



St. Anthony of Padua



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Impact of the federal idea ...



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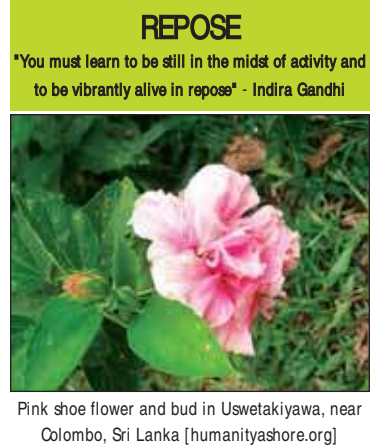
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A parfait media publication  
**Monsoon Journal**  
 VOL 2 ◆ ISSUE 1 ◆ JUNE 2007



REPOSE

"You must learn to be still in the midst of activity and to be vibrantly alive in repose" - Indira Gandhi

Pink shoe flower and bud in Uswetakiyawa, near Colombo, Sri Lanka [humanityashore.org]

## Canadian Conservative Party MP Recommends "Decentralized Federal Model" for Sri Lanka



Pierre Poilievre, M.P. Conservative MP for Nepean-Carleton, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, in a report released recently has, requested the Government of Canada to assist Sri Lanka to move into a decentralized Federal model similar to Canada with autonomy and rights to minorities. The report called for action from the Government of Canada to use its influence to put an end to the tragic fighting, rampant human rights abuses and discrimination in aid distribution throughout Sri Lanka.

Mr Poilievre is urging immediate aid distribution to the displaced fleeing battle areas, and

full audit of Canadian funds contributed to Sri Lanka to ensure that the funds were spent effectively and equitably in reconstruction projects.

"Canada should advocate for, and participate in, an international human rights monitoring mission under the auspices of the UNHCHR. This mission should be completely separate and independent from the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, and should issue public findings," the MP recommends in his report.

Mr Poilievre visited Sri Lanka in the spring of 2005 to view the conditions on the ground, and had met Government officials and members of the civil society.

[TN]

## Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce - A New Land Mark



Kids Town Water Park on a Sunday morning for the four-kilometer Walk. The participants demonstrated a great amount of enthusiasm and encouragement for a worthy cause. Bala welcomed those assembled at the Park after the Walk was completed and thanked the sponsors of the event, the donors of funds, all persons who helped in the collection and those who catered refreshments. Logan Velumailum, President of the Chamber thanked everyone who made the event a success and contributed to the

funding efforts which was for a worthy cause. He made special mention of the youth from the Scarborough Rangers Soccer Club who have been participating actively every year. Representatives from the Scarborough Hospital Foundation, Providence Healthcare Foundation, TD Bank and Scotia Bank also addressed the gathering. The funds raised this year will be disbursed to the Scarborough Hospital Foundation and Providence Healthcare Foundation.

More pictures in page 22

## Hon. Judy Sgro MP for York West raises concern over Sri Lanka situation

Hon. Judy Sgro, Liberal Party MP for York West raised her concerns on Sri Lanka's human rights violations in the Canadian Parliament on June 8th, 2007.

Full text of her statement below:

Mr. Speaker, I continue to hear from my constituents who are very concerned about their family and friends living in Sri Lanka. Increased violence in Sri Lanka has led to people being displaced, and we are hearing about terrible human rights abuses. Recently a UN envoy and Nordic truce monitors have also raised significant concerns about human rights abuses amid renewed civil war. It is time for the Canadian government to step up and take on a leadership role in finding a resolution to this conflict once and for all. Canadians expect their gov-

ernment to take action without delay in light of these atrocities and will accept nothing less. It is essential that we act now to ensure an immediate end to the violence which has cost so many innocent lives.



### Official announcement made known at CTCC Walkathon 2007

The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce will be recognized and made better known in Toronto when one of the Units in the new Emergency and Critical Care Center of the Scarborough Hospital now being built, will bear the name of the Chamber.

This announcement was made known through Ms. Amelia Canto Ellis, President of the Scarborough Hospital Foundation, at the CTCC Walkathon 2007 held at Kids Town Water Park on Sunday June 3rd. This year's Walkathon helped to raise \$ 30,000 bringing the total funds collected so far through the Walkathons for the past few years to over \$ 125,000. Mr. Bala Balasundaram, one of the Directors of the Chamber spearheaded this year's collection efforts and was the Chairperson for the event.

Over 500 persons gathered at

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## India's Economy Expands At Record Rate

By Anjana Pasricha

India's economy grew at a record 9.4 percent last year - its fastest pace in nearly two decades; but growth levels could moderate in the coming year.

The government says the 9.4 percent growth in the fiscal year that ended in March is higher than earlier expectations. It is also the fastest growth since 1989, and was fueled by robust growth in manufacturing, exports, and the services sector.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram says growth rates of over eight percent for a fifth straight year show that the time has come to "shed skepticism about the sustainability of high growth" in India.

Independent analysts agree, and say the economy is expected to maintain strong growth over the next five to six years.

Economist D.K. Joshi says high domestic demand in recent years has fueled investment in sectors ranging from cement and steel to automobiles and telecommunications.

"With the demand being so high, the existing capacity was not able to service the demand, so a lot of investments were taking place," said Joshi. "So now

investment has become the driver of growth."

However, economists say the coming year could see a slight dip in growth rates as banks stop extending low-cost loans to consumers in a bid to cool the economy.

They also point out that India is unlikely to be able to match the more than ten percent growth that has been taking place in the world's other big economy - China.

Economist Joshi says India's full potential is being held back by the country's grossly inadequate infrastructure.

"I think moving from the current rates of growth to over ten percent, that will be a challenge," he said. "If your electricity is priced higher and is unreliable, if your ports are congested, that can actually slow down our growth momentum, that is the immediate concern."

But overall, optimism remains high. And that is being reflected in the country's stock markets, which traded at some of their highest levels after the latest growth numbers were released recently.

[VOA]

## Despite record cereal crop this year, some countries will struggle – UN agency

Although global cereal production is expected to reach record levels this year, at least 33 countries are forecast to face serious difficulties, largely because of conflict, economic struggles or bad weather, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported recently.

The latest issue of the FAO Crop Prospects and Food Situation report, released at the agency's headquarters in Rome, found that cereal production is on track to reach 2,095 million tons, a jump of 4.8 per cent on the figures from last year. The bulk of the increase is tipped to be in maize production.

Demand and prices are on the rise, according to the report, driven by the fast-growing biofuels industry and by stocks hitting their lowest level in more than 20 years.

FAO warned that this could hurt some States classified as low-income food deficit countries, which will now face higher bills for the import of cereals. Several of these nations, include Morocco and Zimbabwe, are also expecting reduced harvests this year.

Emergency assistance will be needed in 33 countries, the report predicts, with the majority of the affected nations in Africa. Millions of Zimbabweans are expected to

face food shortages as the country's economic crisis deepens and inflation continues to skyrocket, while the recent flare-up of conflict in southern Somalia has led to so much displacement that crop production is almost certain to drop sharply around the capital Mogadishu.

Outside Africa, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a cause for concern, with economic constraints and floods jeopardizing the food supply situation for millions of people. A combination of drought and floods in Bolivia during the main cropping season has left large numbers of vulnerable farmers in the Andean nation as well.

The "countries in crisis requiring external assistance" are: Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, the DPRK, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Bolivia.

[UN]

## Critics Say Cambodia Oil Revenues May Curse Rather Than Benefit

By Rory Byrne

Revenues from large deposits of oil and gas discovered in Cambodia's territorial waters are expected to start flowing by the year 2010. The government says the funds will be used to pay for much-needed infrastructure projects and to cut borrowing. But some critics are warning that oil money could fuel corruption and undermine economic development rather than benefit the country.

The exact amount of oil and gas lying off Cambodia's southern coast is still being assessed, but it is substantial. Last month, a Chinese exploration company announced it has found about 230 million barrels of oil plus half a trillion cubic feet of natural gas in just one of Cambodia's six exploration blocks. Other Asian companies and the U.S. oil giant Chevron are also exploring.

The oil could mean millions, and perhaps billions, of dollars for Cambodia's small economy each year. The government says the money will go into the central budget for development projects, to pay civil servants and to cut state borrowing.

But some development experts say there is a danger that Cambodia could be dragged deeper into poverty and corruption by what some call the oil curse.

Corruption is already widespread in Cambodia, and revenues from other state-owned natural resources including timber and precious stones have gone into private pockets. Ek Siden is the Development Issues Program Coordinator for the NGO Forum on Cambodia, representing more than 70 international and Cambodian non-governmental organizations.

"The institutions in Cambodia is very weak, and power is centralized - just only with one-man-show - and we are afraid that the government will use that budget in another way, not to serve the country and not [to] benefit the society as a whole, it will benefit only a few elites," said Siden.

Economists warn that if handled improperly, oil revenues can fuel corruption and contribute to inflation, which could mean key industries like garment manufacturing lose their competitive edge, pushing up joblessness and poverty.



Cambodia Roadside Village petrol Stand - Photo Credit: Natala Menezes

John Nelmes, the resident representative of the International Monetary Fund in Cambodia, says an overhaul of the country's financial management systems will be required.

"I think there are big challenges, there's a lot of work to be done. One of the keys is that they have to put in place strong macro-economic management, that means budgetary policy that is sound and that directs money towards productive uses," said Nelmes. "Another key is to ensure that inflation remains low and that the economy remains competitive."

Human rights groups fear an oil-rich government may ignore the needs of the public and give in to authoritarian tendencies. Ek Siden of the NGO Forum says economic disparities could lead to social unrest and political instability.

"The government may spend a large amount on the military in order to keep just one-man-show, or keep just in the power, so that is the problem," said Siden. "It's also when there's no transparency of management of the revenue, it also become a conflict in the society"

U.S. Ambassador Joseph M. M. Mussumeli says at this stage, it is unclear what the oil revenue will mean for Cambodia.

"I think it's too early to say whether the oil is going to be a curse or a blessing. The good news is that the Cambodian government is well aware that it could be a curse. And just having that knowledge, being aware of what has happened in other countries, may be enough to forestall it here," said Mussumeli. "We are certainly talking to the govern-

ment, lots of other countries are also offering assistance and guidance. But what it will take ultimately is political will and the political realization that the oil could really destroy this country."

To prevent that from happening, the government says that all oil revenue will be channeled through the central budget where it will be used to cut state borrowing, to pay for projects like roads and irrigation and to pay civil servants salaries. Sok Saravuth is the Director of Cambodia's Budget Department. He says that the money will be invested to improve the economy.

"A big lot of investment is needed to push the economy. Only about 5 to 10 percent of the investment required can be afforded by the national revenue. On the order of 80 to 90 percent is funded by grants or loans therefore I don't think we have to worry much that the government has no clear plan or that the money will not [be] used wisely," said Saravuth. "The prime minister has already agreed and decided that this oil revenue will be put into the budget."

Some human rights groups are warning that Cambodia may already be on the wrong path. They say there has been little transparency over the awarding of oil exploration contracts and criticize the authorities for not releasing information on the sums of money that oil companies have already paid.

With two or three years to go before the real oil money begins to flow, most agree that there is much work to be done to ensure that oil money is a blessing for Cambodia and not a curse.

[VOA]

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## From the Publisher's Desk ...

# Unanimous voice of the International Community curtailed the eviction of Tamils from Colombo

The worsening humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka took a 'disgusting' turn when the authorities expelled hundreds of citizens of Tamil origin from capital Colombo, on June 7th, 2007.

As Sri Lanka has descended into full-fledged civil war over the past year, there has been numerous abductions, extrajudicial killings, mounting human rights abuses and threat to media. Security forces and their allied paramilitary groups have been blamed for some of the abuses. But the 'evictions' in capital Colombo swiftly drew condemnation from all around the world in an unprecedented manner, as a conduct of the 'Government of Sri Lanka,' that needs to be rethought by the authorities.

Many of those who experienced this inhumane ordeal are still uncertain about what the future holds.

The Associated Press reported of a 65 year old mother, who is in Colombo now after going through this torment. She is in the capital awaiting migration documents from Canada to reunite with her

son. She has mentioned in the news report as how she knelt before the four policemen at her bedroom door, touching their feet and asking for mercy in vain. She says many in her situation are still terrified and as what will happen next.

Yet, this is not the first time Tamil citizens have faced 'eviction' at the hands of the Sri Lankan Government's security forces.

Tamil villagers, particularly in the East of Sri Lanka such as Sampur and Vakarai who were farmers and fisher folk in their traditional habitats were driven out in mass during the past year. There were aerial bombardments by the Sri Lankan Air Force that killed innocent women and children. Condemnations by the International Community to curtail or restrain such acts by Sri Lanka were either slow in coming or did not come at all in a loud and clear manner during those 'evictions'.

Yet it is very clear that a strong international attention will force Sri Lanka to respect the rights of all its citizens, from the

'apology' and 'promise' of not repeating it again made by Prime Minister

Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, in the aftermath of his government's horrendous act. Yet historical experience tell that they may revert to similar acts by various other means, names or continue the intimidation with Sri Lanka Supreme Court sanction, but the process may not be repeated with the same vigorous simplicity.

Many are relieved and thanking the International community for voicing concern and urging restrain by Sri Lankan authorities. The temporary staying order from the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka wouldn't deliver much reprieve in its final verdict later this month, without this cloud of International condemnation hanging over Sri Lankan authorities. After all this is the same Supreme Court that barred the International Community's much touted Tsunami re-construction joint mechanism, between Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam.

It is the voice of the

International Community that 'saved' the day for Tamils this time, not the vindictive Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, who brought in a temporary halting order in the aftermath!

It is in this respect that the International Community could play a formidable role in the protection of human rights and in leading to a path in finding a political solution.

While condemning the government's 'heavy-handedness' in evicting Tamils from Colombo, the Canadian High Commission in Sri Lanka reiterated that "there cannot be a military solution to the conflict that has besieged this Island for more than 20 years and reaffirms the need for a political solution where the rights and aspirations of all citizens of Sri Lanka can be respected."

To make this a reality, it is imperative that the International Community continuing to act in the same decisive manner that helped towards the curtailment of the recent 'evicting' of Tamils from Colombo.

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# Saint Anthony of Padua

**Raymond S. Rajabalan**

Saint Anthony of Padua, also venerated as Saint Anthony of Lisbon, is one of the very popular Catholic saints.

St. Anthony born in Lisbon, Portugal as **Fernando de Bulhões** to a wealthy family died in Padua, Italy. Today he is one of the most famous saints and is often called upon by not only Catholics but also by people of various religious beliefs to help find lost possessions and also for seeking assistance in their various needs.

## Life

Anthony was born into a wealthy family on 15 August, 1195 in Lisbon, Portugal. His parents wanted him to become a great noble, but he had other plans. His family arranged for good education for him at the local cathedral school.

However, against the wishes of his family, Fernando entered the Augustinian Abbey of St. Vincent on the outskirts of Lisbon. The Canons Regular of St. Augustine, of which he was now a member, were famous for their dedication



to scholarly pursuits. Fernando studied Scripture and the Latin masters Ovid, Seneca and Cato. Fernando was constantly visited by friends and relatives, bringing embarrassing gifts and news from their social world which disturbed him. His studies were suffering and there he found no peace. He persuaded his superiors to transfer him to the Augustinian Santa Cruz Monastery (Abbey of the Holy Cross) in Coimbra, then the capital of Portugal, where he continued his studies.

After his ordination, Fernando was placed in charge of hospitality in his Abbey. In this role, in 1219, he came in contact with five Franciscans who were on their way to Morocco to preach to the Muslims there. Fernando was strongly attracted to the simple Gospel lifestyle of the Franciscan friars. In February 1220, news arrived that the five Franciscans had been martyred in Morocco. Fernando meditated on the heroism of these Franciscans, and he longed to embrace the simple

lifestyle of the Franciscans. He wanted the freedom of a charismatic and joy-filled response to God's call to leave everything and follow Him.

Fernando obtained permission from his superiors to join the **Franciscan order**. In the summer of 1220 he was invested with the Franciscan habit and began to learn the teachings of their founder, Francis of Assisi. He took the new name of **Anthony** when he joined the **Order of Friars Minor** in honor of Saint Anthony the Great (251 AD-356 AD), to whom the Franciscan hermitage where he was living was dedicated.

Shortly after, Anthony set off to Morocco with another friar. He intended to die preaching the Gospel there. However, he fell sick and while returning to Europe by ship, due to heavy wind the ship lost direction and reached Port Mexico in Sicily, Italy.

He was an eloquent preacher with a loud and clear voice, a winning smile, a wonderful memory, and profound learning. With the zeal of an apostle he undertook to reform the morality of his time by specifically combating the vices of luxury, avarice, and tyranny. He taught theology and won a great reputation throughout Italy as a preacher.

It is said that one night, the Divine Child came to visit Anthony. He kissed the saint gently and told him how much He loved him. As a confirmation of this divine visit, statues of St. Anthony are often seen with infant Jesus in his arms.

Anthony's death took place at the convent of the "Arcella", near Padua, on 13 June 1231. He is buried in a chapel, part of the large Basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua, Italy.

## Recognition

His was the **second fastest canonization in Catholic church history**. He was declared a saint by Pope Gregory II, within

an year on May 30, 1232.

**His feast day is June 13th**, and is marked by popular and sumptuous celebrations in Lisbon. Saint Anthony is the patron saint of Padua. His relics remain in Padua as well as Lisbon.

The numerous miracles attributed to him are a reflection to the extent to which St. Anthony is venerated throughout the world.

Three of the countless miracles recorded by his biographers are:

The first is that of a horse, which, kept fasting for three days, refused the oats placed before him, till he had knelt down and adored the Blessed Sacrament which St.

**The devotion that was there in Europe spread to Sri Lanka later. In 1543 King Juan 11 sent a group of five religious teachers of Franciscan order to preach Catholic faith.**

**Later, the Jesuit, Dominican, Augustinian religious orders sent groups of preachers to preach faith and hence religious preaching spread throughout the island. With the the preaching of faith the devotion to St. Anthony grew. He is now the most popular saint in Sri Lanka venerated by people from all communities.**

**May St. Anthony pray to Jesus to intercede and help end all forms of violence and conflicts in Sri Lanka to achieve lasting peace and prosperity.**

Anthony held in his hands.

The second most important miracle is that of the poisoned food offered him by some Italian heretics, which he rendered innocuous by the sign of the cross.

The third miracle worthy of mention is that of the famous sermon to the fishes on the bank of the river Brenta in the neighbourhood of Padua.

The inhabitants of Padua erected to his memory a magnificent basilica, where his relics were transferred in 1263. When the vault in which, for thirty years, his sacred body had reposed was opened, the flesh was found reduced to dust but the preacher's tongue was seen to be uninjured, fresh, and of a lively red colour.

One of the most beloved of saints, his images and statues are ubiquitous. Proclaimed a Doctor of the Church on January 16, 1946, he is sometimes called the "Evangelical Doctor." He is especially invoked for the recovery of things lost; as well as against starvation, barrenness.

He is also the patron of amputees, boatmen, domestic animals, the elderly, expectant mothers, fishermen, harvests, horses, mail, mariners, oppressed persons, Padua, paupers, Portugal, sailors, scholars etc.

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## CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES FIRST PHASE OF FOREIGN CREDENTIALS REFERRAL OFFICE

The first phase of the Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO) was launched today by the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. The FCRO is designed to help internationally trained individuals who plan to work in Canada get their credentials assessed and recognized more quickly. As outlined in Budget 2007, \$32.2 million has been set aside for the first five years of the FCRO's operation.

"Too many newcomers can't get jobs they have been trained for. That's a terrible waste, for them and for the country. Today, we are delivering on our commitment to do something about it," said Minister Finley. "In our first phase, the Foreign Credentials Referral Office will help newcomers access what they need to become accredited, both in Canada for those newcomers already here, and abroad for those waiting for an opportunity to come to our country."

"Canada needs immigrants, and initiatives such as the FCRO will help attract newcomers and capitalize on their skills," said Wai Young, Interim Executive Director of the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance which represents 450 immigrant and refugee service agencies across Canada.

The new office will help people navigate through the complex system of foreign credential recognition in Canada. The office's approach includes:

- ♦ in-person services and a dedicated phone service operated by Service Canada at 320 outlets across the country by fall 2007;
- ♦ an expanded online service that will help individuals identify occupations in Canada for which they may be qualified, provide them with detailed labour market information, and refer them to the appropriate regulatory body; and



♦ increasing employer awareness of the processes for, and benefits of, hiring internationally trained and educated professionals.

In addition, Canada's New Government will work directly with the provinces to speed up the entry of healthcare professionals after evaluating the success of a pilot project included in the recent Canada-Alberta immigration agreement. This project includes provisions to refer candidates with preliminary approval for permanent residence to Alberta licensing bodies to begin the process of recognizing their credentials.

The Government of Canada is also working with provincial and territorial partners to improve online services that help immigrants integrate into Canadian society.

Canada is today announcing approximately \$18.8 million in funding for several provinces and territories to enhance online information about settling and working across the country.

Canada's New Government is also providing \$5 million to top up the existing Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Program, bringing its total funding to \$73 million. This program, which falls under Human Resources and Social Development, successfully strengthens foreign credentials assessment and recognition

processes in Canada. As part of this program, the Government today announced \$7.7 million in new projects.

"Together, the new credentials referral office and the FCR Program will improve the efficiency of Canada's labour market," said Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources. Speaking in Vancouver on behalf of Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, Minister Lunn said: "Specifically, the office will provide newcomers with a clear path on where to find information on how to get their credentials assessed, while the FCR program will help improve foreign credential recognition processes in Canada."

The creation of the FCRO follows consultations with provincial and territorial governments and other key stakeholders, including regulatory and assessment bodies, post secondary education institutions and their national organizations, employers, sector councils, immigrant serving organizations and newcomers themselves. Credential recognition in Canada is mainly a provincial responsibility. The federal government plays a facilitative role, funding assessment projects and now, with the FCRO, providing a range of information and referral services.

## Canadian Tamil youths walk to fight social inequality

**A group of eight Tamil youths led by Mayuran Rhaashivam have taken their fight for social equality to the streets walking from Toronto to Ottawa, the nation's capital to "stop errorism."**

Errorism, as described by walk organizer Mayuran Rhaashivam, is when "a majority community uses stigmatized terms to bully a minority community for its own self interests."

The walk began on May 22 from Nathan Phillips Square in the heart of Toronto and is due to be completed June 11 on Parliament Hill, Ottawa.

By Wednesday the group had walked over 400 km passing through the towns of Oshawa, Bowmanville, Newcastle, Port Hope, Belville and Kingston. The youths met with the mayors, the

general public, students and media men in these towns and explained them the purpose of the walk.

"We want to raise awareness about the Sri Lankan conflict with Tamil Eelam," says Mr. Rhaashivam. "As people of Tamil descent living in Canada, we feel that there is a need to get our identity out."

The group feels its members are often misrepresented in the media as being involved in gang activity. They want to fight these stereotypes in a positive way.

"We are peace-loving human beings like every one else in Canada," explains Mr. Rhaashivam. "At the end of the day we just want to be living our lives in a peaceful manner."

The group is hoping that awareness will create dialogue

between the Canadian government and Tamil Eelam. They have set up a Facebook group on the Internet and it already has more than 600 members who are contributing comments and words of encouragement to the young men.

Some of these members plan to meet up with the group in Ottawa on June 11. The students from a number of Universities have also extended their support to these youths while Canadians Tamils have been sending them their wishes through Canadian Tamil Radio (CTR) June 11 marks "student uprising day" in Tamil Eelam. This is a day in which citizens of Tamil Eelam pay respect to pupils who sacrificed their lives for the cause of obtaining a free and just Tamil Eelam, a battle which is still ongoing. The group hopes to meet with Prime Minister Stephen Harper to get their issues across.

A press conference is scheduled to be held on June 11th at the end of the walk. sTeam mem-

## RBC LAUNCHES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR NEW CANADIANS

**Eligible students have until July 5, 2007 to apply for seven \$2,000 awards**

Recognizing the important role immigration plays in Canada social, cultural and economic development, RBC is launching a new scholarship program specifically for young people who have been through the immigration experience.

The new scholarships are designed to encourage students to share their views on how immigration has shaped Canada and to provide advice to others going through a similar experience.

Any new Canadian families place a top priority on education, said Mark Whitmell, director, Cultural Markets. e hope the RBC Royal Bank Scholarship for New Canadians will help some of our best and brightest students realize their fullest potential. Given the challenges of beginning a life in a new country, their efforts are worthy of recognition.

Seven scholarships, each worth \$2,000, will be awarded to individuals who have graduated high school or CEGEP and are planning to pursue full-time studies at an accredited Canadian college or university this fall. The winners will also be invited to an all-expenses paid awards dinner in Toronto. The deadline for applications is July 5, 2007.

To be eligible for the scholarships, applicants must have been born outside of Canada, and be either permanent residents or citizens of Canada. Applicants must have also achieved at least a 70 per cent average in their previous

year of study. Scholarships will be awarded based on academic achievement and three, 250-word essay questions on how immigration has helped to shape the country we live in today.

RBC has implemented several programs to make it easier for new immigrants before and after coming to Canada. As part of this effort, RBC developed a welcome to Canada website ([www.rbc.com/canada](http://www.rbc.com/canada)) that offers information about education, employment, and housing, as well as everything new immigrants need to start banking and investing in Canada.

For more information about RBC Royal Bank Scholarship for New Canadians, as well application forms, please visit [www.rbcroyalbank.com/scholarships/newcanadians/](http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/scholarships/newcanadians/).

