



VOL 2  
ISSUE 4  
SEPTEMBER 2007

# Monsoon Journal

A parfait media publication

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- JOY -

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy" - Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel Laureate (1861 - 1941)



Red rose in Kalmunal, Ampara district, Sri Lanka [humanityashore.org]

## The Race for Leadership Begins



By Siva Sivapragasam

The battle for Ontario leadership has begun.

With barely a month to go for the Ontario Provincial Elections scheduled for Oct.10th, political parties contesting the elections have kicked-off their campaigns to woo the Ontario voters with a variety of election promises.

John Tory, Progressive Conservative Party leader kicked-off his campaign in the suburban belt of Toronto and also opened several campaign offices in Mississauga. Tory's cam-

paign slogan this year is "Leadership Matters" and he is wooing Ontario voters with this catchy slogan in the Press and Radio.

Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty, who is the incumbent Premier for the province began his campaign criticizing the PC proposal to extend public funding for religious schools.

He has warned that the Tory proposal would slice down \$ 500 Million a year out of public education. He is asking the public to vote Liberal to continue to rebuild a better and strong

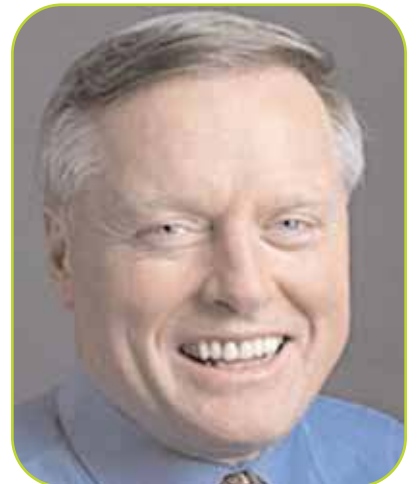


Toronto.

NDP Leader Howard Hampton has stated that the elections would give an opportunity to voters to address their grievances and that the Liberals don't deserve a second term due to broken promises.

He has stated that NDP would be happy if voters elected a minority government giving the opportunity for shifting the balance of power.

Green Party leader Frank De Jong is also hoping for a minority government and expects that in the years to



come, Green Party candidates will enter the Legislature.

The main issues for the voters to decide can be summed up as follows:

- \* Stronger schools and Public Funding for Religious schools
- \* A Crime free Toronto and safer communities
- \* Improved Health Care
- \* Poverty Alleviation
- \* Better Transit

Based on the above issues, Ontarians will decide on October 10th as to who will be their next Premier.

### PC Candidate K K Li - Representing what matters to Markham - Unionville



Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory shakes hands with Markham-Unionville's Candidate – a professional Physiotherapist, entrepreneur and community activist, K K Li

Full Story on Page 21

### Nedumaran and supporters arrested

Tamil National Movement leader P Nedumaran and 500 volunteers were arrested in Nagapattinam on Sep 12th, when they tried to proceed to Sri Lanka by sea with medicines and essential commodities to "help the suffering Tamils" there.

Nedumaran, addressing the volunteers, said that they tried their best to send the items including medicine and food to the suffering Tamils legally through the Red Cross society but their efforts became futile as permission was denied.

The TNM leader also said he had no other option but to observe a fast-unto-death if no help was forthcoming for the suffering Tamils.

Meanwhile, another batch of around 150 TNM volunteers, who were supposed to set sail from Rameswaram in a boat, began an



indefinite fast there as the police were neither arresting them nor allowing them to go to Sri Lanka. The TNM activists had collected medicines and food to supply to Sri Lankan Tamils during their proposed trip to the island nation in violation of rules from Nagapattinam and Rameswaram. [PTI]

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# Upcoming Hindu Religious Festivals

Ganesh/Vinayaga Chaturthi  
 Saturday - Sep 15th  
 Navaratri begins  
 Thursday - Oct 11th  
 Navaratri ends Friday - Oct 19th



Vijaya Dashami/Dussehra  
 Saturday - October 20th



Deepavali/Diwali, Thursday  
 - Nov 8th



Kantha Sashti begins  
 - Saturday Nov 10th  
 Kantha Sashti completion  
 - Thursday Nov 15th



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# Air India aims for 200-strong fleet

Air India is aiming for a fleet strength of 200 aircraft in order to match its peers such as Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines, British Airways and Emirates.

The merged Air India-Indian entity is presently in the process of acquiring 111 Boeing and Airbus aircraft which will take its fleet strength to 140 after phasing out some of its old aircraft by 2011.

Even as this project is underway, the airline is now mulling an acquisition of 60 more aircraft from Boeing and Airbus which will make its fleet 200-aircraft strong.

This is to support its ambitious plan to create a European hub, start more non-stop flights to the US and Canada besides new destinations like Australia, Switzerland, Sao Paulo and more destinations in the SAARC region.

Air India's Board is expected to take a decision on acquiring more aircraft by September which would then be put up before the government for approval, Air India Chairman V Thulasidas said.

The airline recently started a non-stop daily flight from Mumbai to New York with the acquisition of two Boeing 777-200 LRs and has already scheduled similar flights from New Delhi to New York and later on from Bangalore to San Francisco with the delivery of six more Boeing 777-200 LRs.



Thulasidas said Air India would require more such long-haul aircraft if it were to start additional non-stop flights to the US, for which there was a potential.

The destinations that are on Air India's radar are Chicago, Washington and Houston in the US and Vancouver and Toronto in Canada.

The Indian cities that could generate adequate traffic for such non-stop flights to North America are Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Amritsar, apart from Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, Thulasidas said.

He, however, made it clear that the new destinations would be considered only after Air India gets more aircraft and ensures adequate traffic

could be generated for its first and business class segments.

Air India would be launching more flights to destinations in the US with a halt in Europe once it starts getting delivery of Dreamliner Boeing 787 from September 2008.

It has ordered 23 Boeing 787s as part of the 68 aircraft it would be acquiring for nearly USD 10 billion.

[PTI]

**The merged Air India-Indian Airlines has ordered 111 new Boeing and Airbus aircraft whose delivery would be completed by 2011. It is acquiring 43 Airbus 320, 319 and 321, mostly for domestic operations.**

# Bank of Canada keeps target for the overnight rate at 4 1/2 per cent



The Bank of Canada announced on 5th Sept that it is maintaining its target for the overnight rate at 4 1/2 per cent. The operating band for the overnight rate is unchanged, and the Bank Rate remains at 4 3/4 per cent.

Near-term prospects for economic growth outside North America appear to be slightly stronger than anticipated in the July Monetary Policy Report Update (MPRU), while near-term economic prospects for the United States are weaker than expected. It now seems likely that the adjustment in the U.S. residential housing sector will be more pronounced and protracted, exacerbated by recent developments in financial markets. On balance, this implies weaker demand for Canadian exports than had been expected at the time of the July MPRU.

In Canada, total and core CPI inflation in July, at 2.2 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively, continued to be above the inflation target but generally in line with the Bank's expectations. The Canadian dollar has also largely traded in the range assumed in the July MPRU. At the same time, the pace of economic growth in the first half of this year was above the Bank's expectations. It now appears that the Canadian economy is operating further above its production potential than was estimated in July. Domestic demand remains robust, buoyed by a continuing strong labour market and

higher-than-expected increases in home sales and prices. However, recent developments in financial markets have led to some tightening of credit conditions for Canadian borrowers, which should temper growth in domestic demand.

Against this background, the Bank judges that the current level of the target for the overnight rate is appropriate. However, there are significant upside and downside risks to the outlook for inflation. On the upside, there is a possibility that household demand in Canada could be stronger than anticipated, while on the downside the ongoing adjustment in the U.S. housing sector could be more severe and spill over to the U.S. economy more broadly. In addition, there is uncertainty about the extent and duration of the tightening of credit conditions in Canada and, hence, about the tempering effect this will have on growth in domestic demand.

The Bank will continue to closely monitor evolving economic and financial developments. A full update of the Bank's outlook for growth and inflation, including risks to the projection, will be set out in the Monetary Policy Report, to be published on 18 October 2007.

The Bank of Canada's next scheduled date for announcing the overnight rate target is 16 October 2007.

# 55 year old woman gives birth to twins in Chennai

In a rare case, a 55-year-old woman from Karnataka delivered twins after remaining childless for about 28 years, in Chennai on Aug 27th.

Brinda, who gave birth to the babies by caesarean section, could be the "oldest woman in the country to deliver twins," Dr Jeyarani Kamaraj, gynaecologist and infertility specialist at a local hospital here, told.

She said the couple's infertility was due to lack of sufficient number

of sperms in Brinda's husband Alagappan (57) of Bhadravathi in Karnataka. But, the woman's uterus was found to be quite healthy, she added.

Since Brinda had attained menopause a decade ago, the couple conceived by Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI) process using a donor egg.

Despite having complications like diabetes and blood pressure, Brinda delivered healthy babies and named

them Akash and Rishikesh, Dr Kamaraj said.

"I am very happy. It is a bonanza for us to have two babies after being childless for nearly three decades," Brinda, who recently took voluntary retirement from a public sector bank, said.

According to Limca Book of Records, a 51-year-old Bodo woman was the oldest to deliver a baby by ICSI, Dr Kamaraj added.

[PTI]

## Employers and Internationally Educated Professionals to Meet - Overcome Obstacles to Employment, Solve Labour Shortages

A conference designed to assist internationally educated professionals find work in their chosen field is taking place in Toronto on October 19.

This is the fifth annual IEP Conference presented by Progress Career Planning Institute. Organizers have seen interest in the event grow steadily over the years and anticipate 1,500 participants at this year's conference which will take place at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 255 Front St. W., Toronto.

Internationally educated professionals (IEPs) are newcomers to Canada who have professional certification or higher education degrees obtained in other countries and who cannot find work here for various reasons. In some cases, their credentials are not being recognized by employers or licensing bodies. In many cases, a lack of cultural understanding exists between employers and potential employees and this prevents professional relationships from developing in ways that are valuable to both. The IEP Conference is designed to address these and many other issues that continue to prevent the full engagement of Toronto's educated and professional immigrant population.

The key goal of the conference

for the IEP is to allow potential employees to leave with real strategies and information for overcoming obstacles to meaningful employment. IEPs will have the opportunity to connect with employers, licensing bodies, educational institutions, associations and other stakeholders who can help accelerate newcomers' transition to a fuller Canadian life.

Employers will also have the opportunity to gain insight into how to integrate a greater number of IEPs into their organisations through a dedicated information exchange and exploratory session reserved for employers. As part of the 2007 focus, a survey is being conducted to seek employers' views on labour force opportunities and challenges associated with IEPs in Canada. Results of the research will be released on October 19.

"Pressure is building on employers who are starting to feel the impact of labour shortages in key professions", points out Conference Chair Rhonda Singer, "and this is creating greater impetus to solve the challenges and connect them with our internationally educated professionals so that everyone benefits, including Toronto and Canada."

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## From the Publisher's Desk ...

# Voting, it's a privileged Civic duty

The people's voice is channeled from voting booths to the halls of government, beautifully so in democracies.

But does everyone who is eligible to vote take part in this important civic duty? Many people think that their vote does not matter.

In 2006 less than 65% of all eligible voters cast votes in the Canadian federal election. Two years earlier only 38.7% of young citizens voted in the federal election.

Some reasons for not voting are that the polls are too crowded, or you cannot get there on time, work and other 'time' constraints or you do not have transportation. There are many

organizations that volunteer their time to ensure everyone's right to vote. If you need a ride, check local riding offices or other organizations that offer services to get to the polling station; if you know you cannot get to the polls on time, request an absentee ballot. What could be easier than voting by mail?

The groups and communities that are known to 'highly likely to vote' or had historically 'got out to the polls on Election Day' get the attention of the potential candidates, elected representatives and political parties on a continued basis. This is why it is very important for every one to believe that every voice and vote has influence.

A group that most often fails to vote is the young and or first time voters. They don't go to the polling stations because they aren't registered to vote or they are apathetic or disinterested in the election. It is very important to register all eligible voters in the household to vote, and get them out on the Election Day to perform their civic duty.

Monsoon Journal stresses the importance of maintaining the civic responsibilities during elections, which is to vote! For this, it is important that all qualified electors, especially those who are voting for the first time to ensure they have added their names to the Voters List. And seniors and any

others in the household who may be in need of assistance on voting day must be provided with all the help they need by all civic conscious citizens.

This would typically include new residents of these electoral districts, new Canadian citizens and voters who have turned 18 since the last election. These individuals should contact their returning office to ensure their names are on the Voters List and they are able to vote.

An Election is approaching us, on October 10th, 2007 and Elections Ontario advises to call 1-888-ONT-VOTE (1-888-668-8683), to confirm you are on the register.

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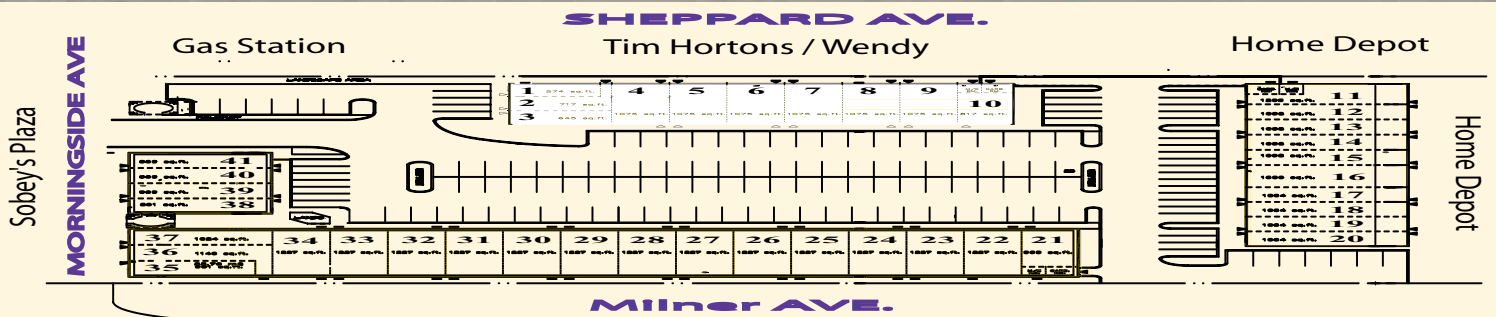
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# Monsoon Living



## Enjoy fabulous autumn

Fall has begun to show its face. The days are getting shorter, and the nights cooler. The prospect of winter on the horizon might get you down, but autumn is a beautiful season with its own special charms.

Use the golden weather, the crisp cool air, and the changing leaves as an excuse to get active outdoors and enjoy nature.

Here are some ways to keep fit outdoors as the weather cools:

Walking - brisk weather is a great time for a brisk walk. Get creative with

your walking by making it an adventure. Go to a nearby orchard for apple-picking, visit a corn maze, or consider a daily walk before or after dinner.

Hiking - Hiking is great for your leg muscles, and autumn leaf viewing is a good reason to get to higher elevation. The increased elevation also burns more calories. Try going to a new location and seeing the autumn sights.

Rake those leaves! - Those autumn leaves are bound to fall down

sometime! Take advantage of this opportunity to work your whole body by raking them up. And, if you're feeling particularly playful, you could always take a leap into the pile!

Prepare a beautiful spring garden - Fall is the time to plant those beautiful bulbs that will brighten your early spring garden. Look in your farmer's almanac, and plant some bulbs today that will brighten your April.

Play some golf - Golf is the perfect game for a crisp fall day. Get some friends together for a round, take your

time, enjoy the scenery, and perfect your chip shot. Or you could get the family together for a round of miniature golf!

Whatever you choose to do this fall, take some time to look at the trees, enjoy the weather, and smell the clean, crisp air.

Winter will be here before you know it, but you can still enjoy the sunshine with outdoor fitness activities.

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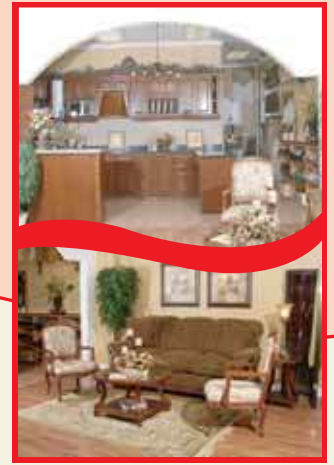
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Callers to Employment Ontario's toll-free hotline will receive help in the language of their choice, Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities said today.

"We're keeping Ontario moving forward by offering newcomers multilingual interpretation for Employment Ontario programs geared towards their success," Bentley said. "It's now faster and easier for newcomers to access training and obtain job counseling - ultimately helping Ontario become more prosperous."

Bentley was joined by Michael Chan, MPP Markham and Peter Fonseca, MPP Mississauga East for a live demonstration of the new multilingual service at an Employment Ontario funded ACCES Employment Services centre in Toronto.

"This new service will help newcomers continue their careers in Ontario," said Chan. "Employment Ontario is a one-stop shop for anyone who wants to learn about how Ontario's job market works, connect with potential employers, and find out where to brush up on their language skills."

Newcomers to Ontario can call the toll-free Employment Ontario hotline and tell staff which language they wish to use. Within minutes a certified interpreter will be linked to the call to



interpret for both caller and staff person. Newcomers can be linked to information about language programs supported by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration as well as Employment.

**Ontario programs and services.**

Newcomers make up about 29 per cent of Ontario's workforce. Since

November 2006, information about Employment Ontario programs and services has been available online in 25 languages, including English and French.

"The staff at ACCES speak various languages reflecting the thousands of newcomers we serve every year," said Manjeet Dhiman, Director of Services at ACCES Employment Services. "Providing service to our participants

in their first language allows us to build stronger connections with them and it ensures that they gain a more in-depth understanding of the information and services we provide."

This year, the McGuinty government is investing close to \$1 billion in Employment Ontario's programs and services to help more than 900,000 Ontarians find employment and training. Bentley also announced new investments in key Employment Ontario programs and services:

**Job Connect** - Links people seeking employment and employers seeking staff to meet their business needs. Job Connect is receiving \$7.5 million in additional funding this year, for a total of \$134 million. This is up from \$105 million in 2003-04.

- Classroom spaces for apprentices - New investments in provincial in-school training will help the government meet its commitment to increase the number of new appren-

ticeship registrations to 26,000 annually in 2007-08. The government is investing close to \$90 million in classroom spaces, an increase of \$25 million over investments in 2003-04.

- **Literacy programming** - Investment is rising from \$70 to \$74 million this year, to help people build literacy, numeracy and other essential skills, thereby opening doors to further education, training and employment. This is up from \$60.5 million in 2003-04.

"Through Employment Ontario, we are building a well-trained, highly skilled workforce. This is just one more example of how, working together, Ontarians are building a brighter future," Bentley said.

For more information about programs and services, contact the Employment Ontario hotline at 1-800-387-5656, or visit [ontario.ca/employmentontario](http://ontario.ca/employmentontario).

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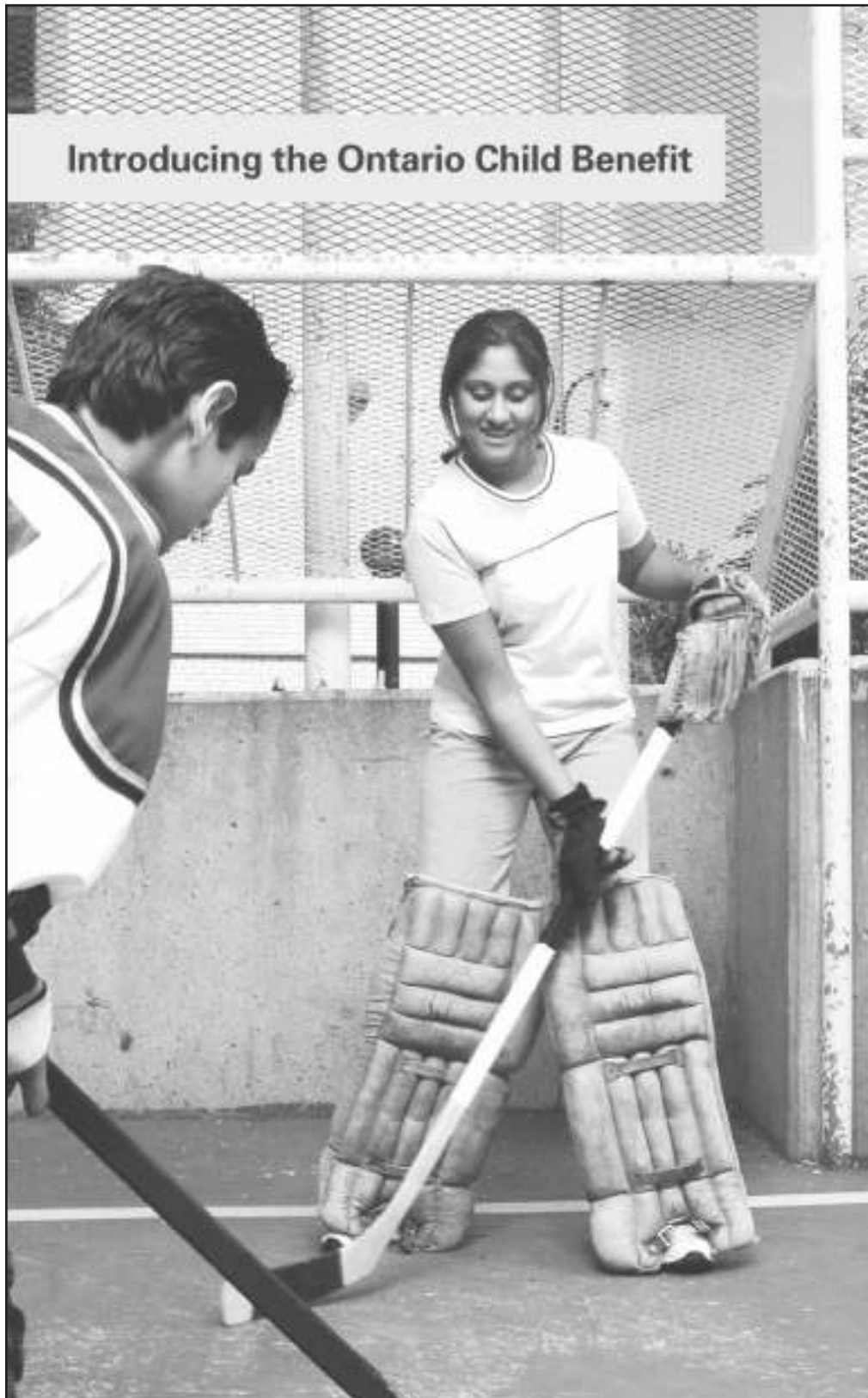
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# Letters to Editor

August 24, 2007

Dear Editor

Refer to days news in Toronto Star, John Tory's proposal to publicly fund religious schools could cost the province way more than \$500 million, as per Education Minister Kathleen Wynne is not correct. The \$500 million number is unfounded. To start, it assumes that every single independent faith-based school will opt-in. That's just misleading. Some schools will opt to stay outside the public system in order to retain their independence.

In fact by 2010, the first year that faith-based schools will be eligible to opt in to the public system, a John Tory PC government will have boosted annual education spending by at least \$1.8 billion dollars, and will add another \$600 million in 2111/2112 for a

total annual increase of \$2.4 billion over current spending.

The money to pay for this will come out of the education tax dollars paid by families using faith-based schools. Until now this money has been diverted to pay for other programs while the families in question are forced to pay a second time for the education of their children in a manner consistent with their culture.

Ontario schools are funded by per pupil grants, so it is inaccurate to claim that extending fairness as Tory is proposing will reduce the funding to public schools. This kind of zero sum claims is the worst sort of divisive fear-mongering. The crisis in public education is due to problems in the funding formula and has nothing to do with faith-based schools.

**Kanayalal Raina**  
Brampton

August 22, 2007

Dear Editor

**Indo-US N-deal - What's LEFT for debate?**

On one hand we are aspiring to become a global economic powerhouse and on the other hand this onward march is being dragged down by political ideals which see no logic and have no rationale. Yes it about the stalled Indo-US nuclear deal.

Without mincing too many words I can say that India's commerce in civil nuclear energy is a must to ensure that the nation gets its fast growing energy requirements met from various sources.

There are estimates that tell me that the 123 Agreement will open up investment opportunities worth more than \$ 40 billion over the next two decades to step up nuclear power generation. Leading US firms are willing to forge joint ventures with Indian firms both in the private and public sector. So why are these so-called well-wishers (read the Left parties) opposing the deal?

I feel that India has nothing to lose by going ahead with the deal. If

the US falls short of what India wants, we can always walk away from the deal.

On the other hand, if the US delivers, India stands to gain a whole lot. It's not just a gain in the area of energy, but also in space research, missile technology, computing, high-end materials, generalised industrial R&D outsourcing. And above that I think India's place among the world's top powers will be undisputed. India's admittance to the nuclear club, without even joining the non-proliferation treaty goes to show that the nation will not allow interference by any other country - not the US... not any other country. India today is being recognised as a power to reckon with!

It's a shame that the country's political parties (that too all constituents of the government) are divided on such a vital issue that can change the face of the nation. The government deserves full support on this key agreement from different sectors of society. So, are we all for the deal?

**Kanayalal Raina**  
Brampton

August 24, 2007

**Subject: Faith Based Education**

Dear Hon. John Tory, My name is Harry Jegathan. I am a resident of Markham-Unionville riding, and also the Ontario PC Party's Vice President in my riding. Our candidate is K.K. Li. I am actively involved in the community, mainly in the school council. I have been the Vice Chair at Father Michael McGivney Catholic High School for the past two years. When I attended the kick off session "Meeting with our Leader" on Friday June 22, 2007 at Riviera Parque with our candidate K.K. Li, I was concerned about the reaction regarding the 'Faith Based Education'. I am an ardent supporter of the "Faith Based Education" for various reasons.

I would like to highlight few of them.  
\* STRENGTHENING OF FAITH AND CHARACTER VALUES AMONG OUR YOUTH

At a time when our society is experiencing increasing problems with youth violence, youth drug-use, and fatal acts involving youth at school, colleges and universities, it is vital that our school system be able to teach and instill values that strengthen the faith, the morals and character of our young generation.

