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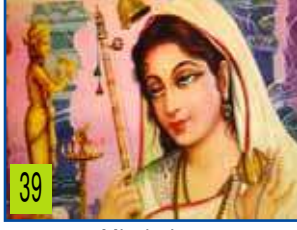
June 2009


What's Inside **Monsoon**

 12
Yogathon ...

 14
Ten Great Myths ...

 24
EAGLE GLEN ...

 39
Mirabai ...

 45
The Beauty of Nature

Monsoon Health 9
Monsoon Real Estate 22
Waterloo News 33
Monsoon Cine 37
Monsoon Kids 44-45

Social Activist and Trauma Counselor speaks at the fourth annual Tamil Studies Conference in Toronto



By **Ellakiya Sivapalan**,
BA (Hons) Political Science, History

The fourth annual Tamil Studies Conference couldn't have come to Toronto at a better time this year. The Conference kicked off at the University of Toronto - Trinity College on Friday, May 22nd and continued till Saturday, May 23rd; only two weeks after the "controversial takeover" of the Gardiner Expressway by the Toronto Tamil community and less than a week from the Tigers' silencing of the guns and "end of the civil war" in Sri Lanka.

With more than 70 scholars, writers, activists and academia from all around the world, the Conference was a presentation of scholarly work in disciplines ranging from Anthropology, Sociology,

History, Diaspora Studies, Religion, Journalism, Music and Art with emphasis on Tamil Studies. This year's theme was "Home, Space and the Other" - "Veendum, Veliyum Thamarum Perarum". Notable Tamil Canadian scholars and social activists were among the presenters and facilitators, including; Professor Joseph Chandra-kanthan, Professor R. Cheran, Kiruthiha Kulendiren and Regini David. Special credit goes to the Academic Organizers Professors. Chelva Kanaganayam, R. Cheran, Darshan Ambalavanar & Sudharshan Durayappah and several other conference organizing committee and volunteers.

Contd. in Page 8

Sri Lanka Government will meet the legitimate political demands of the Tamils, hopes Indian Premier Manmohan Singh

By **Siva Sivapragasam**

Speaking in the Lok Sabha on the President's address in India's first Parliament after the recent General Elections, Premier Manmohan Singh expressed hope that the Sri Lankan Government will meet the legitimate political demands and aspirations of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. He remarked



that the Indian Government is working on this.

Meanwhile, the Tamil National Alliance M.Ps are due to meet the Indian Premier very shortly to discuss the post-war situation in Sri Lanka and to press for a speedy political solution for the Tamils.

Prior to meeting the Prime Minister, the M.Ps met Mr. Karunanidhi, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. In their discussions with the Tamil Nadu Chief

Minister, the Tamil M.Ps insisted on his help and support for the displaced people in the camps and they pointed out the need for the political solution to be implemented soon.

Mr. Karunanidhi informed the M.Ps that he will do all what was possible to help in this matter.

The Indian Government has already promised Rs.500 crores for the rehabilitation process of the displaced Tamils in the camps.

'Stop-Genocide' candidate secures record result, but misses London seat




Ms. Janani (Jan) Jananayagam, candidate for MEP

Details in page 19

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Karygiannis calls on the Harper Government to expedite Family Sponsorship Applications from Sri Lanka

Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt, has called on the Harper Government to expedite Family Sponsorship Applications from Sri Lanka. As the internal situation in Sri Lanka has deteriorated, innocent civilians are suffering unspeakable hardships.

"People in the refugee camps have little or no medical assistance, clean drinking water or food," said Mr. Karygiannis. "There are reports of mass graves and over 20,000 people are reported missing. There are also reports of women being raped, children being separated from their parents and men being segregated separately from their wives and families."

Since the Conservative Government listed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a terrorist organization on April 8, 2006 and the World Tamil Movement (WTM) on 13 June, 2008, the Harper Government has taken an oppressive approach to immigration applications from



Tamil Sri Lankans. While innocent people are dying, immigration application processing times have increased by over three hundred percent; taking up to three years to re-unite spouses.

"Canada must make every effort to ensure that all the necessary security precautions are taken when assessing immigration applications." Mr. Karygiannis commented. "However, applicants from Sri Lanka are undergoing extraordinary background

checks, which are taking an abnormal length of time. This has increased wait times significantly."

Spousal Sponsorships are mandated, by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, to be finalized within six to eight months. Spousal Applications from Sri Lanka are taking up to three years. People are undergoing two and three interviews in order to be able to emigrate to Canada and join their families."

In order to address the plight the innocent victims of the civil war, Mr. Karygiannis is calling on the Harper Conservative Government to immediately enact the Protocol used by the Liberal Government after the Tsunami:

"The immediate evacuation of Canadians caught in the conflict area, who wish to leave Sri Lanka;

"The immediate expedition of Family Class Application presently in progress and new Family Class Application from the affected region (medical and background checks are finalized)

"In order to meet the Department of Citizenship and Immigration mandated Standards of Operation, the High Commission in Colombo should be provided with additional staff in order that this 'need' for increased security does not increase wait times.

"The provision of additional CIDA funding of \$5 million to approved NGO's working in the field in order to provide and deliver humanitarian aid;



"The matching, dollar-for-dollar, all monies raised by NGO's, approved by the Government of Canada, to provide assistance to the war torn area, specifically the North and the Northeast of Sri Lanka;

"That should the Sri Lankan Canadian community wish to raise funds, they should be issued a one-time, special charity number by the Revenue Canada Agency in order to fulfill that requirement;

"That should the Government of Sri Lanka ask for assistance or if asked by the UN, Canada should offer the DART Team, as we did after the Tsunami; and,

"That Canada should push the UN to assign a Special Envoy to deal with the situation in Sri Lanka.

[Full Text of press release issued by Office of the Hon. Jim Karygiannis, P.C., M.P. June 3, 2009]

City of Toronto introduces Mobile Multi-Ethnic Food Carts

The City of Toronto has started a pilot project known as Toronto a la Cart Street Food Pilot Project. The proposed project is for vendors to market food from different ethnicities on mobile carts. This is a 3 year pilot project and there will be an annual report back to the Board of Health outlining the status of the project and making recommendations.

The city is supporting the vendors through media training, marketing materials, the creation of the "a la cart" brand etc. There is no financial support from the city to the vendors. More locations will be added in the future depending on the success of the present vendors. Food safety is the primary goal of the proposed project.

Although the city does not control or regulate the prices, vendors were requested to submit their pricing scheme as part of their application to the project. Their proposed pricing scheme was considered during the overall vendor evaluation and selection process. The city welcomed applications from all ethnicities and places of food origins. The vendor located at Nathan Philips Square offers Indian Food and the City hopes to receive food proposals from all regions of the world as the program expands.

Four of the eight vendors participating in the new Toronto a la Cart Street Food Pilot project have opened their Food Carts for business since last month.

CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER CONSULTS WITH TOURISM INDUSTRY LEADERS

New Federal Tourism Strategy will support businesses and create jobs

OTTAWA - Canadians who work in the tourism and hospitality sector will benefit from a federal tourism strategy that brings together the best ideas from the public and private sectors, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a gathering of national tourism industry leaders today.

"Tourism is an increasingly important industry that supports small businesses in every region of our country and keeps thousands of Canadians employed,"



City of Toronto launches 311 customer service for residents to access non-emergency services

Mayor David Miller meets Ethnic Media

By Siva Sivapragasam

Toronto residents will soon be able to call 311 and obtain assistance for non-emergency services from the Help-Line.

Mayor David Miller announced this to members of the ethnic Media when he met them at a Press Conference recently. The function was organized for an ethnic media briefing and information session where some of the main officials working for the City were present along with Mayor David Miller.

The 311 service is to be launched shortly and it is a simple service that will ensure that all people can access City Hall 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for non-emergency services, programs and information. Access to 311 customer service is provided in up to 170 languages via telephone interpretation service.

The Ethnic Press was represented well where several ethnic media representatives were present and made useful contributions

said the Prime Minister. "Our Economic Action Plan makes several major investments to strengthen this vital sector. The next step is to improve the coordination of our efforts and better sell Canada as a tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors."

The Prime Minister and Minister of State for Tourism and Small Business Diane Ablonczy



Monsoon Staff with Mayor David Miller

to the information session. The City Manager Joseph Pennachetti spoke on some issues and was followed by Kevin Sack, Director, Strategic Communications who made a presentation on City initiatives. Patricia Trott, Manager Media Relations and Issues Management spoke on accessing city information on Toronto.ca.

The presentations were followed by a Question & Answer session in which representatives of the Media clarified certain issues from the officials present at the Press briefing. Some of the issues discussed related to recruitment to the City offices, accessing information, introduction of the mobile ethnic food carts etc. Kevin Sack made the closing remarks.

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used their meeting with industry leaders to announce that the Federal Government is taking the next step towards a new Federal Tourism Strategy that seeks to broaden access to, and awareness of, Canadian tourist attractions.

"Serving as Prime Minister has granted me the privilege of visiting every corner of our country and seeing, first hand, the incredible hospitality, cultural institutions and natural splendor that Canada has to offer," said the Prime Minister. "As Canadians, we must set aside our modesty and do all we can to sell the amazing tourist experiences that exist in our own backyard. By working together, we will build a tourism industry that employs thousands more people and showcases the very best of Canada to the world."

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- Subramania Bharathiyar
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Managing Editor & Publisher
Logan Velumailum

Editorial & Marketing Consultant
Siva Sivapragasam

Promotion Co-ordinator
Senthil Senthivel

Layout Design
Santosh Kumar K.A

Graphics Consultant
Gnane B. Gnanendran

Contributing Columnists

Anand. J
Abizar Badani
Arun Senathirajah
Ayktah Grover
Prof. Ghai, Saran
Harish . G
K.T. Kumaran
Krishni. L
Kumar Punithavel
Mithura Anandarajah
Nate. V
Parthipan Kugadason (PK)
Raymond Rajabalan
Rudy Ruthran
Shiyam. L
Sri Krishnan. S
Circulation Co-ordinator
S.S. Mathavan
Killy Sivarajah

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"Source for Multi Ethnic Exposure"

From the Publisher's Desk ...

Alarming right violation situation for Tamil IDPs:

"Screening Centres, Rehabilitation Centres and Internment Camps"...

The "civil war is over" according to Government of Sri Lanka but what is to follow now are the many unanswered issues as to the humanitarian catastrophe in Sri Lanka such as the "screening process", "internment camps" and "rehabilitation centres".

While the horrific conditions at the "internment camps" have received attention, horrific abuses are reportedly taking place in so called "screening centres" and possibly the "rehabilitation centres" also. What are the procedures involved and who determines the outcome in these processes? The "Screening process" of the war displaced in Sri Lanka is conveniently run by the Sri Lankan government and therefore will enable them to continue to treat the Tamil populace using their own discretion.

Various reports raise fear of abuses taking place where thousands are being detained and "interrogated." There are no outside witnesses at all to prevent the human right violations from continuing in these several "screening centres." It is feared that thousands of people may be held even within the Kilinochchi area "screening centres" and were never allowed into the larger internment camps in Vavuniya.

It is reported that even persons from "internment camps" in Vavuniya are being taken away secretly to the "screening centres" for alleged involvement and / or sympathy to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Children are being separated from parents and being detained in "rehabilitation centres".

UN watchdog Inner City Press reported on June 2nd that 13,100 Tamil Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) appear to have disappeared from Sri Lanka's internment camps between May 27th and May 30th reports by the UN's Office for Humanitarian Affairs.

Protests for the support of international humanitarian intervention have occurred all over the world in cities such as London, New York, Washington and Toronto. These awareness campaigns have gone on for several months and continue to take place as the international community remains largely dormant and inactive to the humanitarian violations that are taking place in Sri Lanka.

A monitoring system needs to be enforced urgently so that international organizations such as the United Nations and other Human Rights groups will be permitted access to these camps to be witnesses to the actions that take place. Without any witnesses to the atrocities that are taking place in these "screening centres", "rehabilitation centres" and "internment camps" countless Tamils are continually disappearing and the numbers continue to grow.

There are discrepancies between the figures from the Sri Lankan government and independent groups for the people in the camps which pose questions of legitimacy for these camps.

Is the Sri Lankan government running these camps to show the international community that they do care about all of their people, including the Tamil people? If this is true then what will they do after the international community loses interest and they are up to their own discretion.

U.S. Senators have urged Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to deny the IMF loan to Sri Lanka that they requested. The grounds for

this refusal were as the Sri Lankan government continued to ignore to address any of the concerns that were raised by Secretary of State Clinton and others, which evidently may set precedence that Sri Lanka can disregard the international community's concerns but still receive their support.

"Before receiving major financial support, the government should first take at least some steps to reassure the world that it is adjusting its policies, by allowing access to the conflict area and international monitoring of the screening process..." said Senators Patrick Leahy and Robert Casey in a letter to the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on June 5th.

The Monsoon Journal urges Government of Canada to take similar urgent measures such as the move by U.S. Senators in suspending the IMF loan, towards getting transparency and access to all "screening centers", "rehabilitation camps" and "welfare camps" run by the Government of Sri Lanka for Internally Displaced Persons.

**- Krishni Loganathan,
BA (Hons)**

Letter to Editor

Dear Sir:

According to President Obama, Secretary Clinton, the chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Muellen and Commander of Central Command, General Petraeus, for eight years Pakistan had been abdicating its responsibility. In these circumstances it is not Pakistan which has reason to worry about the security of its border with India but it is the latter, a victim of sustained proxy war and terrorist infiltrations over the last two decades that has to be concerned about its border security.

In 1947-48 it was the tribal raiders who were unleashed into Kashmir by Gen Akbar Khan of the Pakistan Army. In 1965, too, it was the tribal raiders who attempted to infiltrate into Kashmir under Operation Gibraltar during the Ayub Khan regime. During the Bhutto regime from 1989 onwards once again mostly tribal militants and foreigners belonging to various jihadi organisations who have been infiltrating and carrying out terrorist acts in

Kashmir. Now the Pakistan Army itself accepts that terrorism originating from the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other associated organisations must be disrupted, dismantled and defeated. If the Pakistan Army is serious about its mission against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda it cannot have anything to fear from the Indian Army deployment which is meant to counter the activities of the same terrorists only. When the Pakistan Army treats the jihadis as its strategic assets, it will have concerns on Indian Army deployment. Any continuous obsession about Indian Army deployment will only raise doubts about the Pakistan Army having given up its misperceptions about the militants being its strategic assets.

Kashmir is not the origin of India-Pakistan tension but it is the outcome of Pakistan's two-nation theory which is the original clash of civilisations thesis. At the basis of it is the extremist thesis that Muslims cannot coexist with others and all Muslim-majority areas should be part of an Islamic order. No doubt, the US during the Cold War, particularly in the eighties, promoted the extremist Wahabi

cult to push out the Soviet forces from Afghanistan and that led to the spawning of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, other jihadi organisations and the espousal of the clash of civilisations thesis by Islamic extremists. Surely, at this stage the US cannot afford to repeat its

mistakes of the Cold War and the eighties, and support any stand which would directly or indirectly endorse the Islamic extremist exclusivism in any form.

Kanayalal Raina

A displaced Kashmiri Pandith now settled in Canada

Toronto fallen firefighter memorial service

The annual Toronto Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service was held as a way of honouring the 213 firefighters who are named on the Memorial Honour Roll. The memorial commemorates firefighters who have died in the service of the citizens of Toronto since 1848.

The memorial event was held at Fire Station 334 (Harbourfront) at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 31st, 2009.

There were 14 additions to the Honour Roll this year:

- * Captain Eric Sadler, died Oct. 7, 1970
- * Captain Lester Bangay, Sept. 24, 1972
- * District Chief James *Bob* Martin, Sept. 28, 1981
- * Captain Raymond Brooks, Feb. 23, 1991
- * Firefighter Bernie Bourne, Apr. 17, 1994
- * Firefighter Kenneth Nicoll, July 12, 1995
- * Firefighter Thomas M. McCullagh, Nov. 25, 2001
- * Captain Craig Carter, Aug. 25, 2004
- * Firefighter Charles Brown, Oct. 24, 2004
- * Captain Keith Brown, Aug. 8, 2005
- * District Chief Bill Yates, March 24, 2008
- * District Chief Robert *Bob* Leek, Aug. 10, 2008
- * Captain Ron Seymour, Oct. 8, 2008
- * Firefighter Jerald Callaghan, Oct. 12, 2008

The Toronto Fallen Firefighter Memorial is dedicated to the brave firefighters in Toronto's history who have lost their lives in the line of duty, or died due to a work-related disease. It recognizes that firefighters risk their lives every day to protect lives, property and the environment in Toronto.

Firefighters and their families and friends gather annually for this ceremony of remembrance. Today's event included the comments and the laying of wreaths by senior representatives from the City of Toronto, Toronto Fire Services and the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. Toronto has won numerous awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. 2009 marks the 175th anniversary of Toronto's incorporation as a city. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents. Media contact: Toronto Fire Services Media Line, 416-338-0763

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Canadians choose Top 25 Canadian Immigrants

First national award for immigrants results in more than 10,000 votes

First national award for immigrants results in more than 10,000 votes

A human rights defender, a filmmaker and a scientist are among the winners of the first-ever Top 25 Canadian Immigrants awards. The national awards program, which is being presented by Canadian Immigrant magazine and sponsored by RBC, seeks to uncover and celebrate the untold stories and remarkable achievements of outstanding Canadian immigrants and inspire others.

The winners were selected by more than 10,000 Canadians who voted online for their favourites. Winners will be honoured this week in Vancouver (May 25) or Toronto (May 28) at ceremonies hosted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

"It is exciting to celebrate the contributions that immigrants make to the social, economic, and political fabric of our country," said Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, who will attend the Toronto ceremonies on Thursday. "As Canadians, we have found great success in the coming together of diverse cultures. Celebrations like this remind us how very fortunate we are to live in a country that embraces the many traditions of the world."

The awards program launched in November 2008 with a nation-

wide call-for-nominations, garnered hundreds of submissions over a two-month period, from which 75 semi-finalists were shortlisted by a panel of Canadian Immigrant judges. Voting was then opened online at canadian-immigrant.ca for the public to select their favourites among the 75 semi-finalists. From February to April, 2009, more than 10,000 Canadians voted for the Top 25 winners.

"RBC has been looking after the needs of new immigrants to Canada for over seven generations," said Andrea Metrick, head, Client Strategy and Multicultural Markets, at RBC. "On behalf of all RBC employees, we want to extend our warm congratulations to each of the winners and our appreciation to all nominees and voters who participated in this inaugural year."

Among the winners of this distinguished award, 11 comes from South Asian community.

Baltej Singh Dhillon of Surrey, BC, is the RCMP sergeant best known for being the first RCMP officer to be allowed to wear a turban. He's currently a member of the guild of speakers with Passages to Canada and director of 3HO Organization in Vancouver.

Hari Varshney of Vancouver, BC, is a venture capitalist and heads his own family-owned Varshney Capital Corporation. As



Ten Ontario winners of the Top 25 Canadian Immigrants awards, along with the award presenting guest Mr Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Ms Andrea Metrick, Head of Client Strategy and Multicultural Markets at RBC

a philanthropist, he has donated \$1 million to his alma mater, University of British Columbia.

John Halani of Vancouver, BC, from Uganda founded the Ethno Business Council and owns two hotels often used as temporary accommodations for newcomers landing in Vancouver. The philanthropist is also consul general for Uganda.

Narinder Dhir of Burnaby, BC, is a retired businessman and former governor in counsel on the Multicultural Advisory Council that formed the multicultural policy for British Columbia. He also helped found the first Hindu temple in B.C.

Ujjal Dosanjh of Vancouver, BC, is currently a member of

Parliament and community activist. He is a former attorney general and premier of British Columbia, and a former federal minister of health.

Girish Agrawal of Calgary, AB, is an award winning financial adviser and community leader.

Anupama Vittal of Mississauga, ON, is the president of the Mississauga Art Society and also the CEO and founder of the Bean Bag Factory Inc. and Artescape Anua.

Birinder Singh Ahluwalia of Toronto, ON, is the president of BSA Diagnostic Ltd., one of the largest radiological diagnostic centres of its kind in Canada. He's a philanthropist who freely supports community projects as well



as cultural and educational causes.

Colin Saldanha of Mississauga, ON, is a medical doctor who presently works at the Peel Travel Clinic, which provides medical advice to travelers. He's also worked as an immigration medical officer with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, an aviation medical examiner with the Ministry of Transportation and a designated physician for the RCMP.

Deepa Mehta of Toronto, ON, an internationally acclaimed filmmaker, was nominated for an Oscar in best foreign language film category, making it Canada's first non-French-language film to be selected.

Naseer Ahmad of Vaughan, ON, oversaw the construction of Canada's first Islamic residential subdivision with homes surrounding a mosque in the centre.

Winners are featured on canadianimmigrant.ca and in the June edition of Canadian Immigrant magazine. Winners receive a commemorative certificate and lapel pin as well as a \$250 donation toward an authorized Canadian charity of their choice.

**For a full list of the Top 25 winners and their biographies, please visit canadianimmigrant.ca/top25.

Toronto wins two national awards for green initiatives and international contributions

The City of Toronto has won the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Sustainable Community award in the Buildings category and the Outstanding International Volunteer Contribution award in the category of the same name. The announcement was made today in Whistler BC, where the FCM's annual conference is being held.

The awards recognize the City's leadership in sustainable community development, as well as in international municipal cooperation in countries in South America, Africa, Asia and South-East Asia.

Two sustainable development programs of the City's, the Toronto Green Standard (TGS) and the Better Buildings Partnership - New Construction (BBP-NC) were nationally recognized for their environmental excellence and innovation in service delivery and together received a Sustainable Community award.

"I am very proud of the work we have done to raise the bar for sustainable development in this City," says Mayor David Miller. "In Toronto, buildings account for approximately 63 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions, so it is critical that all new development adhere to a higher level of environmental performance if we are to achieve these targets".

TGS is a set of performance meas-

ures for new buildings that promotes sustainable development. Being implemented through the planning process in September 2009, TGS is the City's approach to greening development practices that respond to the City's environmental concerns, which include air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, water quality, solid waste and the natural environment.

The BBP-NC program provides assistance and incentives to enable energy efficiency measures throughout the design and construction phases of new buildings in Toronto. The program assists with the upfront costs of energy simulation or "modeling" during the early stages of design, as well as paying out incentives on the final "as constructed" energy savings that a new building achieves.

The Outstanding International Volunteer Contribution award acknowledges the City of Toronto's leadership in working with international municipal governments in implementing a number of specific programs to help improve quality of life in countries such as El Salvador, Botswana, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

The City of Toronto has been actively involved in three different programs internationally. The first project was established six years ago by Toronto Public Health (TPH). TPH has

worked with the local governments in the South East District, Botswana on helping them establish public health initiatives focusing on HIV/AIDS, palliative care and youth engagement.

Since 2005, the City of Toronto has also been assisting Tsunami affected communities in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, helping them re-build and develop sustainable waste diversion programs, adequate surface water drainage systems, as well as improving public libraries and developing cultural projects. In El Salvador, the City is working in partnership with the city of Soyapango on improving their overall ability to deliver services, such as a re-engineer their financial management and information technology processes.

"This award reflects the City's commitment to global cooperation and the ability of cities to use their local knowledge to improve the quality of life for others who can benefit from our expertise," said Mayor David Miller.


The mayor accepted both awards on behalf of the City of Toronto.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. Toronto has won

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(Middlefield & Finch)
Web: www.lawyers.com/kesavanlaw
E-Mail: kesavanlawoffice@bellnet.ca

Tel: 416-754-9843
Fax: 416-754-2362

numerous awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. 2009 marks the 175th anniversary of Toronto's incorporation

as a city. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents.



San Jose nonprofit organization International Tamil Technical Professionals' Organization (ITTPO) founded the Vanni Tech in 2002. The institution hailed as a model on how Tamil diaspora could help build their homeland is now "abandoned."

In a news report recently on California - San Jose's Mercury News, Shan Nanthakumar of ITTPO said: "We will go back and start all over again, as soon as we are allowed back. Education is the key driver of survival of the Tamil community."

Full report by Lisa M. Krieger on Vanni Tech also becoming a casualty in the Sri Lanka onslaught:

Among the many casualties of Sri Lanka's bloody civil war is a Silicon Valley-built dream: an innovative technical college, built through Bay Area donations, but damaged in combat, then dismantled and moved, and finally abandoned.

The surviving faculty, staff and students of the Vanni Institute of Technology are believed to be held, against their will, in Tamil refugee camps, where the United Nations says they are in desperate need of food, water and medical care.

One recent graduate is known to be dead. Two staff members are undergoing treatment for gunshot wounds.

"It is a huge disappointment and frustration," said Shan Nanthakumar, a Wharton-trained émigré and chief financial officer for the Altierre Corp, who helped support the school with the San Jose nonprofit organization International Tamil Technical Professionals' Organization (ITTPO).

"My hope is that they are still alive, somewhere - and that we can help them get back on their feet," Nanthakumar said.

A quarter-century of conflict ended in mid-May, raising hopes that the nation, formerly known as Ceylon, could seek peace, reconciliation and reconstruction. Many had high hopes for the nation when it achieved independence from Britain in 1948, but the civil war devastated its

International Tamil Technical Professionals' Organization vows to rebuild Vanni Tech

potential to become a regional economic power.

"We will go back and start all over again, as soon as we are allowed back," Nanthakumar vowed. "Education is the key driver of survival of the Tamil community."

Built in 2002 during several years of cease-fire, VanniTech was a high-tech oasis at the end of a dusty alley, past abandoned bicycles and wandering chickens.

