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"One golden day redeems a weary year." Celia Thaxter (1835-1894) American Poet



Sunset over a paddy field in Chilaw, Sri Lanka [HumanityAshore.org]

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Monsoon **ISSUE 12**

A parfait media publication

Monsoon



Mother's Day



Angkor Watt





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"Canada is proud of the contribution of the Tamil Business Community," says Liberal Leader Stephane Dion



By Siva Sivapragasam

The Tamil Business community in Toronto received a well-earned pat on it's back when Liberal Party Leader Stephane Dion praised it's contribution towards the Canadian economy, at the well attended Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala 2008 held at the prestigious Fairmont Royal York Hotel recently.

Gary Anandasangaree, the incumbent dynamic President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce and his team-mates on the Board sent the Chamber upstairs when this year's event was held at the prestigious Royal York in downtown Toronto.

The invitees were a mixture of Businessmen, Bankers, Professionals and other VIPs who graced the occasion along with their spouses dressed in glittering colorful sarees. The Awards Gala is an annual function held by the Chamber to felicitate the Best

Entrepreneurs of the year among the Tamil Business community. This year's Chief Guest at the function was Liberal Party Leader Stephane Dion.

Speaking further at the function, Mr. Dion stated that it was an honour to be present among the Tamil Business and Professional community who were celebrating the selection of the Best Entrepreneurs for the year. He said that he was honoured to be the Leader of a Party which believed that political equalism is a constitutional principle in Canada. He remarked that Canada is a country where every citizen was treated as a human being irrespective of his or her back-

He said that he felt proud to be a successor of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau decided that Canada will always ty; the Tamil community. be open to the world and will always remain as a country of the Tamil Business community to compassion.

"Our community has overcome many challenges during a 25 year journey", Gary Anandasangaree-President CTCC



Photos by Ken

Gary Anandasangaree, the President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce, while making the Presidential address stated that the original embryonic Tamil Business community has developed and matured over the years in their long and arduous journey, overcoming challenges and the negative portrayals in the Media. We have a group of devout doctors and dentists who take care of us when we are ill!

We have pioneers who have built community institutions from youth groups to senior wellness centers to sports teams to advocacy groups.

We have elected officials from all levels of government, including the first elected representatives from within the community;

And we have ambassadors, not of a country, but of communi-

Anandasangaree called upon embrace, cultivate and foster

business partnerships Canadians of all stripes. He thanked the Tamil Business sector for donating their time and energy towards the betterment of the community and thereby making us feel proud of their achievements. He wanted the Tamil community to look forward at the path ahead as they are no longer burdened by the process of settle-

He further remarked that his community is ready to go forward and accept responsibilities at all levels. He stressed the need for them to become full participants in all activities in Canada and take on all tasks ahead.

He thanked Canada and fellow Canadians for having provided endless opportunities for the Tamil community and the

(More news and Pictures of the Awards Gala on Page 24-25)

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Baby Steps Contribute to Big Goals















Sunday 8:00 am May 25th 2008 at Malvern Town Center

SCARBOROUGH — The Canadian Tamil community is once again partnering with the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation to raise funds for the new Birthing and Newborn Centre, now under construction at Rouge Valley Centenary.

May 25, 2008 marks the date of the Tamil community's second annual Baby Steps Walkathon in support of the Birthing and Newborn Centre. The walk will begin at the Malvern Town Centre and will proceed down Neilson Road, with activities and ceremonies to be held at Rouge Valley Centenary.

"We are very committed to helping to raise funds for the building of this new centre," says Kula Sellathurai, a member of the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation Board of Directors and Chair of the walkathon. "We are also pleased to welcome TD Canada Trust as our Event Sponsor for the second year of this event."

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. at the Malvern Town Centre. All registrants will receive a gift bag and the first 100 people to register will receive a \$5 mall gift certificate courtesy of the Malvern Town Centre. Participants with pledges in excess of \$20

will receive a t-shirt (while supplies last). The walkathon will begin at 9:30 a.m. and proceed south on Neilson Road to the Rouge Valley Centenary. Activities at the hospital will commence at 11:00 a.m. followed by award presentations. Parking will be available at the Malvern Town Centre with free bus transportation operating regularly between the hospital and Town Centre until 2:00 p.m.

Pledge forms for the event can be found on either the Rouge Valley Health System website at www.rougevalley.ca/rvhsf/se/events or the Labour of Love campaign website at

www.labouroflovecampaign.com.

The Rouge Valley Health System Foundation raises funds to support the purchase of leading edge medical equipment for both hospital sites of the Rouge Valley Health System in east Toronto and west Durham, as well as for major capital expansion projects. With the help of our generous donors, the Foundation has contributed more than \$15 million to the hospital in the past decade, part of our vision of enhancing healthcare in our community. www.rougevalley.ca/rvhsf.

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Canada Newsline

UNICEF Canada: This Mother's Day Give the Gift of Hope for Mothers Around the World

This Mother's Day, UNICEF Canada is asking you to honour mothers around the world, by giving mothers and their newborns a fighting chance against HIV. By purchasing a Gift of Hope for your mother on Mother's Day, you will support UNICEF's global efforts to stop the transmission of HIV from mother to child.

Almost every minute of every day, a baby is born with HIV, passed on by his or her mother during pregnancy, labour or upon delivery. Such transmissions account for 90 per cent of all new infections in children with nearly 1,200 children infected daily.

"For those in the world's poorer countries, being born with HIV is often tantamount to a death sentence," said Nigel Fisher, President & CEO, UNICEF Canada. "The harsh truth is that without treatment, half of all HIV-positive babies will not live long enough to see their second birthday. A third will die by their first birthday."

The good news is that we can prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to baby. With HIV test kits that cost only a few dollars, medicine, and education, the risk of transmitting HIV to newborns can be reduced to as low as two per cent.

In industrialized countries like Canada, mother-to-child transmission of HIV has been virtually

eliminated. Sadly, in developing countries, children are still at risk of contracting HIV from their HIV-positive mother since prevention services are largely inaccessible.

In Rwanda, only 36 per cent of mothers have access to antiretroviral medication to help prevent transmission of HIV to their unborn children. Overall, in East and South Africa only 14 per cent of women have access to antiretroviral medicines. In West and Central Africa the rate is only two per cent -- the lowest in the world. This is a terrible injustice to some of the most vulnerable children around the world. That is why UNICEF Canada is calling for action.

How You Can Help

This Mother's Day, purchase a Gift of Hope and support our global efforts to stop the transmission of HIV from mother-to-child. For example:

- A donation of \$27 is enough money to provide rapid HIV test kits for 25 expecting mothers. Once a woman knows her status, she can make informed decisions regarding treatment, in time to prevent her baby from contracting HIV.

- A \$50 donation is enough to provide medicine to mothers and their babies at birth, allowing infants the opportunity to begin



unicef

their lives HIV-free.

- A donation of \$110 will support one child orphaned by AIDS, providing them with essentials such as vitamins, medicine and school fees for about one year.

This Mother's Day, UNICEF Canada is asking you to honour mothers around the world, by giving mothers and their newborns a fighting chance against HIV. To purchase a Gift of Hope, visit www.uniteforchildren.ca or call 1-888-777-0380.

Also for Mother's Day, UNICEF Canada is sharing an inspiring video entitled 'The Gift', narrated by Gwyneth Paltrow. 'The Gift' is a beautiful love story, based on a poem by Simon Armitage. Filmed on location in Rwanda, this film tells the story of a young couple, Monique and Patrick, who fall in love, marry, and start a family. While pregnant with their first child, Monique learns she is HIVpositive. Upon hearing this news, Patrick abandons Monique and she is left to give birth on her own, uncertain if her child will be born with the unwanted gift of

To view 'The Gift' please visit www.uniteforchildren.ca.

The Gover nment of Canada Launches Asian Heritage Month Activities



The Honourable Jason Kenney, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), has invited Canadians to join in celebrating Asian Heritage Month during the month of May.

"Our country was built by representatives of many cultural communities, and Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity to better understand Canada's rich diversity by learning more about the achievements of the Asian-Canadian community," said Secretary of State Kenney. "I invite all citizens to celebrate the contribution of Canadians of Asian origin to building our country."

The Government of Canada officially designated May as Asian Heritage Month in 2001. Five years later, according to the Statistics Canada Census, more than 3 million people self-identified as belonging to an Asian eth-

nic aroup.

Hon. Diane Finley P.C. M.P, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has also extended greetings marking the Asian Heritage Month.

Taking pride and noting that the new comers from Asia continue to make Canada as their destination of choice, Hon. Diane Finley called all Canadians to join in the enjoyment of month long festivities. The Minister further said in a statement, "With ancestral roots tied to parts of Asia ranging from the South, to the Southeast, to the Fareast, Canadians of Asian origin have played an integral role in strengthening Canada for hundreds of years. Our local communities have been enriched by diverse cultural practices and beliefs of Canadians of Asian ori-

Tamil Canadian Nationalism Survey



இலங்கையின் பிரச்சினைகளுக்கு தமிழீழத்தை அங்கீகரித்தலின் மூலம் முடிவுகாண இயலுமா?

WOULD THE RECOGNITION OF A TAMIL EELAM BRING AN END TO THE CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA?

Greetings, I am a Master of Arts student at the University College of the Fraser Valley, in British Columbia. I am currently completing a study on Tamil Nationalism in Canada, and I need your assistance to complete a brief on-line survey. The survey will take less than 5 minutes to complete and is confidential and anonymous. It is my belief that the results of the survey will assist in creating a better awareness among the Canadian public of the plight of Tamil Canadians along with their needs. Please note that the survey is strictly reserved to Tamils of 18 years of age and older, that are living in Canada and/or are Tamil Canadians. For more information, please visit our website from May 1 until May 16th, 2008, at www.tamilcanadiansurvey.org

www.tamilcanadiansurvey.org

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From the Publisher's Desk ... Remembering on Mother's Day...

The history and celebrations of Mother's Day varies from country to country, and motherhood is honored by several special days and festivities in many cultures.

On this Mother's Day lets remember those who are facing difficult situations due to civil conflicts and natural disasters in their communities.

According to the International Rescue Committee, more than 35 million people displaced by conflict are women and children. are women and children.

Recent reports say that, in today's wars, fighting is no longer confined to the battlefield; 90% of those killed or wounded are civilians. Often driven from their homes, women are targeted for ethnic cleansing, raped, widowed and left as the sole providers for their families in societies that, in many cases, show little respect for their rights.

The most urgent tasks of rebuilding daily life in a devastated countries--feeding a family,-

fall to women.

Adding to the burden is food insecurity, resulting from unseasonal rain fall to rising prices for fuel and food.

Devastation from natural disasters too are throwing a wrench in the critical conditions.

Myanmar, recently affected by a cyclone to the proportions of the 2004 tsunami, while having their own people suffering and crops destroyed, will not be able to continue to be a leading exporter of rice.

These challenges are critical to stabilizing a society, yet the world pays more attention to military and security issues.

Ensuring safe motherhood for all is vital to the future.

The Monsoon Journal joins in the world humanitarian communities in calling for increased awareness and attention to the every day situation of mothers and working towards the betterment of their lives. The Colombo Branch of Jaffna Chulipuram Victoria College celebrated the 125th Anniversary of the College with a function in Colombo. A special Souvenir to mark the Anniversary was also released at this function. Pictures show proceedings at the function.





The Chief Guest at the function was Prof.Mailvahanan Sivasuriya, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna.

World press freedom day (May 3rd)

By Harini Sivalingam

In Canada we are lucky to have a diverse and vibrant media to provide us with valuable and much needed information about local and international affairs. Unfortunately this is not the case around the world. As such, the United Nations declared May 3rd to be World Press Freedom Day in order to inform the public of violations of the right to freedom of expression and as a reminder that many journalists brave death or jail to bring people their daily news.

Freedom of the press is a fundamental pillar of democracy. One can gauge the level of democracy in a country by how free the media is to express its views; the freer the press, the more free the country itself is. The Committee to Protect Journalists released an Impunity Index, calculating the number of unsolved journalists' murders as a percentage of the population in each country, to measure countries with the worst record of investigating and prosecuting killings of journalists.

The worst offenders include: Iraq, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Afghanistan, Nepal, Russia, Mexico, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India. These States from all regions of the world include countries that are embroiled in a state of conflict, but also democratic States that are at peace. The report also concludes that local reporters covering

their home countries are the most vulnerable targets.

Sri Lanka, ranked the fifth worst country by CPJ's Impunity Index, has been in a state of armed conflict for the past 25 years. It is reported by Amnesty International that at least 10 media workers have been unlawfully killed in Sri Lanka since 2006. Increasingly, journalists and media workers have been harassed and threatened for reporting on corruption in the Sri Lankan government. For instance, a prominent investigative journalist Iqbal Athas, a correspondent for Jane's Defense was accused of being a "traitor" and driven into exile due to a campaign of terror orchestrated by government officials.

Tamil journalists are particularly vulnerable targets. In its 2007 annual report. Reporters san Frontiers stated that "the escalation of the conflict pitting the army against the Tiger Tamils (LTTE) forced scores of Tamil journalists into silence or hiding." Among the several cases of assassinated or abducted journalists includes the 2005 murder of Mr. Tharmaratnam (Taraki) Sivaram, an investigative journalist who was abducted in a white van and later found dead close to the Parliament Building in Colombo. To date, there has been no investigation into the murder of Mr. Sivaram.

Amnesty International also recently launched an awareness campaign expressing grave concerns for the safety of journalists in Sri Lanka. The Deputy Director of Asia Pacific, Tim Parritt stated "Increasingly frequent attacks on journalists and a climate of impunity for the perpetrators are a matter of serious concern." Amnesty International has urged the Sri Lankan government to protect media workers and their rights to life, liberty and security of person, in compliance with Sri Lanka's obligations under international law

According to the International Federation of Journalists, Sri Lanka has long been considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists. The situation is dire for not only local journalists but also for foreign correspondents and international press agencies. In fact, a journalist working for Agence France-Presse stated "I have never seen anything like it. Even in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, foreign journalists had more freedom of movement."

On this years World Press Freedom Day, as we read our daily newspapers over a fresh cup of coffee, or listen to the radio on our commute to work, or race home to catch the local evening news, let us remember those media workers around the world who continue to fight for freedom of the press despite dangerous circumstances and high risks to the personal safety of themselves and their families

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Canada Newsline

Canadian Guinness records holder to make Tamil film in 12 days

With 53 Guinness world records already under his belt, Toronto-based Suresh Joachim has now set his sights on Bollywood. Next month, he will land in India to create yet another record - making a full-length film in just 12 days.

'Yes, a two-hour film in 12 days because the current Guinness record is held by 'The Fastest Forward', which was made by Russ Malkin and John Gore in just 13 days in 1990," Joachim, the second highest Guinness record holder, told IANS.

'Mine is a Tamil film which will be shot in Chennai. Everything from scriptwriting to shooting to editing to the censors' approval to the launch - will be completed in 12 days," said the 39-year-old Sri Lankan-born Tamil.

The man, whose records include the longest karaoke marathon (25 hours, 49 minutes),

the longest radio broadcast (120 hours), the longest time standing on one foot (76 hours, 40 minutes), the longest watching of TV (69 hours) and the longest ironing (55 hours, five minutes), said: 'I will be the hero of this yet-to-benamed film which will have six top Tamil stars."

He said the film will be shot and released in December.

'But I am going to India next month to meet Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and leading Tamil stars for their cooperation. I have sponsors and backers to help complete this project," said Joachim who set his first Guinness record of 1,000 hours of running in Colombo in 1996.

Canada's top record breaker said he will not sleep during the days when his film is shot.

'Since I will act as the hero, I take a five-hour rest for five to seven days. During the remaining

seven days, I will not sleep at all to see the film through to its Guinness record."

Joachim said it will be launched immediately after its production as the 'censors' clearance will come via email."

Within a week, he said, the film will be released in other countries.

'And I will take it to the Oscars. After this film, I will regularly produce a Guinness record breaking movie every six months over the next 20 years. My next movie will break the record of 65 costumes in the film 'Evita'.

'Then I will do a Hindi movie having a record 21 directors. And I have already lined up a Hollywood movie in which I will act in 35 different roles. I am a stay-at-home dad-cum-professional record breaker and I watch over 400 films every year, so I have ideas," he said.



A trained chartered accountant who left his native Sri Lanka for Australia in 1998 and moved to Canada in 2003 after meeting his future wife at his Guinness record-breaking radio broadcast in Toronto declared that he wanted to create 500 Guinness records over the next 20 years.

'The current Guinness record holder is 54-year-old New Yorker Ashrita Furman who has set 187 records. I will surpass him in the next five years."

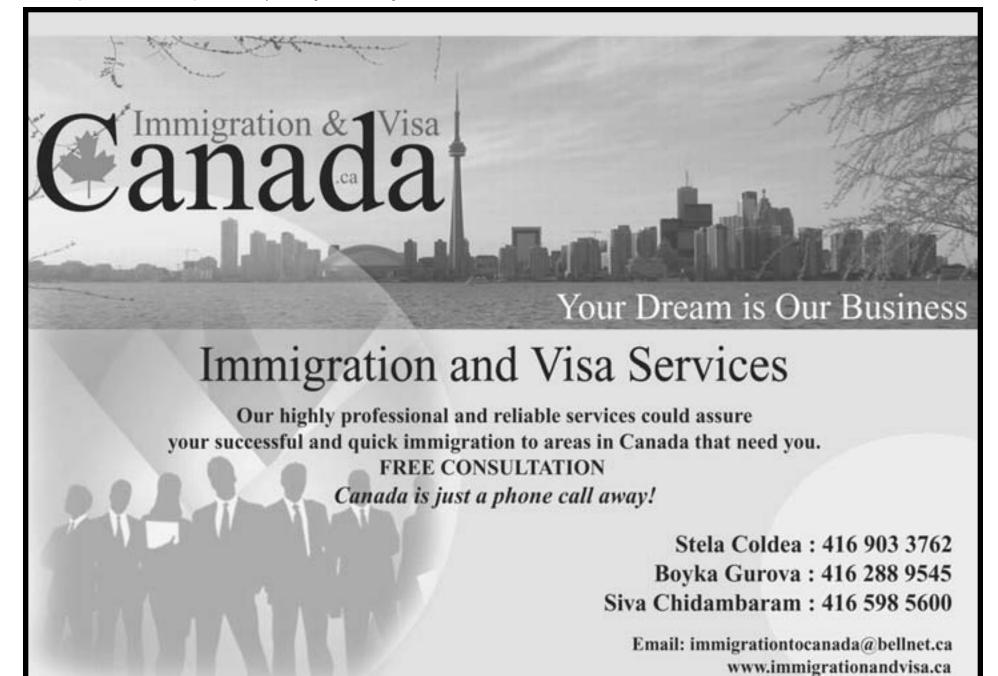
Joachim's other Guinness records include: the most bridesmaids (79) and groomsmen (47) at a wedding; the longest drumming marathon (84 hours); the fastest time to crawl a mile (23 minutes, 45 seconds); the longest time in a rocking chair (74 hours); the longest Elvis Presley imper-

sonation (54 hours); and the longest distance run with a 4.5 kg brick in an ungloved hand and in an uncradled downward position (126.67 km).

Joachim credits yoga and meditation for his feats. 'Everything is in your mind. Once you make up your mind, you can break records. That's how I decided to set records in 1991 after reading the Guinness Book of World Records, given to me by an uncle.

'More than breaking world records, I perform these feats to raise money for charities to alleviate child poverty. Though I have been to many countries to break Guinness records, now I will run a peace marathon through rich countries to raise money for charities,' he said.

[Courtesy: IANS]



Monsoon Newsline

Spark Controversy in India



By Anjana Pasricha

In India, controversy has erupted around foreign cheerleaders brought in to provide entertainment for a newly-launched cricket tournament. As Anjana Pasricha reports from New Delhi, many of the cheerleaders have donned more modest dresses following objections from conservative Indians.

When organizers of the Indian Premier League inaugurated their tournament two weeks ago, they were hoping to give Indians what they love most - a thrilling mix of cricket along with some lively song and dance.

Both came with a variation.

The game being played is a fast-paced, shortened version of traditional cricket. The contest is between newly-created cricket teams owned by top Bollywood stars or big businessmen.

The team owners brought in foreign cheerleaders to turn the matches into a glitzy event. One team owner flew in the cheerleaders for the American-style football team the Washington Redskins. Others brought in cheerleaders from Eastern Europe.

Dressed in American-style in shorts and bikini tops or mini skirts, the cheerleaders danced in packed stadiums as cricketers hit the big shots.

The dancers were meant to appeal to a section of urban India that is young, earns large salaries, thanks to an economic boom, and is ready to enjoy whatever the world has to offer.

But much of India remains conservative. And as television beamed images of the scantilyclad, dancing cheerleaders into Indian homes, strident objections

began being voiced.

They came from politicians like Nitin Gadkari, president of the opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party Maharashtra state.