Catholic schools have exemplified and are well known for setting and demanding high standards in the attire, decorum and behaviors of students both in school and in the community.

\* OPTIMUM UTILIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT FISCAL ALLOCATION TO THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM Catholic boards have continually and consistently demonstrated a high standard of fiscal responsibility and accountability, together with ensuring a high level of cost efficiency in their day-to-day school, administrative and support operations.

\* ATTAIN AND MAINTAIN A LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT'S ACADEMIC

ACHIEVEMENT

In most recent test results at both elementary and secondary levels, Catholic schools have consistently ranked at the top of student's tests scores in many regions across the province.

Catholic schools continue to exemplify and viewed by many parents as having a learning environment that is conducive to sound academic achievement.

\* LEADERSHIP IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

In a multiracial/multicultural province such as Ontario, Catholic schools have provided leadership in recruiting and hiring a diversity of ethno-racial staff, together with having some of the highest levels of diversity among its student population in the Toronto area and regions such as York, Peel, Durham, Hamilton, Halton, etc. In term of inclusively, the Catholic system has shown leadership in developing and implementing an integrated model for educating students with disabilities.

\* EXEMPLARY RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND COMMUNITY-SERVICE PROGRAMS

Catholic school have an array of well-developed extra-curricular Programs through which students have consistently won may accolades and awards in musical bands, other areas of performing arts, sports, science clubs and debating clubs and numerous community service initiatives.

I support the funding for the "Faith Based Education" when the following criteria are met:

- 20% of the students should be from other religions  
- All religions have to be treated with respect

- Arrange classes for other religious students if necessary this will eliminate any negativity regarding the "faith based education".

**Harry Jegathan**

# Democracy not a hurdle for Indian growth: WEF

Despite political difficulties and uncertainties plaguing India, the country's vibrant democratic structure is a help rather than hindrance to economic growth, according to panelists at the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The view emerged at a session on 'Growth Hotspots - Focus on India' attended by panelists from India at the WEF summit here.

"It's the only system by which we can correct ourselves," Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi said at the WEF's Inaugural Annual Meeting of the New Champions.

One of India's greatest challenges will be sustaining bipartisan support at the federal level for a broad reform agenda - "how to get the government structure in Parliament driven by the politics of coalition," former member

of Planning Commission N K Singh said.

The session, not open to the media, noted that over the past 15 years, India's states have gained influence as its central government has gradually lost power.

The devolution of power from the centre to the states has created new centres of economic dynamism, but has reduced the ability of any one government to alleviate the growing gaps in development between states, the panelists felt.

At the same time, India's economy has been shifting from a state-centric to a more market-based model. "I think states will begin to really vie for private sector investment," Singh said.

"I believe competitive federalism instead of competitive populism will

become an increasing force to foster changes in the right direction," a WEF session summary quoted Singh as saying.

[PTI]



# India 'high' on Intel's list for setting up facility

Intel Corporation chairman Craig R Barrett said India continues to be "high on the list of sites" the world's largest chipmaker could consider for setting up a manufacturing facility, if it requires additional capacity.

"We have no need for additional capacity as of now. When we need additional capacity, India remains high on the list of sites (for setting up a manufacturing facility). We will continue to invest in engineering and software activities in our centre in Bangalore," Barrett said on the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony of a health-monitoring project for the Government-aided Higher Secondary

Girls School Tindivanam (Villupuram) on Sep 3rd.

In June this year, Intel decided it would not set up any new assembly test facility, denting plans to have a plant in the country.

However, the decision was for all geographies. With the government announcing the Semiconductor Policy early this year, there was speculation on Intel setting up a manufacturing facility - a fabrication unit or an assembly test facility - in India.

By end of 2007, Intel would have invested upwards of USD 1 billion in its India operations, which is the largest R&D site outside US.

On challenges in India, Barrett said the challenges in the country were not different from that in other parts of the world. For growth, the thrust should be on quality of education and healthcare and technology can play a major role in bridging the digital divide in these sectors, he said.

Earlier in the day, Barrett announced that Intel would donate 500 personal computers to Tamil Nadu. It also, along with the Tamil Nadu government, introduced broadband wireless connectivity to 50 schools of the State.

[PTI]

# Statement on 'Faith in the System from Hindu Council - United Kingdom

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has this morning unveiled it's 'Faith in the System' vision for faith schools in the UK. The Hindu Council UK (HCUK) has been consulted throughout the process and welcomes the document as it highlights the important role faith schools play in fostering understanding between religions. It also outlines the duty of all schools to encourage pupils to respect their own and other faiths and beliefs in ways that promote tolerance and harmony, important issues

raised by HCUK throughout the consultation process.

However, Anil Bhanot, General Secretary of the HCUK says: "We believe schools with a multi-faith ethos would be a more balanced and cohesive way of teaching children about faith. While we endorse this document, we remain committed to our belief that the best future for our children, their education, and our ability to live together in harmony in this country lies with multi-faith rather than single faith schools."

Jay Lakhani, HCUK's Director for Education, adds: "Pluralism in faith education for our children is the only long term solution to the prejudices that plague Britain and the wider world at large. Unless all faiths are taught from the perspective that spirituality is not the monopoly of any one religion and that making can progress spiritually in many different (even non-religious) ways, schools run the risk of creating a polarising rather than a uniting effect in our society."

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# After a year and many promises, still no trace of Fr .Jimbrown

by Raymond Rajabalan

20 August marked the first anniversary of the disappearance of a Catholic priest and his assistant in Jaffna. The Apostolic Nuncio says the investigations promised by the authorities are proceeding slowly, and "one can only entrust them into the hands of the Lord". There is the "cosmetic" commitment of the government to check the increase in disappearances, a violation for which Sri Lanka ranks second only to Iraq.

One year after a young Catholic priest, Rev.Fr. Thiruchelvam Nihal Jimbrow, and his assistant, Wenceslaus Vimalathas, disappeared in Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka, still nothing is known of their fate and no one has been called to account for what happened to them.

Fr Jimbrow, 34, and Vimalathas, a father of five children, went missing on 20 August 2006 amid escalated warfare between the security forces and separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). They were last seen on a motorcycle at a checkpoint in Allaipiddy, in the Island of Kayts, an area tightly controlled by the security forces.

The Apostolic Nuncio to Sri Lanka, Mgr Mario Zenari, has followed the case closely from the beginning. Two days before the first anniversary of the priest's disappearance, the Vatican diplomat told AsiaNews how things stood: "Alas, to date, there is no trace of Fr Jimbrow. On the anniversary of his disappearance and that of his companion Vimalathas, one can only entrust their fate into the hands of the Lord, and implore God to grant consolation to their relatives and to the faithful of the Diocese of Jaffna." The nuncio also expressed "solidarity with all those who have disappeared, especially in recent months, as well as their

families".

The de facto return to civil war in Sri Lanka has led to an alarming rise in abductions and 'disappearances' - often a euphemism for extrajudicial execution. In the past year and a half, there have been more than 1,100 cases, including many in Jaffna, which has been isolated from the rest of the island since the government closed the A-9 highway just over a year ago.

Events were held in Jaffna and Colombo on 20 August to remember Fr Jimbrow and Vimalathas. In the capital, the Christian Alliance for Social Action, together with the Law & Society Trust, held a prayer service at the Centre for Society and Religion. In Jaffna, a prayer and fasting service took place at St Mary's Cathedral. Despite the forbidding omnipresence of the army, Jaffna residents have bravely held many such services and demonstrations over the past year, praying for the deliverance of the two men and calling on the authorities to shed light on what happened to them.

The government's "cosmetic" commitment

But the heartfelt appeals of the Church and local and international NGOs have proved useless. Mgr Zenari said: "The apposite Commission set up by the President of the Republic and charged to examine 15 cases of serious human rights violations with the assistance of a panel of international experts, started to examine one or two cases a few months ago. Investigations are proceeding rather slowly. Some time ago, I was told by the authorities that the case of Fr .Jimbrow was the only one concerning a disappearance that would be examined by the commission."

In June, the international experts appointed to observe the commission of inquiry criticized its activities, say-



ing they did "not satisfy international norms" and citing delays and "serious conflicts of interest", due to the involvement of the Attorney General's Office. And earlier this month, Human Rights Watch said the commission "has proven inadequate to handle the deteriorating human rights situation" and seemed to be just "an effort to stave off domestic and international criticism rather than a sincere attempt to promote accountability".

The government's inability to reverse the 'disappearances' trend comes as no surprise, considering that the security forces and paramilitaries complicit with them are implicated in the majority of cases and thus it could have been for Fr Jimbrow and Vimalathas. According to priests from Jaffna, the commanding officer of the Naval Camp at Allaipiddy - the first and last parish of the missing priest - had accused Fr Jimbrow of being an LTTE supporter and had threatened him.

Enforced disappearances are nothing new in Sri Lanka: the number of reports made to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) ranks second only to Iraq.

# Love

by Kumar Punithavel

When Shanthi's parents were transferred to Mallavi a village in North Sri Lanka, she was very worried leaving behind all her friends. But on the first day at her new school she met another class mate; a girl in her class whose name was Shanthi too. It took hardly any time for them to become friends.

Being a small village everyone knew each and everyone! Their names being the same one became (Periya Shanthi) big Shanthi the other (Chinna) Shanthi small Shanthi. They soon became inseparable studying, playing and seen together. When their parents went on holidays in their separate ways the girls would travel together with them: they shared their parents too.

But this was not to last for separation came when Small Shanthi's father, a government servant got transferred to another district. But the friends kept in touch with one another by letters, as there weren't any telephone facilities available at that time. Initially they wrote at least once a month to each other. They would share news with the Big Shanthi writing about the old school and the Small Shanthi about her new place.

As time passed by, this began to be dragged. Finally it mere seasonal exchange of New Year greeting cards and birthday cards, with a few lines scribbled at the bottom of the card. This too stopped when the card sent by big Shanthi came back marked "Return to Sender."

As time passed by Big Shanthi ended up in Toronto in Canada, and after finishing her studies she worked as a teller in a leading bank. By this time she had married and had a child too. However, she used to wonder often what her friend was doing and very much wanted to get in touch with her old friend and share news and the usual gossips and tittle-tattles. She always wondered how she is doing? Is she married? Does she still write poems? All sorts of unanswered self-made queries would flow through her mind. But she did not know the whereabouts of her loving friend 'small Shanthi'.

One Friday afternoon she was at the counter of the bank and saw a lady walk into the bank. She looked new to the place and she seemed lost. The stranger took her place at the end of the line. Big Shanthi began having a gnawing feeling that she knew this newcomer who had strolled into the bank. But she could not recognize any familiarity in her face. The new comer too kept on glancing at big Shanthi. Probably she felt she must be from Sri Lanka too!

The newcomer ended up at the counter next to Shanthi. When Debby the teller turned to Shanthi and said "She is also from Sri Lanka and her name is similar to yours is Shanthi"



'Big Shanthi's heart started pounding fast and with overpowering excitement she asked "Are you small Shanthi" There was what looked like a long moment of silence.

Finally when she said yes, big Shanthi forgot where she was at that moment. She came running and hugged her and both started crying. All the customers standing around could not understand what was happening. The two had not seen each other for many years but the love was there and the locked-up feelings flowered in tears soothing their cheeks with warm emotions.

Though they had no association for the last twenty years there was unison of feeling which all spurted out into the surface. They were so emotionally aroused they could not speak to each other for a few moments. The silence and tears were so eloquent that there was no need for speech.

Hearing of all the excitement in the bank the Manager walked out and was indeed confused for a moment. He asked both the Shanthi's to come inside his office. They were deeply ingrained still tearing with rising emotion. When he realized all what was happening he asked Big Shanthi to hand over her accounts and take the afternoon off. Small Shanthi sat in the managers office till her long lost friend came back and they both walked out still in silence holding each other's hand. The two couplets giving the situation in Thirkural a great ethical book written two thousand years ago are: "Not association constant, not affection's token bind;

It's the union of feeling friends unites of kindred mind" (785) - Rev U.G. Pope.

It is not necessary to meet often and live together. The fellowship of feeling hearts is true friendshi - Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati.

"And is there bar that can even love restrain? The tiny tear shall make the love's secret pain" (71) - Rev U.G. Pope

There is no bar, no bolt against love. The hearts love is revealed in trickling tears - Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati.

Contact: kumarpunithavel@yahoo.com

# Research Identifies Possible Cause of Mysterious Destruction of Beehives

By Jessica Berman

Researchers think they have identified one factor in the mysterious destruction of beehives across the United States and in some other countries. It is called the Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus, which scientists believe was recently introduced into the United States. The researchers are trying to learn more about the virus to stop its spread.

Starting in 2004, U.S. beekeepers began noticing that adult worker bees mysteriously disappeared from their hives without a trace, leaving honey and queen bees behind. The phenomenon was dubbed Colony Collapse Disorder because the hives died after being abandoned. A similar phenomenon was noted in Australia.

CCD has now affected between 50 and 90 percent of hives in the U.S. In addition to producing honey, bees are used by farmers to pollinate fruit and vegetable crops. Experts say the U.S. agriculture industry provides over 90 fruit and vegetable crops worldwide.



Honey bee reflecting on DNA gel data [ARS/ USDA Peggy Grabb]

American researchers began looking for an infection agent when the problem became acute. Investigators say honey bees contain 18 different microbes in their abdomens.

Using a high tech sequencing technique to analyze the DNA of bees collected over the past three years from healthy and unhealthy U.S. and Australian hives, Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus stood out among some of the bees.

Researchers also tested what is called royal jelly, imported from China, as a possible lead. Royal jelly is secreted by worker bees to feed larvae in starting a new hive.

While scientists broke new ground in terms of analyzing diseases of insects, markers for Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus were found in both healthy and unhealthy beehives and in some of the royal jelly samples that were tested.

John Pettis is chief of bee research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and co-author of the study published this week in the journal Science.

"At this point we only have an association. I think where we can go with this is to look at both historical samples in the U.S. prior to 2004 when we imported packaged bees from Australia and also to look at more worldwide distribution of IAPV to try to understand this story," he said.

Experts say IAPV was first discovered in Israel where infected bees developed shivering wings and became paralyzed before collapsing and dying outside the hive.

Reports of Colony Collapse Disorder in the United States could mark the first time the Israeli bee



Honey bee worker carrying a parasitic Varroa mite [ARS/ USDA Scott Bauer]

virus has been identified here, but how it got to the United States or at what point it became infectious, if at all, is still a mystery.

Researchers think that, because the virus has been found in both healthy and unhealthy bees, some other environmental factor, such as drought, may be needed to trigger the disorder.

Until now, there was speculation that Colony Collapse Disorder was caused when worker bees became disoriented by radio waves emitted by cell phone towers and then died, or because worker bees were pollinating genetically-modified crops.

Senior author Diana Cox-Foster of Pennsylvania State University says the study has pretty much ruled out those theories. In fact, she says genetically altered crops appear to be beneficial to bees.

"The evidence to date shows that bees feeding on pollen from transgenic corn have as good as survivor-



Field collection materials for forensic samples from honey bee colonies [ARS/ USDA Jay D.Evans]

ship or better survivorship than bees feeding on normal pollen," she said.

Researchers say the next step is to see whether they can cause Colony Collapse Disorder in the laboratory by infecting bees in healthy hives with Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus. That way, they may be able to come to a definite conclusion about the cause of the disease.

[VOA]



Shanthi, a female Asian elephant weighing about 9,000 pounds (4,082 kg) follows caretaker Sean's directions during an elephant training demonstration at the Smithsonian National Zoo in Washington, September 6, 2007. Shanthi came from Sri Lanka, where she was rehabilitated at the Pinnewela Elephant Orphanage. She was given to the National Zoo as a gift from the children of Sri Lanka in 1976. REUTERS/ Hyungwon Kang.



# Retd. Sri Lanka Attorney General Late K.C. Kamalabeyson: He did not bow down and we bow to his memory

Speech made by Nihal Jayamanne PC, President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka at the Bar Council meeting held on August 28 at the Bar Council Auditorium at a special reference to K.C. Kamalabeyson PC - former Attorney General:

This morning The Bar Association of Sri Lanka remembers and honours the memory of a good and honest gentleman K.C. Kamalabeyson PC, the former Attorney-General of Sri Lanka.

The constitution of the BASL reserves a special place to two gentlemen of the Official Bar. The Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General. The Solicitor General is the Receiving Officer at the Election of the President and the Secretary of the BASL. The Attorney-General traditionally presides over the proceedings of the Annual Convocation and inducts each year the newly elected President of the BASL.

Mr. Kamalabeyson had presided over eight convocations during his long and illustrious career as the Attorney General of this country. I myself had the honour of being inducted by him in 2006 and 2007. Kamal and I were good friends for the last 40 years. Our friendship started at Law College where we were both Advocate Students. He was junior to me. I passed out in 1970 and he was in the last Batch of Advocates who passed out, before the fusion of the profession. In 1969 I contested the post of President of the Law Students Union and Kamal worked for me as did all the law students at that time from Trincomalee.

I won that election against N.R. Fernando, now Dr. Ranjith Fernando, a leading lawyer in the Court of Criminal Appeals. After I became the President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka my friendship with Kamal was revitalized as we had to meet often as the heads of the unofficial and the official Bars.

We instinctively understood each other and there was a rare bond between us and that relationship helped to solve many problems. We worked together and discussed issues of mutual concern in confidence to safeguard the integrity of the Bar and that of the process of Administration of Justice.

He and I always acted with dignity and upheld the great traditions of the Bar. At ceremonial sittings of the Supreme Court when both of us had to make speeches, we always consulted each other so as to avoid repetition. It was important in this sad age of deteriorating standards for both of us to act sternly and diplomatically to contain the downward slide. And both of us achieved it.

Kamalabeyson took over the office of the Attorney General at a difficult period in the history of our country. The invasion of politics and



politicians into our everyday life which started in the early 1970s had grown to alarming proportions during the period of his office.

All issues were complicated and defiled by the sickening and the frightening miasma of politics. We pay homage to Kamalabeyson for he withstood with courage and dignity this overpowering force. He did not bow down and we bow to the memory of that man who stood straight to the last.

I take the liberty of repeating a portion of my oration made at the funeral of my good friend Kamal. "It is not necessary for me to praise Kamal nor is it necessary for me to speak of his achievements. No doubt others will. Suffice it to state that Kamal was a very successful human being. My only regret is that this good man's life was taken away so soon at the intellectually young age of 58 years. He could have contributed immensely to the progress of our country in so many ways, if his life was spared by destiny for at least a decade more. But then remember and have solace in the knowledge that -

The condiment in life is death."  
Gone, Gone, Gone... forever gone.  
From what is,  
To what never was,  
But yet is,  
And forever and ever shall be.

*May his athma merge with that  
of the eternal.*

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E&O E

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# A tribute to Mr. M. J. A. Jeyanathan delivered on Monday, August 27, 2007 at the Highland Funeral Home, Toronto



My dear friends;  
 Friends, we are assembled here tonight primarily to thank God for the life and times of a great and good man, to bid him farewell, as well to mourn the passing away of a prominent member of our community and would venture to suggest, the Patriarch of the Tamil Catholic Community of Toronto.

Augustine Jeyanathan was God's gift to our community. Educated at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna and nurtured under the watchful eyes of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Mr. Jeyanathan rose to heights in the Bank of Ceylon, few Tamils could aspire at that time. I came to know him after his arrival here and by that time he had lived a full life in Sri Lanka, raised a family of three sons and four daughters and had contributed in large measure to the well being of catholic communities both in Jaffna and Colombo. Just retired, he was courageous enough to join his family here and start a new life. Soon after his coming he immersed himself in every activity of the community eager to share his knowledge and expertise to enhance the quality of life of our people, be it business or social welfare. His advice and counsel was sought and was readily given. As an official of several organizations he served all of them well.

As President and Life Member of the Tamil Catholic Community of Toronto, Augustine Jeyanathan exhorted us to think outside the box. He strengthened our commitments and strived hard to improve our relationships with members of other Sri Lankan communities pleading to include them in our activities. He emboldened us to dialogue with members of other faiths. His forte was education and believing that our future lay in our youth he gave freely of his time organizing seminars and conferences. A few days ago he expressed regret at not being present at our patronal feast of Our Lady of Madhu at Marylake. Such was his dedication and devotion to our organization. We will miss him and his good counsel.

He doted on his family and they in turn adored him. He was their best friend. A fine exhibition of family love and affection was evident at his fiftieth wedding anniversary celebrations. Organized and choreographed entirely by family it was delightful to see his children, their spouses and grandchildren triumphantly trooping in with glee and gladness to open the festivities. They spoke, they sang, they danced and made all of us feel welcome all for the love of their parents while the architect of this spectacle of affection, Augustine Jeyanathan watched in contentment. They are indeed an unusually happy and closely knit family.

Augustine Jeyanathan was a man of God and of unshakeable faith. He lived and walked in the way of the Lord. A few days ago I had a call from Father Joachimpillai saying that Mr. Jeyanathan was in hospital and inquired whether I would join him. Pearly and I jumped at the suggestion. In the few minutes we were with him at his bedside he summarized his life, his family relationships and his gratitude to God saying he has had a

wonderful long and happy life, a loving and caring wife, adorable children, sons and daughters in law and grandchildren. He then gratefully spoke of the fond care he receives from his wife and asked for my help in finding a suitable nursing home to which he could go when discharged, as he did not wish to trouble his wife as she too was in poor health. My research had hardly begun I had another call from Father Joachimpillai the next day that Mr. Jeyanathan had passed away. We were shocked and saddened by the news as we had found him in good shape the day before.

A erudite and illustrious man from Mathagal has now been called to his eternal reward. A light in our community has been extinguished. Mr. Jeyanathan was a respected and honourable gentleman and a distinguished member of our community. He was learned and versatile. His counsel was untainted and impartial. He wrote and spoke with distinction. And his breadth of knowledge extended from finance to moral theology to the moon and the stars. His family was his best audience. A loving and a caring husband, an adorable father and grandfather he lovingly cared for them all. Above all else he was a man of God, truthful to a fault. It is not often a man of his ilk is born. He was an exceptional human being. We were fortunate to have known him. His legacy is his exemplary life, devoted to his family, dedicated to God and serving His fellow beings. His passing away is an irreparable to our community.

On behalf of the Tamil Catholic Community of Toronto and on our own behalf, I offer his endearing wife Angela, his children and their spouses and grandchildren as well as to other members of his family our prayers and convey our love and affection. We know that all of you will miss him dearly. And so will we. Farewell dear friend, farewell our guide and mentor. You have served God and man more than well.

May the saints of God come to his aid, Come to meet him, angels of the Lord

Receive his soul and present him to God the Most High

May Christ who called you, take you to himself, may angels lead you to Abraham's side

Give him eternal rest O Lord and may your light shine on him for ever.

**Brigadier A.P.R. David**



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# Music and Worship in the Bible

Music has a powerful effect on human experience. Students of religious phenomena have long recognized that music transcends our understanding and appeals to our intuitive nature. It is not surprising, then, that music played an important part in the worship of biblical communities, as a way of approaching the mystery of God and of expressing the joy of his presence.

This article discusses the role of music in the worship of Israel and of the early church, by way of establishing a biblical foundation for music in the Christian worship of today.

## Music in Israelite Worship

Israelite prophets were musicians.

⇒ During the exodus Miriam the prophetess, taking her tambourine, led the women in song and dance, celebrating the Lord's triumph over the Egyptians (Exod. 15:20-21).

⇒ Saul encountered a band of sanctuary prophets who prophesied accompanied by instruments (1 Sam. 10:5). Isaiah composed songs, including one celebrating the Lord's deliverance of those who trust in him (Isa. 26:1-6).

⇒ The public regarded Ezekiel as "one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument" (Ezekiel 33:32).

David, a musician as well as a warrior, established the place of music in the worship of the Lord. Even before the sacrifices had been moved to Jerusalem, he instructed the



Harp

Levitical musicians to celebrate the ark's journey to Zion (1 Chron. 15:16-24), and appointed Asaph as chief musician in charge of continual thanksgiving and praise (1 Chron. 16:1-7). The description of this activity (1 Chron. 25:1-7) suggests that these musicians led in a spontaneous and overwhelming outpouring of worship, especially at high moments like the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chron 5:11-14). This may be the "new song" to which the Psalms refer (33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 144:9, 149:1). Many Psalms perhaps originated in this pre-temple Davidic worship centering around the ark of the covenant.

In the temple, music functioned as a "sacrifice of praise," an offering of song to accompany the offering of sacrifice. Under the Judean rulers, the performance of music became regulated and standardized. The titles of 55 Psalms refer to the music director, with instructions for performance on various instruments or using certain tunes. This psalmody remained a feature of Israelite and Jewish worship. After the exile, Ezra recruited more than 200 Levites for service in the sanctuary (Ezra 8:18-20).

After the Babylonian exile, most Jews lived in the Dispersion (areas outside of Palestine) and could not

participate in temple worship. Therefore the synagogue arose for prayer and the study of the Scriptures. The Psalms continued to be sung, and other portions of the Scriptures as well as prayers were chanted according to a developing system of "modes." Such Jewish music influenced the worship of the early church.

Israelite worship music was both vocal and instrumental; the sanctuary orchestra contributed to the celebration of Israel's covenant with the Lord. Its instruments fall into the same general classes with which we are familiar - percussion, winds (pipes) and strings. Horns, trumpets, cymbals, harps and lyres were used when the ark was brought to Mount Zion, and their continued use is reflected in their mention in the Psalms. The sanctuary instruments were not solo instruments, but sounded simultaneously to call the assembly to worship (Psa. 98:6). Strings and pipes, if used, probably played the modalities (tune elements) in the psalm being sung, with perhaps distinctive patterns of ornamentation. Horns, trumpets and cymbals added to the festive joy by creating a larger sound. The selah of the Psalms may have been an instrumental interlude, or a "lifting up" of sound by both singers and instrumentalists. Tambourines, usually played by women, are mentioned in connection with dancing at Israelite festivals (Psa. 68:25), but were not used in the sanctuary where only men served as priests and musicians.