In clean and air-conditioned classrooms, it educated hundreds of the region's top students in electronics, software development, database management and other computer-related skills - all desperately needed by the poor and isolated Tamil-held part of the nation, in the northeast.

Politically neutral, VanniTech earned the official blessing of both the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tiger separatists.

On a green and manicured campus, its software lab was filled with Pentium 4 computers. Its library held more than 15,000 books and CDs such as "Getting Ahead: A Business Course in English." The school had intranet service with e-mail, database servers and wireless connectivity. There were labs, dormitories, an employment center, cafeteria and a gym.

Its most advanced students studied university-level subjects like logic design, circuit analysis and wireless communications. By graduation, they could write business letters and give short speeches in English.

Its estimated 200 graduates have taken jobs with businesses, nongovernmental agencies or outsourced projects, such as Computer Zone Consulting of Minneapolis, Minn.

"It was a beacon of hope to so many young people that a self-sustaining university was in their midst," said Stanford University pathology professor Yaso Natkunam, who visited the campus in 2006. "It was an assurance of what could be achieved and a chance to build for a better future."

VanniTech was conceived by Cisco Systems software engineer Jey Surier of San Jose, who left



Vanni Institute of Technology handout photo - when it was functioning

the region in 1982 but recognized that many of its top students remained trapped and unable to study due to the war and battered economy. Within six months, ITTPO donated \$100,000. In the Tamil village of Kilinochchi, Surier found a suitable site to renovate.

"It was a broken-down building with bullet holes," Surier said. "There was damage from a shell blast on the second floor. It had a leaking roof and no ceiling."

To rebuild, he arranged for tools and materials to go through two military checkpoints along the nation's badly damaged two-lane Highway A9.

For four consecutive years, students graduated and found well-paying jobs. Among them was Singam Theepan, who had lost his leg due to shrapnel lacerations - but gained enough computer expertise to support himself and his parents.

"I thought I would always have to rely on my parents. Now I'll be able to take care of them," said Theepan, interviewed at the school in 2005. "This gave me the only opportunity to progress in this life."

The renewal of combat in January 2008 was devastating to the school.

"There was air force bombings that shattered the windows. After that, there was more indiscriminate shelling," Surier said.

Students and staff dismantled the campus and moved it, in

all contact with them."

On May 20, as army troops closed in on the dwindling band of Tamil Tigers, the terrified civilians fled.

One school staffer, who telephoned San Jose with a borrowed cell phone, told Surier that he escaped the region by wading through a lagoon. "He got shot in the stomach, and started bleeding in the water, but kept walking," Surier said.

Worried about their fate, Silicon Valley's Tamil community is urging the Sri Lankan government to grant access by international aid workers to the refugee camps that house hundreds of thousands of displaced refugees. And they pray for a political settlement, granting rights to the marginalized Tamils, so that violence does not reignite.

Most important, they want the scholars to be released from the camps, so they can return to what remains of their school.

"Our graduates can help rebuild the country. These are local people - top-notch people - with technical skills and know-how," Surier said.

Said Nanthakumar: "Education is the fastest way to self-reliance-and it's been taken away from them."

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Treating the wounded and medical emergencies remains a priority in Vavuniya camps - MSF



A Tamil woman sits on a bed with her child as U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is given a tour of a field hospital in the refugee camp called Manik Farm on the outskirts of the northern Sri Lankan town of Vavuniya May 23, 2009-Reuters pic

"The current restrictions on access to the camps is limiting and slowing are ability to respond to the medical needs of the internally displaced persons," said Severine Ramon, MSF coordinator in the MSF field hospital.

Over the last few weeks, while tens of thousands of people have emerged from the Vanni, the former conflict zone in northern Sri Lanka, MSF teams have been working alongside Sri Lankan Ministry of Health staff providing surgical and medical care to people who were caught up in the fighting. The situation remains extremely worrying inside the hospitals and among the 269,000 displaced people in Vavuniya District.

More than 500 wounded patients are receiving daily medical care in the three hospitals where MSF teams are working together with the Ministry of Health staff.

MSF opened a field hospital close to the Menik Farm camps on May 22. It is the closest referral hospital for the 226,000 displaced people living in Menik Farm. The temporary structure will provide 24 hour surgical and medical care during the current emergency phase. Surgical activities began on Tuesday, May 26. The surgical team is carrying out between six and 10 procedures per day, mainly wound debridements.

"Patients are mainly referred to our hospital by the Ministry of Health medical facilities in Menik Farm camp", explained Severine Ramon, MSF coordinator for the field hospital. "We received more than 100 patients during the first week, mostly with wound infections, severe respiratory infections among children and dehydration because of diarrhea. But the current restrictions on access to the camps is limiting and slowing are ability to respond to the medical needs of the internally displaced persons."

MSF continues to support the Ministry of Health surgical and medical activities in Vavuniya Hospital where the number of patients remains at least three times more than the 450-bed capacity. MSF has set up a dressing clinic close to the wards and the team is applying and changing approximately 60 dressings per day. There are 100 care takers who tend to the patients in the hospital, feeding and assisting them.

Dozens of people have been referred from Vavuniya Hospital to the nearby Pampaimadu Ayurvedic Hospital to receive post-operative care, including physiotherapy. A small operating theatre has been set up in the hospital for minor surgical procedures.

[msf.org]

Two LTTE leaders killed as they marched to surrender



Balasingham Nadesan



Seevaratnam Puleedevan



Marie Colvin

Two LTTE leaders killed as they marched to surrender

LTTE's political wing leaders B Nadesan and S Puleedevan were gunned down by the Sri Lankan army as they came out holding white flags to surrender, according to a media report.

Balasingham Nadesan was the head of the political wing of LTTE, while Seevaratnam Puleedevan was the chief of the Tigers' peace secretariat. "For several days I had been the intermediary between the Tiger leadership and the United Nations as the army pressed in on the last enclave at

the end of a successful military campaign to defeat the rebellion," Marie Colvin, correspondent of Sunday Times (UK) wrote.

Marie Colvin, recognized as Best Foreign Correspondent in many of the British Press Awards, was wounded when she was fired upon in Vavuniya by the Sri Lankan Army in April 2001. Due to shrapnel injury she lost sight in one of her eyes.

Marie Colvin quoted a Tamil, who was in a group that managed to escape the war zone, to describe what happened on the morning of May 18 when the two

leaders were killed.

This source, who later spoke to an aid worker, said Nadesan and Puleedevan walked towards the Sri Lankan army lines with a white flag in a group of about a dozen men and women. He said the army started firing machine guns at them.

Nadesan's wife, a Sinhalese, yelled in Sinhala at the soldiers: "He is trying to surrender and you are shooting him." She was also shot down.

According to the source, who is now in hiding fearful for his life, all in the group were killed.

Aid workers forced to leave Sri Lanka to purge criticism

Foreign aid workers are being forced to leave Sri Lanka as the government considers some of them of being sympathetic to the Tamil Tigers, which could hamper international relief efforts, a media report said.

The government is forcing dozens of British and other foreign aid workers to leave the island country. The policy is costing Sri Lanka tens of thousands of pounds of donors' money as they struggle to help 280,000 Tamil civilians in internment camps, 'The Times' said on June 3 quoting aid organisations.

Sri Lanka claims new visa rules introduced last year was an

effort to "weed out Tiger sympathizers". But aid workers said the rules were being used to purge foreign critics and to limit the ability of NGOs to operate and lobby the government, the report said.


According to an unnamed senior staff in an international aid group, the NGOs are extremely scared. "If you raise your voice you'll be the next one thrown out," they are warned.

The Sri Lankan government deported the Norwegian head of Forut, an Oslo-based NGO, on Saturday and stopped a British employee of Forut from re-entering the country last month, citing new rules that prevent them from



staying in the country for more than three years.

Two foreigners, including a Briton, working for Care International were forced to leave last month because their visas were not extended.



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by MP Bob Rae, Liberal Foreign Affairs Critic

We are told that celebrations have broken out in the Sinhala community in Colombo. That is understandable, but it should be a celebration marked with sadness as well. "The war is over", the crowds will shout. But there is a difference between a war ended by agreement and a war ended by death and destruction.

The tens of thousands of deaths, towns and villages destroyed and hundreds of thou-

If there is no magnanimity in victory, there is no victory

sands of people made homeless in this long conflict have not, until recently, dominated the airwaves and televisions of the Western world. Seven years ago there was a window in this terrible tragedy, a ceasefire brokered by Norway in the wake of unprecedented bombings in the South and a dramatic toughening of world opinion after 9/11. As Chairman of the Forum of Federations, I attended most of the negotiating sessions of the so-called peace talks, and met with the leaders of government, opposition, civil society and the LTTE, known as the Tamil Tigers. I have been back many times since. I think of the possibilities of peace in the years after 2000 and I weep at the lost opportunity, the lost lives. So many dead now that were once alive, debating the possibilities and prospects for peace.

It is impossible to say anything about what is happening without enraging opinion on

both sides. But some things must be said. The Sinhala community - the majority population - took power after the departure of the British in 1949 and over a long period made a series of disastrous decisions: imposing their language and religion (Buddhism) as the only official expression of the country, limiting access to universities and the civil service by the Tamil community, and refusing to broaden the country's politics to allow an effective expression of Tamil opinion. Repeated attempts by moderate Tamils to effect change were met by a

stone wall of resistance. What had been a parliamentary issue turned violent in the 1970's, with the Tamil Tigers emerging as the most powerful guerrilla force after that time. The Tigers were ruthless at killing their opponents and insisting that they and they alone would represent the Tamil people. Their goal was an independent Tamil state in the north and northeast controlled by the Tamil Tigers.

We are always looking for "good guys and bad guys" in a dispute. The Sri Lankan government, for example, insists that the only way to understand what is happening is that the Tigers are thugs and terrorists and so have to be eliminated. The Tigers and their apologists will point to the evil of a corrupt government that they say wants to eliminate the

on both sides won out. In recent months, we witnessed an escalation of the violence as the Sri Lankan government defeated their opponents once and for all. Hundreds of thousands have been affected by this conflict, with thousands still remaining in internal displacement camps at the hands of their Sri Lankan adversaries. While the fighting seems to have stopped for now, the hard work only begins.

The north of the country has been devastated by this war - there will be no pictures on state controlled television of the dead and wounded, the villages destroyed and the lives shattered. I can remember some years ago a senior government official expressing shock at the physical destruction in and around Jaffna when he paid a visit after the



Tamils entirely.

The Tigers are ruthless and have never made the transition from a guerrilla army to a democratic force. They use suicide bombers against civilians and recruit children into their army. But their support around the world is partly based on the sense of the Tamil people that they have never been able to find justice inside a failed state. The Tigers appear as the only public voice for the many grievances of the Tamil population inside Sri Lanka. That does not justify or excuse suicide bombings and the recruitment of children. But it does mean that the narrative of "they're terrorists and that explains everything" is simply inadequate.

The collapse of the peace talks in 2003, the tsunami, the escalation of killings and assassinations, and the official termination of the ceasefire by the government in 2008 meant that the advocates of a "military solution"

ceasefire. "I had no idea it was that bad". I expressed deep surprise that he didn't know, the hospitals and schools destroyed, the homes wiped out, the sheer scale of the physical destruction. The same holds true today.

These hundreds of thousands are not terrorists. The world cannot stand by and do nothing while they attempt to rebuild their lives. The international community can't allow the Sri Lankan government to say "it's an internal matter" and stay away. Nor can Canada, with its long history of engagement in this issue and it hosting the largest population of Tamils outside of South Asia, stay silent any longer. Political accommodation and reconciliation must emerge if this conflict is to be resolved. The Tamil community of Sri Lanka cannot be ignored, but must be brought into the fold if the Sri Lanka has any chance of securing long term peace and stability.

The many and widely attended demonstrations over the past several weeks throughout the world have proven just how powerful these grievances remain in the Tamil community both within and outside Sri Lanka. A military victory is not enough.

If there is no magnanimity in victory, there is no victory. I shall go back to the Vanni, because the effort must still be made. But it is hard not to cry at what has been lost, how much life has been destroyed. And what must still be done to bring justice to the peace that is being proclaimed so loudly.

Social Activist and Trauma Counselor...

Contd. from Page 1

While panels discussing the Pallava period, Sangam literature, Missionaries in Tamil Nadu during the colonial era, or the case of Buddhism among Tamils were intriguing, particularly to the young Tamil scholars who seek knowledge and greater understanding of their heritage and history, it was the discussions on the current conflict in Sri Lanka and the Tamil Diaspora that drew more participation and interest - A biased and unconscious interest indeed. The participants could not refrain from engaging the panelists on the current conflict and seeking their perspectives on issues of terrorism, genocide, armed conflict, protests and civil disobedience. One of the most engaging panels at the Conference was "Activist Practices and the Materialization of Political Community in Tamil Nadu and Toronto", chaired by Glynis George and presented by Kiruthiha Kulendiren, Regini David, Lucy Pirapakaran, and Preethy Sivakumar. It was a panel of strong female presence and feminist perspectives.

Among these vivacious presenters was Kiruthiha Kuldendiren, a community advocate, activist, Trauma Counselor and an eco-feminist. Her presentation dealt with the impact of displacement and transmigration on social activism in Canada - a topic certainly in need of further exploration and discussion. Kulendiren explains "social activism is international action to bring social, economic, political or environmental change, justice and well-being." As a child survivor of the war, Kulendiren understands the sentiments of the Tamil community. She herself triggered on the Gardiner Expressway on May 10, 2009. "This is how I chose to celebrate Mother's Day" she told a group of fifty or so participants. For Canadian Tamils, Kulendiren explains, "the experiences of trauma, oppression and loss in their past, combined with barriers and oppression they face here are stressors that contribute to these social activist practices." As we

have seen in recent weeks, thousands of Tamils participated in series of protests, demonstrations, rallies and vigils. This was an extraordinary outpouring of first and second generation Canadians, who took to the streets to bring about social, political and economic change and justice. This is also a form of expression and coping mechanism for Tamils who have survived the war and who continue to relive the trauma through the current conflict.

When asked from the audience whether the current controversial protests by the Tamil community have undermined the cause, Kulendiren replied "Tamil Canadians cannot express themselves without being labeled". She accepts that there has been negative coverage on the matter but further explains that this is the media's intent to demonize a community. She also points out that despite the great number of support from members and organizations in the non-Tamil community; the media chose to show this as an exclusively "Tamil" issue; undermining this as a humanitarian crisis requiring international intervention.

For those who question why the Tamils are unable to leave behind the baggage they bring to their host country, Kulendiren has this to say: "survivor guilt". As survivors of war, oppression, displacement and torture, Tamil Canadians feel extremely privileged to have escaped the horror but feel immensely guilty of what they have left behind; their families, their friends, and their loved ones. This has emotional and psychological effects on Tamils. They feel helpless but feel they must do something - anything.

Kulendiren attempts to see social activism through the lens of experience and trauma and argues that the first step in the healing journey is a sense of empowerment. Thus, for Tamil Canadians social activism is more than just about bringing change but an empowering experience in an attempt to heal.

Sri Lankan Tamil National Alliance Members of Parliament Sampanthan, Senathirajah, Adaikalanathan and Surech Premachandran met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi recently to get his support for the rehabilitation of the Vanni Civilians and also to press for a political solution for the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. Chief Minister Karunanidhi promised all he could do to help them on this.



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A Journey of Loss

By Mithura Anandarajah, PT
Registered Physiotherapist

A week ago today I drove to the hospital to visit my grandfather. A week has now gone by and I lost a man who I loved dearly. I will remember my grandfather for his caustic wit, his devotion to my grandmother and the endless hours he spent at his manual typewriter. He loved and cared for his family, adored his wife for over sixty years and helped so many. He was funny, jovial, occasionally cranky and always loving. He was a very practical realistic man and his death, like his life, was relatively simple, uncomplicated and yet joyful. As he took his last breaths, he wasn't in pain and he was surrounded by the people he loved.

In death, just as in his life, my grandfather taught me a few lessons. Today I share these lessons and thoughts with you, hoping that they will help. It isn't easy to lose someone you love and the process of death and dying can be traumatic, painful and difficult. The subject is never seen as appropriate dinner conversation; it is often taboo to talk about death or dying. However, it makes such a difference when you've had open discussions

about the process, choices and values. Thankfully, many such discussions were had with my grandfather and family, mostly with humor and his definite practicality. Even in his last moments of consciousness, he was able to express his needs and choose the level of medical care that he wanted.

As well as discussing your values with your family, it is important to realize that there are always choices to be made. You can document your choices for yourself by preparing a "living will", which consists of all your instructions about what level of medical treatment you want

should you be unable to express yourself. For instance, you may want all possible measures taken to keep you alive - or you could instruct that nothing be done. Depending on what medical condition you may have, you can also be specific about what treatments you want. If you or your family members have been admitted to the hospital, ask the medical staff questions and options, to allow you to make decisions based on your values. Waiting in emergency rooms, and being surrounded by wires, tubes and machines is traumatic enough. Nominate one consistent person in the family to coordinate the discussion between medical staff and the family. Have that person ask about treatment options and

the consequence of that action. This is relevant with the use of life-saving measures like feeding tubes and ventilators, which mechanically provides air and oxygen. How long will it be needed? Can it be removed? What is the quality of life? Ask the necessary questions, remembering that ultimately you are being true to the individual's values.

Certainly, the reality is hard and painful. Once you are emotionally ready to let go of the person and realize that you are losing them, you then have to wait for the physical process to continue. For some, it can be sudden and others, it is a slow process of waiting. There will be physical changes that occur. The body temperature and blood pressure may lower; the temperature of the extremities may become cooler. The process of breathing changes and becomes more labored and erratic. The loved one usually becomes unrespon-



sive. It is widely believed that the sense of hearing is the last one to go and therefore, it is recommended to sit and talk to the person. It is the perfect opportunity to share your feelings and in turn, helps you with the grieving process.

This week I was able to share this journey with my grandfather. While it was painful and sad, I feel reassured that it was dignified and was true to his value system. Having seen so many people come to pay tribute to him, I also realize the importance of how you live your life and how you touch the people around you. I am truly grateful for the memories of joy, laughter and love he left behind.



Mithura Anandarajah, PT, CAFCI
Clinical Director / Physiotherapist

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Yogathon 2009

"The 2009 Yogathon for Schizophrenia was a huge success raising more than \$27,000 for the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario's Early Intervention Program!

It may have been rainy and cold outside, but the spirit and enthusiasm inside was absolutely heart-warming! We had yoga enthusiasts and beginners come together to breathe, stretch, and relax in order to raise money to help those affected by schizophrenia.

This year, we were fortunate to have some of the best yoga teachers in Toronto involved in this amazing karma event. As in previous years, Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre led the program, which was then followed by instructional sessions with teachers from Moksha Yoga-Danforth, The Big Stretch Yoga Centre, and Octopus Garden Yoga Centre.

Funds raised through the 2009 Yogathon support our Early Intervention Program to raise awareness of the early signs and symptoms of psychosis, and enable us to better support families facing the early onset of psychosis and schizophrenia. This is invaluable to our efforts to increase early diagnosis, leading to better treatment and enhanced chances of recovery among young people.

We would like to thank our 2009 Yogathon corporate sponsors: CIBC World Markets Children's Miracle Foundation, TD

Securities, Roots Yoga Studio, and Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre, as well as our media partners Ascent Magazine and Monsoon

Journal.

Our other valued supporters of this year's event include Roots Yoga, Dear Lil' Devas, Downward Dog, Moksha Yoga Danforth, The Big Stretch Yoga Centre, Yoga Sanctuary-Danforth, and Octopus Garden Yoga Centre."



(Left to Right) - Michael Gwynne, Committee Member, Mary Alberti, SSO's Executive Director, Joanne Lowe, Top Fundraiser, Yogi Tambiraja, Committee Chair.

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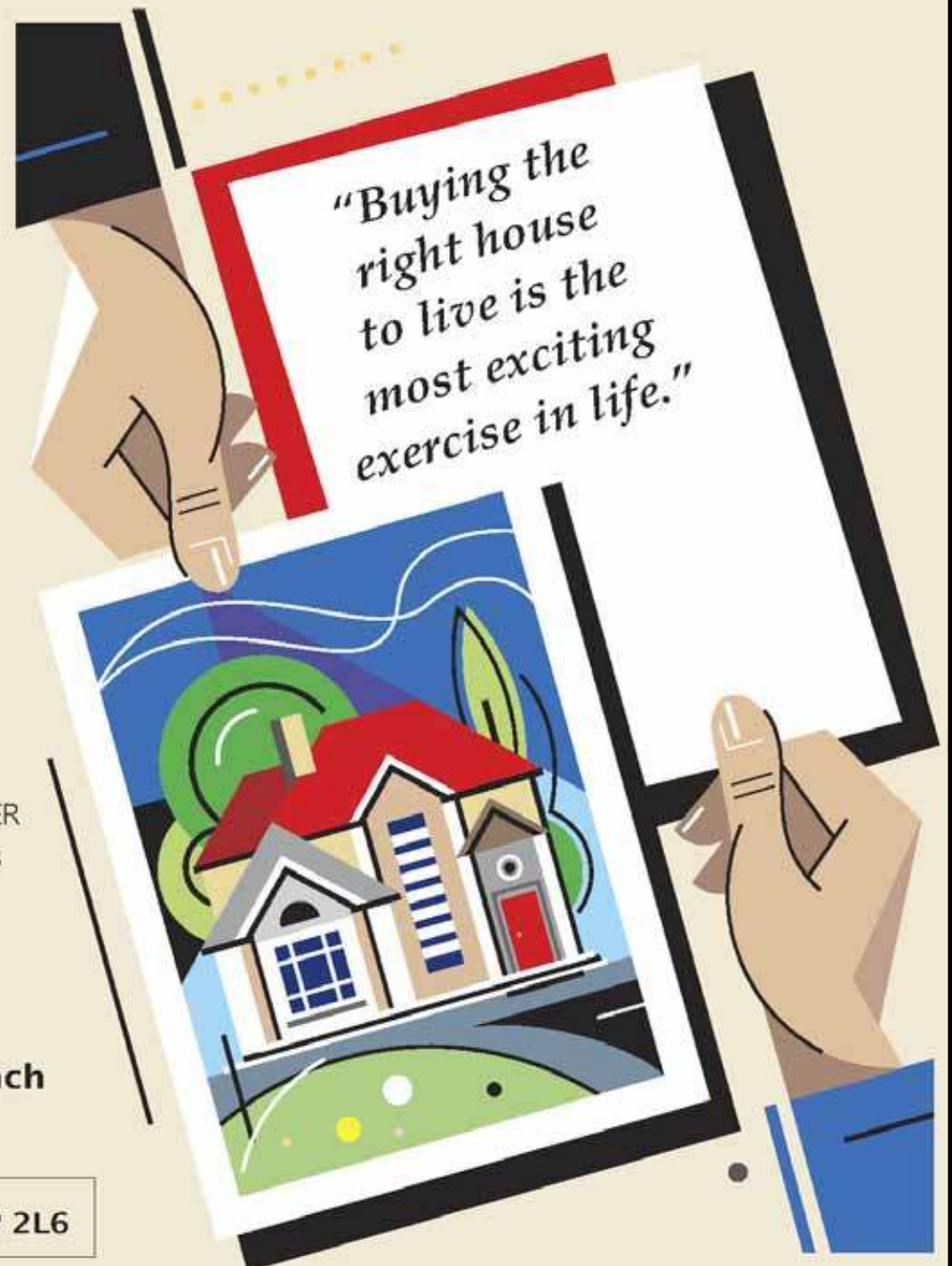
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By Satya Sagar

In the ancient Indian epic Ramayana the Aryan Prince Rama goes all the way from north India to vanquish Ravana, the King of Lanka. Following a massive battle in which thousands are slaughtered Rama, with the help of the monkey god Hanuman, finally rescues his kidnapped wife Sita in a grand victory of 'good' over 'evil'.

The Ramayana of the 21st Century may need a little modification.

In the modern version the Indian Rama and the Lankan Ravana, who turn out to be long lost brothers, together stage the abduction of Sita and accuse the 'terrorist' Hanuman of the crime. Finally with international support they use every means possible to kill him along with thousands of innocent bystanders.

In the modern version the Indian Rama and the Lankan Ravana, who turn out to be long lost brothers, together stage the abduction of Sita and accuse the 'terrorist' Hanuman of the crime. Finally with international support they use every means possible to kill him along with thousands of innocent bystanders.

Adding insult to injury the council of Gods supposed to safeguard the world's conscience not only absolves Rama and Ravana but perversely even applauds them for 'saving' Sita and winning the 'War on Terror'.

Alas, if this were really the only wonky myth about Sri Lanka in our times! The truth is that over the years and decades dozens of myths have been floated about this island nation's history, politics and conflict.

Many of these myths were created by colonial administrators and 'scholars' in the period when the British ruled the island. Many more were created by the chauvinist Sinhala elite- of different shades- who have run Sri Lanka for the past sixty years. Some others were born in the fertile minds of the armchair warriors who sit in New Delhi and a few created by the various champions of the Sri Lankan Tamils themselves.

Given below is a list of the top ten myths (in my opinion) about contemporary Sri Lanka, the dispelling of each of which is indispensable to finding a lasting solution to the seemingly perpetual tragedy of its diverse population.

Myth One - The Sri Lankan government is/ was at war with the LTTE:

This has been the single biggest myth about the Sri Lankan conflict in our time and used as an excuse by many outside to keep quiet about what has been happening all these years in this island country. The LTTE is/was after all a 'terrorist' organisation banned by the international community and so what as wrong if the Sri Lankan government went to war against them?