RBC's Scholarship Awards Program offers a diverse range of scholarship awards to help address the critical need for student funding across Canada. In 2006, RBC awarded over 320 scholarships, totalling more than \$600,000. Scholarships are available for students studying in high school, pursuing undergraduate studies at college or university, and those entering professional programs in medicine or dentistry. Specialized scholarship are also available to New Canadians, Junior A hockey players, and Aboriginal students. For more information about RBC's Scholarship Program please visit [www.rbcroyalbank.com/scholarships/](http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/scholarships/)

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bers Mayuran Rajashivam, Marlan Rajashivan, Anu Kanagasabai and Jayabalan Manimaran walk down King St. in Oshawa. They are part of a group of eight individuals who decided to undertake a journey on foot from Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square to Parliament Hill in Ottawa, to address constant issues of antagonism of minority groups. The main objective of this walk is to create awareness of such events

that target and segregate minority persons. The walk is due to be completed on June 11, which marks "Student Uprising Day" in Tamil Eelam. "Student Uprising Day" is a day in which citizens of Tamil Eelam pay respect to pupils who sacrificed their lives for the cause of obtaining a just and free Tamil Eelam, a battle that is still being fought today.

by Raymond Rajabalan

# Better safe than sorry

By Kumar Punithavel

It was little after the noon hour. The parking lot of the mall was virtually empty as it was a working day. Shanthi had finished mall shopping and came out in great hurry as she had to get home before her daughter got back from school. The bright summer sun blinded her. She waited a moment to adjust her sight from the solar haze. Then she walked up to her car in the parking lot. When she started the car she felt something was wrong; rather something was not right. Shanthi promptly got out and looked at the tires and to her dismay, she found the front right hand side tire flat.

She got the jack out of the trunk and began to change the flat. At that moment, a prim and properly attired man carrying a leather briefcase walked up to her and said, "I noticed you're changing a flat tire. Would you like me to take care of it for you lady?" Shanthi was greatly relieved and readily accepted the help of the Good Samaritan and thanked him profusely.

They chatted amiably while the man changed the flat. The stranger must be a mechanic thought Shanthi for he changed the tire quite efficiently. When the work was done he dropped the flat and the jack in the trunk of the car and closed it. He wiped his hand on a rag Shanthi offered, and finally stretched out his hand with a sweet smile and said, "I am Ramesh. Glad I could help you."

Shanthi shook his hands and thanked him with warm gratitude, and as she was about to get into her car, the man told her that he left his car around on the other side of the mall, and asked if she would mind giving him a lift up to his car.

Shanthi was a little taken aback and asked him why his car was on the side frequented by service vehicles. He smiled gently and explained he had seen an old friend in the mall that he hadn't seen for some time, they had some snacks, chatted for a while, and he got turned around in the mall and left through the wrong exit; and was now running late. Shanthi felt something was wrong here. He never gave the reason for parking on the side where only the service vehicles go.

She was reluctant to believe his story. Being a smart girl, Shanthi thought as in the kural it would be unwise to trust this stranger as his explanation caused reason not to believe.

Folly meets fearful ills with fearless heart;

To fear where cause of fear exists is wisdom's part - No. 428

However she hated to tell him she couldn't because he had been such a Good Samaritan and had rescued her from having to change her flat tire all by herself; but she felt uneasy. Trust indeed that gut feeling!

Then in a lightning streak she remembered seeing the man put his briefcase in her trunk before shutting it, and then he asking her for a ride to his car. Perhaps by accident or with an ulterior motive he might have done it. But she certainly did not want to take a chance. The smart woman she was, she told him she'd be happy to drive him around to his car, but she just remembered one last thing she needed to buy.

Shanthi said she would only be a few minutes. Ramesh could wait in her car and that she would get back be as quickly as she could. She hurried into the mall and looked for security guard. The guard was such a



burly fellow she felt quite intimidated by his physical appearance. But she walked up to him and related her concern. The guard put on his hat and came out with her to her car, but the Good Samaritan had vanished from the scene.

They opened the trunk, found his locked briefcase and took it to the mall security office. While walking to the office they conversed freely about the incident. In contrast to the neat and suave executive-type that helped her moments earlier, the security guard despite his daunting appearance, tuned out to be a jovial fellow. Shanthi wandered how much an appearance could be deceptive. Looking at Ramesh one would never have ever believed him to be a criminal whereas the security guard had all the appearance of a goon.

Cruel is the arrow straight, the crooked lute is sweet,

"Judge by their deeds and the many forms of men you meet" - No. 279.

The words of Valluvar echoed in Shanthi's ears. When they reached the office the guard

opened the briefcase, apparently to look for the ID of the guy so that they could return it to him. But they were in for a shock! What they found was rope, duct tape, and knives.

When they eventually checked her "flat" tire, there was nothing wrong with it. The air had simply been let out. It was obvious what

the man's intention was; obviously, he had carefully hatched a plan in advance with all the necessary moves to execute it. Shanthi was indeed blessed to have escaped harm.

How much worse it would have been if she had her children with her and wait in the car while the man fixed the tire, or if she had a baby strapped into a car seat, or if she'd gone against her judgment and given him a lift?

Wisdom never fades, but knowledge changes. What Thiruvalluvar wrote was wisdom. It has lasted two millenniums, and it will last for many more. The story also gives a good lesson to all women. It could very well save a life. Lighting another candle does not dim another. We have a lesson to learn from Shanthi's experience; better to take measures to be safe than to be sorry.

Contact Kumar Punithavel: [kumpunithavel@yahoo.com](mailto:kumpunithavel@yahoo.com)

## PMK seeks Centre's help to save Eelam Tamils from hunger death

Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) founder-leader Dr S Ramadoss appealed to the Central government on June 7th to save Eelam Tamils from imminent hunger death following escalation of violence in the decade-long Lankan ethnic strife. He was of the view that arms should not be supplied to the island nation at any cost.

"The situation in Sri Lanka is deteriorating day by day. The Eelam Tamils are being put to untold hardship as they face shortage of food and medicines. The United Nations has said Sri Lanka will soon face hunger deaths," he told newsmen at his Thailapuram residence.

Presenting a strong case for not supplying arms to the island nation, Dr Ramadoss disputed the Centre's contention that if India did not supply arms, Sri Lanka would procure it from Pakistan and China.

"They are already procuring arms from Pakistan and China...If India supplies arms, it will be used only to target innocent Tamils," he said.

The PMK leader also opposed joint patrolling of the international maritime boundary by the Coast Guards of the two countries to ensure safety to Indian fishermen.

[UNI]

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## Chennai land prices costlier than London

With real estate prices turning unaffordable to the common man, a city-based firm has come out with the offer of much cheaper properties in London, Dubai and even New Zealand.

Real estate promoters Ace International has put up for sale of 200 plots, some 20-25 kms off Central London and 12 kms from Heathrow airport. The 2,600-4000 sq ft plots cost Rs 15-20 lakh, half of what it costs in the Chennai suburbs.

"This is perhaps for the first time that promoters are taking up the marketing of plots in some other country," V Santhanraman, Director of the firm, told PTI.

The firm has taken up marketing of the plots offered by some prominent developers in London, including UK Land Investments and Marc Properties.

The firm, which has been into the marketing of hotels in countries like China, Malaysia and

Singapore and that of buildings for educational and other purposes and plantations, was approached by the London developers, said Santhanraman.

"The outside world has come to know about the buying capacity of Indians and the globalised economy has facilitated the free purchase and sale of land anywhere across the globe," he said.

The firm also claims to help the customer in completing all government and legal formalities regarding the purchase, resale and construction of houses in the plots.

Santhanraman said his firm would offer site visits to the customer after collecting 20 per cent of the total cost of the plot as advance. The firm would arrange the visiting visa, accommodation and air ticket of the customer.

"He (customer) could then have a look at all the transaction

and ownership details of the land. Once registered in his name, he will have a unique account in the government department UK Land Registry's website, which he can access from here also," he said, adding unlike in India, owners need not worry about encroachments as the land laws are strict there.

The customer can sell it off as and when the prices appreciate or construct a house, for which he has to reside in the UK for four to five years.

Santhanraman claimed that the appreciation of real estate prices in the UK was excellent. "We have been keeping track of the prices and it is projected to appreciate 300-400 per cent in two years."

The company was also coming up with similar projects in Dubai and New Zealand.

[PTI]

## Canadian Heritage Statement Déclaration

**Statement by Jason Kenney, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity) on the 93rd Anniversary of the Komagata Maru**

Ninety-three years after the Komagata Maru incident, Canada's New Government is taking historic and unprecedented steps to acknowledge and commemorate the tragedy. The Komagata Maru was a Japanese ship carrying 376 passengers, all subjects of the Crown, which was prevented from docking in a Vancouver port and forced to return to India.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper was the first prime minis-

ter in Canadian history to acknowledge the tragic nature of the Komagata Maru incident. In his speech on August 6, 2006, in Surrey, British Columbia, the Prime Minister said: "the Government of Canada acknowledges the Komagata Maru incident and we will soon undertake consultations with the Indo-Canadian community on how best to recognize this sad moment in our history."

"Canada's New Government is determined to ensure that the tragedy of the Komagata Maru incident is properly acknowledged and commemorated," said Secretary of State Kenney.

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## Food shortages, fear of abductions - Jaffna residents feel the pinch

Last year at this time 16-year-old Jeevun Kumaraswamy, who lives on the isolated Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka, was on top of the world. His school, Jaffna Central College, was competing against traditional rivals St. John's College in the centenary game of their annual cricket match. Jaffna was decked-out in flags. The kids were dancing in the streets.

This year there's anything but dancing for Jeevun and his friends: Since all-out conflict began between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) the climate has been tense - tense enough that even the big school cricket match had to be cancelled.

The closure of the A-9 highway in August 2006 has also meant most essential supplies, including food, could no longer be delivered from the south in the volumes necessary. Families like Jeevan's have been feeling the economic and nutritional pinch as only scant supplies can be imported by ship and air.

### Fear of abductions

But for Jeevun and his school mates and their families there is a bigger concern. With abductions in the area on the rise, Jeevun's father, Sinnathambhi Kumaraswamy, told IRIN "I am scared to live here because I have three young boys to look after. I don't know when they will go missing." He said: "I have seen many young boys abducted and now I am seeing their parents suffer."

The worried father says he won't even allow his sons to leave the house for fear they could be abducted. Eighty people, all males, were abducted in Jaffna between January and April 2007, according to the Human Rights Commission, a semi-autonomous government body.

Young Jeevun says he is particularly fearful because he wit-

nessed the abduction of a close friend just five months ago.

"I will never forget my friend's last scream," says Jeevun. "Passers-by just stared at the commotion while he was forced into a white van by four unidentified men. I certainly don't want myself or my brothers to suffer like that."

"I love playing cricket with my friends and I had really been looking forward to this year's big cricket match, but now it seems everything has just died," Jeevun says. "My brother and I can't even step out of the house to be with our friends."

Various groups have been accused of carrying out child abductions in Sri Lanka - including the LTTE and the pro-government Karuna group, which is a break-away faction of the LTTE. There have even been allegations - denied by the government and the military - of army or government involvement.

### Seeking help

Some Jaffna residents who have had family members abducted seek the help of the local branch of the Human Rights Commission. It records their cases and conducts its own investigations. Families of victims have also lodged complaints with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which is monitoring the situation and is in touch with all parties to resolve complaints.

ICRC Spokesperson, Davide Vignati, told IRIN: "The ICRC, currently, on a weekly basis, is collecting information on missing persons and abductions. The cases have only been increasing in the peninsula."

### Jaffna University

Even academic work at Jaffna university has been affected by fear of abductions and other intimidation. According to the Sri

Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which monitors the truce between the government and the LTTE, "the problems at Jaffna University campus have continued.

Students and staff have been receiving death threats aimed at people with LTTE (Tamil Tiger) affiliations which has caused considerable fear and led to the closure of the campus," the SLMM said in a situation report dated 14-20 May 2007.

The threats and abductions are occurring in a city that over the past year has faced increasing isolation and economic challenges due to the conflict and the A9 road closure. Just two years ago, even though there were breakdowns in talks between the government and the Tamil Tigers, Jaffna was making the most of the tentative ceasefire.

Jaffna residents who had fled the violence more than a decade earlier, like some from the local Muslim population, were returning to their former homes and businesses. Goods were freely available and guest houses were opening up to the increasing number of visitors. Even private airlines and mobile service providers were lining up to get a piece of the action.

### A9 road closure

All that has now changed and today, principally because of the A9 closure, Jaffna is now a city marked by shortages of basic commodities and medicine and, most critically, food.

The World Food Programme (WFP), which is currently conducting its food assistance programme in Jaffna, has been able to ship only 20 per cent of its total food allocation for internally displaced peoples (IDPs) and vulnerable people to the peninsula due to the A9 road closure.

"Through the food assistance programme, WFP is required to



send 1,000 metric tonnes of food to Jaffna every month. But due to the closure of the A9 road and the lack of space on government vessels, WFP has been able to ship only 200 metric tones of food per month since August," WFP Country Director Jeff Taft-Dick told IRIN.

### Lack of ships

"Our biggest concern is the low number of ships available to transport food," Taft-Dick says. "With the monsoon expected, we will face more difficulties."

WFP says it is in consultation with the commissioner general of the Essential Services Commission to increase the number of supply ships as soon as possible. The government did increase the number of ships last year when supplies thinned out in the peninsula.

"Food prices were quite high several months ago," says Taft-Dick, "but they have come down now. It is a little better now because some private traders are also bringing in food from India,"

he said.

"Very soon our children will be starving"

However, some residents feel that economic conditions in Jaffna are so dire that the cost of commodities, including food, are priced beyond their reach.

"Prices keep increasing weekly," Rosy Theyagarajah told IRIN. "A fixed rate on commodities is not maintained and shops sell goods at whatever price they want," she complains. "Very soon our children will be starving as we no longer have money to buy food."

Rosy Theyagarajah has been living in Jaffna for the past 32 years and says the current situation is the worst she has experienced. She says some children are now suffering malnutrition. "Even during the 20-year war between the government and the LTTE, we had food to fill our stomachs," she says. "But today we have nothing. My husband is out of work and my children only get one meal a day," she adds.

[IRIN]



# Is Water the Next Oil?

**An increasing population, pollution, waste and global warming all threaten the world's water supply**

By Rohini Nilekani  
BANGALORE:

Is water the next oil? Motives behind the question vary, depending on who asks the question.

Those who see water as a future core commodity – therefore as profitable a prospect as oil – pose the question to create the right market conditions for water trade. Those who see the potential for conflict arising from scarcity compare diminishing freshwater to oil's depleting reserves. Those who see an environmental threat from mismanagement of water see parallels with the abuse and waste of oil.

So there are lessons to be learned from how we have managed oil on this planet over the past century and more.

The oil crisis confronting the world today is much like the looming crisis in water, with depleting supplies, unequal distribution and access, and the inevitable specter of rising costs and increasing conflict around the sharing of this vital natural resource. As with oil, water exploitation raises an inter-generational debt that will be hard to repay. The uncontrolled and rapacious exploitation of oil has led to unintended consequences, and if we continue on a similar trajectory with water, the oil crisis will seem like the trailer of some horrible disaster movie.

Ironically, our untrammelled use of oil fuels the crisis in water. Burning of fossil fuels has led to global warming, the melting of glaciers and ice caps, and the early snowmelts that will cause flooding in areas that can hardly bear another burden. And it may also cause the climate to fluctuate in a way that brings too much rain in some places and too little in others.

In addition, the move to replace oil with biomass-based fuels will intensify water use, not so much for sustaining our life and this planet as to sustain our lifestyles.

All this is worth thinking about at the individual level, because if change really happens, it must

begin within the individual consciousness.

The challenges are immense. The first, of course, is that the earth has a finite amount of usable water, despite it being a beautiful blue planet. The 2.5 percent of usable planet water is in a precarious balance with glaciers and fossil groundwater remaining intact.

Another challenge is the inefficiencies and inequities in how water is used. Agriculture consumes 70 percent of the world's water, much of it to produce what we eat. There is tremendous wastage in our agricultural processes, though the levels are somewhat stable or even improving slightly.

Demand for domestic water has risen sharply over the century, which again brings us back to questioning what we as individuals can do. The sectoral demand on water is increasing rapidly within both industry and domestic settings. Competing demand will create pressure on the agriculture sector, perhaps leading water-scarce regions to produce less food and outsource food production to water-rich countries, spurring concerns about the food security of individual nation states.

Poverty, power and inequality are at the core of the water issue and not scarcity, as the UN Development Programme Human Development Report 2006 powerfully argues.

And herein lies the rub. Since we have taken water for granted, we must face the alarming inequality in safe water. More than 1.5 billion people lack access to adequate water and sanitation. If poverty is bad, then poverty without water is hell on earth. Recently, the millennium development goals have supplied a normative framework for governments to prioritize how water is delivered. Still, not enough money or resources flow into this sector. Worldwide, only 5 percent of all international aid goes into water and sanitation. We are still far from universal access to good



**In Search of Water:** Indian women's daily routine in much of the rural areas. Only 2.5% of water on the planet is usable.

water for life. And this inequity instigates the raging debate around water today.

Another critical problem for the water sector is wastewater and pollution of our ponds, streams, lakes and rivers. No one can estimate the costs to clean our water resources and how much of the damage is irreversible.

So maybe it is time to apply the lessons learned from the management of another natural resource – oil.

It's safe to say that, with oil, among other mistakes, we have seen overuse; gross inequity in benefit sharing, across both geography and time, of what is essentially a common property; poor environmental management; an overarching supply-side focus; the use of technology to speed unsustainable extraction; and the lack of effective global governance.

For water, therefore, we need to focus on demand management and universal access, affordable pricing, pollution control and source sustainability. We need to use technology not to extract water more efficiently from the bowels of the earth, but to

replace the use of water with other means where we can, especially to reverse our use of freshwater to carry human waste. And we need urgently to set up more appropriate platforms for negotiation and regulation that are truly participatory across the globe.

These steps are much easier written about than done. So where should one begin?

Already some work is underway to restore good practices or generate new ones: One example is that of reversing the practice of using water to flush and carry human waste. European cities such as Oslo have introduced vacuum-flush toilet systems that use little or no water. Gaining ground in South Asia is eco-sanitation, which provides a viable alternative to water-borne sewage and also converts human waste into nutrient-rich fertilizer.

For source sustainability, New York City has made a creative breakthrough by supporting the preservation of forests in the watersheds of the Catskill Mountains, after finding it more cost-effective to preserve the watersheds that supply the metro's drinking water than to build costly treatment and source-

augmentation plants.

Demand management is perhaps the trickiest issue of all. How do we convince ourselves to use much less water?

Perhaps the urban consumer is the key to solving some of the problems. Urbanites are removed from the natural world, and urban demand fuels new and unsustainable uses of water. And yet, the urbanite is arguably more integrated with the global economy and increasingly understands its pitfalls. If there is to be a change in human consciousness, the urban mind is fertile ground.

We must focus quickly on making the invisible visible. Much of our incompetence stems from a lack of awareness. We need to reduce the knowledge gaps if water consumers are to make more virtuous choices about products and lifestyles that abuse water.

But if such inquiry is to deliver creative solutions, then people must internalize the locus of control. They must see themselves as not only part of the problem but also part of the solution. As a Chinese proverb says, "Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand."

Among the most important lessons to be taken from the history of oil is not taking essentials for granted. Conserve oil, but also conserve water. If our Hummers are a red flag in oil, maybe our Jacuzzis are the same for water. A new universal water ethic could eliminate our lethal bottleneck of overpopulation and wasteful consumption.

Can the water crisis be prevented from becoming a catastrophe? Can we all change the way we think of water? Now that we know every drop counts, can we count every drop? We will soon find out. And it will be bitter irony if our freshwater reserves are depleted before our oil wells have run dry.

Rohini Nilekani is chairperson of Arghyam, a charitable foundation that supports a safe and sustainable global water supply.

[Yale Global]

## Prime Minister Manmohan Singh concerned over eviction of Sri Lankan Tamils

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed concern on June 9th over the eviction of minority Sri Lankan Tamils from the capital Colombo and hoped "better sense will prevail" in the troubled nation.

"On attempt to expel Tamils from Colombo, Sri Lanka, we shared our anxiety with important world leaders," the prime minister said while returning from Germany where he attended the G8 Outreach Summit.

"Hope better sense will prevail. It involves human rights of citizens," added the prime minister, referring to a pre-dawn raid by the armed police Thursday on the temporary lodgings of Tamils in Colombo and forcing them go return to the northern and eastern provinces.

"I heard that this move has been stayed by their Supreme Court. We share the concern."

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# Caste Revolution in India's Uttar Pradesh

By Rajan Philips

The victory of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in the recent Uttar Pradesh (UP) State Assembly elections is a huge political step forward in the slow transformation of the Indian caste society. BSP leader Mayawati Kumari has been sworn in as the new Chief Minister of a single-party government, the first in Uttar Pradesh since 1991. Mayawati, a Dalit Hindu belonging to the Chamar caste, has been Chief Minister thrice before but always in coalition governments and in alliance with the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

'Dalit' (meaning crushed or oppressed) is the term of self-respect for about 170 million or 17% of Indians belonging to what were once called the untouchable castes, or, more patronizingly, Harijans. Mayawati has led the Dalits of Uttar Pradesh to their greatest political victory, something earlier Dalit leaders like the great Bhim Rao Ambedkar who chaired the Constitutional Drafting Committee after independence, Jag-jivan Ram a Congress stalwart of the Nehru – Indira Gandhi eras, or Mayawati's own mentor Kanshi Ram could hardly have imagined. "It was subaltern power on spectacular display across Uttar Pradesh," as The Hindu said in its editorial.

As India's watershed elections go, the 2007 UP election compares with the most remarkable of them: the 1957 victory of the Indian Communist Party in the State of Kerala; DMK's victory in the Madras (now Tamil Nadu) State election of 1967; the stunning defeat of Indira Gandhi in 1977 after two years of her infamous emergency rule; and the spectacular defeat of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of 'India Shining' notoriety in the 2004 national election. These elections are important milestones in the continuing evolution of the world's most populous and socially complex democracy.

The 1957 and 1967 elections marked the beginning of the disintegration of India's grand old party, the Indian National Congress – losing first to a class-based national party in Kerala; and then to a sub-nationalist regional party in Tamil Nadu. Indira Gandhi's defeat in 1977 triggered the final phase of that disintegration, even though Mrs. Gandhi would make one more comeback in 1981, for her last term in office before her tragic assassination in 1984. The convincing defeat of the BJP in 2004, notwithstanding the exaggerated self-beliefs of its leaders and the Hindutva ideologues, restored India's political faith with secularism.

The 2004 election also revived the Congress Party's fortunes, returning it to power after a decade in opposition. The Congress could not do it alone,

however, but only as the head of a coalition – the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The immediate expectation was that the Congress would soon re-establish its bases and return to power in its own right. Nothing could have been more far off the mark. The Congress has suffered defeat after defeat in State Assembly and Municipal elections since 2004, the latest loss in UP being one of its worst losses. The BJP's defeat in UP has been equally substantial, and as the defeated Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav, stated after the election, the political contest in UP is now between Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party and his own Samajwadi Party. The Congress and the BJP have been marginalized in Uttar Pradesh.

As India's largest state with 175 million people and electing 80 MPs to the Lok Sabha in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh holds an important key to political dominance in India. Losing their bases so dramatically in UP, will have far reaching implications for both the



[Mayawati Kumari - PTI Photo]

Congress and the BJP at the national level. In the short term, the UP results coming on a string of earlier electoral setbacks are a blow to the economic liberalization agenda of the Indian government.

Dalit power through new social coalitions

Mayawati's victory is the result of a new social coalition that she has forged under the umbrella of the Bahujan Samaj Party. From what had primarily been a Dalit Party, Mayawati has broadened the Bahujan Party to be more inclusive and co-opted high-caste Brahmins and Muslim candidates to its slate. The broad-basing of the Party worked well in the election and accounted for the Party's strong showing in every part of the State and among all communities.

Mayawati's new social coalition has turned the old coalition blocs of the Congress on their heads. The Congress worked top-down with its urban bourgeois, landlord and professional upper-caste leaders forging coalition blocs among the middle, lower and lowest sections of the Hindu society, and co-opting the Muslim and other minority communities. The new Dalit-led coalition is a

bottoms-up process in which the lowly placed Dalits have mobilized the upper castes into a winning united front.

More importantly, the UP voters cutting across caste and communal boundaries chose to elect the Bahujan Party despite the criticisms that the party lacks any tradition in governance and administration and is dominated by candidates with no experience in either. As it turned out, the people were attracted by the lack of these credentials and were turned off by the major parties who are known as much for their corruption as for their credentials.

The heavy defeat of the BJP underscores the encouraging decline of its religious appeal in electoral politics. Both the Congress and the BJP targeted the media more than the masses to enhance their electoral appeal, and the results show yet another divide in Indian society – between the glittering media and the alienated masses. The amateurish forays of Rahul Gandhi during the election campaign received lavish media footage but failed to boost the fortunes of the Congress Party in what was once its most secure backyard. If at all, the young Gandhi's antics backfired.

Uneven development and caste competition

The dual defeats of the Congress and the BJP have again highlighted the current contradiction in Indian society – between the spectacularly wealthy Indians, some of whom are emerging as major players in the global economy, and the vast majority of India's poor whose deprivation of life's most basic needs has no place in the globalization agenda. Put another way, the question is whether the Dalit victory in UP could sufficiently change at least India's internal agenda to give priority to the needs of the majority of the country's marginalized people.

The answer to this question rests on several levels of reality and interpretation. The most tired wisdom is whether or not the new BSP Government will live up to its promise of providing good governance free of corruption and cronyism. The early signs are not encouraging, however, as Mayawati has reportedly started her new administration using old style politics – transferring large numbers of police and civic officials, and bringing in political staff into quasi-administrative positions. Mayawati has been accused in the past of allowing corruption, amassing wealth, harassing political opponents, bandying the family and bashing birthday celebrations. If the new government were to continue in the old ways, the Dalit victory may not go beyond being a one-term Mayawati government.