## Worship Music in the New Testament

The worship of the emerging Christian movement did not produce new forms of music, but shared the characteristics described above, many of which are still found in the music of historic liturgies. Clearly, the worship life of the early church included psalms and other forms of song.

The New Testament mentions worship music in several places.

⇒ The gospel story begins with a hymn of praise on the lips of the heavenly host, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14).

⇒ Reading the lesson from Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20), Jesus probably intoned it according to the custom of the time.

⇒ The Gospels record that Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn after the Last Supper (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26), probably the "Great Hallel" (Psalms 113-118) of the Passover tradition.

⇒ Luke records that Paul and Silas were singing hymns in prison at Philippi when an earthquake occurred (Acts 16:25). Paul urges the Christians of Ephesus and Colossae to give thanks to God in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Describing the assembly of the church of Corinth, he remarks that "everyone has a psalm" (1 Cor. 14:26) which must blend with the contributions of other worshipers in an orderly service. Perhaps "psalms" were the biblical psalms, while "hymns" could have been Christian music in praise of Christ and "spiritual songs" more spontaneous worship expressions.

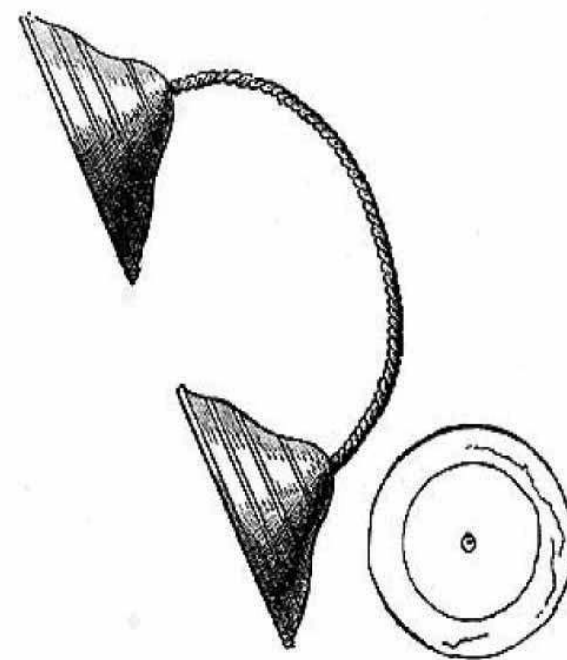
Luke quotes several hymns in the beginning chapters of his Gospel. In addition to the Gloria in Excelsis men-

## Raymond Rajabalan

tioned above, he includes the Magnificat or Song of Mary (1:46-55), the Benedictus or Song of Zechariah (1:67-79) and the Nunc Dimittis or Song of Simeon (2:29-32). Although spoken by several figures in the story of Jesus' birth, these hymns came to be used in Christian worship at an early period. Paul quotes what may have been another song, "Awake, O sleeper and arise from the dead," in Eph. 5:14. Scholars have suggested



David's Lyre



Cymbal

that other passages in Paul's letters are based on primitive Christian hymns in praise of Christ, such as Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-20 and 1 Timothy 3:16. Such hymns may have been composed to reinforce Christian teaching about the nature of Jesus' Messiahship.

The Hosanna hymn of the crowds at Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:9, based on Psa. 118:26) became part of the historic Christian eucharistic celebration.

## Revelation to John

Musical expression of Christian worship reaches its New Testament climax in the hymns of the Revelation to John.

In John's vision, acts of praise before God's throne accompany the dramatic unfolding of events on earth. These hymns glorify the Creator (4:11), proclaim the worth of the Lamb (5:9-10; 5:12), extol both the Father and the Son (5:13; 7:10; 7:12), celebrate God's triumph over the enemies of his people (11:16; 11:17-18; 12:10-12; 19:1-3; 19:6-8), and proclaim his justice (15:3-4; 16:5-



music must have remained the norm. The young church was a community under persecution, and could not apply the full resources of biblical celebration to its worship assemblies. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that music played a vital role in the worship of the emerging Christian community.

## NADASWARAM

Some interesting Facts about Nadaswaram from the Word of God

This sacred instrument is unique; it has a special place in the Bible. There is some divinity about this instrument. We have seen this instrument played at many auspicious occasions. Nadaswaram does not belong to any one sect or one religion.

⇒ In Ezekiel 28:13 we read that God gave this instrument to Cherub to worship Him. In the course of time Cherub was cast down by God because of his high haughtiness. Cherub may have been cast down but the music was always cherished by God. This instrument still holds a significant place before God. We repeatedly see this instrument played at many occasions in the Bible.

⇒ In Genesis 31:27 we see Laban says to Jacob "Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away



A pipe musical instrument

with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps?" We notice that this instrument was an integral part of Joyful occasions accompanied by singing and music.

⇒ In 1 Samuel 10:5 when Samuel anoints Saul, this instrument was again used. This was accompanied by prophetic utterances. An instrument that is so dear to our Lord has been forgotten through time and has been used to glorify pagan Gods. It is my desire to Worship and Glorify our Lord in Heaven through the Music of Nadaswaram.

Perhaps these hymns reflect the actual worship practice of the church near the end of the first century. If so, the Revelation offers a window not only into the judgments of God in the earth but also into the development of Christian liturgy and hymnody.

The New Testament does not supply enough detail to reconstruct the exact musical content of developing Christian worship. Since the Hebrew Scriptures were still the authority for teaching and practice (1 Tim. 3:16-17), their broad principles regarding

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# Monsoon Arts



## Siri Gunasinha Novel in Thamil

Acclaimed Sinhala novel of the 1950s, Hevanella (Shadow) by Emeritus Professor Siri Gunasinha is now available in Thamil translation. The translator is Sarojini Devi Arunachalam, a reputed translator conversant in Sanskrit, Thamil, Sinhala and English. She comes from a great family of poets and educationists in Navaaly in Yaalpanam. Her father Navaaliyoor Nadarasa was a poet, critic, and a pioneer broadcaster over the then Radio Ceylon, and a scholar in Sanskrit. He had translated Kalidasa's Saakuntalam into Thamil. Not forgetting is his translation of Selalihini Sandeshya from Sinhala to Thamil. Sarojini Devi's grandfather was Somasundara Pulavar, credited with fine poems.

The translator retired from the Official Languages Department after holding highest position there. I met her first in a youth programme over the Thamil Service of the then Radio Ceylon in the late 1950s. Soavanna Nadarasa, her father, who later became a Buddhist monk, was the compiler of the programme.

In order to inform the non-Thamil speaking readers what the translator had done and how she had approached the translation process, I shall focus on these features for the benefit of the reader in English.

I first read about this novel from an article in English by the late A.J.Gunawardena. Culling information from that article, I wrote a piece on important Sinhala novels in Thamil to the monthly literary journal Mallikai

The hard cover book has 258 pages neatly printed with vibrant shades of colour as its cover page.

In a seven page introduction, the translator gives an outline of the late 20th century fiction in Sinhala, which is useful to the uninitiated.

Says she:

In an epoch of revolutionary social changes, Siri Gunasinha joined the teaching staff of the University of Peradeniya. He actively scrutinized traditional views and principles in literature and when necessary, did not hesitate to reject them. He thought anew. It was he that introduced Nissandas, a tradition of New Poetry. This was new to Sinhala Literature. His book of poetry, Mas Lae Nathi Aeta was the first of its kind. In this

new poetry tradition, the traditional metre, rhyme, rhythm etc. were not adhered."

According to the professor, the poetic sensibility is seen through the meanings encompassed in words. One cannot preserve tradition merely by ancient poetic forms like "Samudraghosam" and using archaic words. One cannot enjoy the nuances of poetry and its meanings, says Prof Siri Gunasinha.

Sarojini Devi Arunachalam informs that Prof. Siri Gunasinha has in his two anthologies of critical essays Sahithya Ha Sampradhaya and Chiranthana Sampradhaya Ha Pragathiya has explained what Tradition is. She also points out that the learned professor's premise is that a poem doesn't fit into a pre-designed form and it is based on literary tastes like experiences of Rasa. He cites the epic writers in Sanskrit.

Critics of Free Verse were adequately enlightened by his essay on modern style of Sinhala writing. The essay titled Varthamana Sinhala Sahithyae Bhasawa also critically examines language employed in the earlier novels in Sinhala.

The translator, Sarojini Devi Arunachalam, is quick to point out that in Siri Gunasinha's later collections of his poetry - Abhinikmana and Rathu Kakila, the tone of his poems is less rebellious.

One another contention of Prof. Siri Gunasinha was that though differences are there in the form of letters like Na and La, there is hardly any difference in the enunciation of these alphabets. Even in his creative writing he didn't pay much attention to these.

Siri Gunasinha wrote poetry, criticism and fiction. As for novels, the novels of pioneers Piyadasa Sirisena, W.A.Silva, writers during the Independence era and also by nationalistic thoughts and a deep love for cultural traditions had an impact on him. However, he contended that the above works lacked artistic qualities though they had substance.

Artistic works in Sinhala novels evolved after Martin Wickramasinghe's creations. Gamperaliya is one such work. Talking further, Siri Gunasinha points out that Wickramasingha tried to depict the fall-out of traditional social setup due to the then predominant commercial

by K.S. Sivakumaran

economy.

An interesting aspect of the earlier novels was that almost all the writers followed a similar technique, namely, their works had a same structural pattern of a beginning and right through to an end.

Siri Gunasinha deviated from this trend with his novel Hevanalla. A psychological depiction of characters based on primary events in the story is deftly handled by the writer. Rather than writing the novel from an objective point of view, he went inside the characters and used the Stream of Consciousness technique.

How does Sarojini Devi Arunachalam read Siri Gunasinha's Hevanalla?

This is how the translator reviews the novel:

Hevanalla signifies a new chapter in the broad spectrum of Sinhala Literature. The novel's backdrop is the life and style of the 1940s in the University. It was the elite who dominated the scene then. Even if they extended their influence in the campus they were not capable of understanding the intellectual climate prevailing there. They ridiculed the indigenous conventions behavioral patterns.

Even though the novel has its base the University, it also reflects the social milieu of the time. At that time rich students from the villages too attended the University.

The hero of the novel is Jinasena. He belongs to the village elite. Paradoxically, these people from the rural background entrenched in the indigenous culture threw away these and aspired to get into a pseudo lifestyle.

The novelist examines clinically the conflicts confronted by such people. Despite his critical exposition of the behavioural patterns of the rural folks and the ostentatious grandiloquence of the urban elites, Siri Gunasinha never fails to look at things from a neutral stance.

Jinadasa doesn't feel shy of loving a young lass. And yet, because of his background, he feels that he is reclined to his original atmosphere. Therefore he thinks about it. He wants to renounce from all bonds and enter into a free world. But he cannot do

that. This is because his mother and the High Priest have a strong dominance over him. So, he has to shrink himself like a tortoise. Although he realizes the reality intellectually, he doesn't have the courage to revolt against it.

Sarojini Devi Arunachalam also adds Gunadasa Amarasekera, Edirweera Sarachchandra and others later wrote psychological novels. But the emphasis was on social problems than on individual traits in characters from psychological angle. Siri Gunasinha literarily gets into Jinadasa's innate personality and explores his mind.

We learn that Prof. Siri Gunasinha had a deep interest in painting too. He was behind the scenes when Prof. Sarachchandra staged his great opera, Maname. Besides, Siri Gunasinha was given the task of restoring valuable paintings in the ancient viharas. The learned academic's publication of an Album of Buddhist Painting from Sri Lanka is about paintings of the Kandyan Period in Lankan history. It should be noted that Prof Siri Gunasinha wrote his doctoral thesis in French and obtained his academic qualification.

In the field of the Cinema too Siri Gunasinha stamped his individuality. He produced Sathsamudra, a milestone in Sinhala Cinema. He is attributed to have produced a newsreel titled Ranwan Karal.

In his collection of Critical Essays, he has written two articles on the medium of film. He traces the growth of the medium as a technical dimension as well.

Mrs Sarojini Devi Arunachalam pays her indebtedness to Prof. Rohini Paranavitana, Head of the Department of Sinhala at the Colombo University for supplying details about Prof. Siri Gunasinha.

Let me now express my appreciation of the fine and meticulous trans-

lation of the book from Sinhala. In fact, it reads like an original novel in Thamil. Endowed with proficiency in languages,

Sarojini Devi Arunachalam, in my humble opinion, has done an excellent translation in this work. As a translator from English to Thamil and vice versa, I can vouch for what I have said. Her translation while being simple, it is also perfect in grammatical construction. One could not have done a translation of creative writing unless one is familiar with contemporary fiction and tools of literary criticism. She exhibits these virtues admirably in her rendition.

This book was launched on Monday last (August 13, 2007) at the National Library Services Board Hall in Colombo. Emeritus Professor S.Thillainathan chaired the occasion. Emeritus Professor J. B. Disanayake, K.S.Sivakumaran, and Emeritus Professor Siri Gunasinghe, himself, spoke at the function.

While thanking Mrs Arunachalam for asking me to give my views at the launch, and Ambassador-Designate Prof. J.B.Disanayake for his enthusiastic support for me, I must also express my delight in meeting Prof. Siri Gunasinha once again. I had the privilege of interviewing him way back in the 1980s for the Culture Page I edited for The Island Later I wrote this interview in Thamil for a Yaalpaanam based literary journal called Alai (The Wave)

So, one may say that the literati in the Thamil literary circle know about Sinhala literary figures of the calibre of Siri Gunasinha and more. But I am not sure whether the only Sinhala knowing audiences are well informed of Lankan Thamil Literary activities and Culture. It's time for us to emerge from the splendid isolation and exclusiveness.

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## Choosing English brought success to Singapore, says Lee Kwan Yee

The mistakes of Sri Lanka and other newly independent 'failed states' made Singapore go in a different direction, its founding prime minister told the International Herald Tribune (IHT) in a recent interview.

Lee Kwan Yew, now minister mentor, said when Singapore broke off from the Malayan Federation it had a hostile neighbour and population made of Chinese, Malays and immigrants from the Indian subcontinent. "The basis of a nation just was not there.

But the advantage we had was that we became independent late," Lee recalled in a wide ranging interview with the IHT published recently. "In 1965, we had 20 years of examples of failed states. So, we knew what to avoid - racial conflict, linguistic strife, religious conflict. We saw Ceylon."

"Thereafter, we knew that if we embarked on any of these romantic ideas, to revive a mythical past of greatness and culture, we'd be damned."

Lee was prime minister from 1959 to 1990 when he stepped down.

Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948. Lee said the team that ran Singapore made a deliberate decision to use English as a working language and not focus on Chinese. At the time Singapore had Chinese,



Malay and India schools in separate language mediums.

The British has also set up English schools to produce clerks, storekeepers and teachers. "Had we chosen Chinese, which was our majority language, we would have perished, economically and politically," Lee told the IHT.

"Riots - we've seen Sri Lanka, when they switched from English to Sinhalese and disenfranchised the Tamils and so strife ever after.

"We chose - we didn't say it was our national language - we said it was our working language, that everybody learns English whatever language

medium school you go to. Which means nobody needs interpretation to read English."

The country's foreign and defence policy was shaped on the realization that it could perhaps only hold out for two weeks against a foreign invasion.

While Sri Lanka is still grappling with issues such as exchange rates, inflation and fuel subsidies, and political ideology Singapore is thinking far ahead, even to issues such as the effect of global warming on a low elevation island nation.

Earlier this month a retired Thai diplomat, Sompong Sucharitkul, said Singapore opposed the entry of Sri Lanka to Asean when it was founded in 1967 because the country was viewed as unstable. In 1967 Sri Lanka was ruled by Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake in a shaky coalition with the Federal Party. His attempts to solve the ethnic question failed when proposals to devolve power was withdrawn amidst opposition.

Sompong said a discussion was held on August 06 and two ministers from Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) were in an adjacent room.

"I remember one was an economics minister. He waited there anxiously for a signal to join the discussion; but it never came," Sompong told Thailand's The Nation newspaper.

## Canadians to help Greece

### - Karygiannis

The Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt expressed his appreciation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for offering firefighting experts and equipment to help fight the fires burning in Greece.

"I am glad that the Government of Greece requested assistance from Canada to help fight the fires that are devastating my motherland," said Mr. Karygiannis. "I want to thank the Minister and the Government of Canada for quickly responding to the request for assistance."

A Government statement, issued late today, stated that Canada will provide land-based air tankers, the Martin Mars air tanker and other water bomber equipment, as well as trained wildland fire crews.

"It will be a proud day for me



when I see my fellow Canadians offering assistance to the people of the land of my birth." Mr. Karygiannis further stated. "Canadians have once again shown that they are ready to help wherever and whenever they are needed."

## New 'strategic partnership' against China

By Mahmud Ali

Ships, aircraft and submarines from four countries launched a week-long war games in the Bay of Bengal on 4 September.

It is the first flexing of muscles by the newly-formed "Quadrilateral Initiative", which brings together the US, Japan, India and Australia. Singapore also has a small presence in the exercises.

Many analysts see the manoeuvres as efforts by a democratic coalition to "contain" rising Chinese power.

Although the participants deny this, Beijing seems to be increasingly worried. When the four powers set up the initiative (informally named the Quad) in Manila last May, a deeply concerned Beijing sent formal protests to the four governments.

Quad members reassured China that their "strategic partnership" was only aimed at maintaining regional security, and was not targeting any particular power.

A month later, Chinese President Hu Jintao sought clarification from Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the G8 summit in Germany. Although he received reiterations of peace and friendship, Chinese commentary suggests Beijing was not convinced.

Dubbed Malabar 07-02, these are the biggest joint manoeuvres Indian warships have participated in. They were preceded by extensive discussions in Delhi. In July, Australia's Defence Minister, Brendan Nelson, set out the policy framework of defence collaboration.

A month later, Admiral Russell Shalders, commander of the Australian navy, visited India - to work out the mechanics of collaboration and the details of the exercises. Just days later, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrived in Delhi, offering substantial economic and commercial assistance if India agreed to anchor "an Asian arc of freedom" stretching across the Indian and Pacific Oceans and providing a democratic bulwark - presumably against non-democratic powers.

As Mr Abe prepared to leave, his Defence Minister, Yoriko Koike, and the Commander of US Pacific Command, Admiral Timothy Keating, arrived in Delhi, to finalise details of defence co-operation and Malabar 07-02.

This flurry of senior-level exchanges and the size and complexity of the manoeuvres add weight to the arguments of those who say that the Quad is rapidly gelling into a defence coalition. Two US aircraft carriers and one from India, as well as 11 other US ships will join more than a dozen vessels from India, Australia and Singapore to test out how well they can work together against common threats.

Although Quad members insist China has nothing to fear, a similar exercise (Malabar 07-01) involving US, Indian and Japanese warships churned the waters of the South China Sea in April. Bilateral war games are not new for Quad members, but there seems recently to have been a new momentum. Defence papers issued by all four governments have described China as a potential threat, and that combined with the launch of the Quad suggest a pattern of alliance-building activities that China cannot ignore.

Perhaps as a sign of things to come, 1,600 Chinese troops travelled to Russia's Ural mountains to join several thousand mostly Russian troops in "Peace Mission 2007" manoeuvres in August. These ended as President Vladimir Putin hosted Hu and the presidents of four other Shanghai Co-operation Organisation countries (after their annual summit in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek) at the closing ceremony.

Mr Putin then announced the resumption of long-range bomber sorties towards Nato airspace, which had been suspended after the Soviet collapse. The Cold War may not be back, but with trade and security tensions rising between the US, China and Russia, a chill wind seems to be blowing as Asia redesigns its strategic alignments.

[bbc.co.uk]

## Bankers, Analysts See Resurgent Asia 10 Years after Economic Crisis

By Mike O'Sullivan

Bankers and analysts who met in San Francisco September 6 and 7 say that 10 years after the Asian financial crisis, a resurgent Asia has reemerged as an economic power. Their meeting was sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, a branch of the U.S. central bank. They say the key to stable growth in Asia's emerging markets is a resilient financial system.

Regulators, economists and bankers shared lessons from the past and cautions for the future as they looked back on the Asian crisis.

The problems started when the Thai currency collapsed in July, 1997. Panicked investors withdrew their funds and the rapid outflow sent tremors throughout Asia.

For all but astute investors, the frightening chain of events was unexpected. Tarisa Watanagase, governor of the Bank of Thailand, says her country was moving ahead in early 1997 as one of the so-called Asian Tigers. "I think we were in a state of euphoria. Everything was rosy. Money was easy to get, both from the domestic lenders and the foreign ones."

Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea were most affected by the crisis. The International Monetary Fund imposed sweeping requirements for financial reform in exchange for help. The measures included closing troubled banks, abandoning fixed exchange rates and restructuring corporations.

Linda Yang was U.S. ambassador to the Asian Development Bank, which along with the IMF, tried to restore liquidity and confidence in Asia. She says the reforms were difficult, and the poor bore much of the burden.

"In those countries where there was hardly any social safety net, when you impose very strict fiscal discipline, what are the people who are going to be hurt first? Those people who did not have much of a voice - the poor children who depend on a school lunch or the local community clinic," she said.

She says international officials could have tailored their responses more effectively and humanely, but serious reform was needed.

Yang says Thailand and South Korea had lost billions of dollars in foreign exchange reserves through bad investments and poor accounting practices. Auditors discovered the losses.

Dominic Barton, chairman of the consulting firm McKinsey & Co. Asia,



says the financial system in Thailand and some other parts of Asia was inefficient. "The banking system was basically very weak and broken. The corporate sector was unprofitable. So this was a crisis waiting to happen," he said.

Jong Nam Oh was an advisor to South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who took office in late 1997. Oh oversaw South Korea's corporate restructuring, and says the new administration took tough measures.

He notes that four of the country's five big industrial conglomerates, known in Korean as chaebol, would emerge as stronger global corporations: Samsung, Hyundai, LG and SK. A fifth chaebol, Daewoo, collapsed in bankruptcy.

Larry Greenwood, a vice president at the Asian Development Bank, says that before the crisis, there was an over-reliance on banks to finance

businesses, but today he sees a more open financial system, with growing stock and bond markets.

There are still strains and risks in the Asian economies, says McKinsey & Company's Dominic Barton. He says that coming years will see 800 million new middle-class consumers in India and China, and that borrowers and lenders will need financial education to cope with the surge in spending and lending. "Because when it hap-

pened in Korea and Hong Kong and Taiwan, we had blow-outs, bankruptcies," he said.

Economic success, says Korean advisor Jong Nam Oh, still breeds complacency. "If we celebrate too much, and if we become complacent, then this kind of crisis can always come again," he said.

Indonesia, in particular, lags behind its neighbors as it struggles to implement reforms. The nation is also coping with the aftermath of the devastating 2004 tsunami. But these analysts paint a much brighter picture for much of Asia.

They caution that economic disruptions, caused by Avian flu, political upheavals or a surge in oil prices, could cause another Asian downturn. So could problems in the U.S. economy, whose consumers fuel much of Asia's expansion.

[VOA]





# Monsoon Health



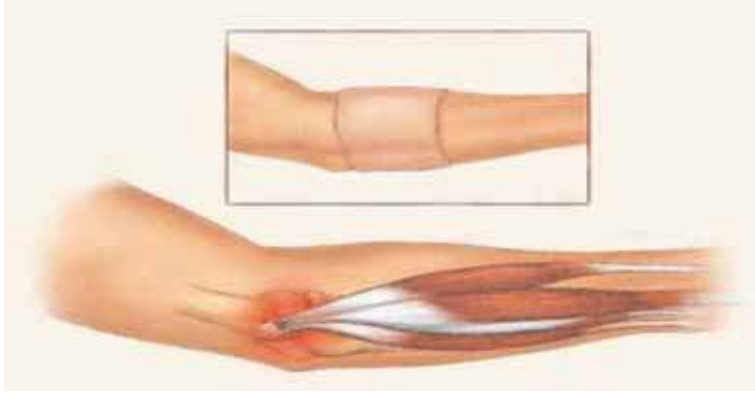
## Tennis Trials

By Mithura Anandarajah

Perhaps you've been gardening or digging for several days. Or you've done overtime at the office, typing away for hours on the computer. You can't remember what you've done, but you notice an ache along your forearm. In time you notice you're clenching and unclenching your fist. You have pain when you reach for the coffee mug in the morning. Your hand feels weak. Perhaps after complaining for several weeks, you finally go to the doctor and describe your symptoms. Within minutes of assessing you, your doctor finally announces that you have "tennis elbow". Slight problem...you've never touched a tennis racket in your life.

Tennis elbow is a condition that results in pain and inflammation that occurs at the elbow joint. Named such because of its frequency with tennis players, medically it is also known as lateral epicondylitis. In the forearm, muscles originate from the bony prominence on the outside of the elbow and come down the forearm into the wrist. Damage and small tears to these muscles, tendons and ligaments cause this condition. What results is an inflammatory process that prevents movement, causes pain and limits grip strength and function. Eventually this leads to the formation of scar tissue and calcium deposits. If you have symptoms of tennis elbow, you probably will have pain and tenderness down the forearm. Any gripping or twisting activity will increase discomfort. With time this may result in weakness.

Initially, the best treatment of this



condition is rest and avoiding the aggravating activity. Sometimes this is not possible, especially if your job involves typing or repetitive hand activity. Applying an ice pack to the forearm and elbow for fifteen minutes will reduce the pain and inflammation. Your physician may give you an anti-inflammatory medication that will reduce the pain and inflammation. Once the injury develops, remember that your strength and function will be limited. Pain relief alone may not fix the problem.

Physiotherapy is an excellent option for this injury prevention and treatment. Initially, the focus of therapy will be pain relief. Modalities like acupuncture or ultrasound will reduce the inflammation and promote healing. Once the discomfort has decreased, the strength and flexibility of the joint and muscles will have to be restored. Progressive strengthening must be done carefully. Overdoing the strengthening will flare up an already irritated condition. The lack of progressive strengthening will cause

the injury to flare up frequently. The muscles will not be able to tolerate repetitive or heavy gripping activity. Occasionally, you may need a tennis elbow brace that will reduce the forces and stress of the joint. Your therapist will advise you accordingly. Massage therapy may also be used as an adjunct to physiotherapy, to manually break down scar tissue and promote healing.

