their knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. In this series of articles I am putting forward all those interviews for the benefit of the readers of 'Monsoon Journal'. I am starting the series with Auto Body Repairs Business. I met Rajan Kaushal, a member of Universal Business Chambers who is running his auto body repairs business for more than 20 years and has a big reputation among his clients.

BUSINESS - 3



By Prof. Saran Ghai

to its roots. Regarding the courses, one needs to successfully complete Appraiser or Estimation Course, Car Body Repairs Course and Car Painting Course or you can hire trained and experienced labour.

Saran: Those who are new in Canada or want to switch their profession, would you suggest them to try auto body repairs business?

Rajan: There is a famous proverb: "If he can do, I can do." If this concept is kept in mind, anyone can join this business.

Saran: What different services you provide to your customers?

Rajan: We chiefly provide Auto Collision and Restoration services at our facility. As a whole we are expert in everything connected to car bodies.

Saran: Would you welcome anyone who is interested to understand this business at your facility?

Rajan: Why not? We had always been ahead to serve our community. It will be a matter of great pleasure for us if someone volunteers to learn this business. Rather I would willingly help him who is interested to start his own auto body repairs business. I will also help him in knowing about secrets of this business, courses, finance, equipment and everything attached to auto body repairs.

Saran: What message would you like to give about this business to the readers of 'Monsoon Journal'?

Rajan: Anyone who has an inclination in technical jobs, especially in the automobiles, one who is dedicated and keen to learn, is welcome. Besides this, I think I should not prevent myself to inform that anyone who needs any kind of repairs in his car body can contact me on (905) 791-8800 or through Universal Business Chambers to get an additional discount of 20% on our services.

-Prof. Saran Ghai, President – Universal Business Chambers

Dear Readers, Next month we will give you some information about Insurance Business. If you are interested to know about the details of any other business, please e-mail us: universal@universalbusinesschambers.com or call (905) 794-4488.

If you are an Insurance/Real Estate/Mortgage Agent or a Financial Adviser, contact us. We would like to share your experience with the newcomers to Canada and to those who want to switch their profession. For any further information or membership enquiries of UBC, please e-mail or call at (416) 816-5559.

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Remedy through Lucky Stones

Can the Rajapakse April 2010

landslide unite fractured Sri Lanka?

By: Arvind Luxman

Charles Haviland – BBC Correspondent in Colombo – reporting on the Parliamentary Elections 4 days before April 08 made reference in the Global World Service, the President and the Elections Commissioner assured the country the landscape will be free of election posters. But the very proliferation of it in almost every street corner of the Island belied this preposterous claim. That, in a way, is one single aspect of the integrity of the election process and the way it was conducted.

The State – without compunction – used many resources unabashedly for its own benefit. Street posters, TV-Radio, the government-controlled media, vehicles, unlimited fuel (in a land where it is priced exceptionally high) local heavy-handedness by thugs and criminals of the area – being just some. The Police and some sections of the army made their own contribution to the government's election machinery – patently unlawful. In Nawalapitiya and Kumburupiti (Trinco) counting was called off on election day and set for another date. All due to blatant obstruction and violence on opposition election officials and counting agents by government ministers and the like.

It may be noted this is perhaps the first time in the country's history where such a thing had happened. The editorial of a popular daily journal sums up the mood of the people as follows. "The most unpopular bureaucrat in Sri Lanka today is the Commissioner of Elections – whose credibility is challenged all over the country. He is seen to have greatly compromised the electoral process. Under the Constitutional provisions he has no business being in his position – in the 1st place (Lanka Guardian – April 09, 2010) .

In a post-poll Press Conference Ranil Wickremasinghe claimed the next Parliament would be one without the people's mandate. He said more voters (over 50%) stayed away having lost confidence in the questionable manner in which the elections were conducted. He added normally a minimum of 80% vote in General Elections vote - including those held under more difficult conditions during the JVP terror period and in the background



Posters for the parliamentary election in Ralkuli, Trincomalee district-pic by: Doctorandus Sarajevo

of the war. He announced steps are being taken to complain to UN agencies entrusted with looking into improper electioneering procedure, absence of media freedom and the like.

Col. R. Hariharan is one analyst whom many have been critical he is too generous in presenting MR's regime overlooking many flaws – just to be on the good side of the regime. Yet, this is what he has to say in his latest comment "...diplomacy has never been Sri Lanka's strongest suite....President Rajapakse is riding the crest of popularity with success after success but does not appear to be fully conscious of the importance of maintaining cordial relations with the US , India .."