The challenge here is not only for Mayawati, or other Dalit and backward caste leaders, to become well equipped in matters



[Statue of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar - Photo Blue Raspberry]

of governance and to avoid moral pitfalls as well as nepotism and corruption in public office. A broader challenge confronts the organization of Indian society and politics itself which continues to limit the lower strata of society from gaining education and experience in governance and from entering the higher echelons in the economic sphere. Equally, changing the lopsided nature of development and giving priority to the basic needs of the majority of the people are as important, if not more, as the need for the emerging Dalit and other backward community leaders to learn the art and skills of good governance.

It is no accident that even as there is an 'India Shining' before the eyes of the world, there is another 'India Stinking' in the bowels of the subcontinent – to use the title of Gita Ramaswamy's book on the so called polluted castes born and socialized to perform scavenging work for the real polluters. Several months ago, the Frontline magazine ran a graphic and depressingly truthful feature on the practice of manual scavenging which, as the journal noted, is "rooted in caste as surely as caste is rooted in the nation's psyche."

In the booming IT sector that provides access to and training in computers to children from the more fortunate homes, the children of the depressed castes are allowed in only for sweeping and cleaning up the ivory towers and perhaps touch and look at the personal machines. Overall, the lopsided nature of development has created much wealth for a minority (that nonetheless counts several millions) in certain sectors of the economy, but has brought

little benefit to the vast village sector where hundreds of millions are constrained to compete individually and as caste groups for limited opportunities.

The 2004 defeat of the BJP government was also a verdict against BJP's celebration of urban-focused and IT-based lopsided development. Although the current Congress-led UPA government committed itself in its Common Minimum Programme to correct this imbalance and give priority to the needs of the rural sector, the government's performance has so far been more focused on the globalization agenda than on the nation's internal priorities. Government policies continue to be tailored to please the actors in the global economy regardless of the consequences for India's villages and its farmers and farm workers.

A rather notorious example is the policy to rapidly create over a hundred of Special Economic Zones forcing people out of their land and livelihood (China which is used as the model has fewer than 20 SEZ). Even the Communist Government of West Bengal wants to join in the loot. But the debate is not over and some prominent people, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram and Sonia Gandhi among them, have come out against the Special Economic Zones proposal, albeit for different reasons. The election results in Uttar Pradesh are likely to strengthen the opposition to establishing Special Economic Zones regardless of their impacts on the surrounding populations.

**Changing contours of caste politics**

There is a curious correspondence between the rise of caste politics since the 1980s and the

liberalization of the Indian economy in the same period. The same V.P. Singh, the high-principled but error-prone former Prime Minister, had a hand in both. As Rajiv Gandhi's Finance Minister (1984-1988), V.P. Singh began the unwinding of India's state-led economy to become a free market economy, and not long after as Prime Minister in 1990 he lit a fuse under India's body politic by abruptly announcing the implementation of the 1980 Mandal Commission's recommendation to reserve 27% of all government

lar non-Congress leaderships. Kerala and Tamil Nadu are notable examples. In the Northern States in contrast, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, caste politics following V.P. Singh's announcement on reservations emerged as an acute and violent phenomenon.

On the one hand, the upper caste groups excluded from reservation were enraged both by the estimate that the OBC made up 52% of the country's population (the critics argued the proportion was around 36%) and more espe-

cially by the recommendation to reserve 27% of university admissions for the OBC. On the other hand, the controversy galvanized the OBC and Dalits leading to the formation of caste-based parties and vote mobilization in both Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (founded in 1984) and the Samajwadi Party (founded in 1996) were direct beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, the emergence of caste politics coincided with the rise of religious fundamentalism leading to anti-Congress and anti-secular coalitions between caste parties and the Bhartiya Janata Party, as well as coalitions involving the dominant Yadav caste group and Muslims pitted against other backward castes and Dalits. Mayawati Kumari's victory in Uttar Pradesh might be the beginning of a new phase of equilibrium in Northern caste politics.

The political advancement of the backward castes at the State level was supplemented by the empowerment of the Indian local government system of Panchayats as Constitutional entities by the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution in 1993. The Amendments provided for the representation of women (33%) as well as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes at the Panchayats and for reserving the post of Panchayat President for a member of these groups in specific circumstances.

Politics at the Panchayat level offers a sharper reflection of caste contradictions on the ground than at the senior levels of government, for it could be easier for a Dalit to become the Chief Minister of a State than for another Dalit to be accepted as the President of a Panchayat. The Dalit empowerment at the local level invariably faces bitter opposition from the dominant castes. The dominant caste is the particular caste group in a village or a district that on account of its numerical superiority and access to land resources ownership exercise power over other castes, particularly Dalits.

Many dominant castes fall under the category of Other Backward Classes and therefore benefit from affirmative reservations, on the one hand, and oppress the smaller and weaker castes on the other. The operation of the dominant castes not only at the local level but also at the state level and the fierce competition even between backward castes for limited opportunities underscore the structural challenges to transforming India's unequal caste society to an egalitarian social order.

The Indian Constitution is unique in setting goals and policy directives to bring about this transformation but without a corresponding economic program the achievements on the political and legislative fronts will not translate into real change in the lives of the marginalized people. Equally, in the context of uneven and lopsided economic development, affirmative actions and reservation programs will lead to a consolidation of caste identity politics rather than a weakening of the caste system.

While initiating economic liberalization and announcing caste reservations, V.P. Singh ignored the more structurally significant recommendations of the Mandal Commission, namely, surplus land allotments, financial and technical assistance for small industries in vocational communities, separate financial institutions to address their specific needs, vocational training and upgrading skills, and literacy and special educational programs. Singh's successors have equally ignored these priorities while pandering to caste politics.

It is not a question of mere neglect but one of contradiction between the priorities of the bottom three quarters of the Indian people and the globalization priorities that mostly benefit the top quarter of them. And the latter are a sizable population, as big as the United States, and few Indian political leaders will dare challenge their interests. More victories like that of Mayawati Kumari are necessary to force a 'priority shift' in Indian politics.

[TamilWeek.com]

## India Invites Global Bids to Rebuild Slum

In India, the government wants to give Asia's largest slum a makeover - and has invited Indian and foreign developers to participate in a huge slum resettlement project in the country's financial capital, Mumbai; but there is strong opposition to the plan.

Dharavi is not just a sprawling urban slum located in the heart of Mumbai, it is a long established

community. 45 percent are self-employed in Dharavi, porters and fisheries colony. Therefore it is not rebuilding Dharavi, it is taking away the existing employment," said Arputham.

The government is trying to calm such fears. It says the project will also make room for industries, except polluting ones such as tanneries.



community. Over the last 50 years, it has mushroomed over two square kilometers, attracting poor migrants from all over the country. Today, more than half a million people live and work in its narrow, dirty alleys.

The Maharashtra state government proposes to change all that, and recently placed newspaper advertisements in 20 countries inviting developers to rebuild Dharavi.

The plan is simple: the slum will be torn down. About 57,000 families living in ramshackle houses will be given tiny apartments of 225 square feet in high-rise blocks. The remaining swathes of land will be cleared for commercial and residential buildings.

The government says the \$2.3 billion project will benefit everyone. Slum dwellers will get free, new housing with modern facilities and sanitation.

But the project has triggered suspicion and resistance from many slum dwellers. They say Dharavi is not just their home but also their workplace.

The head of the National Slum Dwellers Association, Jockin Arputham, is threatening massive protests. He says many people stand to lose their livelihood if the project is implemented.

"The government can't give employment. People have made

At the same time, prime land worth an estimated \$10 billion will be freed up for development in a crowded city, where property prices are among the most expensive in the world.

However, opponents insist the project will mainly benefit developers. They are demanding more transparency and community involvement in the plan.

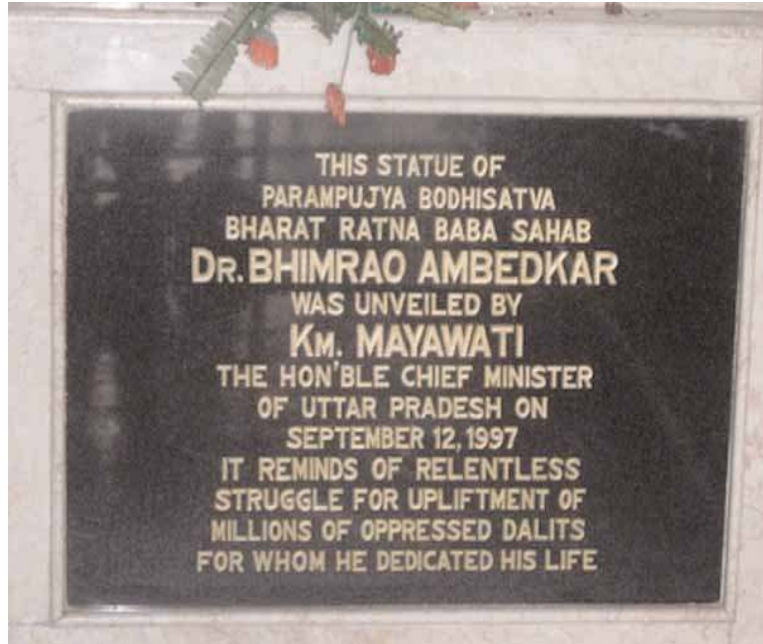
They point to hundreds of small manufacturing units that thrive in its alleys producing a range of goods such as pottery, plastics, and embroidered garments.

Over the years, Dharavi, has become a symbol of the haphazard urban growth in massive cities such as Mumbai, where millions of people live in slums. In Mumbai, more than half the city's population of 18 million lives in slums.

Often the inhabitants in these slums are not people mired in dire poverty, but people forced to stay there due to exorbitant real estate prices. Many cramped homes in Dharavi, for example, boast televisions and refrigerators.

High profile foreign visitors such as Britain's Prince Charles have stopped by Dharavi on their Indian tours to get an insight into the challenges of urban development in developing countries.

[VOA]



jobs and university admissions to the constitutionally recognized 'Other Backward Classes'.

V.P. Singh's announcement resurrected the Mandal Commission Report that had been left on the shelves for ten years and created a maelstrom of controversy and violent protests particularly against the reservation of university admissions. Like the Kaka Kalelkar Commission of 1953, the Mandal Commission was created in 1979 to identify and enumerate the Other Backward Classes (OBC) and recommend measures for their advancement. Two groups within the Backward Classes are recognized in the Indian Constitution and are allocated reservations for seats in the legislatures and in public service according to their populations. They are the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis) constituting about 17% and 6% respectively of India's population. The Mandal Commission enumerated the rest of the Backward Classes - Other Backward Classes based involving both Hindus (with some 3743 castes) and non-Hindus - as constituting 52% of the population and recommended 27% reservations for them.

In other words, 74% of India's people are considered backward and entitled to no more than 50% reservations in keeping with the Supreme Court ruling that the total reservations based on affirmative action, or positive discrimination, should not exceed 50%. The practice of reserving places for backward classes goes back to the colonial period particularly in the South Indian States and in the then Bombay Presidency, but not so in the North Indian jurisdictions where reservations began only in the 1950s. Caste coalitions in these States have evolved over time under progressive and secu-

cially by the recommendation to reserve 27% of university admissions for the OBC. On the other hand, the controversy galvanized the OBC and Dalits leading to the formation of caste-based parties and vote mobilization in both Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (founded in 1984) and the Samajwadi Party (founded in 1996) were direct beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, the emergence of caste politics coincided with the rise of religious fundamentalism leading to anti-Congress and anti-secular coalitions between caste parties and the Bhartiya Janata Party, as well as coalitions involving the dominant Yadav caste group and Muslims pitted against other backward castes and Dalits. Mayawati Kumari's victory in Uttar Pradesh might be the beginning of a new phase of equilibrium in Northern caste politics.

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Politics at the Panchayat level offers a sharper reflection of caste contradictions on the ground than at the senior levels of government, for it could be easier for a Dalit to become the Chief Minister of a State than for another Dalit to be accepted as the President of a Panchayat. The Dalit empowerment at the local level invariably faces bitter opposition from the

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# The World Saiva Council's Appeal To the International Community Concerning Tamils in the NorthEast of Sri Lanka

May 26, 2007

His Excellency

Secretary General United Nations  
New York, USA

CC: Office of the Commissioner, UN Human Rights Council; Amnesty International; Federal President, Switzerland; Prime Minister, Canada; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada; Leader of Opposition, Ottawa, Canada; President of U.S.A.; Prime Minister of India, New Delhi; Leader of Opposition, Lok Sabha, New Delhi, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, India

Dear Sir,

The World Saiva Council, addressing the International Community composed of the member countries of the United Nations and its organizations including the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Security Council and the United Nations Human Rights Council, members of the European Union, the European Union Commission on Human Rights, members of the European Parliament, members of Non-Governmental Organizations and all members of Civil Society;

Expressing grief and outrage at both the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse's and the government of Sri Lanka's irreverence for the sanctity of life and human security; For its disregard for human dignity, equality and liberty all of which are considered sacred and enshrined in the United Nations Charter of Fundamental Freedoms and Human Rights;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for all of the genocidal actions perpetrated by the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, the government of Sri Lanka and its Armed Forces against Tamils ("Genocide" is defined by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as an act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group);

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the Sri Lankan Armed Forces and its gross violation of the fundamental right to freedom of religion and worship under the Sri Lankan constitution denying the peoples' right to freely and safely practice their religious faith;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the attitude and actions of the Sri Lankan Security forces for denying Hindu Tamils, already undergoing reprisals and facing hardship for so long in the war-torn Tamil homeland in the NorthEast of Sri Lanka and for whom temple worship and prayers serve as the only means of hope and consolation, the right to participate in regular temple rituals (poosai) and festivals by imposing yet new restrictions; Christian Tamils living in the military occupied areas are also

facing similar harassments in meeting their religious obligations;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the killing of Ratnasabapathy Aiyar Somaskantha kurukkal (60yrs) chief priest of Mudippillaiyer Hindu Temple allegedly by the Sri Lanka Navy as recently as 30, April 2007 and for the arrests of both the chief priest and chairman of the Board of Trustees of Perunkulam Muthumaariamman Hindu Temple at Vealanai, Kayts which has made people of the area who are regular temple worshippers fearful of attending temples, resulting in the disruption of prayers and religious functions in temples in the many islets.

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the increasingly alarming and worsening situation now prevailing in the NorthEast concerning the safety and security of children and youth;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the recent alleged Sri Lankan Army complicity in the abduction of four high school students in the Jaffna Peninsula on 4, May 2007 by armed men arriving in a now infamous and dreaded "white van" who forcibly entered the students' houses and kidnapped them; For the threatening death notices received by leading Tamil school principals and students distributed by Sri Lankan Army soldiers;

Expressing grave concern for the state of education in schools and universities in the Northeast due to closure of schools (with some schools turned into refugee camps) and the disruption of studies due to the constant shelling and bombing of the area by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces; for the whole education system that's plagued by low attendance in schools, poor facilities and infrastructure, few teachers and fewer suppliers with many children stricken with poverty and suffering from poor health and malnourishment;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the major naval, aerial and land offensive conducted by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces to capture LTTE controlled territory in the East which has resulted in indiscriminate bombing and shelling of civilian targets including the continuous use of multi barrel rockets; For recent attacks in Vakharai in January and Paduvankarai in March both in the Batticaloa District to name a few, which has apart from inflicting damage to infrastructure and destroying harvests, peoples' properties and livelihood activities; has raised the number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in these areas alone to 160,000;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for indiscriminate, targeted extra judicial killings, abductions and disappearances of

Tamil civilians including students, business persons, humanitarian aid workers, priests, journalists, politicians, Tamil Members of Parliament and the Vice-Chancellor of the Eastern University (whose whereabouts are still unknown); For the hitherto "unprecedented" number of violations of human rights (terminology used by Centre for Policy Alternatives - CPA) perpetrated with intent on innocent Tamil civilians by the Sri Lankan Government's Armed Forces and the Paramilitary Forces under its command;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the worsening humanitarian crisis prevailing in the NorthEast of Sri Lanka, the traditional homeland of the Tamils, a situation orchestrated by the government of Sri Lanka and its Armed Forces; For the ethnic cleansing and internal displacement of Tamils; For the imposition of restrictions on the freedom of movement of Tamils and disruption to their daily life, due to the existence of numerous Sri Lankan Army checkpoints, the new military pass system and the closure of major highways that provide access to the Tamil homeland; For the denial of basic necessities for survival such as food, fuel and medicines, for deprivation of livelihood such as fishing, and farming including commercial activities and for the high cost of living that's driving Tamil families to poverty and dependency, negatively impacting their economic, social, educational, cultural, psychological and physical wellbeing;

Expressing disappointment at foreign governments which have been providing continuing aid to Sri Lanka to strengthen its hands despite committing gross human rights violations against innocent civilians;

Expressing contempt for those countries selling/supplying arms to Sri Lanka to reinforce its war machine, that's being used to hurt the wellbeing and lives of innocent civilians;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the breakdown in the Rule of Law in Sri Lanka that seriously calls into question the independence of the judiciary and the judicial system, the right to freedom of expression, the principles of parliamentary democracy and parliamentary privilege (the 6th amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution severely curtailing such principles as seen by the expulsion by the speaker of Mr. Gajendran a Tamil MP from parliament) the freedom of the press including the safety of journalists, making Sri Lanka a virtual Police State; For the intimidation, torture and indefinite detention of Tamils on dubious charges under the guise of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act and other Emergency

Regulations (that give unparalleled powers to an executive presidency);

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for the nepotism and corruption rampant in the ruling elite made up of President Mahinda Rajapakse and his two brothers one of whom holds the key defense portfolio and the other who serves as key adviser to the President;

Expressing grave concern and a lack of confidence in the Commission of Inquiry and the International Group of Eminent Persons unilaterally appointed by the Sri Lankan President to inquire into only sixteen cases of human rights violations, whose powers are restrictive, falling short of expectations with both the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and the Civil Monitoring Committee expressing dissatisfaction over the control the executive has on both bodies that could cripple their independence;

Expressing grave concern and condemnation for Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse's ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party's (SLFP) recent proposals for a political settlement proclaiming Sri Lanka as still a Sinhala Buddhist State, that's unitary in nature and made up of district councils that's an anachronism, typical of Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist hegemony over Tamils and all others in the island; a by-product of innate Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism and racism; For It's proposal for a new constitution based on the Sri Lankan President's "Mahinda Chinthanaya" - which was his presidential election manifesto rejected by the Tamils that do not and would not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people, proving beyond a shadow of a doubt, the futility of any purposeful peace negotiations;

**THEREFORE DO HEREBY RESOLVE**

**That the grave concerns and condemnations herein expressed by the World Saiva Council to the International Community composed of the member countries of the United Nations and its organizations including the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Security Council and the United Nations Human Rights Council, members of the European Union, the European Union Commission on Human Rights, members of the European parliament, members of Non-Governmental Organizations and all members of Civil Society, be given due and immediate attention with consideration for urgent action;**

**That urgent action be taken to condemn in strictest terms the Sri Lankan**

**President, Mahinda Rajapakse, the Government of Sri Lanka and its Armed Forces for acts of crimes committed against innocent civilians;**

**That urgent action be taken to address the concerns herein expressed and intervene to stop all genocidal action against Tamils, ending the carnage and the humanitarian crisis in the Tamil homeland in the NorthEast of Sri Lanka, holding to account the Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapakse, the Government of Sri Lanka and its Armed Forces for gross violations of human rights against innocent civilians;**

**That urgent action is taken to freeze all aid to Sri Lanka whether it's for economic, developmental purposes;**

**That urgent action is taken to stop the sale and supply of arms to Sri Lanka, the use of which kills innocent people;**

**That urgent action is taken to allow Tamils to freely and without fear practice their faith, to have their temples and churches kept opened, for priests to be safe and for people to be able to attend regular prayers, religious functions and festivals without restrictions;**

**Urgent Action be taken to alleviate the suffering of the Tamil speaking people in the NorthEast of Sri Lanka, providing the climate that's conducive for the people to live in security without their lives in constant risk of danger, intimidation and harassment from the Sri Lankan occupying forces;**

**That urgent action be taken to mediate a just peace in the island between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE, arriving at a political settlement that truly reflects the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils based on equal rights and self determination for all the people of the island, creating prosperity and equity and restoring fundamental human rights, dignity, real peace and security to the Tamil people.**

Yours truly

The undersigned  
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# Tamil-speaking Muslims re-discover ties across borders

By PK Balachandran

Tamil-speaking Muslims from Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and Malaysia are now re-discovering and re-establishing linguistic, cultural and religious ties which had weakened considerably over the last 400 years.

Islamic literature in Tamil has provided the rallying point for the new hands-across-borders movement.

There has been a series of conferences and workshops on Islamic literature in the Tamil language in Colombo and Chennai over the last few years, with Chennai having held the seventh between May 25 and 27.

"It was a roller coaster ride, with workshops on a number of subjects," said Rauff Hakeem, Sri Lankan litterateur and cabinet minister.

"The quality of the presentations was quite good. We were glad to find that a number of non-Muslims in Tamil Nadu were doing research on Islamic literature in Tamil. And it was good to hear them praise the Muslims' contribution to Tamil literature," Hakeem said.

One of the major resolutions passed was that universities in these countries should establish Chairs in Islamic literature in Tamil. The Madurai Kamaraj University in Tamil Nadu is the only university having a Chair in this now. Sri Lankan Muslims proudly state that the first occupant of the Chair was a Sri Lankan Muslim, Prof MM Uvais.

The Chennai conference provided opportunities for Tamil-speaking Muslims to rediscover their roots and interact with a Tamil-speaking Muslim Diaspora.

"We were constantly running into Indian and Malaysian Muslims who had owned businesses in Sri Lanka before the ethnic conflict in the island. They were in shipping and gem trading. Some broke into Sinhalese on seeing us!"

"And in Ervadi (Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu) local Muslims showed us Portuguese-style mansions which their ancestors had built with money earned in Sri Lanka," Hakeem recalled.

In the 1960s, a good chunk of the Indian Muslim community in Sri Lanka took flight because of

the communalisation of politics. In 1915, the anti-Muslim riots were directed mainly against Muslim traders from India, called "Coast Moors."

When the Portuguese and other European powers persecuted the Muslims of Sri Lanka and India from the 16th Century onwards, many fled to South East Asia where they became petty traders and artisans.

"During the dark days of persecution by the Portuguese and the Dutch, Muslim poet-preachers from Tamil Nadu helped Sri Lankan Muslims keep their faith. Over 2,000 literary works were produced at that time," Hakeem said,

The Portuguese introduced the "cartaz" or a permit system, which in effect, prevented Muslims from using many ports in South and South East Asia. In Sri Lanka, they were driven away from the prosperous Western coast. Under Dutch rule, they were not given government contracts.

The Nayak rulers of Tamil Nadu favoured the Portuguese over the local Muslim traders. The



British favoured the docile Hindu Chettiars. The British also developed Madras as a port and neglected Muslim-dominated ports in the South, like Cuddalore (then known as Islamabad), Nagapattinam, Thondi and Adhirampattinam.

Because of their conflict with the Sri Lankan Tamils and a new found fascination for the culture of the Arab world, the Muslim elite of Sri Lanka began a movement to shed religious, cultural

and linguistic links with the Tamil Nadu Muslims. The emergence of new states after 1947 created new barriers between the Tamil-speaking Muslims of the region.

But as the Islamic Tamil literature conferences are showing, ties between the Tamil speaking Muslims across borders had not vanished.

And there is hope that they can be salvaged and nurtured.

[Courtesy: Hindustan Times]

## Link rivers, declare Tamil as official language: Karunanidhi

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, who turned 84 on June 3rd, appealed to the Tamil youth to work for declaring Tamil as one of the official languages of the nation and linking of rivers.

Talking to reporters, during his birthday celebrations at the DMK headquarters here, Karunanidhi said rivers in the country should be linked to promote national integrity and unity among states and Tamil should become one of

the official languages of the nation, adding this was his birthday message.

He said these were the DMK's demands and his long time wish. Tamil youths should work for the fulfilment of these demands and people of other states should cooperate for achieving it.

To a query on convening a Chief Ministers' conference for linking peninsular rivers, he said he had already requested Prime



Minister Manmohan Singh to convene such a meeting when he met him in Delhi.

## DMK Govt. seeks Centre's help to renovate ancient temples

The DMK Government in Tamil Nadu, headed by well known atheist M Karunanidhi, has sought Centre's help to renovate ancient temples, which had rich heritage and excellent sculpture.

The Centre's grant of Rs 9.87 crore received under the recommendations of the 12th Finance Commission would be utilised for undertaking renovation works in 48 ancient and historical temples, which were in a dilapidated condition, official sources said.

The works would be undertaken without impairing their antiquity, the sources said.

'It is a milestone in the history of temple renovation', they said.

These temples were sung by Nayanmars (Saivite saints) and Alwars (Vaishnavite saints), who had contributed a lot to development of Tamil language, during the seventh and eight centuries by their devotional songs called Thevaram and Dhivya Prabandams, which were the first kirtanas of Tamil music.

In the later part of the 19th century, when a movement was launched to promote Tamil music, these hymns were used by the musicians to popularise Tamil

music concept.

The temples to be renovated included Janalesar temple at Takkolam in Vellore district, Tirupurantakaswamy temple at Cooum, Azhagiyasinga Perumal Temple, Kancheepuram. These Temples belonged to the periods of either Chola Dynasty or Pallava and the archeturally beautiful, the sources said.

The government also has decided to spend Rs 27.50 lakh to preserve the paintings at the Thiyyarajasamy temple at Tiruvarur, they added.

[PTI]

## Shanker, Director of Sivaji in Canada

Director Shanker is currently touring Canada with his family. His Sivaji starring Rajnikanth is all set for a release on 15 June. He is anticipated to be in Canada at the time of the opening of Sivaji.

One of the big-budgeted movies, Sivaji is being eagerly anticipated by Tamil fans of both Superstar Rajnikanth as well as the Ace Director Shanker around the globe. Shanker had stated recently that Sivaji is a movie to



reckon with in his career.