Tennis elbow is a condition that is treatable and should be addressed sooner than later. Rather than avoiding painful activities, treat the condition and resume your prior level of function. Who knows...perhaps it may include a tennis racket.

*Mithura Anandarajah is a registered physiotherapist working at Rathburn Physiotherapy and Sports Medicine clinic. Located in the heart of Mississauga, please call (905) 566-4533 for further questions or to book a consultation appointment.*

## DRINK WATER ON EMPTY STOMACH

It is popular in Japan today to drink water immediately after waking up every morning. Furthermore, scientific tests have proven its value. We publish below a description of use of water for our readers. For old and serious diseases as well as modern illnesses the water treatment had been found successful by a Japanese medical society as a 100% cure for the following diseases: Headache, body ache, heart system, arthritis, fast heart beat, epilepsy, excess fatness, bronchitis asthma, TB, meningitis, kidney and urine diseases, vomiting, gastritis, diarrhea, piles, diabetes, constipation, all eye diseases, womb, cancer and menstrual disorders, ear nose and throat diseases.

### METHOD OF TREATMENT

1. As you wake up in the morning before brushing teeth, drink 4 x 160ml glasses of water 2. Brush and clean the mouth but do not eat or drink anything for 45 minutes 3. After 45 minutes you may eat and drink as normal. 4. After 15 minutes of breakfast, lunch and dinner do not eat or drink anything for 2 hours - ie you can drink straight after a meal (within the first 15 minutes) but not for 2 hours after that. 5. Those who are old or sick and are unable to drink 4 glasses of water at the beginning may commence by taking little water and gradually increase it to 4 glasses per day. 6. The above method of treatment will cure diseases of the sick and others can enjoy a healthy life.

The following list gives the number of days of treatment required to cure/control/ reduce main diseases:

1. High Blood Pressure - 30 days
2. Gastric - 10 days
3. Diabetes - 30 days
4. Constipation - 10 days
5. Cancer - 180 days

6. TB - 90 days

7. Arthritic patients should follow the above treatment for only 3 days in the 1st week, and from 2nd week onwards - daily. This treatment method has no side effects, however at the commencement of treatment you may have to urinate a few times. It is better if we continue this and make this procedure as a routine work in our life.

Drink Water and Stay healthy and Active. This makes sense ... 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 cup of cold drink after a meal. However, the cold water will solidify the oily stuff that you have just consumed. It will slow down the digestion. Once this "sludge" reacts with the acid, it will break down and be absorbed by the intestine faster than the solid food. It will line the intestine. Very soon, this will turn into fats and lead to cancer. It is best to drink hot soup or warm water after a meal. 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...

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## 'India will be 2nd largest economy in world by mid-century'

India will be the second largest economy in the world by the mid-century, according to the country's High Commissioner to the UK, Kamallesh Sharma.

Addressing a function organised to celebrate the 60th anniversary of India's Independence at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New Delhi recently, Sharma spoke about the rapid strides the country was making in varied fields and said "by mid-century, India will be the second largest economy in the world."

According to economists, for over a century the US has been the largest economy in the world. Major shifts have; however, taken place in the last two decades and during the last 30 years the weight of the world economy has shifted from the US and the rich countries of Europe to China and India.

Of late, economists have been proclaiming the emergence of India and China as economic superpowers in not-too-distant future. The World Bank says India will become the third largest economy after China and the US by 2025.

World Bank Managing Director Graeme Wheeler, who was in India recently, noted the country's tremen-



dous progress in recent years and emphasised the need for sustaining the growth in high-value sectors along with strides in the fields of health care and education.

Lauding achievements of NRIs in London, Sharma said, "people of Indian origin are doing extremely well and now advancement at home mirrors the advancement made outside."

Noting that there is no relationship in the world like the one between India and Britain, the High Commissioner said, "the NRIs have shown that they are prepared to live by the standard of excellence in developed countries."

[PTI]

## Singapore Mustafa Trust sets up chair at Tamil University in Thanjavur

Research on work of South-East Asian Tamil writers to be taken up.

Singapore Thamizhavel Ko. Sarangapani Research Chair has been instituted by the Singapore Mustafa Trust at the Tamil University.

Mustafa of the Singapore Mustafa Trust and varsity Vice-Chancellor C. Subramaniam signed a memorandum of understanding in this regard in Thanjavur on Sep 5th. Tamil Nadu Commercial Taxes Minister S.N.M. Ubayathullah and lyricist Vairamuthu were also signatories.

Giving details, Mr. Subramaniam said the Trust had deposited Rs.20 lakh in nationalised banks.

Using the interest of Rs.2 lakh, research would be conducted on the works of Tamil writers of South-East Asian countries, particularly Singapore and Malaysia.

Research would also be pursued on the life of the Tamils living in these countries. An M.Phil. degree and two Ph.D degrees would be offered.

A sum of Rs.5,000 would be given



as incentive to the M.Phil. student and Rs.10,000 each to the Ph.D scholars every year.

It had also been decided to institute an award for the best Tamil works of writers in these countries.

The award, which would carry a cash prize of Rs.25,000, would be given every two years.

The books of writers from South East Asian countries would be housed in a separate section at the university, the Vice-Chancellor said.

[hinduonnet.com]

## US, Indonesia Urge China, India to Press Burma

The United States and Indonesia are calling on China and India to put more pressure on Burma to improve its human rights record.

At a meeting on the sidelines of the APEC leaders summit Sep 8th, Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and U.S. President George Bush agreed that constructive engagement by Southeast Asian nations is not producing any results in Burma.

They also agreed to talk with China and India - Burma's two largest neighbors - about the problem.

In response, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao repeated Beijing's often-stated position to not "interfere" in other nations' internal affairs.

Liu said China does not support the use of "pressure," but believes that "dialogue" and "mutual respect" is the best solution.

China and India are major military weapons suppliers to Burma and have strong commercial ties with the tightly ruled country.

India did not immediately comment on the remarks. In the past, India has said it believes the people of



Burma need to decide what type of government they want.

Some form of military government has ruled Burma since 1962.

Human rights organizations and several countries, including the United States, have strongly criticized Burma's poor human rights record.

[VOA]

## It is time to protect Tamil, says Karunanidhi

Kalaimamani awards for the year 2006 presented to 69 persons

Tamil language and culture can be protected and preserved only by collective effort and not by fostering enmity, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi has said.

Distributing Kalaimamani awards for the year 2006 to 69 persons in Chennai on Saturday Sep 1, Mr. Karunanidhi, who himself was the recipient of the award in 1967 from the then Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai, said it was time to protect, preserve and celebrate Tamil.

Such awards were recognition of the services rendered by the artists to their respective art forms, the Chief Minister said, adding that actors and technicians of television medium too were being honoured this year.

Stars of small screens were included in this year's list as they had represented to him even before he

became Chief Minister this time, Mr. Karunanidhi recalled. "Even if we happen to fall, Tamil shall live and let others live," he said.

Rajya Sabha Member Kanimozhi, received a souvenir released on the occasion.

### Unhealthy forms

Governor Surjit Singh Barnala lamented that sometimes unhealthy forms with sensuality came into arts. "Vulgarity and violence are seen on the stage and screen...Cinema is a powerful medium and of late the small screen has had much influence on the lives of children and society.

Artists should take it as their responsibility to make valid contributions to build up a healthy society," he said.

### Monthly dole

Earlier, president of the Tamil Nadu Iyal Isai Nataka Mandram Rama. Narayanan said the Government had

raised the monthly dole for indigent artists from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000.

The Government had allocated about Rs. 2 crore in all to fulfil various demands and representations from the Mandram, he added.

Tourism and Culture Secretary T.S. Sridhar said over 1,700 persons had been conferred Kalaimamani award so far, and added that a total of 9,603 indigent artists received the monthly assistance.

### Awardees

Actors R. Parthiban, Vishal, Trisha, and lyricists B. Vijay and N. Muthukumar, received awards.

Writer Balakumaran, vocalist Sanjay Subramanian, danseuse Padma Sampathkumaran and stage artist V.R. Thilagam, besides television actors Venu Aravindh and Balasingh, were also among the awardees.

[hinduonnet.com]

## US, Australia, Japan keen to strengthen ties with India

Viewing India as an emerging "great power", the US, Australia and Japan expressed keenness recently to strengthen ties with New Delhi but ruled out immediate plans to include it in their three-way strategic dialogue.

In their landmark security talks, US President George W Bush, Australian Prime Minister John Howard and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe focussed on how to boost ties with India as they met over breakfast on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Sydney.

"There was a lot of discussion about India, a lot of optimism about India, the importance of strengthening our relations with India," Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer told reporters, adding "there's a recognition now that India is a coming great power."

Downer said India was the the world's largest democracy and its economy is growing at a rapid rate and "it's a country that we're all feeling increasingly comfortable working with."

"It was an opportunity to talk about a range of different issues but

certainly to focus on India and the importance of that country to us in the Asia-Pacific region and broader geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region," he said.

The discussion on engaging New Delhi more came at a time when the three countries are holding joint naval exercises with India in Bay of Bengal.

Downer, however, said expanding the three-way strategic dialogue to include India was not on the table for the moment.

"Nothing like that is going to happen any time soon, we are looking more in a general sense at progressing the relationship," he said.

Ahead of today's meeting, the three developed countries sought to allay China's fears saying the dialogue was not aimed against any country.

"As far as China is concerned, the three leaders shared the same recognition that it's important to have a positive engagement with China," Japanese foreign ministry spokesman Mitsuo Sakaba said after the talks.

Besides India and China's growing regional influence, the three leaders discussed the the North Korean and Iran nuclear issues at the meeting,



which was also attended by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Downer.

Downer again said that leaders at the APEC summit were unlikely to expand their club to take in India or any other country by lifting a leadership moratorium.

"One of the reasons for that is I think there are 11 applicants for APEC membership, India is one.... it's quite a long list and I think there is a consensus that if you were to bring one in, you'd have to bring others to balance it up," Downer said.

[PTI]

## Tamil binds Tamil Nadu, Sri Lankan Muslims strongly

The legacy of a shared heritage between the Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka binds them strongly, P.M. Amza, Deputy High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Chennai, said recently.

One of the binding factors was a shared language-Tamil-as Muslims in Sri Lanka were predominantly Tamil-speaking, he said delivering the presidential address at the valedictory function of the 13th International Qirath Meet and 22nd All India Competitions in Oriental Studies, organised by the Murthuzaviya Educational and Cultural Foundation of south India.

### Commonalities

Muslims of Arab-Indian origin from the Malabar coast and Kayalpattinam in Tamil Nadu settled in Sri Lanka. There were many commonalities between Kayalpattinam and Kathankudi near Batticaloa, Sri Lanka:

both were all-Muslim settlements and preserved their distinct characteristics.

The Muslims in Sri Lanka produced stellar literature, a legacy that was still alive. The Sri Lankan Muslims integrated seamlessly with the local community wherever they lived, be it among the Sinhalese or the Tamils, Mr. Amza said.

The younger generation should imbibe the values preached by the Koran such as tolerance, brotherhood, peace and non-violence, Justice K.N. Basha, Madras High Court Judge, said. He called upon the affluent sections of the community to contribute more to building institutions that nurtured secularism.

The competitions were being held every year to instil moral values in the youth and wean them away from the path of dissent and terrorism, G.S.M.P. Khadri, correspondent of the foundation, said.



T. Rafeeq Ahmed, industrialist, gave away prizes to the winners of the competitions. S.K. Khadri, founder-president of the foundation, was present.

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# Monsoon Travel



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In 2007, Malaysia is celebrating 50 years of independence. The month of August was filled with a myriad of parades, cultural performances, street shows and carnivals to commemorate the country's Independence or Merdeka Day on 31st August.

It was on 31st August 1957 when history was made as the Union Jack was lowered and the Malaysian flag hoisted, with the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj leading the people in the famous shouts of Merdeka! Merdeka! Merdeka! (Independence!)

Malaysia invites all visitors to share in the joy and excitement of this momentous occasion. Come and be mesmerised by a unique multicultural populace celebrating 50 years of nationhood in harmony and peaceful co-existence. You will truly be fascinated.

Having had an interesting past and being a part of the international spice route many hundreds of years ago, Malaysia has turned into a mosaic of cultures. Everything from its people to its architecture reflect a colourful heritage and an amalgamated culture. To understand Malaysian culture, you must first get to know its people.

Malays, Chinese, Indians and many other ethnic groups have lived together in Malaysia for generations. All these cultures have influenced each other, creating a truly Malaysian culture.

The largest ethnic groups in Malaysia are the Malays, Chinese and Indians. In Sabah and Sarawak, there are a myriad of indigenous ethnic groups with their own unique culture and heritage.

### Malay

Today, the Malays, Malaysia's largest ethnic group, make up more than 50% of the population. In Malaysia, the term Malay refers to a person who practices Islam and Malay traditions, speaks the Malay language and whose ancestors are Malays. Their conversion to Islam from Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism began in the 1400s, largely influenced by the decision of the royal court of Melaka. The Malays are known for their gentle mannerisms and rich arts heritage.

### Chinese

The second largest ethnic group, the Malaysian Chinese form about 25% of the population. Mostly descendants of Chinese immigrants during the 19th century, the Chinese are known for their diligence and keen business sense. The three sub-groups

who speak a different dialect of the Chinese language are the Hokkien who lives predominantly on the northern island of Penang; the Cantonese who lives predominantly in the capital city Kuala Lumpur; and the Mandarin-speaking group who lives predominantly in the southern state of Johor.

### Indian

The smallest of three main ethnic groups, the Malaysian Indians form about 10% of the population. Most are descendants of Tamil-speaking South Indian immigrants who came to the country during the British colonial rule. Lured by the prospect of breaking out of the Indian caste system, they came to Malaysia to build a better life. Predominantly Hindus, they brought with them their colourful culture such as ornate temples, spicy cuisine and exquisite sarees.

### Indigenous Ethnic Groups

#### Orang Asli

Orang Asli is a general term used for any indigenous groups that are found in Peninsular Malaysia. They are divided into three main tribal groups: Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malay. The Negrito usually lives in the north, the Senoi in the middle and the Proto-Malay in the south. Each group or sub-group has its own language and culture. Some are fishermen, some farmers and some are semi-nomadic.

#### Sarawak

Collectively known as the Dayaks, the Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu are the major ethnic groups in the state of Sarawak. Dayak, which means upstream or inland, is used as a blanket term by the Islamic coastal population for over 200 tribal groups. Typically, they live in longhouses, traditional community homes that can house 20 to 100 families.

#### Iban

The largest of Sarawak's ethnic groups, the Ibans form 30% of the state's population. Sometimes erroneously referred to as the Sea Dayaks because of their skill with boats, they are actually an upriver tribe from heart of Kalimantan. In the past, they were a fearsome warrior race renowned for headhunting and piracy. Traditionally, they worship a triumvirate of gods under the authority of Singalang Burung, the bird-god of war. Although now mostly Christian, many traditional customs are still practised.

#### Bidayuh

Peace-loving and easy-going, the



gentle Bidayuh of Sarawak are famous for their hospitality and tuak or rice wine. Making their homes in Sarawak's mountainous regions, they are mostly farmers and hunters. In their past headhunting days, their prized skulls were stored in a baruk a roundhouse that rises about 1.5 metres above the ground. Originally animists, now most of them have converted to Christianity.

#### Orang Ulu

Also known as upriver tribes of Sarawak. Forming roughly 5.5% of Sarawak's population, there are over 100,000 different Orang Ulu tribes. Arguably Borneo's most artistic people, their large longhouses are ornately decorated with murals and superb woodcarvings; their utensils are



embellished with intricate beadwork; and aristocratic ladies cover their bodies with finely detailed tattoos.

#### Sabah

The largest indigenous ethnic groups of Sabah's population are the Kadazan Dusun, the Bajau and the Murut.

#### Kadazan Dusun

The largest ethnic group of Sabah, the Kadazan Dusuns form about 30% of the state's population. Actually consisting of two tribes; the Kadazan and the Dusun, they were grouped together as they both share the same language and culture. However, the Kadazan are mainly inhabitants of flat valley deltas, which are conducive to paddy field farming, while the Dusun traditionally lived in the hilly and mountainous regions of interior Sabah.

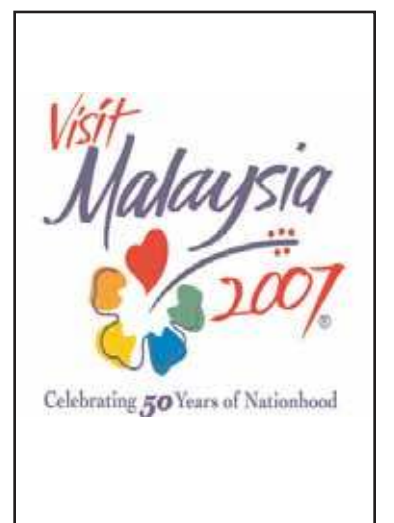
#### Bajau

The second largest ethnic group in Sabah, the Bajaus make up about 15% of the state's population. Historically a nomadic sea-faring people that worshipped the Omboh Dilaut or God of the Sea, they are sometimes referred to as the Sea Gypsies. Those who chose to leave their sea-faring ways became farmers and cattle-breeders. These land Bajaus are nicknamed 'Cowboys of the East' in tribute to their impressive equestrian skills, which are publicly displayed in the annual Tamu Besar festival at Kota Belud.

#### Murut

The third largest ethnic group in Sabah the Muruts make up about 3% of the state's population. Traditionally inhabiting the northern inland regions of Borneo, they were the last of Sabah's ethnic groups to renounce headhunting. Now, they are mostly shifting cultivators of hill paddy and tapioca, supplementing their diet with blowpipe hunting and fishing. Like most indigenous tribes in Sabah, their traditional clothing is decorated with distinctive beadwork.

[<http://travel.tourism.gov.my>]





## TD Canada Trust launches Festival of South Asia



### Bill Hatanaka

**Group Head TD  
Wealth Management,  
Chairman and Chief  
Executive Officer-TD  
Waterhouse Canada Inc.  
speaks of TD Banks  
roles in Community  
Involvement**

The official launch of TD Canada Trust sponsored annual South Asian street festival took place at the TD Tower downtown, on 16th August.

A large representative gathering of TD Bank officials, South Asian business leaders and the Media were present for the official launch. Members of the Gerard India Bazaar and Bill Hatanaka, **Group Head TD Wealth Management**, Chairman and Chief



Bill Hatanaka seen with Bhangra Dancers

Executive Officer-TD Waterhouse Canada Inc., were hosts to the evening reception. Mr.Hatanaka is also the Chairperson of the Diversity Leadership Council, which is made up of senior business leaders across TD.

Speaking to the gathering at the function, Mr. Hatanaka thanked the many representatives from the South Asian community present. He remarked that TD Bank was happy to be a sponsor for the second year in succession for the festival. He emphasized that at TD Bank, diversity and respecting all cultures is one of the Bank's top priorities and that it is embedded in their business strategies at every level of the organization.

Mr. Hatanaka also remarked that TD Bank was judged as the No. 1

retail bank by six of Canada's major ethnic populations. He said that the only way to build and maintain confidence of their clients was by what the Bank does in the communities it serves.

Mr.Hatanaka hoped that TD's involvement in events like the South Asian Festival will send a message to it's employees and customers across the country-that cultural diversity matters to them as a business and as individuals.

Guests at the function were entertained to cultural performances and sumptuous refreshments.



## Gauri Guha, renowned vocalist participates as Teacher in Belgium

Almost 300 students participated in different disciplines. Such as,

Tango Dance, Flamenco Dance & Singing, Gypsy Jazz, Iranian Percussions, Indian Classical Music, Bulgarian and Romanian Music, Cuban-African Drums & Singing, etc. For the first time the Academy appointed Gauri as an Indian Vocal Teacher. All students and teachers moved in to the Academy for 7 days. Basically, they spent entire time with

each other in teaching, discussing, practicing, performing and presenting. The atmosphere was like an Ashram in olden days.

It gave everybody the opportunity to network, learn from each other, experiment and collaborate new things. Apart from solo performances, Gauri performed with Radhka Stefanov, Bulgarian Vocalist, Evan Stefanov, Gaduka Player and Daniel Schell, Tiptar Player.



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## PC Candidate K K Li - Representing what matters to Markham - Unionville

Committed to work, Dedicated to the cause, Accountable to what he does and a strong believer in community involvement- These are perhaps the best characteristics to describe K K Li - the PC candidate contesting the Markham-Unionville constituency in the forthcoming Ontario Provincial Elections.

Born in Hong-Kong K K Li migrated to Canada in the seventies and followed a course in Rehab. Medicine at the University of Toronto. He began his own practice in the field he chose and is currently the CEO of Yee Hong Rehab Centre and Yee Hong Ki Kit Li Rehab Centre, employing over 200 in his staff which includes physiotherapists, occupational therapists, massage therapists and acupuncturists.

He also functioned as the Vice-President of the College of Physiotherapists during 2004-2005.

K K Li has been involved in community work over the period of 20 years he has lived in Markham. He was a member of the organizing committee of the Golden Daffodil Charity Ball which raised over \$ 1.5 million for the Canadian Cancer Society. He has been involved actively in volunteer work through the Chinese Outreach Steering Committee. Fund raising for community oriented organizations is another of his achievements. His community involvement was recognized and was the winner of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award in 2004. He was also responsible in helping foreign physiotherapists from ethnic commu-

nities to gain better access for job opportunities.

K K Li has been involved in the PC Party both at the federal and provincial level for more than ten-years. He is presently the executive Vice-President of the fund - raising and candidate search committee of his local riding Association. He seeks support for his candidature on the basis of building stronger and safer communities, fairness for taxpayers and investing in public education.

K K Li is married to Sylvia, has four grown-up children and has been a resident of Markham for over twenty-years.

K K Li is a firm believer that Leadership matters for a better Ontario.



K K Li with Markham residents: Mohan Thuraiajah, Retd. Lt. Col. Ghulam Ahmed Chaudhry and Harry Jeganathan



K K Li at Markham Stouffville Hospital AGM



CanPak Chamber of Commerce Canada Day Celebration



KK and the Finance Minister of Canada, Hon. Jim Flaherty on the Budget Day 2007 in Parliament Hill

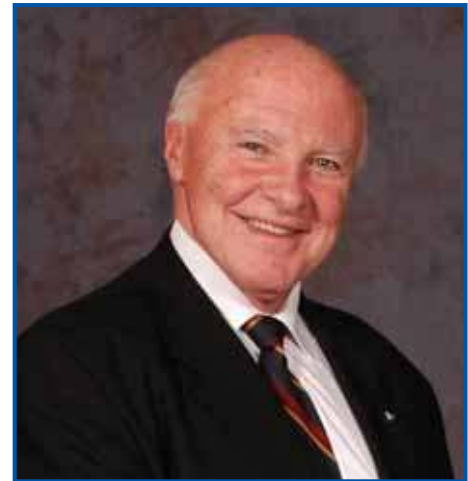


KK receiving the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award from the Associate Minister of Health, Hon Dan Newman Thank you !

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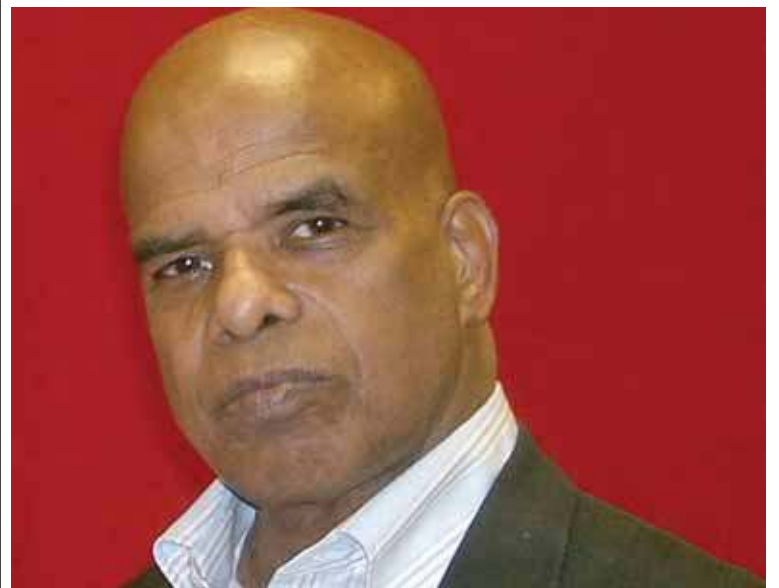
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 www.leadershipmatters.ca  
 email gary@votegarygrant.ca

The Gary Grant Campaign  
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 Scarborough, ON M1E 2N2

Approved by CFO Scarborough-Guildwood PC Riding Association

## Samy Appadurai Campaigns for a better Toronto



Samy Appadurai, PC Candidate for Scarborough Centre believes that the Tories will deliver the goods better and create a safer and better Toronto.

Samy has recently opened a plush campaign office in Midland and Lawrence. Speaking to Monsoon Journal, Samy remarked that poverty alleviation will be tackled if they are elected.

He said that tax reductions will be given and better employment opportunities will be created for the Province. He also remarked that giving proper jobs to the professionally qualified new-comers will be given priority.

Samy Appadurai is a strong and experienced voice for Scarborough

Centre. He carries with him successful years of experience in Education and community involvement. He is a community worker, educator, broadcaster, author and a free-lance journalist. He has been a recipient of several awards.

He was the winner of the medal and certificate of Golden Jubilee celebration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11, community service award by National Ethnic press and media council of Canada. He was also five time gold medalist for his community work in Ontario.

Samy is married and is the proud father of three grown-up children.