The Ten Great Myths of Modern Sri Lanka

The simple truth is that the Sri Lankan conflict is much older than the LTTE itself, which emerged as a force only in the early eighties. The systematic conversion of Sri Lankan Tamils into second-class citizens in their own country or state-sponsored violence against them however dates back to the time of Sri Lankan independence in the late-forties itself.

The recent offensive in the north of Sri Lanka was just a new and more brutal phase of the war that Sri Lankan Sinhala elite have been waging for a long time against Sri Lankan Tamils and indeed all the minorities in the country. And I must add that these minorities are not just linguistic or religious ones but also political as over the decades successive Sri Lankan regimes have also killed - and continue to kill- a very large number of Sinhala people opposed to their policies.

In their quest for power there has been no human norm left unviolated by the Sri Lankan elite, which has managed to murder over 20,000 or more of the country's Tamil citizens in its final assault on the LTTE in May this year. If the LTTE has used terrorist methods to further its cause there is no doubt that the Sri Lankan government has used genocidal methods to put them down.

Myth Two - The Mahinda Rajapakse government has 'won' the 'civil war' and successfully prevented the division of Sri Lanka :

There is of course nothing 'civil' about any war but this term implies that the conflict in Sri Lanka is between two groups that belong to the same nation. Maybe this was true upon a time long ago but is certainly not the case any longer.

How many countries around the world do you have governments bombing their own citizens using air power, mobilising tanks, heavy artillery, thousands of ground forces, sophisticated military equipment supplied by foreign governments? How many governments herd all citizens of a linguistic minority into concentration camps to be treated as terrorists simply because of their identity? And after doing all this what right do they have to call themselves 'one nation'?

What we are today witnessing in Sri Lanka is indeed a war between two separate nations. Whether the regime in Colombo realizes this or not by their own actions over the years they have made Tamil Eelam a reality today. The defeat of the LTTE is not the defeat of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. Nor is it the end of their quest for dignity, against racist discrimination and the right to self-determination.



There comes a point in every relationship when divorce becomes inevitable and the only alternative to separation is gross murder. That time has arrived in Sri Lanka today. The future of the Tamil people should be urgently decided by an internationally monitored referendum on whether or not they want to be part of a united Sri Lanka.

Myth Three - The creation of a Tamil Eelam will damage the interests of the rest of Sri Lanka:

In fact the opposite is likely to happen if Sri Lanka's Tamils are given the right to self-determination and form their own country. Either they will fail miserably and clamour to become part of a future Sri Lankan federation on their own accord or succeed brilliantly and create a prosperous neighbourhood that benefits everyone. If a group of Tamil guerillas could make fighter aircraft while hiding in the forests of Vanni imagine what they can achieve in peacetime.

Myth Four - The Sri Lankan Tamils will gang up with Indian Tamils and create a 'Greater Tamil' nation:

For all the light and sound produced in the Indian province of Tamil Nadu about the fate of their 'Tamil brothers and sisters' in Sri Lanka the fact remains - beyond the usual rhetoric- they have not really done much for them. Over the past twenty years there are thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees languishing in Tamil Nadu without proper shelters, livelihood, education for their children or even safety from arbitrary arrest by local police. The Indian government has repeatedly turned down calls to sign international treaties on rights of refugees and the politicians of Tamil Nadu - busy bargaining for their place in the Indian cabinet- don't care a damn.

Similarly, soon after independence from British rule when the then Sri Lankan government, in one of its first vile acts, disenfranchised over a million Indian Tamils working in the country's tea plantations there was not a murmur of protest from the then leaders of the Sri Lanka's Tamils. They were 'Indian Tamils' after all and that too poor workers to boot.

The point I am trying to make is that Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils have different histories, outlooks and priorities and cannot be simplistically conflated into one phrase 'Tamil people'. The fact is that the problem of the Sri Lankan Tamils is not a 'Tamil' issue at all- it is a problem common to many linguistic, ethnic, religious and other minorities around the world. While indeed the people who are suffering today in Sri Lanka are the Tamil speaking population of that country their primary identity is that of an

Worshippers reach out to touch a holy icon as it is carried through a large crowd during a religious ceremony at the Kelaniya Buddhist Temple located in Colombo May 8, 2009 - Reuters pic.

oppressed people fighting for their rightful place under the sun and not as Tamil speakers alone.

In that sense what is being murdered in Sri Lanka is not just the Tamil population but the very concept of humanity itself, an issue that should agitate the entire world. To make my stand clear I would say that if the Sinhala people had been a minority in Sri Lanka and the Tamils had been the racist oppressors I would have appealed to the world to fight for the rights of the Sinhalese.

Myth Five - Sri Lanka has a special place in world Buddhism and its territorial integrity needs to be protected by the Sinhala people:

From whatever little I know, the Buddha became what he did only by giving up his entire kingdom in the search for truth and the salvation of humankind. In the process he in fact conquered the entire world. What the current day proponents of religious nationalism in Sri Lanka are promoting is a crude kind of 'landlordism' and certainly not 'Buddhism', which has nothing to do with ownership of property.

The idea of the Sinhala elite being champions of Buddhism - a religion of compassion, peace and tolerance - is also simply laughable given their historical record of taking so many lives. Ultimately you are a Buddhist only by what you do in practice and not by wearing saffron robes, chanting a few mantras in Pali or Sanskrit or building large and expensive monuments to the Buddha.

Two thousand years ago the great Emperor Ashoka became a

Contd. in Page 16

Canadian Tamils protest attack on Canadian High Commission in Sri Lanka

Hundreds of Tamils protested near the Sri Lankan consulate in Toronto on Friday May 29th against the attack on the Canadian high commission in Colombo on May 27th.

Scores of Sri Lankan protesters had ransacked the Canadian mission to protest against what they called Canadian "support" for Tamil Tigers. Media reports suggested the protesters belonged to hard line Sri Lanka's Sinhala Patriotic Movement.

However, many of the protesters in Toronto said the attack on Canadian High Commission in Colombo was carried out with the cooperation of senior Sri Lanka Defence officials. They pointed out that such a protest is not possible without government sanction in the security fortified capital. Shouting slogans against Sri Lanka for the ransacking of the mission, Tamil protesters said the attack on the mission exposed the true fascist nature of the Sri Lankan government.

"We condemn the vandalism.

Canadian Tamils protest attack on Canadian High Commission in Sri Lanka on May 29, 2009 - Pic. Puthinam.com

Canada is a symbol of hope, peace and equality for millions around the world and we, Tamil Canadians, see this as an attack on these principles," said Canadian Tamil Congress leader and spokesman David Poopalapillai.

"If the Canadian mission can be attacked with this impunity, imagine what happens to the ordinary Tamil civilians (in Sri Lanka) who have no protection at all," he added. Poopalapillai said the Canadian government must pressure Sri Lankan government to bring the culprits to justice.

Government of Canada has accused Sri Lankan police of failing to guard the Canadian High Commission in Colombo when it was targeted by stone-throwing protesters, and demanded a full inquiry.

Earlier British High Commission in Colombo too was attacked in a similar manner. Sri Lankan Government did not take any police action during or after that organized ransacking either.



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MONSOON FEATURE

Contd. from Page 14

Buddhist when he repented for the massacres he committed in the war on the Kingdom of Kalinga. Today the Sinhala chauvinists, many of whom claim their ancestry back to the very same Kalinga, are exiting from Buddhism through the genocide they have committed against the Tamil people. These champions of Buddhism have no doubt become its greatest destroyers.

Myth Six - Sri Lanka is a sovereign country and outsiders should not interfere:

Sri Lanka used to be a sovereign country once upon a time when they were not at war with their own people. The fact is that whenever the Sri Lankan regimes have been in deep trouble they have always violated their own sovereignty to seek help from other countries to help prop up their rule.

island over the decades has sent thousands of Tamil citizens fleeing the country into exile all over the globe. So for all the touchiness of its leaders against 'foreign interference' what is happening in Sri Lanka is really an international conflict and the people of the world have as much right to interfere there as their governments.

Myth Seven - A majority of the Sinhalese people are racists and chauvinists:

Sinhala chauvinism was inevitable in a country where the Sinhala population is in a majority and every politician has to stoke nationalist, ethnic or religious passions to win his/her election. So whether you were a practicing Buddhist or not or knew even how to speak Sinhala properly or really loved your motherland you had to be a 'Sinhala Buddhist nationalist' in order to succeed in politics.

There is no real history of Sinhala-Tamil conflict before the formation of the Sri Lankan 'nation' artificially carved out of their 'Raj' by the hastily departing British colonialists in 1948. For most ordinary Sinhalese, like ordinary folk every-



A Sri Lankan Tamil man reads a newspaper outside a Hindu Temple in Colombo May 16, 2009 - Reuters pic.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe, who had signed a peace deal with the LTTE in 2002. Since the Tamil population largely boycotted the election what this clearly shows that close to half the Sinhala voters preferred peace over war when they voted for Ranil.

Today most of these Sinhala people are also being held hostage by the fascist Rajapakse regime, which has turned Sri Lankan nationalism into a family-run dictatorship guarded by guns purchased with the people's own hard earned money. The fact that there are still enough Sri Lankan journalists and human rights activists willing to die to preserve democracy in their country is evidence that human decency is still not dead everywhere on this troubled island. The entire world should come to the support of these brave people fighting one of the most murderous regimes in recent history.

Myth Eight- The Tamil and Sinhala people have always been pitted against each historically and always will be:

Projecting the very idea of a 'Tamil' or 'Sinhala' race or people back to ancient times is problematic as the consciousness of such an identity is modern and can be traced back to the nineteenth or eighteenth century at the very earliest. Before that there were really no 'Tamil' or 'Sinhala' Kings - they were simply 'Kings' who used anyone from anywhere who suited their quest for control and power.

The earliest people to inhabit Sri Lanka were neither the Tamils or the Sinhalese but the ancient Veddas, of whom just a few thousand families now remain. The rest of the population of this island came from different parts of India in different periods and intermixed freely with the Veddas as also each other and so it is difficult to talk of any 'pure' race anymore. It is well established that the royal families of past- both Tamil and Sinhala- freely intermarried with royalty across southern India in what are today the provinces of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. There are cultural, linguistic and other differences between Tamils and Sinhalese today of course but not 'racial' differences.

Much of the modern conflict in Sri Lanka has to do with the rigid framework of the unitary 'nation state' imposed on the fluid realities of the island's people by European

colonialists - particularly the British. This together with the notion of 'separate histories' of each linguistic or religious group - as if such separation into neat identities is possible at all- has hardened attitudes on both sides unfortunately.

Even then I remember clearly - despite years of conflict- when the Asian tsunami wrought untold tragedy on the people of Sri Lanka in December 2004 both ordinary Tamils and Sinhalese showed phenomenal solidarity and compassion to each other. There were Tamils involved deeply in the rescue of tsunami survivors in southern Sri Lanka while the people of the south rushed aid voluntarily to those affected in the north and north-east. All this of course lasted for a fortnight or more till international donors got together to pledge over US\$3 billion towards 'rehabilitation' and sparked off a fresh round of intrigue and bad blood between Colombo and Jaffna- the latter still under LTTE control at that time as part of the peace accord.

Today- after all that has happened in the past few months- all this talk of solidarity between Tamils and Sinhalese may sound needless detail, but it is important to remember this to disprove the notion that there is something 'permanent' about their antagonism and also to remind ourselves that many conflicts around identity around the world are part of real conspiracies by power elites to keep ordinary folk slaughtering each other so that they don't turn against their real enemies.

Myth Nine - The Indian government, once supportive of the Sri Lankan Tamils, has turned against them:

The truth is that the Indian government does not really care for either the Sri Lankan Tamils or the Sinhalese for that matter. Like in most countries of South Asia successive Indian regimes too have only been bothered about preserving the power of the corporate or feudal elites and care little for their ordinary citizens.

New Delhi in that sense is not the capital of India but the seat of the Indian Empire inherited from the Mughals and the British by the 'Brown Sahibs' of today. And among the nefarious things these Johnnies have been up to all these years is bullying neighbouring governments and playing games with the lives of their people - especially those that

don't 'stand up and obey'.

So the Indian regimes in the past supported the Tamil struggle, including through military assistance and training, when they wanted to put the then Sri Lankan government in 'its place'. Later on when their priorities changed - for various reasons chief among which was the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi- they dumped the Tamils and started cultivating the Sinhala elite.

The lip sympathy for Tamils across the Palk Straits that still emanates now and then from New Delhi is solely because of the compulsions of electoral politics in Tamil Nadu- where politicians routinely play political football with the hopes and aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Once elections are over it is back to the usual indifference to the fate of thousands of people being pulverised by the genocidal Sri Lankan state.

Myth Ten - Governments around the world do not care what happens to the Sri Lankan Tamils:

Many of them actually they care so much that they will not do anything to help the Tamils form their own nation. For many governments - from India to Israel and China to Russia- Tamil Eelam becoming a reality would set a 'bad example' to their own restive minorities. Hence their all out support to the ruthless Sri Lankan government, who they believe is showing them 'the way' how to deal with dissent of all kinds within their borders.

Western nations, that themselves have the blood of innocent civilians on their hands in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, also care- but only about their own global image. Making noise about upholding human rights after the genocide has been carried out allows to them to appear to be 'civilised' without having to take any meaningful action.

After all it was quite clear that a colossal human tragedy was in the offing for the past three months. If the UK, EU and the US had put their combined might together to warn the Rajapakse government properly the Sri Lankan lion- for all its bravado- would have squeaked like a trapped mouse.

The fact is that the Sri Lankan Tamils today can expect genuine support for their cause only from other people around the world facing similar racist discrimination or fighting for autonomy and self-determination. That is not such a bad thing, as looking across the globe such people probably constitute well over half the planet's population.

There are the Palestinians, the Tibetans, the Burmese, the Kashmiris and people of the Indian North-East, the Baluchis, the Pashtuns, the Chechens, the Basques, the Puerto Ricans, the Scots- and lots more. If Sri Lanka's Tamils can join hands with all these struggles for dignity and equality it would be a good start indeed to make a fresh bid for Tamil Eelam!

(Satya Sagar is a journalist, writer, video maker based in New Delhi)

(courtesy: Countercurrents.org)



Children hold pictures of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran during a protest rally against Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa in the southern Indian city of Chennai May 28, 2009 - Reuters pic.

In 1971 the Sirimavo Bandaranaike government sought and obtained the help of the Indian navy together with the Pakistani air force to put down the JVP rebellion- mainly consisting of Sinhala youth fighting for revolutionary change in their country. Today in their war against the Tamils the Sri Lankan regime is supported by the governments of India, Pakistan, China, Russia and Israel while the entire Lankan economy depends on regular infusions of aid and cash from the IMF, World Bank, Japan or the European Union. It is also worth mentioning that the conflict on this

where, the main concern is livelihood or love and the quest for a better life denied to them by their own elites.

But so venal have been the feudal Sri Lankan families that inherited power from the British that they chose to divide and destroy their motherland rather than give up power- political, economic or social- to the ordinary men and women of their land.

If one looks at the results of the 2005 presidential election in Sri Lanka the hawkish Mahinda Rajapakse won only by a slender margin of 50.29% of the overall votes against 48.43% for former

"Bleeding Hearts" Book Release Function

By Sella Moorthy

*"The Virakesari Organization in Sri Lanka published nearly 100 novels & books, and also introduced more than 25 Tamil creative writers through it's Book Publishing Project," - Siva Sivapragasam, Former Virakesari Book Publishing Dept. Manager

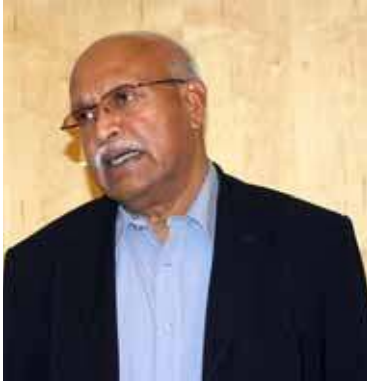
* "Bleeding Hearts is a novel that will appeal to the Tamil Diaspora, specially the younger generation whose fluency is the English Language"

- Kanaga Chelvanayagam, Professor of English, University of Toronto

"Bleeding Hearts ' is An English novel written by me to unravel the village environment and Tamil culture, specially to the expatriate Tamil younger generation"- Balamanoharan, Author of "Bleeding Hearts"

At a well attended meeting in Scarborough last week-end, a Book release function was held to officially launch in Canada "Bleeding Hearts, a novel set against the background in a rural village in Mullaitivu and authored by Balamanoharan, who is more known to the Tamil reading public through his maiden novel "Nilakili", published as a pioneering effort of the "Virakesari" Organisation, Publishers of "Virakesari", the premier Tamil Daily in Sri Lanka.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr. Siva Sivapragasam, former Manager



Author Balamanoharan addressing the audience

of the Virakesari Book Publishing Dept. stated that the Management of Virakesari was at first skeptical about the success of the Book Publishing project, taking into consideration the flood of South Indian Novels and Books which was then the obvious choice of the Tamil reading public. However, he and his colleague Mr. Balachandran who was then the General Manager took this venture as a challenge, and made the project a success. He stated that the organization was able to publish almost 100 novels and other books. In the process, he stated, that they were able to introduce more than 25 or 30 creative writers of repute to the Tamil reading public. He mentioned that author Balamanoharan's novel "Nilakili" was one of the first novels to be published and it was a roaring success. He further stated that it was heartening to note that a writer whom Virakesari introduced has today published a novel "Bleeding



Dr. Chelva Kanaganayagam, Prof. of English, University of Toronto reviews the Book "Bleeding hearts. Others seated are, Author Balamanoharan, MR.M. Nadarajah and Siva Sivapragasam - Former Manager-Virakesari Book Publishing Dept.



A section of the audience present at the book release function.



Mr. Marianayagam, one of the admirers of writer Balamanoharan presenting a golden shawl to the author.

Mr. Chelva Kanaganayagam, Professor of English from the University of Toronto reviewed the merits of the Book "Bleeding Hearts". In his rich review of the Book, he mentioned that there is a close connection between Balamanoharan's Tamil novel "Nilakili" and his English novel - "Bleeding Hearts", in that both novels project village life as the back-

ground. He remarked that "Bleeding Hearts" will have a special appeal to the Diaspora Tamil younger generation who are proficient and fluent in English only. He reminded the audience that the Tamil definition and culture are reflected in the novel. He stated that the simple style in



Mr. Siva Sivapragasam, Former Manager of the Virakesari Book Publishing Dept is seen speaking. Author Balamanoharan is seen standing next to him.

the narration was a special characteristic for the novel.

Author Balamanoharan thanked the guests for their presence and the speakers for their contributions. He stated that one of the primary motives for writing this novel in English was for the benefit of the younger generation and for them to become familiar with Tamil culture and the village environment back home.

Mr. Peratharan, a writer and a representative from the Vanni Tamil Social and Cultural Organization proposed the vote of Thanks while Mr. M. Nadarajah presided at the function.

Photo Courtesy: Vasanthan

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LETTERS & OPINIONS

- The smell of the army boots, the gun, never our friend

I became an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) when I was just 13 years old. Our house was bombed out. We did not know where to go. We ran and ran. The stench of corpses was everywhere. They were not just dead bodies. They were my uncles, sisters, friends and neighbours.

My mother asks me to close my eyes. I keep seeing the gun that pointed at my face. I see my sister frozen with fear of being raped. I see us running into the church. I see my neighbours crawling without legs. I see people's feet, stepping over small babies. I see infants crying to awaken their dead parents. I see the pregnant mother running, to save herself and the unborn baby in her stomach. And I see her shatter in an explosion near the church. I see her two legs quivering in pieces on the soil. I see the fragments of shells, raining down to destroy me, to destroy my mother.

We are all packed in a small tiny space, our neighbourhood church. Hundreds of families, thousands seek here. There is no place to sit here. I just sit in one place for five days. I want to stretch myself and go to sleep. I am numb all over. There's nowhere to even stretch my arms. Five days, I stand or sit, circulating blood. I cried for food and water, as many other children around me did. Our mothers could only give us their tears. Our fathers were nowhere to be seen. Our brothers were taken away by the army. My sisters were hidden under their folded arms, numb with fear. My uncles went with the priest to help the wounded and take the dead bodies to the cemetery as there were dead bodies everywhere. That was the last I saw of my uncles. It was the priest whose white tunic turned red, who tried to console us saying that he had to put my uncles too in the bullock-cart, they had used to send the bodies to be buried. My uncles were killed in the shell bombing while they were helping others. I never had a chance to say goodbye. We screamed and screamed until our throats went dry. No one heard our voices.

The Sri Lankan Government told the world that my uncles are safe... The Sri Lankan government told the world that my sisters did not get raped. They told the world that it was not true. But the truth is they are all gone.

Our stories are buried in our backyards, but our nights are full of these stories.

Buried for years in our backyards: Stories of suffering by Sri Lankan Tamil Women

On seeing the bloodshed of innocent people, I decided to work with the community of people who most needed it. I worked in the community at the grassroots level with women raped and affected by war in many villages around Jaffna and continued my work in the first twelve refugee camps in Colombo during the 1990s.

I still recall vividly life as a community worker in the refugee camps.

I heard many voices of innocent, helpless civilians who lost their loved ones on their way to the camps. Women's silent cries at being raped on their way to the camp. Mothers crying over their lost and disappeared children. Scattered families who had to leave behind loved ones who did not want to leave their homes, neighbourhoods they grew up in, friends, schools, temples, fields and trees even when their lives were in danger. My family was one of them. I saw entire communities of Muslims being uprooted from Jaffna with unbearable sorrow in their hearts.

But after all this struggle to reach the "safety" of the refugee camps, more struggle awaited us.

The refugee camps were packed to explode. People just had space only to lie down in the vast open halls of former schools and community centers.

People were lining for washrooms. When people had diarrhea, the last piece of cloth they had were most of the time soiled. And they had to keep wearing them until or if some help arrives. There were many contagious diseases such as rashes, dysentery, and malaria in these refugee camps which kept recurring again and again.

Armed Tamil groups who were given responsibility over the camps by the government misused their power over the innocent helpless civilians. I saw old men who went to get fresh air, escaping the fetid air in the camps get beaten up until they coughed up blood, by one of the main leaders of the Tamil armed groups for returning after 6 PM. When people speak out, they disappear the next day. Young women and men were watched constantly. The people in these camps were not allowed to return to their neighbourhoods or communities that they grew up in, even if they wanted to. For some people, there was no place to return because of the bombs. People were afraid to speak freely about even regular happenings. There was so much loss and sorrow they could not even think about it, as it filled them up. Many times, when I gave counselling, people were bottled up with unshed tears and pain. It took me a lot of time to build trust. The counselling had to happen inside

the camps surrounded by the Tamil armed groups, which kept most of them silent. People were kept in the refugees camps for months without being allowed outside. Even children! Our future is lost in the refugee camps in our own lands.

I had to fight for months with the Tamil armed groups for permission to take the children and families out for a few hours to conduct a trauma workshop. However, I could not continue to just do my set out tasks. I went further and beyond my limitations and asked questions and challenged the authority of the Tamil armed groups. So, I was targeted and was put in jail for 12 days with my family and friends, under the Sri Lankan emergency law just because I spoke out. I was able to get out of the jail only with the support of the international aid community. If they had not come to my aid, my family and I would have lost our lives as many Tamils have.

The international community should not wait to pressure for answers from Sri-Lankan government during disasters because the Sri-Lankan government does not listen or follow international law. This is clear from how the Sri Lankan government is not even allowing the UN to send aid, or the aid agencies to provide much needed relief for the 300,000 innocent civilians caught in the camps. The Sri Lankan government is not even letting in the international media. The international community has to act now and not just send requests as it has done for months. Otherwise many more thousands of innocent lives will be destroyed forever.

Future of Tamils in Sri Lanka:

Refugee camps are not a solution as the Sri-Lankan government, other Tamil armed groups, and Tamil human rights activists would have us believe. Even the leaders and their supporters who propose all these, the question we have to ask is: would you put yourselves and your children through a refugee camp?

During the last 30 years, thousands of innocent civilians have lost their lives and homes that they keep rebuilding, along with their identities and hopes.

I can understand the feelings of this war as the 1980s, 90s and 2000s are no different. Being raped in 1990s and being raped in 2009 is not different; the agony is the same. The loss of loved ones, the hunger, the running for safety is the same then and now. Having no hands to comfort, being alone is the same in that war and this war.

The international community and the Sri Lankan government thinks that they only need food and water, a place to sleep, and medicine to heal their wounds



and they can survive. Food and shelter is important, too, but that is not enough for real peace. What about their scattered families torn apart by war, the endless mourning for them, and the endless hope for a life without guns and bombs. None of this comes into the solution of a refugee camp.

Therefore, refugee camps after the mass killings of Tamils, after the torture, after the erasure of people, the refugee camps are not a solution, especially because it is the same government who kills them and their families and then offers them refuge. Where is the guarantee of real safety inside these refugee camps? As I mentioned, when I worked in the refugee camps, what I saw was nothing less than terrifying. The threats to their lives, the torture, the violence continued even inside the camps. Therefore, this is not a permanent or democratic or diplomatic solution; it is not even a solution. It will not end the war or bring peace, and any human rights activist who works without any bias or agenda except for humanitarianism would not disagree.

It is our responsibility as a Sri Lankan, as a Canadian, as a human being to support and solve the real issue for our children in

the future. The powerful leaders carry out their campaigns with both guns and pens. These guns and pens bury the stories, the pain, the faces of women and working class people in their own backyards. Sometimes, Tamil human rights activists and intellectuals cover up our pain with their personal pain and loss. Our unheard voices were buried for years and continue to be buried.