"The cheer girls dance with half dress which is not good for Indian culture...The way they dress, definitely it is vulgar, because the way in which they showing their body, it is really a vulgar-ness," said Gadkari.

As the murmurs became louder, team owners decided to tone down the dresses of their cheerleaders. One team made them exchange their short dresses for more modest ankle-length pants, another made them don black stockings with their short skirts. One team sent back the cheerleaders, saying it might switch to a band of drummers.

But many spectators are wondering what the fuss is all about. They said the mix of sport and cheerleaders was just good fun.

"I think it is a good idea, I mean why not? It is just a bit silly that everyone is chasing after them, it is not such a big deal," says this spectator.

"I think its fine, everything in limit is fine, I am all for cheerleaders, it is all done in a very good humor and good spirit," says another spectator.

The controversy has not ended. Some say India, where women generally dress modestly, is not ready for the cheerleaders. Others point out that no one objects to Bollywood heroines often dressed in skimpy clothes dancing to sensual numbers in Hindi films.

[VOA]

Foreign Cheerleaders In India, Infrastructure Falls Short as Economy Moves Forward

By Anjana Pasricha

India is building new roads, airports and power plants to cater to the needs of an economy that is growing at a rapid pace.

Later this month, a gleaming, new airport will open in India's famous technology information Bangalore, meeting a long-standing demand of the I.T. industry.

However, access roads to the new airport -- 36 kilometers north of the city center -- have not been widened to ease chronic traffic snarls. As a result, people fear the commute to the airport could take up to three hours -longer than a short-haul flight.

Inadequate transport networks in bursting cities is just one of the problems confronting a country where all infrastructure is in short supply -whether it is reliable power, highways, ports or world-class airports.

Bidisha Ganguly, a consultant at the Confederation of Indian Industry, says these shortages have intensified amid the recent economic boom.

"India has been growing at a very fast rate," Ganguly said. "So, as a result, all infrastructure is strained, so there are huge gaps and bottlenecks everywhere. We don't build infrastructure ahead of demand. We typically build it once the bottlenecks are there and fairly apparent."

The bottlenecks are becoming severe. Vehicles choke already crowded roads as car sales go up. Average loading and unloading time at busy sea ports is 85 hours -- 10 times longer than at Singapore or Hong Kong. Airports and ports often run short of warehouse space. It takes manufacturers days to transport goods from one part of the country to the other -- partly because trucks are barred from congested cities during the day for fear they might bring traffic to a standstill.

Lack of adequate power is perhaps the most severe problem. Most industries and offices rely on massive power generators because electricity is often shut off for hours at a stretch, even in prime business and industrial



The head of the Indian Council of International Economic Relations. Rajiv Kumar, says lack of adequate infrastructure holds back growth and discourages investors -- both domestic and foreign.

"The industry has to provide all the infrastructure needs, itself, rather than these be available to it as it is in all other countries routinely as a part of the delivery of public services," Kumar said. "That means that even for those who can afford to do this, the costs become very high. But for a large number of medium and small enterprises it just means that they simply have to forego investment opportunities. So, infrastructure deficit in my view is probably costing India up to two percent growth in GDP (gross domestic product)."

The government acknowledges the country is grappling with a huge infrastructure deficit. It estimates India needs to invest \$500 billion, in the next five years, to build roads, seaports, airports, high-speed expressways and power plants. The government is calling on the private sector to share the task.

Some of that investment is already in the pipeline. A project to link the country's four major cities with wide roads is to be completed this year. Modern airports are being built in sev-

eral cities, under a new model under which private groups will build facilities, collect tolls and eventually hand the project back to the government.

The government says the results of all these investments will be visible in five to 10 years. But many fear it may be longer, because many infrastructure projects often get delayed.

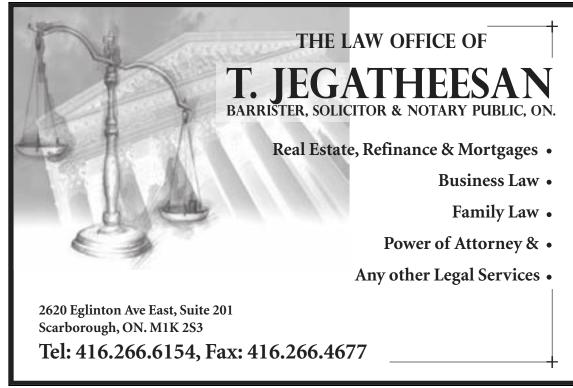
Ganguly says India needs to speed up the pace at which projects are implemented.

"The feeling is that much more should be done," Ganguly said. "While the government has a broad plan, there are problems in implementation, getting clearances. Bureaucratic delays are there and it is not a straightforward issue, where you can just go and build a port or a airport."

But many acknowledge that it is not always easy to fast track projects in a democracy where issues like land acquisition are sensitive and time con-

Critics often compare India to the other Asian giant, China, which has built world-class infrastructure in record time. But others point out that although the Chinese central government's nod is enough to get a project off the ground, the task is far more difficult in India, where consensus is needed before any project can go

[VOA]



Monsoon Newsline

Canada calls for stronger economic ties with India

Seeking stronger economic ties with India, Canada has announced that it would open two new trade offices in Hyderabad and Kolkata.

Canada is committed to strengthening ties with New Delhi for mutual benefit, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said recently, adding his government has taken a number of steps to improve trade relations with India, an emerging economic superpower.

Harper stated this while presenting the Global India award to Sam Pitroda for his contributions to improving telecommunication services in India. The award, instituted by Canada India Foundation, carries USD 50,000.

Former President Abdul Kalam was also present on the occasion, apart from R L Narayan, the High Commissioner of India, and over

500 top Canadian executives and politicians.

"Canada simply cannot afford to miss out on India's phenomenal economic growth. That's why our government is putting so much emphasis on improving trade and investment between our countries," Harper said.

The Prime Minister announced that Canada will open two new trade offices in India. The offices will be in Hyderabad, gateway to southern India's Information-Communications Technology hub, and Kolkata, the main business, commercial, financial, and transportation centre of eastern India.

To further enhance trade and investment ties, the government will also post additional commissioners at the established offices in Mumbai and Delhi.

[PTI]

Sri Lanka has failed to honour agreement with India, says CPI

Communist Party of India (CPI) National Secretary D Raja recently made a special mention during the Zero Hour in the Indian Raiva Sabha. the upper house of Parliament of India stated that the agreement on Kachchatheevu and the historical waters between the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka, signed in 1974, didn't work after 1983. Mr. Raja said there is a grey area in the agreement with regards to the right of access to the island by the Indian fishermen and said that the agreement should be reopened and renegotiated in order to protect the rights of fishermen.

Kachchatheevu, a tiny islet situated midway between Neduntheevu (Delft) island of Sri Lanka and Ramesvaram island of India in the Palk Strait, was long an island of contention between India and Sri Lanka. It became a part of Sri Lanka through the agreement concluded in 1974, on the boundary of Historic Waters between the two countries. However, according to the agreement, the Indian fishermen and pilgrims can continue to have access to visit Kachchatheevu as it was before, without any travel document required by Sri Lanka.

It was agreed by both the countries that fishermen from Tamil Nadu would be allowed access to Kachatheevu Island for rest, for drying of nets and to offer prayers in the local St.Anthony's Church. However, the Indian fishermen have repeatedly asserted that their traditional fishing rights should be respected.

Following is the transcript of CPI National Secretary's speech at the Indian Rajya Sabha on 26 April, 2008:

SHRI D. RAJA (TAMIL NADU): Sir, I am raising an issue which is important for the rights of the fishermen; it is important for maintaining good neighbourly relations with our neighbouring countries, particularly with Sri Lanka.

India is having 7,516 kilometres long coast line along nine States and four Union Territories. Sea accounts for 90 per cent of India's trade by volume. The safety of Indian waters is crucial. India is the third largest producer of fish in the world and the second largest producer of fresh water fish in the world.

Having said this, I must see this Kachchativu Agreement in this background. The Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka on the boundary in historic waters was signed in the year 1974. It was signed by Shrimati Indira Gandhi and Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Article 5 of the Agreement says 'subject to foregoing, Indian fishermen and pilgrims will enjoy access to visit Kachchativu as hitherto and will not be required by Sri Lanka to obtain travel documents for these purposes.

Article 6 of the agreement says, "The vessels of India and Sri Lanka will enjoy in each other's waters such rights as they are traditionally enjoyed therein".

Sir, this agreement worked from 1974 till 1983. After 1983, the problems arose.

Smt. Indira Gandhi, when signed the agreement, said. "Kacchativu was

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D.Raja

sheer rock of no strategic impor-

Now, the Kacchativu island in Palk Straits has become a strategic area. The U.S. imperialists do not want the Indian Ocean as the zone of peace.

In this background, we must see the war in Sri Lanka against the Tamil people is tending to be a war against Indian fishermen also.

There is harassment. Swaran Singh, the then External Minister, made it clear, "The fishermen were free to fish even round about the Kacchativu island." But on 11.5.2006, in the same Rajya Sabha, for a Starred Question No.396, E. Ahmed, the MOS for External Affairs Ministry has said, "Under the agreement, Indian fishermen are allowed to access Kacchativu island to rest, for drying of nets, for attending the annual Saint Anthony's festival. The right of access is not understood to cover fishing rights around the island to Indian fisher-

This is a grey area, very vague and this needs that the agreement has to be reopened and renegotiated in order to protect the rights of fisher-

Thank you. (Ends)

DR. V. MAITREYAN (TAMIL NADU): Sir, I associate myself with the issue. [TamilNet]

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(Middlefield & Finch)

Asia fears lost decade, unrest from food price shock

By Andrew Hay

Soaring food prices may throw millions of Asians back into poverty, undo a decade of gains and stoke civil unrest, regional leaders said recently as they urged a boost to agricultural production to meet rising demand.

Asia -- home to two thirds of the world's poor -- risks rising social tension as a doubling of wheat and rice prices in the last year has slammed people who spend more than half their income on food, Japanese Finance Minister Fukushiro Nukaga said during the Asian Development Bank's annual meeting.

If food prices rise 20 percent, 100 million poor people across Asia could be forced back into extreme poverty, warned Indian Finance Secretary D. Subba Rao.

"In many countries that will mean the undoing of gains in poverty reduction achieved in the past decade of growth," Rao told the ADB's meeting in Madrid.

The ADB estimates that about 20 percent of people in Asia are presently living on less than \$1 a day -- the international definition of extreme poverty -- compared to more than 60 percent who did so in the mid-1960s.

A 43 percent rise in global food prices in the year to March sparked violent protests in Cameroon and Burkina Faso as well as rallies in Indonesia following reports of starvation deaths.

Many governments have introduced food subsidies or export restrictions to counter rising costs, but they have only exacerbated price rises on global markets, Nukaga said.

"Those hardest hit are the poorest segments of the population, especially the urban poor," Nukaga told delegates.

"It will have a negative impact on their living standards and their nutrition, a situation that may lead to social unrest and distrust," he added.

The ADB estimates the very poorest people in the Asia Pacific region spend 60 percent of their income on food and a further 15 percent on fuel -- the key basic commodities of life which have seen their prices rise relentlessly in the last year.

Japan is one of 67 ADB member economies gathered in Spain to discuss measures to counter severe weather and rising demand that have ended decades of cheap food in developing nations.

The Asia-Pacific has three times the population of Europe -- around 1.5 billion people -- living on less than \$2 a day.

Rice is a staple food in most Asian nations and any shortage threatens instability, making governments extremely sensitive to its

But the steadily rising cost of providing fuel and food subsidies harms budget finances, puts at risk the macroeconomic stability international investors demand in return for buying government bonds and, in some cases, curbs the access nations have to global financial markets. Indonesia, for example, has pledged to reduce its budget deficit by cutting fuel subsidies ahead of planned global bond sales this year worth around \$12 billion.

"We have to reduce the budget deficit for investor confidence," Anggito Abimanyu, a senior Indonesian fiscal policy official told ADB delegates on Sunday, saying that fuel and electricity subsidies of \$20.5 billion this year hampered efforts to raise money on international capital markets.

Decade-high inflation, driven by food and raw materials costs, has topped the agenda of the ADB's annual meeting.

The Manila-based multilateral lender has had to defend itself from U.S. criticism it is focused on middle



income countries and has neglected Asia's rural and urban poor.

Smaller countries such as Cambodia urged the ADB to focus its lending on the poorest Asian states.

The Bank on Saturday called for immediate action from global governments to combat soaring food prices and twinned it with a pledge of fresh financial aid to help feed the Asia Pacific region's poorest nations

Leading members Japan, China and India backed long-term ADB strategy to provide low-cost credit and technical assistance to raise agricultural productivity.

The United Nations said the rural poor represented a political time-bomb for Asia that could only be defused by higher agricultural investment and better technology.

"Unless you can look at the plight of the poorest farmers in the region and how they are going to add to the numbers of very poor, very deprived people, we are unnecessarily going to create a problem that will erupt into a political crisis," said Rajendra Pachauri, head of the U.N. panel on climate change.

[Alertnet.org]

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- Complete Processing: All applications currently in the backlog will be processed.

These measures are currently before Parliament.

All of these changes respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Canada needs an immigration system that is flexible, fast and fair for everyone — that's why we're reducing the immigration backlog.

For more information on these changes please call 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232) TTY: 1-800-926-9105.

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Actuellement, le nombre de demandes d'immigration en attente se chiffre à 925 000, Cela se traduit par des délais de traitement pouvant atteindre six ans.

C'est pourquoi le gouvernement du Canada propose des mesures pour réduire l'attente.

Voici quelques-unes de ces mesures importantes, qui doivent être mises en œuvre :

- accroître les ressources : un montant supplémentaire de 109 millions de dollars pour accélérer le traitement des demandes;
- réduire les délais de traitement : la capacité d'accélérer le traitement des nouvelles demandes;
- améliorer les possibilités d'emploi : sélectionner des travailleurs qualifiés dont les compétences répondent à nos besoins économiques;
- traiter toutes les demandes : toutes les demandes déjà en attente seront traitées.

Le Parlement s'emploie actuellement à examiner ces mesures.

Toutes ces modifications sont conformes à la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés et à la Loi sur l'immigration et la protection des réfugiés.

Le Canada a besoin d'un système d'immigration souple, rapide et équitable pour tous — c'est pour cette raison que nous **réduisons le nombre de demandes d'immigration en attente**.

Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements au sujet de ces modifications, veuillez composer le 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232) ATS: 1-800-926-9105.

Vous pouvez également consulter notre site Web, à l'adresse suivante : www.cic.gc.ca/attente







Canadä

Monsoon Health



Watch your Step

By Mithura Anandarajah, PT

In the winter, we smother ourselves with heavy coats, toasty gloves and warm insulated bulky boots. We can't wait to put them away and pull out the shorts and tees. What we look forward to most of all, is to slip on those sandals. Wiggle those toes, slip on those slinky sandals in all colors of the rainbow. Or, if you belong to the male species, grab those flip flops and let's see some leg. Girls, this is the time to deck those toes in magenta pink or metallic blue. Boys, this is the time to cut those toenails. It is probably the only time in the year that we actually pay attention to our feet. Unfortunately, this attention is mostly superficial skin deep. Only when each step is painful and agonizingly slow, do we stop and really take care of our feet.

Did you know that about one quarter of all the bones in your body are down in your feet? Made up of 26 bones, 33 joints, 107 ligaments and 19 muscles, each foot bears the weight of your body on a daily basis. The average person takes approximately 10,000 steps a day, which

adds up to about 115,000 miles over a lifetime. When neglected and not cared for, your feet can reflect your general health. What can result is improper body alignment, skin conditions and painful steps. At some point in our lives, we can relate to painful steps. It could be after dancing for three hours in high heels, or it could be caused by working and standing for over eight hours. Painful feet and foot conditions affect every part of our daily activities. Thankfully, most of these can be prevented or treated. A chiropodist or podiatrist specializes in the intricacies of feet and their care. Early intervention can cure, treat or minimize the symptoms conditions. many Recommendation of proper foot care will also facilitate this process.

The following are some conditions often treated by these professionals.

INGROWN TOENAILS:

Ingrown toenails are common painful conditions that occur when the skin on the side of the toenail grows over the edge of the nail, or when the nail grows



into the skin. They can develop for many reasons. Sometimes, the toenails are simply too large. Trauma, such as stubbing a toe, can cause a piece of the nail to jam into the skin. Tight footwear or foot deformities can contribute to this condition. Ingrown toenails can be extremely painful and cause swelling. Sometimes, an infection can occur. Uninfected ingrown toenails can be treated by following this regimen:

- · Soak the feet in warm soapy or salt water
- · Dry them thoroughly with a clean towel
- · Apply an antiseptic solution and bandage the toe.

If an infection occurs or if there is excessive swelling or discharge develops, it should be treated by a Chiropodist, who can trim or remove the nail with a minor office surgical procedure. The best way to prevent this condition is to wear comfortable shoes that fit adequately and trim the nail regularly straight across at a comfortable length.

WARTS

Plantar warts are benign growths that occur on the sole, heel or ball of the foot. The human papilloma virus (HPV) causes several different types of warts, which are the most common type of skin infection. This virus thrives in moist areas like bathroom showers or locker room floors. It enters the body through open cracks or sores; it remains there to cause infection and spreads if the feet are not washed and dried after exposure. Signs and symptoms include hard, raised areas on the sole of the foot; black dots may be seen or

have a "cauliflower" appearance. Infections can be mild or severe; pain can be caused by pressure on the foot on the painful areas. Thorough washing with soap and drying of feet will help prevent infection and re-infection. Wear protective footwear in public areas with high risk of holding the virus, such as public showers, locker rooms etc. Once the warts develop, surgical care may be required to reduce the wart, followed by a chemical treatment to kill the virus. This treatment should only be done by your Chiropodist.

CORNS and CALLUSES

Calluses are areas of thickened skin caused by repeated friction and pressure. They form to protect the skin and the structures beneath it from injury or damage. They can form on the sole of the foot, on the heel, or under the five metatarsal heads. These areas typically bear most of the pressure and friction from standing and walking. As the callus thickens, it causes additional pressure against the skin inside the shoe, resulting in pain. Corns are dead skin cells that build up and harden to form a callus-like point that presses on the nerve

Continued in page 19

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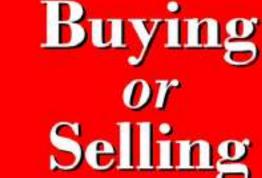
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Monsoon Living

Founder: Coco Chanel Born: 1883, Saumur, France Died: 1971, Paris, France

Coco Chanel always said that she designed only for her - to escape the flouncy and restrictive Womenswear of the early part of the century - and if anybody else wanted to wear her clothes, that was up to them

Coco Chanel's background was as unexpected as her attitude. She was brought up in a convent, having been orphaned at a young age. With every intention of becoming a dance hall artist - her signature song was 'Qui qu'a vu Coco?' hence the nickname - she entered the jetset of the time, thanks to the money and contacts of Etienne Baslan, a Parisian play-

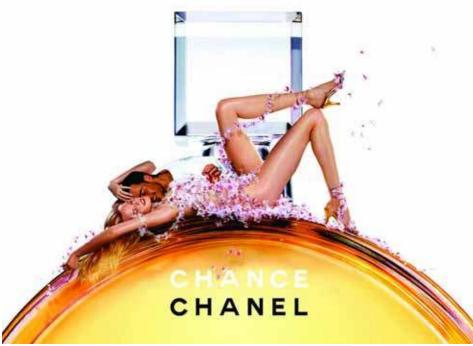
Designer Profile

CHANEL

blouses, 'yachting pants' - wide-legged sailor style trousers when trousers were still relatively radical - twin-sets, beach pyjamas, straight skirts worn with Chanel's take on a man's sweater, and now staple Little Black Dress.

By 1921 Chanel had launched her first





boy. Although details are scant, she is believed to have picked up some dress-making and millinery experience along the way, and opened her first shop (a hat shop) on rue Cambon in Paris in 1910. Further shops followed in Deauville and Biarritz in 1915. World War One did nothing to stop her customers from spending.

Buoyed by the shifting social scene of women in the 1920s, Chanel's simple, almost minimalist style grew in popularity. Women could not get enough of her adaptations of traditional menswear in an easy palette of black and navy blue (as well as beige). Chanel offered light garments with few linings, jersey dresses (first in 1916, when jersey was generally used for underwear), sleeveless evening gowns, loose

perfume - Chanel No.5. During her time designing, Chanel was responsible for putting gilt buttons on blazers, and introduced gilt chained handbags, strings of pearls (prefiguring her love of extravagant costume jewellery in the 1970s) and sling back sandals. She also designed clothes for Hollywood stars, most notably Gloria Swanson.

While the company continued in a somewhat low-key way, launching the quilted leather handbag and back-to-back. 'C' Chanel logo in 1955, Chanel herself all but disappeared from fashion for 25 years. In 1954, at the age of 71, she came out of retirement and reopened her Paris shop, surprising many with pre-war styles.