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*Zoran Churchin*

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**MARKHAM - UNIONVILLE**

*"For those of you who may not know me personally, my name is Ki Kit Li. I have lived in Markham for over 20 years with my wife and four children. I am currently Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Yee Hong Ki Kit Li Rehab Centre. In addition, I am an active member, supporter and believer in the importance of community involvement."*

*Ki Kit Li*

**INVESTING IN STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

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## On October 10th, Elect **SAMY APPADURAI** for Scarborough Centre



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# MIRIDANGA SHESTHIRAM

presented "Laya Abhinaya and Thoughts" led by  
Miridanga Mastero Guru Kaaraikudi R. Mani,  
on Sunday, Sept 9th at the Metropolitan Centre, Scarborough.



Photo Courtesy:  
KEN PHOTO





## Are plantation workers of Sri Lanka second class citizens?

by John David

Are the plantation sector people a second class or no class citizens? Are the state institutions like the Centre for Disaster Management, Department of Social Service etc. only for the first class citizens? What is the backbone of the Sri Lankan economy? Who are the lowest-paid but the hardest working community in Sri Lanka? Is there one to look into the basic needs of these hapless people? Is it that the politicians and the trade unions that live on these people have no conscience or any sense of responsibility? Are not the plantation companies that profit from the labour of these people duty-bound to provide the basic needs of their workers? Where are the trade unions that claim to work for the welfare of these people? Where are the do-gooders of NGOs? These questions came to my mind when I saw the men, women and children huddled together braving the cold and the inclement weather in make-shift shelters since their houses were burnt down on the 23rd of January this year.

It is said that the leaders of their trade unions hastened to the place only to promise that new houses would be built for them within three months. But nine months have gone by after the fire and no signs of houses and rehabilitation are in sight.

The State and its service arms like the Department of Social Service, the Centre for Disaster Management, the INGOs and the NGOs are elbowing each other to be the first in giving aid to victims of natural disaster like the tsunami affected people, but nobody seems to know or care that the fami-



Estate worker, plucking tea leaves in Leangawella Tea Estate



The line houses

lies consisting of 80 to 90 people are destitute with only promises and hope.

It is significant that the trade unions collect Rs. 45.00 to Rs. 50.00 from each individual per month. Multiply this with the membership and you will know what a gold mine it is. In passing it would be an interesting and worthwhile exercise to go into the matter of how this money is spent.

Added to this there is yet another NGO which I am told collects a large sum of money on the export of tea specifically meant for the welfare of the plantation worker. It would be interesting to know what action the Trust has done so far to rehabilitate these people.

I would very much wish that the media- electronic or otherwise - takes up this issue, to give it due publicity and thereby help to give succour to this hapless people.

**Pictures:**  
[HumanityAshore.org]  
Dushiyanthini  
Kanagasabathipillai



Generations in the hill country

## Sri Lankan singer rises from displaced person to superstar

By Beatriz Gonzalez

in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

The face of Sasiskaran, a newly popular singer from Trincomalee district in eastern Sri Lanka, shines with happiness. The most extraordinary thing about this raw talent is not that he beat 5,000 others to win a nationwide talent show, but that he was an internally displaced person (IDP) when he became a music idol.

Sasiskaran, 27, won the "Shakti TV Superstar" competition broadcast by a Tamil-language television station last month - without having any musical education. Holding his trophy, his face beams from posters all over the capital Colombo, but very few Sri Lankans know the real story of this young singer. Sri Lanka has been mired in conflict for more than 25 years.

Things have been especially hard for the population in the eastern and northern provinces since April last year, when fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) intensified. Thousands of people were displaced, including Sasiskaran and his family, who had to leave their house in Batticaloa district, also in the east, in February due to clashes between the two sides.

Sasiskaran had moved to Batticaloa after marrying a young woman from this district. "We had to run away from our home due to the shelling, and seek refuge in a school close to Batticaloa town," Sasiskaran said. "Living in the school was very hard as the building was in bad condition, also there were no trees around and during the hot days we had no shadows to hide from the sun."

Singing was Sasiskaran's childhood dream. But it was not just a hobby for him and, aware of his talent, he participated in many singing contests searching for the opportunity to become popular. Thus, the singer was not surprised to be selected for

"Shakti TV Superstar," having previously made it to the final rounds of other music competitions. What was surprising for him was that he made it at a time of war and displacement in the east.

Like the other participants, Sasiskaran chose some popular Indian songs in the Tamil language for the competition. "It was very difficult for me to find a proper place for singing practice in the school," he recalled. "As the conflict was continuing in the

The young singer is thankful for the public support he received: "Even with the conflict going on, people did not take into consideration my background or origin, only the way I performed. This makes me really happy and grateful to them."

A Sri Lankan young man who followed Sasiskaran's performance on TV said, "He has a good voice even if he does not have a basic knowledge of music." His colleague added, "During the competition the members of the



Singing sensation Sasiskaran (centre) surrounded by family and neighbours in Batticaloa. © UNHCR/ B.Gonzalez

first three rounds of the competition, I had to travel from the school to Colombo in order to participate in the programme. But after winning the third round, we left the school and were able to move to Colombo, from where I continued the competition."

In the first six rounds, participants were voted in through SMS texts from the public. "I was concerned because the people in the east, who I thought would most likely vote for me, did not have mobile signals at the time due to the war," he said. "I only became confident of my chances in the final stages, when a jury was asked to choose the best among the final participants."

jury told him that he has the right voice qualities to be a good singer in future."

Recently, Sasiskaran went home to Batticaloa, joining thousands of IDPs who returned when fighting in the east ended in May this year. He can now enjoy peace in his house in the company of family and neighbors.

"My dream turned into reality when I won the competition and I passed from being an IDP to a popular singer," he said. "My plan for the future is to produce my own music, but before that, I would like to do studies in music."

[unhcr.org]

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# Monsoon Food Court



## IRISH FOOD

Contributed by Chef Nate and Scott

The main method of cooking food was long and slow in a large pot or cauldron or on spits over an open fire. This cauldron was also sometimes used as a crude type of oven, sometimes being turned upside down over hot stones or the cooling embers.

Next came The Vikings (c794 AD) who introduced more complex sea fishing techniques, enhancing and enlarging on the seafood consumed, but it was probably the arrival of the Anglo Normans around the 12th century AD who had a more profound influence on Irish cuisine. Not only did they introduce many vegetables and herbs from the Mediterranean, but also the all-important Potato in the 16th century, which was to become an important staple in the diet, particularly of rural Ireland. Unfortunately, so much so that The Potato Blight of 1845 made famine and the death of many unavoidable.

It's interesting to note that cattle wasn't always slaughtered for its meat, but used for dairy purposes. This can be explained by the fact that a man's wealth was judged by the amount of cattle he owned.

### Current Day Cuisine

What most people consider to be today's traditional Irish cuisine originated in the kitchens of the farmers of the past, not from the nobles or gentry. It is good, wholesome food made from locally grown/reared produce.



Ireland's lack of natural (industrial) resources back in the late 1800's meant that, unlike much of the rest of western Europe, its agricultural practices remained in tact, thus preserving a unique culinary identity.

Potatoes still feature prominently in today's diet and old time recipes like Irish Stew and Dublin Coddle remain firm favorites. Lamb and pork or bacon are still popular meats as well as fish such as salmon and shellfish.

A Full Irish Breakfast (very similar an English breakfast) consists of bacon rashers, eggs, sausages, baked tomatoes, mushrooms, white pudding, black pudding, fresh fruit, toast or scones with butter and marmalade. In Northern Ireland (still part of the UK) they add fried potatoes or Potato Fart to it and call it an 'Ulster Fry'.

Lunch in rural Ireland is usually the largest meal of the day consisting of meat with vegetables and potatoes although most city dwellers would substitute this with sandwiches and/or soup and have their main meal in the evening. The Irish are also famous for their soda bread and teatime

favourites such as barm-brack and boxty bread, not to mention Guinness and whiskey....both of which are excellent when used in certain dishes. renowned as the only fare for subsistence farmers in the first half of the 19th century, a time when a significant portion of the population lived in agricultural.

### Irish Food - More Than Potatoes

Ask anyone if there is an Irish national food and the answer, more than likely, will be the "potato"! The potato is certainly poverty. The blight, which hit in 1845 and raged on and off for the next five years resulted in the death of an estimated one million Irish, and the emigration of another 1.5 million.

Still, it is important to remember that the potato was unknown in Ireland prior to the 16th century when Sir Walter Raleigh is credited with bringing it to Ireland from America. Ironically, it was at first considered too much a luxury for peasant farmers and was reserved for the tables of the wealthy. Before long, however, it was apparent that the potato was immensely suited to cultivation in Ireland's climate. It thrived throughout the island, even in those areas with relatively poor soil in western Ireland that had become home to the rapidly growing Irish population. With the forced subdivision of a farmer's holding among his surviving sons under the conacre system it became typical for a family to subsist off the potatoes grown on less than an acre of land.

While the potato was obviously the mainstay of Ireland's poor, the more prosperous lived on a more var-



ied diet of food grown on larger Irish farms. These foodstuffs exceeded the needs of the larger farmers and were in fact exported from Ireland as others were starving.

Cattle had always been valued in Ireland, back to the time of the Celts. They were held not for their meat but as a source of dairy. Buttermilk was a supplement to the potato diet that actually meant that the peasant diet was reasonably sound nutritionally.

Pork, and lamb, were the more affordable meats. Easy to manage, the Celts let the pigs range outside year round. In later centuries, a pig could often make the difference in a farming family's standard of living. Raised within their home, it would be sold when grown to provide cash for rent payments or to buy food during the lean summer time when the potato crop was not ready for harvest. Meats were generally roasted or prepared in some sort of stew (such as the well-known Irish (Lamb) Stew). The importance of seafood in the Celtic and Irish diets can't be over-

looked. Not only were fish harvested from the seas surrounding the island but in the rivers and lakes as well. Like meat, they were grilled, roasted, or prepared in stews.

Oats, barley and wheat were the primary grains raised on the island. The oats, eaten as porridge in the style of Ireland's Celtic neighbor, Scotland, was the subsistence fare before the potato took hold. (The presence of mills in the Griffith's Valuation is likely evidence that grain was being grown in the area.) Barley, of course, wound up in beverages like stout. Bread was baked, with honey as a primary sweetener.

Root vegetables such as carrots, turnips, and leeks, were commonly grown, both before and after the potato's introduction. Other produce either grown or collected from the wild included sorrel, nettles, watercress, and various fruits such as wild cherries and an assortment of berries. Apples were the primary cultivated fruit.

## Beef in Guinness Stew

The Guinness in this recipe has the same function as the wine in Coq Au Vin - the acid and moisture combined with the long, slow cooking help tenderize the tough but flavorful meat.

2 1/2 lb/ 1 kg shin of beef  
2 large onions  
6 medium carrots  
2 tbsp seasoned flour  
a little fat or beef dripping  
1/2 cup dry cider  
1/2 pt/ 250 ml/ 1 cup Guinness  
with water  
sprig of parsley  
(serves four)

Cut the beef into chunks and peel and slice the onions and carrots. Toss the beef in the flour and brown quickly in hot fat. Remove the beef and fry



the onions gently until transparent. Return the beef and add the carrots and the liquid. Bring just to the boil, reduce the heat to a very gentle simmer, cover closely and cook for 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Check that the dish does not dry out, adding more liquid if necessary. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve with plainly boiled potatoes.



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# Waterloo News



## FCM is implementing, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local

Government and Provincial Councils, the Canada/Sri Lanka Municipal

### Cooperation Program (MCP).

MCP's goal is to support national post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts and to create an enabling environment for peace building by increasing local government capacities and through the promotion of good intergovernmental relations.

Its purpose is to improve operations management, service delivery and strengthen participatory mechanisms in local governments affected by the tsunami.

The activities carried out in this technical mission to Canada will enhance and contribute to the goals of the projects which are:

"To help Batticaloa MC, Trincomalee UC, Galle MC, and

Kalmunai MC-Finance Department improve customer service by streamlining operations, providing accurate information on a timely basis and presenting a professional way. (Finance Branch in producing reliable and timely annual financial statements by developing a modern financial management and reporting system".)

1) Improved understanding the possibilities around automation and

what is needed to sustain it in our country Local Government activities

2) Improved to the possibilities for an application of a model of customer service in Sri Lanka;

3) Improved the communication tools that could be used with council and the division of roles between municipal staff and elected officials.

4) Enhanced capacity of change issues that will likely arise as automa-

tion and other changes to their work processes unfold - IT

The team is trying to implement the best practices followed in Canadian City administration in the our Local Government setup to deliver the effective and efficient service to the community.

TAMIL CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF WATERLOO REGION

## Tamil CULTURAL NITE 2007

Saturday, October 13th  
6.00pm  
University of Waterloo  
Humanities Theater

Waterloo Region & Toronto Artists jointly present

South Indian Classical Dance, Tamil Folk Dance  
Veenai Recital, Natheswaram Music etc.,

Admission Free

An entertainment for your family



வேட்டர்லூ வட்டார தமிழ் கலைப் பண்பாட்டுக் கழகத்தின்  
செழுமையான வடிவம்

## தமிழ் மாணவப் பொழுது 2007

வேட்டர்லூ நகரத்தில்,  
வேட்டர்லூ வட்டார மற்றும் சொறன்டோ மாநகர கலைஞர்கள்  
இணைந்து வழங்கும்  
மாநகரம் தமிழ் கலைவிழாவில்

புத்தாட்டியம், சங்கீதம், விண் இசை, நாடகவியல் இசை,  
விலலிசை போன்ற பல கலையான  
நிகழ்ச்சிகள் இடம் பெறவுள்ளன.

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# நகைச்சுவை மாலை

2007

## 3வது வெற்றி விழா

September 15, 2007  
Saturday  
5:30pm

**Armenian Youth Centre Auditorium  
(50 Hallcrown Place, Toronto)**

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எம்மவர் நிகழ்வு

சிரிக்க

சிறார்கள் தமிழறிவை வளர்ப்போம்  
உள்ளூர்க் கலைஞர்களை ஊக்குவிப்போம்

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# SCIENCE OF SELF

## An Interview with realized master and founder of Isha Yoga, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is a realized master, yogi, and mystic from southern India. As founder of Isha Foundation, Inc., an international, non-profit service organization, Sadhguru works tirelessly among the world's pre-eminent spiritual leaders and institutions to foster peace and international cooperation. Isha Foundation conducts personal development programs, humanitarian initiatives, and, through Isha Yoga Center in Coimbatore, India, administers the Dhyanalinga multi-religious temple and meditation shrine, an ashram, and a yogic hospital. Sadhguru's program of subtle yoga, Isha Yoga, is a scientific approach to Self-transformation that facilitates healthy, joyous and effortless living.

**Q:** Sadhguru, from what lineage or tradition do you come?

**S:** Fundamentally, I don't come from any particular tradition as such. It is from inner experience that I come. But, if I look at it now, I'm a part of every tradition in the world...whatever the traditions have become over a period of time, that's different. When I look at the source of all traditions, all traditions have started the way I have started. It cannot be any different. Whether it is this religion, or that religion, or Tao, or Zen, or yoga, whatever-it all comes from the same source of an inner experience-when a person experiences the unity within himself. So, in a way, I belong to all traditions, while I don't belong to any because the presentation is unique.

**Q:** Sadhguru, you are here to teach a special form of yoga. Yoga seems to be the trend these days, but you describe it as a science. How so?

**S:** Today, modern science says that the whole existence is just energy, vibrating in so many different

ways. There is no such thing as matter. It's true. Definitely having a mastery over your energies can lead whichever way you want. You can take yourself to the highest peak. It's entirely possible. The (Isha Yoga) practices are not something that are being invented by somebody and being imposed on the system. They are something that has been discovered by observing the system. It's gleaned from the system by a deep observation. Yogic science provides the necessary tools to completely transform human nature. Its aim is to bring about experiences that bring life into a new dimension of perception.

There are eight limbs of yoga. The first three limbs are called the "fire" aspect of yoga. Last five limbs are called the "light" aspect of yoga. Pranayama is called a path of fire and light. The reason this is so is fire signifies purification; light signifies enlightenment.

Pranayama is path of fire and light. It is both purifying and enlightening.

If there is a live Guru, he knows and understands what is required. He looks at the combination that works for a person. For each person he mixes the right combination. For different people, different types of meditation, different levels of practices are given depending upon their nature. A common prescription will not work - people will only get suppressed. There will be no enlightenment. Suppression has happened in the name of spirituality everywhere in the world. Mostly, ninety percent of it is suppression. This is simply because without any understanding you want to go head-on against your own nature. It is not going to work. You don't have to become slaves of your nature. You have to transcend your nature. You have to approach it with understanding and awareness.

**Q:** Is your yoga for health and happiness in everyday life or for spiritual pursuits?

**S:** If you ask me, you cannot really separate these two things. People are seeking well-being, people want health, people want to be peaceful, but they have a confused mind. How will health happen? How will peace happen? How will happiness happen to them? They think they can buy it from the outside; it's a very wrong notion. So, if you're really seeking well-being, whether peace or happiness or health, you need to dig into yourself, to go deeper into yourself, which is a spiritual process.

Now, this question comes up because there is so much misconception about what is spiritual. We are posing spirituality versus a materialistic way of life. There is no such distinction. If you live here, your body, which is material; and who you are within you, is a spirit. So, can you separate these two things in living? You have to live here as body-spirit. So there is no such distinction as to this is spirituality; this is materialistic. It is just that, if you're enslaved to a materialistic way of life, then we will say, to find a little release from it, you can focus on the inward. But, with or without focusing on the inward, on the inner situation, there is no well-being in life. It's only a struggle.

So definitely, Isha Yoga focuses on health, well-being, natural living, and all these things. But, if a person can be truly peaceful and happy in this world, irrespective of what's happening around him, I consider that person a spiritual person. How deep he's gotten is questionable, but he's started being spiritual, because he's happy by his own nature.

**Q:** When modern life is so busy and outward-focused, how can yoga help us focus on the inward?

**S:** I would say that the seven days (the Isha Intensive) are an opportunity for a person to explore himself. So it's a personal exploration

fasting the previous day (Saptami, seventh day). This is followed by a night-long vigil commemorating the birth of Krishna at night.

At midnight, the deity of the infant Krishna is bathed, placed in a cradle and worshipped. After ablutions, and prayers and worship, the devout break their fast with Prasadam, food that has first been offered to God. Sweets made of milk and other dairy products, especially butter, are traditionally prepared on this occasion.

As per custom the Hindu festival of Janmashtimi, the birthday of the Hindu deity Lord Krishna, was cele-



**"It (the Isha Yoga Intensive) is an opportunity for a person to really seek the innermost core within."**

for a person with the assistance of a master so he can look at himself like he has never looked at himself. The practices are a great support in that direction. Whatever we individually understand, unless it is substantiated by personal application, it will not become a permanent process within you. Intellectual processes will have an impact today. Tomorrow you will totally forget about it. Today you read a book and it seems to be so wonderful, life changing, but the day after tomorrow, you've forgotten about it. So, unless the intellectual dimension is reinforced with an experiential dimension, it doesn't really become a life altering process. This is an opportunity for a person to really seek the innermost core within."

Then what you are doing in terms of practices (Isha Yoga) is just to mature your energies in such a way that if you sit down you don't need to do anything. You're willing to allow whatever happens. The very fundamentals of Shonnya meditation (a powerful process of conscious non-doing taught in the Isha Intensive) are just that, you are not needed. If something truly wonderful has to happen, you are not needed. If you want small, petty things to happen to you, you can do it. But if you really want something enormous to happen to you, you are not needed. If you know how to keep yourself aside, it will hap-

pen. You can't do that; you just have to allow it. So whatever you're doing (Isha Yoga practices) is just to bring your energies to that level of stability where you can just be. Not trying to do anything, not trying to get somewhere, simply allowing it to happen.

The only thing that you need to understand is how you are bound to your limitations. So a Guru's work is to help you to untie the knots with which you are binding yourself and to show you where the knots are. If you understand this and free yourself from those bondages, where you have to go you will anyway go. If I talk about the sky, it's no use. What are the ropes that are tying you down to the earth? That is all that matters. Your business is with the ropes that are tying you down, not with the sky. If you untie these ropes, this (pointing to questioner) will anyway reach the sky. When you reach there, only then you will know what is the sky.

Sadhguru trained Isha Yoga teacher will conduct a 7-day Inner Engineering program in Toronto from October 24th to 30th. Early registration is encouraged.

**For information contact: 416 699 0951 or check online registration. To learn more about Sadhguru visit [www.ishayoga.org](http://www.ishayoga.org)**

## Shri Ram Mandir, Mississauga

Krishna Janmashtami, also known as Krishnashtami, Gokulashtami, Srikrishna Jayanti or Sree Jayanthi, is a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Krishna, the eighth avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.

Depending on planetary movements, the festival may be celebrated on different (but successive) days by different people, owing to their local or family traditions.

The pious begin the festival by



brated by thousands of devotees who visited on Monday 3rd September 2007 at Shri Ram Mandir through out the day.

Janmashtimi is one of the most auspicious festivals of all Hindus, "the birth-day of our Poorna Avtar Bhagwan Krishna". People celebrate this day by decorating their homes and temples. A special 24 hour fast is kept which is broken at mid-night. People make special sweets and food. They have religious and social gatherings where pooja (worship) is offered to Lord Krishna.

At midnight, a baby as Krishna was bathed, decorated and dressed with beautiful clothes and then placed in a basket. The head priest kept the basket on his head and carried him in a procession to the temple where he was then put in a cradle and worshipped by all the devotees present.

This festival is celebrated by all

Hindus with devotional songs marking the celebration.

May this day and onwards bring all of us greatest joy and prosperity and give us the energy and spiritual wisdom to serve our mankind and humanity, said Pandit Roopnauth Sharma Ji. Earlier Pandit Ji recited various chapters but in particular chapter 12 of Bhagawat Geeta and explained the main message of Lord Krishna in verse 13-14.

"He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, rid of "I" and "mine", balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever-contented and mentally united with Me, ny, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me- that devotee of Mine is dear to Me."

**Kanayalal Raina**





# Talk or Shoot to be Heard

"Nation, is the geo-social entity providing maximum security for the survival of a community, Nationalism, is that fundamental desire

For the assurance of a Nation Nations uniting and dividing Of their own volition, is the Expression of their urge for that assurance

Alas, as usual, this time too Our Nation lost the basis of its existence - V.I.S Jayapalan

Bathed in the glare of the media and a high-pitched war rhetoric, the military operations in the East were the visible war efforts to most of us in this country and abroad during the past few months. But simultaneously, elsewhere in the East, the government had stealthily opened up another war front away from all the publicity and fanfare. This particular battle was part of a longer term strategy than anything that had been envisaged by the security forces in the North-East. Extraordinary gazette notification was its hardware that carried ammunition in the form of legality, which was deadlier than the biggest multi barrel rocket launcher. Once ground control is consolidated, it is going to use the so called agents of development as its forces of occupation.

It is none other than the declaration of the Muttur East/ Sampur area within the Trincomalee district as a high security zone, and also as a special development zone.

On 30th May 2007 the Sri Lankan government enforced the Muttur East/Sampur high security zone of around 5000 acres of land comprising of 12 GS divisions, through an extraordinary gazette notification. "No person shall enter the area comprising the Muttur (East) / Sampur High security zone, in any boat or vessel or any other manner, or having entered, remain within or ply any boat or vessel within the Muttur (East) / Sampur High Security zone, except under the written authority of the Competent Authority. ..." said the notification. And Maj. Gen. Parakrama Pannipitiya, Commander, Security forces - East, was instituted as the competent authority. With the stroke of a pen, over 15,000 Tamil people who had occupied these areas for generations, were rendered homeless. 28 villages were lost and along with them, access to deep sea fishing, cultivable lands, and cattle grazing areas, not to speak of the local agriculture tanks, schools and hospitals. And this was done while the people were displaced in another district, having been there for over one year.

The HSZ notification is a regulation made by the President invoking section 5 of the Public Security Ordinance. This section is there to execute regulations which are temporary in nature, as deemed necessary for National security. How could the President, under this section, bring into force a regulation which could permanently take away from communities their very basis of existence? Then, one could argue that any government has the jurisdiction to designate areas for development projects. But, when this development leads to the displacement of communities from their lands of habitation, this certain right begins to tread on dubious grounds; more so if it involves the decimation of the economic, social and cultural life of any minorities, clan groups or tribes. For, in the case of such vulnerable communities, this act disrupts the 'geo-social entity' so essential for their existence. And no government shall endanger an ethnic minority, which is really tantamount to ethnic cleansing.

Tap on the shoulder of any Sri Lankan Tamil (note, ANY) to pose the question on the bona fides of this recent declaration. The answer, without any doubt, will identify it as the latest move in the long line of the col-

By Shanthi Sachithanandam

onization process carried out during the past sixty years or so by consecutive Sri Lankan governments for the dilution of the demographic constituency of the Tamils in the North-East. This list will begin with the Gal Oya scheme in the then Batticaloa district in the 1950s, afterwards continue through Kantale, Morawewa (changed from the name Mudalikulam), Gomarankadawela (changed from the name Kumaran Kadavai) and Padavisirpura (changed from the name Padaviyal Kulam) schemes, all within the Trincomalee district. On 16th April 1988 a similar extraordinary gazette notification displaced 13,288 Tamil families living in and around 42 villages, though not ancient villages as in Muttur East, in Weli Oya (changed from the name Manal Aru) in the Mullaitivu district. 9,289 Sinhala families were settled there instead, ostensibly under the Mahaweli Development Programme.



Not only development programmes, even the discovery of ancient Buddhist places of worship provided equal enough excuse to 'Sinhalyze' the area, completely denying the Tamils their own Buddhist heritage. The Seruwila colonization scheme under the Mahaweli system B project, was one such case, again within the Trincomalee district.