With the who's who of Tamil cinema including Shanker,

Rajnikanth, AVM and Rahman coming together, Sivaji is touted to be the biggest release in Tamil cinema ever.



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# Impact of the Federal Idea on a World Changing Fast

By D.B.S. Jeyaraj

" maybe the federal idea isn't such a bad idea after all "

- Bill Clinton (in 1999)

Ailing president of Cuba, Fidel Castro Ruiz, wrote recently an article responding to some observations made by US President George W Bush. In the last part of that article Fidel related an anecdote from his halcyon days of revolting against Batista. This is what it was:

"Ideas cannot be killed," Sarrria emphatically said. Sarrria was the black lieutenant, a patrol leader in Batista's army who arrested us, after the attempt to seize the Moncada Garrison, while three of us slept in a small mountain hut, exhausted by the effort of breaking through the siege. The soldiers, fuelled by hatred and adrenalin, were aiming their weapons at me even before they had identified who I was. "Ideas cannot be killed," the black lieutenant kept repeating, practically automatically and in a hushed voice. I dedicate those excellent words to you, Mr. Bush." Castro wrote.

True, Ideas cannot be killed. As the cliché goes Ideas can be defeated only by greater or better ideas. Another truism is no force can stop an idea whose time has come. Cliches and truisms may be repetitive and boring but they do represent powerful wordly wisdom!

It was perhaps the merit in what is called the federal idea which prompted Bill Clinton to observe " maybe the federal idea isn't such a bad idea after all " . This was in 1999 when he was the most powerful man on earth. It was at the end of the conference on federalism at Mont Tremblant in Quebec that Clinton made this remark. Incidentally Prof. Gamini Lakshman Peiris also addressed this path - breaking conclave organized by the Forum of Federations based in Ottawa.

What then is this "federal idea" ? It is in one sense a concept that embodies various related things like federalism, federal systems, federations and federalist etc. This is a world where the word "federal" has become almost the "F - word" in politics. Different countries and different entities for different reasons frown on this "F - word". Therefore "federal idea" has become an indirect reference to this F - word. If a " rose by any other name could smell as sweet" then the "federalism " word too can be sanitised and discussed as the "federal idea".

Let me quote Canada's Bob Rae, former Ontario premier and ex - president of the forum of federations on this. In his foreword to the "handbook of Federal Countries" published by the forum Rae has this to say - "There has been a profound resurgence in interest in the federal idea in the last decade. I choose the phrase "federal idea" because the "ism" in federalism has a way of limiting debate and understanding".

In Spain the central govern-

ment doesn't like to use the "federal" word as it seems to indicate erosion of sovereign authority. Ironically Catalonians in Spain also frown on this because in their perception "federalism is not enough to articulate the unique Catalonian identity and right of self - government. In South Africa the earlier "apartheid" regime set up some federal structures to contain and diffuse pan - african yearning for freedom. So Federalism became a dirty word to the blacks. When the African national congress attained power with its vision of "one South Africa" the ANC did not want to describe the new Constitution as "federalist".

Sri Lankans are well aware of what Rae meant. In Lanka's deeply polarised society federalism is certainly the "F - word" and worse. At one end there are the "unitarists" who are adamant that the unitary structure of the state should not be changed. At the other end are the "separatists" who want the Island to become home to two states. In between are those who want a compromise based on principles of power - sharing.

This middle ground is shrinking rapidly as war escalates. There is marked reluctance and trepidation on the part of many to espouse federalism openly. This is sad but quite understandable in a situation where "federalism" is seen as betrayal by both sides. One sees it as a conspiracy to break up the nation while the other views it as a ruse to stymie the quest for total independence.

While Sri Lankans on both sides of the ethnic divide look on federalism with suspicion and embroil themselves in debilitatingly destructive conflict the rest of the world is in ferment over the federal idea. There was a time when federalism was seen as the ideal remedy for many of the world's political maladies. It was perceived as the universal device to achieve unity in diversity. Experience has shown that this is not necessarily true in all situations. At the same time federal arrangements have certainly helped wield cohesiveness in many cases.

Twenty - Five Countries today have federal and / or quasi - federal structures. These range from the sole superpower USA to tiny St. Kitts and Nevis; from Canada in the north to Micronesia in the south; from India in the east to Switzerland in the west. The population in these countries together amounts to more than 40% of the world's total humanity. In addition there are some countries that are not federal but have special administrative arrangements amounting to de - facto quasi - federalism.

Let us proceed alphabetically . Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Comoros, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico, The federated states of Micronesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, St. Kitts and Nevis, South



Flags of nations in Toronto during World Cup Soccer

Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Venezuela are the Federal countries. While most are explicitly federal a few like Spain are not, but in actuality are federal in all but name.

Though federal none of these countries share the exactly same system. Each country has different administrative arrangements and internal structures. They also vary greatly in size. Russia has republics and many types of regions within: India has states and union territories; Switzerland has cantons while Germany and Austria have landers. Belgium has three regions and three cultural communities while Spain has autonomous regions; the USA has states, federacies, local home rule territories, unincorporated territories and native american dependent nations: Canada has provinces, territories and aboriginal organizations. Venezuela has states, territories, federal dependencies, federal district and many Islands.

Apart from federal and quasi - federal states there are also Countries having de - centralized unions with federal features. The United Kingdom comprising England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and five self - governing islands is the best - known example of this kind. Italy with 15 ordinary and 5 autonomous regions is another; Netherlands has 11 provinces and one associated state; Japan has 47 prefectures; Fiji Islands is a consociation of two ethnic communities; Colombia has 23 departments, 4 intendencies and 3 commissaries. Ukraine has 24 oblasts, 2 metropolitan areas and the autonomous republic of Crimea; The people's republic of China has 22 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities, and the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macao.

Another phenomenon is that of Countries with federacies and associative states. Bhutan is an associative state of India. Nine and Cook Islands are associative states of New Zealand. Netherlands Antilles, San Marino, Liechtenstein, Monaco are associative states of Netherlands, Italy. Switzerland and France respectively. Puerto Rico and Northern Marianas are federacies of the USA. Madeira and Azores Islands are Portugese federacies. Likewise Greenland and Faroe Islands are Danish federacies. Britain has the federacies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. Aaland Islands is a Federacy of Finland.

It could be seen therefore that the federal idea is not restricted to categorical federal or quasi - federal states alone. The federal idea is a free spirit permeating the body politic of many states. There is no "mono - principle" here. Each country has fashioned its own unique arrangement to suit its needs. Apart from administrative convenience and the imperative to provide citizens with the best form of government these Countries have also taken into account diversity of peoples, regional variety and imbalances, historic and geographic necessity etc as criteria to evolve systems of governance. There has been no rigorous dogma stifling aspirations of constituent peoples.

The federal idea has assumed a new importance and related vigour in recent times. There are a number of reasons for this Ronald Watts of Institute of Intergovernmental relations at the Queens university in Kingston, Canada is the author of "comparing federal systems". An excerpt from that explains this global trend.

" Modern developments in transportation, social communications, technology, and industrial organization have produced pressures at one and the same time for larger political organizations and for smaller ones. The pressure for larger political units has been generated by the goals shared by most western and non - western societies today; a desire for progress, a rising standard of living, social justice and influence in the world arena, and by a growing awareness of world - wide inter - dependence in an era whose advanced technology makes both mass destruction and mass - construction possible.

The desire for smaller self - governing political units has risen from the desire to make governments more responsive to the individual citizen and to give expression to primary group attachments - linguistic and cultural ties, religious connections, historical traditions and social practices - which provide the distinctive basis for a community's sense of identity and yearning for self - determination. Given these dual pressures, more and more peoples have come to see some form of federalism, combining a shared government for specified common purposes with autonomous action by constituent units of government for purposes related to maintaining their regional distinctiveness as allowing the closest institutional approximation to the multi -

national reality of the contemporary world".

Watts sums up the essence of the federal idea. On the one hand there is the tendency to form larger entities including supra - national bodies like the European union. On the other there is the need to accommodate different intra - national aspirations of an ethnic nature. So Belgium reverts to federalism to satisfy the Flemish and the Walloons while Brussels is the seat of the EU parliament. The Union Jack flag may have the crosses of St. George, St. Andrew, St. David and St. Patrick but merry England cannot hold the United Kingdom together without devolving power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The on going war (declared or undeclared) and its brutal ferocity has distorted current reality in Sri Lanka. The consequences have gone far beyond the original causes. But the conflict has its genesis in colonialism. Modern Ceylon as Sri Lanka was known then is a British creation. The Island was unified administratively but the people were divided politically through representation on communal lines. What was "united" to exploit was "divided" to govern. In the absence of adequate and equitable forms of power - sharing the Island is wracked with post - Independence conflict within pre - Independence boundaries.

Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism is primarily reactive. The Tamils thought of themselves as being on par with the Sinhala people as co - founders of the modern nation of Ceylon. Universal franchise and territorial representation reduced them to a principal minority. The Tamils still thought of themselves as belonging to the Island in its entirety. So they wanted balanced representation and then adopted responsive cooperation as political strategies. When these failed came the Federal demand. Tamil self - perception now confined it to a regional minority. Even here the political leaders were prepared to compromise far short of federalism like regional councils, district councils etc. Finally came the desperate cry for separation and resultant armed struggle. Federalism if adopted at the appropriate time could have prevented the bloodshed and carnage.

Federalism is proposed even now as the possible solution. The greatest achievement of the Norway brokered peace process was the agreement in Oslo to

explore federalism. But people are wary, pessimistic, hostile and dismissive. The proponents of federalism are perceived as traitors to their own ethnicity by hardliners on both sides. The vanishing tribe of moderates on the other hand react by describing the so called patriots as extremists and narrow nationalists.

Whatever its merits or deficiencies federalism cannot be imposed on any people. The element of consent and mutual cooperation is essential for any system to work. If Sri Lanka is to become federal or quasi-federal or even have devolved powers within appropriate units in a unitary system the various segments of this nation have to work and live together as one country. For this a better understanding of the federal idea is required.

The proponents of federalism argue that adopting it will strengthen unity and territorial integrity. Switzerland, India, Malaysia, Belgium, Germany, Spain etc are

In spite of the heat generated in Sri Lanka by this "F - word" there is no denying that the Federal idea is catching on in a world of ferment. The Federal idea is impacting greatly on a world changing fast. In the words of Bob Rae -

" The resurgence of the federal idea has at its core many different causes. The vitality of the values of democracy, the revolutions in the politics of identity and human rights, the twin collapse of apartheid and bureaucratic communism, the impact of the technological revolution, the economic changes we associate with the word globalisation, all these have made their contributions.

This renewal is not at all confined to countries that have a federalist tradition. Countries have long had to struggle with the simple truth that geography is rarely synonymous with automatic homogeneity. Ethnic, linguistic, racial and religious conflicts have become the dominant issue fac-



Flags of Nations at UN, Geneva

cited as examples. But it cannot be denied that federalism has failed to prevent secession too. The disintegration of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are well - known examples. The Malaysia - Singapore and Pakistan - Bangladesh splits of the past as well as modern break - ups of Czech - Slovakia, Serbia and Montenegro are also lessons. In Canada, separatism flourished in Quebec despite federalism. Britain devolved power to Scotland and Wales but secessionism seems to have gained ground there. Nigerian federalism did not prevent the Biafran civil war. There are however many nuances to take into account when analysing the countries in question.

At the other end of the spectrum is Belgium and Spain willingly opting for federalism as a solution to curb separatist tendencies. In Canada the equation is changing with the new leader of the separatist Parti Quebecois announcing that no referendum to facilitate secessionist "sovereignty" will be held in the near future. The three main Quebec parties are now for greater autonomy and powers within a united Canada. Recent amendments in Germany have strengthened federalism. India through its co-operative federalism model is becoming more and more federal in practice. The reverse is visible in Australia and USA where "centralised" authority is slowly eroding pure federalism.

Federalism therefore provides no "one size fits all" type of solution. Each Country has to examine and adopt arrangements conducive and suitable for individual needs. Sri Lanka too needs to explore the federal idea intensively and fully before deciding whether to accept or reject it or adopt it with appropriate innovation. The federal idea is dynamic and constantly evolving. What we in Sri Lanka need to do is to explore the federal idea and have an informed debate about its pros and cons and also on deciding whether we adopt or reject it.

ing the world order today. Wars after 1945 have been as much within countries as between them, with disastrous consequences for peace and security. It is no longer soldiers dying in the millions but civilians. From Rwanda to Cambodia, from the Balkans to East Timor the battleground is within countries that are unable to resolve the conflicts of what Michael Ignatieff has called ' blood and belonging'.

It is in this context that the federal idea is re-emerging.

Indeed, issues of federal governance are at the centre of active political and legal discussions in every part of the globe, particularly in areas where conflict resolution is a critical necessity.

National sovereignty is not dead and the age of the nation - state is not over. But the notion that these are exclusive or all defining is clearly outmoded. Governance practices within countries are inevitably subject to the scrutiny of world political and economic opinion, and most important, to the rule of law itself.

The collapse of one party state, the demands of identity, the urge to local empowerment, the insistence on greater openness and transparency in government, and the recognition that in a smaller and much more inter-dependent world sovereignty is no longer an absolute, has brought the federal idea to the fore again."

This then is what the federal idea is all about. Whatever the misgivings about the "F - word" in Sri Lankan politics dilly - dallying over a political acceptable settlement is a luxury we cannot afford. Drowning people will clutch even at straws to save themselves. Sri Lanka is submerging in an unnecessary and brutal war. The Oslo agreement provided a lifeline in the commitment to explore the federal idea.. Why not grab it? [federalidea.com]

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# Monsoon Arts



## Thamil Isai Kalaamanram gets its own premises

Full fifteen years and a few months ago the Thamil Isai Kalaamanram of Ontario was launched with a dedicated commitment to serve the Tamil community in Canada, principally in Ontario, a new and vibrant immigrant group that was making a homeland for itself – in fact one of a few others in the world, because of the agonizing and excruciating political circumstances in Sri Lanka. No community can stabilize itself anywhere in the world if its cultural roots are either strangled or snapped to such an extent that nourishment needed to enrich and enhance it is continuously denied.

Political philosophies may come and go but cultural roots and whatever flowers and seeds through eons of time are eternal. They bear the hallmarks of human civilization. They are precious to any community as much as to the Tamils and this is an area that should never become arenas of political contentions; this is no place for debate, disagreement and disputation but true spontaneous development based on understanding, appreciation, admiration and enjoyment. These are the streams that water and nurture human civilization and foster a spirit of unity and joy.

It was in that spirit the Thamil Isai Kalaamanram was founded which has had the good fortune over the years of volunteer support from truly devoted people



from the community. Today they have become role models in volunteerism to our young people. The Manram today is the only one of a kind in this field in North America, very much like the internationally famed Trinity College of Music, holding annual examinations in Carnatic vocals, instrumentals and classical dance forms of India especially Bharata Natyam which is generally identified as the traditional dance of the Dravidian people. But this dance form is considered the main source of the classical dances of India and its roots go back to the ancient of times when sages of old perceived the entire creation in the dance.

Speaking to this writer, the president of this organization, Mr Thampiah Siripathy said that the Thamil Isai Kalaamanram is not only ensuring that our community have these rich traditions to inspire them, but we are also

being promoters of this sacred music and dance forms and their religion-based philosophy to people of the world. In this, he added, as Sri Lankan Tamils we take great pride.

Sunday April 29, 2007 was indeed a proud day for Thamil Isai Kalaamanram. On this very day, they opened their new premises cum auditorium and library from where they will function now. All these years, volunteers have used their own homes to carry out the various organizational tasks without any due material returns to them but the rewarding satisfaction that they were serving their people especially children and young people. Hundreds of children have benefited from this commitment during the last 15 years and the community too has been treated to many cultural functions, the types of which would not have been possible but for the way the Manram has managed its goals and objectives.

The premises situated at 50 Waybright Court, Unit # 33, Scarborough, Ontario were opened in traditional style by the community's much respected and revered Sangeetha Pooshanam

Mr. T Rajalingam, and the lighting of the lamp was done by Mr. P. Kanagasabapathy.

Soon afterwards, Mr Siripathy welcomed the guests in the auditorium of the premises ideally suited for mini-recitals and seminars and announced the happy news that the Manram has been recognized by the Canadian Government as a Charitable Organization. Mr Siripathy also said that the Manram has never received any grant from any government or public institutions or organizations and the new premises were fully bought up because finances were managed ably with great skill and integrity. He expressed his joy being able to work with such a dedicated team of volunteers.

Thereafter several friends of the Manram publicly expressed their delight and pleasure and also their continued support for it. The public function followed the annual general meeting of the Manram at which the whole committee was re-elected by public acclaim. Refreshments followed soon afterwards.



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# Karthigesu Sivathamby: Mighty Intellectual

by K.S.Sivakumaran

The Tamil community in general and the academic / intellectually oriented student population both in this country and abroad, in particular, treat him as an icon of the past and present century. He is just not merely a Tamil scholar, but also a multi-disciplinarian of the intellectual kind. He is much more than to us Sri Lankans. His beginnings as a Marxist and a student of Emeritus Professor Tompson at Birmingham University in the UK and his association with academics in various universities as pacesetter teacher and his gradual concern about the dilemma of being a Thamilian and a Sri Lankan at the same time has led him to be an overly excited humanist of Tamil Nationalism.

Sivathamby has many facets and versatility. I am not going to describe all aspects of his contribution to our country in this column. That has to be written at length. Instead, I wish to draw the attention of readers in Thamil to a dossier on K.Sivathamby in the current issue of a Lankan Thamil literary journal called Gnanam edited by an important writer in Thamil, Dr.T. Gnanasekeran. Scholars and students in Thamil Studies are indebted to the editor for the compilation of various articles on Sivathamby that put the scholar and intellectual in the right portfolio. There are many more who could give their estimation of the learned professor, but due to exigencies of space only a few had contributed within the 64 pages of the magazine. But the articles are substantial and show us the subject of description as a phenomenal figure.

Among those who had written are six Lankan academics. They are A.Shanmugathas, C.Maun-aguru, Nagaraja Iyer Subram-anian, S.Yogarasa, K.Raghuparan and S.Santhirasegeran. There are also other writers like P.Maa-thaiyan, A.Muhamadu Sameem, V.Vimalarajah, Theniyaan, Sengai Aaaliyaan, A.Ravi, S.Moses and Anthony Jeeva.

I enjoyed reading M. Sameem's article for its sheer personal note recreating the atmosphere of the Peradeniya campus in the mid fifties of the last century. He also highlights contributions in relation to Sivathamby's works. The lighter side of the relationship between Sameem and Sivathamby is totally amusing and absorbing.

Maunaguru's article, equally personal, analyses the part played by Sivathamby in the field of theatre. It could be recalled that Sivathamby's theses for his doctorate in Birmingham was on Ancient Tamil Drama. Sivathamby was an actor and director on the stage as well as an artiste on the radio. It is an exhaustive study true to Maunaguru's style of writing. Maunaguru himself is an artiste and producer of folk theatre.

Sivathamby is one of the few Thamil academics familiar with Sinhala. Shanmugathaas recounts the quintessence of Sivathamby as far as his reputation in Thamilnadu as the beacon light for the scholars there. Similarly Santhirasegeran shares his experiences with Sivathamby in foreign climes. A Thamilnsu scholar, Maathaiyan relates Sivathamby's perception as literary historian. It is also a studied analysis. N.Subramanian sees Sivathamby as a Thamilologist.

I liked S.Yogarasa's article as it introduces the traits in Sivathamby's writing hitherto unexplored. K.Raghuparan discusses Sivathamby's deep interest in ancient



Thamil literature. Vimalarajah places him as the symbol of Vadamadachi region in the northern peninsula.

Theniyaan speaks about the terms and words Sivathamby has coined for the benefit of Thamilians among other things. Sengai Aaliyaan reviews Siva-thamby's role as a literary critic. A.Ravi writes about how he was moulded by his guru. I found that this was a sort of clumsy writing in relation to the rest of the articles. And it is longish and undisciplined. On the other hand Moses as a student of the professor focuses on his guru in an organized manner. Finally Anthony Jeeva eulogizes Sivathamby as a temple of knowledge.

This particular issue of Gnanam also has its usual features like poems, short stories, readers' letters and columns.

The magazine is available from 3 B, 46th Lane, Colombo 06. web; www.gnanam.info e-mail; editor@gnanam.info

Last Sunday, there was a get together of theatre people of the past decades, pioneers in Colombo in keeping Thamil theatre alive, despite several obstacles and unguided direction in understanding drama and theatre. They were not sophisticated and poor. But their enthusiasm was great. Some of the artistes who contributed are dead. During their time they improved theatre presentation and emerged as great players, though their achievements and contributions are not recorded by academic critics.

I was invited to this get-together held in Kotahena. This was organized by Kalaichelvan and Siva Pradeepan supported by several artistes belonging to different theatre groups in Colombo North. The philanthropist, Hashim Omar was the chief guest. Among those present were some members of the Colombo Municipality.

The highlight of the event was the variety entertainment they provided mainly singing; their hidden talents came to the fore, despite the fact that they were ageing.

They are all in need of a building for the Thamilian artistes to rehearse and conduct their theatrical activities. If the government is disinterested in reckoning the Thamilian artistes, and they will have to rely on the private sector to support them.

It was revealed that Hashim Omar is ready to provide Rs.25,000 to buy a land.

But the CMC with concurrence of the President has to allocate land for this purchase.

It is a pity that businessmen never sponsor any artistic activities- theatre, music, film productions, and literary activities for the benefit of Lankan Thamilians. Is it because they think that the local Thamilians do not belong to Sri Lanka? Hope not.

[TamilWeek.com]

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# Monsoon Health



## Spring Back to Action

By **Mithura Anandarajah**  
(Registered Physiotherapist)

Spring is finally here and we're getting ready to enjoy those summer months. Put away those bulky sweaters and pull out the skirts, shorts and sandals. It is time to finally start those projects that you delay during those cold long winter months. Pull out those gardening supplies or plan for some spring cleaning. Perhaps it is time for some renovating or moving or time to start a new sport. All this activity though invigorating, may certainly take its toll on your body. In addition to strains and sprains, one of the most common injuries is low back pain. It can start as an acute strain while lifting a couch. It can also be a chronic injury worsening over time, perhaps due to poor posture or arthritis. Whatever the cause may be, it can limit your mobility, sleep and daily function. Pain can develop immediately within minutes or can worsen over days and weeks.

8 out of 10 Canadians suffer from low back pain at some time in their lives. Men and women are equally affected. After the common cold, it is the second largest

cause of loss of work. Low back pain can be localized in the back or can radiate down the buttocks or the legs. It can be a dull ache or can worsen into sharp spasm; sometimes, you may feel pain, pins and needles and/or numbness. It can be painful enough that you are unable to get out of bed. Even sitting can sometimes make it worse.

When having low back pain, it is important to realize that low back pain is common and that it usually will get better, within days or a few weeks. The primary cause is mechanical dysfunction, which involves a strain of the muscles, or other soft structures (ligaments and tendons) connected to the spine. What can be more complicated is when the disc (a jelly cushion between the bones) bulges out of its position and irritates an adjoining nerve. Though commonly called a "slipped disc" this is actually a misnomer. The material within a disc may leak out of its casing and into the vertebral canal. This is referred to a herniated disc. When the material irritates the nearby nerves and pain then radiates down the lower extremity, what results is a condition called

sciatica.

The cause of low back pain can vary from person to person, and it is important to accurately determine the cause. See your Doctor or a Physiotherapist for assessment and treatment. Be aware of "red flags" which are indicators of perhaps a more serious condition. They would include the following:

- ♦ Pain following a traumatic injury like falling off a ladder.
- ♦ Pain getting worse and constant
- ♦ History of cancer
- ♦ Significant weight loss
- ♦ Developing symptoms in your legs, like weakness and numbness.
- ♦ Bowel or bladder problems

With treatment of low back pain, it is important not to panic. The initial focus of treatment is pain relief. If you do lift that couch and feel the sudden onset of pain, immediately apply an ice pack to the area for 15 minutes and apply it 2-3x a day. The pain may force you to rest but realize that this is not the ideal treatment. What results is further stiffness which will prevent movement and delay recovery. Either



see your physician for pain and/or anti-inflammatory medication or see a Physiotherapist. Modalities such as electrical stimulation, heat/ice or acupuncture may facilitate pain relief. Also your physiotherapist may start you on an exercise program for gentle low back stretches. If you have limited flexibility in you back and legs, this will predispose you to back injuries. Once your pain starts to resolve, your Physiotherapist may progress your program to include postural and abdominal exercises to prevent further re-injury. This will increase your core stability. Massage therapy may facilitate pain relief and increase circulation to the injured area. It will be important to use heat and/or ice at home and do the stretches daily. Discuss with your therapist the best position for sleep and ways to modify your daily activity.

You may have to alter your work station to allow you to continue working, without flaring up your back.

While treatment is important, prevention of low back pain can reduce pain/anxiety and will allow you to take full advantage of spring and summer. Staying fit and active throughout the year will keep you in better flexibility/strength and mobility. Maintain your flexibility in your back and legs. This will allow your back to work in its optimal position. Strengthen your abdominal and back muscles either at the gym or with your Physiotherapist/Kinesiologist. Joining a yoga or pilates class will facilitate better back care. Also, watch your posture when doing activities like moving furniture and bags of soil. Discuss with a therapist the best way to lift heavy loads, while protecting your back.

Protecting your back will allow you to enjoy all those activities that you enjoy during the spring and summer months. So stretch, get a massage and spring back into action. Be active, healthy and enjoy the sunshine!

Mithura Anandarajah is a registered physiotherapist working at Rathburn Physiotherapy. Located in the heart of Mississauga, this clinic provides physiotherapy, massage therapy and chiropody.

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# Heart attack symptom

The Chinese and Japanese drink hot tea with their meals...not cold water... maybe it is time we adopt their drinking habit while eating!!! Nothing to lose, everything to gain...