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continued from previous page





This time she also offered a less cleancut look, including what has come to be regarded as a quintessential Chanel garment; the jersey or tweed, collarless, braidtrimmed suit with patch pockets and kneelength skirt.

A similar slide into obscurity followed Chanel's death - alone in the Paris Ritz - until designer Karl Lagerfeld took over the house of Chanel in 1983. He cleverly dusted the cobwebs off some of Chanel's older, now classic creations, updating others (the hugely popular Chanel suit as black leather biker gear, for instance) and generally reinvigorated one of the biggest names in French Fashion.

WHAT YOUR 'GOODBYES' SAY ABOUT YOU? The way you end love affairs, friendships and jobs speaks volumes about your personality

- 1 You've got a new job and need to hand in your notice at work. Do You:
- a) Have several sleepless nights your boss will see this as a betrayal and give you a hard time.
- b) March into your boss's office without feeling at all nervous. Its just business, after all
- c) New job? Why? You've been in the same one since you left college and have never thought of applying elsewhere.
- 2 You see your most recent ex on the street. He's alone, you're alone. Do you:
- a) Cross to the other side of the road in order to avoid him.
- b) Throw your arms around him and drag him off for coffee.
- c) Have a friendly chat and suggest you meet up sometime.
- 3 How many of your exes have you managed to stay good friends with?
 - a) Over five.
 - b) Two to five.
 - c) One or none.
- 4 If you've ever fallen out with a friend, did you:
 - a) Feel bad, but it's her loss.
 - b) You've never fallen out with a friend.
- c) Feel bad, but know that you tried your best.

SCORI NG

1 a) 2 b) 3 c) 1

2 a) 3 b) 1 c) 2

3 a) 1 b) 2 c) 3

4 a) 3 b) 1 c) 2

You Scored 10-12

Your style is: The sudden bolt

'Don't look back' is your motto; endings happen swiftly. "You tend to leave mentally and emotionally before you go physically," says life coach and psychotherapist Sandra Donaldson. "The other person won't what's hit them."

The good news: you make a nice, clean break without all that messy stuff. And move onwards and upwards with ease.

The bad news: "People who leave a situation suddenly often grieve post-split because they haven't worked through their feelings." Says Donaldson. Not such a clean breaks after all, then.

You Scored 6-8

Your style is: Constant dithering

You blow hot and cold. Partly for good reasons as you hate hurting anyone, and you're loyal, "Ditherers need to 'wean' themselves away - their endings happen in stages."

The good news: "This is a gentler way to do things," she suggests. " You don't go if there's a chance you can work things out."

The bad news: Leaving can take forever. And the process can also horribly messy, torturing yourself and those left behind.

You scored 4-5

Your style is: Paralysing inactivity

Would your ever leave anyone or anything if they didn't leave you first? "You'll deny there's anything wrong, until your lover's out the door.

The good news: You're so good-hearted that you hate hurting people or rocking the boat.

The bad news: It's time to put yourself first and think about what's good for you for a change.

by Parthepan Kugadason (PK)





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Monsoon Newsline

High prices and food shortages taking toll in Sri Lanka

Humanitarian agencies in Sri Lanka are preparing for the fallout as increasing food prices and shortages put vulnerable populations at risk of malnutrition and leave many families no longer able to afford essentials such as medical care and school tuition.

The global food crisis, referred to by World Food Programme (WFP) officials as "the silent tsunami" during a summit in London on 22 April, is hitting home.

Munniandy Muttur, a janitor in the capital Colombo, told IRIN: "I earn only Rs350 [US\$3.20] per day, and that amount is not enough if we try to eat well. If I or my wife fall sick, we can't even think of private hospital. God willing, we will either not fall sick, or just fall dead, that is better."

The 66-year-old man said he and his wife had cut down on meat and survived as best they could. "Everything is getting expensive, but we are not getting paid more."

Relief agencies warn that vulnerable communities will increasingly cut back on essentials just to get by.

"Poor communities are surviv-

ing from one day to another - the rise in food prices means the poor families are living in a 'survival mode', planning for their next meal, rather than making and acting on long-term plans for them and their children," Nayomi Kannangara, Child Protection Program Manager with Christian Children's Fund in Sri Lanka, told IRIN. Kannangara warned that children's education and healthcare may be neglected first.

"Some families may not be able to afford the bus fare to the hospital where the medical care is free and may not be able to purchase the drugs that are not available through the free clinics," she said. "Symptoms are neglected and less attention is paid to non-critical medical needs."

Rice stocks have dwindled since the government imposed price controls on 17 April. In addition, the World Food Programme (WFP) has temporarily suspended its work for food project in the war-torn northeast due to a lack of resources. WFP country director Mohamed Salaheen told IRIN the programme had been benefiting 175,000 people.

"We held discussions with the

government and agreed on what our priorities are," he said. "Given the resources we have, we cannot take care of everything." The suspension will remain in force until new donor commitments allow the WFP to recommence it.

The WFP in Sri Lanka is facing increasing budgetary restrictions given that food prices have shot up by more than 50 percent in the past year and the agency is facing a 40 percent funding shortfall.

"We need an additional US\$35 million to meet the funding requirements that were set on older prices, but now they have sky-rocketed," the WFP country director said.

The food price increases have been exacerbated by a 12.5 percent shortfall in domestic rice supply, the staple food of the islanders, according to government statistics.

Inflation jump

The government Census and Statistics Department recorded that average annual inflation rose by 16.8 percent in March 2008. A monthly 1.5 percent rise in the Colombo consumer price index (CCPI) was due to escalating food prices

"The increase in the CCPI for March 2008 is mainly due to an increase in prices of rice, fresh milk, condensed milk, Lactogen [baby food], tea, red onions, coconut oil, butter, jam, some varieties of fresh fish, dried fish, coconuts, potatoes and some varieties of vegetables," it said in its latest CCPI report.

Agencies working with vulnerable populations have already begun to factor in the rising prices into their estimates.

"We are in discussions with WFP on whether to increase the monthly amount provided to poor families," Meneka Calyanaratne, chief of communications for Save the Children UK in Sri Lanka, told IRIN. Such assistance, while important, is marginal in terms of numbers, compared with the WFP programme that has been feeding more than a million people. "It will all depend on what the assessments of WFP and other UN agencies are, but there is a very real likelihood that the individual grants will go up."

Save the Children provides Rs1,600 (approx \$16) per month for 2,672 poor families countrywide.



A woman checks rice at a grocery store in Colombo, Sri Lanka

Calyanaratne also said rising food prices may force older children in poorer families to leave school for lack of funds. "When families find it hard to make ends meet," she said, "they tend to look for easy avenues for more income; sending children to work is one of the easiest."

Sri Lankans on average spend 37.6 percent of their monthly expenditure on food, according to the latest Census and Statistics Department data, with vulnerable families spending as much as 70 percent.

[Reported by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-I RI N]

Sri Lanka inflation hits near 30% record

By Natasha Gunaratne

Sri Lanka's inflation hit an all-time high in recent decades when it peaked at a near 30 percent, according to the latest Colombo Consumer Price Index (CCPI) figures - up from 28.1 percent the previous month.

Inflation - measured by the new Colombo Consumer Price Index, the CCPI (N) - also peaked to 25 percent in April, up from 23.8 percent the previous month. Economist Dr. Harsha de Silva said the last time inflation reached close to 30 percent was in 1980.

He said that while the CCPI(N) was a better reflection of inflation, the 25 percent figure was still misleading. "The problem with the new index is that the government has forcibly removed part of the consumption basket. Alcohol and tobacco have been removed even though they are almost as much as an average household's expenditure on education," he said explaining that on average Rs. 630 was spent on education a month while Rs. 510 was spent on alcohol and tobacco a month.

In a statement the Central Bank (CB) said a surge in global inflationary pressures, far in excess of expectations, caused by the continued high oil prices and a sharp rise in other commodity prices had passed through to domestic prices, causing a substantial increase in domestic inflation worldwide.

The CB has also decided to further restrict its quarterly targets for reserve money through a down revision for the remaining three quarter of 2008. Dr. de Silva said such a move should have been done months ago. "I have been arguing that there is too much money in the system and that the reserve money targets are wrong," he said.



"When growth figures came in at 6.7 percent instead of 7.5 percent which the CB used to calculate the reserve money target, it should have immediately revised the figure downward. We need a certain amount of money to sustain a certain amount of economic growth. If that growth doesn't happen, the money in the system is too much. Now, the CB has admitted that its targets are wrong and has revised them. Inflation might have been less if the CB did what it should have done. Even though it is late, I applaud it," the well-known economist added. Dr. de Silva said he agreed with the CB there was more influence from the international prices now than six months ago but that the CB was putting the blame fully on international prices instead of adjusting its reserve money targets down-

"Now there is a huge difference between other countries and ours. The difference is not converting. It is true that worldwide, inflation is going up but in Sri Lanka, it is hitting 30 percent. The CB has to be even more careful with the demand side issues because oil prices don't seem to be coming down," he added.

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Monsoon Newsline

IDPs continue to flee fighting in northwest

IDPs continue to flee fighting in northwest

Intensified fighting in recent months in Sri Lanka's restive northwestern Mannar District has forced more than 16,000 people to flee to safe areas within the region.

In light of this, A Nicholasspillai, the government agent for Mannar, told IRIN he had made contingency plans for up to 25,000 additional IDPs fleeing the clashes between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the district, while government military spokesman Brig Udaya Nanayakkara also expected additional civilians to flee to government-controlled areas in the district

"There are 40,000 people registered as living in the Manthai West division [an LTTE-controlled area] where fighting is intense," Nicholasspillai told IRIN. "Most of them have already moved out of the [immediate] areas where the fighting is taking place, but if the clashes continue and they move further north, they will have no other option but to flee to government areas."

Fighting has been continuous along the line of control in Mannar District since December 2007, with government forces trying to dislodge the Tamil Tigers from their frontline positions.

The conflict has also threatened Madhu church and its prominent 500-year-old statue, Our Lady of Madhu. Clashes close to the church prompted Catholic authorities to relocate the statue and key artifacts and documents. "Our Lady of Madhu [statue] has become a refugee in her own land for the first time," the Catholic bishop for the district, Rev Rayappu Jospeh, said.

Access limited

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), there were 23,000 IDPs in Mannar District by end-March. Most of the displaced - 16,700 - remained in the Manthai West division, under the control of the Tigers. No access is available to the division through government-controlled areas in Mannar due to the fighting. Humanitarian agencies have had to reach the displaced through the Tiger-controlled Kilinochchi District

UN agencies have reported that security and access restrictions have affected their ability to provide medical assistance to those displaced in Manthai West.

"[The UN Children's Fund] UNICEF reports that due to ongoing military operations, Public Health Midwives (PHM) have returned to Mannar and only one [government] medical officer and three PHMs are covering the whole of Manthai West," the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (ISAC) stated in its latest situation report released on 12 April.

"Approval for transportation of Tri-posa [a children's nutritional supplement] and Corn Soya Blend to Manthai West is pending. In 2007, only three of the 12 months' supplies were transported." it said.

Checkpoint delays

Nicholasspillai said strict security measures had also delayed supplies to government-controlled areas of the district. "Access continues to be problematic due to the checkpoints."

All vehicles proceeding to Mannar undergo rigorous screening by government security forces at Madavachchiya, 90km from



Mannar, where supplies are unloaded and reloaded into vehi-

"That takes a considerable amount of time and there are other checkpoints on the road to Mannar," Rukshan Fernando, coordinator for the human rights in conflict programme at the Law and Society Trust (LST), a Colombo-based rights advocacy group, told IRIN.

Sri Lankan military authorities told IRIN they were not denying anyone entry into Mannar but were taking precautions to prevent attacks by the Tamil Tigers. "We have not restricted anyone, but the usual strict checking is in place," Nanayakkara said. "We have to be responsible for the safety of everyone."

Nicholasspillai said humanitarian agencies were also awaiting clarification from security authorities regarding the status of a new IDP centre at Kalamoddai, which is sheltering about 200 people in temporary shelters. Nicholasspillai said more IDPs were expected to arrive there. So far, the humanitarian community had limited its assistance to the provision of emergency supplies, he said.

Nanayakkara said: "We plan to set up more sites as the number of people fleeing the Tiger areas increases."

[Reported by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)]



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Monsoon Features

ANGKOR WATT - GLORIOUS ANGIENT HINDU CIVILAZATION

By: J. M. Rajaratnam

The Bangkok Airways flight from Bangkok to Siem Rep (200 miles north of Phnom Penh in Cambodia) was filled to capacity mainly with foreigners from US. As the plane descended towards Siem Rep , the thrill inside the plane was palpable. The terrain below was flat with red clay sand. Small huts were seen here and there; water buffaloes were gracing the green pasture lands; puddles of water were seen everywhere. Then from the right side of the plane rose the glorious and majestic Angkor Watt; it shone golden by the reflection of the early morning sun. It looked so peaceful and serene . People inside the plane were speechless, mesmerized by the beauty of this stunning monument. . As you were appreciating the beauty of Angkor watt, you feel a bump inside the plane, indicating that it had indeed landed in Siem Rep.

KAMBUJA (CAMBODIA) - EARLY HISTORY:

Kampuchea, Cambodia, Khmer and Angkor are all names associated with a single civilization renowned for its art and architecture. Kambujadesa or King of Cholas, and a daughter of the naga king, who inhabited the waters and ruled over the soil.

However, the generally accepted dates for the Angkor period is from 802 to 1432. It began when Jaywarman II conducted a ritual that installed him as the universal monarch and ended with the relocation of the Khmers from Angkor to Phnom Penh in 1434. It is believed that Jaywarman was held captive at the court of the much more powerful Sailendra dynasty in Java of Indonesia - Sailendras were Buddhists who built the magnificent monument at Borobudur in central Java. Upon returning from Indonesia, he unified the Khmer nation, and declared independence from Indonesia, thus beginning the glorious period of Angkor.

Suryawarman II took the throne around 1113 and ruled until 1150. He was the most brilliant Khmer rulers and it was he who built Angkor Watt. However by 1175, Threvada Buddhism was spreading fast in the Cambodia – due to the strong influence from neighboring Siam(Thailand) - and by 1200, the rulers of Khmer nation had converted in to

early 20th century it was accidentally discovered by a group of French explorers.

LOOTING OF THE ANGKOR:

Angkor complex has many Hindu and Buddhists temples and monuments of which Angkor Watt is the largest and the most famous . In the 13th century a wave of Hindu iconoclastic fervor led to the destruction of all Buddhist images. Most of the plundering came from the Siamese (Thailand) in the 15th century who carried away most of the cultural treasures . However, the most notorious planned expedition looting in the early 20th century involved Andre Malraux who would later become France's cultural affairs minister of De Gaulle cabinet. He and his accomplices removed large sections of the temple and shipped them out of the country. He was later arrested and tried.

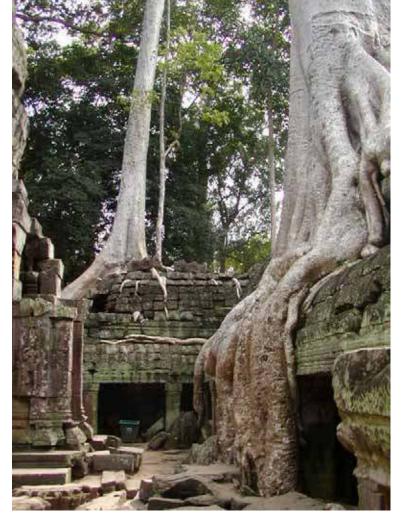
During the Vietnam war, American jets bombed Angkor Watt. Cambodians swear that there were no insurgents at Angkor Watt. Yet, the Americans pilots knowing that this was not only a national but world monument bombed it. Fortunately, only minor damage was done. My driver would recall this incident with some anger- as a cultural terrorism on the part of the Americans.

In the eighties, the Pol Pot's men vandalized Agnkor complex systemically. Beautiful stone carvings had been ripped apart from the temple walls and sold for a song in the antique market of near by countries. My guide- who was a former high ranking Khmer rouge member — told me about the systemic looting and how they survived in Angkor , mostly on monkey meat.

ANGKOR WATT:

Angkor watt is the largest monument of the Angkor complex - there are several other Hindu and Buddhist temples and monuments in the Angkor complex. It lies about 4 four miles north of the main town of Siem Reap. It was built in the first half of the 12th century (approximately 1113-50) by Suryavarman II . He dedicated the temple to Lord Vishnu.

Watt is Thai name for temple, which must have been added on to Angkor when it became a Threvada Buddhist monument, probably in the 16th century. It is believed that Divakarapandita, the chief adviser to the king, who was a Brahmin, designed Angkor Watt. The estimated time for the construction of the temple is about 30 years. It has been debated whether Angkor Watt was built as a temple or as a





tomb. Though the architecture of the Angkor points to a temple, its orientation – the main entrance is west - points that it was built as a tomb.

The complexity and beauty of Angkor Watt can be appreciated only when its is seen personally. From a distance, it appears to be a colossal mass of stone, but on a close look, it is a series of elevated towers, covered galleries, courtyards.

Angkor watt is an immense monument, occupying a rectangular area of about 500 acres, defined by a laterite, which is surrounded by a moat that is 600 feet wide. The reflection of the entire temple on the water of the moat during the evening is a breathtaking experience. Angkor watt is 213 feet tall, achieved by using three rectangular or square platforms. Each platform is progressively smaller and higher than the one below. At the third level, the platform supports five towers

the middle. The ingenious plan allows a view of all five towers only from certain angles. The overall profile imitates a lotus bud.

Angkor watt temple is most famous for its Bas-reliefs. The Bas - reliefs surround the first level of the temple. The reliefs covers the innermost wall of the first level on all four sides, and covers 12,900 square feet of brilliant sandstone carvings. It extends seven feet from top to bottom. The Basreliefs on the western gallery depicts the story of battle of Mahabharata ; south gallery depicts the army of Suryavarma; East gallery portrays the story of churning the Ocean milk; West Gallery portrays the story of battle of Lanka- Ramayana. The exquisite and intricate sand stone carvings points to the rich heritage of the Khmer civilization.

Continued Next Page



Kambuja is a Sanskrit name for the modern Cambodia. It is believed that the word had derived from a North Indian tribe and is associated with Kambu Svayambhuva, legendary founder of Khmer civilization. The name Angkor is from a Sanskrit word nagara (Holy City). The Khmer Empire remained in the vicinity of Angkor for over 500 years.

Evidence suggests that during the 1st century AD there was trading between Bay of Bengal to western coast of Malay Peninsula. Chinese records from the third century indicate about an Indianized settlement - Funanain Cambodia in the third century AD. It describes - similar story is recounted in Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions — about a marriage between a foreigner from India who was either a Brahmin or a

Buddhism, thus the people and the nation. The Hindu temples and monuments that were built during the Hindu period was not destroyed, but converted in to Buddhist temples; statues of Lords Shiva and Vishnu were replaced with Lord Buddha.

By the 14th century, the biggest threat to Khmer nation came from Siam (Thailand) . Sukothai - considered a national hero in Thailand, invaded and plundered Angkor of its precious architecture many times. Due close proximity of Angkor to their perpetual enemy - Thailand - the rulers of the Angkor, shifted their capitol from Angkor to the present Phnom Penh in the late 15th century. For the next four centuries Angkor watt remained in ruins covered by gigantic tress and bushes. It was only in the

Continued from previous page

All the Bas —reliefs are dazzling rich sand stone carvings on the wall. You can spend days — if not weeks- just marveling at the rich artwork and the ingenuity of the sculptors who created these master pieces about one thousand years ago. To me, Angkor Watt was more magnificent and majestic than Taj Mahal. Among the Bas—reliefs, the churning of the ocean of milk—the Hindu mythical story of Devas and Asuras churning the ocean to obtain the immortal nectar—is simply breathtaking. You are simply stunned and paralyzed when you look at these gorgeous master works. It is best to see Angkor Watt at sunset.

REPLACING LORD VISHNU WITH LORD BUDDHA:

If there is one disappointment with Angkor Watt, that is seen as you come to the top level. The top level has five towers , four at corners and one in the middle , which is considered the sanctum sanctorum. I have no doubt the middle tower had the most beautiful statute of Lord Vishnu at the time the temple was built. However, with the Khmer rulers adapting to Buddhism, Angkor Watt was taken over by the Buddhist priests, and they replaced Lord Vishnu with Lord Buddha . Today, there are three gigantic Lord Buddha statues inside the sanctum sanctorum. I have nothing against Lord Buddha- whom I consider one of the greatest spiritual souls to be born. However, the whole beauty of the Sanctum sanctorum disappears with the Buddha statues inside. Lord Buddha looks out of place there. This was not built as a Buddhist temple. I believe they should have left Angkor Watt as it was meant to be- a Hindu monument.

In the Angkor complex, Angkor watt is not the only place to be visited. The are many other temples — both Hindu and Buddhist. Some of the famous are 1) Angkor Thom- another masterpiece Buddhist monument 2) Baphoun — Hindu temple dedicated to Siva 3) Bayon-Buddhist.