Connect all these schemes, and an astonishingly congruent wedge bifurcating the contiguous Tamil territory of the North-East will emerge. What a coincidence! A coincidence made possible by the strategic placement of only Sinhala officers as Government Agents and authorized land officers in Trincomalee district. Progressively, these senior posts in civil administration are being turned over to the armed forces. In Sri Lankan English parlance, "Easy No?" At present, both the Government Agent of Trincomalee and the Governor of the North and East are ex-officers of the Army and Navy respectively. It is strongly rumoured that the same fate also awaits the post of the Chief Secretary of the Eastern Provincial Council.

The Muttur East HSZ declaration, therefore, is one part of the strategy to prise the whole of Trincomalee district from the North-East Province. Why else would the authorities bother to rename the fishing village of Ilangaithurai Muhathuvaram, situated at the tip of the adjacent coast, as "Lanka Patuna"? And swiftly announce, even before the war is over and normalcy returned, that 675 sq.km of this land is to be acquired for the creation of a special development zone?

Ever since the gazette notification, the members of Parliament of the Tamil National Alliance have expressed their objections inside and outside of the Parliament. The Tamil press continues to be filled with long articles of lament by both regular columnists and other individuals. The Federation of Tamil Organizations of the Trincomalee District, the Batticaloa District Inter Religious Peace Union, the New Democratic Party, all issued statements of condemnation. The New Democratic Party

referred to the HSZ as a tactic to provide protection to the projects of the State, not for the people as claimed by the government.

The Muttur Pradeshia Sabha unanimously passed a motion denouncing the HSZ. This motion mentioned the fact that as a body, it had repeatedly appealed to President Rajapaksa, the Governor of Eastern Province, the Government Agent of Trincomalee, Minister of Resettlement Rishad Badurdeen, and the Minister of Disaster Relief Services Amir Ali, to facilitate resettlement. They also alleged that the government suddenly went back on its initial assurance of allowing resettlement once de-mining was over.

In June on the International day of the refugees, thousands of people from the Muttur East region now displaced in Batticaloa district, staged a silent march through the main town of Batticaloa carrying placards which stated in particular that they will not settle anywhere other than in their

own villages. They handed over a signed petition to the district representative of the UNHCR. On the 25th July, total Hartal was observed in the North-East despite the intimidation by the Military, STF and the renegade Tamil groups.

Thus, the totality of the Tamil Nation now in turmoil, the government in the guise of Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake chose to respond. The Prime Minister categorically stated in Parliament that this notification will never be revoked. He might also have wanted to humour those present. "Even Katunayake and Kolonnawa are declared as HSZs. People continue to live there. The government has not violated their land rights.." he said indignantly. Surely, he must know that HSZs in the North-East mean total expulsion? Are people from Katunayake and Kolonnawa languishing in refugee camps, sometimes for over 15 years, like those in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Trincomalee districts as a result of HSZs? That is why we thought that he was cracking a joke.

But then we have heard these jokes many times before. When the Sinhala Only Bill was brought before the Parliament, when the whole house debated on the colonization schemes in the North-East, when all the Tamil parties staged a walkout in protest of the proposals for the 1972 constitution, when the 6th Amendment was passed rendering the Tamil parties illegal, we heard them over and over again. Every time, armed with political power and backed by the judiciary, they rode rough shod over Tamil opinion and bulldozed through with their own project, joking all the way. Perhaps this was the reason for Prabhakaran to conclude that not voices but the frequency of a gunshot was all that the Sinhala South could hear.

Muttur East people demand that their existence is ensured through the assurance of the continuance of their geo-social entity. How can they make themselves heard? Are their voices sufficient, or should they resort to Guns? Do please tell them!

[Courtesy: Montage]

# Time is precious

- Justice Marsoof -



Excerpts from an address delivered by Judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Saleem Marsoof at the Islamic Day held at Zahira College, Colombo, Sri Lanka:

In Sura Al Asr, Allah swears by the token of time, which is so precious that it is a crime to waste it. Every day, nay every minute, of our school life is precious, and unless we add value to it by maximising its use we will be at a loss.

Ibnu Sina, one of the most learned men the Islamic world has ever produced, was an illustrious practitioner of time management. By the age of 10, Ibnu Sina memorised the Holy Qur'an and went on to study medicine. By the age of 16, he had mastered the study of medicine, but he had simultaneously studied philosophy, and by the age of 21, Ibnu Sina had become accomplished in all branches of formal learning, and started to serve as a jurist, physician, doctor and administrator.

Coming back to Sura Al Asr, where Allah swears by the token of time, to say that: Innal Insana Lafi khusr "Verily, man is in loss", Illallahina amanu wa amilussalihathi wathawasaw bilhakki wathawasaw bissabr, "Except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and join together in mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and consistency." So, if we do not have strong iman, if we do not perform salah on time, if we do not fast during the month of Ramadhan, if we do not give zakath, if those of us who are able do not perform hadj, and generally if we do not practice thakwa or piety, we are definitely at a loss, and we will regret in our later life and hereafter.

Our Holy Prophet, practiced time management so effectively that while he was busy leading his ummah from the front, so to speak, from a suppressed minority in Mecca to a powerful nation, he had time not only to perform the 17 compulsory rakaths per day, but he actually performed about 60 rakaths per day. As you know, salah helps us to keep our body fit and the mind clean, teaches us punctuality, puts into practice notions of equality and brotherhood, makes us remember our creator five times a day, and keeps us away from all sin and helps us to meditate and gain peace of mind, so necessary to keep us in the straight path.

Indeed, it was the need to preserve the Islamic way of life and maintain Islamic values, which brought Zahira College into existence more than a century ago. Zahira really blossomed during what has been



described as its 'golden era' under Marhoom Dr. T.B. Jayah, Marhoom Senator A.M.A. Azeez, and Marhoom Shafie Marikar. Not only did Zahira become the premier educational institution of the Muslims of Sri Lanka but it was one of the best schools in Sri Lanka. Inspired by this success Zahira Colleges were established in not only Gampola, Aluthgama, Slave Island and Matale but practically in every nook and corner of Sri Lanka.

It is unfortunate that after this golden era, Zahira had a long period of turmoil, but we are now in the wake of a great reawakening, what the present Chairman of the Board of Governors, Al Haj Fouzul Hameed calls the "Renaissance of Zahira." The Group of 60 is in the process of procuring a vehicle for our teams to travel for their matches.

Apart from the properties in Maradana itself, there are two other properties, one in Maharagama and the other in Sagara Road, Bambalapitiya which could be developed as branch schools or as source of income for the college, which unless we do something now may be taken over by squatters or unscrupulous persons and will be lost to Zahira forever.

So, there is a great deal more that can be done, not only by the Board of Governors and the constituent bodies such as the Trustees of the Maradana Mosque, the Welfare Association, the Parent Teachers Association and the Old Boys Association and various groups such as the Group of 60 and the Group of 80 but by every one of you present here today whether as a teacher, a parent, or a student. We can rally around the college successfully only if we act in unison and not in confrontation, and if all concerned follow Islamic values and practice thakwa and fear Allah the Almighty.

Islam places a great deal of emphasis on education. Nurtured in the Islamic spirit, every one of us too should be willing to face any challenge to develop Zahira to be the best school of all.

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# Tamil Speaking Aid Workers becoming an Endangered Species in Sri Lanka

By D.B.S. Jeyaraj

"There is a concern...about the safety of humanitarian workers themselves and the record here is one of the worst in the world from that point of view," John Holmes, UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, told Reuters in an interview late on Wednesday during a visit to Sri Lanka..."Democratically elected governments are judged by higher standards than other people, so they need to address these concerns, they need to look into them, they need to investigate allegations that are made..."It would be good for Sri Lanka's international image that there is that kind of monitoring to demonstrate, which the government say, they have nothing to hide in this area," Holmes said.

**Excerpts from Reuters news story filed by Simon Gardner on Aug 8 th 2007**

It was the morning of Monday August 20th 2007. Two Tamil youths were going along Kasthuriar road in the heart of Jaffna town on a motor cycle. Both of them were members of the field staff at the Danish Demining Group, a respected Non-governmental organization doing yeoman service in mine-clearing in the North.



Sir John Holmes

31 year old Sivaswamy Sreetharan, a native of Puliyanakoodal in the off-shore Island of Velanai was the rider. Seated on the pillion was 26 year old S. Vijayenthiran a colleague and friend. A motor-cycle with two helmet clad youths that was following the demining aid workers suddenly sped up. The person on the pillion sprayed gunfire on the deminer duo.

Sreetharan was killed on the spot. Vijayenthiran was seriously wounded and admitted to the Intensive care unit at Jaffna Hospital. The assassins had vanished. Despite the close proximity of the high security zone and the vicinity being saturated with sentry posts the killers were not even stopped let alone being apprehended.

The Danish Demining Group which functions under the purview of the Danish Refugee Council suspended its demining activity in Jaffna. Steen Wetlesen, the DDG's Country manager also issued a brief statement "Danish Demining Group in Sri Lanka deeply regrets to announce

that a member of its Jaffna Field staff was tragically shot dead this morning, the 20 th August, whilst on his way to work, by unknown gunmen. In the same incident another DDG staff member was also wounded.

All DDG staff are deeply shocked by this terrible incident and DDG, Jaffna has immediately suspended all Demining activities to evaluate the security situation and safety of its staff.

We know that all DDG staff and the whole aid community would want to pass on their deepest sympathies to the family of the killed staff member and are hoping for the speedy recovery of the wounded staff member"

Two days later on Wednesday Aug 22nd a 25 year old youth from Kaithady in the Thenmaratchy sector presented himself at the Human Rights Organization office at Jaffna. He was also an employee at the Danish NGO and a close friend of Sreetharan. Fearing danger to his life the youth surrendered himself to the HRO seeking protection and safety.

The incident turned the spotlight once again on the plight of an endangered species in Sri Lanka - the "Tamil" humanitarian aid worker. The daylight murder at Kasthuriar rd was not the first of its kind. It certainly wont be the last either if recent events are any indication.

It was only on Aug 8th that Sir John Holmes, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs told Simon Gardner of Reuters that there was "concern about the safety of humanitarian workers themselves" and that the record here in Sri Lanka "is one of the worst in the world from that point of view."

All hell broke loose as the Rajapakse regime began its vilification campaign against Holmes. Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayake referred to Holmes as a "Yakka" (devil). Prime ministerial aspirant Jeyaraj Fernandopulle called Holmes a "terrorist bribed by the LTTE".

While these "gentlemen" played to the majoritarian "gallery" two other ministers were engaged in - what is now a familiar scenario - damage control. Rohitha Bogollagama disassociated the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) from the statements made. Mahinda Samarasinghe wrote conciliatory letters seeking to pacify the UN official.

Yet within days of this attempt at damage-control the murderous minions of state terrorism have been at it again. One Humanitarian aid worker is killed and another injured while the Danish Demining Group suspends work to evaluate the security conditions and safety of its staff.

After Mahinda Rajapakse became

president and an undeclared war began, the targeting of certain Tamils became part of the state's avowed counter-terrorist strategy. The dogs of war were unleashed.

This practice continues and the recent Kasthuriar rd killing is just one more instance. That such incidents could be perpetrated just 12 days after Sir John's outspoken criticism shows how little this regime cares for International opinion.

State terrorism is now entrenched and the recent incident is but one way of telling the UN and the International Community "Palayang bung yanda".

An important reason for the venomous anger against Sir John is due to the fact that the UN official placed the targeting of NGO workers in a different perspective.

Instead of viewing the incidents as being done to "Tamils" he looked at the victims as humanitarian aid workers. This altered things drastically and had maximum impact. Hence the unbridled resentment.

The single biggest incident of this type that drew international attention was the killing of 17 aid workers in Moothoor on August 4th last year. It is widely believed that they were killed by army commandoes. The GOSL has vehemently denied this but the clumsy attempts to delay and thwart justice has exposed the truth.

This incident however occurred during a period of intense conflict. There are some who feel that this happened in a tense situation where the LTTE had dominated the place first and the security forces had wrested it back.

This columnist does not subscribe to this view and feels that the "heat of the battle" excuse does not apply here. The brutal massacre was very clearly a cold-blooded, cowardly killing of unarmed innocents by personnel claiming to be "elite" soldiers. It the current war is deemed "legal" it was a war crime. If not it is a crime against humanity

What is of significance here is that a certain pattern exists in this targeting of Tamil humanitarian workers or those connected to aid projects. In most cases the workers were abducted. Some went missing while others were executed ruthlessly after being tortured. Some have also been killed in cold blood. NGOs like the DDG have been targeted earlier also.

The LTTE has victimised some. The Karuna faction is responsible for some incidents. The EPDP, home guards and para-militaries are also responsible for some acts. The security forces have been implicated in some incidents.

Some of these incidents were reported in these columns earlier. Let me refer to them as far as possible in chronological order.

On January 11th in 2006 two brothers - in-law left their home Odaikkarai lane in Point Pedro at about 5.30 am and proceeded on their motor cycles to work. Narayanamoorthy Kandeepan and his sister's husband Thambiah Tharmasiri were employed by the Danish demining group and were then engaged in mine-clearing at Kuppilan. They were abducted by EPDP operatives at a spot about 150 metres away from the 52-4 brigade army camp.

Then came the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) abduction incidents of Jan 29th and 30th. The London based Amnesty International in one of its conspicuously infrequent releases on Sri Lanka issued an appeal nearly six weeks later in March.



**A girl with the photo of her sister, slain in an August 2006 attack on the French aid organization Action Centre Faim in Mutur. Seventeen mostly ethnic Tamil employees were forced to lie face down on the ground and were shot dead - Pic: J. Adam Huggins for NYTimes.com**

The AI also noted that the "TRO is seen as being closely affiliated with the LTTE", but pointed out that the TRO "is a legally registered Sri Lankan charity and its mission is to provide much needed relief, rehabilitation and development for the people of the northeast of Sri Lanka".

On Jan 29th 2006 a TRO vehicle with two males and three females were hijacked by armed men in a white hi-ace van on the Polonnaruwa road close to an army check point in Welikande.

They were on their way from Batticaloa to the TRO headquarters at Kilinochchi. Two females were released the following day and the third a few days later. The two males were reported missing.

On the next day (Jan 30th) 15 TRO employees were travelling in a vehicle from Batticaloa to Vavuniya to attend a training workshop. The vehicle plying on the Polonnaruwa road was hijacked at almost the same spot as the previous vehicle. 10 of the occupants were released but another five comprising four males and one female were taken captive.

Several appeals were issued for the release of the missing TRO employees. The Police did not evince any interest in tracing them and began harassing those eye-witnesses who complained about the incident.

Since the TRO was perceived as an arm of the LTTE the abductions did not receive the attention it deserved. A theory was also floated that the abductions were stage-managed by the LTTE for its own purposes.

After one year it was the sad lot of this writer to uncover and expose in these columns what had happened to these seven TRO employees. They had been abducted by members of the Karuna faction on the orders of senior leader Pillaiyan. All six men had been tortured and killed.

The woman had been gang-raped and murdered. TRO officials from Kilinochchi contacted this writer after the article appeared, confirmed details and closed their files on the incident.

Those killed in this horrible manner were TRO director Kasinathar Ganeshalingam, vehicle driver Kathirkamar Thangarasa, Chief Accountant Thanuskody Premini and four accountants Shanmuganathan Sujendram, Thambiraja Vasantharajan, Kailayapillai Ravindran and Arunesarasa Sathessharan.

The Halo Trust in Jaffna is a non-governmental organization engaged in mine clearing. A large number of youths were recruited during the ceasefire to do this type of work. The LTTE played a dominant role in selecting recruits. Since the mine clearance

was basically in areas adjacent to the Palaly high security zone Halo Trust activity was looked upon suspiciously by the security forces.

The Halo Trust in Jaffna is a non-governmental organization engaged in mine clearing. Since the mine clearance was basically in areas adjacent to the Palaly high security zone Halo Trust activity was looked upon suspiciously by the security forces.

On Feb 4th 2006 a 23 year old Halo Trust employee, Gunaratnam Logithas left his home in Kaithady at night and proceeded on his motor cycle towards Chavakachcheri town. He was never seen again and presumed abducted at Nunavil along the Kandy road. Logithas is one among the innumerable "disappeared" now.

On April 10th 2006 an army truck was going along the A-9 highway in the Thenmaratchy area. It was Monday afternoon. A vehicle belonging to the NGO Human Development Centre (HUDEC) was following the truck. At one point in Mirusuvil the HUDEC vehicle tried to overtake the army truck. At that stage a claymore mine attached to a lamp post was triggered off by the LTTE. The tigers were targeting the army truck but both vehicles were hit.

Five soldiers were killed and two injured. Two Hudec employees were killed and another two staffers injured. Those killed were Pathmanathan Shanmugaratnam (55) and Selvendra Pradeepkumar (29). The injured HUDEC personnel admitted to Chavakachcheri hospital were Mayilvaganam Thatparanathan (48) and Ajanthan Mariyarasu (28).

The HUDEC is the social arm of the Catholic Church of Jaffna, which networks at Parish level across the Jaffna Peninsula and the Wannu working with the disadvantaged for the alleviation of poverty, ignorance and social oppression.

On May 26th 2006 an irrigation engineer Ratnam Ratnarajah (48) was killed in the east. Ratnarajah was the deputy director of irrigation in Batticaloa. He was also the deputy project director of the North East Irrigated Agricultural Project (NEIAP) which receives world bank assistance. Ratnarajah hailing from Natpiddimunai in the Kalmunai area was staying at Kalviyankadu in the B'caloa municipality area.

Ratnarajah was shot near his residence at about 2.15 pm in broad daylight. He was returning home after an irrigation related meeting. It is widely believed that the efficient and upright official was killed by Karuna faction cadres. Earlier he had been threatened with death by the Karuna group's Markan who wanted two of his relatives appointed as office clerks at the NEIAP office. Ratnarajah had



**Deminer in Thalaiyady, Vadamarachchi East - Pic: Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai**



refused and apparently paid the price for such defiance.

The TRO became a target again in the east on July 2nd in 2006. Krishnapillai Kamalanathan a child protection officer at the TRO office in Vaakarai was travelling on his motor cycle to Batticaloa town. He was abducted at 10. 30 am by cadres of the Karuna faction at Vaalaichenai. He was never seen again.

July 8th 2006 saw the discovery of a body in Poligandi in the Vadamaratchy area. The body was that of a 42 year old man named Rasiah Muraleswaran and bore injuries caused by severe assault. Muraleswaran , a native of Meesalai East was a resident mason at the Nilavan Kudiyiruppu Housing scheme funded by FORUT.

He had earlier worked on an LTTE supervised housing scheme. It was also reported that another construction worker at the site called "Rajini" a 26 year old native of Pukudutheevu had gone missing.

August 4th in 2006 saw the single biggest massacre of aid workers. This well - known incident happened at Moothoor in the Trincomalee district. Fighting had ensued between the security forces and the LTTE after the tigers closed sluice gates at Maavilaaru. The LTTE in a sudden raid had taken control of Moothoor town for a few days. The security forces launched counter attacks and regained their hold.

Casualty figures in the fighting were difficult to arrive at but one incident that shocked the civilised world was the massacre of 17 aid workers. The victims comprised 15 males and 4 females. 16 were Tamils and one a Muslim. They were attached to the France based Action Contre La Faim (ACF) or Action against Hunger..THE ACF was set up in 1979 to combat global hunger. It had projects running in Sri Lanka from 1997.

The victims were mainly ACF employees from Trincomalee town who had come to the Moothoor branch office and were unable to return as conflict escalated. Fifteen of the victims were found inside office premises while two bodies were outside in a vehicle. They had all been shot dead at point blank range. One of the victims Kavitha was the daughter of another victim Ganesh.The names and designations of the innocent victims are -

1. Mr. P. Anandarajah (Assistant Promotion Manager)
2. Mr. M. Ketheeswaran (Supervisor)
3. Mr. G. Sreetharan (Advanced Field-Officer)
4. Mr. Narmathan (Field officer)
5. Mr. R. Arulraj (Field officer)
6. Mr. P.Pratheeban (Field officer)
7. Mr. M. Rishikeshan (Field officer)
8. Mr. Y Kodeeswaran (Field officer)
9. Ms. K.Kovarthani (Hygiene Promotion Officer)
10. Ms. S.Romila (Hygiene Promotion Officer)
11. Ms. V.Kokilavathani (Hygiene Promotion Officer)
12. Ms. G. Kavitha (Hygiene Promotion Officer)
13. Mr. S. Ganesh (, Driver)
14. Mr. K. Koneshwaran (Driver)
15. Mr. S.Muraleetharan (Driver)
16. Mr. A.L. Mohamed Jauffer (minor staff)
17. Mr. A. Jaseelan (minor staff)

The prevalent belief was that personnel from the army special forces who played a major role in driving the LTTE away were responsible for this cold - blooded massacre of innocents.The GOSL of course denied it vehemently.

Interestingly the GOSL that initially denied the LTTE was in control of Moothoor at any time changed its tale after the bodies were discovered. It was now said that the LTTE was responsible for the killings as the army was not present at the time of the massacre. The army came in only later it was said.

The GOSL also made many clumsy attempts to obstruct justice. The



Homage to TRO workers on troonline.org

Moothoor magistrate was transferred out and the Anuradhapura magistrate brought in. The local JMO was also disallowed to conduct a post - mortem.Family members of the victims were terrorised..The matter was also put in cold storage on the pretext that it would be probed by a special Commission of inquiry under the scrutiny of a body of eminent persons.

The manner in which the inquiry into the Moothoor massacre is being handled by the state has come under severe criticism from several agencies including the ICJ, HRW, SLMM etc. It became increasingly obvious that the regime was not cooperating in a genuine search for justice and was acting like some one trying to conceal the truth.

The ACF's Director - General Francois Danel summed up the feelings of the International Community when he told the European Parliament on June 5th " As humanitarian aid workers, we have to remind all those involved in the conflict, the principles on which our action is based: impartiality, neutrality and independence. Today, I sincerely want the culprits and those responsible for this outrageous massacre - whoever and wherever they are - to be identified. Impunity would only increase our indignation".

August 24th 2006 saw another killing in the East. 20 year old Julian Jestley a native of Komari in the Amparai district was an employee of the UN agency UNOPS office at Thambiluvil. Armed men on motor cycles came to his office at about 9 am and took him away at gun point. His bullet ridden body was found later at Munaiyoorukulam near Thambiluvil. It is believed that the LTTE was responsible for the killing . The cause for killing is unclear.

The next killing of an NGO worker was in Trincomalee. The Seattle - based World Concern Development Organisation was active in the district after the Tsunami of 2004. It was involved in providing relief and rehanilitation to the Tsunami affected and also emergency assistance to displaced persons. Ragnathan Ramalingam was a field worker with World Concern from 2005.

The father of five was returning to the world concern office after having lunch at home on September 12 th 2006. His last child was born only a week old. He was riding his motor cycle when unknown armed men shot him. The assassins are suspected of

being Sinhala home guards."The motive for the killing is not clear" said Rhonda Manville, a spokeswoman for World Concern told the media then..

The Jaffna based de - mining organization Halo Trust became a target again on November 15th 2006 .Charles Hudson Ravindran (30) a married employee of Halo Trust was with his family in his house on Old Park road Chundikuli. His house was only 500 metres away from the Halo Trust head office also on Nalloor cross road..A white van drew up at about 11. 00 am and armed men suspected of belonging to the EPDP barged in. Ravindran was taken away at gun point and never seen again.

The targetting of Halo Trust employees continued after the new 2007 year dawned also. 29 year old Subramaniam Parameswaran a de - miner at Halo Trust was a resident of Rakka road in Jaffna town. He was at home on Jan 4th 2007 with wife and children when a white van arrived and armed men jumped out. They held guns to the wife and children while forcibly dragging Parameswaran away. He was never seen again. The abductors are said to be EPDP operatives.

The Halo Trust was again targeted on Tuesday Jan 9th 2007. 36 year old C. Rajendran was a vehicle driver attached to Halo Trust. He left his home on Kilner rd in Nallur with his son. It was routine for him to drop the son at school and go to work.. On that fateful day he dropped his child as usual but failed to turn up at office. He simply went "missing". Nothing has been heard since and the victim has become one more statistic in the ranks of the disappeared.

Once again a Halo Trust employee went missing exactly a month after Rajendran. did. 27 year old Nagarasa Narenthiran of Temple road left home as usual for work on the Morning of February 9th 2007. He never reached the Halo trust head office on Nalloor cross road. His distraught wife Sarojini complained to the HRC but the man is missing still while the disappeared persons total increased once more.

The TRO was in the news again on March 24th 2007 A TRO vehicle was the target of a claymore mine at Periyamadhu in Mannar district which is an LTTE controlled area . The explosion that occurred at about 12.30 pm killed one and injured three other TRO employees.The deceased victim was 30 year old Muthurajah Aruleswaran from Poonagari. This father of a year old child was an emergency assis-

tance worker and driving the vehicle when the incident took place.

The three injured TRO personnel were the Assistant Executive Director , Vadivel Ramachandran (38),International planning director, Seenithamby Parameswaran (41) and Selvarajah Nixon (37) the head of the TRO's Akkarayan development unit. The TRO people were returning after visiting a displaced persons camp . The Army's deep penetration Unit (DPU) was accused of the claymore mine attack inside tiger territory.

The next Humanitarian worker victims were from the high profile Red Cross organization.The shocking incident did not take place in the North or East but in Colombo.

Two Tamil workers of Sri Lanka Red Cross from the east, Sinnarajah Shanmuganathan, 38, and Karthigesu Chandramohan, 28, who had come to Colombo for a training program in Tsunami work were abducted by men in civils claiming to be from the Police.

This happened on Friday June 1st 2007..Subsequently their bodies were found on Sunday June 3rd at Kiriella in the Ratnapura district..

Head of Sri Lanka Red Cross in Batticaloa, Mr Vasantharajah told the media then that the the two were part of a group of six aid workers sent from Batticaloa who had come to Colombo for a training programme related to tsunami relief work on the 30th of May ..

After completing the training program the group had gone to the Fort Railway station at 6:30 p.m. on Friday to take the 7:15 p.m. train to Batticaloa. A group of unknown Sinhala speaking men had examined the Identity cards and had taken Shanmuganathan and Chandramohan to a white van for "questioning."