Although I have questioned the validity of the last Presidential Election and the previous General Election, I believe President Rajapakse could be described as having won in this instance – despite many shortcomings. That is largely due to the fact there was hardly any semblance on April 08 to the strong show put up by the opposition in the January 28 Presidential Election - buoyed by the presence of the Buddhist Sinhala hero – "the Generaal" The deflated opposition lead by serial-loser Ranil Wickremasinghe, was concentrating only on preventing Rajapakse ending up with a 2/3rd victory rather than seeking to win the election for the UNP coalition. Those in the fence believing in the old "everybody loves a winner" theory did not miss the point.

The people are weary of elections and suspect it is a dressed

up fraud to cover the regime's weaknesses and poor record in the past five years to engage the more pressing problems of the people. This is best illustrated by the fact less than 50% went to the polls. Significantly, people in the more sensitive Tamil-dominated areas of the North East Province (the Tamil Homeland, if you will) hardly showed any enthusiasm.

The official estimate is 22% voted while others puts it around 18% Apologists for the State did not disappoint us. They present us with attractive computer-aided graphs claiming most people actually voted. I certainly am not going to spoil their day although many who kept away I spoke to did so for the reasons I enumerate. There is much room to say nearly half of the Southern Electorate established beyond doubt they are weary of the carnival of elections while the Tamil-speaking people virtually rejected the "charade".

At the end of the day, Mahinda Rajapakse is in full control of the State machinery – whether one likes it or not. That pleasant situation also brings with it some awesome responsibilities now to a nation impatiently waiting for the Rajapakses to deliver in many fronts. Foremost being uniting the nation where around 1/3rd of the country, arguably, are backing political parties that may seek total separation if their persistent appeals to running their affairs in their now divided Homeland, the North East Province (merged in 1987 for nearly 20 years) is refused again.

The past week has been dom-

inated by the formation of the Cabinet and the post of Prime Minister. All that is now settled although I suspect both are stop-gap arrangements that could well be revived in November. Dallas Allapperuma, very much an inner circle man, going down to accept the lesser Youth Affairs Ministry from the high profile Ministry of Transport he held earlier is an indication he has cooperated with the President to overcome the present run for Cabinet Posts until the "real one" comes in 6 months time. It is good the question of PM was resolved without controversy.

A wag even went to the extent of speculating we may have 3 PMs working on 8-hour shifts to overcome the impasse – as it almost happened in Delhi during the Bansi Lal-Charan Singh period a few years ago when . At least now that poor man from Gampola who made the news both in 1977 and 1983 pogroms (its all in Police records) can wear the suit he has been telling us he had ready for display for the swearing in. Looks like that talk of drastically reducing the Jumbo cabinet is meant for the marines. It is around 37 now and could be more by 5 by next week, which added with the Deputy Ministers – is not substantially less than what the country gained a dubious reputation with.

A visiting journalist remarked with such a large Cabinet of Ministers working even in half "all your problems should be over by now." The appointment of the delinquent Mervyn Silva - widely believed to be the Godfather of the local underworld - surprises



even party men. That he was placed high in the Media Ministry is viewed as in poor taste. Incredibly, the President's comments in justifying the appointment – to a party politician reported in the media – provides much cause for concern. International media organizations have widely condemned this stubborn but appointment which the local media community perceives as a threat to them "to behave - if not" signal.

The lacklustre Ranil Wickremasinghe has added one more tally to his run of major electoral losses and survives in the UNP only because of that strange clause that assures the President of the Party a lifetime. How such a blatant clause went without resistance in a party, not short of brilliant legal talent, remains a mystery. In the matter of the reduced National Lot slots Ranil earned further umbrage by keeping out seniors in the party and coalition partners by an ill-considered pledge earlier no losing candidates will be accommodated in the list. He has proved to be his own suicide-bomber and could well have blasted his tottering leadership role in the party by this poor decision.

President Rajapakse has no more excuses but to get his act together and solve the National Question aided by the enormous mandate he has repeatedly received. He is a creature of SinhalaBuddhist supremacist section, the Mahanayakas and the Army – the trinity of real political power in the country. They can be persuaded by the ruling set not to place road-blocks on the path to national unity.

The TNA enjoys the reputation of speaking for the Tamil people of the NEP – although Minister Douglas Devananda, Col. Karuna and others are inducted into the Cabinet more for cosmetic purposes and international consumption. There is hardly any more reason for insisting on the formalities of preparatory events for "talks" with the representatives of the Tamils. The TNA-ITAK manifesto spells out what the immediate priorities of the Tamil people are – on which they received a resounding mandate of those who voted.