For those who like to drink cold water, this article is applicable to you. It is nice to have a cold drink after a meal. However, the cold water will solidify the oily stuff that you have just consumed.

It will slow down the digestion. Once this "sludge" reacts with the acid, it will break down

and be absorbed by the intestine faster than the solid food. It will line the intestine.

Very soon, this will turn into fats and lead to cancer. It is best to drink hot soup or warm water after a meal.

A serious note about heart attacks:

Women should know that not every heart attack symptom is going to be the left arm hurting. Be aware of intense pain in the jaw line.

You may never have the first chest pain during the course of a

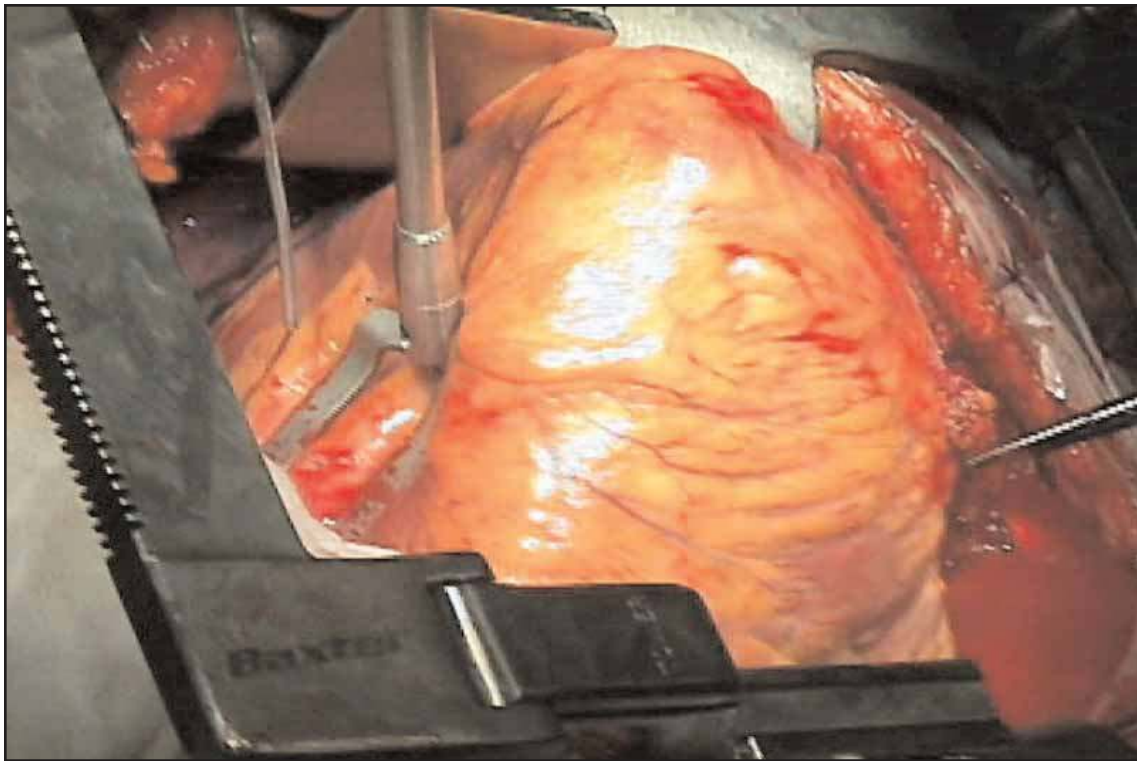
heart attack.

Nausea and intense sweating are also common symptoms.

60% of people who have a heart attack while they are asleep do not wake up.

Pain in the jaw can wake you from a sound sleep. Let's be careful and be aware. The more we know, the better chance we could survive...

A cardiologist says if everyone who gets this mail sends it to 10 people, you can be sure that we'll save at least one life.



# Fatty Fish Diet Helps Prevent Vision Loss Among Seniors

By Rosanne Skirble

The link between diet and vision loss among older people is the focus of the Age Related Eye Disease Study, or AREDS, sponsored by the National Eye Institute, where John Paul SanGiovani is a staff scientist.

SanGiovani says the first stage of the study, called AREDS I, showed that a combination of high doses of vitamins C, E, beta-

had severe AMD.

All participants reported what they ate everyday. SanGiovani says AMD risk may be lowered with a diet high in fatty fish like salmon and tuna. But he is not sure whether this is related to lifestyle among people who eat fish or simply the diet. "From what I understand about the science there is a good reason to believe that the nutrients contained in fish



carotene and zinc significantly reduced the risk of advanced macular degeneration or AMD, the leading cause of blindness in the United States. "It was about a 25 percent reduction in the risk of progressing to this sight-threatening form of AMD."

AREDS I followed 4,500 people over a 12-year period ending in 1998. A total of 1,115 participants did not have any symptoms of AMD at the beginning of the study and were compared with those who did, including 650 who

may act in a protective role."

AREDS II is now underway. The 5-year clinical trial will test the nutrient-vision link among 4,000 participants at 80 medical centers across the United States. SanGiovani hopes that as more is known about the dietary link to AMD, the risk can be reduced and progression slowed for the millions of people diagnosed with the disease. The research is reported in the May issue of the Archives of Ophthalmology.

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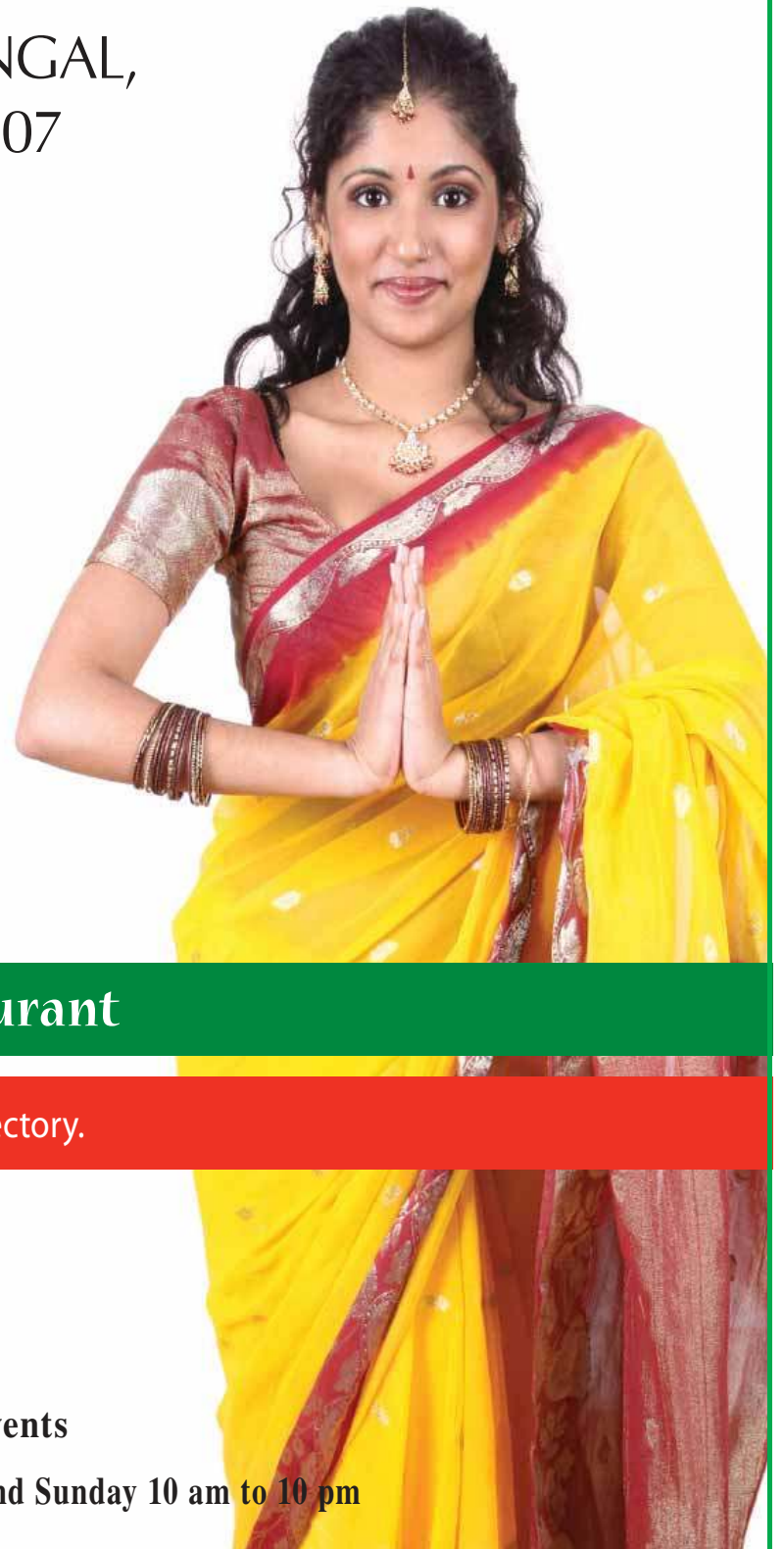
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# Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce - New Land Mark - Continued from Pg 1



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#### JOB Placement Services

Our goal at ComputeK is to assist our students with employment or placement opportunities. We have implemented a new service that provides all our students new and graduated access to our workshops and Employment Resource Center which helps in the following areas:

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## Why Us

#### Career Selection

"Before you start on a Career Program, Research the Program and the College you want to attend"



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# Monsoon Food Court



## BBQ

In may just be in human nature to barbecue. Well, we have been doing it as far back as time can denote. In the Stone Age, man hunted for food and cooked it over an open flame. And while we still cook over flame today, there are actually two different types. True barbecue requires a sauce. If not, you are just grilling. While both are good, barbecue involves slowly cooking the meat with low temperature for hours.

When you think about going to a barbecue, you probably think of yummy, juicy food such as hamburgers and steak or even a good hot dog with all the fixins?. The term barbecue does not only refer to the food but also to the event itself. The act of gathering together with friends and family to enjoy good food, drinks and a great time has been an honored tradition for generations. It doesn't matter where you live or where you are from, the barbecue is a popular get-together.

So we all know that the barbecue is an honored American tradition but just where did it originate anyway? Well, there are several different states that each has their own claim to fame when it comes to the barbecue. Texas, Virginia, Georgia and the Carolinas all have stories about

how the barbecue originated. If you look into the history of barbecues you will see that each of these states has a slightly different method of barbecuing so they very well could have all come up with it. Wherever the idea came from, it took off really fast.

If you love barbecue, then you know a staple of the successful barbecue is a great barbecue sauce. There are different types of sauces but the original Texas BBQ is famous for its thick sweet tomato flavor. In Texas, they also enjoy using a dry-rub seasoning on the beef before it is barbecued.

Southeast barbecue sauce is slightly different. If you get BBQ sauce in Georgia it will likely be thinner and with more vinegar. Another difference in the barbecue is that instead of beef, they use more pork. You will also see barbecue pits used often. This method smokes the meat giving it a great smoked in flavor. Pit barbecues are very popular and leave you with great tasting meat.

Your family likely has their own barbecue secrets and they might be passed down from generation to generation. You might have your own secret BBQ sauce recipe. Your family may have a slow cook method for beef or pork or maybe you enjoy both. Whatever type of barbecue you like, there is no doubt that families and friends love it and it will stick around for many more years to come.

Barbecue party tips can help a



host put together an extraordinary event for family and friends. Eating outdoors is a favorite pastime enjoyed by everyone and planning the event can help make it more memorable and stress-free for the host. Big or small, a barbecue party requires an adequate amount of planning and preparation to ensure that everything is laid out properly.

It is advisable to plan the event around a theme in order to create a focal point for the barbecue party. This way, all aspects of the party such as the food, games and decorations can be fashioned around a central theme. Favorite themes for barbecue parties include a Hawaiian motif, nostalgic seventies get-together, or, if you are near the sea, opt for a beach bbq party!

Planning the menu is perhaps the most important part of any get-together especially for a barbecue party as most guests will be looking forward to an array of

lip-smacking roasted meats dripping in bbq sauce.

### Barbecue on the Beach Anyone?

Ah, what can be better than a great barbecue on the beach? The beach is definitely one of the best locations to have a barbecue. After all, the nature of grilling and barbecuing as a cooking technique is that it's fun, exciting and very rewarding. Similarly, the beach pretty much exudes the same atmosphere. There are a lot of fun and exciting activities to do at the beach. It's a place where people can be themselves in their 'bare essentials' and the relaxation factor is definitely rewarding. Putting these two wonderful concepts together, a barbecue on the beach is pretty much a recipe for a great time!

But before you pack your stuff, gear up your grill and hit the sand for one hell of a barbecue on the beach party, bear in mind that there are various safety proce-

dures and other rules governing beach areas so it would be best to consult authorities and secure the proper permissions before you even think about organizing a beach barbecue party.

Assuming you've done that and you've already picked a nice spot, next would be preparing for your barbecue on the beach. There are various grill types that you may use for barbecuing on the beach? you have the wood or charcoal grill, gas grill or you may also use a campfire tripod. Be sure to station your grill in a stable spot, away from any flammable material and safe from people possibly bumping into it.

Bring your marinated meat, poultry or seafood in a cooler and take them out only when you're ready to start barbecuing to avoid spoilage. Further, the last seasoning you would want on your barbecue on the beach is sand right? So keep them covered!

And of course, don't forget to pack those barbecue sauces and hot sauces to spice up your barbecue dishes. If you're looking for something insanely different to give your barbecue that extra punch,

visit [www.InsaneChicken.com](http://www.InsaneChicken.com) for their wide array of barbecue sauces, marinades and dry rubs. Treat yourself and your friends' taste buds to their line of extremely hot products; they would definitely go well with a good beer. Now that's what I call one unforgettable barbecue on the beach party!

## Grilled Tandoori-Style Chicken with Cool Cucumber Raita

Using a tandoori paste from a jar makes this spicy chicken dish fast and easy. Marinate the meat at the cottage in the morning, or combine the chicken and marinade and marinate overnight in the refrigerator before leaving for the cottage the next day. This marinade is also lovely for grilled lamb chops. You can make the raita at home and bring it along in the cooler.

### Ingredients

2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts, 1 kg cut into lengthwise strips  
2-3 tbsp tandoori paste (homemade or purchased) 25-45 mL  
1/4 cup plain yogurt 50 mL  
olive oil  
RAITA: 1/2 large English cucumber, finely chopped  
2 large Roma tomatoes, seeded and finely chopped  
1/2 tsp salt 2 mL  
1 cup plain yogurt, strained 250 mL  
2 tbsp chopped cilantro 25 mL  
1/4 tsp roasted cumin 1 mL  
1 pepper



### Procedure

Marinate chicken in a combination of tandoori paste and yogurt for several hours or overnight in refrigerator.

Thread chicken accordion fashion on bamboo skewers that have been soaked in hot water for 30 minutes. Discard marinade. Preheat barbecue grill to 550° F. After pre-heating grill, adjust all burners to medium heat. Lightly brush each piece of chicken with olive oil then grill over direct medium heat for 8-10 minutes, just until chicken is cooked through.

To make raita, seed and finely chop the cucumber and tomato

paste. Salt the vegetables and let stand for 30 minutes to remove some of the excess moisture. Line a mesh strainer with a coffee filter, set it over a bowl and drain the yogurt over the coffee filter and bowl in the refrigerator for 1-2 hours. Discard liquid and place the yogurt in a bowl. Drain the vegetables and add to the yogurt. Stir in the chopped cilantro and roasted cumin. Season with pepper to taste and refrigerate. Raita may be made up to two days ahead. Serve chicken immediately with lots of turmeric-scented basmati rice and some of the raita on the side.

Serves 4

## Cowboy Barbecued Ribs

### Ingredients:

5 pounds pork spareribs  
1 cup water  
1/3 cup butter or margarine  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
1/4 cup dry mustard  
1/4 cup chili powder  
1 tablespoon sugar

mix well. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer for 30 minutes. Brush sauce on ribs. Broil 5 inches from heat for 7-10 minutes on each side (or better yet - do it on the grill!). Serve ribs with additional sauce.

Chef Nate



1 tablespoon paprika  
2 teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon onion powder  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
Instructions:

Place spareribs on broiler pan. Cover with foil. Roast at 400 degrees F. for 1 1/2 hours. Meanwhile, combine remaining ingredients in medium saucepan;

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# So you are living in a Common-law Relationship???

Here are some tax tips for you.....

For tax purposes, same-sex common-law couples are now referred to as "common-law partners", which is defined as two persons, regardless of sex, who cohabit in a conjugal relationship and have done so for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

In recent years, many of our laws, both provincially and federally, have been amended to recognize same-sex partners' rights, obligations and benefits. In June 2000, the Income Tax Act was amended to reflect the fact that all common-law relationships, either opposite or same-sex, should be treated equally under the tax laws.

The changes to the tax rules have both positive and negative implications for same-sex partners. This article summarizes some of the new benefits available to same-sex partners as well as some of the new obligations same-sex partners now face.

## Common-law partners

Under the new rules, same-sex common-law partners are to be treated the same as opposite-sex common-law partners. All tax legislation has been amended to extend the same treatment to all common-law partners. This will help ensure that all Canadians are treated fairly and equally. Same-sex common-law partners are now eligible for the same tax benefits, and are subject to the same obligations as married couples and opposite-sex common-law couples.

These new rules are effective for 2001 and subsequent taxation years. There are transitional rules in place that allowed same-sex common-law partners to jointly elect to be treated as common-law partners for all purposes of the tax legislation in 1998, 1999 and 2000,

Beginning with the 2001 tax year, same-sex partners who meet the definition of being in a conjugal relationship for more than 12 months are required to declare themselves common-law partners on page 1 of the Personal Income tax return by checking off the "living common-law" box. Note that this new definition encompasses both opposite-sex and same-sex common-law relationships.

## Conjugal relationship

The question has arisen as to how

the Canada Customs Revenue Agency (CCRA) will know if two same-sex partners are living in a "conjugal relationship", as married persons have their status legally registered in a public document, the marriage certificate, whereas same-sex partners do not. The same issue arises currently with common-law opposite-sex couples whose status is not registered anywhere.

The CCRA proceeds exactly as they have proceeded in the past few years with opposite-sex common-law couples. The CCRA has a self-assessment system in which taxpayers are expected to tell the truth and in which persons who make false statements on their tax returns can be penalized. Whether or not two persons (opposite-sex or same-sex) are living in a conjugal relationship is a question of fact, and this can include whether or not the couple presents itself publicly as a conjugal couple and has claimed the status of a couple for purposes of a pension or health plan, etc.

In determining whether two people are in a conjugal relationship, the following points are examined.

1. Shelter: do the parties live under the same roof and what are the sleeping arrangements?
2. Sexual and personal behaviour: do the parties have sexual relations and do they maintain an attitude of fidelity to each other?
3. Services: what is the conduct and habit of the parties in relation to domestic services such as preparing meals and performing household maintenance?
4. Social: Do the parties participate together in social activities?
5. Societal: How does the community view the parties, both individually and as a couple?
6. Support (economic): What are the financial arrangements of the parties in terms of their relationship?
7. Children: What is the attitude and conduct of the parties concerning any children?

This means that same-sex common-law partners who do not correctly declare their status, for example, to avoid losing benefits that are based on the combined net income of both partners, can be reassessed and asked to repay the benefits. This is currently true for legally married or opposite-sex com-

mon-law couples who can be reassessed if they collect benefits they are not entitled to because they fail to correctly identify their status as married or common-law.

## Tax considerations

The addition of the term "common-law partner" to the Income Tax Act will affect more than 150 different tax provisions. The most significant changes that impact individual investors will be discussed below.

## Transfer of property to a common-law partner

Transfer of capital property made to a spouse or common-law partner automatically "roll over" at the adjusted cost base, although a spouse or partner can "elect out" of the rollover on his or her tax return and request a transfer at the fair market value.

This opens up a whole new opportunity for same-sex partners to transfer property between themselves on a tax-deferred basis. Before the new rules came into force, any transfer of property from one same-sex partner to another was deemed to occur at fair market value, which could have resulted in the realization of a capital gain or loss.

Note, however, that the attribution rules now also apply to same-sex partners (see below)

## Income splitting and the attribution rules

Income attribution rules generally block attempts to shift income from a higher income person to a lower-income person by attributing the income back to the higher-income earner.

Generally, where an individual has transferred or loaned property to or for the benefit of the individual's spouse or common-law partners, any income (loss) from the property and any capital gain (loss) on the disposition of the property will be attributed back to the individual.

As the attribution rules now govern common-law partners, same-sex couples lose the opportunity that used to be available to them to split income. Instead, common-law partners may consider the strategy of having the higher income partner pay all the household expenses, thus preserving the lower-

income partner's income, which can be used solely for investing, as any returns on such investments would then be taxed in the hands of the lower-income partner.

## Common-law partner loans at prescribed interest rates

One of the exceptions to the above attribution rules applies where an individual makes a loan to a spouse or common-law partner to allow the spouse or partner to invest. As long as interest is charged on the loan at a rate at least equal to the CCRA's prescribed interest rate at the time the loan was made, the attribution rules will not apply. The interest, however, must be paid each year or within 30 days after the end of the year for the attribution rules not to apply.

## Spousal RRSPs and RRI Fs

Contributions made to a spousal RRSP are deductible by the contributing spouse or common-law partner within the applicable contribution limits. When funds are withdrawn, they will be taxed in the hands of the annuitant spouse or partner.

Even though the term "spousal RRSP" continues to be used throughout tax literature, the rules now certainly permit a same-sex partner to take advantage of this significant income-splitting opportunity. A spousal plan generally makes sense where one partner's income is significantly higher than the other's and therefore the higher income partner can claim the deduction for the contribution on his or her return. The lower income partner may pay little or no tax on the ultimate withdrawal of the funds from the RRSP or its successor (an annuity or RRIF)

Note, however, that the spousal attribution rules for RRSPs or RRIFs also apply to common-law partners. These rules state that if the annuitant spouse or partner withdraws any funds from a spousal RRSP or withdraws more than the minimum amount from any spousal RRIF within three years of any contribution being made to any spousal RRSP, the withdrawal will be attributed back and taxed to the contribution spouse or partner.

*More in next issue ...*



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# Why should we Lankans have an ethnic issue?

By Ramane Seneviratne

We had great ties with South India. According to the history of the Kandy Kingdom, lots of Sinhala youth were absorbed into the palace "ettulkattale as Appuharmys.

Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe had a lot of connections with Sinhala nobles and commoners. He was a devout Buddhist. According to the book, Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe worshipped the Tooth Relic of the Buddha twice a day. Kneeling beside and bent head as a mark of respect.

During Nayakar period the Maligawa was renovated and decorated, maybe to address people and make them feel happy for the devotion and respect that was shown by the south Indian kings towards Buddhism.

I would like to pay my highest tribute to my parents for giving me the birthright to live in a beautiful country like Sri Lanka. It is our fervent duty even in the humblest way to contribute something by penning a few lines to ease the pain of mind many of us have at the grip of loosing our nation from provocation and pressure from various forces.

After going through our history, I extracted the thought that with the introduction of Buddhism to our country about 300 B.C. a civilization emerged as Sinhala.

With king Vijaya setting his royal feet on this beautiful emerald land, he brought with him many followers to peopleize his new found paradise.

With the advent of Mahinda Thero to this land, King Devanampiyatissa embraced Buddhism and ruled according to 'Dasa Raja Dharmaya'. As a result our country produced great and brave men.

From time to time our kings brought princesses from South India as their "Aga Mehis" (Chief queens) and along with them their relations and retainers and many others came to settle down here. They embraced Buddhism and merged into the Ariyan Community the 'Sinhala' and presented themselves as



[Last king of Kandy, and he put more sculptures in the caves at Dambulla, Pic By: Jason Turgeon]

Sinhala Buddhists. This great merger and the emergence of an enduring civilization was the result of the Lord Buddha's philosophy. This proved that the Sinhala Buddhists were a tolerant and a peaceful race.

My father, L.B. Ratnayake, a lawyer by profession was holding a responsible post (1950- 1962) in the Gal-Oya Development Board in Amparai. Our journey from Kandy to Amparai very often was through Valachchenai, Kalkudah, Batticaloa, Kalmunai, Samanthurai and Malwatte, There were quite a few spots my father loved to stop along this route.

The Tamils and Muslims who owned these shops and wayside boutiques loved my father and beaming with smiles offered their best! The balance that changed into coins always went into their tills or was distributed among the little brats who come round our vehicle. With shy smiles and huge grins! I was taken out of Hillwood College (Kandy) boarding and put

to Carmel Convent in Kalmunai, as a weekly boarder.

The convent was run by the Tamil speaking Carmalites. The Carmelite sisters and mother superior looked after me and four other Sinhalese girls with such love and care that I still remember them with great respect and adoration.

During the communal riots (1954-1956) my father protected the Tamil community who were in Amparai from any harm they would face in our territories. It is sad to realize that these lovely people turned against the "Sinhala" people.

My father's maternal great grand father was the 'Maha Mudiyanse' of the palace of Kandy during the Nayakar period. When Kirthi Sri the good King died, he went about the palace rituals getting ready for the King's funeral in tears and with great loyalty. The cohesive qualities and his love of the king and the palace and his honesty and noble qualities give a message to the reader of the book titled "In the Days of Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe" written by Punchi Bandara Dolapihilla that the (ettulkattale people) loved

and adored the king although he was a South Indian.

King Kirthi Sri revived Upasampada and gave a lot of patronage to Buddhism. He loved his people very much. According to Lawrie's Gazette; this Uduwela Mahamudiyanse' later joined the rebels (1818) to oust the British rule.

We had great ties with South India. According to the history of the Kandy Kingdom, lots of Sinhala youth were absorbed into the palace "ettulkattale as Appuharmys. Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe had a lot of connections with Sinhala nobles and commoners.