The war will end and people will be in peace only if the real root of the problem is touched and addressed democratically. Banning the LTTE or defeating them or other Tamil armed groups is not a solution. The solution will be when Tamils are treated as equal citizens in a land that they have lived in for many decades now. The solution will be when Tamils do not have to prove their belonging or their right of place in Sri Lanka. The solution will be when we all sit down and talk with an open agenda with justice in mind. No Justice, No peace!

By Regi David, Toronto,
May 21, 2009:

Don't Test the colour of my blood, I also, will be destroyed.

But even then, the colour of my blood is red, just like yours, my friend.

"Brown Like Me"

The struggles of Queer South Asian Youth and the dilemmas they face (when coming out) are often overlooked in mainstream Queer culture. So when "Brown Like Me" - a film with a uniquely South Asian focus gets produced, its hard not to take notice. It follows the struggles of five queer South Asian youth, who speak candidly about their own experiences with homophobia, gender identities, acceptance, bullying, harassment, and abuses they faced, based on their sexuality. Siva Gunaratnam, Tamil Outreach Coordinator for the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) was able to relate: "the film is a very good representation of some of my own struggles of coming out, and of being queer and Tamil within a community that still denies the existence of homosexuality."

The Tamil prevention program aims to address queer issues within the Toronto Tamil community while, providing support and social services to queer Tamils through its Snehithan initiative - a social and support group for Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans men of Tamil speaking origins. Log into www.snehithan.ca for more information.

"Brown Like Me" was launched on Friday May 15th 2009 at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. This inspiring event was hosted by the Queer South Asian Youth (Q-SAY) program which is funded by Community One foundation, and is housed out of the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention office in downtown Toronto.

For upcoming screening times and locations, please contact Siva Gunaratnam at 416-599-2727 ex 227 or tami.outreach@asaap.ca

UN's Cover-ups of Tamil Ethnic Genocide:

United Nations and Nations United in Slaying the Surrendered and Bulldozing the Wounded

ArunSenathirajah

LTTE has been declared a terrorist organization by 32 countries in the world and in return these countries have 'helped' Tamils, by allowing Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinistic Sri Lankan Government to ethnically cleanse more than 100,000 Tamils in the heart shaped heartless Sri Lanka. Now again The U.N. Human Rights Council resolved last week that Tamil Tigers are responsible for all killings this year, and the Sri Lankan government for none of them with the support of 43 countries. In doing so the UN Human Rights Council, and supported the burning down of more than 50,000 Tamils and slaying of surrendered LTTE cadres. 'It has been largely impotent on the major issues of our time,' said Anne Bayevsky, a UN expert at the Hudson Institute. Tamils for Obama adds that the U.N. has seen atrocities in Sri Lanka and tried its best not to notice. It is now emerging as a fact that slaying of the LTTE cadres was executed by Sri Lanka a 'democratic' government, even after the surrender of the LTTE cadres were negotiated with UN high level official Vijay Nambiar who was in Sri Lanka at that time. In the last urgent request by one of the LTTE leader Soosai appealed to the outside world to save the more than 25,000 wounded and while there were piles of dead bodies all over, in addition to similar number of people had sought shelters in bunkers.

Vijay Nambiar's Cover up

After using aerial bombings, artillery fires and phosphorus bombs to kill more than 50,000 Tamils (they were not even considered as civilians in the eyes of the world as Sri Lanka treats all the Tamils as terrorists - they were killed only because they are Tamils), heavy weapons such as tanks, multi-barrel tanks have been used to bulldoze the dead bodies and any survivors left. Then all the dead bodies were burned down into ashes using inflammable chemicals. All these atrocities were took place during UN Secretary General's high level official Vijay Nambiar stay in Colombo in the last three days of ending war massacre. Although he was informed of the massacre of more than 20,000 by one of the UN employee caught in the war zone, while it was happening in Mullivaikkal narrow coastal line. Vijay Nambiar did not take any action or at least did not raise a voice against Sri Lanka to stop this mass killing. According to French newspaper Le Monde Nambiar even told UN representative in Sri Lanka that the UN should 'keep low profile' and play a 'sustaining role' that was compatible with the government.

Silence of the UN even though it was informed, gave a blank cheque to carpet bomb the whole area of filled with more than 20,000 civilians according to Le Monde. All these have left the Tamils all over the world to belief whether he was covering up the Sri Lankan genocide and assisted in not disturbing his brother Satish Nambiar's role as consultant to Sri Lankan army.

Bai-Ki Moon's Bias

Above all the UN Secretary General Bai-Ki Moon had flown over the war zone after LTTE said it has silenced its guns. Tamils have serious doubt about his prolonged visit to Sri Lanka until the LTTE is defeated and let the Sri Lankan government to do whatever it wants on Tamils. After the flying he made a pre-matured statement stating 'there were no any evidence to belief any heavy weapons have been used in the war zone', without any ground based analysis. Times newspaper has the same satellite images what Bai-Ki Moon saw in the zone and claims those are the very evidences for crimes committed by Sri Lanka using heavy weaponry. How he can dare to make such a statement without a proper independent investigation, without any forensic analysis and any ground based analysis where Tamils were burned down into ashes and when Sri Lanka continues to reject access to any independent media, NGOs or even to any UN representative to the area and to meet any survivors. Why UN a world public body behaving like as Sri Lanka rejecting independent media, not releasing its own UN-SAT satellite findings to the world. Why it behaving like a dictator government not disclosing public entitled evidences and finding. All these have let the Tamils to belief that UN Secretary General Bai-Ki Moon and his official Vijay Nambiar were partners in Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka working collaboration on the Indian agenda. Further it raises doubt as his home country Japan continued to provide financial aid to Sri Lanka irrespective of its human rights violations and denial for independent medias and aid groups in the conflict area, he is working in alliance with Japanese government rather than for the UN.

Continuous Access Denial by Sri Lanka itself is the evidence for covering up its crimes.

Has Sri Lankan justice system has ever punished any one so far for abductions and human right violations? That is the record which is going to continue for the massacre of more than 50,000 civilians and numerous abductions from the UN funded camps and all over NorthEast of Sri Lanka. UN has released \$20 millions to funds the detention



Tamil civilians lie on a cardboard box on the ground in the Manik Farm refugee camp located on the outskirts of northern Sri Lankan town of Vavuniya Tuesday, May 26, 2009. U.N.

camps and to put better quality barbed wire in order to prevent Tamils escaping to their homes. Sri Lanka has rejected access to the UN itself which has funded the camps, and now UN official says shamelessly there are about 13000 peoples missing from the camps, without stating what action it has taken to prevent such occurrence in the future.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Sir John Holmes, who visited Sri Lanka met President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Temple Trees in April 2009 and had discussions in an atmosphere of cordiality and friendship has lots of things to learn from Sri Lankan leaders. One of those is how to give promise give face to face and how to break the promise when the face is not there. Sri Lanka Government promised to provide all necessary facilities to the civilians in the camps but later abduct people from there. Rather than taking full control of the camps, the UN has given chickens to vultures to guard them and trust their promises and words all the time in friendly atmospheres. What type of friendship one has to maintain when you are entrusted in guardian and trusted status. Ban to sought U.N. access to Sri Lanka refugee camps, and it was promised to him but no sooner he got into the return flight the access was denied. Does Bai-Ki Moon aware of this? An official who joined Bai-Ki Moons delegation said U.N. aid agencies still lacked full access to the refugees and that the government had hampered the delivery of aid by banning the use of motor vehicles by U.N. officials or aid workers from non-governmental organizations.

UN Still Withholds Casualty Numbers

For Britain's Times newspaper's claim of more than 20,000 Tamils were massacred in the final days of the war Bai-Ki Moon, UN's relief coordinator John Holmes and other officials keep avoiding give their own counts, but giving a qualitative statements such as appalling number of people were killed, without giv-

ing what number it has. This is in order to keep room for making opportunistic statements in the future according to the mounting pressure level and to cover up the 'democratic' Sri Lanka. The UN and Holmes are in the midst of protesting the expulsion and lay-off of half of the humanitarian workers in Darfur. But there is no humanitarian or media access at all to the conflict zone in Sri Lanka. According to Innercity press, "Holmes said the UN has "done some of our own attempt" at a count, but "cannot verify them" and therefore will not release the figures. By contrast, the UN repeatedly uses a 300,000 figure for deaths in Darfur, regarding which many questions of verifications have been raised. There were no humanitarian or media access at all to the conflict zone in Sri Lanka. What action has the UN took? They obey Sri Lanka officials' statements. Tamils for Obama reports that it has its own sources in the safety zone. These sources estimate that there were 360,000 Tamil civilians in the safety zone last January. Now, news reports say that there are about 290,000 Tamil civilians held in detention camps by the Sri Lankan military. For Tamils for Obama, the math is simple: about 70,000 Tamils civilians have vanished in the last five months.

No Hope Obama

"Stop Genocide" ... Contd. from page 1

Ms. Jan Jananayagam, an independent candidate contesting the European Parliament elections in London, secured over 50,000 votes, an unprecedented result, and a record for an independent candidate in an EU election. Though Ms Jananayagam did not secure a seat, her campaign team said they were delighted with the results.

Despite having decided to contest only days before voter registration closed and four weeks before the polls, the Tamil candidate had amassed more votes than some well-established small parties in Britain, and more than twice all other independent candidates combined, they said.

Apart from Tamil expatriates,



US President Barrack made lots of statements prior to the election about human rights issue and transparency of actions. For him he was too busy to react and had no time to save the more than 50,000 massacre of Tamils and abductions and missing of Tamils from the UN funded camps and all over Sri Lanka. Tamil have another doubt as to whether does he need Indian approval on any action to help Eelam Tamils?

China

China which was liberated by Mao Tse-Tung for the oppressed and the proletariat, now behaving like a imperial superpower for its expansionism, seeking new bases in South Asia - in Pakistan, in Bangladesh and Hambantota in Sri Lanka has now buried its former great leader's policy and teachings. Its expansionist policy has led it to go against the oppressed Tamil ethnic group in Sri Lanka got it mixed up in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. When some countries calling for human rights violation China's argument is it is interference in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. But as an external power it has supplied fighter planes and weapons to Sri Lanka.

Pending IMF \$1.9 billion Loan

After Sri Lankan government massacring more than 50,000 people, in begging for IMF \$1.9 billion loan trade minister G L Peiris says "What the country needs this time is support, understanding, empathy, not condemnation, not judgement... not posturing". What he says is Sri Lanka has no concern for the Tamils life but, they need Tamils plight as 'cause' for the funding. After getting the fund they will misuse it for the benefit of Sinhalese as they did with Tsunami funds by settling Sinhalese in Tamil lands. All these Sri Lankan leaders know very well how to cheat international partners and institutions like UN, IMF, and ADB etc.

her campaign, conducted by students and volunteers, had drawn support and donations from British voters and other minority communities.

Ms. Jananayagam had campaigned on a platform of getting the UK and EU to take action to stop genocide abroad and protect human rights and civil liberties, both at home and elsewhere. She is the UK representative for the pressure group Tamils Against Genocide (TAG).

Ms. Jananayagam, a Jaffna-born British citizen, had agreed to contest a few days before voter registration closed on May 19th. The UK polls were held on June 4.

[TN]



**MONSOON
FEATURE**
Raymond Rajabalan

Fatherly Love



After the usual Sunday evening hymns, the church's pastor stood up walked over to the pulpit and before delivering his sermon, briefly introduced a guest minister who was present during the service.

In his introduction, the pastor told the congregation that the guest minister was one of his dearest childhood friends and that he wanted him to share with the church members some of his experiences. Accepting the invitation the elderly guest minister stepped up to the pulpit and began to address the gathering

"A father, his son and a friend of his son were sailing off the pacific coast", he began.

"A fast approaching storm blocked their attempt to return to the shore and the waves were so high that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright and soon the boat capsized and the three were tossed into the

stormy ocean.

After this introduction the guest minister made eye contact with two teenagers among the congregation because he noticed that since the service began they were showing interest in listening to his story.

The aged priest, continued with his story

"Grabbing a rescue line the father had to make the most excruciating decision of his life, wondering to which of the two

boys he would throw the other end of the life line. With only a few seconds left to make the decision, the man was in a dilemma. The father knew that his son was a Christian but his son's friend was not. The agony faced by the father at that moment could not be matched by the torrent of the roaring waves.

Yelling out "I love you son "; he threw out the life line to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back

to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging ocean into the black of the night.

His body was never recovered.

By this time the two teenagers were sitting up straight in the pew, anxiously waiting for next words to come out of the minister's mouth

"The father "he continued" knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus and he could not bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into an eternity without ever accepting Jesus. Therefore he sacrificed his only beloved son to save his son's friend.

"How great is the love of god that he should do the same for us. Our heavenly father sacrificed his only begotten son that we could be saved. I urge you to accept his offer to rescue you and take hold of the lifeline HE is throwing out to you.

With that the old man walked up to his chair and sat down with tears rolling down his wrinkled cheeks.

A hushed silence filled the

church.

The pastor then walked slowly to the pulpit and repeated the invitation offered by the visiting pastor. However, no one seemed to respond to the appeal.

Meanwhile after the service ended, the two teenagers went up to the old man.

"That was a nice story "one of them politely told him. He continued "I think it was very realistic for a father to sacrifice his only son's life in the hope that the other youth would become a Christian.

"Well, you have got a point there ", the old man replied, glancing down his at his bible. A big smile broadened his narrow face. He once again looked up at the boys and said "It sure was isn't very realistic. Is it? I am standing here today to tell you that story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for god to give up his son for me

"You see I was that father and your pastor is my son's friend"

If this is the expression of sacrifice of an earthly father, how much more will be the love of the heavenly father? To show his love, HE sent his only son Jesus to the earth to sacrifice his life on the cross to redeem the mankind.

Cuisine & Cuvée raises \$150,000 (net) for Providence Healthcare

Providence Healthcare Foundation's 9th Annual Cuisine & Cuvée on May 21st raised \$150,000 (net) in a one-day, food-and-wine extravaganza that gave 550 people a chance to sample gourmet-style foods and fine wines.

"This was an amazing event that achieved great success," said Peter Kilty, Chair of the Cuisine & Cuvée Committee, and Vice-Chair of the Providence Healthcare Foundation Board of Directors.

"It's even more remarkable when you consider these challenging economic times. But we have established long-standing relationships with many of our sponsors, and they've continued to support us through the years. Raising \$150,000 (net) in one evening will go a long way to help support the areas of greatest need at Providence."

Providence Healthcare Foundation is currently involved in a campaign to raise \$2.08 million for this fiscal year. The Foundation also has other fundraising events coming up, including the Ken and Nancy Shaw Providence Golf Classic at Glencairn Golf Club on July 7th, and the annual Silver Ball gala at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel on October 24th.

The Cuisine & Cuvée, which was held in the Centennial Ballroom at Inn On The Park in Toronto, included delicacies from 20 different stations offering gourmet food and cheese, wine,

vodka and beer. Such restaurateurs and distilleries as Biagio Ristorante, The Cheese Boutique, Guzzo Fine Catering, Chiado Restaurant, Steam Whistle Brewing, and Southbrook Vineyards in Niagara-on-the-Lake donated goods. Corporate sponsors included such companies as Scotiabank Group, TD Commercial Banking, and Davis + Henderson.

The evening began with a cocktail reception, followed by three hours for the Food and Wine Stations. Sommelier David Lawrason, one of Canada's most prominent wine experts and chief judge for the Canadian Wine Awards, conducted a formal wine tasting. There was also a Silent Auction of quality leatherware, accessories and original paintings, and a Wine Auction with over \$50,000 in Fine and Vintage Wines. Wines for sale included two 1998 bottles of Chateau Mouton Rothschild (value of \$2,200), four 2001 bottles of Chateau Mouton Rothschild (value of \$3,300), and three bottles of 1995 Chateau Palmer (value of \$1,575).

About Providence Healthcare

Providence Healthcare, which last year was recognized as one of Greater Toronto's Top 75 Employers, is a leading Toronto health care facility, specializing in rehabilitation for patients who have experienced strokes, orthopaedic surgery, or lower limb

amputation, or who require specialized geriatric rehabilitation, assessment and treatment. It also provides complex continuing care, long-term care and community outreach with a focus on addressing medical, physical, spiritual and emotional needs of individuals with geriatric conditions.

Programs and services are provided through three Integrated Care Divisions: Providence Hospital, one of Ontario's largest rehabilitation and complex continuing care facilities; the Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence, a long-term care home for 288 residents; and Providence Community Centre, specializing in community clinics, caregiver support, and education and neighbourhood outreach programs such as the nationally acclaimed Alzheimer Day Program and the innovative Tamil Caregiver Project.

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For further information:
Beth Johnson,
Director, Communications,
Providence Healthcare,
(416) 285-3666 ext. 4042,
bjohnson@providence.on.ca

Kamala Haasan, South Indian popular Tamil actor with his two daughters at a recent function. In the centre is Gouthami, another famous Tamil actress who has paired with Kamala Haasan in many movies. Standing next to Gouthami is her daughter. It is rumoured that Gouthami and her daughter live with the Kamalahaasan family



Monsoon Journal

enters its 4th year of publishing.

We thank all the Readers, Advertisers, Patrons and well wishers.



Tamil civilians stand behind a barbed-wire fence in the Manik Farm "internment camp" located on the outskirts of the northern Sri Lankan town of Vavuniya May 26, 2009. The UN secretary-general has called for an inquiry into possible war crimes committed during Sri Lanka's offensive. [pic: Reuters]

A selection of reader comments appearing on Times UK online (www.timesonline.co.uk), on the unfolding Tamil-Sri Lanka affairs

*** 'India accused of complicity in deaths of Sri Lankan Tamils'**

We Sri Lankan Tamils have looked to India for leadership when under assault by Sri Lanka's genocidal regimes.

The allegations against India are credible and India needs to redeem her reputation as an advocate of pluralism, and explain all this, lest Indian Tamils doubt their place in India - **Ratnajeewan Hoole, Avon, CT, USA**

India must save her own children, the Sri Lankan Tamils, across the Palk Strait who are bound by an umbilical cord to India.

India, must grant a Federal State to Tamils in Sri Lanka as PM Manmohan Singh suggested, and guarantee a federal legislature that will ensure Land Rights and civil Rights. - **G. Sathianathan, State College, PA**

Everyone knew that India's hands were dirty in all of this for months before the bloodbath. It is disgusting that in these post mortem discussions, the finger pointing continues and yet the more than 20,000 men women and children are DEAD. We all know who is guilty. India, Pakistan, China, US, Japan - **Dr Shander, CT, USA**

As an Indian I am ashamed of what my motherland has done to fellow humans. Historically, even before the so called "Rajiv Gandhi assassination" the Indian government had been supporting the anti-Tamil sentiments in Sri Lanka. Indian diplomats to Sri Lanka are always anti-Tamils!

World watches YOU! - **Dr. Sundaravadivel Balasubramanian, Charleston, USA**

*** 'Sri Lanka's crucial role in Indian Ocean power struggle'**

It's quite pathetic actually that Sri Lanka is so arrogant over its military victory of the LTTE, while in reality, has taken so many countries to accomplish. Did they really need the

help of China, India, Pakistan and others to defeat the much smaller group of rebels? If yes, they why so much attitude?

It's not like they themselves won the so called "war". It is very entertaining to see them fluff their feathers, only to turn around and beg for aid money, although they will not abide by the conditions that would be placed on them if they do receive aid money. Sri Lanka is nothing but a pawn in the battle for control of the Indian Ocean, and unfortunately they do not care about being exploited. Not a very promising future for them. - **Genny Dan, Toronto, Canada**

*** 'UN chief knew Tamil civilian toll had reached 20,000'**

UN failed not only the Tamil Diaspora but the whole humanity of this world. I'm suggesting the EU to take over from UN and act fast to save thousand of innocent Tamil IDPs at the mourning camps in Sri Lanka. No wonder, if this kind of Gov massacre will happen in our near future in any other country.- **Saravanan Ramanathan, Georgetown, Malaysia**

*** 'Aid workers forced to leave Sri Lanka under strict new visa rules'**

Independent humanitarians are needed in Sri Lanka as Sinhala chauvinism runs deep at centre of governing. Sri Lanka cannot pick on choose what it wants in the international arena. Isolation will have to apply sports, culture, education & investment. Not just NGOs. Is this acceptable to Sri Lankans? - **Sangarapillai, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka**

From buying a passport application form to issuing visas to SL are beset with bribes. With govt. bent on procuring NGO funds for its own victory tamashas and allowing politicians relatives to disburse among IDPs they don't need genuine aid workers. This is our time honoured custom. -

Pearl Thevanayagam, Harrow, UK

NGOs should campaign to enforce boycott of trade, air, land & sea blockage against Lanka, & travel ban against its high profile politicians, bankers, & business tycoons & total ban on sale of any weapons. These measures will swiftly bring in a saner regime to restore normality in Lanka. - **S Sundaram, Singapore**

*** 'Chief Justice of Sri Lanka condemns 'internment' of Sri Lankan Tamils'**

Thanks for this Chief Justice, but he was instrumental in de-merging the North-East provinces and gave the final death blow to the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord..."nothing to fear" for expressing his mind about the camps...he has done whatever courts could do to establish Sinhala supremacy. - **M. Pereira, Bedminster, NJ, USA**

"Screening process" is what needs to be investigated. Thank god the Chief Justice was able to visit the internment camps in Vavuniya and so the despicable living conditions. But no where anyone see pictures of children, youth. This process needs international supervision. - **Gowtham, Little Rock, AR, USA**

*** 'Ban Ki Moon addresses Security Council on Sri Lanka 'war crimes''**

UN is calling for this meeting too late. What happened in Sri Lanka and UN regarding this genocide of Tamils shows how corrupt the Sri Lankan Government and the UN. Truth regarding this Genocide will find its own way to the public.

"When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it, always."- Mahatma Gandhi - **VR, Glendale, USA**

Marking the 20th Anniversary of Free Elections in Poland, Blaine Calkins MP has said the success of Solidarity, personified in the leadership of Lech Walesa is an accomplishment worthy of commemoration.

Mr. Blaine Calkins MP, Conservative Member of Parliament in the Canadian House of Commons represents the riding of Wetaskiwin in Alberta.

Speaking at the Parliament on June 4, 2009 Blaine Calkins MP further said:

Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago today Poland held the first free parliamentary elections in what was then the communist Eastern Bloc. The overwhelming winner was the Solidarity free trade union movement. For the first time in four decades, a democratic government came to power. Solidarity's triumph helped to tear down the Iron Curtain and led to



Blaine Calkins, MP-Wetaskiwin, Alberta

Poland, an example to those still fighting for freedom and democracy around the world

the non-violent collapse of communism throughout central and eastern Europe.

proud to stand up today for the recognition of the 20th anniversary of free elections in Poland .

Within mere months of this election, nearly all of the communist governments across the region fell. Democracy, for which many Poles and other disenfranchised Europeans had given their lives, finally saw the light of day.

Today, Poland serves as an example to those still fighting for freedom and democracy around the world. On this 20th anniversary of the beginning of the end of communism in central and eastern Europe, Canadians should remember its significance and be mindful of the need to always stand up for the values that we hold dear: liberty, human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

The success of Solidarity, personified in the leadership of Lech Walesa and inspired by Pope John Paul II, is an accomplishment worthy of commemoration. I am

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Bank of Canada Rate Unchanged

Bank of Canada maintains overnight rate target at 1/4 per cent and reiterates conditional commitment to hold current policy rate until the end of the second quarter of 2010



The Bank of Canada today announced that it is maintaining its target for the overnight rate at 1/4 per cent. The Bank Rate is unchanged at 1/2 per cent and the deposit rate is 1/4 per cent.

Information received since the Bank's April Monetary Policy Report (MPR) is broadly consistent with the Bank's medium-term outlook for output and inflation in Canada. The economy is undergoing major restructuring in a number of sectors. The already significant output gap will continue to widen through the third quarter, putting downward pressure on inflation. The Bank continues to expect that the global and Canadian recoveries will be more muted than usual.

In recent weeks, financial conditions and commodity prices have improved significantly, and consumer and business confidence have recovered modestly. If the unprecedentedly rapid rise in the Canadian dollar (which reflects a combination of higher commodity prices and generalized weakness in the U.S. currency) proves persistent, it could fully offset these positive factors.

GTA May Resale Housing Sales Higher Than Last Year

In May 2009, Greater Toronto REALTORS® reported 9,589 sales, up almost two per cent from May 2008 - the first annual increase since December 2007. The seasonally adjusted annual rate of sales in May was 81,300.

"The resale housing market in the GTA has remained resilient in the face of challenging times globally," according to TREB President Maureen O'Neill. "Many home buyers have taken advantage of extremely low mortgage rates."

The average price for May transactions was \$395,609 - down less than one per cent compared to the same month last year.

"The average resale home price has moved in line with last year's level because of tighter market conditions experienced this Spring," stated Jason Mercer, TREB's Senior Manager of Market

Analysis. "Home sales have increased strongly relative to new listings, bolstering home prices."

Seasonally adjusting TREB MLS® data removes recurring seasonal trends observed each year. For example, MLS® sales are highest in late spring each year and lowest in the winter months. Removing the recurring seasonality, allows for the analysis of a meaningful trend reflecting actual changes in market conditions. By multiplying the monthly seasonally-adjusted figure by 12, creating an annual rate, we can compare how the current month relates to historical annual figures.