The leader of the aid workers group had told the Sinhala speaking men that the two did not know Sinhala and that he could help in the questioning, but the men declined the offer, the leader of the group said. One of the group was smart enough to note the number of one of two vehicles involved in the incident. The other was unmarked.

Though the number was noted no action was taken. Media reports stated that the vehicle belonged to the Karuna faction. But no concrete action was taken. Subsequently UNP Parliamentarian Lakshman Seneviratne exposed the sordid details about how Tamils were being abducted.He provided specific details about the Red Cross abductions and divulged details of the masterminds behind it.

Recently the Police has issued a reward for a person belonging to the Karuna group said to be responsible for the killings. But the popular belief is that the Wanted person is a fictitious name publicised to distract attention from the perpetrators who are allegedly linked to the armed forces.

One of the victims Shanmuganathan joined the Red Cross in 1997 and was from Vi'laavettaan in Vavunatheevu. His address at the time of death was 141/5 St . Sebastian Road Batticaloa. The other victim Chandramohan had been working with Red Cross from 1999. He was from Ka'luwankerni and was living at 1/1 Main Road Batticaloa when killed.

The Red Cross murders like the ACF massacre aroused widespread condemnation and indignation internationally. This however failed to make any solid impact on the Rajapakse regime as the IC for some inexplicable reason is reluctant to chastise Colombo by deed. Mere words are not of any consequence to a regime that is not shamed by any feeling of "lajja".

June 19th 2007 saw another abduction of a NGO worker. This time the target was the Danish de - mining group also referred to as the Danish Humanitarian De - mining organization that is funded by the Denmark Government. 20 year old Sivarasa Vimalarasa a native of Mayliankaadu in Kuppilan was going to work in the

morning on his motor cycle when "unknown armed men seized him in Kuppilan itself.

The incident took place in front of several witnesses.Kuppilan is within close proximity to the Palaly high security zone. The De - mining group officials registered complaints with several institutions and also made representations to defence authorities in Colombo. But the man is missing still while the Danish group became a target again and again.

A month later on July 23rd 2007 a 26 year old man named Arumainayagam Aloysius from Chillalai South was shot dead at Anaikottai at about 8.30 am in the morning. Aloysius was a field officer with the Danish de - mining group that came under the purview of the Danish Refugee Council.

Aloysius was on his way to work when he was waylaid and shot. He had earlier been working at Halo Trust but had joined the Danish organization after Halo Trust discontinued employment for Aloysius and 16 others. The victim had been married for only ten months and his wife was pregnant.

The next humanitarian worker victim was a Tamil speaking Muslim from Trincomalee. Mohammed Zahir Mohammed Rizwi was attached to the United Methodist Community Organization for Refugees (UMCOR) an International Non - Governmental Organization. He was at the UMCOR office on Arunagiru road when "unidentified " persons abducted him. Rizwi's father has lodged a complaint with the Trinco Police but details of the background to the abduction are still hazy.

And then came the Aug 20th killing of one De - mining group worker and the wounding of another. The DDG is engaged in evaluating the security situation for its employees.

It is indeed time to evaluate the security and safety of all NGO workers in the North - East and not only the DDG. . The targeting of HGO humanitarian aid workers in the North - East has been going on for nearly two years.

The fact that such an evaluation has not been done before and that NGO workers have been rendered vulnerable for so long does not reflect creditably on the NGO "big shots" themselves

One reason for this lack of adequate concern may be due to the fact that all the NGO worker victims have been Tamils except for two Tamil speaking Muslims from the East.. If the victims were from the Sinhala community or foreigners the responses may have been different.

The unpleasant reality in Sri Lanka today is that Tamils can be targeted easily with little fear of repercussions or retribution. A climate of impunity prevails in this respect.

Sir John Holmes sees the victims as humanitarian workers. This is true but the larger reality is that they are victims because they are Tamils.

The NGO's themselves arouse resentment among majoritarian hawks because they are doing much service in the North and East. They are hated because they are seen as helping Tamils.

If the reality is that of people being targetted because they are humanitarian aid workers then why is it that the victims so far are Tamils and Tamil speaking Muslims alone? How is it that Sinhala or foreign aid workers are not being targets?

It may be that Tamils are targetted because they are the "weak" link in NGO's and could also be scapegoated as tigers. So messages are being sent to the NGO's by victimising Tamil NGO employees.

If this is true then the NGO big-wigs in particular and the International community in general can be deemed guilty of collaboration in a crime against a vulnerable section of humanity.

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# Ramadan and Fasting

Compiled by Sameem  
Mohamed, BASC, P. Eng. Realtor

## Ramadan

Almighty Allah says, (Your Lord does create and choose as He pleases ...) (Al-Qasas 28: 68)

Allah is the Creator of everything visible and invisible. Everything in the heaven and earth belongs to Him and serves Him. Allah is also the Creator of time and space. As Allah chose some persons to be His Prophets and Messengers, and as He chose some places to become the sacred spots on this earth, similarly He also chose some time to become the sacred time. The sacred personalities teach us about Allah, His will, His rules and commands. The sacred places and times remind us about Allah's special favors and blessings. In Islam we worship only Allah. We neither worship any person other than Allah, not any space or time. But certain spaces and times inspire us and motivate us to do good things. One of those important and sacred moments for us is Ramadan. It is a special month and a special time. Allah says in the Qur'an:

(The month of Ramadan is that in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, with clear signs for guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful. When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed quite near: I listen and answer the call of every caller when he calls Me. Let them listen to My call, and believe in Me; so that they may be guided aright.) (Al-Baqarah 2: 185-186)

The blessed month of Ramadan is a great time and a beautiful time as well. We thank Allah that He is giving us another occasion to witness this blessed time in our life. May He help us to benefit from this season of virtues and blessings and may He grant us His love, mercy and forgiveness now and forever. Ameen.

Ramadan is a great month. This is the month of the Qur'an, and in this month is the Night of Qadr, which is better than one thousand months. Allah chose this month and a particular night in this month to grace humanity with His Final Testament, His Last Message, the Qur'an. The moment of this revelation became a sacred moment, and that time and month became an eternal time for us. Allah chose this time, and He has filled it with His countless blessings. In this month we have a greater urge and desire to do good deeds. This month becomes the month of virtues and blessings for us. This is the month about which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"When the first night of Ramadan comes, the devils and rebellious jinns are put in chains and the doors of hell are closed, none of them remains open. The doors of heaven are open and none of them remains closed. And a caller calls, 'O seeker of goodness, come forward, and O seeker of evil, desist. And Allah has many (in this month) who will be freed from Hell.' This announcement is made every night." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 618)

Ramadan is meant for our moral and spiritual training and for the purification of our bodies, minds and souls. This is an annual training program for all believers. It is a special time to get closer to Allah and to seek His blessings and bounties. It is a time to learn taqwa (God-fearing), piety, self-discipline and patience. It is a time to give more charity and become

more generous. It is a time to seek Allah's forgiveness and to forgive each other. It is a time to be thankful to Allah for His gifts and bounties and especially His gift of iman.

I urge you, my brothers and sisters, do not miss any day of fasting and do not miss any moment of the blessed month of Ramadan. This is a very precious time and Allah will give us many benefits if we use it in the proper way.

Let us keep the following things in our mind when we observe this month:

1. Intention: Remind yourself again and again that you are fasting in obedience to Allah. Be sincere in your intention. You want Allah to accept your fasting. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whosoever fasts in Ramadan with faith and seeking Allah's reward, all his past sins are forgiven." (Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 37)

2. Sunnah: Observe the Sunnah in fasting. Take the suhur meal a little before dawn and end your fast at sunset. As much as you can, try to fast as much like the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) fasted. There was no prayer better than his prayer and no fast better than his fast. Try to follow his way of fasting. That is the most acceptable way of fasting to Allah.

3. Wara' (Avoiding everything haram or makruh): Keep your body and mind very clean. Fasting is not just avoiding food and drink. Fasting is to learn how to avoid bad words and bad deeds. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whosoever does not leave bad words and bad actions, Allah does not care if he leaves his food and drink." (Al-Tirmidhi 641)

4. Qur'an: Fasting and revelation are inter-connected. Prophet Musa (Moses) fasted when he received the Torah. Prophet `Isa (Jesus) fasted when he received the Gospel. Prophet Muhammad fasted when he received the first message of the Qur'an. Let us do the same thing. You must fast and spend more time with the Qur'an. Read the Qur'an every day. Try to finish at least one time the whole Qur'an during this month by your own personal reading.

5. Prayer or Salah, Du'a' and Dhikr: Pray on time and observe all the prayers. Do not ignore the Tarawih or Ramadan night prayers. Make more extra and voluntary prayers. Do as much worship as you can. Do more dhikr (remembering Allah) and du'a' (supplication) for yourself and for others. Repent and seek forgiveness for yourself and for others as much as you can. This is the best time for devotion and seeking Allah's forgiveness. Seek the Night of Qadr by special devotion during the last ten nights of this month.

6. Zakah, Sadaqah and Generosity: Ramadan generates the spirit of giving and sacrifice. When we deprive ourselves of food and drink we understand and realize well what it means to be hungry and thirsty. We realize the pain of those who cannot find the basic necessities of life. Be very charitable and generous. Give more to help the poor and needy. Contribute generously to useful social and community projects.

7. Family: Goodness must begin at home. Be very good to your family, immediate family and the extended family. Spend more time and quality time with your family members. Try to have suhur (pre-dawn meal) together. Break your fast together and pray together as much as you can. Do this more at this time. Ramadan should bring you closer to each other. Allah's special mercy comes on the families that are united, harmonious and peaceful.

8. Good Conduct: Fasting should transform you and should make you a different person. Try to be extra kind



and courteous during this month. Forget your quarrels and disputes. Reconcile and forgive. Do not get involved in backbiting, lying, cheating and anything that is wrong. Be very good to Muslims and to all human beings. Be good to your friends and neighbors. Let your non-Muslim neighbors and co-workers know that this is your blessed and sacred time.

9. Tafakkur (reflection): Think, reflect and plan to improve the moral and spiritual condition of your own self and your family. Think about any wrong things and sins you might be doing and decide to correct yourself. Think about any deficiencies you have in your Islamic observances. Plan to change yourself. Think what you can do for the Ummah and for humanity to make this world a better place for everyone. Think about the life after death and the Day of Judgment.

10. Be cheerful and happy: Ramadan is not a time of mourning or sadness. It is a time of thankfulness to Allah. In a Hadith it is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When you fast, anoint yourself. Let not the signs of fast be seen on you." (Al-Bukhari, Al-Adab al-Mufrad) Do not feel tired and miserable. Feel alert and relax. Take things easy. This time is for your own good. Give the greetings of Ramadan to each other and enjoy this beautiful time.

It is reported in a Hadith that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave a sermon about Ramadan to a gathering that met towards the end of Sha'ban. He said:

"O People, a great and a blessed month is approaching you. In this month, there is a night that is better than one thousand months. Allah has made fasting obligatory and prayers at night commendable during this month. Whosoever will do a voluntary good deed during this month, it is as if he performed an obligatory good deed at another time and whosoever will perform an obligatory good deed, it is as if he performed seventy obligatory good deeds at another time. This is the month of patience and the reward of patience is Paradise. This is the month of kindness. In this month the believer's provision is increased. Whosoever will give food to a fasting person in this month, it will bring forgiveness for his sins, will save him from the hellfire and he shall have his reward while the fasting person will not lose any of his reward." (As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr al-Manthur)

## Fasting

### 1. What is Fasting?

Fasting is called sawm in the Qur'an. The word sawm literally means "to abstain". In Surat Maryam, Allah tells us about Mary the mother of Jesus that she said, (I have vowed a fast (sawm) for the sake of the Merciful, so today I shall not speak to anyone.) (Maryam 19: 26) The meaning is "I have vowed to abstain from speaking to anyone today". According to Shari'ah, the word (sawm means to abstain from all those things that are forbidden during fasting from the break of dawn to the sunset, and to do this with the intention of fasting.

### 2. Purpose of Fasting

The Qur'an says: (O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who were before you, in order that you may learn taqwa.) (al-Baqarah 2: 183)

Taqwa is a very important spiritual and ethical term of the Qur'an. It is the sum total of all Islamic spirituality and ethics. It is a quality in a believer's life that keeps him/her aware of Allah all the time. A person who has taqwa loves to do good and to avoid evil for the sake of Allah. Taqwa is piety, righteousness and consciousness of Allah. Taqwa requires patience and perseverance. Fasting teaches patience, and with patience one can rise to the high position of taqwa.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said that fasting is a shield. It protects a person from sin and lustful desires. When the disciples of Jesus asked him how to cast the evil spirits away, he is reported to have said, "But this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting." (Matthew 17:21). According to Imam al-Ghazali (d. 1111 C.E.), fasting produces a semblance of divine quality of samadiyyah (freedom from want) in a human being. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 1350 C.E.), viewed fasting as a means of releasing the human spirit from the clutches of desire, thus allowing moderation to prevail in the carnal self. Imam Shah Waliullah Dahlawi (d. 1762 C.E.) viewed fasting as a means of weakening the bestial and reinforcing the angelic elements in human beings. Maulana Mawdudi (d. 1979 C.E.) emphasized that fasting for a full month every year trains a person individually and the Muslim community as a whole, in piety and self restraint.

### 3. Fasting is obligatory

In the second year of Hijrah, Muslims were commanded to fast in the month of Ramadan every year. The Qur'an says, (O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those who were before you, in order that you may learn taqwa (piety).) (al-Baqarah 2: 183) Further Allah says, (The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Qur'an, wherein is guidance for mankind and the clear signs of guidance and distinction. Thus whosoever among you witness the month must fast....) (al-Baqarah 2: 185)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) explained this further in a number of his statements reported in the books of Hadith. It is reported by Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim on the authority of Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah said, "Islam is built upon five pillars: testifying that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing Prayer, paying the Zakah, making the pilgrimage to the Sacred House (Hajj), and fasting the month of Ramadan."

The Muslim Ummah is unanimous that fasting in the month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every person who is capable (mukallaf).

### 4. Rules about Fasting:

#### A) Who must fast?

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who is adult (i.e. has reached puberty) and sane and who is not sick or on a journey.

Sickness could be a temporary sickness from which a person expects to be cured soon. Such a person is allowed not to fast during the days of his/her sickness, but he/she must fast later after Ramadan to complete the missed days. Those who are sick with incurable illness and expect no better health, such people are also allowed not to fast but they must pay the fidyah, which is giving a day's meals for each fast missed to a needy person. One can also give instead the money for meals to a needy person. Women in their menses and post-natal bleeding are not allowed to fast, but they must make up later after Ramadan. Pregnant women and mothers who are nursing babies, if they find it difficult to fast they can also postpone their fasting to a later

time when they are in a better condition.

Journey according to the Shari'ah is any journey that takes you away from your city of residence, a minimum of 48 miles or 80 kilometers. It is the same journey that allows you to shorten (qasr) your prayers. The journey must be for a good cause. It is a sin to travel in Ramadan in order to avoid fasting. A Muslim should try to change his/her plans during Ramadan to be able to fast and should not travel unless it is necessary. The traveler who misses the fasts of Ramadan must make up those missed days later after Ramadan as soon as possible.

B) Fasting according to the Sunnah:

1) Take sahur (pre-dawn meal). It is Sunnah and there is a great reward and blessing in taking sahur. The best time for sahur is the last half hour before dawn or the time for Fajr prayer.

2) Take iftar (break-fast) immediately after sunset. Shari'ah considers sunset when the disk of the sun goes below the horizon and disappears completely.

3) During fast abstain from all false talks and deeds. Do not quarrel, have disputes, indulge in arguments, use bad words, or do anything that is forbidden. One should try to discipline oneself morally and ethically, beside gaining a physical training and discipline. One should also not make a show of one's fasting by talking too much about it, or by showing dry lips and hungry stomach, or showing bad temper. The fasting person must be a pleasant person with good spirit and good cheer.

4) During fast one should do acts of charity and goodness to others and should increase his/her worship and reading of the Qur'an. Every Muslim should try to read the whole Qur'an at least once during the month of Ramadan.

C) Things that invalidate the fast: One must avoid doing anything that may render one's fast invalid. Things that invalidate the fast and require qada' (making up for these days) are the following:

1) Eating, drinking or smoking deliberately, including taking any non-nourishing items by mouth, nose or anus.

2) Deliberately causing oneself to vomit.

3) The beginning of menstrual or post-childbirth bleeding even in the last moment before sunset.

4) Ejaculation out of sexual excitement from kissing, hugging, etc.

5) Eating, drinking, smoking or having sexual intercourse after Fajr (dawn) on mistaken assumption that it is not Fajr time yet. Similarly, engaging in these acts before sunset on the mistaken assumption that it is already sunset time.

Sexual intercourse during fasting is forbidden and is a great sin. Those who engage in it must make both qada' (make up the fasts) and kaffarah (expiation by fasting for 60 days after Ramadan or to feed 60 poor people for each day of fast broken in this way). According to Imam Abu Hanifah, eating and/or drinking deliberately during fast also entail the same qada' and kaffarah.

D) Things that do not invalidate fasting:

During fast, the following things are permissible:

1) Taking a bath or shower. If water is swallowed involuntarily it will not invalidate the fast. According to most of the jurists swimming is also allowed in fasting, but one should avoid diving, because that will cause the water to go from mouth or nose in the stomach.

2) Using perfumes, wearing contact lenses or using eye drops.

3) Taking injections or having blood test.

4) Using miswak (tooth-stick) or toothbrush (even with tooth paste) and rinsing the mouth or nostrils with water provided it is not overdone (so as to avoid swallowing water).

Continued in next page ....



By Dr. A. R. M. Imtiyaz

## General thoughts on Ramadan

Ramadan is the (month) in which Qur'an was sent down, as a guide to mankind, and a clear guidance and judgment (so that mankind will distinguish right from wrong). Whoever among you witnesses the month of Ramadan should fast through it..." (2:183)

Ramadan, the third pillar of Islam, falls on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar established in the year of 638CE. Ramadan is derived from an Arabic word for intense heat and scorched ground. "Ramadan is the month during which the Quran was revealed, providing guidance for the people, clear teachings, and the statute book. Those of you who witness this month shall fast therein. Those who are ill or traveling may substitute the same number of other days. Allah wishes for you convenience, not hardship, that you may fulfill your obligations, and to glorify Allah for guiding you, and to express your appreciation." [2:185] Ramadan divides into three parts. They are, (1) Rahmat, which mean mercy of God, (2) Maghfirat means forgiveness of God, (3) Nijat which means salvation.

Tarawih praying is one of the key elements of the month. Tarawih is an Arabic phrase referring to extra prayers. Muslims perform this prayer after Isha prayer. Muslims who identified with Sunni school perform Tarawih every night of the month. South Asia, home to Sunni Muslims, witness Tarawih during Ramadan. However, there is no unique position among the Muslims as to how many Salah should be performed in Tarawih which are held in the (Sunni) mosques every night of the month. However, Muslims who attach to Shia school, the second largest denomination based on the Islamic faith after Sunni Islam does not practice Tarawih. Shias view that Tarawih prayer as a Bidah (type of innovation) and thus caution Muslims to excuse themselves from it. In order to gain Almighty God's love and appreciation, instead of performing Tarawih, Shia perform the night prayer during Ramadan just like any other night. This night prayer (Salah) commonly known as Tahajjud (tahajj-od).

Generally, during whole section of the Qur'an is recited during the praying in Ramadan. This opens the gate to complete the entire Qur'an by the end of the month. Sunnis predominant group among the Muslims believe it is conventional practice to do a khatm (complete recitation) of the Qur'an during the Ramadan by reciting at least one chapter (Juz) per night in Tarawih. Moreover, Shia Muslims regularly read Qur'an and attempt to complete it by the end of the month.

Ramadan demands both spiritual and physical observance of thirty days of fasting during the daylight hours. Right through the month of fasting, Muslims across the world including South Asia, regardless of their bitter

# Ramadan: some thoughts

ethnic and sectarian divisions, observe a fast from dawn to dusk. Fasting can help to purify the body and mind if those who fast seriously and sincerely committed to the ritual. Muslims also believe that Ramadan helps to raise Islamic values of peace, justice and equity.

Ramadan can help those who fast to practice the teachings of Islam. It also can seriously discourage those who fast in refraining from unpleasant feelings such as anger, envy, greed, and gossip. Qur'an encouraged Muslims to read it regularly during the month and dissuade Muslims having sexual pleasure during the day time. That is to say during fasting in the day sexual intercourse is not allowed but is permissible after the fast.

Fasting can help to cultivate righteousness and humility if it is practiced in its form. Fasting is not simply a practice of abstaining from food or drink; it is all about how those who fast control their mind and mature themselves to obtain wisdom and to seek a spiritual path. Thus, it must be observed strictly in order to gain the fruits of fasting.

## Why do Muslims fast?

(A) To follow God's order

One of Almighty God's injunctions, directed to Muslims (men and women) to fast. "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you..." (2:183) and "...whoever witnesses the month of Ramadan should fast through it..." (2:185) the phrase "O you who believe" is referring to those who attach to Almighty (Allah) God's command and testify that "La ilaha illa ilaha Muhammadu-r Rasululla (there is no God but God Muhammad is the Prophet of God) and follow the Sunnah of His Prophet, Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him). Clearly, Ramadan fast is a divine order obligatory to all able-bodied Muslims who are free from compelling excuses.

(B) To practice the tradition

"O ye who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for people before you ..." (2:183) In fact, fasting was not an untainted innovation of Prophet Mohamed (PBUH). It was practiced well before the birth of Prophet Mohamed (PBUH). As a matter of fact, Adam (Sal) who was believed to be the first creature of mankind by Almighty God practiced fasting. Ramadan had been a practice of all the Prophets of God and their followers. Qur'an mentions that Musa (Sal) fasted for 40 days (2:51) and thus, the Jews termed "Jewish Passover" and the Prophet Mohamed (PBUH) told us that Dawud (Sal) used to fast for half of the year (this involves fasting on every alternate day). Jesus or Isa (Sal) was also reported to have fasted for 40 days and thus, the Christians termed it "the Lent", usually observed before



Easter festival. Since these Prophets were messengers of God, it can be seen that by asking to follow the prophet Mohamed to fast. In other words, Almighty God intends to draw creature's attention to the practice and tradition of his messengers who brought his message to the mankind.

In Mecca, Prophet Mohamed found that a group called Sabians practiced praying and making ablution, or ceremonial washing, before each prayer. Ramadan was a pagan ceremony practiced by the Sabian. 1. In the Qur'an, Mohammed called the Sabians "people of the book" like the Jews and Christians.

Moreover, Ramadan has its pagan roots originated in India. The observance of fasting to honor the moon, and ending the fast when the moon's crescent appears, was practiced with the traditions of the Eastern worshippers' of the moon. Both Ibn al-Nadim and the Shahrastani tell us about al-Jandrikinieh, an Indian sect which began to fast when the moon disappeared and ended the fast with a great feast when the crescent reappeared. 2

(C) To learn how to achieve faithfulness

"O ye who believe, fasting is prescribed for you...so that you will (learn how to attain piety)" (2:183) Human nature is susceptible to sins and transgression. This may be due human struggle to secure wealth and positions. Qur'an warns against gossiping, backbiting, slandering, hypocrisy, lying, cheating, duping, and hurting. Islamic school of thoughts believes that Ramadan can help to challenge those ill-behaviors and actions if one performs fasting with pure intentions. Ramadan teaches how to put an end to ill-actions and behaviors and take a step close to Almighty God

(D) To reap the full reward of the Night of Power (Lailat-ut Qadr)

"Indeed We have revealed it (Qur'an) in the night of Power. And what will explain to you what the night of Power is? The night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein descends the Angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand: (they say) Peace" (continuously) till the rise of Morning!" (97:1-5)

Muslims believe that the first divine revelation to Prophet from Almighty God took place in the Night

the Night of Power (Qur'an 2:183) it follows that any Muslim who wishes to benefit from the Night of Power must fast during the month of Ramadan.

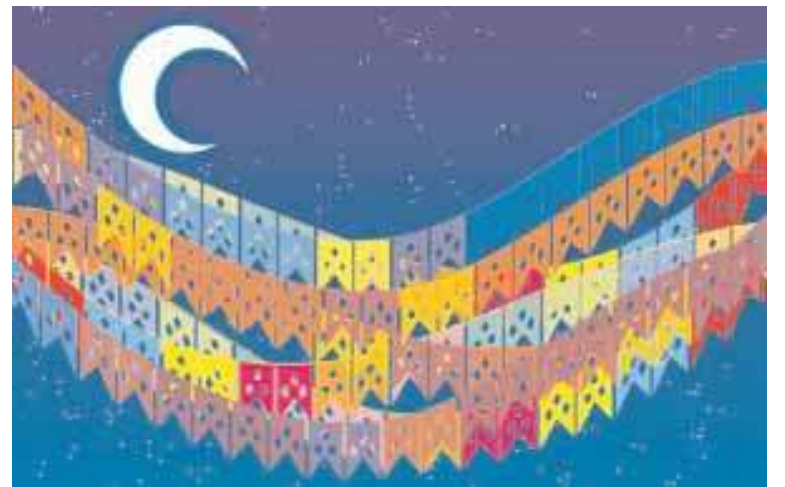
## Critiques on Ramadan

Muslims believe that during the month of Ramadan they strictly monitor both, their emotional and physical feelings. Also they think fasting is very true, because those who fast do not eat (during the day light). However, critiques point that though they do not eat during the day light, they do eat (freely) their meals during the night. Since the Muslims believe that God allows them to eat while it is dark, they eat a large meal in the late evening and wake up early in the morning for another big meal. In other words, they simply change the time of their meals from daylight to darkness.