He was a devout Buddhist. According to the book, Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe worshipped the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha twice a day. Kneeling beside and bent head as a mark of respect.

During Nayakar period the Maligawa was renovated and decorated, maybe to address people and make them feel happy for the devotion and respect that was shown by the south Indian kings towards Buddhism.

According to the article written by S.B. Karaliyadde on Sunday February 13, 2005 in the Silumina, king Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe the last king of Kandy had adopted the Maha Mudiyanse's son Uduwela Karunathilake.

Rajapaksha Wasala Mudiyaase later was an R.M. and the king loved him very much. I cannot come into terms as to why his sudden change of attitude in the latter part of his rule turned him into a tyrant and disastrous events took place.

Thereafter he became a prisoner of the British Raj and the history of our land took a turn altogether finally our freedom was lost and fell into the hands of the Western powers.

King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe had good qualities too. He sacrificed his birth rights as a Hindu and became a Buddhist and learnt Sinhala for the sake of the majority of the people.

His influence on my grand mother's grand father would have been extremely unusual as the old gentleman's influence was remarkable.

My grand-mother lived a life of great charm and dignity. Her early morning Pirith chanting reached our ears in cadences which moulded our lives accordingly. She had 14 children and everyone was brought up in the traditional Sinhala Buddhist way.

Her eldest son Mr. A. Ratnayake, was a minister in the first Cabinet of Ceylon. D.S. Senanayake as the Prime Minister along with S.W. R.D. Bandaranayake, a Minister at that time, pioneered free education and they were active members of the Sinhala Maha Sabha and brought in reforms and gave pride of place to Buddhism in parliament for a better Sri Lanka. They followed the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi.

A. Ratnayake made arrangements to bring back the skull of the great hero Keppetipola from England, when he was the minister of Home Affairs during Dudley Senanayake's regime.

The outcome of the Union with the palace and with Nayakkara kings being South-Indians, my ancestors learnt to live a life of charm, dignity and simple ways which won the hearts of many as they were a law-abiding people of this country.

From the time of the Anuradhapura kingdom our kings sacrificed by laying down their lives to protect this land.

Sri Sumangala Thero laid down his life for the sake of the country. Anagarika Dharmapala, F.R. Senanayake, D.S. Senanayake, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, T.B. Jayah, E.W. Perera and many others relentlessly fought without shedding a drop of blood to get back our freedom.

Therefore, we Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers must unite and join hands to protect this country. Buddhism is not a religion; it is a philosophy that could be practiced by all irrespective of caste, creed or race. All this is every Sri Lankan's heritage.

It is the duty of all Sri Lankans to protect it. Time has come to practice 'Ahimsa' and tread on the middle path for a better future for our new generation.

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## Ki Kit Li wins nomination for Ontario PC Party in Markham Unionville



KK Li delivering winning speech



KK Li with family



KK Li with his party supporters

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# Monsoons high tide and coastal problems

By Dilrukshi Handunnetti

Coastal Sri Lanka is currently experiencing increased devastation due to a natural phenomenon, commonly known as the high tide. The onslaughts have been particularly bad in southern coastal areas where some property damage has been caused by the rising waves, particularly to boats and other fishing equipment.

Officials from the Coast Conservation Department (CCD) agree that there is a certain ferocity associated with the high tide experienced at present.

Seasonal phenomenon

While high tide is a natural and seasonal phenomenon, the CCD fears that there are some contributory causes for the present situation. Officials say that the clearing of natural buffers coupled with the devastation caused by the tsunami had together weakened the coastal ecology making certain coastal areas like the south more vulnerable to strong wave action.

"Coastal people know what high tide means. They understand the wave patterns and have practical methods of dealing with such. However, this time the waves have been particularly ferocious and caused some damage to fishing gear and several boats. This time, the waves have taken the fisher folk by surprise," explained a CCD official.

However, the Meteorological Department says that it is natural to expect some "churning," locally known as "warakan" with the change in weather patterns.

Rainfall

"Average rainfall can be expected during the Southwest



Monsoon season due to commence in the latter part of this month. However floods, landslides and earth slips cannot be ruled out," an official explained.

According to Met officials, the situation will depend on the frequency of the rainfall experienced in the country and the extent of daily rainfall. The Southwest Monsoon is, according to local weather experts, the longest weather season in Sri Lanka which prevails from mid May to end September.

And the seasonal rains also have a connection to the high tide. Met officials say that strong winds together with high tide can be expected at the onset of Southwest Monsoon season.

"When the wind is strong, sea erosion and slight intrusion of sea water can also be expected, particularly along the south western coastal areas. As the coast is more open to the sea after the

tsunami disaster, intrusion of sea water may be higher at some places this year," officials say.

Southwest Monsoon

The formation of the onset is mostly associated with a tropical disturbance in the Bay of Bengal. Fairly heavy falls are likely in the southwestern parts of Sri Lanka during the first few weeks of the monsoon. Southwest Monsoon conditions are likely to get established towards the end of May.

Prior to this, the rainfall tends to get somewhat confined to the Western Province and others areas like Galle and Matara districts in the form of light showers.

Earth slips and landslides generally occur when there is rainfall over 100 ml. Kolonna, Kalawana, Ratnapura and Deniyaya have been identified as high risk areas for landslides while 10 other districts; Matale, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Kegalle, Ratnapura, Kalutara, Galle, Matara and

Hambantota have been identified as landslide prone districts.

What is more, experts explain the atmospheric temperature which is high, is what is causing the present unbearable heat. Another contributory cause is the winds also being dry. The high humidity level in the air also increases the heat as the human body fights to retain its natural temperature level.

Warning

With all of these reasons put together, the authorities feel that coastal communities need to be sufficiently warned of stronger high tide phenomenon.

"What we have to also take into account is that we have high tide coupled with devastated coastal ecology. The impact cannot be easily assessed. Forecasting too is difficult as a result," claimed a CCD official.

The official said that there should be more support for integrated coastal development and strengthening of natural buffers and the creation of artificial buffers.

"The CCD addressed the need to fortify natural buffers soon after the tsunami. Artificial buffers too were created in vulnerable coastal areas, particularly in Telwatta, Seenigama and Hikkaduwa. Yet the high tide experienced in these areas have devastated the people," he added.

In the meantime, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has renewed its call for the tsunami hit countries to create and maintain natural buffer zones, fortify natural buffers along their coasts and rebuild in less exposed areas to protect against future calamities.

UNEP recommends the planting of trees, primarily mangroves, around denuded shorelines as a method to lessen the impact of disasters like the tsunami that killed nearly 290,000 people

around the Indian Ocean.

Priority issue

"Priority should be given to near-shore forest development as trees will help absorb the energy of future tsunamis, prevent coastal erosion due to rising sea levels and meet national objectives for reforestation and job creation," it said.

UNEP has reiterated further its call for nations to heed the long-term environmental lessons of the tsunami, particularly the consequences of ripping out mangrove swamps and the destruction of coral reefs that protect coastlines.

In rebuilding destroyed housing and infrastructure, the UN body has lamented a lack of best practice guidelines for construction to minimise damage from giant waves.

It was also suggested that countries enact strict building codes in coastal areas to keep construction away from sites known to be prone to high waves and flooding.

Integrated coastal development

"This is what we mean by integrated coastal development as well. The high tide of yesterday will not be experienced for a long time. Perhaps never. Our coastal ecologies have changed so much – deteriorated and suffered. Until there is rebuilding of the ecology, there will be many a devastating experience like unpredictable weather patterns, altered seasons, ferocious waves and stronger high tide. All these are inter-connected and need to be addressed as a collective of issues," notes a senior CCD official.

High tide

High tide is a seasonal natural phenomenon. High tide is when the tide is at its fullest with the waters reaching the highest level. This increased wave high is referred to as high water.

[moringleader.lk]

## A lesson to emulate from Singapore

Mr.Ranjith Gunaratne an officer of the Sri Lanka Overseas Foreign Service has translated the The Singapore Story by Senior Minister of Singapore Mr.Lee Kwan Yu as Singappuru Kathawa.

Both Mr.Lee Kwan Yu and His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka have given messages which are published in the book.

They are both worth reading and is of immense contemporary relevance. Below are translations of the Sinhala text.

From the Author, Senior Minister of Singapore Mr.Lee Kwan Yu:

Through The Singapore Story which is my autobiography what I seek to achieve is to remind the younger generation of Singapore nationals who have been brought up in a more comfortable environment that we need to strive hard with great dedication to change our old familiar habits. Before Singapore was firmly on the path of success, we had to change our contradictory perceptions that tended to be a divisive influence of our people who belonged to many ethnic, religious and language groups. We also had to minimise the competitive tenden-



Lee Kwan Yu

cy that existed between Trade Unions and Employers.

What the Sinhala translation of this book makes clear to the people of Sri Lanka is that specially the Politicians of Singapore resisted and subdued any desire to address ethnic, language, cultural and religious forces with the intention of garnering votes. This enabled Singapore to avoid unnecessary, painful experiences. If ever such infuriating feelings arose they would have surely gone out of the window of logical wisdom and common good. What my generation of Singaporeans understood was this reality.

Lee Kwan Yu

1st February 2006.

From His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka:

The Singapore Story

Lee Kwan Yu is one of the great heads of state to emerge from Asia. His dedication, determination and farsightedness enabled him to bring Singapore to the forefront of nations of the world in a very short period.

We have many lessons to learn from that remarkable country. In that multi ethnic, multi religious country, the harmony, mutual trust that exist amongst deferent groups has ensured the peace and security of that country. This has enabled them to minimise the obstacles to a great extent in their development efforts.

Therefore it is my feeling that the narrative that describes how Singapore was developed by Mr.Lee Kwan Yu is a book that every Sri Lankan should read. I greatly appreciate the effort made by Ranjith Gunaratne an officer of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service to translate this book to Sinhala to make it accessible to Sri Lankans.

Mahinda Rajapakse

President of Sri Lanka

7th April, 2007.

## Canada condemns the forced removal of citizens of Tamil origin from Colombo

The Canadian High Commission issued the following statement on June 9th 2007:

"Canada condemns the forced removal of citizens of Tamil origin from Colombo back to the conflict zones in the north and the east".

"Whilst Canada acknowledges that the Sri Lankan government has the right and the duty to protect itself and its citizens against potential terrorist attacks, such as the reprehensible bombings in Colombo Fort and Rathmalana in recent weeks, the heavy-handedness of this sweeping action will only alienate the vast majority of innocent Tamils and further com-

plicate the search for a durable peace settlement."

"Canada welcomes the stay issued by the Supreme Court which prevents further removals and notes that President Rajapakse has directed that these people be returned to Colombo if they wish."

"Canada reiterates that there cannot be a military solution to the conflict that has besieged this Island for more than 20 years and reaffirms the need for a political solution where the rights and aspirations of all citizens of Sri Lanka can be respected."

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# Uthayan Newspaper Kalai Vizha 2007

Prakash Raj, the South Indian versatile actor who has played different roles in Tamil films, was the chief attraction this year at the Uthayan Newspaper cultural event held on June 2nd and 3rd in Scarborough. The event was a

two-day programme where musical and dance entertainment was provided to the guests wrapped up with a dinner on the second day.

Prakash Raj, who addressed the audience stated that he was

pleased and encouraged to attend a cultural programme hosted by a Tamil Newspaper in Canada. He commented on the warm hospitality extended to him and his family by the Canadian Tamil community and The Media. He

also mentioned that he likes to take different roles so that his talent and versatility can be best judged by his fans. Mr. Logendralingam, the Chief Editor of the Uthayan Newspaper thanked the readers and advertis-

ers who helped make this function a success and for the support extended to his paper over the years to make Uthayan a leading Tamil Newspaper for the Canadian Tamil community.



## South Asian Business Festival - Kondattaam



TVI and CMR Multi-cultural Radio hosted their Annual Kondaatam South Asian Festival at the International Centre in Mississauga on May 19th and 20th. Large crowds thronged the Centre on both days to witness non-stop Music and Dance entertainment. Over 200 Trade stalls representing a variety of Business

interests displayed their products and services.

While the elders were busy visiting the stalls, kids were entertained to games and sports events. The entertainment provided was of a multi-cultural nature and was therefore enjoyed by other South Asian communities who visited the show.

### Senior Tamils' Centre, Board of Directors



**Seated left-right**

Mrs. Suguna Rajendram, Mr. S. M. J. Emmanuel, Mr. Maya Kandiah, Mr. K. Rathinasingham (President), Mr. A. Balasubramaniam, Mrs. Parames Nagarathnam, Mrs. Thanam Tharmalingam

**Standing left-right**

Mr. M. V. Jeganathan, Mr. T. Kanagarajah, Mr. S. Sri Jeyanathan, Mr. W. S. Jeevaratnam, Mr. V. Thirunavukarasu, Mr. S. Subramaniam, Mr. V. Viswanathan & Mr. K. Balasingham



### Strike out the Homeless - Bowl a Thon 2007

On May 26, 2007 Shelters Aid Community Support hosted its 2007 annual bowling fundraiser at Kennedy Bowl, to raise funds for abused woman and the homelessness. The event was attended by great numbers whose turn out enabled the preset goals to be accomplished. Funds raised will help Shelters Aid in their mission to provide resources to shelter agencies. An amount of 2900 dollars was raised at this event.

Special thanks to Julliette's Place (Woman's Shelter) for providing helpful resources for families in crisis.

Human rights activists Dr. and Mrs. Usha Sri-Skanda Raja were chief guests to the event who addressed the gathering and stressed the importance for com-



munity members to become allies to vulnerable families.

To learn more of the organization, please visit the web site [www.sheltersaid.org](http://www.sheltersaid.org) or Tel/Fax: 1888 405 4498

Seen in the picture is the ladies champion Georgia Lindsay and Donovan Brown Men's champion of Strike out the homeless - Bowl a Thon 2007

# RBC-Royal Bank Celebrates South Asian Heritage Month

RBC-(Royal Bank) Financial Group Scarborough and Toronto Central/Beaches Regions celebrated South Asian Heritage Month at a function held at the Metropolitan Center in Scarborough end of last month. Senior officials of the Bank including Ms.Jennifer Tory-Regional President-Greater Toronto Region, Ms.Lisa Gallacher-Regional Vice-President, Scarborough,Mr.Imtiaz Seyid-Vice President, South Asian Markets, Mr. Mohan Sundara-

mohan-Manager, Morningside /Milner Branch were among those present at the function. Mohan welcomed the guests and functioned as the M.C. for the event. Ms.Jennifer in her speech stressed the role played by RBC in helping community events and organizations. She referred to the recent financial contributions made by Royal Bank towards the Scarborough Hospital Foundation and the Providence Care Center. Ms.Lisa, dressed in a colorful

saree to suit the occasion, thanked the guests for attending the function even though it was a busy working day. She also referred to the long and close connection of RBC with the South Asian community. The guests were entertained to a Bharatha Natya Dance recital by students of Natya Shethra Dancing school. The gathering at the function included leading persons from the South Asian Business community and Media personnel.



Courtesy Ken Photo

## Senthi's Trade Show 2007

The fifth South Asian Trade Show organized by Athavan Publications was held on 12th and 13th May at the Downsview Park. Over 150 stalls representing varied businesses showcased

their products and services to those attending the Trade Show.

Visitors were provided with non-stop music and dance entertainment. Kids were entertained with games etc. and

sports was also added to the fun.at the Show. Bargain hunters were seen visiting stalls which offered sale prices for most of the items on display.

Photo Courtesy: Senthi & Gnane



Mr. Amar - owner of Frontline Collision Center



Dance performance



Directors of Air-Com Plus



CTCC's Ex-Secretary Sam Thiru & Bala Jeganathan - Walkathon's Chairperson



Lighting the Lamp - by Sritharan Thuraiarajah as Mr/ Mrs . Senthi and Selvadurai watch



Vocal performance by Children



RESP Representative for CST - Guhan Vallepuram & family



Mr/Mrs Senthi with Chief Guest Carol Doerr



Leading Life Insurance Broker - George Sakhivel



WATERLOO REGION NEWS

## Tamil community joins hand to celebrate Waterloo's sesquicentennial



On May 27, 1857 Waterloo, Ontario became incorporated as a Village, with a population of about 500. Many of the early settlers were Pennsylvania-German Mennonites who then attracted German-speaking European farmers and craftsmen to the area. However, it was not until the 1850s – when John Hoffman purchased a large tract of land, divided it into lots and sold them at public auction – that the basis of a village was created.

On January 1, 1948, Waterloo Officially became a city. Since, then Waterloo has carried on in the innovative and creative tradition of its founders and continued to grow and prosper. Waterloo has evolved from an Industrial and manufacturing centre into a creative, smart City. Although the character is changing, Waterloo has maintained 'stability' through-

out its 150 years of history.

The Tamil Cultural Dance troop performed traditional Bharatha Natyam dances during the inaugural celebration at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex on May 27th. Dancers performed a series of intricated and complicated steps composed of rhythmic feet and hand movements. Colourful costumes worn by the Students of Sri Abiramy Dance Academy of Waterloo gave the celebrations an added beauty. Many local dignitaries including Hon. Andrew

Telegdi MP, Hon. Elizabeth Witmer and Her worship the Mayor of Waterloo Brenda Halloran attended the event.

The members of the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region extended their support to the day long event.

## Waterloo named the World's Top Intelligent Community

The Intelligent Communities Forum (ICF) has recognized Waterloo as being the world's Top Intelligent Community 2007, an honour that acknowledges the community that best exemplifies the development of a prosperous economy based on broadband and information technology.

At the ICF conference in New York, Waterloo was recognized for its commitment to fostering institutions, projects and initiatives that drive technology innovation and share its benefits with the community at large.

In announcing Waterloo as the Top Intelligent Community, Lou Zacharilla, Director of Development, ICF, referred to Waterloo as a North American community like no other. "What makes Waterloo special is that in the heart of the technology triangle, the tradition of community barn raising, looking after one another from the very young to the very old, is kept alive today. It's a place where people wake up and give thanks for the fruits of their works and for their good fortune."

Waterloo was one of two Canadian cities among the prestigious list that included Ottawa-Gatineau; Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom; Gangnam, District, Seoul, South Korea; Issy les Moulineaux, France; Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, United Kingdom; and Tallin, Estonia

"This recognition belongs to our community – to the businesses, to the schools, to the universities and colleges, to our libraries, to our not-for-profits – all of whom look for innovative ways to use technology to make Waterloo a better place," said Waterloo Mayor Brenda Halloran in

accepting the award.

"There are great things happening in Waterloo," said Halloran. "The Intelligent Community Forum has helped us more clearly recognize the collective strength of what we have. In fact, it's created a reason for bringing people together who have been able to look at those strengths and through collaboration, leverage them even further."

In November, the ICF announced that Waterloo was among the 'Smart 21' communities, placing Waterloo in the list of semi-finalists being considered for the Top Seven list, which was announced in January. ICF is a special interest group within the World Teleport Association that focuses on the uses of broadband technology for economic development by communities large and small in both the developed and developing world.

Each year, ICF selects communities from around the world to appear on its list of the Top Seven Intelligent Communities of the Year. These seven communities are selected based on indicators that include the significant deployment of broadband communications, the extent to which the community enables a knowledge workforce, the promotion of digital democracy, the ability to foster innovation, and effective economic development marketing that leverages the community's broadband, labor and other assets to attract new employees.

Waterloo's nomination credits several organizations that include the universities, hospitals, libraries and schools as well as companies such as RIM, Open Text, Sybase, DALSA and many others that export their products,

technology and services around the world. It also notes the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, The Centre for International Governance Innovation, The Institute for Quantum Computing, The Research and Technology Park, and the presence of Communitech and Canada's Technology Triangle as being further reflections of leadership as an Intelligent Community.

"We were very proud when Waterloo was named as one of the Top Seven Intelligent Communities," says Waterloo Councillor Mark Whaley, a member of the steering committee. "Being named as the Top Community is a reflection of the fact that we are a city where technology and innovation is fostered in a way that truly does build community. That has many benefits for our residents, for our businesses and for our collective, sustainable future. The economic development benefits that will come from this recognition will be tremendous."

"This recognition is recognition for the countless ways that organizations, businesses and individuals have leveraged technology and broadband in innovative and leading ways throughout this community," said Simon Farbrother, CAO and Chair of Waterloo's Intelligent Community Committee. "The success of our intelligent community comes in part from the commitment of our committee to research, understand and articulate how extensive our collective use of technology and broadband is in this region."



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## Priest's Action Underscores Church Stand Against Abductions

A series of abductions involving white vans has been sending shivers through Sri Lanka's capital.

With more than 140 people abducted since the beginning of April and at least 18 of them killed, the Catholic Church found the phenomenon impossible to ignore and issued statements condemning it. One priest went a step further and intervened in an abduction.

Father Alfred Alexander saw a group of men, talking in Sinhalese and Tamil, dragging a young man into a white van in broad daylight on April 16 in a Colombo suburb.

Father Alexander protested as they forced the 20-year-old youth, who had just walked out of a bank, to the vehicle. The priest then entered the van himself and demanded that the men release the youth. Father Alexander told UCA News he even offered to take the young man's place.

With such a commotion, he recounted, bystanders began to crowd around, and the abductors gave up and drove off.

"I know these things are happening in Colombo and around the country, but here I came across an incident before my own eyes," Father Alexander said.

The 67-year-old priest formerly headed his Blessed Sacrament community in Sri Lanka. He has earned a reputation for standing against injustice and human rights violations in this country, plagued by civil war between Tamil rebels and the Sinhalese-led government. Concerning what are known as the "white van abductions," he said the Church "must take the initiative to act against this evil."

The country's Catholic bishops have called attention to what at least one newspaper has called a "growing menace."



"The Catholic Bishops' Conference has so far issued a number of statements protesting this situation," Father Leopold Ratnasekera, assistant secretary general of the conference, told UCA News, "As the Church, we strongly condemn these abductions and all other types of human rights violations," the Oblate priest added.

The international NGOs Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both expressed concern about the abductions. Amnesty published a press release on the April 16 abduction attempt.

Government spokespeople blame gangsters and army deserters, and say the police are investigating, but this has done little to stop rampant speculation and questions about who is behind the abductions.

Sinhalese are the majority in the capital area, while most abduction targets have been Tamils, according to the non-governmental Civil Monitoring Committee (CMC).

Father Alexander has his own explanation.

"A set of misguided youth working with the support of the police forces are behind these acts," he said. "They need to think: if a member of their own family is abducted like this, how would they react? Unfortunately we are living in a culture where

people seem to be immune to the pain, hurt and suffering they cause."

CMC chairman Sirithunga Jayasuriya told UCA News his organization focuses mainly on Colombo, which has high-security zones and which the government claims is safe compared to the violence-racked north and east.

According to CMC statistics, 142 abductions have taken place since April 1. Of those people, 16 were ransomed and released and 18 were murdered.

"The rest just vanished into thin air without any clues," said the CMC chairman. "Family members know nothing; neither does anybody else."

The Church, meanwhile, also has concerns about disappearances elsewhere.

Father Nihal Jim Brown and lay assistant Wenceslaus Vimalathas, both of St. Philip Neri's Church, disappeared on Aug. 20 in the Jaffna area, on the peninsula that forms the island's northernmost extent. The case reportedly was raised when Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa met Pope Benedict XVI and Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone at the Vatican April 20.

According to Jayasuriya, no progress has been made on the case, but a body has been found that remains unidentified and could be the priest's.

## 'Loitering Tamils' asked to leave Sri Lanka's capital

Sri Lanka's police recently asked minority Tamils "loitering" in the capital Colombo to get back to their homes in the island's embattled northeast, saying they are a "threat" to national security.

The presence of a large number of Tamils from the troubled regions in Colombo was a threat to national security and the safety of others, Police Inspector General Victor Perera told reporters here.

"Those who are loitering in Colombo will be sent home. We will give them transport. We are doing this to protect the people and because of a threat to national security," he said. He said Tamils travelling to Colombo from the northern and eastern regions spent over six months in the city without any employment and were "loitering".

Minority Tamils are already required to obtain a pass to travel

to the rest of the country and specify for how long they will be away. The permit system, which is almost like a visa, was restored after the ceasefire began falling apart last year.

Meanwhile, Tamil MP Mano Ganeshan said 56 lodges, or low budget guest houses, here complained to him that they were asked to close down and leave the premises immediately.

"The residents are distressed by these orders and claim it is difficult to find alternate accommodation at short notice. I informed Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe about the matter and he promised to fight against it," he said.

Police deny they were shutting down the lodges, but asking Tamils who had stayed for long periods to leave.

## Pak. training Lankan pilots to clinch arms deal

With LTTE air strikes worrying Colombo, Islamabad is reportedly making efforts to train batches of Sri Lankan pilots and get a guarantee for clinching an arms deal with the island nation.

A batch of five Sri Lankan pilots are being trained in Pakistan, while a Pakistani delegation led by former high commissioner Bashir Wali was in Colombo recently to help the nation's forces evolve a battle strategy against the Tamil insurgents.

It has now been almost established that LTTE has three Zlin-143 aircraft and one Robinson-22 helicopter. The Tamil insurgents also possess two microlights, Sri Lankan media reports said.

The Zlin-143 is a low-flying four-seat aircraft that has report-

edly been modified as a two-seater to accommodate additional payload. The Tamil Tigers have also added improvised night-flying capability on these planes, they said.

The Sri Lankans, on the other hand, lack an integrated air defence capability and plan to induct J-7 fighter jets or loan them from the Pakistan Air Force, the reports said. The J-7 (Jian-7) is a Chinese derivative of the Russian MiG-21 which serves as an interceptor.

While Islamabad has decided not to loan its J-7 fighters to the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF), it is aiming at expediting a deal to sell 22 Al Zazar tanks to Sri Lanka in competition with Belarus and Ukraine, the reports said. [PTI]

## 'Tamil plight like era of apartheid in South Africa'

By Tabela Timse

THE plight of Tamil-speaking Sri Lankans was heard in Port Elizabeth yesterday when the representative of the Tamil Nation Alliance (Tamil Tigers) in the Sri Lanka parliament spoke to various organisations and concerned individuals.