CAMBODIANS: MORE INDIAN THAN MONGOLOID FEATURES

Cambodians are very easy going and hospitable people. They have more Indian than the Mongoloid features. It is a country that has been vandalized by many powers -

Watch Your Step
Continued from Page 9

Calluses and corns occur as the body's natural response to continued friction and pressure points. Poorly fitting shoes or abnormal gait can result in callus or corn formation. If left untreated in people with diabetes or circulatory problems, they can lead to foot ulcers. Custom made orthotics can help correct structural foot problems causing corns and calluses. Special padding may be required to reduce pressure areas. Your Chiropodist can provide footwear advice and treatment options. Never try to remove these structures with a razor blade or sharp instrument.

ATHLETES FOOT

Athlete's foot is a skin disease caused by a fungus, commonly occurring between the toes and in the arch. Fungus thrives in a warm, moist area such as bathroom showers or changing rooms. It enters the body through cracks or sores; it remains there to cause infection and spreads if feet are not washed and dried after exposure. Symptoms include itching, dryness and cracking of the skin. Those who scratch and then touch other parts of the body, may spread the infection. Prevention and treatment include thorough washing and drying of feet. Wear protective

in the ancient times by the Siamese, then by the French, followed by Khmer rouge, and recently by the Vietnamese. Every Cambodian has a personal story about Khmer rouge (Pol Pot). My driver's entire family (five of them) were murdered one night, when Khmer rouge men smashed their skulls with a hammer against a rock. The Driver- who was eight old at that timewas taken out of the house by his aunt just before the men arrived . My guide took me to a Buddhist temple one evening. At the entrance, there was this huge glass cage. Inside the cage were hundreds of human skulls. The guide became very silent and started crying. Within sobs, he told me that his father's skull was one of them.

The latest aggressor of Cambodia was Vietnam. Like Eelam welcoming the IPKF in the initial stages, the Cambodians were happy that Vietnamese were there to protect them from Khmer rouge. However, within months they were behaving worse than the Khmer rouge – killing and raping Cambodians. Due to UN intervention, Vietnamese were asked to leave, and some form of civilian administration has been restored. However, resentment against the Vietnamese runs very deep among the Cambodians even today. The current Prime Minister, Sen, was a right hand man to Pol pot. He later broke away from Pol Pot.

TARVEL TO ANGKOR

There are several flight from Bangkok to Siem Rep (on Bangkok Airways, and takes about an hour) . Siem Rep is about 4 miles south of Angkor . Silk air- subsidiary of Singapore Airline - flies directly from Singapore to Siem Rep. One could also reach Siem Rep from Phnom Phen- takes about one hour. There are excellent hotels in Siem Rep , the prices ranging from \$20 to \$200. You could book your hotels through the internet . The Cambodian embassy in US has a web site that gives you good information - though they do not reply your E-mails. Visas are issued upon arrival at the airport for citizens of most countries- including the US. You need \$20 and two passport size photos. You can rent a car for about \$ 20 / day. An English speaking guide would cost about \$20/Day strongly recommended. Food is very cheap in Siem - excellent Chinese food would cost about \$1. You need about two days to see most of the temples in the Angkor complex.

footwear in public places; wear clean dry shoes. If an infection occurs, see your Chiropodist for treatment.

PLANTAR FASCITIS

Plantar fascitis is an inflammation in the foot caused by excessive stretching and inflammation of the plantar fascia. The fascia is a broad band of fibrous tissue that runs along the base of the foot. What results is heel pain, arch pain and possible spurs. Overpronation or flat feet can contribute to this painful condition; also an unusually high arch or improper footwear can further irritate the fascia. Treatment of this condition may include physiotherapy for pain relief and exercise to stretch/strengthen the fascia. Also custom made orthotics, which are insoles that support the arch, allow for correct weight bearing and alignment. Your chiropodist will facilitate treatment and prevention. Also they can suggest the correct footwear.

The above listed are just a few of the conditions that impact your feet and how they step in your daily life. Often addressed with the onset of pain and/or infection, most can be prevented and symptoms minimized. Wear those slinky sandals or those flip flops but bear in mind that they support your whole body weight. Pay attention to your foot care, besides the colorful array of nail polish. Proper care will preserve that bounce in your step in time to come

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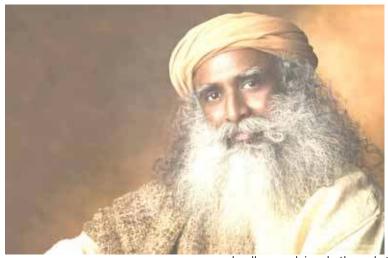
Monsoon Features

Taking life into their own hands:

How the population of Tamil Nadu is taking a stand for their environment

What can break through our apparent immobilisation in the face of climate change? We are not documenting the demise of someone else's planet; we are walking eyes open into an uncertain future for our own. Does the lack of appropriate or logical action show us unwilling to comprehend the enormity of what we have created, or simply too overwhelmed by the scale of what we may need to do about it?

In 2005, just after the tsunami that swept away so many lives and livelihoods, a group of volunteers from The Isha Foundation were starting the job of rehabilitating the



was loudly proclaimed through every means possible, engaging every sector of society. On the 17th of October 2006, over quarter of a million men, woman and children planted 852,587 saplings across 27 districts in Tamil Nadu and Union of Pondichery, successfully claiming a new world record.

2007 saw the project shift gears and start adopting itself to a new intention; how to maintain the momentum but translate this into on-going, deliberate, mass public propagation and protection of trees? The answer; show how tree planting provides a way out of suffering. By supporting farmers to plant trees as poly-culture crops on lands that they can no longer even afford to farm, they are rehabilitating once barren land, protecting the soil from flood erosion, improving the health, happiness and livelihood of farmers, increasing the green cover, improving the micro climates and sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. By supporting schools, colleges, businesses and self help groups to participate and work together to build or tend nurseries, run their own campaigns and plant as many trees as they can, they are offering a whole population a collaborative way of handling the climate driven inevitability of their situation.

Project GreenHands has since facilitated the planting of a further 4 million saplings. They want their strategy of mass mobilization and environmental action to spread across India, and to other developing and developed nations, but they need our help to do this. These people are among the least responsible for climate change, and yet they are already among the worst affected. To increase their green cover by 10% state wide, to minimize the risk of wide scale deserti-

fication and famine, they need to plant 114 million trees within the next 5- 10 years. They have the map, the tools and the willingness to do it, now they need the money, and they need millions fast. Anything that you can give will contribute.

To donate please go to www.projectgreenhands.org

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devastated coast of Tamil Nadu, Southern India. They noticed that coastal villages that were forested suffered significantly less damage than those that were not, and an idea arose. Could trees be a tool to reconnect people to their hearts, to their grief and to their land?

They decided to grow saplings and present them on white cloths to each family as a gift to plant in memory of their loved ones. The effect was an unprecedented mass planting of 25,000 trees within a few short weeks by the inhabitants of only 6 villages. The overwhelming response of the people proved what the volunteers had hoped; that by directly interacting with and taking responsibility for a living tree, people experienced an internal shift back into "felt" relationship with themselves and the land. A

new environmental initiative called Project GreenHands was born.

Project GreenHands was clear from the very start that its role was to catalyze a mass mobilization of rural people to reforest their agriculturally ravaged land before desertification led to famine. Rural India was then and is still in the grip of a deep agricultural, financial and emotional crisis that is leading to the suicide of over 20,000 farmers every year. The project needed to be designed in a way that could breathe hope and self sufficiency back into the villages with the first step being education. Once the context for the planting was understood, an event would be created that linked joy and community to the experience of planting trees.

To raise immediate profile and energy around the project, a Guinness World Record attempt

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Monsoon Newsline

Rights abuses flourish in secrecy, denial in Sri Lanka: Amnesty International

Noting that in conflict situations "without reports, pictures and film of the fighting and the violence, no-one knows enough to put the pressure on the participants to ensure human rights are respected," Amnesty International, (AI) in a media release issued Friday, said the need for such environment is "strong in Sri Lanka, where fatalities on all sides are believed to be very high with large numbers of civilians caught in the crossfire."

"Despite the gravity of the human cost of war, Sri Lanka is a conflict where journalists face unjustified restrictions on reporting and there are very few established facts. In fact, both sides consistently contradict each other," the release said.

"The conflict in the north and east of Sri Lanka has continued to escalate since the ending of the ceasefire agreement on 16 January 2008. The withdrawal of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) responsible for monitoring the implementation of the 2002 ceasefire agreement means that there is a vacuum of independent reporting of human rights violations. This makes it more urgent that journalists are allowed to report without undue restrictions and document human rights abuses on the ground," Amnesty said in the release.



minority Tamil community had fled the Jaffna peninsula where government forces are battling Tamil Tiger rebels," Amnesty said, quoting International Federation of Journalists(IFJ)

Quoting Jaffna daily Uthayan Editor, that "publishing our daily newspaper in Jaffna is an increasingly herculean and dangerous task with armed gunmen who continuously threaten our work and our lives," Al also pointed out that incarceration of Tamil journalist Jayaprakash Sittampalam Tissainayagam who was arrested on 7 March and has been held in the Terrorist Investigation Division Detention centre in Colombo, was arbitrary.

Amnesty also said that Tissainayagam "is at risk of going "25 journalists from the blind if he does not receive specialist treatment for a serious eye condition."

The organization called upon the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) "to respect media workers and publicly announce that killings, threats, or other attacks will not be tolerated and to investigate all cases of attacks, disappearances and killings of media workers promptly, independently, impartially and effectively, irrespective of the identity of perpetrators or victims.

Amnesty also called on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to "issue instructions to all its members to cease all killings, threats or other attacks on media workers.'

"All parties to the conflict must stop targeting journalists," the Amesty said.

Church Seeks Security **Guarantee Before** Reinstalling Madhu Statue

The Catholic Church is mulling whether to return the revered statue of Our Lady of Madhu after the Sri Lankan Defense Ministry announced plans to designate a "security zone" around the Madhu shrine.

According to Father Surenthiran Ravel Leenus, secretary at the bishop's house of Mannar diocese, declaration of a two-kilometer peace zone around the shrine and the safe return of displaced local people are conditions that must be fulfilled before the statue can return to the shrine. It was removed a month ago.

Father Leenus spoke to UCA News by telephone on April 29, after a priests' council meeting the evening before discussed the threat to the shrine and the Church's concern that the surrounding area should be a "zone of peace."

About 30 diocesan priests attended the meeting at the bishops' house with Bishop Rayappu Joseph of Mannar.

The meeting was called after Army Commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka said the shrine, damaged due to shelling the past few months, was now under government control and would be handed back to the Church.

The military campaign by government forces to wrest control of the area including the Madhu from Tamil rebels began in July 2007. According to the army, its soldiers secured the area on April

On April 3, following heavy fighting, statue of Our Lady of Madhu, revered across religious lines, was taken from the shrine to St. Francis Xavier Church in Thevanpiti, a coastal village where 20,000 displaced people live in makeshift camps or with relatives. The priests, nuns and other Church workers at the shrine have also taken temporary residence there, about 50 kilometers to the north.

Much of northern and eastern Sri Lanka has been scarred by fighting between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who launched an armed struggle for a separate Tamil state in 1983. Tamils had long complained of oppression and discrimination on the Sinhalese-majority island.

At the April 28 meeting, Father Victor Sosai Anthony, vicar general of Mannar diocese, told fellow priests about his trip to Madhu two days earlier, when government soldiers took him to the shrine. He later recounted his experience to UCA News.

"I got down from the armored vehicle and entered the shrine through a window, since the doors were closed," he said by telephone. "I felt mixed feelings -- peace and sorrow on seeing the Marian shrine, its unswept floor covered with dust and debris."

Father Anthony said he kissed the main altar. He reported the priest's residence and nearest chapel had been damaged in the fighting but the main church was unharmed.

The council meeting discussed conditions under which it could be considered safe to return the statue and for displaced people to resume their life in the vicinity.

Mannar diocese has decided to send priests to the shrine, with the permission of the government forces. Three priests volunteered to "safeguard the serenity of the shrine," Father Anthony told UCA News. They will remove debris and clean the shrine in anticipation of its reopening.

The matter has been in the news due to a public appeal by the Mannar bishop for the shrine to be made a "zone of peace." Additionally, Sinhalese Catholics rallied recently in Colombo and called for worship places of all religions to be free from war.

[UCA - Union of Catholic Asian News]

Peace one Day: Sri Lanka Youth Declaration

Peace one day is a concept by filmmaker Jeremy Gilley. He was at a musical concert, when Jeremy had an idea: what if there was one day when the world stopped fighting? A worldwide ceasefire - a non-violence day? A Peace Day? After years of work Jeremy finally had his wish in 2001, when the UN general assembly unanimously adopted a resolution for formally establishing an annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence as the UN International Day of Peace on September 21st.

This year, on September 21st, a group of young Sri Lankans [..] want to celebrate that this by

launching a Sri Lankan youth deceleration in solidarity with the Peace One Day Initiative. Following is an excerpt from the formal document:

"Through the voice of young people, we reaffirm the faith in fundamental peace and prosperity for all, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women regardless of race, creed, colour or social status.

We bring to the forum a process of meaningful reconciliation, constructive dialogue and change for a positive Sri Lanka.

Throughout history, young

people within Sri Lanka have always played a major part in shaping the continuing story of this small island. As the keepers of this responsibility, we reaffirm our right to be heard and counted. In spirit of this, we put forward our vision for a constructive peace and a progressive Sri Lanka.

This day and declaration is the manifestation of such ideals.

In true strength of democracy our ideas are open to criticism, compromise and inclusion"

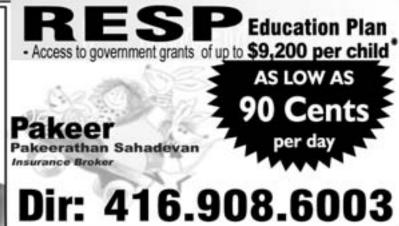
Visit SahaSamvada for more information regarding the organisers etc.



INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE







Monsoon Newsline

by Tasha Manoranjan World of Children

As a Tamil girl who was born and bred in America, I was rather naïve and thus righteously shocked to witness the real life impact of warfare on innocent children. But this was nothing new or shocking to the residents and students of the region. They were saddened, of course, to hear of ten-year olds killed in the bombings or to see the embargo imposed on medicine and school supplies, but far from shocked.

These children did not know of a life in which you can study freely and walk around without worrying that you may be detained for questioning, torture or death. They did not know of the ability of laws to protect people, where you can petition courts



casualties as possible.

So we crouched down in the

bunker in silence. We would alter-

nately sit on our flip-flops to avoid

dirtying our clothing, and stand

huddled in the bunker that was

eerily reminiscent of a grave. It

was just tall enough that we could

bend over halfway without brush-

ing against the tree trunks mak-

ing up the roof of this make-to

shelter. But as the bomber planes

flew overhead more and more

frequently, forcing us to disrupt

our classes to run into the

bunkers, the bunker seemed

We knew of the bombing last

August of the Sencholai Children's

Home, in which 54 schoolgirls

were killed and over a hundred

severely wounded when 16

bombs were dropped on the girls

as they were preparing for school.

I visited this home a week after it

was bombed and saw the blood-

stains at the well, where some of

the girls had been washing their

faces to get ready for the day's

classes. The walls of the girls'

hostel and assembly hall were rid-

dled with shell pieces, and I shud-

dered to think of the fear and

shock that must have gripped

them in their last moments. They

more and more like a grave.

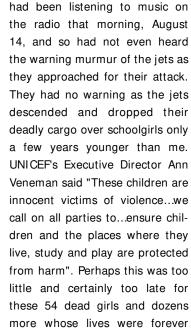
if you are denied education or employment opportunities based on your ethnicity. All they know is fear and they live with it every moment of every day.

WAR. The word itself spells fear...but living in the United States, we are generally far removed from the real aspects of war and its impact, especially on children. I am 20 years old and when I told my parents that I was taking a year off from college to go and work in our native Sri Lanka, they were both proud and fearful for my safety. Sri Lanka is a tiny island in the Indian Ocean. At about 65,000 square kilometers it is about the size of West Virginia. The population of the island is about 21 million, 75% of whom are Sinhalese and about 15% of whom are Tamil. The Sinhalese are primarily Buddhist and the Tamils are basically Hindu. Stress between these two groups has existed for centuries but erupted into all out civil war in 1983. We are Tamils...but this story is about children of war...because children do not make war or declare war or fight wars...they simply suffer from the outcome.

I could barely make out her

Born Without Hope

eyes across from me, as the darkness smothered us both. But I could feel her dark pupils burning into mine, asking me to reassure her that we would survive this attack. One of her hands found their usual place enveloped in mine, and I gently squeezed it to calm her. I wished I could talk to her, to tell her that our school was too small to be a target of the bomber jets, and that we would be safe. But talking was out of the question, since it was believed that the jets and the reconnaissance planes could detect talking underground and would then know the locations of our bunkers, thus making it easier for them to attack with as many



changed by this single act of war

er-intuitive yet accurate logic that kept sick people away from hospitals.

After the bombing of the Kilinochchi General Hospital, people realized hospitals too were a



dren have been consumed by fear and uncertainty of war. How does one comfort them? How does one give them hope when the bombers scream overhead and the explosions rock the shelters? I wondered if this is what it was like in other war zones...children huddled in fear, tears glistening in their eyes, yet hoping for a better future while the adults go about their "war".

The harsh realities of warfare made teaching English difficult, to say the least. As a Tamil girl who was born and bred in America, I was rather naïve and thus righteously shocked to witness the real life impact of warfare on innocent children. But this was nothing new or shocking to the residents and students of the region. They were saddened, of course, to hear of ten-year olds killed in the bombings or to see the embargo



imposed on medicine and school supplies, but far from shocked.

These children did not know

These children did not know of a life in which you can study freely and walk around without worrying that you may be detained for questioning, torture or death. They did not know of the ability of laws to protect people, where you can petition courts if you are denied education or employment opportunities based on your ethnicity. All they know is fear and they live with it every moment of every day.

Thus, I was shocked. And they were simply saddened.

This dichotomy of reactions is what has prompted me to speak out against the injustice visited upon children that I witnessed in Sri Lanka. And to hope others here will join me in doing the same. In saying indiscriminate warfare against unarmed, innocent children is and will not be tolerated. That all children in Sri Lanka, regardless of their ethnicity, should have the right to live and grow in peace to study freely and live freely.

Courtesy: Sangam.org



against innocent children.

After this it became very difficult to get children to attend school. They were so afraid their school would be the next target for the bombers. There was clearly no hesitation in targeting innocent children, so it was believed that if children stayed home and refrained from gathering in known targets such as schools, they might reach their twentieth birthday.

Their logic was frighteningly rational. Though it was counter-intuitive, children were safer staying at home. The probability truly was smaller that children would be killed if they stayed home from school. This was the same count-

target. People were uncomfortable going into a hospital, knowing it could be bombed at any time. The red cross prominently displayed on the roof of any hospital only made it easier to attack.

This is the twisted logic that plagues the innocent children caught in the throes of war.

I lived in this war zone for the past year, trying to teach English to students there amidst this chaos and suffering. These people have been living in a war zone for the past 25 years, as the war continues between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Despite a four-year ceasefire on paper, virtually the entire lives of these chil-

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The Annual Festival (May 16, 17 & 18)

The annual festival of the temple will be held over the May 16^{th} , 17^{th} and 18^{th} weekend (Victoria Day long weekend).

On May 16th the festival commences at 9:00 AM with the usual welcoming ceremony for the Sri Vishnu Durga as she arrives from St. Catherine's. The "Vaancha Kalpa" Maha Ganapathi Homa followed by the Pancha Suktha Abhishekam to the Devi are also part of the first day

celebrations. The Maha Ganapathi Alankara Uttsavam will take place in the evening, culminating in Ganapathi taken around the temple in procession.

The 17th will feature Chandi Homam commencing at 5:00 AM and followed by Abhishekam, Alankaram and Annapavadai for the Devi. In the evening at 6:00 PM, during the Chapparam procession the Devi is conveyed around the temple, for many, the highlight of the festival.

The last day of the festival commences at 9:00 AM with the Sri Dattatreya Uttsavam that includes a 1008 right handed conch Abhishekam, the Pancha Suktha Abhishekam and culminates with Sri Dattatreya taken around the temple in procession. At the end of the recital, the Bhairava Bali will signify the conclusion of the festival.

Festival attendees this year will enjoy live carnatic music performances by famous artists.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for the daily Annadhanam, flowers, fruits, milk etc., as well for individual Abhishekams and Poojas. Please visit the web site or contact the temple for further details.