It is probably "Now or Never" for Sri Lanka's territorial integrity.



MONSOON FEATURE

History, Mission & Principles

History

The International Medical Health Organization--Canada (IMHO Canada) is an international humanitarian organization that focuses on developing and improving health care in disadvantaged and needy regions worldwide. IMHO Canada is a registered not-for-profit organization in Canada and is currently awaiting registration with the government of Canada as a charitable organization. The organization was formed in 2008, following the model and mission/vision of the original IMHO in the United States. Although IMHO Canada shares a unique and close relationship with IMHO USA, it is an independent organization driven by its own Board of Directors and Team.

International Medical Health Organization - Canada



Mission

To develop and improve health and health care infrastructure in under-served regions worldwide.

Vision

IMHO Canada aims to improve health care across the globe for those in need, by identifying

health needs and providing resources & training to address those needs. We believe in empowering communities to build their own health systems, improve overall health, and to respond to health needs as they arise. In this way, we promote

self-reliance and sustainability. IMHO Canada often partners with local and international non-governmental organizations to better channel assistance to needy populations. Our work is focused on the following areas:

1. Primary Care & Public Health



2. Health Education & Training
3. Capacity-Building

Founding Principles

IMHO Canada is founded on principles of humanitarianism and neutrality. IMHO Canada chooses its areas of operation according to an objective needs-based analysis, and remains impartial in treating suffering communities in conflict situations. IMHO Canada works to provide assistance during times of monumental suffering, such as in the aftermath of natural and manmade disasters. This emergency relief work complements IMHO Canada's ongoing structural and capacity-building work to enhance health care opportunities and relief.



IMHO Canada presents...



Nalam Kappom




Please join IMHO Canada for this annual event to learn about the most current and pressing needs of the people in Sri Lanka, including firsthand accounts from four visiting physicians from across Sri Lanka, and updates from IMHO Canada on efforts thus far. This event is also the annual fundraising event for IMHO Canada, so please come out and show your support, and make a donation to the important work we do to help those in great need in Sri Lanka! Admission is FREE!

WHEN: Saturday, June 5th (4:00-8:00pm) & Sunday, June 6th (12:00-6:00pm)

WHERE: Canada Sri Ayyappan Temple
635 Middlefield Road,
Scarborough, ON M1V 5B8
www.ayyappan.com

WHY: The people of NE Sri Lanka need our help! The most pressing needs are for prosthetic limbs, mental illness & psychosocial issues, ongoing primary care services, sanitation (including toilets), and assistance for the Jaffna and Batticaloa Hospitals.

HOW: You can make a donation to IMHO Canada by check/cash, PayPal, or direct debit. Or become a monthly sponsor for just \$10/mo.