Manickavasagar Kanagasabapathy Eelaventhan visited the city as part of his global tour to create an awareness on the plight of the Eelam Tamils.

"South Africa must be made aware of what's happening in our country. South Africa would be able to make a positive contribution to our cause, especially since it is part of the security council in the UN," he said.

The UN charter justifies third-party intervention in situations of genocide and the right to resist oppression.

Eelaventhan compared the situ-

ation in Sri Lanka to that of South Africa during the apartheid era, but said the injustice and discrimination against Tamil people was far worse.

More than 600 000 Tamils living in Jaffna were virtually living in an open prison, where people were subjected to starvation and denied medical care and basic services, he said.

The army had deliberately obstructed humanitarian help from reaching affected areas and aid workers and media were also harassed.

Eelaventhan said Tamil women and children were killed and raped. People disappeared daily.

Political activists were killed by the Sri Lankan intelligence bureau and para-military groups, he said.

"There is a calculated move by the Sri Lanka government to totally wipe out the Tamil nation in the country.

"The Tamil nation is facing cultural genocide, physical liquidation and economic strangulation," he said.

During his tour, which started two months ago, Eelaventhan has met ministers, governmental officials, opposition parties and non-government organisations.

Valli Ragavelloo, a member of the ANC in East London and a human rights activist, said she was concerned about Eelaventhan's safety when he returned home as five other political activists had been killed.

The Tamil Tigers have requested advocate Roshan Pillay, who sympathises with the freedom fighters, to facilitate meetings with President Thabo Mbeki and the African Union.

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By Kumar Punithavel

(1st of June 2007 will be the twenty sixth anniversary of the burning of the largest public library in south Asia)

A friend of my son, who was a born in Canada, had an interesting question. He asked, 'Why the Sinhalese majority do not wish to give the minimum amount of freedom to the Tamils though they had lived together more than two thousand years? In order to get a reasonable answer I would like to recollect an ancient fable I have had read.

Once upon a time there lived a farmer. He wanted to harness a horse. The horse was much stronger and faster. So he decided to use his wit to bring it under his control.

The farmer called the horse and said, 'You are a wonderful beast, the most majestic of them all. You should be able to live in freedom and move freely with lots of leisure. If not for the deer who roam the forest you would be a happier animal. He has learnt the art of running faster and reaches the water holes before you. They live as a group and grace all your grass, and out runs to the water hole and empty them, before you and your foal reach them'.

He then went on with his cunning theory, "if you agree to stay with me, my wisdom and guidance shall deliver you and your kind from this dismal running after the mirage and humiliating state of life'.

The horse blinded by envy, slowly started developing hatred towards the deer, and finally agreed to be harnessed by the farmer. Once the farmer placed the saddle on the horse it lost its freedom and became a slave to the farmer for ever.

The horse in the fable refers to the Sinhalese populous. Deer is the Tamils and of course the post independence Sri Lankan politicians to the farmer.

One may wonder how true this allegory is to reality. After all the Sinhalese is a smart compassionate race in their own way. It must be remembered that there will always be the struggles of every day life. It is not a difficult task to point finger to some one and say the cause of your suffering is that person and, advice if you can get rid of him, you could be happy. The average man who is caught up in daily struggle for survival in life is glad when some one offers to help eradicate the problem. We have some time or other had fallen pray to such an idea, or had suggested in some level such idea.

How was it possible for these politicians to ride in the psyche of the Sinhalese masses? Members of a group existing in a nation who communicate in a particular language are bound to one another more than they are to the remaining population. Hence a nation will never be free of friction while such group is distinguishable. This chafing and rasping will further magnify when there are only two languages and both have predominantly different reli-

# Why the Tamils are hated?

gions. This conflicting circumstance between the Tamils and Sinhalese was consolidated by the politicians under the pretext of nationalism, making Sinhalese the only state language in Sri Lanka and mother tongue as medium of education. This further aggravated the developing hostility by polarizing the two communities, at the same time consolidated the position of the politicians. Religious leaders advocate and do the propagating of the message of their religion, which means they otherwise live from the avails of the religion and has a personal interest to magnify the difference than the similarities. When there are more people following their faith they will be rewarded in this world better!

Under above situation the colonial rulers gave independence to Sri Lanka not because there was great agitation for it, but because it became an unprofitable entity to rule after giving independence to India. Ceylon, the name by which it was known then, was so far away from Briton and such a tiny Island it lost all luster to hold on as a colony. When the independence was gotten there wasn't much patriotism to cement the difference between the two communities. In the beginning there was much cordiality between the two communities. The first two monuments in the parliament compound were that of two illustrious Tamils stand ample proof of this cordiality. The lack of patriotism made people put self before the state. The atmosphere was ripe for the politician to step in and concoct a vicious poison in the political cauldron they had set on fire.

It is true fact that there was a large number of Tamils serving in the public service of the colonial government. One has to find the real reason behind this anomaly. Before the British came, Sri Lanka was an agrarian society, and people lived scattered everywhere in the Island. In the early nineteenth century there was an epidemic of Malaria. This made the arid Vanni farmers to abandon their farmland, as these farms depending on small irrigation works called village tanks. These small reservoirs became breeding ground for anopheles mosquitoes, which spread malaria. Fortunately the Sinhalese populations which were in and around the capital of Ceylon and also mostly depended on rain fed cultivation were lucky. The benefit of malaria eradication program was best felt near the capital city Colombo.

The Christian clergy who came with the colonial masters to spread the message of Lord Jesus, with the help of the ruling government and the support of the people of their home land built churches. Together with the churches they were magnanimous to build schools. These schools helped to educate the natives and at the same time helped to spread the message of the son of God! These schools

were built in the north, east, south and west.

The Tamil children with their resource of water for agriculture hard to come by, turned their attention to formal education in the eager hope of getting a job in the public service, which was the biggest employer of the time. It is a common dictum among the Tamils; 'If you have to farm chicken it is best to farm it in the government'. There is another reason too, which is the cultural heritage.

The Tamils with their heritage of a rich literature, even before the dawn of the Common Era had great respect and veneration to education. They say the king is respected only in his country, but a learned is respected around the world. It is Thiruvalluvar in his tetise as four hundredth couplet says;

Learning is excellence of wealth that none destroy;

To man nought else affords reality of joy.

Another great female poet in her advice to children in aphoristic style verses says;

Evan begging it is good to learn.

This kind of attitude of veneration towards education played an important role in pursuit of knowledge among the Tamils. Intellectual accomplishment held lofty among the Tamils created an atmosphere particularly favorable to development on academic excellence of their children. Even when they moved out of their homeland because of persecution, in their chosen land too the second generation is doing extremely well in academic excellence because of this attitude towards academic excellence.

Another important factor for the Tamil parents to encourage the children to study is the dowry system among Tamils. This is a system, which has been flogged by many a reformist but it lingers on. A young boy knows that if he studies and gets a good job in the colonial administrative machinery is bound to get a good dowry, and the life will be happy ever after.

There is another parameter to consider before going further. When deprived of the opportunity to farm the Tamils moved into trades sector. There is no town in Sri Lanka where there is no retail shop owned by a Tamil. They bought the farm products and sold it with profit, there by the per capita wealth slowly rose. This too the politicians were able to exploit and saddle.

As opposed to the Tamils, the Sinhalese who were in rain fed region and had plenty of communication with outer world and was more liberal in their attitude. The need for education was less, and youngsters chose their partners. They were content with their life. It is the discontent that is the prime force for a person to endeavor.

When the independence was achieved, rather foisted on the

people, the few educated Sinhalese got into politics. They could be classified into two groups. One, of course were those who were motivated by the class struggle against the ruling elit. They were able to get elected in the cities by the working class. The other group was those from the high cast society of the Sinhalese. These politicians had a horse to flog in the Tamils.

They made a successful propaganda that the Tamils have unfair percentage of jobs in the Government machinery. They pointed to the Sinhalese masses that the British had employed more Tamils to divide and rule.



But the reality is there was more percentage of Tamils educated. The hatred of Tamils slowly crept into the mind of Sinhalese. Before there was intermingling of the two races, but the politicians drove the peg deep down between the two races by enacting 'Sinhalese only law' as the official language. Anyone praising the Sinhalese language was considered a patriot, and to praising Tamil was considered treason. The jealousy of the academic achievement reached its zenith with the burning of the Jaffna Public Library which was the best in south best Asia at that time.

It is appropriate to say a few words about how this library was developed and burnt like in Nazi Germany. In the latter case it was the Jewish author's book that was burnt, but in Sri Lanka the whole building was burnt down. V.S.Thuraiajah an architect recounted in 1996 in the Ceylon Daily News;

In 1933, a well-wisher named K.M. Chellappah, out of his desire to share knowledge with others was conducting a free library in his house. Appreciating the idea of Mr. Chellappah, some lovers of learning got together, formed a committee and met on June 9th 1934 to establish a library. Isaac Thambiah, who was High Court judge of Jaffna at that time, was elected chairman and K.M. Chellappah was elected secretary.

Due to the effort of this committee, on August 1, 1934, a library was opened in a small room on Hospital Road, Jaffna, in front of the electrical station. At inception, this library had 844 books and about 30 news papers and magazines. Slowly by the effort of the Tamil public it grew

into a great library housing more than 97,000 rare books and manuscripts in a magnificent building, built in Dravidian architecture.

It became a focal point of envy of the Sinhalese fuelled by the politicians. On the night of 1st June 1981, the splendid Jaffna public library, housing more than 97,000 rare books and manuscripts, was burned to the ground. It was not only the books, but also the building which was a classic Dravidian architecture. On hearing of the arson the scholar Rev. Fr. David who had been a key player on the project living in Australia on retirement died on the spot by heart attack.

This act of arson was carried out, not by a bunch of nameless hooligans, but by a posse of two hundred officers of the Sri Lankan

police force, taken to Jaffna by two senior Sri Lankan Cabinet ministers (Cryl Mathew and Gamini Dissanayake, both self-professed Sinhalese racist supremacists), ostensibly to oversee an election.

These two Sinhalese Cabinet ministers, who watched the library burn from the verandah of the nearby Jaffna Rest House subsequently claimed that it was an 'unfortunate incident', where a few policemen 'got drunk' and went on a 'looting spree', all on their own. Imagine two federal Government ministers going to Quebec and burning the central Library and giving such an explanation. The English speaking Canadians would be the first to voice the loudest outcry; but not in Sri Lanka. The justification had been echoed and re echoed by many Sinhalese political leaders and the Sinhalese Media.

Nadesan Satyendra, writing on the eleventh anniversary of the library burning (1992) recorded:

'And when the Tamil leader of the opposition sought to bring a motion of no confidence against the Sinhalese Ministers who had been present in Jaffna on those fateful days, the ruling Sinhalese political party pre emptied the move by bringing a motion of no confidence on the Leader of the Opposition! It was reportedly the first and only time that a motion of no confidence had been moved by a ruling party, on the leader of opposition in any parliament, anywhere in the world. A point of order raised against the no confidence motion was overruled by the speaker'.

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## Continued from previous page

The politician on the saddle will do any thing to protect his position not heading to the future of the nation he is governing. The politician is Sri Lanka did it in the name of subduing of the deer.

One cannot fail to observe that cultural destruction is an integral part of genocide, and the literary-works of the intellect is the prime target. The practice of book burning is not something new. As a prelude to the holocaust, in Nazi Germany, books of great Jewish writers like Albert Einstein, and Sigmund Freud, were thrown on the road side and was burnt. On the fateful day in 1933, under the orders from Doctor Goebbels (Hitler's Minister of Propaganda and popular Enlightenment!), Nazi gangs raided the Berlin library and burnt great number of books. Unlike the Sri Lankan counterparts, they didn't burn the building!

The dowry system has another positive parameter. Any parent who has a daughter had a tendency to conserve wealth hoping to get their daughter married to an educated young man. The community as a whole was closely knit and love marriages was not encouraged, for fear of cross cast couples. The wealth saved by the Tamils in Sri Lanka was another point of grouse that was raised by the politicians. As observed earlier the dowry system and cast system made the Tamils to be frugal and conserve wealth. It was an easy target to point finger by the politician to the prodigal horse and

say; 'see how the deer is doing well when you are suffering'. The anti Tamil pogroms promoted by the politicians in 1956, 1958, 1961, 1977, 1979, 1981, and 1983 are sad historical fact. The 1983 violence is a replica of the Kristallnacht of November 1938 in Germany against Jews, where Goebbels blamed the assassination of the third Secretary of the German embassy in Paris. On the pogrom of 1983 especially, the politicians blamed the killing of 13 Sinhalese soldiers by LTTE on the Tamils, and the masses and the world believed it. All these pogroms were initiated by politicians, making the Sinhalese believe and justify that the Tamils are unfairly rich.

The spreading of hate has developed by the politicians to such a fine art, unknowingly the Sinhalese have developed the hate to the Tamils in Sri Lanka, that a reasonable solution of unity in diversity is not possible by a federal form of Government, unless an external pressure is applied on the populous. To day the Sinhalese under the saddle of the politicians are oblivious to their own sad fate. Sri Lanka is the only country they have as mother land and unknowingly they are destroying it. A compassionate race has lost its righteousness by the saddler the politician. By the politicians selfishness all three races, Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims have suffered. And this is the reason for hate of Tamils.

## Elephants destroy houses in eastern Sri Lanka

People in the war-torn eastern Sri Lanka say thousands were made homeless as wild elephants have destroyed their houses.

Over one thousand houses were destroyed in nearly 35 villages, according to regional authorities.

Residents in Kokadicholai, Vellaveli where people were recently resettled and Vavunathivu and Chenkaladi where the resettlement to be started soon were made homeless as a result.

Increasing fighting in Thoppigala using mortar and heavy arms is one of the main reasons for the elephants behaviour, residents said.

Some of the houses were abandoned after fighting escalated in 1990 and some houses were destroyed as residents fled due to the threat by the elephants.

"Nearly 60 houses were destroyed by elephants in Vellaveli itself," Ilayathambi Vinayam told BBC Sandeshaya.

"The walls were cracked as the elephants put the trunk in to

steal rice," the refugee who has fled fighting in 1990 added.

Devani Veerakutti from kokadicholai, a refugee in Mahilur, said their houses and all the coconut trees were destroyed while they were away due to heavy fighting.

The wild elephants are not afraid of humans or strong noise any longer, they said.

"These are murderous elephants," Seenithambi Kadasamithamby, 72, from Vavunathivu said.

The regional authorities admitted the situation has been worsening in recent weeks.

Batticaloa Additional District Secretary, K Mahesan, said the authorities were taking steps to provide huts to those affected as a temporary measure.

"We were informed by the Divisional Secretaries that houses being destroyed in Vellaveli, Pattipalai and Vavunathivu," he said.

Ministry of Resettlement and UNHCR has already provided some assistance, Mahesan added. [Sandeshaya]

# SLFP Proposals fail to meet the mark, says Dr. Imtiyaz

Dr.A.R.M. Imtiyaz, of Colombo, Sri Lanka is a visiting scholar at the Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His articles have been published in several journals and presented in the international conferences on ethnicity. His primary research interest is in the study of ethnic conflict, both in Sri Lanka and in other countries.

He recently spoke to Iqbal Ali of popular Colombo Tamil Daily "Thinakkural". Translation of the interview published on May 27th, 2007 is as follows:

Q: How do you view the current political developments in Sri Lanka?

A: After their independence, countries have failed to change the political realities of the post colonial period. And changes from modernization and resulting social pressures failed miserably as they were not adequately addressed by the political leaderships. We see the consequences of this in majority of the post colonization countries. In greater Asia - Sri Lanka, India and Middle Eastern countries face this while Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia in Africa stand out as examples of this situation.

The political status that prevails in Sri Lanka today can be easily understood through approaching this within principles of Political Science.

Q: In that case do you see the Freedom struggle of Tamil Eelam is a result of this political process?

A: Generally whenever political communities erroneously develop or create rules and regulations that favor only a particular ethnic group or religion it results in conflicts. This is like how a child will show dissatisfaction toward parents if there was imparity between the parents and other

children of the family. In the same manner, an affected community will show its displeasure towards the government and its dominating ethnic group.

This is a common phenomenon of all political communities. Post independence, the ruling classes' adapted pro Sinhala policies. The Sinhala only policy of 1956, 1972 Constitution, standardization in higher education, deliberate Sinhala colonization and ethnic cleansing of Tamils did not give any hope to the Tamils. In the same token these policies did not help to pave the way to create patriotism of the country, among all minorities. Contrarily, the pro Sinhala policies divided the people of Sri Lanka. They resulted in Tamil people to relying on the freedom struggle. The birth of deadly groups such as the LTTE is a consequence or child of such pro Sinhala policies

Q: The Government of Sri Lanka and International community consider the LTTE as a terrorist organization. In the meantime majority of the Tamils see them differently. How do you view the LTTE?

A: History will determine if an organization is a freedom movement or a terrorist organization. The duty of a Political Scientist is to observe and research a community. I can't say anything regarding whether LTTE is a terrorist organization or not. But I can say one thing. When a society enforces policies discriminately, chances are higher for political organizations to rise. The affected people will not live peacefully wherever they live. This is demonstrated by the history of the world.

Q: The party in power SLFP, recently put forwarded District Councils as solution for the ethnic

problem. However, the Tamil parties and Muslim Congress have rejected this proposal. What is your opinion?

A: The solution for the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka is to fulfill the aspirations of the minority communities. In this regard, the minority communities have already lost faith in the Sinhala dominated government. Particularly, the Tamils don't count on the government or its other agencies. Even in bigger political communities "political confidence" is important. When an ethnic or religious community loses faith in the government, it results in "political tension".

The only avenue to avoid this dangerous deterioration is creating mutual understanding and trust. How to do this? In accordance to the concepts of Political Science, power sharing could lead the way in winning the trust. The minority communities must be free to conduct their affairs in their regions through their representatives.

Everyone could see that Sri Lanka Freedom Party's "District Council" proposal fails to meet this political mark. Therefore there is no hope that this proposal will help bring about a political solution. Proposals such as these not only will win the trust of the minorities but they will only help to further erode the trust in the government by affected minorities.

[Translated by K. Thirukumar]

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## Red Cross: Two Employees Kidnapped, Killed in Sri Lanka

The Red Cross says two of its employees were kidnapped and shot dead in Sri Lanka.

A Red Cross official on June 3rd said the bodies of two ethnic Tamil aid workers were found Saturday in Ratnapura. The men had been abducted from a railway station in the capital, Colombo, on Friday, as they waited for a train to take them home to eastern Batticaloa.

In separate violence, Sri Lankan military officials say Tamil rebels attacked a key military post

in northern Vavuniya district late Saturday, killing 10 soldiers and wounding 20 others.

The military says it repulsed the assault and inflicted heavy casualties on the rebels.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama Sunday stressed that the government wants to negotiate with the rebel Tamil Tigers and bring an end to the armed conflict.

He also urged foreign governments to prevent Tamil rebels from using their territories or

waters to procure and smuggle weapons.

Bogollagama made the comments at an Asian security conference in Singapore, where he highlighted recent cases of rebel-controlled ships acting in waters off India and the Maldives.

Fighting between Sri Lankan government forces and separatists has killed more than 5,000 people over the past 18 months.

[VOA]



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# 5000 Tamils Participate in "Velga Thamil" event in Canada

By: Raymond Rajabalan

Tamils in Toronto, Canada braving scorching heat of mid summer thronged Albert Campbell square, Scarborough Town Centre, Monday afternoon to express their solidarity and show of support to their brethren in Tamil Eelam and simultaneously urge moral support from the World Community for Tamil people's right to Self Determination and Statehood. Expressing their desire for justice and peace in Sri Lanka, Tamils from all walks of life in Canada gathered at the rally called upon the Canadian government and the International community to come to their assistance in this hour of need.

Representatives from all major political parties took part in

the event and expressed their support for the Tamil community. All the speakers condemned the recent inhuman act by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) of evicting Tamils in Colombo and stressed the need for the Canadian government to act immediately to speed up the stalled peace process.

Speeches and cultural programs performed by Tamil artists were held on a gaily decorated special stage erected in the town centre.

Scarborough is a very large city in Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in the province of Ontario where nearly 100,000 expatriate Tamils have settled here within the past two decades.

Representatives of the ruling

Conservative party (CP) as well as Liberal Party and National Democratic Party (NDP) and representatives from provincial and municipal governments graced the event.

More than 5000 Tamils took part in the event, described by veteran journalists as the largest gathering in living memory.

Howard Hampton, Leader of NDP party of Ontario Province, Jim Karygiannis (Federal MP for Scarborough-Agincourt), Raymond Cho (Toronto City Councilor) Chuck Konkel, of Conservative Party, George Khourie, Conservative Party of Canada (Federal candidate for Scarborough East-Pickering) Sujani Krishnalingam, a final year



student of University of Toronto addressed the assembled supporters.

John McCallum (MP for Markham-Unionville) and Judy Sgro, (MP for York West) spoke

over the phone expressing their unreserved support for the cause of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Both expressed their regret for being unable to be present at this memorable occasion.

All Tamil business in Toronto was closed for the day as an expression of their support for this event. Representatives from Canadian Tamil Radio (CTR), Geethavani WorldTamil Radio (WTR), Tamil One TV station, ATN television and reporters representing the various Tamil newspapers in Canada covered the whole program.

The participants in the rally were dressed in red-yellow while a number of Tamil organizations displayed huge banners.

Photo Courtesy: Puthinam.com



## Bambalapittiya Hindu College Old Boys Associations Dinner Dance held in Toronto

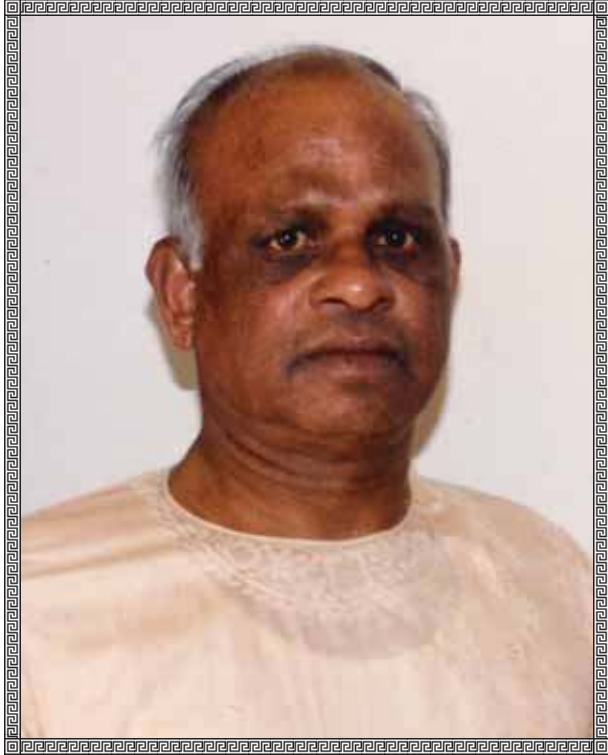


# Mr. E. Sivasothy

*Former Trade Unionist*

*Past Vice Petron of OBA Mahajana College*

*Former Translator – Immigration Canada*



**Born on: November 27, 1929**

**Demise: May 18, 2005**

Siva was a colorful, vibrant, and cheerful staple to every Trade Union Meetings and Mahajana OBA Meetings and other related meetings, both in Canada and worldwide. His professional relationships were all sincere, illustrated by the large network of colleagues that also called him a friend. His contributions to Mahajana and Trade Unions are countless and outstanding, all the while he was one of the most approachable – and recognizable – figures in his field. In addition, Siva's commitment to Trade Union Members was unprecedented. Siva will always be remembered with a smile.

## **Friends and Family**

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Mr. E. Sivasothy Two years have passed, since that sad day May 18, 2005

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## Surgical patients to benefit from Town of Ajax's \$250,000 gift

**Money to purchase Minimally Invasive Surgery equipment**



A \$250,000 gift from the Town of Ajax to Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital will help reduce scarring and ensure faster recovery times for surgical patients in west Durham.

The donation, pledged over a four year period, will support the purchase of Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) equipment for the hospital's surgical program—an area of Rouge Valley that has recently seen a 24 per cent increase in patient volume.

Minimally Invasive Surgery involves using a tiny video camera and remote-controlled instruments to perform surgical procedures through incisions that are much smaller than those in traditional operations. This results in less scarring, faster recovery times and fewer surgery-related complications.

Currently, Rouge Valley Centenary in Scarborough is the only community hospital in the Greater Toronto Area to have an MIS suite. Surgeons there have been successfully performing a variety of procedures for the past two years, including laparoscopic bowel resections and operations on gallbladders, spleens and kidneys.

The addition of an MIS suite at Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering will provide Durham residents with access to some of the most advanced surgical techniques available.

"The benefits of minimally invasive surgery to a patient are enormous," says Dr. Peter Hayashida, Program Chief of Surgery at Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering. "It is sometimes called keyhole surgery because of the tiny incision, and for the patient it means less need for pain medication, smaller scars, shorter hospital stays and faster overall recovery time."

Tracy Paterson, Acting

Executive Director of the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation, says the \$250,000 gift from the Town of Ajax recognizes the importance of investing in innovative healthcare in the community. "We thank the Town of Ajax for this extremely generous gift, which will go a long way towards addressing surgical volumes in this rapidly growing community," Paterson says.

"The Town has been one of our biggest supporters for many years, and this gift brings their lifetime contribution to nearly \$1 million. We are grateful for this level of support, and we know that the residents of Ajax and the rest of west Durham will be the real beneficiaries of their generosity."

**- Media invited -** Surgical patients to benefit from Town of Ajax's \$250,000 gift

**- Money to purchase Minimally Invasive Surgery equipment -**

Ajax town councillors will tour the operating suites at Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 24, 2007 before presenting a cheque for \$250,000 to the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation. Media are invited to participate in the tour and learn more about the benefits of this \$250,000 gift for surgical patients in west Durham.