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European Union's GSP + Versus Impunity for Human

Rights Violations by Sri Lankan Government

The European Union consisting of 27 countries has maintained a GSP scheme -Generalised System 1971.The Preferences since scheme is updated every ten years, and reviewed every two years. The GSP consists of several components. Those are general arrangements and special incentive arrangements for specific protections. In order to be eligible for benefits under the special arrangements, countries need to fulfill certain criteria. The GSP+ is a unilateral and preferential trade scheme to tariff-free export of goods into EC (European Community) from qualified LCDs(Less Developed Countries). The European Union has granted it only to a total of 15 countries. Sri Lanka is the only country in the entire Asian region to enjoy dividends of the GSP+ system. The EC has originally decided to grant additional tariff benefits to Sri Lanka under its GSP scheme in 2005, based on Sri Lanka's compliance with international core labour standards as adopted by (International Labour Organization). EU allows businesses in Sri Lanka to export 7,200 items to the EU, duty free. The countries wishing to receive the facility for 2009 should apply by October 31st, and the recipients will be announced on December 31st. But there are serious concerns that the EU may not extend the GSP+ for Sri Lanka. For the GSP+ renewal to be successful, Sri Lanka have to show that it is a vulnerable economy and ratify 27 international conventions on human rights, labour rights and environmental standards.

Benefits to Sri Lankan Economy

The GSP+ gives Sri Lanka the facility of tariff-free export of 7,200 commodities, which is crucial for its economy. Since it was first given to Sri Lanka in mid-2005, the GSP+ has helped beat competition from lower cost producers and increase Sri Lankan exports into the EU. According to the EC, the GSP+ is now worth 900 million Euros to Sri Lanka in terms of export earnings. This growing market share is important to Sri Lankan economy. The ready made garment export sector is the biggest beneficiary of the GSP+. The duty free export facility of the GSP+ has helped increase market share of Sri

Lankan garments in the EU, despite increased price competition from larger producers like China, India and Bangladesh. The garment industry is the biggest employer in the manufacturing sector in Sri Lanka and provides direct employment to nearly 300,000 people, mostly rural women. Losing the GSP+ could directly impact on the price competitiveness of Sri Lankan garments and this in turn, could hurt employment and export incomes. Consisting of 27 countries EU, has already replaced the US as the biggest buyer of Sri Lankan goods. Sri Lanka has access to 27 countries with tariff concessions through one single market arrangement. Minister of Export Development and International Trade Prof G L Peiris says Sri Lanka is in danger of losing the GSP+ facility from next year. An estimated 350,000 persons who directly depend on the garment industry and export products will suffer the repercussions. An estimated three million people indirectly benefit by the garment industry. In 2007 alone, 3,200 million US dollars had been earned through this facility, Prof. Peiris said. "So, I think we need to be perennially conscious of that reality and whatever we do, whatever political actions or initiatives we embark upon, we need to remember that GSP Plus is a matter that goes to the very root of Sri Lanka's economic and social wellbeing."

Increasing publicity on allegations of human rights violations could disqualify Sri Lanka from the GSP+ scheme. Germany is also considering proposing to the European Union to withdraw the General System of Preference Plus (GSP+) concessions from Sri Lanka in view of the human rights issues. Sri Lanka is expected to not just ratify but also implement these international conventions in order to sustain its eligibility.

Human Rights Violations (HRV) related highlights:
-The US Government-funded Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in November 2007, has put the proposed funding of nearly \$590million is on hold pending improvement in security situation.
-The British Parliament on 17 January 2008, a scheduled 'Adjournment debate" in the House of Commons, turned out to be a full 'debate' which went on for an unprecedented hour and a

by Arun Senathirajah

half. It was an expression of serious concern from both sides of the House, at the escalating violation of human rights in Sri Lanka. -The German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, in a recent interview, indicated that Germany plans to half of the personnel working in development cooperation and close the office of the German Development Bank in Colombo, if the government continues to pursue the war option. -Gareth Evans Head of International Crisis Group said 'as adopted by the UN 60th Summit of 2005 by 160 heads of state that if a state cannot protect its own citizens from crimes being committed against them such as genocide, ethnic cleansing and other forms of human rights violations, the international community through the United Nations Security Council has a right to intervene, the last resort being even military intervention.' -Amnesty International Report 2007 on Sri Lanka mentioned that "The human rights situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated dramatically". It noted "- it dithered on Sri Lanka and took no action - with killings and abductions continuing with

- Ambassador Alan Rock, Special Advisor to the UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, had reported in Nov 2006 that the GOSL was aiding and abetting the Tamil militant group to conscript child soldiers. - Manfred Novak, the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Torture (October 2007 said, "It has taken the world an insanely long time to come to terms conceptually with the idea that state sovereignty is not a license to kill - that there is something fundamentally and intolerably wrong about states murdering or forcibly displacing large numbers of their own citizens, or standing by when others do so.

- Prof. Philip Alston, United Nation's Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, speaking to the United Nations General Assembly, Third Committee, 20 October 2006, said that the "dramatic attacks in recent days and spiraling number of extrajudicial executions" indicate that "Sri Lanka is



not so much on the brink of a new crisis but, instead, only in the midst of an interminable and intractable crisis that has already exhausted its fair share of international attention," and called upon the United Nations Secretariat to "establish a fullfledged international human rights monitoring mission in Sri Lanka." In the report Prof Alston presented, he said: "The [Sri Lanka] Government should not, however, interpret the widespread proscription of LTTE as a terrorist organization as an endorsement of its own record. Neither its past nor its present conduct would justify great faith in its ability to respect equally the rights of all citizens. Indeed, it is an enduring scandal that there have been virtually no convictions of government officials for killing Tamils, and many Tamils doubt that the rule of law will protect their lives." - UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, visited Sri Lanka in October 2 007. addressed the UN Human Rights Council on the issue of 'abductions and disappearances in Sri Lanka' said, "I have suggested that the Government would benefit from the support of a presence of OHCHR in the country, with a full mandate incorporating technical assistance and public reporting". But Sri Lanka rejected her suggestion as "gratuitous". - The GOSL unilaterally withdrew from the Ceasefire Agreement with the LTTE in Jan 2008, to escalate the conflict, irrespective of the magnitude of the civilian casualties, almost all Tamil civilians in the Northeast.

- Norway peace maker and Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission were told that they were no longer necessary, and were asked to leave the country as proclaimed in the 'Mahinda Chinthanaya' – his election manifesto.

- The International Independent Group of Eminent People (IIGEP) was appointed to monitor Sri Lanka's Special Presidential Commission. Main purpose was to investigate 16 cases of serious rights violations, including the August 2006 massacre of 17 local employees of the French charity Action Against Hunger (ACF). In March 2008, the IIGEP decided to "terminate its operation in Sri Lanka" saying that The Public Inquiry Process fell short of International norms and standards."There is a climate of threat, direct and indirect to the lives of anyone who might identify persons responsible for human rights violations, including those who are likely to have been committed by the security forces. In April 2008 they reconfirmed their position in a letter to H.E. the President from Justice PN Bhagwati merely expresses '... It lamentable that Government of Sri Lanka continues to divert attention from the central truth in this matter - that is, the problem of impunity for serious human rights violations and the need for the Commission to get to the bottom of that impunity.'

- In early March 2006, more than 30 international left-wing political parties and organizations appealing for 'progressive forces' to come forward on the defense of the just cause of the Tamil people. They demanded that the Government of Sri Lanka "stop imposing its will militarily on the Tamil people".

continued in page 42...

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Monsoon Features

True Wisdom

What is true wisdom? What makes someone a wise person? Prem Rawat widely known as Maharaji, who travels the world with a message of peace, says wisdom comes from an understanding of one's true nature-an understanding that he says comes from a direct experience of the self.

"Once there was a parrot who belonged to a wise man," Maharaji says. "One day, the parrot came to the wise man and said, 'You know, I have so many brothers and sisters who live in the jungle, and I also see that this hunter comes and traps them. What can I do?'

"So the wise men taught him a poem. He said, 'Go and sit on the tree and sing this poem:

The hunter will come and drop the bait, drop the seeds. Don't you go to eat them, because if you do, you will get caught in that net.'

"The parrot was very thankful for this advice. He went, sat on a branch and started singing this song. Everybody listened to the song and said, 'Oh, yes. What a beautiful song.' That day, all the parrots flew away and nobody got caught.

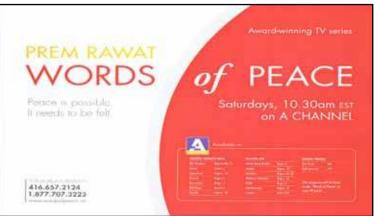
"Next day, they were all gathered together. The hunter came and put down his net, threw the seed, and again, the parrot came and sang, 'The hunter will come, throw down the bait, throw down the seeds. Don't you go eat them, because if you do, you will get caught.' Everybody agreed, 'Yes, we shouldn't do that.'

"This went on and on. Every day, the hunter would come, and every day, the hunter would lay down the net, and every day, he'd throw the seed. Eventually, the parrots got used to hearing this song. Without thinking, one day they drifted down, and all of them got caught. Then they started yelling, 'Oh, you were right; you were right, we forgot!'

"The parrot flew off, went to the wise man and said, 'I told my friends, and when they listened to me, they didn't get caught, but now when they weren't thinking they've got themselves caught. What do I do? How can I help them?' not aged-it's the same as when you were a little child.

"Your head gives you commands all day long: 'You should do this; you must do that.' The heart does not command you. It's speaks to you. It says, 'Be happy. Be content. Be in joy. Be thankful.'





"The wise man said, 'Go to them and tell them not to try to fly away one by one. Try to fly together. Make the effort together. So they made the effort together, and the next thing you know, they're flying away with the net."

That's what happens, Maharaji says, with human beings. If someone tells us not to get caught when trouble comes and throws down its net, we say, "Oh, that's very good advice"-but it's advice that we forget.

Maharaji suggests that, instead of repeating what others have said about life, people look within to find out what it's all about for themselves. He offers inspiration and assistance to anyone who feels a need to discover more.

"Life is not about what your head is telling you, but about your heart," he says. "Your heart has "A tree grows, and everybody can see and enjoy its fruits. How about you? How do you grow? Is it just that your hair becomes gray and you get a few wrinkles? Is that wisdom? Or is it something that you understand in your life?

To understand that this life is a gift is a hundred percent wisdom. To understand the significance of this breath is pure wisdom-pure, pure, hundred-percent wisdom. Seek the value of this breath and understand what it means to be alive. Then accept and celebrate."

To receive a free DVD to know more about what Maharaji offers;

call 416 657 2124 1 877 707 3223 Toll Free e-mail wordsofpeace@ sympatico.ca

To Learn More visit www.tprf.org www.wordsofpeace.ca

CANADA-SRI LANKA BUSINESS COUNCIL ELECTS OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2008/2009

By Our Business Correspondent

The 2008 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council (CSLBC) was held on Saturday, April 26th in the Berczy C Room, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, 7095 Woodbine Avenue, Markham. Members were hosted to a 'hot' breakfast followed by the meeting. Chairman, CSLBC Kula Sellathurai presided at the AGM. Consul General for Sri Lanka in Toronto, Mr. Bandula Jayasekara graced the occasion on invitation.

The outgoing board of directors for 2007/2008, comprised of President Louise Roberge; Vice President Ganesan Sugumar; Executive Secretary Upali Obeyesekere; Hony. Treasurer Priyantha Gunaratne; Director Membership Nalaka Weerasinghe; Director Media Relations Suresh Kumar; Director Mohan Perera and Director Sharmila Perera.

Immediately following the breakfast, a tribute was paid to the late Mr. Nirantha De Silva, Vice President of the Council who sadly passed away on February 5, 2008. Mr. Upali Obeyesekere then introduced Mr. Bandula Jayasekara to the members and said that the new Consul General has a diversified background in the private sector, in addition to high level experience in media and communications. "The Council looks forward to working with the Consul General in furthering its objec-

tives," added Mr. Obeyesekere.

Consul General Bandula Jayasekara thanked the Council for inviting him to meet the members. He offered his full cooperation to the Council to fulfill its mandate. Mr. Jayasekara addressed security concerns in the country by saying that it is a global issue and Sri Lanka is no exception. By way of trade, Mr. Jayasekara announced that the trade posting currently in Ottawa would soon be relocated to Toronto given the fact that this city is the commercial hub of Canada. Once this takes place, there will be a focused action plan to improve bilateral trade and investment between Canada and Sri Lanka

Chairman Kula Sellathurai welcomed the members to the AGM. He spoke of the potential that the Council has in promoting trade and investment between the two countries. CSLBC President Louise Roberge presented the Annual Report for 2007/2008 and spoke of the activity that transpired during the operational year.

The Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council was formed in 1990, due to the pioneering efforts of a group of businessmen from the Canadian business community working together with the Sri Lanka High Commission in Ottawa. Sir Christopher Ondaatje was the Council's inaugural president.

The following were elected to serve as officers of the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council board for operational year 2008/2009.

 $\label{eq:continuous} \textbf{President - Ms. Louise Roberge-Tea Association of Canada}$

Vice President - Mr. Ganesan Sugumar - Sugshe Group

Executive Secretary - Mr. Upali Obeyesekere - Ad-Bri Enterprises Inc. Honorary Treasurer - Mr. Nalaka Weerasinghe - Canada Wide Immigration

Services
Chair, Membership - Mr. Umesh Sivakanthan - Richmond Realty Group Inc.
Chair, Media Relations - Mr. Ranier De Lambert - Centum Advance Realty Inc.

Directors-at-Large - Mr. Mohan Perera - M&M Twins Limited Ms. Sharmila Perera - Ann Arbour Consultants Inc.

Mr. Lalith Wickremasinghe – Sri Lankan Travel Inc.

Hony. Auditor - Mr. Krishan Suntharalingam, CA - Suntharalingam & Associates

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The New Board of Directors of Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council with Sri Lanka Consul General in Toronto, Mr. Bandula Jayasekara From L to R: Lalith Wicklremasinghe, Umesh Sivakanthan, Nalaka Weerasinghe, Louise Roberge, Sri Lanka Consul General Mr. Bandula Jayasekara, Ganesan Sugumar, Upali Obeyesekere, Ranier De Lambert and Mohan Perera. Not in picture: Director Sharmila Perera

Monsoon Features

A REMARKABLE ANNUAL EVENT OF CANADA BARATHI KALA MANRAM'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY AND 36TH ARADHANA OF SATGURU SRI THYAGRAJA SWAMIGAL

Pudhuvai N. RAMAN

 $M_{
m music}^{
m usic}$ is divine. Any kind of music with various forms and styles represents and reflects the cultural heritage of all ethnic groups universally from ancient period. In the present modern world music play an important role with innumerable forms from folk music to so called western music in different manner. All types of music no doubt enchants and entertains everyone someway or other to forget the depression and encircling worries as well give mental peace and pleasure. As such melodious songs composed by innumerable poets and sung by famous singers are gift of nature to the music lovers and fans of all kinds apart from race, religion and language. Among them, the Indian Classic Music plays a vital role from Carnatic, Hindustani and Gajals with world wide popularity. That too in carnatic music we all know the elegance and grace of its rhythm, ragas and melody sung by great scholars from Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar to Bharat Ratna M.S.Subbulakshmi. All these great singers music concert will always be with the poems of Sri Satguru Thiagaraja Swamigal . As such Sri Satguru Thyagaraja Swamigal, Sri Muthusamy Dikshadar and Sri Sama Sastrigal were the exponent of carnatic music Guru to all the carnatic musicians throughout the world.

Sri Thyagaraja Swamigal, born in Thiruvayar, a small hamlet in Tamilnad, (India) spent by worshipping, composing thousands of songs praising Lord Rama throughout his life. All the krithis (Songs) composed in all raagas by him are in Telugu and Sanskrit. Particularly his 'Pancharatna Keerthana' is the foundation of annual aradhana festival, which is being observed for more than a century in his birth place of Thiruvayar, every year during the month of January for three days in fabulous manner. The carnatic musicians from all parts of the Nations will never fail to pay their divine tributes by rendering his songs, which has become very popular. Moreover, those who do not avail this opportunity have become to celebrate this aradhana in the migrated countries every year. As such in Canada, Bharathi Kala Manram, a cultural association of South Asians has been conducting Sri Satguru Thyagaraja Music Festival for the past 35 years with great success.

Bharathi Kala Manram: It is one of the most respected Indian Cultural Organizations in Canada started in 1969. It has specialized in preserving and promoting the Indian Culture and traditions with particular emphasis in South Indian traditions among the Indo Canadians and their community interested in traditions.

Practically every music concert in Toronto by the visiting artists

from South India over the past 40 years has been organized by Manram. In the early days Manram started maintained language classes in Tamil and Telugu, and launched the ethnic

Language classes with the school boards. It has the prestige of being the first organization to start the traditional festival of Sri Satguru Thyagaraja Aradhana Music Festival in cooperation with the York University back in 1973. Now the festival is being celebrated in more than 25 cities in North America along the format developed by Manram. Further Manram has initiated a scholarship scheme -Thyagaraja Music Scholarships at York University whereby two Annual Scholarships of \$750/- each to York University students of Indian Music. Manram encourages the learning of carnatic music and dance by collaborating with the teachers and providing platforms for the students to perform in various Manram events. Manram fuctions as the meeting and 'net working' forum for the new comers to settle down smoothly without loosing touch with the home cultural traditions. It is the leading cultural organization in Canada with over 40 years of excellent record of community survive with 750 members. At present Mr. Thiagarajan (President) Venkatraman as Secretary and Dr Krishnan as Joint Secretary with Board Members have made a remarkable history by inviting Former Indian President Dr. M.J. Abdul Kalam to participate as the chief guest on the 36th Annual event of Sri Thyagaraja Aradhana which was held on 19th April at Payal Banquets & Convention Centre, Mississauga Hall, in grand manner.

This year 40th anniversary of Bharathi Kala Manram and 36th annual event of Sri Satguru Thyagaraja Music Festival were conducted at two venues on 19th & 20th April with great success. As a remarkable achievement in the growth of this organization, this year former President of India and great scientist Dr. M.J. Abdul Kalam participated as the Chief Guest in this music festival.

On 19th April at Payal Banquet Hall, house full audience comprising eminent music scholars from South India, local talented carnatic and classical musicians, instrumental players, members, invitees etc gathered in the auditorium, which was beautifully decorated with the huge paintings of sangeetha mumoorthigal at one side, and in the middle of the stage Deities of Rama. Lakshmana, Sita with Anjenaya with the worship of Sri Thiagaraja's portrait were displayed, which created a sense of divine feeling to the viewers. Similarly a big TV screen was projecting the cultural events from start to end.

The programme started at 8.30

am with mangala isai by the Nathaswara Vidwan Mr. Murugadoss group, followed with prayers and pooja to the deities. Mr. Thiagarajan, President of the Manram introduced this year function. As usual all the singers and instrumental players with the visiting South Indian musicians paid devotional tributes by singing the Pancharatna Krithis melodiously in chorus which was really admiring. Eminent Carnatic Musicians Shri O.S.Thiagarajan, Rohini. Aswin Iyer. Chitra veena Ravikiran. Abishek Raguraman. Violinist Akkarai Subbulakshmi, Thanadevi Mitra Deva, Mirudangist Professor Trichy Sankaran, Gowri Sankar, Ganjira Karthik and others are particularly to be mentioned.

By 10.30 chief guest arrived to the auditorium, all the participants received him with standing ovation enthusiastically. Mr. Thiagarajan (President), Mr. Venkatraman (Secretary) Dr Krishnan (Joint Secretary). with Board Members received him by honoring with sandal garland and shawl. Mr. Thiagraran gave a welcome speech highlighting the President visit to Canada.

Dr.M.J.Abdul Kalam in his speech expressed his great joy by meeting the South Asian community in this grand event of Sri Satguru Aradhana. He expressed how the music is a gift of God, which gives all sorts of peace and pleasure in all respects. Being a talented musician, veena player and composing of poems he remembered the famous carnatic musicians and stressed that this tradition and culture should be advocated to the younger generation so as their discipline and character would result for better future to visualize 'vision 2020'. He emphasized the inner conscious of righteousness to be followed by everybody and asked the children to repeat his words on this lines he composed. Above all his inter action with the children was really very inspiring as such he responded to their questions with smiling face. He also congratulated Bharathi Kala Manram and extended his good wishes to all. After his departure, the solo music program continued by eminanant singers Shri O.S.Thiagarajan, Aswin Tyer Brothers Aboshek Raguaman and Ravi Kiran. With sumptuous dinner the forenoon program concluded and in the evening the chitraveena music concert by Mr. Ravikiran was held in the same auditorium which was attended by large gathering of members and fans. Mandram's souvenir also was released during this music concert. The artists were honored with presentation of

Nextday the individual singing of students was scheduled at Central Peel Sec. School auditorium (Brampton) which started at 2.30 to 4 p.m. about 50 students took part by rendering Thyagarajar krithis, as









the special music concert the famous carnatic musician Mrs. M.S.Sheela with accompaniment of A. Ragavendran (violin), B.Gowrisankar (Mirudangam) and V.Karthik) Kanjira presented a wonderful vocal music program. On this occasion two scholarship to the York University Students as well mementoes to the visiting artists were presented and honored fabulously. This year celebration of Sri Satguru Thyagaraja as well 40th

anniversary of Bharathi Kala Manram, no doubt proved uniting the traditional music lovers of South Asians as well others to remain in green memories of these two days events whole heartedly.