Median Price

In May the median price was \$337,000, from the \$338,000 recorded during May of 2008.

(Courtesy: Toronto Real Estate Board)

The outlook is subject to considerable uncertainty. While the underlying macroeconomic risks are roughly balanced, the Bank judges that, as a consequence of operating at the effective lower bound, the overall risks to its inflation projection remain tilted slightly to the downside.

Conditional on the outlook for inflation, the target overnight rate can be expected to remain at its current level until the end of the second quarter of 2010 in order to achieve the inflation target.

The Bank retains considerable

flexibility in the conduct of monetary policy at low interest rates, consistent with the framework outlined in the April MPR.

Information note:

The next scheduled date for announcing the overnight rate target is 21 July 2009. A full update of the Bank's outlook for the economy and inflation, including risks to the projection, will be published in the MPR on 23 July 2009.

(Courtesy: Bank of Canada)

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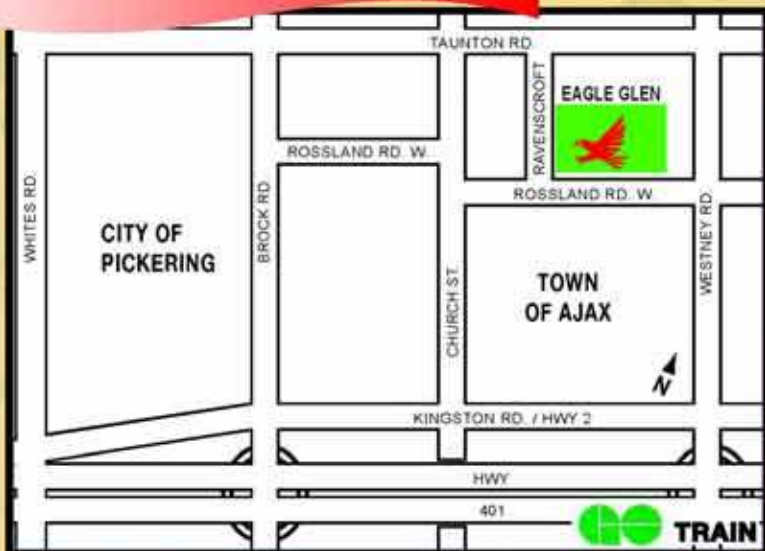
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MONSOON FEATURE

John Boddy Homes has won the Diamond Award for 'Best Builder' for the twelfth year in a row in this year's Readers' Choice Awards and has now opened its newest phase in their Eagle Glen community in Ajax. Located just minutes east of Toronto, the Eagle Glen Community 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, bungalows, and future town-homes. Homes start at 1,800 square feet and range up to a spacious 3,858 square feet, some with triple car garages. John Boddy Homes offers traditional size lots with a minimum of 105 feet in depth and a limited selection of wide shallow lots and pond lots. With such a broad range of house sizes and styles Eagle Glen has the ideal home to suit every preference. From the unique

EAGLE GLEN

A FAMILY COMMUNITY BY JOHN BODDY HOMES



which allows for interior custom colours with a maintenance free

model inventory specials that include over \$20,000 in savings. Features such as, granite counter tops, oak staircases, octagonal skylights and so much more are offered at huge reductions. Drop by their sales office and their sales representatives will gladly take you on a personal tour.

For a limited time only John Boddy Homes is currently offering a number of special incentive packages. An upgrade master ensuite with a separate shower and upgrade tub, a granite kitchen countertop, oak staircase and \$5,000 in free upgrades are now included with every home. They are also currently offering one year of Rogers services 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.

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.

The Eagle Glen community offers many important neighbourhood amenities such as a brand new public elementary school opening in September 2009, 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 is a host of shopping and recreation centres,

'Eagle Glen' allows residents all the amenities of the urban lifestyle while providing the beauty and tranquility of the neighbouring countryside.

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

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

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



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 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

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 various upgrade items to select from in order to customize your home. Their high-tech electrical and décor consultants allow homebuyer's to make upgrade selections on site, enabling them to conveniently personalize their home.

For a limited time they are now offering a select few



Rendering of Model
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An urgent request from Gods Own Children Foundation

Dear Donors / Well Wishers,
Based on the Official Statement about the number of Special Needs Children in the Valigamam Zone - released by the Zonal Department of Education - Valigamam.

and an Urgent Request for Immediate Needs of Special Needs Children of the Valigamam Zone - Appeal by Zonal Department of Education - Valigamam

Gods Own Children Foundation requests Donors & Well Wishers to respond positively to the Appeal from the Zonal Department of Education - Valigamam.

The Education Officials in Jaffna , are performing an excellent job , even going beyond their duty, amidst all difficulties, in the Jaffna Peninsula. Gods Own Children salutes their determination and dedication. The officials

have requested us to facilitate the assistance, requested by them.

The glasses for the children are a top priority, and we request donors to support this cause. A Glass would cost around Rs: 2500.00 (\$25.00), and a Wheel Chair would cost around Rs30,000/= (\$300.00).

GOC will arrange for an Official Handing Over Ceremony, with all the relevant Education officials present. We will be pleased to invite Donor Representatives too. A Report of the handover, with Photographs will be sent to the Donor/s.

Thank you very much.

We look forward to hear from you.

Best regards

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CONTACT LENSES CAN BE IMPLANTED IN THE EYE

By Carol Pearson

Millions of people use glasses to correct their vision. Others turn to a surgical procedure called LASIK that permanently changes the shape of the cornea, the clear part of the eye over the iris. But now there is another choice for people who are nearsighted.

Tommy Hardeman cannot believe how well he can see. "Everything is so clear," he said. "I'm still not fully used to not wearing glasses or contacts." He is a 20-year-old college student who says that he did not get perfect vision with LASIK. Hardeman had contact lenses surgically implanted in his eyes.

This procedure is most often used for patients who cannot have laser surgery and whose low vision cannot be corrected any other way. Dr. Jeffery Whitman is enthusi-

astic about the results. "Patients are really thinking this is better than sliced bread (a vast improvement)," Dr. Whitman said.

Implanting the lenses involves minor surgery. The doctor makes one small, self-healing cut in the eye and inserts a plastic lens in front of the patient's natural lens. Patients are awake, and the procedure takes about 10 minutes per eye.

The surgery is similar to cataract surgery, except the patient's own lens is left in place.

And unlike LASIK, this technology does not permanently change the shape of the cornea.

"We have a lens that we can remove if we want to do something, (if) a new technology comes out and we want to do something down the line," Dr. Whitman said. "And we haven't interfered with the structure of the

eye at all."

"It left me more options than LASIK did," Hardeman said. "For later on in life, if my eyesight had to change a little bit, I (am) still able to fix that."

The American Academy of Ophthalmology says as eye doctors become more comfortable with this procedure, it will become more common. In some countries the procedure has been done for more than 20 years.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the lenses for use in the U.S. four years ago. New lenses are being developed that are expected to be better than those already available.

[VOA News]



Implanting the lenses involves minor surgery. Patients are awake, and the procedure takes about 10 minutes per eye

India becoming medical hub for orthopaedic surgeries



Low-cost facilities, world-class expertise and almost no waiting list in Orthopaedic surgeries have made India the hub of medical tourism with more foreigners, needing joint replacements or affected with bone injuries, flocking to the country for treatment.

The market for orthopaedic implants has grown by five to six times in the last decade and a large portion of this growth has been

driven by medical tourists from developed countries, as also from Africa and Middle East, experts say.

The cost factor, which is almost one twentieth of what it is in the western countries, is the primary motivator for foreigners, who want to avail "world-class" facilities at affordable prices, they say.

"There has been an evident change in the sector in the past few years with orthopaedic implant surgeries becoming acceptable with greater number of Indians and the inflow of foreigners also going up considerably," said O N Nagi, an orthopaedic surgeon at the Ganga Ram hospital, Delhi.

Besides providing cost-effective treatments, Indian medical centres also cut down the painful procedure of waiting for their turn in countries where the sector is congested, said Dr. Nagi, who conducts 500 surgeries annually, 30-50 among them being

for foreign patients.

"The last decade has seen the number of surgeries done, including those of foreign patients, go up by 5-6 per cent," he told PTI.

A knee surgery which costs \$40,000 in America, can be availed at \$8,000 in India, thus benefiting those opting for it even after adding up the travel costs.

Hip replacement surgery in India costs Rs 45,000 for a cement-less implant and Rs 75,000 for a cemented implant and the expenses are one-twentieth of what stands in the US or the UK.

Orthopaedic implants which include knee, hip, shoulder, elbow, among other surgeries are recommended to patients who have suffered damage to joints, sometimes by injuries but mostly by thinning away of cartilage, wasting of muscles, bone overgrowth and deformities.

"As the number of people undergoing orthopaedic implant surgeries has steadily gone up by 5-6 times in the last decade, knee and hip replacements are the most sought after surgeries," said C S Yadav, orthopaedic sur-

geon and professor in the Department of Orthopedics at AIIMS.

The surgeries are sought after because they considerably improve the quality of lives of people undergoing them, and unlike people suffering from heart ailments, patients from western countries can travel long distances to avail low-cost facilities in developing countries, Dr. Yadav says.

While the medical aspects of the sector have been showing positive trends, the area of concern is the quality of implants produced in India, doctors say.

"There is no innovation in the Indian market. Indian companies have no copyrights and most of the implants or their designs are imported or copied," said Yash Gulai, orthopaedic surgeon, at Apollo hospital.

According to estimates, the global demand for orthopaedic implants is likely to reach \$23 billion by 2012.

As per a research by US-based consultancy firm Deloitte, India was the world's second largest destination for medical tourists after Thailand, treating an estimated 4.5 foreign patients in 2007. [PTI]

Researchers Say Depression Preventable

By Carol Pearson

Depression is a common mental disorder characterized by sadness and lack of energy. It is a leading cause of disability worldwide. In severe cases, it leads to 850,000 suicides around the world each year.

"[It] can affect their school, their relationships with friends, increased risk for suicide and increased problems with drugs and alcohol," explained Judy Garber, a doctor of psychology at Vanderbilt University.

She presented the results of a

study on teenagers and depression at a conference in New York. She studied teens because adults who suffer from depression say it often begins in adolescence.

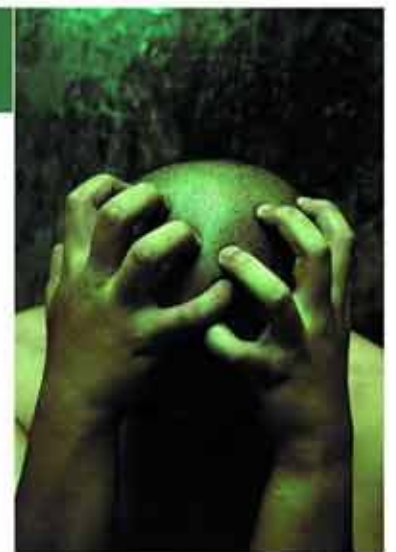
"I'd like to eliminate the stigma that's associated with it because it is common, and it is treatable, and

we think, preventable," she added.

Garber led a study on more than 300 teens who already had one episode of depression. Half the teens were in a control group. The other half had regular group therapy that examined depression and taught coping skills, ways of solving the problems that caused their depression.

"We focused on looking at how they were thinking about things, particularly how they deal with stress, particularly when a stressor occurs," she explained. "Do they blame themselves, do they think that things are going to be terrible forever? Do they think that it's all their fault? We get them to look realistically at what are the consequences of the events, consequences of their own actions, and then, what they can do about it."

When the study ended, those in the prevention program had an 11 percent lower incidence of depression compared to the control group. Garber points out that preventing depression



has broad social implications.

Depressed teens sometimes act out and commit crimes. Preventing depression saves precious community resources.

Another thing the researchers learned: if a parent is depressed, teenagers were much more likely to feel depressed. A parent's depression was such a strong factor that she says it prevented the program from helping these teens.

The researchers says their findings have the potential to improve the lives of many teenagers and reduce lost productivity when they enter the workforce.

[VOA news]

The report is in The Journal of the American Medical Association.

Swine Flu Cases Rise

The World Health Organization said the number of countries with confirmed cases of the swine influenza A-H1N1 has risen to 66.

In its latest figures released on June 3, the WHO said there are more than 19,000 confirmed cases of swine flu worldwide and that the virus is responsible for 117 deaths.

In addition to that count, authorities in Saudi Arabia Wednesday confirmed the country's first case of the virus.

Saudi Health Minister Abdullah al-Rabeeah told news media a nurse arrived in the country Friday aboard a flight from the Philippines. He said she began showing symp-

toms of the virus and later tested positive for the virus.

In the Philippines, health officials said De La Salle University in Manila has suspended classes for 10 days starting Wednesday after a foreign student tested positive for swine flu.

The WHO has said it is closer to declaring a pandemic as the infection appears to be taking hold outside North America.

The WHO had said previously it needs to see clear evidence of sustained community transmission of the virus from person to person in at least two regions of the world before it raises its alert to the Phase 6 pandemic stage. The alert level is currently at Phase 5.

Most of the swine flu cases have been reported in the United States, Mexico and Canada. Mexico has the most swine flu deaths, with about 100.

[VOA News]



India's Parliament Chooses First Woman Speaker



Photo: Reuters

India's newly-elected parliament has elected its first woman speaker - Meira Kumar. She is also a member of the country's low-caste Dalit community. Her name was put forward by the Congress Party, which won a sweeping victory in the recent general elections.

Amid applause from lawmakers across ruling and opposition benches, 64-year-old Meira Kumar was elected, unopposed, by a voice vote as speaker of the lower house of Parliament, Wednesday.

A smiling Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described it as an "historic occasion."

"For the first time, a woman member of this august house has been elected as speaker, and that, too, a woman belonging to the Dalit community. In electing you to this august office, we members of Parliament pay tribute to the womanhood of our country," he said.

Not new to Parliament

Meira Kumar is a five-term member of Parliament. She was sworn in as a Cabinet minister last week, but resigned after the Congress Party offered her the speaker's post.

She is the daughter of a former deputy prime minister, Jagjivan Ram, who was a prominent leader of the low castes.

Political analysts say the choice of Meira Kumar as speaker will enable the Congress party achieve twin objectives as it seeks to build on its decisive victory in the recent general elections.

Image boost

It will boost the Congress party's image as being a pro-women party. During its last term in office, the Congress Party was instrumental in helping Pratibha Patil become the country's first woman president.

Even more significantly, the party hopes to strengthen its base in the low-

caste Dalit community, which in recent decades has switched its loyalty to a host of regional parties headed by low-caste leaders. The Dalits belong to the lowest rung of Hindu religion's complex caste system and have faced discrimination for centuries. Congress wants to be seen as a party committed to improving their social and economic status.

A smiling Meira Kumar said she is overwhelmed and has promised to do her best in her new job.

"It would be my endeavor to run the house as well as I can and give a very fair chance to all sections of the house," she said.

Not easy

The task may not be easy in a house where noisy disruptions are common and lawmakers frequently stall proceedings by shouting slogans and storming the podium.

The prime minister has already ap-

pealed to lawmakers to observe a "new beginning" and allow parliament to function smoothly.

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee backs the plea. "Perhaps I would like to have the indulgence of the house that ... we would like to create a new precedent not of obstruction, but debate and discussions," said Mukherjee.

But not many people are sure that will happen in India's raucous and noisy democracy. [voa news]

Indian Students Claim Epidemic of Racist Violence in Australia

By Phil Mercer

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has condemned as "senseless acts of violence" a series of race attacks on Indian students in Melbourne. The Indian high commissioner is demanding greater protection for Indians studying in Australia, as state authorities in the southern state of Victoria draw up new laws to crack down on hate crimes.

A series of assaults on Indian students in Australia prompted about 3,000 people to take part in a recent rally in Melbourne to demand greater protection from the authorities, who are accused of doing too little to stem the violence.

There were ugly clashes between protesters and police. More than a dozen people were arrested.

Indian High Commissioner to Australia Sujatha Singh says many young expatriates are furious that their concerns have not been properly addressed.

"Our Indian communities overseas are law abiding. They go by the rules and, if they're being provoked into this [protests], it is because they have very real concerns," said Singh.

In the past year, about 70 attacks on young Indians in Melbourne have been reported and there are claims by community groups that the vast majority have been racially motivated.

The latest victim of the violence - a 25-year-old Indian student - is in a critical condition after being stabbed with a screwdriver

by intruders at a birthday party.

His friend, Srinivas Vedantam, insists the attack was carried out by racist thugs.

"When they entered the party and they started abusing - using the racial abuses, like 'You black Indians,' like that stuff. So it ended up with a racial attack," said Vedantam.

However, senior police officers doubt that the violence directed toward the Indian community in Australia is exclusively motivated by racial prejudice.

Victoria Police Chief Simon Overland insists that students, in general, have become "easy targets" for opportunistic criminals.

"It's partly violence against Indian students," he said. "It's escalating robberies and we have used the term 'soft-target robberies.' Now, the Indian students have taken that as referring directly to them; it's not. What we have seen is that robberies are now happening more directed against people in the street, directed against people who are wandering around with laptop computers, mobile phones, iPods, cash. And, if they're alone, they're vulnerable."

The attacks have caused diplomatic friction between Canberra and New Delhi.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has publicly reassured the Indian government that Australia is not a racist country and says he was appalled by the assaults.

"These are senseless acts of violence. Those who carry out these attacks stand condemned," he said.

In response, the Rudd government has set up a special task force to deal with the violence.

The new unit will be led by a former chief of Australia's Special Forces, Duncan Lewis, who is one of the government's most-senior national security advisers.

Officials in Victoria also want those convicted of racially-motivated offenses to be given more severe punishments.

Victoria Attorney General Rob Hulls says judges should take bigotry into account when passing sentence.

"We want to send a message that any crime that's committed purely based on hatred or prejudice against a group of people is not to be tolerated, but it ought to be something that is taken into account in the sentencing principles in this state," he said.

But some Indian students, like

Jayasanker Bagiepalli, are too fearful to remain in Australia and are heading home.

"See what happens here? We are being attacked. Not once, twice. Many people, many Indians are being attacked. That's what happens here. So if this country, you know, people from India really stops coming here. My parents doesn't (sic) want me to stay here," said Bagiepalli.

About 90,000 Indian students are living in Australia. They generate millions of dollars for the national economy, each year.

The Australian wave of violence has made headline news across India.

Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan has rejected an honorary doctorate from a university in Queensland to protest the assaults on Indian students in Australia. [voa news]

Economists Say

Immigration is Key to Ending New Zealand Recession

By Phil Mercer

Some economists warn that New Zealand will suffer if it cuts immigration because of the recession. As unemployment rises, there is growing pressure on the government to reduce its intake of skilled workers, imitating decisions made across the Tasman Sea in Australia.

Unemployment in New Zealand is at a six-year high and stands at five percent. The economy slipped into recession last year, well before many other developed countries, and the chances of a speedy recovery appear slim.

The International Monetary Fund expects the New Zealand economy to shrink by two percent this year.

Unions: scale back immigration program

Trade unions argue that in such dismal economic times the government in Wellington should reduce the level of skilled migration to protect local workers, especially in hard-hit industries such as construction.

Union officials think New Zealand should follow Australia's example and scale back its immigration program. Canberra cut migration levels by almost 15 percent because of the global economic slump.

Some economists, however, think this is a short-sighted view.

British economist Philippe Legrain says New Zealand needs to prepare now for economic recovery by keeping immigration strong. He says that new migrants are a lifeline to the world economy and a "launch pad" for recovery.

"Different people, with different experience,



different ideas, different perspectives sparking off each other can create new solutions to problems, can help to innovate and it is precisely in a recession that businesses need to innovate in order to be prepared for the recovery," he said.

Some migrants complain they are being overlooked

Some well qualified migrants complain that they are being overlooked when applying for suitable positions in New Zealand.

Enoch, who arrived from Rwanda in 2002 armed with two university degrees and the ability to speak four languages, says it took him two years to find work.

He thinks companies in New Zealand are too ready to dismiss overseas qualifications and experience.

"When you have work experience that can be transferred to businesses here is what matters and sometime some employers do not look closely to the CVs to find what is really your experience and what you can do for their businesses," he said.

PM resists calls to scale back immigration

So far, New Zealand's conservative Prime Minister John Key seems likely to resist calls to scale back immigration. Mr. Key says that skilled foreign workers will help the country of just over four million people to eventually recover from its recession.

The largest groups of migrants settling in New Zealand come from Britain, China and Australia, followed by Samoa and India.

[voa news]



Photo: Reuters

WORDS OF PEACE

The Beauty Within

"With all our inventions," says Maharaji, "we are so trapped that we have even forgotten our basic, fundamental desire to be content."

Indian-born but now recognized as a citizen of the world because of his constant traveling, Maharaji has been delivering a message of peace and personal fulfillment to people around the world for several decades.

"My message doesn't change," he says. "Opinions change, people change, circumstances change, but the message remains the same. This is about you. This is not about your accomplishments; this is about you being alive."

"So who are we? We are beings with a singular quest to better ourselves-to evolve, to move forward, to improve upon all that can be improved. What I talk about is the true possibility of the ultimate betterment of a human being. Not of mankind or of a country, but of a human being, and not through religion, not through doctrines, not through ideas, but for every individual to explore and find the beauty within."

Maharaji offers to help people realize this potential, free of charge. He says he has only one condition. "Clear the table. That's all that's asked before you taste this dish: Clean your plate."

To explain the reason behind this request, Maharaji sometimes tells a story about two ants, one of which lived on a hill made of sugar, the other on a hill made of salt.

"The two ants met one day," he says, "and asked each other where they came from."

"I live on the sugar hill," said the first one.

"The other ant asked, 'What is sugar?'"

"Oh, it's this wonderful, sweet-tasting thing."

"The ant from the salt hill said, 'I've never heard of that. We've got salt. You eat it, and it makes you thirsty. This sweet stuff sounds pretty good.'"

"So the ant from the sugar hill said, 'Why don't you come over one day and taste it-see if you like it?'"

"They decided on a day. When



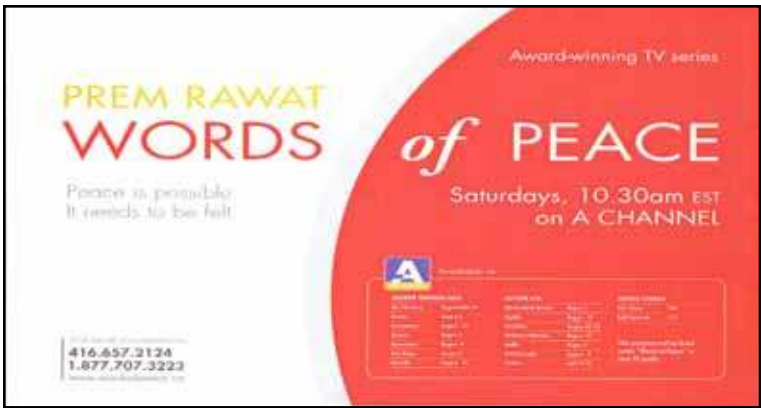
moving!"

In the same way, Maharaji says, it's hard to find the beauty within us without first getting rid of ideas and concepts.

"This is not a blend," he says. "That's why you need to clear the table, clean your plate, and taste this as it should be tasted-not mixed with something else. Taste this so that you'll know what its flavor is."

"I'm not passing judgment. I'm not here to say, 'Well, the system of the world is no good.' It's not my place to say that."

"I go from place to place and I say to people, 'Your fundamental desire is the desire to be content.' I speak of innate and fundamental things common to all



the day came, the salt ant thought, 'I'm going to this sugar hill. What if I don't like it? What if it's terrible? Then I'll be hungry. I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to carry some salt with me in case I don't like the sugar.' He put some salt in his mouth and took off.

"Hi," said the sugar ant. 'How are you?'"

"Oh, I can't wait to taste the sugar!"

"Here. Taste it."

"The salt ant put the sugar in its mouth, chewed on it a little bit and said, 'This tastes just like salt. There's no difference. I guess you call it sugar here, we call it salt there. It's the same thing.'"

"The other ant said, 'I don't think so. Open your mouth. Let me take a look.'"

"Sure enough, in the back of the mouth, there it was-salt. He removed the salt and said, 'Now taste it.'"

"The salt ant said, 'Unbelievable. So different! So amazing! I love this stuff! I'm

human beings on the face of this earth."

"In your life, you need peace. In your life, you need to be content. In your life, you need to be happy. Discover that joy that resides in the heart of every human being, and be fulfilled."

Do whatever is necessary to find peace in your life and be content. Look for peace, find peace, and enjoy peace. If you can't, I can help. It's as simple as that.

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Procreation is regarded in our society as not merely the act of copulation that results in another life form. We attach deep- running emotional and social connotations to child- bearing. Think of it, as a woman, giving birth to a child and watching it grow makes you feel wonderful happy and complete.

In many societies 'barren' women have always been persecuted. In our country too, a childless woman is said to be accursed. This is simply because in the worldly view, having children is completeness. And a woman who is incapable of bringing another being out of her body is looked down upon.

There are two ways of perceiving motherhood. One a



straight tin the eye. The bareness of life is not ugly- it is beauty personified.

So, own up to the fact that this simple physical need is indeed a prominent emotion in our lives. As proof look at how we decorate our vision of this need with social arrangements- marriage, love and what not!

There is nothing wrong with these decorations. For most people, it is one thing to look at life in its bareness, and quite another to

Motherhood



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 416 300 3010 or email Toronto@ishafoundation.org

woman attains the state of motherhood because of copulation, which is purely a result of her physical longing. On the other hand, a human being originating in and emerging out of another's body in itself is a miracle. So in a way we can look at it logically and destroy all the romance attached to it; or we can make it truly mystical- because both the dimensions exist.