Rouge Valley Health System is an innovative leader in quality family centred care, with regional programs in cardiac care, mental health and paediatrics. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two hospitals: Rouge Valley Centenary, in east Toronto; Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering, in the west Durham Region. Together a team of doctors including 224 general practitioners and 325 specialists, more than 1,000 nurses and many other professionals, care for a broad spectrum of health conditions. In consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, healthcare organizations and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs and create new ones catering to the needs of the growing communities of Scarborough, Ajax, Pickering and Whitby. It's in our nature to care.

[www.rougevalley.ca](http://www.rougevalley.ca)



# Counseling and Prevention of HIV in Jaffna

By **Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapthipillai**

Sri Lanka had a population of almost 19.69 million in 2005. Sri Lanka ranks 96th on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index scale. There were a total of 743 cases of HIV/AIDS, and 144 deaths reported by 2005, according to statistics from Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) clinics. There were 432 males, and 311 females reported in 2005 with HIV/AIDS. 129 new cases were reported, and there 13 deaths due to HIV/AIDS in 2005.

HIV surveillance is conducted annually by the National STD/AIDS Control Programme (NSACP). HIV sentinel serosurveillance started in 1993. There were 26,786 HIV tests carried out during 2005. Male to female ratio of reported cases of HIV infection is 1.4:1. However the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates the actual number of PLWHA (People Living With HIV/AIDS) to be 5,000 (3,000- 8,300), and classifies Sri Lanka as a low-prevalence country with an adult rate of less than 0.1 percent. Despite the current low-prevalence, Sri Lanka is vulnerable to an impending HIV epidemic because of the existence of vulnerable groups like commercial sex workers (CSW's), low condom use, high rates of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and the ethnic conflict.

"People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA's) in Jaffna are unable to undergo the test called "Western Blot", because there is no qualified doctor to carry out this particular test. A few persons have been tested for "Elisa" at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital.

HIV/AIDS status in Jaffna is pathetic, because of the prevailing situation in the peninsula. There is no specialized medical officer in the Jaffna Teaching Hospital to carry out the required test. The Public Health Inspector (PHI) is forced to play the doctor's role, although he is not qualified. There is no privacy for a person who comes to the STD clinic. The patients are deprived of all facilities namely routine test to know the viral load, medication, care and support. The STD clinic at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital is not fully functional" says Kanthar Visuvalingam Kanthaverl, Director and Founder of Pathway Counselling Centre, and Executive Member of People's Movement for Patient's Rights.

Pathway Counselling Centre was the first counseling centre in Jaffna, which was set up in 1991. It extends its service in sex, sexuality, pre and post test counseling on HIV/AIDS, and create awareness. The counselors strictly maintain the confidentiality of the persons, who go there for counseling. There are three trained counselors for HIV/AIDS.

The following are excerpts from an interview with Kanthar Visuvalingam Kanthaverl, Director and Founder of Pathway Counselling Centre:

Q:What is your responsibility as a counsellor?

"A:Counselling plays a very important role for the person infected, and his or her family. Counsellors are trained on HIV/AIDS, and maintain confidentiality of the information of the persons. It's very difficult to build confidentiality with the persons, I counsel. It takes more time. The counselors and persons, who are

being counseled need a lot of patience. I give counseling for the persons, who seek support before and after HIV test. I give counseling for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs), and students.

Smoking and consuming alcohol are habits. Sex is an urge. People have to go for safer sex. A large number of infected persons are in the age group of 25-35 year old. The people of Jaffna do not talk about sex in public. People are shy to have a frank discussion about sex and sexuality with others. Therefore the information exchanged in the society is comparatively low.

The accumulated number of People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA's) is 38, while people living with HIV is 16 to date. There are more women than men living with HIV/AIDS. Out of these, two are children. The first case of HIV positive was detected in 1993 in Jaffna.

Q: How do you help the People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA's)?

A:Most of the individuals have tested for HIV without counseling. Counseling is important before and after a test for HIV, because if the person if found positive he or she will not be in a position to accept the results. He or she will be able to handle it, if he or she has gone through the counseling before going for a HIV test. The family of an infected person should be counseled as well. A lot of families do not respect the rights the People Living With HIV/AIDS. Some families throw the HIV positive persons to the road, once they are found to be positive.

Many more undergo the HIV



[Kanthar Visuvalingam Kanthaverl, Director and Founder of Pathway Counselling Centre, and Executive Member of People's Movement for Patient's Rights]

test somewhere, and not at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. Because they are afraid of their status of HIV would be made public, and they will have to encounter various difficulties in the society. I personally know of seven persons, who have undergone the test somewhere in order to protect themselves, and avoid discrimination and trauma. Few have gone to India to do the test. People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA's) are stigmatized. Fear, stigma, denial and discrimination still exist in the society.

And young adults do not have the correct and scientific information about HIV/AIDS. Women know very little about the mode of transmission compared to men in Jaffna. Condom use is reported to be low in Sri Lanka, with a usage of only 3 percent. Condom use in Jaffna is almost nil. It's sad to note that, the women are powerless to negotiate with men for the condom use.

Q:What measures could be taken in order to prevent more persons getting infected in Jaffna?

A:Jaffna has a very closed society with regard to sex and sexuality. I find it very difficult to talk about these issues frankly. But these issues should be addressed without further delay. Our Jaffna society denies that, we do not have HIV/AIDS in our society. We try to site various reasons such as "We are a very conservative society, our culture does not permit us to misbehave, we do not go for free sex, HIV/AIDS is a western disease- we will not get infected, we are a God fearing society".

People of Jaffna should be able to accept the fact that, there are HIV positives in the society, and should not discriminate them in any way. The society has been through two decades of war. It's inevitable to avoid HIV in war torn

society. But we should create awareness more frequently among the public, and discuss about it.

The society is becoming more vulnerable with the new displacements in the recent violence in the peninsula. Health issues are to be taken into consideration, when there is displacement. People have no privacy in the Internally Displaced Camps. Some people live in the Internally Displaced Camps for longer time that they expected.

It is estimated that some 30,000 women and girls, and 15,000 boys work in the sex industry in Sri Lanka. There are a number of sex workers in Jaffna peninsula. They can earn more money than a peanut seller in Jaffna. Therefore many women are entering the trade as a sex worker. Due to the ethnic conflict many women lost the male bread winner of their families. They are forced to take care of the rest of their families immediately. These women either single parent or young girls find it very difficult to manage the families. Since they have to take care of their families, they are compelled to take up any job available immediately. They become sex workers, earn an income to feed the family.

Although it's hidden in the society, it's noted that there is a number of men who have sex with men (MSM). The society does not want accept this fact either. This is another vulnerable group.

A better facility should be extended to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital in order to help the people. People should build confidence with the counselors, and continue to get the care and support.

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# FILM REVIEW S

by Anand. J

## Chennai 600028

Hats off to the new team of S.P.B Charan and Venkat Prabhu that has emerged in Kollywood and has come out with a wholesome, entertaining film for the viewers. It is none other than Chennai – 600028, a film reflecting the pulse of the youth. There are no popular faces, punch dialogues, or colorful foreign locations in the film. But Venkat has proved that they are not necessary for a good film like Chennai-600028 (pincode of Mandaveli area). The entire movie is cen-



tered around the Gully cricket (street cricket) and a tournament final between two rival teams. Apart from cricket there is enough space for love, friendship, sentiments and decent comedy in the script.

Raja Annamalaipuram Sharks and Royapuram Rockers are the two teams who always fight for supremacy in the game in their area. The field enmity continues in their real life too. Raghu (Jai, son of Music Director Deva) is the star bowler in the Rockers team and he later shifts his house to the stronghold of the Sharks R.A.Puram. As the Shark members tease Raghu in the initial stage, he finds it is very difficult to adjust in the area. But the love between Selvi (Vijayalakshmi, daughter of Agathiyan) and Karthik, the captain of Shark, brings him closer to the Shark team. Finally, Raghu decides to play for Sharks and in the process incurs the wrath of the Rockers.

In the mean time, Radio Mirchi announces Mirchi Cup tournament for Gully cricket teams in which Rockers and Sharks meet in the semifinal. The climax is interesting and riveting than a real international one day match. The love innings of Arvind, the star batsman in Shark, with Christine Zedak is a separate story and the viewers get embarrassed with their steamy bed scenes in an ECR farm house.

The plus point of the movie is the star cast. Though it is a challenge to a viewer to remember all the members of the teams, one should really appreciate the director in selecting actors with a boy-next-door image for all the roles, including the lead ones.

Mirchi Siva as Karthik is impressive. A radio jockey-turned-actor Shiva has performed well in the lead role. Proficient in the game of cricket, Shiva had enough opportunity to perform in the movie and the young lad has

utilized it well. Vijayalakshmi, a girl with a typical middle class look plays Shiva's lady love and has performed her role flawlessly.

Then there is Jai. He looks like Vijay in certain scenes, and has done a neat job. This lad has enough stuff to perform as an individual hero. It is Premji, the younger son of Ganghai Amaran and younger brother of the director, who steals the show whenever he appears on screen. He has handled the comedy role with ease and is able to regale the audiences with laughter throughout the film. Nitin Sathya and Illavarasu have done their part well. Other newcomers have also given a good supporting performance..

The semifinal match for the Mirchi Cup between Rockers and Sharks satisfies the die hard fans of cricket who were disappointed with India's dismal performance in the recent World Cup!

Yuvan Shankar Raja proves his worth in the music department with some peppy songs and good background music. Shakthi Saravanan's camera work has added to the mood and feel of the film.

The only minus point of the movie is that its theme is completely based on the youth of Chennai who speak in their typical slang. As the city is already identified as a fairly cosmopolitan one, it will be hard to lure audiences from the rural centers who anyway feel annoyed with the cultural diversity of Chennai.

Director Venkat Prabhu started out as an actor and tried his hand in singing as well. But now he has chosen a field of Direction which he is sure to excel.

## Fool N Final

Fool N Final is all about transporting you to a world of make-believe. The sole intention is to offer you loads of entertainment in those 17 reels / 2.20 hours. But, wait, there's a hitch. The execution of the material is done most stylishly, it's akin to watching a comic book on screen. But the effort falls flat since there's no script in the first place. No issues with that, but director Ahmed Khan and his team of writers should've mixed, merged and uni-



fied the assorted characters and incidents skillfully so that the entire experience would be worth cherishing. Unfortunately, what happens here is that you root for a few individualistic sequences only, not the film in entirety.

What redeems Fool N Final are the portions between Johnny

Lever and Paresh Rawal and a few splendid stunts in the narrative -- Shahid's bike chase at the start or Sunny's fight to finish combat in the finale. But as you walk out of the auditorium, you strongly feel that Ahmed hasn't utilized the golden opportunity of creating a paisa vasool entertainer. To sum up, Fool N Final disappoints!

Fool N Final is all about a diamond that's robbed by Chunky Pandey in Mumbai and smuggled to Dubai. Chunky's uncle [Gulshan Grover], a don based in London, asks Chunky to sell the diamond to his accomplice in Dubai, Asrani. Arbaaz Khan, a don based in Dubai, gets to know of the diamond and also of Chunky's weaknesses - guns and gambling. Arbaaz asks Paresh Rawal to get on to the job. Paresh plans to carry out the robbery with his niece [Ayesha Takia], her boyfriend [Shahid Kapoor] and a cabbie [Johnny Lever]. Vivek Oberoi owes money to a don [Zakir Hussain], who conducts illegal boxing matches in Dubai. Meanwhile, Chunky cannot resist the urge for guns and calls Arbaaz, who in turn asks Chunky for a favor: Chunky should bet on his behalf at Zakir's illegal den. On Arbaaz's instructions, Paresh, Shahid, Ayesha and Johnny decide to kidnap Chunky. Sunny Deol has an altercation with Vivek's fighter. Zakir asks Vivek to bring Sunny for the big fight. Sunny knocks down Zakir's fighter. Zakir is seething with anger. In the meanwhile, Arbaaz walks away with the diamond. Subsequently, Zakir walks in and demands the diamond from Paresh and gang. Gulshan and Asrani also land up at Paresh's place with Jackie Shroff and ask for the diamond.

Fool N Final is meant to be a laughathon but it excites in bits and spurts. The first half offers rich visuals and a few interesting gags, but the entertainment quotient isn't high enough. It's only when Johnny Lever enters the frame that things intensify. The sequence in the car, with Ayesha's dog swallowing the mobile, is hilarious and every time Paresh and Johnny interact with one another, the smile on your face only widens. But too many cooks spoil the broth. In this case, with so many characters around and so many stories running concurrently, the writer duo hasn't been able to do justice to each of them. As a result, the viewer feels dejected because every sub-plot isn't as interesting as the Paresh - Johnny track.

Himesh Reshammiya's music is in sync with the mood of the film. Cinematography [Johnny Lal] is excellent. Fool N Final has a host of actors, but the ones who stand out are Johnny Lever and Paresh Rawal. No two opinions on that! Johnny is in form after a long, long time and the funster is the soul of the enterprise. The masses will simply love him. Paresh is excellent yet again and together with Johnny, elevates the film to a major extent.

Shahid Kapoor is noticeable because he's with Johnny and Paresh all through. Even otherwise, he leaves a strong mark in dances. Ayesha Takia pairs off well with Shahid, but doesn't have much to do really. Sunny Deol is okay, although his mukka will be liked by the hoi polloi. Vivek Oberoi hams in the little role that he has. Sameera Reddy has no role either. Sharmila Tagore is wasted. Om Puri deserved a better deal. Jackie Shroff is hardly there. Chunky Pandey is passable. Ditto for Arbaaz Khan. Zakir Hussain does well. Gulshan Grover, Asrani, Vijay Raaz, Razzak Khan and Suresh Menon are mere gap fillers.

On the whole, Fool N Final is all gloss, no substance.

## Karuppasamy

### Kuthagaikarar

After Kokki, Karan has returned to the screen with a sure hit script - Karuppasamy Kuthagaikarar. Debutante director Moorthy has done a good job directing the film. He has made a spicy entertainer shot with the



city of Madurai in the background. The story is simple but the director makes it very interesting with his talented and witty script!

Karuppasamy (played by Karan) aka Xerox is a committed, hard working man who is a cycle stand contractor near the Madurai Bus Stand. His mimicry skills allow him to imitate actor superstar Rajinikanth. This artistic inclination of his inspires him to start a dance troupe, which becomes very successful.

He leads a carefree and happy

life along with his friends until Rasaathi (played by Meenakshi), a student of medicine, enters his friend's circle. Rasaathi visits Xeroxs cycle stand frequently. In the process, she meets him often and is impressed by his decent behaviour. Another thing that impresses her about Xerox is the concern that he shows towards the way her studying is going on. In Xerox, she sees none other than her late mother. This makes her fall in love with him as time passes by.

While she consciously develops a soft corner for him, she pursues her education with more priority - her intention to study and become a doctor. Meenakshi's family comes to know of the affair between Meenakshi and Xerox. They convince Xerox to let go of Meenakshi, which he does in favour of her of pursuing her education. Finally he wins her heart despite letting her go.

It is a pleasant surprise for one to watch Karan act excellently in the film. His portrayal of Xerox will take the audience by storm. Moreover, he has maintained a balance - he has not over acted neither has he under performed. Meenakshi make her debut well in the film. She plays the role of Rasaathi very well and shows that she can play good roles with extreme ease.

Vadivelu comes in with his comedy quirks. Though the comedy is not imbibed into the main storyline of the movie, he as always brings many a smile on the viewers face. The debutante newcomers of the film have also played their roles well.

Music by Dheena is average and two songs are above average. The film has too many songs, something which spoils the film. Cameraman Sridhar does an excellent job capturing the city of Madurai in an altogether different angle.

All in all the movie is Above average.

Karuppasamy Kuthagaikarar - Pozhudhu Pogadhavargalin Sondhakarakar (A movie for people who have lot of time)

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## CINE JOURNAL



# Kollywood TidBitz

**Karan** – Started his film career as a child artiste and later rediscovered by Kamal Hassan. Karan bagged a plum villain role



in Kamal's movie 'Nammavar' and then followed it with a lot of villain roles. But Karan turned unlucky in his ventures and was waiting for the right break. He teamed up with Prabhu Solomon and delivered a hit movie 'Kokki' which won him accolades. Now Karan has delivered another hit 'Karuppasamy Kuthagaitharar' and is smiling all the way. Karan dedicates this success to his hard work and sincerity. Karan admits that he picks his character very carefully and would like to play different characters. The latest we hear about Karan is that Director Saran has approached him to do a mega budget movie and various other producers are waiting in line to get a nod from Karan. Hope the new found success of Karan stays with him for a

## Kollywood Top Contenders

long time.

**Soorya** – He was last seen in 'Sillinu oru Kadhal' alongside Jyothika. He has been concentrating on Television commercials lately and his participation



ratio is almost 3 out of 5 television commercials. He has become a household name due to his commercials frenzy act but he has lost touch with the film industry and is sure in tangles. His films 'Vaaranam Aayiram' and 'Vel' are having troubles due to the producers tangle and the latest we hear is that it might take another 6 months before he completes one of the movies. This will be a major setback to this young and promising actor since he will not have a release this year. Hope Soorya gets to his act quickly.

**Prakashraj** – One of the best villains of Tamil film industry after Rajinikanth and Sathyaraj,

Prakashraj made a name for himself as a good producer of quality films. 'Kanda Naal Mudhal' and



'Mozhi' won him a lot of accolades as a producer. The movie 'Mozhi' was screened in the Cannes film festival along with other Indian movies. The latest we hear about Prakashraj is that he is planning to produce a mega budget movie with actor Vijay in the lead. It seems Vijay has nodded his head for the project and if rumors were to go true, the director will be Radha Mohan who directed Mozhi.

**Asin** – Dove eyed beauty from God's own country took the Tamil film world by storm with her lively performances in the movie Ghajini, Sivakasi and Pokkiri. She has only two projects in Tamil namely 'Dasavadharam' and 'Vel'. She is currently Bollywood bound since Aamir Khan selected her for the lead role in the remake of Ghajini in Hindi. Latest we hear

about this dusky actress is that she has been flooded with offers in Bollywood and the actress is taking her time in deciding on which projects to sign. Gossip mongers are buzzing with the news that she will be the next best southern actress to make it



big in Bollywood after Hema Malini, Sridevi and Jayaprada.

**Meenakshi** – The hot of happening girl of Kollywood is Meenakshi. After her successful outing in 'Karuppasamy Kuthagaitharar' with Karan, she is inundated with offers and she has reportedly accepted two mega



offers. Director Bala has signed

her for his dream project 'Naan Kadavul' after a reportedly bad experience with actress Bhavana. Meenakshi happily agrees to do glamour roles since she doesn't want herself to be typecast as a typical homely girl as in her debut movie.

**Kamal Hassan** –

The maestro actor Kamal wows the Indian film world with his variety of movies and stupendous acting. Currently working on his dream project 'Dasavadharam' directed by K S Ravikumar, he is keeping all the important news about the movie to himself and his crew. He doesn't want to divulge any information about the



movie until after the release of another biggie of the decade 'Sivaji'. Kamal admits that he plans on coming up with interesting tidbits in the month of July which will have everyone surprised. The latest we hear about his project is that he has requested special permission from the chief minister M Karunanidhi to picturise a Tsunami scene and another riveting action scene in the Nehru stadium with flying helicopters. If sources were to go true, this action scene would be one of the costliest made in the Indian film history. Now that's Kamal for you. **By Anand J**

## Heavens Rehearsal *moment in time to prepare for eternity*

Fifteen thousand people are expected to gather at the Air Canada Center on September 15th, though not for a sporting event - but for a wedding rehearsal.

Heaven Rehearsal is intended to embrace and celebrate the cultural diversity of Toronto Christian faith community with a seamless mix of ethnic music and dance. At a recent press conference held in Toronto, Co-Chair and host of the daily national TV program 100 Huntley Street, Reynold Mainse, said, Heaven Rehearsal will for sure fall short of the grandeur of Heaven, but will certainly surpass the expectations of anyone in attendance. He continued, we believe this gathering will closely reflect the worship of Heaven. In addition to the music and dance that evening, the organizers plan to present a Parade of Nations where a select group of people bearing their national flags and dressed in white will visually unite to break the walls of racial, gender and cultural divisions among God children and usher in healing and restoration to our city, country and world.

At the press conference Terry Bridle, the event coordinator said, we chose Toronto, because it is the



most ethnically diverse urban center in the world and Toronto is the city that most closely reflects Heaven gathering of all nations, tribes, peoples and languages. Terry continued we are planning to make it an annual and global event and hope to have it streamed live on the Internet as well as broadcasted around the globe. Peggy Kennedy, the events Nations/Ministries Liaison stated that Heaven Rehearsal has what she calls friends of the Vision. These are many churches and organizations that are in support of Heaven Rehearsal. This is a large-scale charitable undertaking that needs financial support from many. Primarily individuals, as

well as ministries and local congregations have provided funding thus far. Heaven Rehearsal still has a ways to go before the budget is met. Tickets went on sale May 15, and are available through Ticket Master at a cost of \$20 per individual; however, \$15 special priced tickets can be purchased for groups of 10 or more.

Historically churches have been divided on everything from minor issues of hair and clothes

to complex doctrinal issues. However, there is a strong movement prompted by the Spirit for the church to major on the Majors and Minor and the Minors namely majoring on faith in the Jesus, the Lord and Savior of mankind

which is the bottom line or some might say, the Key to Heaven door. This event is intended to foster unity, develop oneness, and prepare the Bride of Christ to stand as one before her lover God. In God we are one family says Rachelle Mainse who is leading the youth arm of Heaven Rehearsal that is known as UR828. She says, any youth will be attending the event with the expectation that God is going to show up.

For more information go to [www.HeavensRehearsal.com](http://www.HeavensRehearsal.com) or to volunteer send an email to [info@HeavensRehearsal.com](mailto:info@HeavensRehearsal.com).

In the press conference photograph seated are the Co-Chairs Reynold & Kathy Mainse, Hosts of the daily national TV program "100 Huntley Street"



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# Monsoon Real Estate

## BUYING A NEW HOME & YOUR PROTECTION UNDER ONTARIO NEW HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM (ONHWP)

**By T.M Kesavan  
Barrister & Solicitor**

In Ontario, every new home builder must register with the 'Tarion' Warranty Corporation, which administers Ontario New Home Warranty Program (ONHWP). Every new home built for sale must be enrolled in the program before the start of construction. The primary purpose of 'Tarion' is to protect consumers when builders fail to fulfill their warranty obligations. If you intend to purchase a new home, the first question to ask at the builder's sales office should always be: Are you registered with 'Tarion'? Further, you may check their registration number and the ONHWP rating by calling ONHWP office on the website, <http://www.tarion.com>. Buying a home without a warranty is too risky. There is no 'Tarion' protection at all if the home is built using a remnant of a prior home on the site (such as a pre-existing foundation), or if it is a substantial renovation of an existing dwelling. There may also be no protection if a builder personally moves into a new home and lives in it for a time before re-selling it, or if it is used for a sales office prior to re-sale.

### What does ONHWP cover you for?

The ONHWP insures your deposit to a maximum of \$20,000.00 if the transaction is not completed and your deposit is not returned to you. What this means is that if your builder becomes bankrupt and you have given more than \$20,000.00 in deposits, the excess is lost. So you should not pay deposits totaling more than \$20,000.00 before closing without careful consideration.

All homes enrolled in the Warranty Program are covered for:

- All defects in materials and

workmanship for a period of one year after the date of possession;

- Basement leakage and Ontario Building Code violations with respect to safety and health for a period of two years;

- Major structural defects for seven years following completion for possession. A major structural defect is defined in the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act as any defect in materials or work that results in the failure of a load-bearing part of the home's structure, or any defect in materials or work that significantly and adversely affects the use of the building as a home.

### Protection against delayed closing

No compensation is payable to a purchaser for a major delay of between 16 and 120 days, or a minor delay of up to 15 days, if proper notice of extension is given. The builder may extend the scheduled closing date by up to 120 days by giving 65 days notice before the closing date or confirmed occupancy date, in the case of condominium purchase. If the house is not completed by then, the purchaser has 10 days to terminate the transaction and receive a refund of all deposit money paid. If the purchaser does not terminate, the transaction is automatically extended for up to an additional 120 days. If the house still isn't finished by 240 days and the parties don't agree otherwise, the transaction comes to an end. On a minor delay the builder need only give you 35 days notice before the closing date or confirmed occupancy date. The builder can also delay the closing by up to 05 days without notice or compensation.

The Ontario New Home Warranty Program provides con-

sumer protection against delayed closings. If the builder anticipates a delay in the closing date and does not give due notice at any time prior to closing, you may be able to claim compensation up to \$5,000.00. Unless the builder refuses to close, you must complete the purchase in order to claim compensation. However, the right to compensation does not arise if the purchaser agrees to an extension in writing. The clock starts running all over again as if the extended date is the original proposed closing date. That's what happened to Joseph and Eleanor in the case of Joseph D. Yue and Eleanor I.C. Yue v Ontario New Home Warranty Program(2005). In this case, Joseph and Eleanor purchase a new home in Waterloo in June 2002, with a scheduled closing of November 25, 2002. Due to construction delays, the builder later gave notice that the new closing date would be March 25, 2003, but the notice was shorter than the required 65 days. In November 2002, the builder and purchasers signed an amendment to the agreement amending the closing date to March 25, 2003. After closing, the purchasers submitted a claim to the warranty corporation for \$5,000.00 for delayed closing costs. The court held that the purchasers are not entitled to the claim.

You are not entitled to compensation if the delay is caused by factor's out of the builder's control such as floods, natural disasters, fires or strikes. For an example, when you are advised in writing of delays due to strikes, the extension period under the ONHWP effectively freezes. When the strike resolves the time periods will again begin to run. Remember this is not the builder's fault.

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