Monsoon Journal extends its good wishes to the Bharathi Kala Manram for its successful growth to promote the South Asian Fine Arts and traditional culture with record of achievements.

Life Time Achievement Award

April 21st 2008 Boyds, Maryland. USA

International Shotokan Karate-Do Foundation, RMAA and Zen Karate celebrated its First Year anniversary in USA, and 38th Anniversary of Rajaguru In Martial Science at Clubhouse at WoodCliff, Boyds, Maryland, USA.

Hon. Senator Mr. Robert J Garagiola, Maryland State Senate as a Chief Guest/ Keynote Speaker and Best Seller Author "Adventures in Management" Mr. Kenneth were present to celebrate this occasion.

International Shotokan Karate-Do Foundation –USA and the executive members of the organization under the leadership of Renshi Senbag Rajamani, Chief Instructor of ISKF- USA organized this celebration to honor Grand Master So Shihan Rajaguru

T. Ravindran for his 38 years of dedicated service rendered to the Humanity and Martial arts.

Grand Master - So Shihan, Rajaguru T. Ravindran who came from Chennai and staying in Toronto,he accepted the invitation and visited Washington DC.

During the award function, Hon. Senator Mr. Robert J Garagiola, presented "Life Time Achievement" award to Grand Master So Shihan Rajaguru T. Ravindran in Appreciation of 38 Years of Dedicated Service towards Martial Arts and Humanity.

In this function, Grand Master Rajaguru T. Ravindran issued Trophies, certificates and belts to the students who passed their karate grading in the presence of the dignitories.

In his special address to hundreds of audience on that day, he said, "I would like to direct my attention to three points. That is True Love, the challenges facing us as to protect our Humanity, and the best practices that we want to pass on to our fast evolving children.

My first message to all is Enter the temple of True love as you always enter to a holy place as a simple person.

Enter into the world means enter into the worldly things, and you always enter as a person with expectation. The world reduces everybody to a short minded person, but True love raises everybody to become an emperor. Love is a life changing transformation phenomenon.

Even if one heart has flowered towards you, or because of you, God has reached through that heart. Somebody looked towards you with love; in that moment God looked at you. If we spend the money we will get the happiness as well as sadness. With money we cannot attain the peace. That will be only reached through our soul.

Watch the eyes full of love,

you will find God throbbing there because it is always God who loves. To love is to feel the God.

Vision is an important way of transcending limitations, within and outside ourselves. In order to achieve the vision our thoughts must be good.

If we have good thoughts then our actions become good.

If Our action is good then our life becomes good

If our life is good, then we will attain the peace

If we attained the peace then we will feel the God

The biggest asset a parent



mental abilities of the children to face the entire world with love,



Hon. Senator Mr. Robert J. Garagiola, presented "Life Time Achievement" award to Grand Master - So Shihan Rajaguru T. Ravindran in presence of Chief Instructor - ISKF- USA, Mr. Senbag Rajamani



has is their children. The valuable asset for the children is education. To have the better knowledge learning for kids, there must be two important things. One is spiritual Meditation for mental fitness and another is Physical training for physical fitness.

The Word Karate is meant by "Kara" means "Empty", "Te" means "Hand" so, Empty hand in Japanese. Karate training enables us to protect ourselves, and our neighbors with bare hands, without using any weapons when we encounter dangerous situations.

Karate is not only a fighting training, but it is mental and physical fitness. It also provides the self defense training.

A child starts Karate Training at the age of 10 years, when he reaches the age of 20 years, his intelligence and knowledge will be matured to have

a wiser 60 years old person. The ten years of training will trench harden the physical and calmness, patience, discipline and braveness.

In my 38 years of training and teaching in the science of Martial Arts all over the world, to thousands of children and grown ups, I witnessed many many children became respected citizens of their own country as doctors, engineers, scientists, lawyers and business people today.

I am proud to say that our Karate Children's better life is my biggest asset in my life. Every parents wish is to see the children go in the right way in their life. That is what we provide through our science of martial arts by not only teaching confidence but also guiding them to follow good principles and conscientious to become good citizen." Finally he also mentioned, "Keep Love in one eye and keep service in another eye because both eyes are important."

Canada India Foundation held the Chanchlani Global Award Function on 18th April at the Liberty Grand in Exhibition Place. The Guest of Honour was Hon. Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India and the Chief Guest was Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada. Picture shows Messrs. Ganesan Sugumar and Kula Sellathurai, two prominent Businessmen from the Sri Lankan Tamil community in conversation with Dr. Abdul Kalam.



SULEKHA.COM LAUNCHES TORONTO PORTAL

Expands its portfolio of services to classifieds and event ticketing

Toronto, April 16th 2008: Sulekha.com, the most popular online community for Indians worldwide, today announced the launch of portal – toronto.sulekha.com – for Indians in Toronto . The dedicated portal for Indians offers the largest selection of Classifieds, Events, Tickets and Blogs for Indians and South Asians in Toronto .

Mr. Satya Prabhakar, Founder and CEO, Sulekha.com said, "Whether you are looking to lease an apartment or find roommate...looking to buy or sell cars...finding a nanny...looking for things to do over the weekend...buy movie tickets...whatever you want to do, Sulekha.com is the place. Sulekha.com presents to you the largest online Classifieds and Events/Ticketing for Indians in Toronto."

Sulekha.com, the most popular site for Indians in 24 cities in US and India, now brings to Indians in Toronto quick and easy access to a busy marketplace where others in Toronto are offering various goods and services. The classifieds section has been designed with almost 12 broad categories including roommates, rentals, automobiles, domestic appliances, jobs, real estate, travel, and services etc. which are further classified into relevant sub categories thereby catering to the specific requirements of the users.

Being a leading online ticketer for Indian movies and events in U.S., Sulekha.com has also partnered with Golden theatres, one of the leading group of theatres in Toronto for online booking of tickets for the Indian movies in Albion



and Woodside Cinemas. Besides the user generated content of Sulekha.com around various areas of interest like Travel, Movies, Food, News is of universal interest thereby establishing itself as a global platform for Indians worldwide

About Sulekha.com:

Sulekha.com, a pioneer in the Indian centric online community, is a highly popular member-generated community and social/professional networking hub integrating social media and local commerce services with over 3.5 mn members. Their key services can be categorized into Social Media -Blogs, Groups, Networks, Verticals (News. Movies. Cricket. and Travel) and Local Commerce -Yellow Classifieds. Pages. Sulekha.com has city specific portals covering 25 cities across the world with offices in Austin , Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, New Delhi and Mumbai. For more information. please visit www.sulekha.com.

For further information please contact:

Vaishnavi Polepalli vaishnavi.polepalli@sulekha.ne

Waterloo News



Waterloo Region Tamils help children in Sri Lanka

Kitchener: Anjali Abraham and Lakshmi Sivakumar have been waiting for this day to help the children from Sri Lanka . Their excitement and determination is to help the local Tamil community to raise funds in their own way. It paid off when they took part in the Tamil community garage sale, by selling chocolate bars to the public. "I am proud" shouted the girls when the money started to roll in. Their way of talking to people attracted a large audience and ended up in collecting \$45.00 from the sale.

Project hope Garage sale is

part an event organized by the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region (TCAWR) to raise awareness of the short comings of the Children and Adults face in the IDP facility in Batticaloa , Sri Lanka . It was held on Saturday, May 3rd in Kitchener . A large number of volunteers worked tirelessly to collect used items within the community over a period of four weeks. They raised a sum of \$645 during the event. All proceeds went towards TCAWR Global Relief Fund.

The local yarn manufacturer,

Montreal Woollens Ltd, donated rolls of yarn to this charitable sale. The event coordinators Mrs. Rajivi Nadarajah and Mr. Dennis Loyola attracted the crowed with their talking skills. "The children in Batticaloa need all the help from the Tamil community" said Rajivi. "We Tamils have to help fellow country men whether it's in Sri Lanka , India or even in Canada . We should not let race, religion or politics to get in our way to help another human being. We are a very small community in this part of the world but we could make a difference.

We are in the process of learning from the Canadian society" said Sivakumar, the president of the Association. Ramya and Padmini, native from South India and members of the association were happy, they were part of the volunteering team to help the children from Batticaloa.

TCAWR's goal is to collect \$2000, for the children's Nursery school building and IDP Facility run by Ramakrishna Mission, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka by end of Dec. 2008. They are slowly reaching the half way mark through community events. They

are also looking for donation from fellow Sri Lankans and Canadians.

Donations can be forwarded to Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region, P.O. Box No: 25068, Kitchener, ON, N2A 4A5, Canada . All donations will be duly acknowledged with an official receipt. More information can be obtained by visiting www.tamilculturewaterloo.org .

TCAWR, is a registered nonprofit organization serving the Tamil community of the Region of Waterloo and city of Guelph.



Dennis Loyola, Rajivi Nadarajah and Ramya Loyola helping at the Garage Sale in the Beechwood Forest area,



The public strolling through the sale.



Anjali Abraham and Lakshmi Sivakumar selling chocolates to raise funds for Project hope.



Tamil community volunteers organising the event.



A large group attending the sale.



Athithan, Indra, Dennis, Nagul and Logan selling Yarn

Slain journalists remembered in Colombo

Suppression (MAMS), a common English media participated in the front organization consisting of event conducted under the banfive major media organizations, ner: "Stop the war against jour- Karunaratne said, "the [media] May 6, 2008 around 6:30 p.m. in front of Fort Railway Station, Colombo, in remembrance of the 14 slain journalists. The MAMS, in a leaflet gave the statistics, describing the state of media freedom in Sri Lanka where 14 journalists were killed in recent years, 8 journalists were subjected to abductions, 4 were imprisoned, 5 electronic broadcasts were blocked, 1 website blocked, 3 records of suppressive laws against media and countless number of harassments against media and media personnel.

More than a hundred journal-

Movement Against Media ists from Sinhala, Tamil and held a memorial event Tuesday. nalists in Sri Lanka".

Sunanda Deshapriya, the convener of Free Media Movement (FMM), a Colombo based media watchdog, Bothala Jayantha of Working Journalists' Association, Sanath Jayasooriya, the secretary of the Working Journalists' Association, R. Barathi, the secretary of Ceylon Tamil Journalists' Organization, Vithiyatharan, the editor of Uthayan and Chudaroli Tamil news papers and several other journalists took part in the candle light campaign.

Vickramabahu Karunaratne, the leader of the New Left Front and prominent

members of the party were present at the event.

repression has increased dramati- democratic forces to come forcally with the intensification of the war against Tamil liberation fighters. The first victim of a war is the truth. In particular, any war to curb an uprising demanding national freedom has to be fought with lies and distortions. This means that media freedom will be curbed. Any one who comes out with the truth will be in danger."

"There were disappearances and we were told at first these were done for exhorting money by ransom takers. Soon media people were taken away in the same manner and either killed or dropped back after grievous bodi-

ly harm. Many threats were made to nongovernmental media cen-Addressing the crowd, Dr. ters. Arson and bombing became open and severe." He called on all ward to defend the freedom of the press.

> "Stop the War on Journalists in Sri Lanka," was the slogan displayed in Sinhala, Tamil and English languages in the banner placed in front of the participants.

> The participants stood around the banner and lit candles and offered flowers besides bearing the pictures of the slain journalists in a gesture of paying hom-

> The event concluded around 7:30 p.m.

(source:Tamil Net)

University of Guelph Spring Academic Open Houses

The University's Admissions Office is hosting open houses from May 12 to 15 for admitted students and their families who want to learn more information about their chosen academic degree program.

Each day will focus on a particular degree program, or group of degree programs

The open houses will also offer academic information sessions, sample lectures, tours of residences, athletics facilities and the library, and opportunities to meet faculty and students.

The sessions begin at 9 a.m. in Rozanski Hall and run until 3 p.m.

For a complete listing of program offering by date visit the www.uoguelph.ca or call 519-824-4120 Ext. 58713

Monsoon Sports

Muhammad Ali

zz Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr.(original name) American professional boxer and social activist. Ali was the first fighter to win the world heavyweight championship on three separate occasions; he successfully defended this title 19 times.

Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr., grew up in the American South in a time of segregated public facilities. His father, Cassius Marcellus Clay, Sr., supported a wife and two sons by painting billboards and signs. His mother, Odessa Grady Clay, worked as a household domestic.

When Clay was 12 years old, he took up boxing under the tute-lage of Louisville policeman Joe Martin. After advancing through the amateur ranks, he won a gold medal in the 175-pound division at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome and began a professional career under the guidance of the Louisville Sponsoring Group, a syndicate composed of 11 wealthy white men.

In his early bouts as a professional, Clay was more highly regarded for his charm and personality than for his ring skills. He sought to raise public interest in his fights by reading childlike poetry and spouting self-descriptive phrases such as "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee." He told the world that he was "the Greatest," but the hard realities of boxing seemed to indicate otherwise. Clay infuriated devotees of the sport as much as he impressed them. He held his hands unconventionally low, backed away from punches rather than bobbing and weaving out of danger, and appeared to lack true knockout power. The opponents he was besting were a mixture of veterans who were long past their prime and fighters who had never been more than mediocre. Thus, purists cringed when Clay predicted the round in which he intended to knock out an opponent, and they grimaced when he did so and bragged about each new con-

On Feb. 25, 1964, Clay challenged Sonny Liston for the heavyweight championship of the world. Liston was widely regarded as the most intimidating, powerful fighter of his era. Clay was a decided underdog. But in one of the most stunning upsets in sports history, Liston retired to his corner after six rounds, and Clay became the new champion. Two days later, Clay shocked the boxing establishment again by announcing that he had accepted the teachings of the Nation of Islam. On March 6, 1964, he took the name Muhammad Ali, which was given to him by his spiritual mentor, Elijah Muhammad.

For the next three years, Ali dominated boxing as thoroughly and magnificently as any fighter ever had. In a May 25, 1965, rematch against Liston, he emerged with a first-round knockout victory. Triumphs over Floyd Patterson, George Chuvalo, Henry Cooper, Brian London, and Karl Mildenberger followed. On Nov. 14, 1966, Ali fought Cleveland Williams. Over the course of three rounds, Ali landed more than 100 punches, scored four knockdowns, and was hit a total of three times. Ali's triumph over Williams was succeeded by victories over Ernie Terrell and Zora

Then, on April 28, 1967, citing his religious beliefs, Ali refused induction into the U.S. Army at the height of the war in Vietnam. This refusal followed a blunt statement voiced by Ali 14 months earlier: "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong." Many Americans vehemently condemned Ali's stand. It came at a time when most people in the United States still supported the war in Southeast Asia. Moreover, although exemptions from military service on religious grounds were available to qualifying conscientious objectors who were opposed to war in any form, Ali was not eligible for such an exemption because he acknowledged that he would be willing to participate in an Islamic holy war.

Ali was stripped of his championship and precluded from fighting by every state athletic commission in the United States for three and a half years. In addition, he was criminally indicted and, on June 20, 1967, convicted of refusing induction into the U.S. armed forces and sentenced to five years in prison. Although he remained free on bail, four years passed before his conviction was unanimously overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court on a narrow procedural ground.

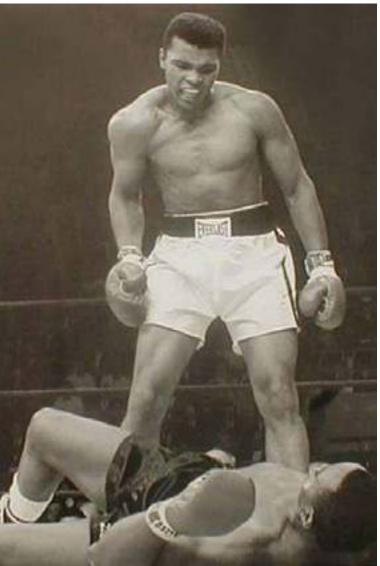
Meanwhile, as the 1960s grew more tumultuous, Ali's impact upon American society was growing, and he became a lightning rod for dissent. Ali's message of black pride and black resistance to white domination was on the cutting edge of the civil rights movement. Having refused induction into the U.S. Army, he also stood for the proposition that "unless you have a very good reason to kill, war is wrong." As black activist Julian Bond later observed, "When a figure as heroic and beloved as Muhammad Ali stood up and said, 'No, I won't go,' it reverberated through the whole society.

In October 1970, Ali was allowed to return to boxing, but his skills had eroded. The legs that had allowed him to "dance" for 15 rounds without stopping no longer carried him as surely around the ring. His reflexes, while still superb, were no longer as fast as they had once been. Ali prevailed in his first two comeback fights, against Jerry Quarry and Oscar Bonavena. Then, on March 8, 1971, he challenged Joe Frazier, who had become heavyweight champion during Ali's absence from the ring. It was a fight of historic proportions, billed as the "Fight of the Century." Frazier won a unanimous 15round decision.

Following his loss to Frazier, Ali won 10 fights in a row, 8 of them against world-class opponents. Then, on March 31, 1973, a little-known fighter named Ken Norton broke Ali's jaw in the second round en route to a 12-round upset decision. Ali defeated Norton in a rematch. After that, he fought Joe Frazier a second time and won a unanimous 12round decision. From a technical point of view, the second Ali-Frazier bout was probably Ali's best performance in the ring after his exile from boxing.

On Oct. 30, 1974, Ali challenged George Foreman, who had dethroned Frazier in 1973 to become heavyweight champion of the world. The bout (which Ali referred to as the "Rumble in the Jungle") took place in the unlikely location of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Ali was received by the people of Zaire as a conquering hero, and he did his part by knocking out Foreman in the eighth round to regain the heavyweight title. It was in this fight that Ali employed a strategy once used by former boxing great Archie Moore. Moore called the maneuver "the turtle" but Ali called it "rope-a-dope." The strategy was that, instead of moving around the ring, Ali chose to fight for extended periods of time leaning back into the ropes in order to avoid many of Foreman's heaviest

Over the next 30 months, at the peak of his popularity as champion, Ali fought nine times in bouts that showed him to be a courageous fighter but a fighter on the decline. The most notable of these bouts occurred on Oct. 1, 1975, when Ali and Joe Frazier met in the Philippines, 6 miles (9.5 km) outside Manila, to do battle for the third time. In what is regarded by many as the greatest prizefight of all time (the



"Thrilla in Manila"), Ali was declared the victor when Frazier's corner called a halt to the bout after 14 brutal rounds.

The final performances of Ali's ring career were sad to behold. In 1978 he lost his title to Leon Spinks, a novice boxer with an Olympic gold medal but only seven professional fights to his credit. Seven months later, Ali regained the championship with a 15-round victory over Spinks. Then he retired from boxing, but two years later he made an illadvised comeback and suffered a horrible beating at the hands of Larry Holmes in a bout that was stopped after 11 rounds. The final ring contest of Ali's career was a loss by decision to Trevor Berbick in 1981.

Ali's place in boxing history as one of the greatest fighters ever is secure. His final record of 56 wins and 5 losses with 37 knockouts has been matched by others, but the quality of his opponents and the manner in which he dominated during his prime place him on a plateau with boxing's immortals. Ali's most tangible ring assets were speed, superb footwork, and the ability to take a punch. But perhaps more important, he had courage and all the other intangibles that go into making a great fighter.

Ali's later years have been marked by physical decline. Damage to his brain caused by blows to the head have resulted in slurred speech, slowed movement, and other symptoms of Parkinson syndrome. However, his

condition differs from chronic encephalopathy, or dementia pugilistica (which is commonly referred to as "punch drunk" in fighters), in that he does not suffer from injury-induced intellectual deficits.

Ali's religious views have also evolved over time. In the mid-1970s, he began to study the Qur'an seriously and turned to Orthodox Islam. His earlier adherence to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad (e.g., that white people are "devils" and there is no heaven or hell) were replaced by a spiritual embrace of all people and preparation for his own afterlife. In 1984 Ali spoke out publicly against the separatist doctrine of Louis Farrakhan, declaring, "What he teaches is not at all what we believe in. He represents the time of our struggle in the dark and a time of confusion in us, and we don't want to be associated with that at all."

Ali married his fourth wife, Lonnie (née Yolanda Williams) in 1986. He has nine children, most of whom have chosen to avoid the spotlight of which Ali was so fond. One of his daughters, however, Laila Ali, is pursuing a career as a professional boxer. While her skills are limited, she has benefited from the fact that the Ali name is still financially viable.

In 1996 Ali was chosen to light the Olympic flame at the start of the 24th Olympiad in Atlanta, Ga. The outpouring of goodwill that accompanied his appearance confirmed his status as one of the most beloved athletes in the world.

Planning for Business Succession

Maximize the success of your business, to day and in the future, with proper succession planning

If you're self employed or the owner of a business, planning for business succession can be like writing a Will - you know it needs to be done, but you don't really want to do it.

However, like a Will, you've got to get it done before it's too late. Leaving business succession to chance could allow someone else to decide what happens to your business, and potentially at significant cost. Here are some of the issues you need to consider when planning for the future of your business.