Let me first demystify motherhood. A woman becomes mother because of a physical act, because she has a lust in her body. What I say may sound a little hurting but the fact is that unable to accept raw sexuality of the whole at, we hide behind the words: 'starting a family'. Yes, just to bring some sanctity into the sexual act you create a family and a sense of stability; otherwise one would be no different from a dog or a cat.

But nothing is more important than looking at life sensibly and

deal with it. Because, divest of trappings, life and our own overriding sexuality may be too difficult for many to come to terms with.

And now for the mystical part: Pregnancy is all about including another being as a part of yourself. Psychologists talk volumes about this infringement of personal space and here are women who just give up their wombs and bodies to create a being! This includes, this sharing of space is love.

Have you noticed how some women become so beautiful during their pregnancy? Not just physically, but in every way! When you include somebody as a part of your body and life, it is an enormous experience for you.

It is in this way that spirituality shares a similarity with pregnancy- if you can contain your whole existence like a pregnant woman carries another being in her body, then you are spiritual.

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Pudhuvai N. Raman

Art is long - Life is short. Music is the divine gift of God. Throughout the world music, Dance and Drama have created a long history from generation to generation all these years.

Among which, Carnatic Classical Music of South India is very popular universally. As such even the Western people also are admired to its rhythm, composition of songs with multifarious ragas and alabanas. The great exponent of this carnatic music Thiruvayaru Satguru Shri Thyagarajar, Shri Muthusamy Dikshadar and Shri Syama Sastrigal are considered as Sangeetha Mummoorthigal of Carnatic Music. They have composed more than thousands of songs in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil Keerthanas by great scholars like Shri Papanasam Sivan, Periaysamy Thooran, Gopalakrishna Bharathi and others in Tamil, Purandara Dasa and others in Kannada, and Swathi Thirunal and others in Malayalam. which are being sung by all the carnatic music singers in all stages throughout the world. Particularly Saint Thyagaraja Aradhana for the past 162 years being celebrated in grand manner for three days at Thiruvayar which is still considered as one of the famous festival in South India during January. Most of the carnatic musicians, instrument players from all parts of the world assemble in this holy place to pay their music tribute during this aradhana festival, starting with Pancharatna Keerthanas as well individual singing and playing of instruments like Nathaswaram, violin, mirudangam, veena, Flute, Kanchira Clarinet, and Ghatam which will be create a divine inspiration to the music lovers.

Canada being a country of cultural diversity, most of the South Asian Tamils enjoy this same trend on various occasions through their community cultural associations. One among them the Bharathi Kala Manram. Canada for the past 42 years has been promoting this classical music by conducting every month various music concerts regularly with fame and greatness.

Musicians from India used to visit and perform innumerable programs, who are greatly appreciated and honoured with awards. Manram is proud of its record of inaugurating the tradition of celebrating Saint Thyagaraja Aradhana Music Festival by a public organization, almost along the lines of the celebrations done in its place of origin, Thiruvayaru in Tamil Nadu State in India - in co-operation of York University. The Festival has spread to more than 30 centres in

37th Anniversary of Carnatic Music Guru Satguru Shri Thyagaraja Aradhana of Totonto Bharathi Kala Manram 2009

USA and Canada, including the world famous Cleveland Aradhana.

In Toronto itself, the youth membership was encouraged to learn and practice Carnatic music in an authentic manner. With more than 20 experienced teachers running classes all over the city, as the result of which more than hundreds of youth are getting interested in learning, performing and enjoying carnatic music.

To promote this art among the younger generation the Manram do imparts training so as the young talented musicians are coming up and achieve a lot. Since this Manram is associated with the Toronto University, every year two best music students are being elected and offered an annual scholarship of \$ 750/- during its annual function of Thiagarajar Aradhana. You are all aware of that the former President of India, Dr M.J. Abdul Kalam participated as the Chief Guest during last year annual event.

This year 37th Saint Thiagaraja Aradhana Music Festival was celebrated as usual for three days in the newly constructed Srigeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation (SVBF) Auditorium, 80 Brydon Drive, Etobicoke in grand manner. Renowned artists (singers and musicians) from South India viz Sikkil Shri Gurucharan, Padmashri Smt Sudha Ragunathan, Dr. Prameela Gurumurthy, (Head of the Dept. of Music, University of Madras), Sangeetha Kalanidhi violinist Shri S.M. Chandrasekaran with his daughter Smt.G. Bharathi Violin Duet) gave an excellent performances in the evening special events on this occasion, who were accompanied with the musicians Toronto Miss Varaghi (Tambura), Nagai Sriram on (violin), Shri Gururaja Prashant from Michigan (violin) Thiruvarur shri Vaidyanathan, Shri T.V. Vasan and Toronto Shri B. Gowri Shankar (Mirudangam) and Toronto Shri Karthik Venkatraman (Kanjira). Participation by the Artists from India in this festival series were financially supported by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations of the Government of India. This year two students of York University in music were given the annual scholarship by the Mandram and famous Dancer and Founder President of Sabradhya Dance Academy Dr Latha Pada was also felicitated and honoured by the Mandram. Further this year onwards Mandram has started to introduce the local talented qualified young musicians. The first music concert by the Sri Lankan Tamil singer Miss Sayee Brinda, held during Pongal Celebration got a great appreciation and welcomed by all



so as to make the individual identity of their talents in Music among all in GTA.

About the upcoming renovated temple of Shri Yangjeswar Shivalaym and Sringeri Shree Saradha Peetam in the name of Sringeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation Community Hall, Trustees Mr. Ravi Sunramanyam family and Dr Lakshmanan have been doing wonderful jobs with the co-ordinations of 12 South Indian sculptors, who are none other than the students of famous Architect and Sulptor Kanchevarum Shri Ganapathi Stapathi, whose son Shri Rajendra is the coordinator to this team. All of them have been doing beautiful works in this renovation as well volunteered during this three days music festival. Above all sumptuous food, snacks, coffee etc were provided by the kitchen incharge Mr. Roshan with his assistants Shri Chandu, Rana Bai and Bhavana as well volunteered by various women members of this Mandram were really receptive with tasty and sweet.

On 24th April the inaugural program of Sikkil Shri Gurucharan, a young rising star in the carnatic music field was really impressive since the selected songs were admirable as well the accompanied musicians also did well.

On 25th, being the famous Saint Thyagaraja Aradhana festival, the whole auditorium was in full swing with hundreds of music

lovers, Indian Artists, teachers, musicians, instrument players of younger generation. In the reception hall 'Gokulam' a famous shop in Scarborough for CD, DVD and gazettes had displayed a sales exhibition, which had a good attraction among the visitors during these days. The Board Members of Bharathi Kala Mandram welcomed everybody and offered the Programme schedule as well to the ladies Jasmin Flower also.

The event started with Mangala Isai, followed with the special pooja to the portraits of Satguru Thyagarajar, Sri Ram family, Hanuman and Lord Ganapathi.

Mr Thiagarajan, the President of the Mandram gave welcome address and highlighted this year festival which was followed by the tributes of Pancha Ratna Keerthanas by all the musicians. This was really a great source of inspiration to all music lovers as well to the musicians in total.

Then the individual singing of youths went on upto 3 O clock, in which nearly 50, both male and female youngsters rendered Sri Thyagarajar songs as well played instruments also.

In the evening function Padmashri Mrs Sutha Ragunathan's music concert with full audience in the auditorium was beyond words of appreciation since her songs and rhythms were superb. Similarly the accompanied musicians in violin, mirudangam and ghatam exposed their talents in beautiful manner, which was enjoyed by all in great manner.

On this occasion Dr Latha Pada, President of Sambiradaya Dance Academy, two selected York University Students of Music were honoured with awards and felicitations by Ex President Mr Ramamani and Dr Lakshmanan.

On Third day, the remaining students of 15 participated in individual singing, which was followed with the Hari Katha by Dr Prameela Gurumoorthy. The narration and illustrations of Saint Thyagarajar's life with melodious songs were really most inspring since the whole discourse was in English and Tamil, which attracted the younger generation at large.

As the concluding music concert by famous violinist Shri Chandrasekar with his daughter Smr Bharathi as violin duet was also equal to rest of the music concerts on this festival days.

37th Annual Thyagaraja Music Festival Souvenir was also released and distributed to all. Monsoon Journal feels proud to appreciate and extend its hearty good wishes to the Board Members of this Mandram as well the Trustees of SVBF to achieve more in the Divine Musical World as well to encourage the local talented youths to become the popular musicians in future.

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University of Waterloo Engineering Competition

Introduction

For the first time, the UW Engineering Society (EngSoc) and the Sandford Fleming Foundation (SFF) are working together in a joint effort to hold a prominent engineering competition as a way to select teams to represent the University of Waterloo at the Ontario Engineering Competition (OEC).

The OEC is held every February, with the Canadian Engineering Competition (CEC) following in March. The top two winning teams from the OEC in each category get to advance to the CEC.

The Waterloo Engineering Competition consists of six categories:

- Junior Team Design
- Senior Team Design
- Consulting Engineering
- SFF Debates
- SFF Technical Speaking
- Innovative Design

The Technical Speaking and Debates categories have been SFF- (Sandford Fleming Foundation) run activities for many years. Not only does the SFF sponsor the competitions, it is in the foundation's mandate to provide quality educational activities outside of the classroom. To honour this dedication, these two WEC categories will remain identified as SFF.

Registration opens on June 1,



2009 and will close at 11:59 p.m. on June 12, 2009. Registration is only available online.

<http://wec.uwaterloo.ca/index.html>

The Spring 2009 Waterloo Engineering Competition will be held between Monday, June 22 and Saturday, June 27.

When does this happen?

The Waterloo Engineering Competition is held twice a year: in June for students on campus, and again in October for students in the opposite stream. There are five categories in the June and October competitions: Junior Team Design, Senior Team Design, Consulting Engineering, SFF Debates, and SFF Technical Speaking. The Innovative Design category takes place every January.

University of Waterloo

200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
N2L 3G1

+1 519 888 4567

Ethnic gaps remain a threat to peace

Courtesy: THE RECORD

The bombs and the artillery have gone silent in Sri Lanka, whose 21 million people have endured a grueling civil war for the past 26 years that has killed an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 people, shaken the country's economy and deepened ethnic divisions.

Now comes the hard work of winning the peace.

There are positive signs that give rise to some hope.

The highest-ranking surviving member of the Tamil Tigers rebel group has urged supporters to "restrain from harmful acts to themselves or anyone else" and unequivocally said "we have given up violence and agreed to enter a democratic process" to achieve rights for the 18 per cent of Sri Lankans of Tamil origin.

Sri Lanka's president Mahinda Rajapaksa has made conciliatory moves, too, speaking briefly in Tamil in a speech immediately after the Tigers' defeat, and reiterating his plan to resurrect a proposed constitutional amendment to strengthen provincial administrations and give more autonomy to Tamil areas.

Such expressions of goodwill are to be welcomed, but they

must be followed -- swiftly-- with meaningful actions.

The Sinhalese majority have suffered from this war, with the uncertainty and horror of terrorist violence, from assassinations and suicide bombers to attacks in busy public places such as the financial district and the central bus depot.

But the Tamil minority has suffered far more, enduring hardship, deprivation, coercion (for some) into the rebel forces and continuing violence, culminating most recently in the deaths of some 7,000 civilians in the final offensive against the rebels.

Distrust and anguish run deep among Tamils -- Tamil Canadians are so profoundly mistrusting of the Sri Lankan government that they want aid for victims to be channeled only through international organizations.

The first priority must be to improve conditions for the 300,000 people crowded into the world's largest camps for displaced persons. The Sri Lankan government has been slow to allow aid organizations access to the massive camps. Despite its fears that the camp may house some terrorists -- an estimated 8,000 or so, by some counts -- the situation in the camps is dire and



the government should welcome all efforts to ease the suffering of those mouldering behind the barbed wire.

Next, the government must begin the long task of rebuilding an area shattered by violence. Some part of the 2.6 per cent of its GDP that Sri Lanka has until now spent on its military might be redirected there.

Reconstruction is one area where Canada and other interested nations can help, clearing landmines from the north, for instance, and helping resettle displaced people.

And lastly, the country must address the Tamils' unresolved grievances with genuine and lasting reforms. Sri Lanka's existing constitution gives primacy to the Sinhalese language and Buddhist religion.

Federalist models like Canada or Switzerland might provide inspiration for change, as will the recent experiences of Ireland and Punjab in forging a new peace.

If it fails to act, the country runs the risk of spiraling once more into violence.

UW scientist receives major award for omega-3 research contributions

A University of Waterloo nutritional scientist who pioneered a new technique to test omega-3 levels in the body will receive a major award from a leading international research society.

Ken Stark, a professor in UW's faculty of applied health sciences, has been awarded this year's young scientist award from the American Oil Chemists' Society (AOCS). It recognizes his significant and substantial research contributions to increase the intakes of omega-3 fatty acids among North Americans.

"During the past few years, Dr. Stark has become a leader in developing the tools and insights in experimental nutrition and food science research, and this award confirms his growing reputation," said Roger Mannell, dean of applied health sciences. "Omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in fish and seafood, have been associated with reduced risk of chronic diseases. The methods Dr. Stark's team has developed increase the potential for routine clinical profiling of fatty acids."

Stark, a former AOCS-honoured student, will receive the award at the society's annual meeting and exposition to be held in Orlando, Fla., May 6. He will give an address, entitled Omega-3 Fatty Acid Profiling and Dietary Forensics.

Stark, who heads UW's labora-

tory of nutritional and nutraceutical research, now is developing new biomedical tools that will help quantitate and interpret diet-induced diseases. His recent research has provided practical insights on North American intakes of omega-3 fatty acids and strategies to increase these intakes.

His research team seeks to use fatty acid profiling to assess disease risk in large clinical trials. This will lead to a routine measurement of omega-3 fatty acid levels in blood to determine cardiovascular disease risk.

The work will help revolutionize primary prevention of cardiovascular disease and many other diet-induced disorders.

Stark has published more than 20 peer-reviewed articles since 2000, serving as primary investigator on 17 of those articles. He has been often invited to speak to scientific and general audiences, as well as give interviews on television and radio.

In 2006, he received the young investigator grant from the International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids Congress.

The AOCS is a global professional scientific society for individuals and corporations interested in the fats, oils, surfactants, detergents and related materials fields.

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Computek College Graduation 2009

Computek College, one of the pioneer educational Institution, had their Graduation Day on May 22, 2009 at Delta Toronto East Hotel Conference Centre in a grand scale. It was a packed audience of around 500 guests as about 200 students graduating this year. Some of the notable Distinguished guests attended were Hon. Minister Gerry Phillips, Senior Lecturer Nirmala Vijayakumar from U.K, Prof. Renee Williams of Mc Master University and Former Prof. David Lieberman, Centennial College.



Prof. Renee Williams delivering her speech



Vaithegi Vasanthakumar is the Emcee of the event



Dr. Tham Vasanthakumar, Director of Studies, Computek College delivering his speech



Hon. Minister Gerry Phillips, MPP-Scarborough Agincourt addressing



Guest Lecturer, Nagarani Shanmugam being honored



Pushparajan Sinnadurai receiving certificate from Minister



Theiventhiram receiving certificate from Minister



Georgia Chapman receiving certificate from Minister



Chandra Sivapalan receiving certificate from Minister



Wai Ling Chung receiving certificate from Minister



Svetlana Staverska receiving certificate from Minister



Tharmakulasingam Kanapathipillai receiving certificate from Minister



Ayanarikumar Iyadurai receiving certificate from Minister



Assumpta Yogarajah receiving certificate from Minister



Selvambikai Senathirajah receiving certificate from Minister



VIP's and Guests



Nirmala Vijayakumar, David Liberman, Dr. Tham Vasanthakumar, Hon. Minister Gerry Phillips, Prof. Renee Williams & Vaithegi Vasanthakumar



Mr. & Mrs Sivakumaran with Nirmala Vijayakumar and her son Aruran from UK

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**Life is Beautiful;
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through it.
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upcoming British
talent to the
International
community.**

The Backstory:

Jasmeet Kaur Kalsi (Jassie) was born in the United Kingdom, Croydon, 1983. She completed education at college. She graduated in the following subjects; Dance, Drama, Media and General Studies. Her first dance performance was at the age of 8; she performed on front of an audience of 200 at Wandsworth Town Hall.

During the past three years Jassie has performed for countless shows, two shows are her most memorable. Firstly, she had the pleasure to dance for Sony TV. The event was a dance competition, although she did not win the competition she reached the last 24 dancers, and she was awarded Best Category in London. Her happiest moment was that her family was there and that the presenters also interviewed her. Her second most memorable moment was earlier this year in March 2009. She performed for one of not the biggest charity event that is showcased live over all TV/ media channels in the UK, Comic Relief. She was involved in a Bollywood dance off

Upcoming Dancer Profile



with Denise Lewis that premiered on prime time TV. Comic Relief is a charity dedicated to help sponsor those who live in third world countries with food and water. Most of the country is in frenzy around this time of the year as everyone young or old get involved. People have the opportunity to sponsor others in any form of activity, to collect money to help needs of others. Jassie was overwhelmed and pleased with the final outcome of the production, she was happy to know that her performance had made a difference in the world; most importantly she was happy and proud of herself and thanked God that she was lucky to be there.

Her main aims after being involved in such a large production was to get more people interested in dance. Since this time more people have opted to learn Bollywood dance, since the past 6 years.

Jassie, as friends know her also has many other nicknames. Her parents call her 'Ish' meaning 'shy'. Her cousins on her fathers side call her 'Jash' and cousins on her mothers side call her 'Jashleen'

Jassie's aesthetic and interest all derive from her family. Her father plays a lot of sport and keeps himself fit and her mothers dream of one day becoming an actress. Jassie feels that she would like to fulfil her mother's dream, of one day making it big in Bollywood. Jassie is focused on wanting to reach that goal more as she feels that her mother has sacrificed her own happiness for her.

Her Influence for dance comes from Bollywood movies. Her three favourite Bollywood movies where she continues to draw inspiration from are: Devadas, Veer Zaara and Mujhse Dosti Karage. Her favourite song of all time is from a Bollywood classic, Dilbar Mere - Sakte pe Sakta.

Admiration:

The one Bollywood actress/dancer that Jassie admires the most is Madhuri Dixit, of her idol she says 'she dances with her soul and is extremely talented'. Jassie places her high above the Bollywood celebrity list and describes her as the best Bollywood dancer, giving her all in dance whether it is for a dance production or movie. Jassie's first ever dance performance was taken from a Madhuri Dixit movie, she was blown away after watch-



ing Devadas, and would one day like to hold a stage presence and dance like her idol.

'..I wasn't born to live, I was born to dance my life away..'

Jassie is finding that the Bollywood industry is losing its culture and her main aim is to get more Indian girls to dance. It's a struggle, but she finds it an achievable goal. She is hoping that Bollywood dance will target people of all ages, as she describes the form of dance to be fun, whilst listening to happy, fast paced songs. She hopes that this form of dancing will one day make a statement. 'Dance like no one is watching'.

Personal Style:

When it comes to dressing herself, Jassie mainly shops at Topshop and H&M and also online which she finds 'carefree'. She finds that H&M caters for all styles. She also draws inspiration from Indian actresses regarding forms of makeup and hair.

Her close friends think of her as an extremely talented individual brimming with confidence, Jassie's closest friend Tina, who in her eyes she sees as a sister describes her as 'a little drama queen, loyal friend and a snappy firecracker'.

Jassie's favourite colours are; pink, black and silver. At present she is reading 'Yes Man' a fiction written from the movie. Her favourite holiday destination is Malaysia and one country she longs to visit is Thailand.

Looking Ahead:

Jassie is unsure what path her career might take. She hopes that one day she owns dance studio and gains recognition in being in the Bollywood industry. She hopes to be established and famous within 5 years. She hopes that she can make it big in the industry by being more positive, building up confidence and believing in herself.

Her goals are to dance abroad a lot more, as she enjoys travelling very much. She also hopes that one day she settles down with a family and gets married to someone who understands her ways of life and supports her in every way. She just wants to make her family proud especially her parents.

Jassie dreams of being successful, and being able to bring happiness into someone's life through the form of dance. Her dream is to be an idol for somebody and the world to know her.

By: PK





Firewood seller at 3rd mile post in Uppuvelli, Trincomalee District, Sri Lanka

Goodness is helping one in distress;
 Support is not deserting one who is dependent;
 Culture is to act in unison with the ways of the world;
 Love is not surrendering ties with one's kin;
 Wisdom is to ignore the advice of the ignorant;
 Honesty is not to go back on one's words;
 Integrity is to ignore others' faults;
 Justice is awarding punishment without partiality;
 Patience is to suffer the ill-disposed - (Kalithogai 133)

Picture by Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

'Let's make shorter films'

The length of films will change. Our films will get shorter because attention spans will get shorter, actor Kamal Haasan said. Speaking at the valedictory function of the Chennai International Screenwriting Workshop in Chennai convened by Raj Kaamal Films International on Wednesday, June 3, the actor said, "the future of cinema is bright. Screenwriters need to be ready to deal with platforms which are palm-size." Urging the film personalities to tap every available platform to reach out to the masses, he said that they have to take to available platforms like YouTube. On the concept of naach-gaana in Indian films, Kamal Haasan said, "I am against monoculture. Just as everyone is different, films too must be different." Predicting that the future of Indian cinema is safe, noted screenplay writer and head of the Screenwriting Departments at Film and TV Institute of India, Anjum Rajaballi said, "there has been a

great interest among youth for screenwriting. It means we are seeing a definite change in the quality of storytelling in Indian cinema. In fact, one can even expect a mutative change." "An extensive survey of Hindi movies released between 1991 and 2000 revealed that over 85 per cent of movies failed to recover even the cost, the reason being they lacked effective screenplay. The greatest storytelling culture in the world has neglected screenwriting in cinema for too long," Anjum Rajaballi said. Hariharan, director of L V Prasad Film and TV Academy, said that the mutative change in cinema would arrive because filmmaking is no longer the domain of the elite. "The difference between the elite and the mass audience has collapsed," he said. Earlier in the discussion, director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra said "time is ripe for us to get talent from the small towns and let them tell their stories in the universal language. People are the

same everywhere in the world." "If a Hindi movie clicks in a town like Coimbatore cutting across language barriers, it should do well in an European country too," he said. Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, who made an impact with Rang De Basanti, said, "My Delhi 6 was a very touchy and personal movie. Unfortunately I understood after the movie's debacle that the final output was far from what I originally conceived. A screenwriter has to do movies that is convincing to him. He cannot make movies to the expectations of the audience. I will be making minor corrections in the movie and reshooting few portions as per my original script." French writer Olivier Lorelle, film personalities including Jean Claude Carriere, Sreeram Raghavan, K Balachander, Balu Mahendra, Shekhar Kapur, Rituparno Ghosh took part in the function.

[nwestodaynet]

Street-side story



By subha j rao

There used to be a time in Tamil cinema when even grief was projected aesthetically. Then, a young man with fire in his heart made the gut-wrenching Veyil, layered with raw grief and longing, and changed public perception forever. That film found reception even at Cannes, where it was screened to moist eyes and choking voices. Now, Vasanthabalan is back with Angadi Theru, his ode to the street and the sellers that people sit.

"Usually, in cinema, the camera is always on the buyer. What about the seller? What is his life like? What drives him? These are some of the questions I seek to answer," says Vasanthabalan.

A late night pav bhaji break during the post-production of Veyil was the inspiration for this script, which took three years to perfect. "I saw people going and coming, constantly. And, I wanted to document their lives," he says.

"My film is about a particular street rife with the din and bustle of humans. Even after the whole world sleeps, this one's awake — the shops are cleaned and stocks replenished. And, it's not just things that are for sale — there are slaves, sex workers... everything is for sale, and everyone has a price," says this former assistant of Shankar. As much as 90 per cent of the film was shot at night in a Chennai market (sometimes using a hidden camera) by cinematographer Richard M. Nathan.

And, as in Veyil (a biography), there's a lot of Vasanthabalan in this too. "Well, I can't avoid that. Years ago, I came to Madras wearing torn rubber slippers in search of a life. So many people come in like that. The film will talk about their mental state, their homesickness..."

Feeling of hope

But, despite it all, what will shine through is the feeling of hope, the young director assures. "There is strife, but flowers still bloom, children are still born. There is life. And, living is important. Actually, mere existence is great joy," he philosophises.

So, will he ever be able to shoo away the ghosts of the past and make a happy film? "Never. I can see only pain. Probably, there's something wrong with me. Am I addicted to pain? Possibly," he admits.

How easy was it to move on to Angadi... after the catharsis called Veyil? "I don't carry baggage. Also, that was much easier because it was my life. Here, I'm trying to see through another being's life."

The cast of the film has been spoken about too. Mahesh, the hero, hails from a family selling pori kadalai in theatres and shops in Chinnalapati near Dindigul. He was discovered at a volleyball match after close to 30,000 boys were screen-tested. "I wanted a rural-looking boy who oozed helplessness and fear. He was perfect. And, I have not trained him in 'cinema' acting."

The heroine is Anjali, who made a mark in the critically-acclaimed Katradhu Tamizh. "She has the perfect girl-next-door looks," he says.

How happy is he with the way the film has shaped up? "Very. It is more refined than Veyil. And, I've worked hard for it. I was hospitalised thrice during shooting. I am eagerly waiting to see people's reaction," he says.