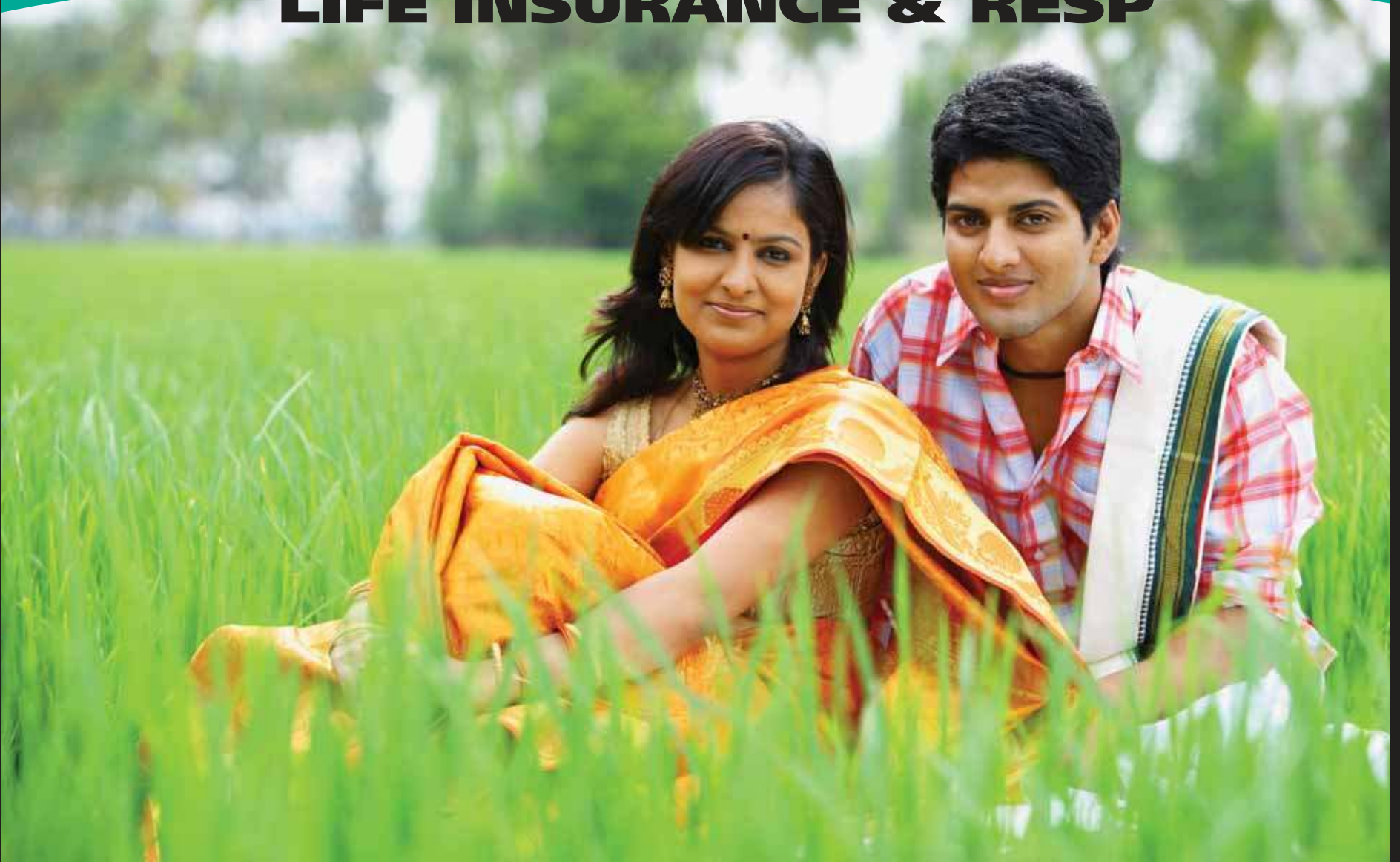


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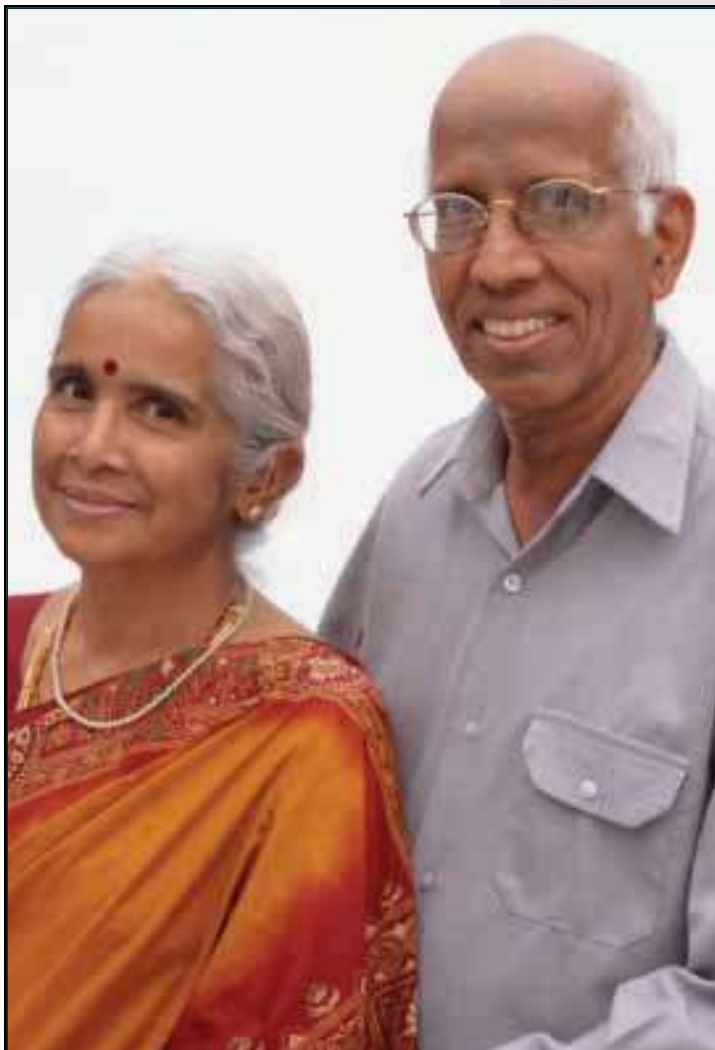
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