Personal needs first

If your business is your primary asset and main source of income, it's critical to take care of immediate, day-to-day planning issues first.

On the personal side, you need adequate life and disability insurance to make sure you and your family can sustain your current lifestyle in the event of illness or death.

You also need a personal financial plan that addresses your savings and cash flow needs. Will you have enough to pay for current expenses, such as your children's education, and still be able to buy that cottage or take that trip you've been thinking about?

With your personal affairs in order, it's time to look at your business needs.

Taking care of business

It's tempting to wait until retirement is near to start making succession plans for your business, but there can be substantial savings when you plan further about

According to Todd Herzog, Managing Director, Financial & Estate Planning Group at Scotia bank," Business owners need insurance to protect their business property, but that's only part of the story. What if their business can't function

because of the loss of a key employee or some other unexpected interruption? And what happens when the business owner eventually passes away? Insurance can provide ways to plan in advance for these situations."

Your business succession plan is something that should be reviewed on a regular basis or whenever there is a major event such as a birth, marriage, illness or death, family member entering the business, or even a relevant change in tax legislation.

Here are some additional issues that you should consider:

Is everyone on the same page?

Many of the disputes that lead to business and family breakups come about due to a lack of TM Trademark used under authorization and control of The Bank of Nova Scotia. ScotiaMcLeod is a division of Scotia Capital Inc., Member CIPE communication. For example, if you plan to pass your business on to family members, have they expressed a clear interest? Surprisingly, this is a common area of miscommunication.

Who will run the business when you're no longer doing so?

Is your family prepared to inherit the business, or do they need training? Don't forget - ownership and management are two different things. You may be able to handle both, but your family members may be better off retaining ownership only and leaving business management to others.

Is selling the business a better alterna-

Selling your business can create immediate value and also avoid family disputes. Have you fully considered this option? Don't let emotions get in the way of making a sound business decision

Are there other ways to unlock the value in your company?

Has your business been valuated? Are you aware of the potential tax cost of selling it? You have choices when it comes to maximizing your company's value and minimizing tax, such as financing, life insurancestrategies, and special corporate structures.

Is your business succession plan part of your personal financial plan?

Your personal and business plans are closely linked. For example, you may be able to enhance your retirement income using a Retirement Compensation Arrangement (RCAs) or Individual Pension Plan (IPPs). These options can be integrated with your personal finances to create a superior overall retirement plan.

Does your Will reflect your business succession plan?

Is your Will up to date? If it conflicts with your business succession plan, there could be consequences such as higher taxes, a forced business sale, or even litigation. Setting up trusts and executing multiple Wills are two ways to minimize these risks, and potentially reduce taxes and probate fees on your estate.

Do It Now

Proper business succession planning can help you maximize the success of your business both today and in the future. It can also protect you and your heirs against losses from unexpected illness, death, and taxation. Considered all at once, business succession planning can seem overwhelming. However, a Scotia McLeod advisor has the knowledge, resources, and team of experts to help you take it one step at a time. The best time to take that first step is now.

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Cheque displayed at the event



Imtiaz Seyid of RBC talking to a representative of the Heart & Stroke Foundation



Dr. Arya Sharma, Shafeq Ebrahim and Imtiaz Seyid of RBC



Shafeq Ebrahim of RBC giving an interview to TamilOne TV

Tamil Mirror's Annual Gala Nite - 2008

Pictures taken on Sunday, April 20th, 2008, at J & J Swagat Convention Centre



Mr. Pon Kulendran receives award from Mr. Derek Lee, MP, Scarborough-Rouge River & Ms. Karen Parker, a renowned Human Rights and Humanitarian (armed conflict) Lawyer.



Karen Parker being honoured by Mrs. Sritharan, Mr. Nathan Sritharan, Barrister and Solicitor & Publisher Charles Devasagayam.



Mr.V.S.Thurairajah,President Tamil Eelam Society and Karen Parker preenting an Award



Jim Karygiannis, MP, Scarborough-Agincourt, Derek Lee, MP, Scarborough-Rouge River and other VIP's



Mr. Vigneswaran receives award from Karen Parker. Charles Devasagayam on right.



Charles Devasagayam delivering his



Mr. Fred Balasingam receives award from Karen Parker.



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Monsoon Features

New Immigrants Bring New Blood and New Energy to Canada

by Samy Appadurai Part One

I had just spent my vacation in a sub-tropical paradise and returned to Toronto's freezing weather. Even more than the warm welcome my family gave me, a pile of bills warmly welcomed me with the additional expectation of a spontaneous response. The accumulated bills scared me because my holiday expenses had gone way beyond my budget. I had to tighten my belt. I paid all the bills and was left with just a few dollars with which to go shopping. So, I made my way to a well-known store where things are truly inexpensive. As I was leaving, at closing time, one of the employees, who had finished her work for the day, was kind enough to help me carry my purchases to the car. In return I offered her a lift. Her home, she told me in response to my enquiry, was not far from mine.

While we were chatting, I noticed a wave of anxiety and disappointment on her face. I was aware that the lady was a new immigrant to Canada. I asked her, "How long you have been in this country?" She told me she had arrived two years ago, under the independent class provision, in the skilled worker category. She further told me that she had been a doctor and her husband an engineer in their country of origin.

I knew that most skilled newcomers, like this lady, had completed post-secondary education of some kind and that a large percentage of them were highly qualified professionals. In their home countries they had held high, responsible positions, and had enjoyed many long years of success, along with its accompanying high status, in society. Simply put, back home they were the cream of the crop, and I could see that the lady I was driving was a highly refined, educated individual.

I have met several such people in Toronto. .Their overall expectations have not been realized, and the truth is that their life in Canada, at its initial stage, is a very bitter pill to swallow. Highly skilled immigrants arrive on our shores full of sweet dreams that they will fit easily to our system and that a better life will be theirs

almost instantly. Unfortunately, however, when they turn on the tap, it is only well treated, healthful fresh water that flows out, not milk and honey. (That being said, to many the sweet, fresh water is a blessing they never had back home, and they are most grateful

I told the lady about the experiences of those like her whom I have been privileged to meet. Canada, I told her, is a miniature world where immigrants and refugees from more than 170 countries have come together, with their many talents, to further build up our great nation. When she expressed her frustration at not having her qualifications recognized, this is what I told her: If Canada directly accommodates every immigrant in his or her field of specialization without having uniformity in terms of recognizing their training, professional qualifications will be of an uncertain quality, and disaster-social, professional and economic-will follow. Therefore, I said, for the best interest of the nation and for the newcomers, the hardships they face notwithstanding, a certain amount of training and updating of qualifications, to assure professional excellence and uniformity, are essential. Although, of course, I sympathized with her, I said, there should be no exceptions to this policy.

As my car reached this lady's apartment building and we said our good-byes, I encouraged her as best I could to follow her dream of qualifying to work as a doctor here. I will not forget this lady, who is willing to do work way below her professional level to gain a foothold in Toronto with a view to practising her true profession later on. She is a fine example to other new immigrants, and, indeed, to us all.

Migration, of course, is not a new phenomenon. From very early on, people did not stay in one place, but were, in fact, wanderers. It is now widely accepted that Canada's First Nations' peoples, too, migrated here from Mongolia in pre-historic times across a land bridge that no cies, every individual, irrespective longer exists. Archaeological of his social status, education, findings indicate that, even after race, religion, economic strength arriving on these shores, they or other social norms, is highly

migrated from place to place. Only after they began to cultivate the land did they begin to establish settlements.

Subsequent global migration has been caused by continental drift, climate change, and by natural calamities such as drought, flood, volcanic eruption and tidalwave. Man-made factors have also contributed to mass migration: war, trade, exploration, and colonization, among many other factors. In today's global village, migration on a large scale is inevitable.

From a historical perspective, those who have populated this country, along with their descendants, can be categorized into twelve separate groups: (1) First Nations' peoples (who, as stated above, are thought to have come to Canada from northern Asia) (2) slaves (3) indentured servants (4) traders (5) warriors (6) contract workers (7) refugees (8) through marriage (9) skilled workers (10) investors (11) those born here and (12) family-class sponsorship.

The international growth of human resources and the means of their distribution are undergoing a period of dramatic change. In many instances, migration is linked with economic disparity and population imbalance. Population growth in most of the developed world remains stable or is declining, while, in the developing world, the population continues to grow. That being said, certain governments, such as that in Uganda, where the birth rate is very high, have introduced initiatives to help slow population growth. China's one-child policy is likewise an attempt to control the numbers of people being born there, and is a statistical, if not social, success.

Overall, the world's population continues to increase rapidly, while people's needs have, more and more, become the focal point of policy making on the part of governments and their handmaidens, the economists and statisticians. For the first time in the history of the world, particularly in those countries that are democra-



valued and respected-in principle, if not always in practice.

The effects of the Industrial Revolution that took place in Great Britain a couple of centuries ago reverberated all around the world. Indeed, the technological advancement that followed in its wake began the journey towards the development of the global vilthat exists today. Industrialized economies turned national, closed economies wide open and paved the way for greater individual and social interdependency, especially in economic terms, than had ever been known before. No country in the world today-whether a market economy or a centrally planned economy-could exist in a vacuum without interacting with the rest of the world.

Largely on account of this international connectivity, the demand and supply for human resources has been shifting geographically and growing exponentially in First World and Second World countries. Supply is based on an increase in population and the local demand for outstanding human capital to fill the need.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that population growth has four main stages. In the initial stage, in less developed countries, the inferior development of the economic and other sectors contributes to high birth rates and infant mortality. In the absence of a developed manufacturing sector, agriculture and trade are the mainstays of the economy. In such economies, no significant industrial framework exists to hire significant numbers of workers, so most people remain poor.

In the second stage, higher standards of living, mass education and improved health facilities cause the death rate to decline faster than the birth rate. As a result, the gap between the two becomes wider. It is predicted that, within the next twenty years, the population of India will outstrip that of China. Meanwhile, Canada's birth and death rates remain relatively equal, although both have declined significantly in recent years.

In Canada today-indeed, everywhere, in principle if not in fact-children should not be considered liabilities; they are our resources of tomorrow. They are certainly dependents now, and the tax system necessarily devotes a high percentage of a nation's wealth to them. As stated, a great deal of the money and other resources we devote to children is an investment. Nevertheless, it is very hard for a developing nation to invest as much money as is needed in children's health and education; therefore, in many of those places, children are tragically viewed as liabilities. It is interesting to note that, in Canada, the decline in the birth rate has reduced our current investment in children, and that this has had negative connotations in terms of our economy.

On the other hand, the so called baby-boomers now account for more than twelve per cent of Canada's population. This number is unusually high for a specific age cohort. As the baby-boomers retire, they, too, as senior citizens, become dependants of a different sort. Whether we like it

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Monsoon Features

or not, our increasing expenditure on seniors is the moral obligation of every society.

In the third stage of development, the standard of living has improved drastically. Many things that were once considered luxuries have become essentials. The desire for a good education is now viewed, by most people in Canada, as a need, not a "want." Whether or not to educate one's children is not longer an option. Child labour, of course, is illegal here. Education is considered a basic right of a child, and providing it is the responsibility of the state. Yet, on account of the exponential rise in the cost of living, providing children with what they need has become incredibly expensive. As well, modernization has brought about many avenues for entertainment, a concept that holds little or no value in most of the Third World. The very concept of entertainment is foreign to millions of people globally while it is taken for granted here.

At the beginning of the last stage of development, both birth rates and death rates slow down. At the latter part of this stage, at some point the death rate supersedes the birth rate, and several industrialized countries are moving towards this. If Canada were to close its doors to immigrants, in approximately two hundred years not a single person would be living in this country.

Clearly, Canada has entered the early part of the last stage. This country can no longer depend solely on natural population growth on the part of those who live here now. Whether one likes it or not, Canada needs a constant influx of new immigrants both to keep up the birth rate and to ensure this country's economic

During the last election, our prime minister, the Right

Honourable Steven Harper, insisted that there be increased protection of our northern border. Before he brought this issue to light, many Canadians did not realize its importance. However, when Russia and the United States began to focus on the oil, diamonds and other minerals in the Far North, we came to see the need for the defense of our northern regions and for maintaining the integrity of our sovereignty there. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for bringing this matter forth as an issue of great public

In view of the increasing importance of the Canada's Far North and the need for skilled labour all across our nation, we need more people. As was noted earlier, Canada's present birth rate does not produce enough people to do all the work that needs to be done, the improvements in technology notwithstanding. We need a constant flow of immigrants. Here the question arises: Who gets the most benefit? The sending country or the receiving country? Sending countries invest heavily in their people, but before they can recoup this investment, their people leave. On the other hand, the receiving country reaps the benefits of the investment of the sending country without much, if any, investment. Most newcomers to Canada, it should be noted, are between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five, and are highly skilled, educated people.

Are these immigrants invited here for purely economic reasons, or are there other reasons as well? Many factors are involved when it comes to deciding whom Canada will accept. As is well known, the reunification of families is considered a priority here for humanitarian reasons. As is also well known, Canada's multicultural policy remains in full force. Indeed, it can be said that Canada's immigration policy is multi-dimensional.

In the era of the early European settlers, around five hundred years ago, the door was open mainly to the British and the French. They settled, of course, primarily in what is now Ontario and Quebec, although settlement in Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces began around the same time. Most of Canada west of Ontario was virgin land, and more people were needed to settle the western regions and convert the forests into arable land. Eventually the decline in migration from Britain and France led to a need for immigrants from other places, and at this time the immigration door was opened to those from Eastern and Southern Europe. This is how Canada's west was built.

The influx or slowdown of the arrival of newcomers is determined by two opposite forcespush and pull forces. Whenever there is a famine, a population explosion, a natural calamity, armed conflict and so on in the sending country, the push force will send more migrants to other parts of the world. At the same time, when the receiving country is economically strong, with a high standard of living and offering great opportunity for education and employment, those are considered pull factors. These, coupled with a slowdown in the natural growth of population and a high demand for manpower, pull many migrants from Third World to First World countries. Quite often, both push and pull factors are at work.

In addition to the reasons discussed above, other issues also contribute to the push/pull factors come into play. Governmental policies, issues pertaining to cultural preservation, ethnic tensions, language, religion, etc., all have a profound influence as to whether people leave or stay in their home coun-

Canadian's immigration policy has been carefully designed. At specific times in the past the government was concerned that Canadian values not be tampered with or altered by the arrival of a large number of people from specific ethnic or religious groups. At other times governmental policies towards new immigrants may have been superficially warm, but there was sometimes a hidden agenda behind bringing them

Canada's immigration policy before 1978 was explicitly biased against Asians and other minorities. For example, the Canadian Immigration Act of 1910 expressed an overt bias against certain groups, and it empowered Cabinet to prohibit the admission of immigrants on racial grounds. Although the wording of the Act was changed several times, its provisions remained intact until 1978. In fact, in 1919, Cabinet had the power to bar from Canada any immigrant from any race on the grounds that members of a given race were undesirable. Part of the Act read as fol-

"Owing to their peculiar customs, habits modes of life and methods of holding property, and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated ... "

The Act affected Germans, Austrians, Hungarians and Bulgarians by the Order in Council of March 14, 1919. Asians, too, were denied free entry into Canada from 1923 until 1956, with the exception of farm laborers, domestic workers and spouses of Canadian citizens. A Head Tax was levied on Chinese immigrants.Under the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, Chinese who wished to settle in Canada had to pay a Head Tax of \$50. In 1900 this was increased to \$100, and, in 1903, it was again raised to the huge sum of \$500. Great honour and respect go to our prime minister, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, for apologizing for the Head Tax imposed by his long-ago predecessors and for extending compensation to those affected by this racist policy.

The Immigration Act of 1978 brought true democracy to Canada's immigration process and removed the discrimination inherent in the previous Act. Today's Canada is a role model and an example for the entire world. Canada is the only country that accepts newcomers regardless of whether they are from the independent class, family class sponsored class or refugees; all are received in the same manner. Canada extends its hand to eligible newcomers with a broad smile and a warm welcoming package. On the other hand, many other countries are hesitant to accept refugees, as defined by the Geneva Convention, and take them in only with the proviso that they will return to their home countries once the situation improves there. In certain countries, even refugees' children and grandchildren who were born in the country are not granted citizenship.

As we have seen, therefore, Canada is a country built by immigrants and refugees. Their contribution to our economy and our cultural and social life has proved invaluable. All of us are the richer for their presence.

... More in next issue

Tamil IPTV - A New Fully Licensed Tamil TV Service to be Launched

named Tamil IPTV is to be launched on June 1/08 by a young team of hi tech professionals. This new technology will be an ideal media to watch many South Indian based live TV stations and also listen to Tamil radio stations. The most popular Tamil TV dramas, the best Tamil movies, the latest news and entertainment, your favorite Tamil actors and actresses, the latest Tamil music videos, historical films, documentaries, etc, could all be seen via this new service. Live television channels such as Raj Tv, Raj Digital Plus, Raj Musix, Jaya Tv, Jaya Max, Jaya Plus and

time on the day of the launch, according to Ruban Selvarajah, a spokesperson for Tamil IPTV.

Tamil IPTV is the only source to get exclusive live television

Broad casting and on demand movies from India delivered exclusively to your TV set over the

When our correspondent asked Ruban about details, he further stated that this service has been tested and they are waiting for specially designed set-topboxes to arrive as they are expecting a high volume of demand once they launch. End

A new Tamil TV Service Makkal TV will be aired in EST users no longer need to worry about installing a dish and pointing. Using this technology one can reach audiences anywhere on the

> The service will be more benefitting to those living in condos and apartments. The set-top-box will be available with a \$150 secure deposit and channel packages are as low as \$14.99 per month. Customers are advised that they must have hi-speed internet connections to make this

> > For more information contact: Tel: 416-628-8405 www.tamiliptv.tv

The Scarborough Hospital Foundation celebrates Fifties fun and fashion at The Grease Ball

It was an era of leather jackets, poodle skirts, classic cars and the roots of rock 'n' roll. And whether you lived through the 1950s or not, it was a time that has captured our imaginations in movies, music, stage and television for the past half century.

This Saturday, The Scarborough Hospital Foundation is saluting the best of the '50s at The Grease Ball, a gala fundraiser that will take a fond look back at the decade that changed pop culture forever.

Guests at the Grease Ball will enjoy dinner and dancing, a Live and Silent Auction and a special performance of Grease by staff and physicians from The Scarborough Hospital. Additional entertainment features Bobby Motto Magic and the music of Le DJ.

This year's Master of Ceremonies is Bill Hutchison, co-anchor of the late night CTV Newscast.

WHEN: Saturday, May 10, 2008. Guests begin arriving for cocktails at 6:00 p.m., dinner is served at 7:15 p.m. and the live performance is scheduled for 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: The Carlu Dinner Theatre, 444 Yonge St., Toronto.

WHAT: Media are invited to attend for photo opportunities including the live performance, Silent Auction and cocktail reception.

CONTACT: For more information, please contact:

Anne Marie Males

Director, Public Affairs and Community Relations

The Scarborough Hospital (416) 438-2911 ext. 6790 Cell: (416) 930-8265 E-mail: amales@tsh.to

Monsoon Features

M - O - T - H - E - R

Raymond Rajabalan

"M" is for the Million things she gave me, "O" means Only that she's growing old, "T" is for the Tears she shed to save me, "H" is for her Heart of gold, "E" is for her Eyes with love-light shining in them, "R" means Right, and right she'll always be.

Put them all together, they spell "MOTHER" a word that means the world to me.

For those of you who are lucky to be still blessed with your Mom's presence on Earth, the story below is beautiful. For those who aren't so blessed, this is even more beautiful.

Mothers very often try to hide their sorrow and pain in order to make sacrifices to bring up their children under trying circumstances. In the process they often resort to telling various 'lies', which actually various form of her sacrifice.

The story below, written by an unknown author illustrates this very beauitifully.

EIGHT LIES OF A MOTHER

 \cdot The story begins when I was a child: I was born poor.

Often we hadn't enough to eat. Whenever we had some food, Mother often gave me her portion of rice. While she was transferring her rice into my bowl, she would say "Eat this rice, son! I'm not hungry."

This was Mother's First Lie.

· As I grew, Mother gave up her spare time to fish in a river near our house. She hoped that from the fish she caught, she could give me a little bit more nutritious food for my growth. Once she had caught just two fish, she would make fish soup. While I was eating the soup, mother would sit beside me and eat what was still left on the bone of the fish I had eaten; My heart was touched when I saw it. Once I gave the other fish to her on my chopstick but she immediately refused it and said, "Eat this fish, son! I don't really like fish."

This was Mother's Second Lie.

· Then, in order to fund my education, Mother went to a Match Factory to bring home some used matchboxes which she filled with fresh matchsticks. This helped her get some money to cover our needs. One wintry night

I awoke to find Mother filling the matchboxes by candlelight. So I said, "Mother, go to sleep; it's late: you can continue working tomorrow morning." Mother smiled and said "Go to sleep, son! I'm not tired."