Now, he's working on another script in Tamil. And, post-Cannes, many offers for crossover films have been coming in. "They liked the raw emotions, and many scripts have been coming my way. I am waiting for the right offer, though," he says.

How comfortable will he be doing a "foreign" film? "Well, Tamil films are like my home; this will be like a neighbour's home. But, a director is a craftsman first, and craft knows no boundaries."

[hinduonnet.com]

MONSOON FEATURE

By Appadurai Muttulingam

In a colorful ceremony marked by enthusiasm and witnessed by several hundreds of Torontonians and others, well-known writer Dr. Lakshmi, better known to readers as Ambai received a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award consisting of a Plaque and \$1,500, from the Tamil Literary Garden

The 8th annual Lifetime Achievement Award took place on Sunday, 24th May 2009 at 6.00 PM at Seeley Hall, University of Toronto. As in the previous years the award (also known as Iyal Virudhu) which includes a plaque and a cash prize of C\$1500.00 was given by the Tamil Literary Garden to a writer who has made significant contributions to the promotion of Tamil. The recipient this year was Ambai, a historian and creative writer who writes about love, relationships, quests and journeys in the Tamil region and elsewhere. Her real name is C S Lakshmi. Dr. C S Lakshmi has

Creative Writer Ambai (Dr.Lakshmi) receives Lifetime Achievement Award from Tamil Literary Garden

been an independent researcher in Women's Studies for the last thirty years.

Ambai has been writing from the age of 16 and her stories have been translated in two volumes entitled A Purple Sea and In a Forest, A Deer. The latter recently shared the Hutch-Crossword award for translated fiction. She is currently the Director of SPARROW (Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women).

The award was presented at the function by Dr R. Nagaswamy, former Director of Archeology, Tamil Nadu. In her acceptance speech Ambai said that she had not received a single award for Tamil in India. In her forty years of writing career she had crossed many oceans, conquered mountains, fought wars and destroyed countless demons to arrive at where she is today. 'Like the Zen philosopher who produced a single tune on his flute when the King asked him what he had learned in life, I too would have created a single musical note of my understanding of life. But that would not have earned a lifetime

achievement award for me. Everything needs to be built in words,' said Ambai.

In addition to the Lifetime Achievement Award the following awards were also presented:

Fiction Award to Thamizavan for his novel 'Vaarsavil Oru Kadavul.'

Non-fiction Award to Dr. Murugar Gunasingam for his book 'Ilangayil Thamizar.'

Poetry Award to Leena Manimekalai for her collection of poems 'Ulakin Azakiya Muthal Pen.'

Information Technology in Tamil Award to Suratha Yarlvanan for his long time contribution to Tamil computing.

Student Scholarship award to Angela Britto for best essay.

The award ceremony was presided over by Professor Chelva Kanaganayakam and the invitees included writer P. Karnaharamoorthy from Germany, Dr M.A. Nuhman from Sri Lanka, writer Balamanoharan from Denmark, Professor Subramania Iyer and Dr R. Nagaswamy.



Dr. Nagaswamy, former Director of Archaeology - Tamil Nadu presenting the Award to Ms. Ambai. Looking on are Mrs. Bama Mahendran and writer A. Muttulingam.



Dr. Murugar Gunasingam receiving an Award from Mr. Jayavarman, a former U.N. Official. Standing on the Left is Mr. Rabindravarman and on the right is Tamil short-story writer Mr.A. Muttulingam



Balamanoharan, author of novels, "Bleeding Hearts" and "Nilakili" presents an Award to Chelvan who receives the Award on behalf of Thamizavan, prize-winner for best fiction. Looking on is writer Karunaharamoorthy from Germany



Prof. M.A. Nuhman giving award to Suratha Yarlvanan from Germany for computer Technology in Tamil.



Ms. Anjala Britto, a University student, receiving the Best Essay Award from Mr. Manuel Jesudason, Attorney-At-Law. Standing on the Left is Mrs. Jesudason.

Book Review

The Legends of Indian Cinema - Sivaji Ganesan

Author: Theodore Baskaran | Publishers: Wisdom Tree-India

Reviewed By:
Siva Sivapragasam

The Profile of A Cinematic Icon

Nearly Seventy years ago, a little boy seven years old and bearing the name Villupuram Chinnasamy Ganesan ran away from his home to join a Drama Company later to make his debut in South Indian Cinema for well over a half a century.

The little boy was no other than Chevalier Sivaji Ganesan, who strode the Tamil Cinema for over fifty years like a colossus and whose film career culminated with the Dada Saheb Phalke Award, the highest honour in India for an artiste for his contribution to the film industry in his country.

In his book "Sivaji Ganesan", author Theodore Baskaran has traced the meteoric rise of this legendary actor from his life on



The Legends of Indian Cinema - Sivaji Ganesan

stage, his first film Parasakthi and the final countdown of his film career. Beginning his early days in Drama, the book follows Sivaji's early essays in Cinema, his days of glory as a star, the manner in which he acquired power to control his career and his rivalry with MGR, both on and off screen. The decades of his domination on the South Indian screen and the cul-

mination of his film career with the winning of the Dada Saheb Phalke Award form part of the book. The book also takes the reader to his early days with the Dravida Munnetra Kalagham, his association with Periyar, C.N. Annathurai and present Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi. It also portrays his entry into politics and his failure in this field.

Sivaji was groomed to be an actor and not fitted for a politician.

Sivaji Ganesan was more than a cinematic star. He was an icon. His life portrayed and reflected the changing face of India. He exhibited this through his films. From Parasakthi to Kattabomman, from Paasamalar to Karnan, from Gauravam to Thangapathakkam Sivaji's exceptionally excellent portrayals reflected the changing times and different moods of moving India. Whereas MGR carved for himself a different role in Politics away from Cinema, Sivaji remained in the cinematic field right to the end.

When Wisdom Tree Publishers began a series of books on the Legends of Cinema, Sivaji was an obvious choice. At the ceremonial opening of his statue on the Marina Beach in Chennai, even Chief Minister Karunanidhi publicly admitted "Enathu uraihalluku uir koduththavar Sivaji" (Sivaji gave life to my dialogues) Kamalahaasan went one step further when he stated that "The Indian Tamil Cinema could be

divided into two periods - The one before Sivaji Ganesan and the other after Sivaji Ganesan." His eminence in Tamil Cinema was so electrifying that the great Cinema Music poet Kannathasan acknowledged that there was no Tamilian who had not been influenced by his screen persona. The book portrays the life of the actor from his early beginnings drowned in poverty and how he rose to the dizzying heights of glory. The book is certainly a wealth of understanding the great actor and an inside perspective of his life.

Theodore Baskaran's story of Sivaji is the profile of a cinematic icon and a book worth reading from the beginning to the end. The book is handy in size to handle and pictorially represented with rare photos of the highlights of Sivaji's career.

(The Book is Published by Wisdom Tree, India and will be soon available to Canadian readers at Murugan Book Depot, Ellesmere & Midland, Scarborough - Tel 416 285 9118)

Contd. from previous Issue

By: Kanyalal Raina

Most of the details of Mirabai's birth, parentage, matrimony, and circumstances of death are just approximate arrived at by broad consensus. Unanimity does not prevail even in regard to her name.

Dr. Barthaval contends that Mira was not her actual name but the term's literal meaning being 'Consort of Ishvara -God' it emerged as Mira's popular name. Purohit Harinarayana, another scholar claims that Mira, developed from 'Mir', the title of the descendants of the family of Muhammad, was a name inspired by Shah Sufi of Ajmer, though in view of Rajputs' great dislike for Shah it is not likely that any Rajput would inherit from Shah anything, even a holy syllable, for naming his daughter. Scholars like Dr. Padmavati and Dr. Bhagwan Das Tiwari among others mention Mirata, Miram and Miran as Mira's three other names.

Mirata, divisible as Mira+ta, is linked with Merata, one of the places associated with her birth. It broadly means 'one from Merata'. In early 17th century genealogy of Munhata Nainsi Mira has been mentioned as Miran, and in one or two others, as Miram, though these are only local phonetic variations of the term Mira.

It is alike with the date of her birth which swings from 1403 to 1506. Though no conclusive evidence has so far come to light supporting it, 1500 C. E. has wider acceptance. Apart that a local scholar from Mewar Devashri barrister claims it as the date of Mira's birth, the dates that scholars like Dholerava Bhat, Kunwar Sukhvira Singh Gahlot, Munshi Deviprasad, Harvilas Sarda among others fix as the date of her birth are also around 1500 C.E., that is, in between 1498 to 1506 C. E. Citing some secondary evidences Jhaveri takes the date of Mira's birth back to 1403, G. A. Grierson and W. G. Archer, to 1420, Thakur Chatur Singh

Rathor, to 1457-58, and F. E. Keay to 1470. W. G. Archer's opinion is somewhat significant. In his 'The Loves of Krishna' he contends that Vallabhacharya was Mira's follower, and as

Vallabhacharya was born in 1478, Archer takes back the date of Mira's birth to 1420.

Vallabha's Pushtimarga had begun taking shape when he was in his thirties, approximately around 1520-30, the period when Mira, having relinquished the houses of both, Rathors and Sisodias, was passing through the prime period of her 'bhakti' life. Strangely, Vallabha's Pushtimarga immensely influenced all Vaishnava devotional poets, Surdasa and others; however, nothing of it is traceable in Mira's writings, and that too when he had his seat in Mewar itself, one of the two most significant places in Mira's life. It strongly suggests

Mirabai

The Melodious Saint



that Mira might have preceded Vallabhacharya.

Merata, a medium size town situated at Delhi-Jodhpur train route, is now widely accepted as Mira's birthplace, though some scholars yet contend, Parashurama Chaturvedi being quite firm, that her birthplace was Kukari, and a few others, that it was Chokari.

Kalyanamal Shekhavat has a far different opinion. He claims that Mira was born at Bajauli, though she lived at Kuraki for sometime. In his 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan' Col. J.

Tod mentioned at two different places Rao Duda and his son Ratan Singh as the names of Mira's father. Mewar records, collected by Munshi Devi Prasad, too, confuse between Duda and Ratan Singh as her father's name. However, despite such initial confusion it is

now almost unanimously accepted that Ratan Singh was Mira's father. Similar confusion prevails in regard to her mother's name, which in some sources has been mentioned as Kusum Kunwar while in others, Virakumari. It is popularly believed that Mira's

mother died soon after Mira's birth, though some scholars contend that it was not so. In his 'Bhaktirasabodhini', the early 17th century commentary of Bhaktamal, Priyadas claims that Mira's parents, both mother and father, were alive for long.

Mira's Marriage

The event of Mira's marriage, about the date of which greater unanimity prevails, has strange undertones, and from here Mira seems to take two different directions, one, the essential or fundamental to which her essential being inclined, and the other, incidental, which as human-born she was obliged to take. It was largely at this juncture that the traditional or popular Mirabai whom accumulated faith of generations across centuries

constructed and people's memory retained, something like the spiritual Mirabai, emerges. The human-born Mirabai was married in 1516, when barely six-

teen, though till recently confusion prevailed as to the name of her husband, which some sources - J. C. Omen, Colonel Tod, G. A. Grierson among others, claimed was Rana Kumbha, and other, Bhojaraj. Perhaps the historical Mira temple constructed close to Rana Kumbha's Victory tower at

Chittor, confused Col. Tod to relate Mira and Kumbha with each other. This temple dedicated to Mira enshrines Krishna, and Mira seated close to his feet, sings and plays on lyre for him in perpetuity. However, a wider consensus evolved in favour of Bhojaraj as Mira's husband.

Unlike her matrimony in human-birth, there is hardly any confusion in regard to the matrimonial status of the popular or spiritual Mirabai. This Mira was wedded to One Infinite who manifested in human, personal, beatific and joyous form of Krishna. Krishna was her Lord and to Him she was wedded with ties of love beyond fetters of this world, rigid modesty norms and chains of family life. She was married to Him in every birth, and

in every birth she yearned for him in love and was thus ever his spouse and ever his maid. This Mira, the pure soul, a part of the Supreme separated from Him, was thus ever wedded and was ever - births after births, a virgin: 'Charana Sarana ri dasi Mira, janam janam ri kwanri' -

A servant at her Lord's feet Mira was a virgin, birth after births.

Strangely, scholars jump from one date of Mira's marriage to another and from one person to the other as her husband but as for Mira, she claimed to be ever a virgin - 'Janam janam ri kwanri', and if she was dyed in colors of anyone's love, it was Krishna's - 'Shyam rang ranchi' - dyed in Krishna's blue. History, a coward, does not have the courage to look into the eyes of the Mira who is both, ever wedded and ever a virgin. This eternal consort of the Supreme, and His virgin ever in sojourn till he meets her and she unites with him in inseparable union, is hardly discoverable in debris of history.

Mira Transformed

Interestingly, Mira's utmost poetic imagery and devotional idiom center on marriage, particularly its bonds that tie the two together, resulting union and its delight, and separation and its pangs. She presents herself as her Lord's virgin, bride, and humble servant, one willing to live the way He liked. Mira seems to have discovered in marriage love's essential idiom - formal and intrinsic; and, it is somewhat natural for it was an event of marriage that transformed the human-born Mirabai into the spiritual Mirabai; to some extent, the spiritual Mirabai was born out of an event of marriage. As the popular tradition has it once when yet a child, Mira saw a marriage procession reaching her neighbourhood, a curious mind, she asked her mother what for so many richly bejewelled and costumed men riding horses and palanquins had come there. When told that it was a marriage procession and that the most richly bejewelled youth riding as splendidly saddled horse walking ahead of others was the bridegroom come to marry their neighbour's daughter, Mira innocently asked her mother where was her groom. Mira's mother smiled at her innocence and to amuse her picked the idol of Krishna and giving it to her said that he was her groom. Mira's adolescent mind believed it. She



recalled how, though not in a procession, her groom had likewise come.

Mira's mind was so deeply influenced by this association of the Krishna's idol that in many of her songs Mira addressed Krishna as 'jogi' and herself as his 'jogin'. Mira rarely sees her Krishna beyond her own contexts. She yearns for Krishna but these are her own yearnings, not Krishna's. She does not drag him to her level of sensuous yearnings.

Mira venerated Raidasa as her 'guru' - teacher, in some of her verses, and so contended the popular tradition, though chronologically Mira and Raidasa, broadly accepted period of

Raidasa being from 1394 to 1418, weren't contemporaries. It is said that Raidasa had led her to the path of Vaishnava 'bhakti'. It seems that this might have led the common mind to link 'yogi' and Raidasa for they both led her to the path of Krishna.



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Mira's Pre And Post Marriage Life

Although slightly varying is the contention that Mira's mother died early and Mira was the sole charge of a fond grandfather Rao Duda, a staunch Vaishnava. Reciprocally, Mira the child took care of her grandfather's religious activities - lighting lamp and incense, making sacred food for offering, dressing up the idol, arranging things in order, and when rites began chanting hymns along with him and herself prostrating before the idol. This Vaishnavite atmosphere was Mira's initial training and the factor that shaped her personality. Whatever her inspiration, by the time of her marriage with Bhojaraj her mind had become fully absorbed in Krishna so much so that when on her lips were the marriage-rites related hymns within her heart were thoughts of Krishna. She earnestly believed that she was being married to Krishna, not to Bhojaraj.

Most sources say Mira did not have problems with Bhojaraj but her real ordeal began with his death in 1523. Under rigid customs of 'sati', Mira, a Rajput widow, was required to immolate herself, which Mira declined. She argued that she was wedded to Krishna who was 'Avinashi' - indestructible, not to anyone other than him, she was not a widow. Immolating herself would disgrace him whose consort she was. This incensed everyone's anger in the family and even beyond including her father who thought the same way. Now Mira, the bride of the house of Sisodias, was the object of everyone's disdain. Ungenerous treatment apart, she was subjected to various atrocities, mental and physical; to include even attempts on her life, to which everyone in the family was a party.

Contd. in Pg 41...



LETTERS & OPINIONS

Historic misdeeds sure to breed a new Tamil politics

"Closing of this chapter in Sri Lankan history is bound to see the inauguration of an even tougher phase of challenges for the Rajapaksa oligarchy. Lack of governmental enthusiasm to correct its historic misdeeds is sure to breed a new Tamil politics this time which will lay the foundations for a new nation-state in the neighbourhood," writes Sadanand Menon in the leading Indian periodical, *The Outlook*.

The Eelam forecast:

So why are they bursting crackers in Colombo as if some IPL match was won? Velupillai Prabhakaran, the LTTE chief, may be dead or alive. But that's completely beside the point. What everyone should be asking is whether the Tamil question in Sri Lanka is dead. Let's make no fuzzy mistake. The answer is a resounding no.

The present triumphalism of the Sinhala government and the carousing people on the streets of Colombo is a display of a kind of political idiocy. They have learnt nothing from over sixty years of ethnic conflict and almost thirty years of armed insurgency, which has claimed an unconscionable number of dead soldiers and militants-not to speak of an unacceptably high number of civilian casualties.

The notion of a Tamil homeland is not going to perish with Prabhakaran. The militant movement, which began in the mid-1970s in Jaffna, was in response to three decades of unbridled majoritarianism by the Sinhala state, which tried to squeeze Tamil aspirations and snuff out Tamil identity. Broadly speaking,



Monsoon Op-Ed
A member of Australia's Tamil community walks past symbolic coffins (unseen) and a placard during a memorial service in Sydney on May 24, 2009 to mourn the deaths of Tamil civilians killed in Sri Lanka's civil war. [Getty Images]

these conditions continue to exist.

The Sri Lankan state itself will be in no mood to address any of these long-standing grievances. It's up to India and the rest of the international community to effectively persuade Colombo to pay attention to redressing this. It is

apparent that before the dust settles, the Sri Lankan government will do its best to send across Sinhala settlers into the Tamil regions of the north and east, even as a large segment of internally displaced people continue to languish in ruthlessly controlled

'refugee camps'. While humanitarian aid is sure to pour in, a substantial percentage of it is bound to be diverted to settle 'outsiders' in the newly depopulated Tamil regions. The strategy of demographic disaggregation is not unknown in our times and frequently used to neutralise nationalist ambitions. Ethnic porosity over geographic stretches becomes particularly achievable in smaller countries.

But what the Sinhala state now needs to heed is the new reality of a swelled out, prosperous and extremely vocal Lankan Tamil diaspora. Thirty years of militancy-topped by at least twenty years of LTTE hegemony-has decimated the Tamil youth, crippled the Tamil intelligentsia and denuded the Tamil population of any sort of alternative leadership at the local level. It is into this space that a newly articulate, million-strong, diasporic community with international connections is poised to step in. That is where the new leadership, new resistance and new political process will come from. This segment is better equipped to continue the struggle through constitutional means, even as it encourages stray elements to carry out neat surgical strikes on a vulnerable Sri Lankan state.

The Sinhala government is reportedly preparing to divide the newly conquered Tamil territories in the north and east for obnoxious renegade elements like Douglas Devananda, Pillaiyyan and Karuna to administer. This too is only going to lead to further alienation as armed acolytes of these warlords roam the streets bullying and extorting a beleaguered population. Some of it is already happening in the east. Sri

Lanka will have no mechanism to demobilise this Falstaffian army. A quick slippage into another kind of a civil war is inevitable.

No one speaks enough about India's own wretched role in the political and social mess that contemporary Sri Lanka is in today. In the 1980s, it was India's strategic interest in keeping president Junius Jayawardene from walking into the US camp (by allowing the American Seventh Fleet use of Trincomalee harbour) which led to the Indian state's alacrity in setting up training camps for militant Tamil youth groups like LTTE, TELO, EPRLF and PLOTE. These armed insurgents were to be used as a threat against any Sinhala intransigence. Ironically, India lost the plot pretty soon as the groups became involved in the usual internecine, inter-intelligence agency rivalries and dirty tricks. Soon, by 1987, the LTTE had ruthlessly decimated all other groups claiming to represent the Tamil cause and had declared itself independent of Indian control too. Subsequently, the role of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in turning the guns on the Tamils in Jaffna and the recent Indian collusion with the Sri Lankan state to stomp out the rebels in the Vanni are well known.

However, the closing of this chapter in Sri Lankan history is bound to see the inauguration of an even tougher phase of challenges for the Rajapaksa oligarchy. Lack of governmental enthusiasm to correct its historic misdeeds is sure to breed a new Tamil politics this time which will lay the foundations for a new nation-state in the neighbourhood. The Rajapaksa regime's time starts now.

When you're aware there's no ego

How are you going to surrender the ego, when it does not exist? Suppose you are sitting in a dark room. You want the darkness to disappear. But can you push it out? Can you fight darkness and force it to leave the room? No! No matter how long you keep trying, you are ultimately going to be defeated - and that too by something which does not exist!

Ego is all about the illusory identify we build about ourselves, around ourselves, so that we can feel secure. A child has no ego. It is free to explore. As we grow, our education and conditioning helps us build this barrier around ourselves. It is an 'unreal', non-existent barrier that separates us from our true Self. It is a barrier that keeps us in bondage.

The ego is like darkness, it

has no positive existence. Just like darkness simply the absence of light, the ego is nothing but the absence of awareness. To struggling to kill ego is like struggling to push the darkness out of the room.

To really expel the darkness, what you need to do is to forget all about dealing with the darkness. Focus your energy on light instead. Just bring a small lamp into the room, and you will find that darkness has fled on its own! So, I tell you to forget all about the ego. Instead, focus on bringing a lamp of awareness in to your being.

When your entire consciousness has become a flame, you will find that the ego is no more.

The ego is an illusion. You cannot surrender it when you are unaware- because you don't know



how. Of course, you cannot surrender it when you become aware either - because then you realize that there is nothing left to surrender! What you have heard, read, been taught - "Surrender

the ego in order to attain Self-realization" - this is unworkable. It can happen only the other round. Self-realization dawns, and suddenly you cannot find the ego anymore. The surrender has already happened, just like that.

I am glad if the question has arisen in your being. The ego is the root cause for all your anxiety, sorrows, and tensions. It is your doorway to hell. To actively feel that you want to drop the ego, to feel the need to be rid of this burden is itself a step towards awareness. It shows that you are stirring from your sleep!

Watch Video www.youtube.com/lifeblissfoundation

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Mirabai

The Melodious Saint Contd. from page 39

Her father-in-law Rana Sanga was a little considerate, but he died in 1527 fighting against Babur and with this the reins passed into the hands of Ratan Singh, and a little after, Vikramaditya Singh, Mira's worst oppressors. The Bhaktamal, its various commentaries, and other early records evade mentioning the names of tormenters, but enumerate a number of atrocities, including a few attempts on her life, to which Mira was subjected. Mira's atrocities, especially the attempts to kill her, also feature in the 17th century poetry of Priyadasa, Dhruvadasa, Nabhadasa and Dayabai among others. However, the list of atrocities and occasions when attempts on Mira's life were made, and divine miracles which every time aborted them, is quite large in the popular tradition.

When this attempt failed, he sent a wicker-basket with a deadly cobra in it; however, when Mira opened it, it revealed just a Saligrama, a symbolic form of Vishnu. The Mira Mandir at

Vrindavana has a Saligrama icon claimed to be the same into which the cobra sent to kill Mira had transformed. As popular is the event of Rana's encounter with Krishna in Mira's apartment. It is said that Krishna often appeared in Mira's chamber and she spoke to him. Hearing her talk to someone privately Rana's sister Udaibai reported the matter to her brother. With a naked sword in hand Rana, perhaps Vikramaditya, stormed her chamber shouting where her lover was. When he found none except Krishna's image, he left shamefaced. In slight variation, he flung his sword on one behind the curtain wherefrom a disc - Vishnu's Sudarshana Chakra, emerged and struck his sword, and in sheer horror he

left. As some sources have it, Rana passed the night almost in fearful trauma. In the morning, in complete inversion of the values that he so far venerated, the king and his wife went to Mirabai and submitted to her as her devotees.

Whatever, after the atmosphere of the royal household, where lust for power and sensuous pursuits overrode piety, became throttling Mira decided to relinquish it. As have some

sources, she first went to Merata, her father's abode. Her uncle Rao Viramdeva and

cousin Jayamala were cordial and she was allowed to have her own way but subsequent political events, reducing Merata to Jodhpur's suzerainty in 1538, and Rao Maladeva pressurizing Mira's uncle to mend Mira's ways or banish her, forced Mira to leave. She first

went to Vrindavana and then to Dwarika. Now her devotional life was in full swing. She moved in sadhus' company, danced and sang in temples and beyond breaking all barriers that rigid society and its customs imposed. In visual representations the Mira of palaces was a wanderer of roads with songs on lips and a 'vina' - stringed instrument, in hands.

When at Vrindavana, Mira heard that the known Krishna-devotee Jiva Goswami was at Vrindavana. She desired to meet him, but under a vow not to cast his eye on a woman, he refused to see Mira. Thereupon Mira sent him words that she was under the impression that in Vrindavana there was just one male and all others, His Gopis. Now she finds that there is another male parallel to Him and identifies his separate entity. Jiva Goswami did not fail to understand the underlying meaning and ashamed rushed to meet her.

Mira's Death

When in her forties, Mira came to Dwarika. Now every moment of her life was devoted to Krishna. In the meantime her cousin Jayamala succeeded in wresting Merata back and regained his supremacy. He sent messengers to Mira asking her to return. Some of the messengers stayed at Dwarika pressurizing her that they would not go back unless she accompanied them. As the tradition has it, she asked them to wait for the night, and when the night fell, all alone she entered into the temple, in some legends, into deep forest, for bidding farewell to Shri Rana choraji. She sang two songs; with the one, her spiritual being merged into the image of the Lord, and with the other, merged into Him her mortal form.