In fact, Muslims those who are financially able enough, continue to consume large meals during Ramadan. What is also true is that rather than simple meals which they have during the year, they arrange for elaborate meals, spending sometimes triple or more money on food during Ramadan than in any other month. Thus such reality of meals consuming during the Ramadan lead critiques to suggest that Muslims eat a lot during the Ramadan than non-Ramadan period. Muslims need to open their eyes on this critique in order to strengthen the meaning of Ramadan.

## Conclusion

Societies, whether they are located in the corner of North or in the South, consist of only of two classes-



Grand Mosque in Puttlam - Photo: Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

of Ramadan- Lailat-ut Qadr. God picked the night because of the special blessings in it. It is called the night of Power (Lailat-ut Qadr) or the night of blessing (Lailat-ul Mubarak). It is this night that all Muslims are invited by God to look for in the month of Ramadan. Specifically, the night is in the last ten days of Ramadan and usually in one of the odd days (i.e. 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29th). A Muslim is expected to perform naafilah, recite the Qur'an, do zikr etc in the night. Since no one knows precisely which of the odd days the night is, Muslims are expected to be in seclusion (itikaf) during the last 10 days of Ramadan and the best place to be so is in the mosque.

Muslims do not want to miss the Night. It is this very reason that every Muslim wants to witness and reap its full blessing by fasting during the days of the month of Ramadan. As Ramadan fast is inextricably tied to

poor and rich. Islam urges economically able (rich) Muslims to be generous to economically disadvantaged (poor) class. Islam puts particular attention on the end of Ramadan to financially help those who are in need. Moreover, Ramadan steers Muslims in the right way in terms of spiritual and material life. It can indeed help cultivate wisdom, kindness and compassion among Muslims if it is observed properly with pure intentions. Ramadan will come to an end with the festival of Eid al-Fitr. This year, it is highly likely it can occur on October, 13th 2007. A sense of kindness and appreciation dominate these festivities. Muslims need to stick to the lessons Ramadan has thought to them.

May the Creator God give us courage in this world and in then hereafter and give us strength and good health to be able to fast during the month of Ramadan. Also, God give us equality and peace to all of us-

## Ramadan and Fasting

Continued from previous page

5) Eating, drinking or smoking unintentionally, i.e. one forgot that one was fasting. But one must stop as soon as one remembers and should continue one's fast.

6) If one sleeps during the daytime and has a wet-dream, it does not break one's fast. Also, if one has intercourse during the night and was not able to make ghusl (bathe) before dawn, he/she can begin fast and make ghusl later. Women whose menstruation stops during the night may begin fast even if they have not made ghusl yet. In all these cases, bathing (ghusl) is necessary but fast is valid even without bathing.

7) Kissing between husband and wife is allowed in fast, but one should try to avoid it so that one may not do anything further that is forbidden during fast.

E) Requirements for the validity of fasting:

There are basically two main components of fasting:

1) The intention (niyyah) for fasting. One should make a sincere intention to fast for the sake of Allah every day before dawn. The intention need not be in words, but must be with the sincerity of the heart and mind. Some jurists are of the opinion that the intention can be made once only for the whole month and does not have to be repeated every day. It is, however, better to make intention every day to take full benefit of fasting.

2) Abstaining from dawn to dusk from everything that invalidates fasting. This point has been explained in detail in the preceding sections.



# Infrastructure Ontario



**Building team selected for Rouge Valley Health System's Ajax and Pickering hospital redevelopment project -- Construction is expected to begin in October 2007.**

The Rouge Valley Health System and Infrastructure Ontario have selected Aecon Buildings to build and finance the Ajax and Pickering Hospital Phase I Redevelopment Project.

"We're very pleased that a building team has been selected, paving the way for construction to begin," said Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, David Caplan at a staff appreciation event. "This project demonstrates that our government is fulfilling its commitment to modernizing Ontario hospitals and stimulating economic growth."

"Selecting a team and beginning final negotiations with them shows

Our government's commitment to modernize and expand health care infrastructure to improve access to quality health care," said Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman.

The team, led by Aecon Buildings, includes financing arranged by Stonebridge Financial Corporation. With the addition of more than 75,000 square feet of new construction and more than 65,000 square feet of renovations, the hospital will be able to provide more effective health services to Durham Region's expanding population. As well, it will be able to deliver more effective family-centred care for a broad range of health conditions.

"The McGuinty government is dedicated to improving services and providing the facilities and health care we all need," said Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge MPP Wayne Arthurs. "Not only is this project great news for improved health care in our region, but it also brings economic opportunity and jobs to our community."

"Our staff, physicians, volunteers and the community have been

Incredibly supportive of this project," said Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of Rouge Valley Health System Rik Ganderton. "Durham region residents will benefit from improved access to care, state-of-the-art facilities and an improved environment for our future health care professionals and scientists.

We're all looking forward to getting construction underway."

Infrastructure Ontario will work with the Rouge Valley Health

System to redevelop the Ajax and Pickering hospital, which will remain publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly accountable. Infrastructure Ontario is a Crown corporation dedicated to managing some of the Province's larger and more complex infrastructure renewal projects - ensuring they are built on time and on budget.

This project is guided by principles outlined in the Province's

Building a Better Tomorrow framework, which ensures public ownership of core assets such as hospitals, schools, and water and wastewater facilities. The Rouge Valley Health System project is one of many infrastructure projects being upgraded and modernized under ReNew Ontario, the government's five-year, \$30-billion plus public infrastructure investment plan.

Visit [www.infrastructureontario.ca](http://www.infrastructureontario.ca) for more information.

## Background

Rouge Valley Health System consists of several sites, including two hospitals: Rouge Valley Centenary, in east Scarborough; Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering, in 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.

The Rouge Valley Health System serves the healthcare needs of some 529,000 residents in the Ontario communities of east Toronto (Scarborough), Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Durham Region and more.

## Rouge Valley Health System Redevelopment Project

The Phase One redevelopment of the Rouge Valley Health System's Ajax Pickering Hospital renews the main hospital with more than 65,000 square feet of renovations and more than 75,000 square feet of building expansion.

### New and expanded services include:

A new Emergency Department with capacity for 60,000 patient

### Visits per year

- Nine more beds in the adult inpatient area of mental health

- An ambulatory care unit for outpatient clinic visits, a

Fracture clinic, outpatient procedures, medical day care and pre-admit

### visits

- A Complex Continuing Care Unit with a capacity for 30 beds for

patients who are transitioning from acute care to long-term

care or to their home.

- Redesigned space for the Diagnostic Imaging and Cardiac

### Diagnostic areas

The redevelopment project will enable the Ajax and Pickering hospital to accommodate Durham Region's expanding population and deliver more effective family centred care for a broad range of health conditions.

Over the Rouge Valley's 2-1/2-year construction period, there will be an average of 70 workers on site daily.

### For further information:

- **Amy Tang**, Minister's Office, Public Infrastructure Renewal, (416) 325-4048;

- **Terence Foran**, Infrastructure Ontario, (416) 325-2939;

- **David Brazeau**, Rouge Valley Health System, (416) 284-8131, Ext. 4010

# Election Canada Decision

**Statement by Minister Van Loan - Minister of Democratic Reform and**

**Leader of the Government in the House of Commons - Sep. 11, 2007**

Last spring Parliament passed with multi-party support Bill C-31 to prevent voter fraud and improve the integrity of the voting process.

The intent of the Bill was clear: a person would have to demonstrate their identity before they could vote.

Parliament, as well as our government, had confidence that Elections Canada would comply with the intent of the legislation.

Unfortunately, yesterday, Elections Canada decided to maintain that a person is able to vote while concealing their face.

This decision goes against the clear intent of the law.

Basic common sense dictates that it is impossible for a person to demonstrate their identity if their face is covered.

This is a position that was endorsed by the Procedure and House Affairs Committee of the House of Commons.

Yesterday the committee voted unanimously to send a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer asking him to reverse his decision.

Once again we are calling upon Elections Canada to respect the will and the intent of Parliament and immediately reverse their decision to allow people to vote while concealing their face.



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# A Glimpse of Life in Ghana

## Part Two of a Three-Part Series

In last month's piece, I recounted the struggles of life in Ghana due to things such as irregular supply of water and electricity. Rather than allow these inconveniences to ruin my experiences, I decided to take on a different attitude in order to enjoy the country. It was this decision that truly allowed me to learn about Ghana's rich cultures, absorb the country's love of music and understand the importance of religion.

Let me begin with the distinctive funeral customs in Ghana. I once read about cultures that celebrated death and always found it so intriguing. Until my arrival, I never knew Ghana was among these societies. In a place like Labadi, the dense little township of Accra I lived in, funerals were as common as children bathing by the roadside.

Between Thursdays and Sundays, funerals could be seen all over town. Sometimes, the large groups of people wearing the typical funeral colours

funerals struck me one day while walking home. I noticed a small shop displaying a bright assortment of large wooden crafts. I decided to investigate. To my surprise, I learned that they were coffins. According to the young craftsman, if you or your family chose, you could be buried in a human-sized fish, cocoa pod, car, rooster, Ghana Airways airplane or beer bottle! Of course, custom designs were available as well.

Curious about the vast differences from Canadian and Sri Lankan funerals, I decided to ask my Ghanaian friends for explanation. Chuckling at my naiveté, they said that although they did mourn a loss, death also signaled the arrival of a new community member in the near future. And so, holding a funeral party had two purposes: it celebrated the life of the dead person and welcomed the newcomer, whoever it may be. This, to me, was a very refreshing way to look at death.

clutch their chests, shouting prayers with their eyes shut firmly. The choir erupts into joyful song and everyone joins in. The collection basket is quickly filled with crumpled notes. The atmosphere is electric, addictive.

On most days, all of this activity began at 4:30 am with families singing their praises for the day. My neighbours chose to do this under the giant neem tree just outside my bedroom window. As for the churches, they usually began at dawn. Saturdays were livelier while Sundays were the peak of the ecclesiastic fervor. The singing would go on all day long as well-dressed families milled about the church grounds and enjoyed the relaxing day. Not surprisingly, the laid-back nature of Sundays made them my favourite day of the week.

Now that I am back in Canada, friends often ask the question, "so, how was it?" I usually say it was great and when they ask why, I have an endless list of reasons (the church experience is not included). The one that raises the most eyebrows is the confidence I gained because of the bold and aggressive men.

For example, I have had taxi drivers ask me to be their wives, married colleagues wanting to go out for a drink and a host of random men telling me that I should bear their children. Naturally, I found this all too much to handle. Only after meeting

## Lidvina S. Rajabalan



The coffin maker posing by a beer bottle coffin

this as normal; "it's the way they [African men] are" one woman remarked to me. Rather than try and fight every man who asked to be my husband, I decided to turn each situation into a humorous one. So, I would tell the taxi driver that I did not go to church. This would visibly shock him, sending us into a circular discussion about the merits of church worship. I would agree to a drink with a married colleague, on the condition that his wife and children join us. As for the random men, well, each situation was unique.

Only when I arrived home did I realize that, all humour aside, my experience with Ghanaian men left a surprising impact on me. It was empowering, even inspiring a sense of invincibility. Whether the price was worth it or not is debatable. What I am glad about is that I did take something positive out of an experience that was invasive and at first, disempowering.

In the final part of this series, I will describe the Ghanaian shopping experience, the amusing variety of ethnicities I was perceived to be and my amazing travels to two of Ghana's neighbouring countries.

Lidvina Rajabalan received an MA in Legal Studies from Carleton University and a BA in Criminology from the University of Toronto. She resides in Toronto.



A funeral getting started steps away from my bedroom window. All was quiet until the band arrived

of black and red were an indication. Most frequently, however, it was the large canopies, rows of lawn chairs and blaring music that typified the Ghanaian funeral. Usually, these setups would spill onto main roads, forcing traffic into a chaotic frenzy.

Mournful music mixed with trendy Western tunes pounded through the air as the mood turned from sombre to celebratory. By night time, the music would be at an ear-splitting pitch. Everyone from small children to grandparents danced tirelessly. There were even times when it was so loud, that my housemates and I nervously watched our glass doors fearing they would explode! This, I quickly discovered, was the Ghanaian funeral tradition.

Other funeral celebrations would take place in the form of a loud, musical street parade. For example, I have seen these parades roll down streets as revelers tooted horns, banged on drums and even fired guns into the air. Some people were painted in elaborate white designs while others, often older persons, wore intricately designed costumes. These larger and livelier funerals were often for a high standing member of the community or a tribal chief.

One more interesting thing about

Of course, these traditions varied from tribe to tribe. I lived among the Ga people. According to friends, their celebrations tended to be louder and more vibrant than other tribes. Given the high volume of funerals, street parades and other unexpected marches down the main road, I would have to agree!

Continuing with the theme of lively celebrations, my description of Ghana would not be complete without detailing the role of religion. Nearly two-thirds of Ghanaians are Christians, and very devoted ones I should add. In Labadi, the numbers were likely much greater given the high concentration of churches in such a small area. Some were grand structures with elaborate security surveillance systems while others were not much more than tin roof and wooden beam set ups.

My home was surrounded by churches. At times, the singing and music was so loud that it felt as if I was sitting right in front of the speakers. Let me paint a picture of a typical charismatic church mass. A passionate preacher thunders up and down the altar delivering a riveting homily. He thrusts his fist into the air as sweat careens down his freshly pressed shirt. Parishioners in humble clothes



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# Monsoon Photo Journal



## NALLUR FESTIVAL Nallur Thear festival draws large number of devotees

Pictures by Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

Historians have found evidence that the original temple was built in 1248 in Kurukkal Valavu in Nallur at the same location of the present temple. Nallur was then the capital of the Jaffna Kingdom.

But in 1450, Parakramabahu the 6th of the Kotte Kingdom, in response to the Arya Chakkaravarthi of Jaffna's to extend his rule to the South, sent his son Sapumal Kumara to bring the Jaffna Kingdom down to his rule.

Sapumal Kumara defeated King Arya Chakkaravarthi, destroyed his palace and the original Nallur temple.

But upon becoming Buvaneka Bahu the 6th, he sought to make amends by building a new temple in 1467 at a nearby location, says Shanmugapriya in Nallur Kanthaswamy: A Spiritual Experience.

And centuries later the Portuguese, after fighting with the kings of the Jaffna Kingdom for more than hundred years, with the death of King Sangilian, captured it in 1620. The Portuguese General Phillip Oliviera used the Nallur temple as a fort.

During Dutch rule, the new tem-

ple was built in the same place in Kurukkal Valavu, as the original place. The main shrine has deity Vel, but later a statue of Lord Murugan was installed.

Further the Nallur festival of old days took place in the nights, with the procession carrying the deity preceded by women clad in shimmering outfits dancing to the beat of gigantic drums.

The streets of Nallur were illuminated with flame of torches and lamps.

More than ten thousand devotees attended the Thear (Car) festival Monday Sep 10th, 2007 conducted at the historic Nallur Kanthasamy Temple. The absence of curfew Sunday night enabled devotees from different parts of Jaffna peninsula to participate in the festival. However, temple administrators said the number of devotees attending the festival was far less than what the festival draws during peace time.

The temple environs were free of Sri Lanka Army (SLA) presence and devotees were able to freely participate in the festival.

Volunteer students from local schools provided logistics support during the day.

SLA Military head quarters in Palaali had earlier announced the lifting of curfew in the peninsula on Sunday and Monday nights.

[TamilNet.com]

Images from Year 2005 Nallur Festive days:



Arumugasamy on his way to the Thear



Devotees, camphor burning and coconut breaking



Thear



Kaavadi devotee[1] ready to roll



Nallur Temple



Nallur Rajagoupuram



Anna Coffee Bar



Playing udukku in a bhajan [1]. Udukku is believed to be a spiritual instrument in Hindu tradition



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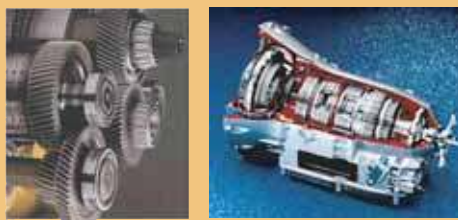
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# BUYING FROM A BUILDER: HOW DOES CLOSING WORK?

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The by-laws of the municipality require certain standards to be met and inspections completed before a property can be occupied. The municipality issues an occupancy permit when it is satisfied that its standards have been met. An inspection of each and every type of dwelling is required to be undertaken by a duly authorized representative of the building department of the local municipality confirming that the dwelling complies with the occupancy provisions of the Building Code, before any occupation of the dwelling can be lawfully commenced.

Prior to closing, you will attend at the property with a representative of the builder to complete a pre-delivery inspection of the house. You are well advised to inspect the house carefully and to list all apparent defects or incomplete matters and other concerns on the Certificate of Completion. If you don't list it, you may not be able to compel the builder to fix it. Here's a

short list of what to look out for during inspection:

- Allow yourself enough time to do the thorough inspection;
- Don't let the builder's representative push you and do the inspection at your own speed;
- Write down every flaw, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem;
- Do not accept verbal promises of repair if something is not right;
- Test every light, every door, every lock, every window, every appliance and every thing that could be or go wrong;
- Watch for stains on carpet, scratches on wood floors, cracks in paint or drywall, etc.
- Check for any deficiency in the exterior;
- For Condo, inspect common areas such as lobbies, garbage rooms, parking areas, lockers, etc.

Most builder's Agreement of Purchase and Sale require that the purchasers complete the transaction without holding back any part of the

purchase price provided that the house is "substantially" complete at the closing date. Accordingly, your new house does not have to be completely finished as of the date of closing. It must, however, be reasonably fit for habitation so that you can move in at that time. There will often be various items which will not be finished until after the closing date.

### Buying a new Condo

Condo purchases from a builder involve a two stage process on closing with an "interim closing" and a few months later, a "final closing". The interim closing date is the occupancy date of the condo and the final closing date is the date when title is transferred from the builder to you. When you take the possession first time, you don't actually own the condo until the final closing and registration of documents.

On the interim closing date you may be required to give the builder what is popularly called a "phantom mortgage" or "fictional mortgage". The amount of this mortgage is equal to the difference between your deposit and the purchase price (that is, balance on closing). You need to determine what is included in your monthly interim occupancy payment. The amount of the monthly interim occupancy payment is calculated as the total of: monthly interest on the phantom mortgage; an amount estimated by the builder on a monthly basis for municipal taxes attributable to your condo; and the proposed monthly maintenance fee for your condo.

You do not have the option of paying all money at the interim closing date because the builder is unable to convey title to you until the organization and registration of the condominium corporation has been completed. Therefore, there is no need for you to arrange mortgage on the interim closing date. The monthly interim occupancy payments are treated as rent and are not refundable, nor are they credited to you on closing. At the interim closing date, the builder may require six to twelve post-dated cheques for the monthly interim occupancy payment. You may be required to increase your deposit on the occupancy date.

## Surge in violence displaces thousands in Sri Lanka's Mannar district



By Sulakshani Perera

More than 3,000 people have fled their homes in north-west Sri Lanka's disputed Mannar district to escape fresh fighting between government troops and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the first week of September.

The Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, citing local government officials in Mannar, said 3,109 people had moved from southern parts of Mannar to Nanattan division in the north of the district. Slightly more than half were staying with friends or family. The rest - 435 families - are being accommodated in two schools and a damaged mosque.

The UN refugee agency and its partners have distributed food and non-food relief items to these internally displaced people (IDPs). Local government officials have handed out 2,000 rupees (US\$18) in cash for each person and are planning to organize meals for the displaced over the next few days. Dry rations may follow.

Meanwhile, 2,915 individuals had registered with local government officials as IDPs in Mannar's Manthai West division as of Wednesday evening, according to field reports. A further 59 families had left their homes in LTTE-controlled areas of Mannar and arrived

at Mulankavil in neighbouring Kilinochchi district. These groups feared fighting following the onset of government shelling.

Most are out in the open, using only plastic sheeting as cover. Some families are staying in communal areas, some are with host families and others are taking refuge in communal buildings such as schools.

There are concerns about water and food shortages. Limited assistance - both food and non-food-relief items - has been provided to families and more assistance is being planned. The poor condition of access roads to the settlement sites is posing a considerable challenge to relief efforts.

UNHCR, in coordination with other UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and local government officials, will continue with relief and protection-monitoring efforts as the situation in Mannar develops.

Since the resumption of conflict in April 2006, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced in the north and east of Sri Lanka. More than 100,000 people displaced in the east were able to go back home under a government return programme launched last May.

[UNHCR.org]

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# Kollywood Film Review



by Anand.J

## Ammuvagiya Naan

Ammuvagiya Naan is an off beat movie which has a bold theme and a fantastic narration. In these modern day film making, this is a rare gem which needs appreciation and accolades. Director Padmagan has to be lauded for venturing into a theme which has only been handled by his veteran director K Balachander in Thappu Thalanga and Arangetram.

Director Padmagan had an awful outing in his maiden adventure 'Pallavan' but returns with 'Ammuvagiya Naan' a story of a commercial sex worker who lives in Pondicherry. It is a theme which commercial film makers are not comfortable, but the director and his team have given it a realistic look. There is



through his body language. Surely it can be rated as one of his best performances in his career.

At many places, the director allows the visuals to speak more than the dialogues and the way of his presentation gives the feel of a cool breeze!

Bharathi is definitely a worthy new face and the actress could handle the sensitive role with ease and perfection. Abhishek, Mahadevan, Sadhana and Ragasudha also done their parts well.

M. S. Prabhu has framed a prostitution house in most dignified manner through his camera. Very rarely one would get to view such a 'house' picturized very beautifully in tamil films. The soothing background score by Sabesh - Murali adds strength to the movie.

Director Padmagan gets full marks in trying to convey an off beat story with full conviction and a neat screenplay. The lead actors Parthiban and Bharathi definitely play their parts well and makes the movie a different viewing experience for the audiences.

**Ammuvagiya Naan -  
Definitely worth a view.**

## MARUDHAMALAI

Marudhamalai is the latest action flick from the action king Arjun. It has all the commercial crass elements with good action sequences and comedy. But whether it has all that could make this film a good film, is a big question mark.

The story is about a young man Arjun who is trained by his constable father to become a respected police



officer. Arjun passes and gets posted in a place called Nachiapuram which is run by a king maker Lal who has made sure that elections are not conducted there for sixteen years. Anyone who dares to file their nomination paper ends up being slaughtered in public. Raghuvaran who is the election commissioner comes to Nachiapuram to conduct the long pending election which is naturally disliked by the king maker. On the day of election Lal tries to disrupt the peace and Arjun intervenes and arrests him. The villain pledges to take revenge and the rest of the story is about whether Lal succeeds in beating Arjun or whether Arjun has the last word?

If the story reminds you of the recent Ajith starrer Kireedom, it is only natural especially the first half but this movie is more of a commercial pot boiler. Suraj who directed Sundar C's Thalainagaram wields the megaphone in Marudhamalai too. He has given a fast first half, but romance and action

act as speed breaker in the second half. Please leave your thinking cap outside the theatres as the director does not seem to give credit to the audience's intelligence. There is a sequence where the villain is in remand for fifteen days and the related events that happen outside far exceed the fifteen day mark. There is no synchronization of Nila's voice with her lip movement and in many scenes dialogues seem to continue even after she closes her mouth.

In the acting department, Arjun as the action hero proves yet again why he is called the Action king. He has acted well and has done the action sequence with passion. Nila is there for filling the glamour quotient and is beautiful in the songs. Nasser and Raghuvaran also have done a neat job. Vadivelu is actually the real hero of the movie, he is a complete laugh riot, and his English usage will surely go down well with the masses. But sometimes his comedy degrades police personnel a lot which could have been avoided.

In the technical department the movie has a passable music score by Imman. Vaithiya and V.K. Senthil Kumar take care of cinematography and the shots where Lal meets Raghuvaran and challenges are fine examples. Dance choreography by Raju Sundaram has nothing special but his taste in 'Yennavilai' song is a worrying factor for Tamil cinema. The action sequences are over the top with no respect to gravity or physics.

On the whole a good fun filled first half and illogical second half explains Marudhamalai.

**Verdict - First half Malai,  
Second half Mannu.**

## Fortune favours Kollywood

By M Bharat Kumar

Just a few years ago, the Kollywood was in total disarray with several flops and the number of producers fast decreasing.

Call it a miracle, today the industry has managed a turn around with an increase in number of corporates evincing interest to churn out movies, widening business markets and slew of concessions to Tamil film industry by the State government.

Though Kollywood churned out the maximum number of movies in the country, it could not leave an impact on the audience until recently. Post-Sivaji, the scene underwent a dramatic change and today, the Tamil movies were seen with awe and admiration by people all across the country.

Rajnikanth-starrer Sivaji set the ball rolling. The big budget movie was released in over 850 screens all across the globe and even in countries where Tamil movies were never opened in theatres before, Sivaji managed to run to packed houses. Now there are demands for release of Tamil movies in northern States, Far-East countries and even in the West.

Prominent corporate giants like Pyramid Saimira, Adlabs, UTV, GV Films, Midvalley Corporation, Moser Baer, Varma Corporation and Aynkaran International are keen on producing Tamil movies.

Also the business market has expanded. Unlike earlier days, the Tamil movies today have prospective



buyers in countries including Australia, USA, Europe and in several Asian countries including Japan.

Says Rama Narayanan, president, Tamil film Producers Council: 'The industry is witnessing a healthy trend specially after a slew of concessions including tax exemption announced by Chief Minister M Karunanidhi. The business has increased manifold and correspondingly the budget too. Films rich in content and technical brilliance are being churned out here'.

Mushrooming growth of television channels has ensured good returns to the producers in the form of satellite rights for their movies. The audio market, which was facing a challenge from the pirates, has heaved a sigh of relief after the entry of corporate firms like Nag Ravi's Insight Media.

Another fresh avenue for the producers to make some money is the ringtone downloads. Cellular companies are ready to pay hefty sums to obtain the download ringtone rights of the songs in Tamil movies. Also popular commercial brands are associated with movies in its promotion fetching more revenue for the producers.



The controversial marriage alliance of South Indian Actor Srikanth with Vanthana ended this week when both were married at the Taj Coromandel Hotel in Madras. Picture shows actor Kamalahasan wishing the couple. (courtesy: Virakesari)



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