This was Mother's Third Lie

· When I had to sit my Final Examination, Mother accompanied me. After dawn, Mother waited for me for hours in the heat of the sun. When the bell rang, I ran to meet her. Mother embraced me and poured me a glass of tea that she had prepared in a thermos flask. The tea was not as strong as my Mother's love, Seeing Mother covered with perspiration; I at once gave her my glass and asked her to drink too. Mother said "Drink, son! I'm not thirsty!

This was Mother's Fourth Lie.

· After Father's death, Mother had to play the role of a single parent. She held on to her former job; she had to fund our needs alone. Our family's life was more complicated. We suffered from starvation. Seeing our family's condition worsening, my kind Uncle who lived near my house came to help us solve our problems big and small. Our other neighbors saw that we were poverty stricken so they often



advised my mother to marry again. But Mother refused to remarry saying "I don't need love."

This was Mother's Fifth Lie.

· After I finished my studies and got a job, it was time for my old Mother to retire but she carried on going to the market every morning just to sell a few vegetables. I kept sending her money but she was steadfast and even sent the money back to me. She said, "I have enough money."

That was Mother's Sixth Lie.

· I continued my part-time studies for my Master's Degree. Funded by the American Corporation for which I worked, I succeeded in my studies. With a big jump in my salary, I decided to bring Mother to enjoy life in America but Mother didn't want to bother her son; she said to me "I'm not used to high living."

That was Mother's Seventh Lie

· In her dotage, Mother was attacked by cancer and had to be hospitalized. Now living far across the ocean, I went home to visit Mother who was bedridden after an operation. Mother tried to smile but I was heartbroken because she was so thin and feeble but Mother said, "Don't cry, son! I'm not in pain."

That was Mother's Eighth Lie.

Telling me this, her eighth lie, she died.

YES, MOTHER WAS AN ANGEL!

European Union's GSP ...

continued from page 29

Impunity on HRV

There have been numerous occasions by Sri Lankan Government officials which simply reject or request to nullify any HRV (Human Rights Violations) issues when a event is take place or/and statement is made by concerned party or outsiders including any international body. British Minister Kim Howell said "The Tamil Tigers are not the only source of violence in Sri Lanka. Civilians in government controlled areas regularly fall victim to brutal attacks by paramilitary groups after acting with apparent impunity."

Contrary to the minister's statement in an interview with the BBC's Hard Talk programme, Central Bank Governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal dismissed the EUs GSP+ trade concession to Sri Lanka as a "subsidy" and went on to downplay the garment industry's dependence on the EU trade concession. His view suggests Sri Lanka cannot be shaken in its human rights violation policy and prepared better to lose the GSP+ benefits. In other words, Sri Lanka's HR violation will continue unabated and it will disregard the expectation of European Union on HRV issues. He does not want to pressurize the government to comply with EU's expectation but expect entire world to adopt impunity on the government

actions.

Trading Partners EU and the US and Expectations on HRV

Sri Lanka's two largest export partners told the country's biggest export industry last week to consider the country's human rights, to increase exports. The US, the single biggest buyer of Sri Lankan goods and the EU, the biggest collective export destination for Sri Lankan goods, told the garment industry that human rights counted towards improving trade. American Ambassador Robert Blake, told garment exporters that Sri Lanka's negative human rights image 'eclipsed' everything else right now. "You will also have to work quietly with our friends in government to urge an improvement in the human rights situation in Sri Lanka,"

The preferential trade scheme will face a review this year that would decide whether Sri Lanka continues to benefit from it. EU ambassador, Julian Wilson, who also attended the same event, said he "loved" Sri Lanka but that the extension of the GSP+ scheme depended on implementing 27 international conventions on human rights, labour rights and environmental standards. In March 2008, visiting EU delegation issued a press release. "...The EU and Sri Lanka share binding commitments under the international conventions that they have signed, especially regarding human rights and international humanitarian law. The EU welcomes the assurances that it has received concerning respect for human rights, which is one of the key principles underpinning all EU-Sri Lanka relations, and an essential element of the EC-Sri Lanka Cooperation Agreement. Nonetheless, the EU continues to harbour very serious concerns about continuing reports of human rights abuses....'. It is also vitally important, however, to create a more favourable environment to allow NGOs, UN and the ICRC to work effectively, without undue criticism.

EU Law Adoption a Misleading Attempt

One of the key international human rights conventions listed under the relevant EU law is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). For the GSP Plus scheme is ratification and full implementation of the ICCPR is important. Sri Lanka acceded to the ICCPR in 1980, and to its First Optional Protocol (which allows individuals to address complaints against violations of rights recognized by the ICCPR directly to the Human Rights Committee in Geneva) in However, the Supreme Court decided in the case of Singarasa v. Attorney General (2006), that while the accession of Sri Lanka to the ICCPR was legal, valid and bound the State at international law, it created no

additional rights for Sri Lankan citizens in the absence of domestic legislation. The Supreme Court also went on to hold that the accession to the First Optional Protocol was invalid and unconstitutional, because in the view of the Court recognizing the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Committee was an unconstitutional alienation of the sovereign judicial power of the people of Sri Lanka. Supreme Court's decision has deprived Sri Lankans of an important avenue of human rights protection. In the case of The Joint Apparel Association Forum and Others v. Sri Lanka Ports Authority and Others (2008)), the Court r decided unions were not entitled to seek redress from an external body while their matter was pending before the Court, even though within Sri Lanka's obligations under the ILO conventions, the right of access to the treaty-body is recognized.

Sri Lanka government passed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Act, No. 56 of 2007 (the ICCPR Act). The title is completely misleading gives the impression that its purpose is to enact the ICCPR into domestic law. This ICCPR Act contains only four main substantive rights. Furthermore, these provisions are formulated in terms substantially and significantly different from the corresponding provisions of the ICCPR. Ratification and full provisions of

the ICCPR and effective implementation are essential to satisfy the requirements.

Impact not only Economy, but also on Life of Tamils

Sri Lanka government has created a situation for having international witnesses are being expelled from Sri Lanka before a massive assault on civilians and to continue their human rights violations on Tamils. Unless international bodies like UNO, EU, IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank etc bring economic, monetary, trade blockades on Sri Lanka urgently, the world will be watching the genocide of the Tamil people, and the emergence of a failed state which would have disastrous consequences for all the people of the country.

big question is whether claims of human rights and labour rights violations could be taken seriously enough by the EU, to disqualify Sri Lanka from the GSP+ scheme. So far, EC did not comment on whether accusations of rights violations would be seen as violations of the international conventions that are the basis of the GSP+ scheme. We do not know as happened in the past aids granted by G7 countries over and over relying on the false promises given by the Sri Lankan government, EC would also fall into the same pit of peril. If that happens, it would be an indirect ratification for ethnic cleansing of Tamils in their homeland.

Meditation - a Path towards utter Freedom

Saran Ghai

Most dictionaries suggest the meaning of Meditation as 'thinking about something'. But they do not suggest what that something is! Very often I ask my students during our discussion sessions about that something. They throw so many words in air like worry, tension, stress, depression etc. and add their causes too like family and personal problems, job, love, business, and this and that.....

Some scholars suggest Meditation to be a religious activity and some others find meditation an exercise for calming or relaxing mind. Most Meditation gurus prefer to use both together as a package and give practice to their pupils as an exercise to relax mind by means of repeating name of their respective religious gurumantra which in Hindi is known as 'Smaran', meaning repetition of religious name or mantra in heart. The Meditation gurus advice this sort of exercise keeps our mind focused to one point and the disciples also find it convenient to start with practicing meditation by means of smaran.

To me, after years of study and experience, Meditation means - not thinking at all. It is little difficult to keep the mind empty even for a fraction of moment but believe me, it is an examined and trusted method of meditation. Readers should be aware of the fact that meditation is not a proven science subject yet. Science tests the subject in its own way. May it not be yet a proven science subject but for every reason it is a proven human subject.

Meditation kindles in us the light of fullness and completion. It takes our state of mind from disturbance to tranquility, like heading from war to peace. The biggest painful state of mind is depression. We have thousands of reasons which cause worries and stress. They compel us to keep thinking about getting rid of worries and this perpetual contemplation leads us further towards chronic state of stress and depression. We have uncountable problems surrounding us. We face problems about our own self, our family, our friends, business, job, marriage, love, children and have millions of other reasons to worry about.

Our life is full of tensions and worries and that ultimately drags us towards stress and depression. A month before I received a call from a

lady asking me when she could come to meet me for meditation practice. I said in a couple of weeks a new meditation session will commence and you can come see me next week. You will be astonished from her answer. She said that she is under serious state of depression and needs an immediate relief. She said that she wants to come right now to get relieved from depression by means of meditation. I had no answer except to suggest her that in this state of emergency you don't need a meditation guru but you need to see a doctor who will diagnose your state of health, mental issues and give you suitable medication. It took me about ten minutes to make her understand that meditation is a tested process for mental relieves but is a time taking process. She currently needs immediate medication and not meditation. Finally she understood and agreed to follow my advice and went to visit a doctor. Next day I received a thank you call from her with a promise to join meditation session soon. Reason to mention this conversation is that readers should understand that meditation is not a quick but a permanent remedy for mental stress, tension, and even chronic state of depression. Those who are suffering from any kind of depression must know that they did not reach this worst state in a day or a week, but it took a real accountable time to bring them to that state. By means of meditation they are sure to come out of depression provided they patiently devote time and dedicatedly follow the advice of their meditation guru. Here I would like to add that mere following is not enough, they have to sincerely act upon and keep on working till they successfully come out of their problems. Just hit and try

It will be an awful mistake if we limit prospects of meditation just for stress relief. No, it is far more useful than that. In fact, meditation is a tool which enlightens our mind and opens up the path that leads towards self-consciousness. Relief from depression is just the first station onto the journey towards the state of utter peace of mind. When we are in a state of complete peace of mind, relieved, relaxed surely we want to think about other worldly subjects like religion, relationship, sex, world peace, equal rights, discrimination less society and



want to find out answers of many more such questions.

When we meditate, we engage our mind to contemplate and dig out the facts hidden in and beyond the mysterious world. Besides this above all meditation helps us to know ourselves. It helps us to know who we are, wherefrom we came, where would we go after completing our journey in this world and where is our last abode.

Sometimes pupils ask what is the need to know how did it happen to bring us in this world, where would we go after our death, who we are and many more related questions. They claim every one knows that by means of a natural process between a man and a woman, we incarnated. Since we are living human beings, we are to do what we are supposed to do, complete our journey and finally say good bye. Questions like wherefrom we came and where would we go cause nothing but added tension. So, why worry for a question which will always remain un-answered?

To the disciples asking such questions, my only answer is yes; we need to think about these questions as we are human being. God has given us brain to think and senses to realize why the human race is the best among all the creatures living or had lived in this world. Why and what for this creation came into existence? Who are we and why were we born?

One person can not find answers of all these questions so each one of us has to contemplate to find out — "Who am I?" In the next article we will discuss how meditation is helpful to provide us the answer of the question — "Who am I?"

-Continued

(Readers of "Monsoon Journal" can contact Saran Ghai at (416) 816-5559 or e-mail: goodbyeworries@ yahoo.ca for further information about Meditation Sessions.)



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Monsoon Kids Corner

Color Me Competition - 4

Dead Line for entries: May 25, 2008

Entries have to be made on original paper, photo copies not accepted.

The Winner will be selected and posted in the June issue.

Please mail to:
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Winner for April 2008
Color Me competition-3
Anjana Chandrakumar
SCARBOROUGH

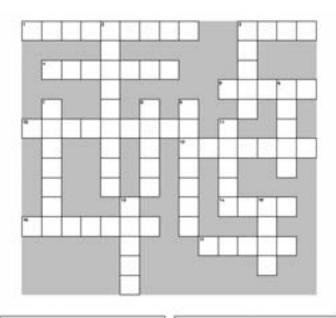
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Husband's in the Bible

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Across
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4. Sarah
5. Michal
10. Naomi
12. Sapphira

14. Ruth

16. Orpah

17. Bathsheba

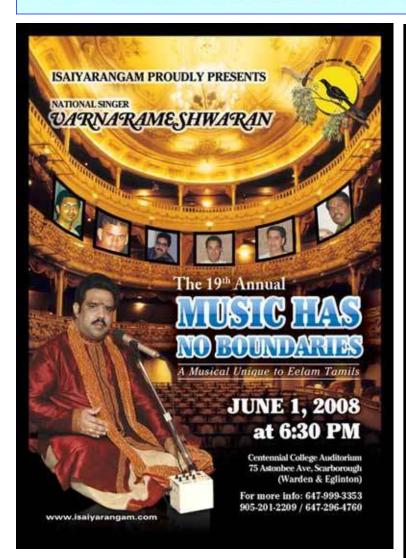
6. Rebekah 7. Hannah 8. Jael 9. Huldah

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Monsoon Events





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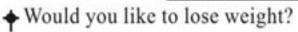
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Reflections"

Book Release Function

A Book titled "Reflections" which is a collection of articles written by the Late Augustine Jeyanathan was released at a function held at Eastown Banquet Hall on 25th April. The Late Jeyanathan was a community activist who actively engaged himself with SACEM and was also a founder member of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce. The panel of Speakers at the function were Peter Crosby from the Family Services Association, Dr. Vasanthakumar -former President of SACEM, Jeyasingh David-President SACEM, Mano Thillainathan-Branch Manager, Scotia Bank, Siva Sivapragasam-Editor. "Monsoon Journal" Newspaper, Stanley Arnold from

Margosa Credit Union and Lawyer Manuel Jesuthasan.

Dr. Vasanthakumar and Mano Thillainathan enlightened the audience on some interesting thoughts spelled out by Mr. Jeyanathan in his Book.

Anandasangaree, President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce who also spoke presented the first copy of "Enterprise" Magazine published by the Chamber for the Awards Gala 2008, to Mrs. Jeyanathan.

Mr. Anton Jeyanathan and Ms. Michelle Albert, speaking on behalf of the Jeyanathan Family, thanked SACEM and Dr. Vasanthakumar for publishing "Reflections" as a memento for the Late Jeyanathan.



CTCC President, Gary Anandasangaree presents the first copy of "Enterprise" Magazine to Mrs.Jeyanathan



Logan Velumailum, Past President CTCC receives a copy of the Book "Reflections" from Mrs.Jeyanathan



making his speech



Peter Crosby from Family Services Association Tamil Eelam Society President Mr. V S Thurairajah receiving

Pictures taken during the South Asian Trade Show held on May 3rd and 4th - Downsview Park



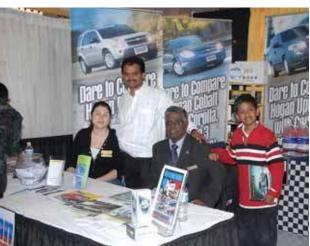












Kollywood Film Review

by Anand. J

Kuruvi

Much was expected on Vijay starrer 'Kuruvi' since it brings back the successful 'Gilli' team. The Vijay, Trisha, Dharani and Vidyasagar quartet oozed abundance energy and 'Gilli' turned out to be a racy entertainer, going on to become a blockbuster.

between Trisha and Vijay deserve a special mention. The bubbly Trisha fits the bill well. Though she has limited scope to perform, unlike 'Gilli', she is right there delivering one of her best. Suman continues from where he left in 'Sivaji'. As a baddie, he performs what one expects of him. The scene stealer is Vivek, who with his usual punch lines walks away with applause.



When they teamed together again, obviously expectations soared to greater heights. Unfortunately, 'Kuruvi' has failed to live up to expectations and the pep and energy in 'Gilli' was sorely missed in 'Kuruvi'.

Dharani, known for rendering right commercial elements in his movie, has handled a wafer-thin storyline. He has tried his best to sustain the momentum, which works out in parts.

Scaling high-rise buildings, bowing down to bullets elegantly, Kuruvi opens with Vijay in his best nonchalant style, sending his fans into raptures. If the same care and hard work that had gone into rendering a weighty build up for Vijay had also been employed in the story department, it would have been a Ghilli-like encore for this team. As it happens, Kuruvi flies short of Ghilli.

All credit to Vijay, who manages to leave his screen presence in his usual self. He fights, romances and tries his hand at comedy. The actor with a mass fan-following has tried to play to the gallery.

The on-screen chemistry

Music composer Vidyasagar's groovy music is good specially the number Darna..., which will rock the front-benchers.

In a nutshell, the movie is about Vetrivel (Vijay), a racer in Chennai, who sets out to free his father Singamuthu (Manivannan) and his peers who are bonded laborers in a mine run by Kocha (Suman) and Konda Reddy (Asutosh).

In the meantime, he also finds time to romance Kocha's sister Devi (Trisha), who falls in love when he comes to her brother's place in Malaysia as part of his mission.

Special pat to producer Udayanidhi Stalin for spending his might to bring grandeur on screen. Dharani, known for his commercially masalas, disappoints those expecting the same from him. It can be enjoyed only in parts

'Kuruvi', a racy thriller loaded with romance and action, is a sure treat for Vijay fans.

If you go to see Kuruvi with lowered expectations, you may end up liking it. But those who are looking for big build-up sequences and large Ghilli-like payoffs - stay away.

Verdict - Kuruvi flies low.

Santosh Subramaniam

Is it possible to give a film without punch lines, Kuthu songs, unbelievable stunts, idiotic sentiments and third rated comedy in these days? Most of the time the answer is negative for this question, but sometimes we get the positive answer like Santosh Subramaniam. Raja, the remake specialist knows how to present a film with maximum clean and admirable way to the family audiences and in the past years he proved the same with 3 good films. Here is yet another clean entertainment from the master of remake.

If all you're looking for a good family movie with fun and amusement, then Santosh Subramaniam might be your right choice. It is a faithful remake of Telugu Bommarilu and you can relate to each and every character (even the locations and costumes), which has a subtle yet important message for parents and a film that could change every youngster's life. The story is simple, but a close read on everyone's psychology with likeable characters and healthy humour.

Santosh (Ravi) is a good and intelligent guy, who always brings under the guidance of his, a strict, disciplined rich Subramanyam (Prakash Raj). He is a sort of dictator who decides everything right from the dress he wears to the way he should behave and talk even how to eat. They all live in a happy joint family with a kind hearted mother (Geetha), daughters, an elder son and his family.

Santosh tolerates everything just for the sake of the family and his father's kind heart. But he wants to get married as per his own wishes. But Subramaniam fixes Santosh's wedding on his own desires. A frustrated Santosh bumps into Hasini (Genelia) a vibrant and innocent girl (and sometimes looks like a crack) daughter of a middle class

employee of a temple (Shayaji Shinde). They soon fall in love and when Subramanyam comes to know about it, Santosh requests him for a stay of Hasini in their house for a week, to prove his choice is right.

Finally, Subramaniam accepts for that and Hasini comes to live in Santosh's house and wins over each and every family member but in a turn of events she leaves his home and how the lovers unite in the end forms the rest of the story very interesting.

First, we must appreciate



standing and does his role perfectly. Genelia steals the show in the role of Hasini. Her spontaneous and innocent performance convinces everyone that no other actress could do the role like Genelia.

The supporting characters like Santhanam, Premji and Sathyan help to maintain the flow smoothly. Devi Sri Prasad is another asset of the film. All his tunes are lilting and foot taping, especially, Adada... adada... steals everyone's heart. The special of the song is that it is rendered by



director M Raja for his right choice of story as well as right artists for the characters. Each and every scene reveals the director's confidence on the script.

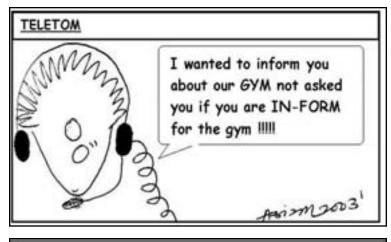
Jayam Ravi has done his best and it seems that the actor has improved a lot in dialogue delivery and dance movements. His mature performance in the climax, where he blasts his father Prakash Raj, and outbursts his frustrations that he was carrying over years is heart touching. As usual Prakash Raj is simply out-

Siddharth, who also did the lead role in the Telugu original. The camera work is outstanding.

There are few minuses in the script but those are very minor and not affect the flow of the story.

Overall, Santosh Subramaniam is a promising entertainer that brings the first word of the title in every viewers mind for long time even after come out from the theatre.

Verdict : Sandhosham.









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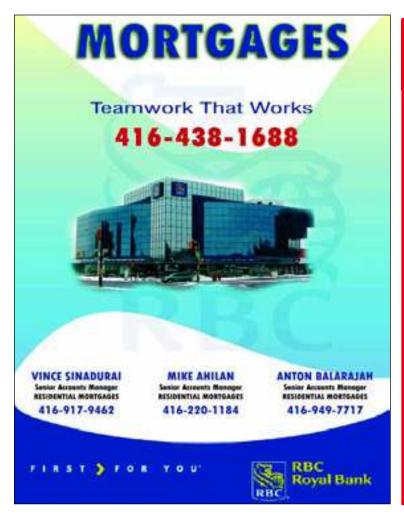




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