Those who had seen her entering the temple never saw



her coming out. Her mortal body was never found. Another tradition puts it with some difference. With her wide open eyes she looked at her Lord praying Him not to separate her from Him. It is said that thereupon the Lord stepped out of the idol, entered into her through her eyes, occupied her spiritual being, and let the discarded mortal body fall.

Mira's Popularity, Poetry And Nature Of Bhakti

Kabir, Surdasa, Tulsi, Nabhadasa were 'bhakti' poets. 'Bhakti' was their poetry's essence but basically they were poets. Mira sometimes sang like Kabir:

'Jantar mantar kachhu na janunved parhi nahi Kasi'

- neither adept in cosmology or the science of syllables nor I have read Vedas or visited the holy Kashi, but still I am just an uncut naive 'bhakta'.

When she danced, in her legs revealed her surrender to her Lord and when she sang, in her words revealed her yearning to unite with Him. Neither a dancer, nor singer, Mira was 'bhakti' incarnate - surrender in love, surrender beyond questions, calculations, fear, and all thoughts of profit or loss, something that Chaitanya called Gopi-bhava - single-pointed submission as Gopis had for Krishna.

To Mira, the ties between her Lord and her were those of love, the love that looked like this world's. Not an inhabitant of this world, Mira discovers in it the frame for her Lord's picture, in the world's sensuous ways, her Lord's ways, and in its idiom, the diction to communicate with Him. Not a symbolic or elemental merger, Mira desired, with her body, soul and all faculties, that her Lord, when He met her, rushed to her, smiled and embraced her -

In love, her form of devotion and its essence, Mira sought release from the cycle of birth and death:

'Jana Mira Kun Girdhara milaya, dukha metan sukha bheri, Ruma ruma sata bhayi ura mein, miti gayi phera pheri' -

The moment Mira met Girdhara, sorrows vanished and happiness emerged, all agitations of mind and body extinguished, and the cycle of birth and death is destroyed.



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PUDHUVAI N. RAMAN

Canada, being a world famous nation giving primary importance to the unity in cultural and ethnic diversity, people from all over the world have migrated to this country long back and have become the citizens of this great country. One among them from South India, Pondicherry, an Union Territory of Indian Nation is famous for French Indian culture. People from various parts of Pondicherry State are living in Canada for the past more than 25 years similar to Tamil Nadu. We all know that people from all parts of this Universe, who are migrated to this country, have organized their community organization in various forms and styles to promote their tradition and culture to make an identity of their home land to great extent. As such from Pondicherry about 50 family's dream to organize an association has been visualised by the efforts my Mr. Ezhil Subramaniam and myself. Accordingly on 2nd May 2009, the preliminary get together of Pondicherry families was held at 6890 Earnest Park Drive, Mississauga, L5N 6X7.

About fifty members with their families and friends attended this remarkable event with their kith

FORMATION OF PONDICHERRY CANADIAN ASSOCIATION GET TOGETHER

and kins at the residence of Mr. Divy Ratnasamy and his family of Pondicherry, who have made all arrangements in grand manner for the successful of this function. They welcomed every one and as a special item of our tradition for ladies, Jasmine flower was also given at the reception table followed with a short dish.

A well designed Logo was posted in the Meeting hall with the traditional devotional music playing on one side, everybody gathered and then the introductory speech was given by Mr. Pudhuvai N. Raman with a request to Mr. Vizeacoumar to be the chair person to this event. Mr. Raman in his address highlighted the importance and scope of forming this Association in the interest of Pondicherry families, who are in GTA for more than 25 years.

Mr. Ezhil Subramanyam in his welcome address explained the importance of this association and requested everyone to strengthen the activities by bringing out new members in future since this is the first formal meeting of every one to get introduced as well to discuss and plan for the activities

by forming a Board as well to suit a name to this association, which was unanimously accepted as "PONDICHERRY ASSOCIATION OF CANADA".

Mr. Vizeacoumar in his presidential address appreciated to this effort and elucidated such associations have been doing wonderful job in France, Dubai and other western countries. Though Tamil Nadu and Sri Lankan Tamils have their own associations in various forms, Pondicherry has got a different cultural and social history embedded with French tradition. As the former Prime Minister Mr. Jawarlal Nehru once stated that Pondicherry is the window of French Culture, we have to stamp our speciality in this Country by having our Association so as we also can do a lot since we all owe our due respect, integrity and patriotism to Canada. He also appreciated the organizers of this meeting and wished for the success of the Association to achieve a lot in future.

Mr Divi Ratnasamy called for introducing the participants individually and each one with their families got introduced with fun

and frolic. As a surprise to all one Mr. Venkatramani from London also have come all along from long distance since his interest and anxiety were beyond words while he introduced his family and appreciated this informal meeting.

Mr Jacob and Mr Manoharan called for nomination of Names to form the committee Members of the Board and the following persons were elected unanimously as Board Members.

President -Vizeacoumar

Vice President - R. Lancy

Secretary - Mr Ezhil Subramanyam

Treasurer - Mr Premraj

Executive Committee

Members: Mr Mohan, Mr Manohar, Mr Francis Fredrick, Mrs Uma Chandrabalan and Mr Vengtrmani

Public Relation Officer - Mr. Pudhuvai N.Raman

Cultural Committee Members: Mrs Nalini, Mrs Jeeva and Mrs Shoba

Sponsorship Committee: Mr Divi Ratnasamy and Mrs Meera

In general discussion, everybody expressed their views with great enthusiasm and felicitated

this event totally. It was finalised that Board Members will meet in due course to formulate the by-laws of the Association, Membership fee and future course of action so as to launch the Inaugural of this association at a latter date. Further to give importance to the younger generation as well to women to play vital role in various activities of the association, everyone expressed their views and suggestions, which will be taken up accordingly in suitable manner for future course of actions.

Mr Manoharan proposed vote of thanks, which was followed with cultural entertainments songs, games and play contest as well cutting the Pondicherry Association of Canada cake, which were really most enjoyable to all. Thus one more feather in the cap of cultural diversity has been crowned in the name of Pondicherry Association of Canada will establish a new history in the Holy Land of Canada

Monsoon Journal extends its good wishes to this new organization and its members for the successful growth and prosperity in the interests of Canadians.

Sears STC BBQ Fundraiser

Sears Scarborough Town Centre partnered with the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation to raise funds for Rouge Valley Centenary (RVC). Since their beginning in 1953, Sears has always believed in giving back to the communities they serve.

"Sears Canada is a company who cares," said Maureen Dowhaniuk, Manager of Special Events at the Foundation. "Our mission is to partner with the community to invest in superior healthcare at Rouge Valley, and we are indebted to Sears and Bashir Sayed-Hassen, Marketing Director, Sears Scarborough Town Centre, for partnering with us."

The fundraiser barbecue held on Saturday, May 30, 2009, raised \$183 and awareness about RVHS.

Photos by Roselyn Sagar-Lal



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4th South Asian Heritage Day and Awards Ceremony



Human Endeavour, a community service organization working to improve the Economic and Social conditions of vulnerable community members, along with its partners hosted the fourth annual South Asian Heritage Day to celebrate the heritage and culture of South Asia. Human Endeavour also holds an award ceremony on this occasion to

honor those organizations and individuals who have made extraordinary efforts for the benefit of the community in different ways.

The award recipients were selected from across GTA. Ontario Minister of Citizenship & Immigration Michael Chan presented the awards. Other dignitaries included MPP Helena

Jaczek, Frank Scarpitti the Mayor of Markham, Council members of Vaughan and other community leaders. Hundred of community members from GTA participated in the event. One minute of silence was observed to remember Tamil community members who lost their lives in Sri Lanka.

Out of the three award recipients from Markham, two

belonged to the Tamil community. Late Kanaga Arasaratnam, the editor of Thamilar Senthamrai was recognized for his efforts to integrate the Tamil community into the Canadian fabric through media. His son accepted the award on his behalf.

The second award recipient from the Tamil community was Kandavel Palanivel (Velu) who

was selected for his commitment and extraordinary support for the seniors of the Tamil community.

For more information visit www.humanendeavour.org or contact Srinivasan Supramaniam 647-293-4422.



Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Prem Arasaratnam and Hon. Minister Michael Chan



Organizers, award recipients and some guests



Kandavel Palanivel (Velu), Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti and Hon. Minister Michael Chan



Markham Mayor with some of the dancers who performed

Separated from parents and under detention in camp run by Sri Lanka Army



Darshiga Kuken

Darchiga Kuken (16 years old) is one of 95 Tamil children interned at the Ambepussa "rehabilitation centre" after enforced separation from her parents by Sri Lanka government. Sri Lankan Army has alleged the children are either Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) cadres or underwent military training arranged by LTTE.

Guardian UK's Gethin Cham-

berlain took this photo while he was on a guided tour by Sri Lanka Army. Human Rights groups have expressed reservation about the set up of these internment camps with lack of international humanitarian supervision. Concerns have been raised about the welfare of these children.

Ambepussa is a town near 45 kilometers northeast of Colombo, in predominately Sinhala District of Kegalla.

Tamil Awareness Day

"Tamil Awareness Day" organized by the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada. This event was held recently supported by other professional associations such as Canada Medical and Dental Development Association, Association of Sri Lankan Accountants, Tamil Nurses' Interest Group and Tamil Graduates Association. Here are some of the photographs taken at the event.



Provincial ministers George Smitherman, Gerry Phillips and Trustee Raj Thavaratnasingham of the ASGC executive committee explains the history of Tamils in Sri Lanka giving chronological sequence of the key events in the history.



MP John participates at the panel discussion that took place at the end of the day while ASGC Vice President Yasotharan Somalingam conducting the intersecting panel discussion.



President Yoga Arulnamby explains Tamils' history to few visitors from the Canadian mainstream community

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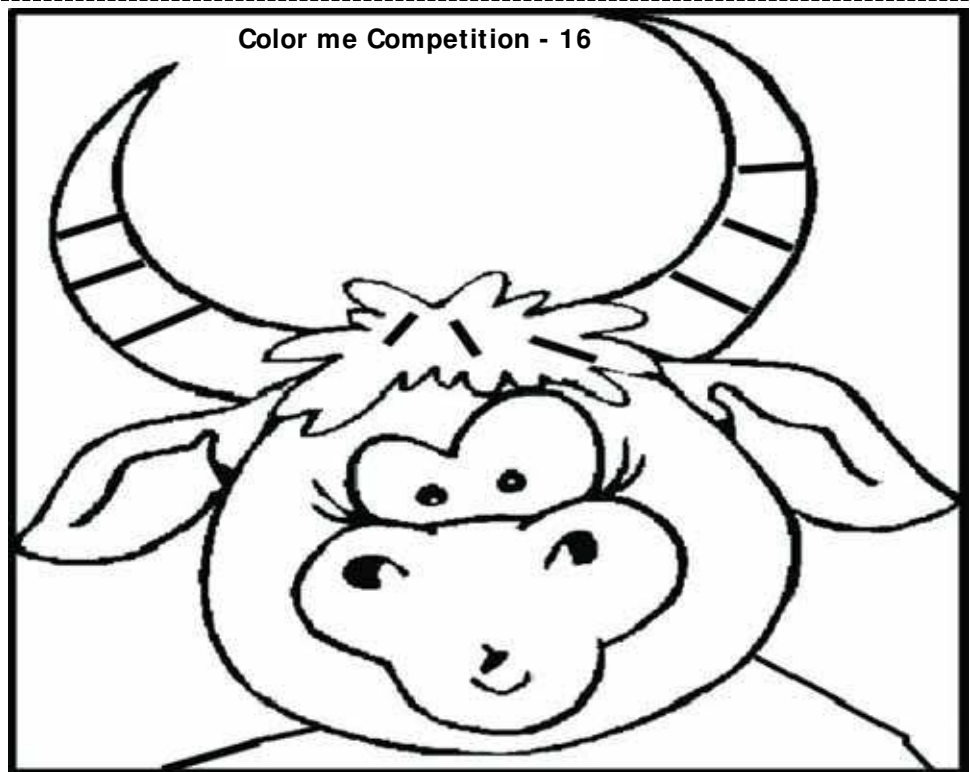
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Children's Peace Theatre - a world without borders

Contributed by
Abizar Badani

In 2010/11, The Children's Peace Theatre will be celebrating ten years as part of a world wide effort to create a culture of peace. In 1998, the United Nations General Assembly declared the period 2000 - 2010 the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World". In direct response to this declaration, The Children's Peace Theatre was established in 2001, with a mandate to create a culture of peace by engaging children and youth through the practice of theatre.

On September 11, 2001 children and youth from the Children's Peace Theatre were on a train to New York City with a prestigious invitation to perform at the U.N. Headquarters to help launch the Decade of Peace. They were turned back at the U.S border as the grim events of that day unfolded. The events of September 11, 2001 hurled the world into an unprecedented state of alert fueled by deep misunderstanding, and intolerance and the youth of Toronto are coming of age in its aftermath. Since that event the Peace Theatre has been developing innovative programs for 8-24 year olds that help children and youth understand that conflict does not need to end in violence and that



self-expression through the arts can be instrumental in developing tolerance.

Programs include Peace Camp (for 8-13 year olds), the Peace is Possible Parade (all ages), The Youth Leaders Theatre Project (14-24), and 2 award winning programs for schools, Conflict Transformation and Peace Leaders. All of our programs are based on the belief that conflict is inevitable, but peace is possible when people face conflict with courage, compassion and creativity.

Currently The Peace Theatre is taking registrations for their 9th annual Summer Peace Camp. Peace Camp is the biggest and most exciting program of the year. Children collaborate with professional artists for 3 weeks using theatre, art and music to engage in an exploration of the world around them and be inspired to

imagine new possibilities. The children work with the artists to create an original theatre performance for the community. This year's theme is "In Shadows". We will be playing with idea of shadows to explore aspects of ourselves and our communities which we repress and the outcomes of such repression. The creation of the work is challenging, creative, exhilarating and fun! "The final performance is sure to be visually stunning and



thought provoking and filled with youthful energy and humour", says Artistic Director Karen Emerson.

Peace Camp takes place at the Massey Goulding Estate at 305 Dawes Road from July 6-25th. The Gala performance of "In Shadows" will take place on Saturday July 25th in our outdoor amphitheatre.

The Peace Theatre will also host a free Multi-Cultural Festival on Saturday June 27th from 1 to

5 pm. This year the festival will feature live music and dance from diverse cultures, including South Asian, arts activities for children and a market of delicious foods representing the diversity of the Crescent Town Community.

For more information call 416 752 1550

Send your feedback on this feature to the editor -"Kids Section" at :

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The Beauty Of Nature



By Anjali Suthakaran

Nature is a beautiful thing to see and to admire. Through others eyes people see nature differently. We rarely see beautiful pieces of nature anymore. Nature is one of the key things to the earth and what we need to survive. Sadly we pollute the air and ruin our planet so much that our nature preserves all get destroyed. The sight of that destroys nature our planet and sometimes even us.

Nature is seen through different ways whether its plants and flowers magnificent creatures or just gorgeous scenery. Nature is like a pyramid which it relays on to keep the beauty of nature alive. At the bottom of the pyramid is us people. We have to do little part compared to what others do but we still choose not to do it the hard way and care.

People must do their part by not littering throwing away things in the right bins and keeping the earth clean. We humans are the least part of nature. Animals rely on nature to rely on being there home. Animals cannot stand the sight of garbage and neither can I. Animals everyday get killed by garbage and all nature being destroyed. For example whales get straws stuck in there blow hole and die because they can't

get them out and whose fault is it for the straw being out there ours.

Nature and homes for animals get destroyed for animals and they don't have anywhere to go. That is how the population gets extinct. All the poor helpless animals can't do anything about it if we were killing their homes and them. Where does this all add up to you know NATURE! People and animals are important to nature but both of those combined are not as important as plants. Plants are just as important. Plants and flowers give nature its shine.

Plants and flowers is what everyone see's when they see a piece of the environment. Little do we know plants are much more to nature then just looking pretty and beautiful? Not everyone knows that if there were no plants and flower there be no nature. Think about it what do you basically see in nature? Trees flowers and plants you do see bugs as well but if there was no plants trees or anything green bugs or any wild life would never live there and where do you think they would live. They would start living with us in our own environment. We can't blame them where do you expect them to go. It would be our fault as well for not doing our part.

We all need to start doing our

part and it is not that challenging either. Already people who care about our planet try doing the part for others but it will not work. Those people need to start doing their part. They need to take into consideration what I have spent all my time thinking about and writing and also use that amount of time that you took to read this story and start cleaning up. I can clean up you can clean up we can all clean up. We need repair the damage that has been done for years by us humans. WE NEED TO CLEAN UP THE ENVIRONMENT THE PLANET AND MOST IMPORTANTLEY OUR ACT. Are you up for the challenge by doing your part now!



Anjali Suthakaran

The winner from March 2009 for Color Me Competition - 13, Ms. Anamica has sent us her photo taken on her 8th Birthday and thanked the sponsor of the gift, Xclusive Video Productions and Monsoon Journal.

Monsoon Journal wish to thank Abizar Badani for his dedicated commitment, who initiated Monsoon Kids Corner over a year ago continuously developing new ideas for the Kids Corner. Monsoon Journal and Xclusive Video Productions congratulate Anamica on her winning the competition and wish her successful in her future.



Attention KIDS!

"Monsoon Journal" Kids Page welcomes contributory articles on interesting subjects from Students in Junior & Senior schools, for publication in "Monsoon Journal" - Editor



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Prof. Saran Ghai

In my monthly publication 'Superior Star' I have a regular column titled - "Good to Know." This column is quite popular among the readers. It reminds such small information which we are aware of but at the time to use, we ignore and suffer big problems/losses because of that 'don't care' attitude. While discussing the subject matter of my magazine with one of its readers, all of a sudden he opened up the page where this column - 'Good to Know,' was. He pointed me out, for him, the best item in the magazine is - 'Good to Know' column.

During this whole conversation both of us agreed that it is good to know those small things which we do know, although we are not very serious about. And in due course of discussions topic of good to know - 'information' drifted into good to know 'each other'. It happened because of our similarity of thoughts. We both met for the first time; there and then we became friends. Both of us agreed to the point that it is always good to know each other. That conversation inspired me to write on this subject.

It is human psychology to not to meet and mix up with the unknowns or the strangers. For many reasons we avoid talking or mixing up with those who we do not know or we think, we do not need to know. Don't you think because of this nature, thousands

and thousands of people, who could be our familiar ones, we just lose their closeness as we feel it safe to ignore or keep a distance with them. And the result is, we miss uncountable number of people who could be our friends.

I have learnt one good thing from Americans that they will always pass a smile when they come across you. If you are in a bad or a sad mood and do not respond them warmly, they will make it a point for you to smile. Rather they would offer - 'if you do not have a smile, take one from me.'

That is how we make friends. Friendship is not always a relation which is carried on for years together. You might meet somebody while travelling in a train or a bus, chat with the person in a friendly way and leave him/her for ever like strangers when you leave. Those moments passed with that person were the most precious moments in a very friendly atmosphere. Sometimes such friendships last for years together.

Whether you are walking on the sidewalk of a road or you are in an elevator, jogging or coming out from your office in the evening, on your way people who make an eye contact with you, greet them with a smile. Believe me, nothing will be lost but friendships will be gained.

If someone shows his/her interest to talk little further, ask about their health, how are they

doing, talk about the weather and give the person a comfortable environment so that, when he reaches home, remembers you with a smile on his/her face.

Remember, every stranger is not a terrorist or a thief. Most of the people living on this earth are good. May be just 5% to 10% are dangerous to humanity but what wrong rest of the 90% have done? They are good human beings. They are worth making friendship.

Today during discourses in a seniors club, a lady raised a point that why are people so different? Why some are good but some are very bad? Why some are engaged in the service to the humanity and some others are bent upon ruining the prevailing peaceful environment of the world? I said, "If each one of the living being starts thinking and acting in the same manner, this world would become so boring that the whole world will commit suicide." We are alive because each one of us is struggling to be better than others. This competitive attitude for some becomes a tool to boost up positive energy and for the others a source of negative energy.

Those who are struggling to be better with the help of their positive energy are giving a healthy competition to others and those are indulging in negative energy are creating an environment of havoc. Our job is to be wise enough to keep away from the negative energy people and support the positive energy people.

Muktipath Meditation - a path towards utter freedom - XIV

Good to know each other - Meet and Greet People



saranghai.blogspot.com, E-mail: ghaisaran@gmail.com, website: www.muktipathmeditation.com.

- Continued...

(Prof. Saran Ghai is an Author, Editor and Publisher of a number of Books, Magazines and Newspapers. He is a Palm Reader and a Numerologist too. To book appointment to know about your present and future, Love, Marriage, Business and other problems, make an appointment on phone.

Prof. Ghai publishes a 2-in-1 English-Hindi monthly magazine titled "Superior Star" & "Soubhagya" (Good Fortune) covering Meditation, Wellness, Naturopathy, Yoga, Palmistry, Astrology, Numerology, Astronomy, Reiki and many other alike subjects. To Subscribe Superior & "Soubhagya" please e-mail - superiormonthly@yahoo.ca or soubhagyamonthly@gmail.com. To join or to know more about 30+ SuperiorStars Club, e-mail: thirtyplusstar@yahoo.ca

ple.

Time will come when the strength of the positive energy people will be far higher than the strength of the negative energy people. Wait and watch and work for the moment when this world will itself be a better place than heaven. Do your part, meet and greet people.

-Saran Ghai

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True Colours Bazaar

The Ajax-Pickering Federal Liberal Association presents "True Colours Bazaar", an international bazaar celebrating the vibrant communities of Ajax and Pickering. FREE admission! It will be held on June 13, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM at Pickering Village United Church, 300 Church Street North. Enjoy the sun in this outdoor event.

The event will have children's activities, vendors selling crafts, jewelry, clothing, food, and more. Entertainers will perform on the main stage. A contest will be held for the "Best Country Display", in which each contestant submits and exhibits an original display reflecting themes of a country.

All are welcome. Admission is FREE.

The goal of this event is to bring people together to experience and celebrate the vibrant communities of Ajax and Pickering.

Event website is www.apfla.ca

For more information

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Sri Maamaanga Pillaiyar

By Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai
 dushi.pillai@gmail.com
 courtesy: humanityAshore.org

Maamaangam temple is one of the many ancient Hindu temples in Sri Lanka. It is situated in a village known as Amirthakzhi in Batticaloa district. The Maamaangam temple has a history of more than 5000 years. It's believed that, during the battle between Lord Ramar and King Ravanaan, Maamaangam temple came into existence. This was origi-

nally a Sivan temple, and later became a Vinayar or Pillaiyar temple.

Keerimalai is famous for Aadi Amaavaasai in the Northern province. Likewise, in the Eastern Province Maamaanga Pillaiyar temple is famous for Aadi Ammavaasai to carry out special religious rites for our forefathers. Aadi Ammavaasai falls during the month of July on a new moon day. Kaaththotti Kaai is cooked and served on this day, which tastes sour.

Pilgrims from various parts of the Island travel and stay her in the Mandapams (resting places), and

gather here on this day. It's believed that, if these special religious rites are performed properly and continuously for six to twelve years, the soul will attain Moksham (Heaven). After the special religious rites are performed the people, bathe in Maamaanga Nathi and take part in Anna Thaanam. The river is also known Anumar Theertham. According to legends, King Ravanaan set fire to Anumar's tail, while he was searching Lord Rama's beloved wife Sithathevi. Anumar was a dutiful messenger of Lord Ramar. After his tail caught fire, he came to Maamaangam, and dipped his tail into the holy river. And, it is believed that Lord Ramar worshipped the Sivalingam in Maamaangam.

Hindus travel to Batticaloa to fulfill their vows. It is also believed that many miracles happened here. Devotees believe that, the holy water in the Maamaanga Nathi has healing power, free from their sins and takes away ill evils from the human body



Kopuram under construction



Moolasthanam of the temple



Beautiful sculptures at Sri Amirthakazhi Sri Maamaanga Pillaiyar temple in Batticaloa



Mouse in front of the Moolasthanam



A view of Maamaanga Nathi or Anumar Theertham



Kodithambam of the temple



The divine spirit spreads in the vicinity



A crow in its nest inside the temple



A view of the well in the compound



Kandiah Ponnuthurai (60) with his friend Holy saint Ponniah Ilayathamby (62) in the compound of the temple

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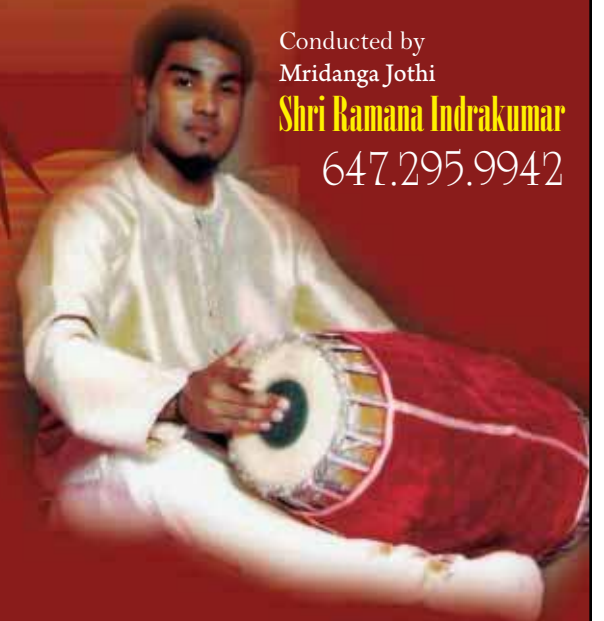


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