

Happy Diwali

Monsoon Journal

A parfait media publication

VOL 2

ISSUE 6

NOVEMBER 2007

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- Meaning of Life -

"The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity"

Leo Tolstoy Russian Novelist (1828-1910)



Paddy field in Sammanthurai-Ampara district, East of Sri Lanka [humanityashore.org]

Poverty Reduction - A Priority for new Ontario Government

by Siva Sivapragasam

Premier Dalton McGuinty had no better choice than Deb Mathews (Minister of Youth Affairs) to fight poverty rates in Ontario.

Deb Mathews was a driving force behind the fight on behalf of low-income children, persons with disabilities and families on social assistance. She also spearheaded the campaign for the introduction of the new child benefit last spring.

Poverty reduction among the less fortunate will become a priority for Dalton McGuinty's new Government as he starts batting his second innings. It was a major election pledge on the platforms of the Liberal Party. Within weeks of winning a majority government McGuinty has kept his promise by appointing a high powered Cabinet committee to tackle poverty reduction.

Deb Mathews who was appointed as the new Minister of Youth Affairs and Children is a mother of three

grown up children and has a PhD to her educational credit. She is quite familiar with the subject assigned to her.

Premier McGuinty gave an election promise to develop a poverty reduction plan within one year. High priorities that have to be integrated into this programme should be higher minimum wages, better housing, providing dental coverage to the poor, higher levels of old-age security etc.

Although Deb Mathews does not



control the purse strings of the Government, her previous record proves that she wins what she wants.

Canadian MP recalls meeting slain Tamil Peace Negotiator



Hon. Jim Karygiannis P.C., M.P.

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The funeral procession of slain Tamil Tiger political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan proceeds to the cemetery



Story in Page 32

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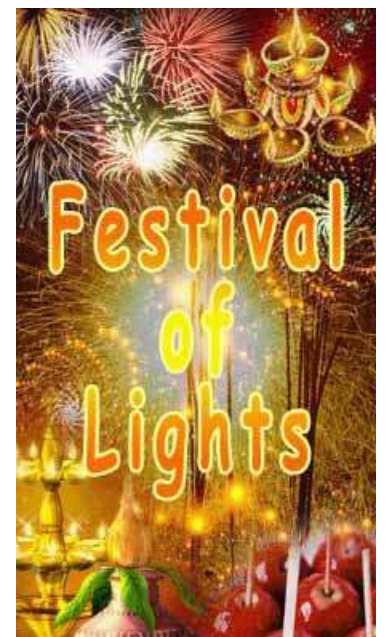
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Canada Newslines

Canada to accept up to 265,000 new immigrants in 2008

The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, announced on October 31st, that Canada expects to welcome between 240,000 and 265,000 newcomers in 2008.

The target is set out in the 2007 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration tabled today in the House of Commons. The report provides information on immigration activities in 2006 and outlines the immigration plan for 2008.

"Our government believes that immigration plays an important role in building our communities and growing our economy," said Minister Finley. "The immigration targets tabled today will help ensure that Canada continues to grow and benefit from all that newcomers and their families bring to our country."

The Canadian Experience Class, first announced in the 2007 budget and a key element of the government's long-term immigration plan, will be implemented in 2008 for certain skilled temporary workers and international students with Canadian degrees and Canadian work experience. Once the class is established and for the first time, individuals meeting specific criteria will be able to apply for permanent resident status



from within Canada.

The Canadian Experience Class adds to other initiatives to address labour market needs and to help in the successful integration of newcomers. These include establishing the Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO), improving the Temporary Foreign Worker program and expanding the Provincial Nominee Program.

The FCRO is working with the provinces and territories to help internationally trained individuals get their skills assessed and recognized. The Provincial Nominee Program allows provinces and territories to identify and nominate immigrants who will address their labour market needs.

Canada is continuing its humanitarian tradition by, for example, resettling 800 Karen refugees from

Thailand and committing to welcoming 2,000 more. Canada also played an important role in negotiations on the protracted situation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, agreeing to resettle 5,000 of them over the next few years.

The federal government has also committed an additional \$1.3 billion in settlement funding over five years, and \$342 million per year ongoing, to help newcomers succeed.

The Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, which must be tabled by November 1 each year, is a requirement under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

**[Citizenship and Immigration
Canada Press Release]**

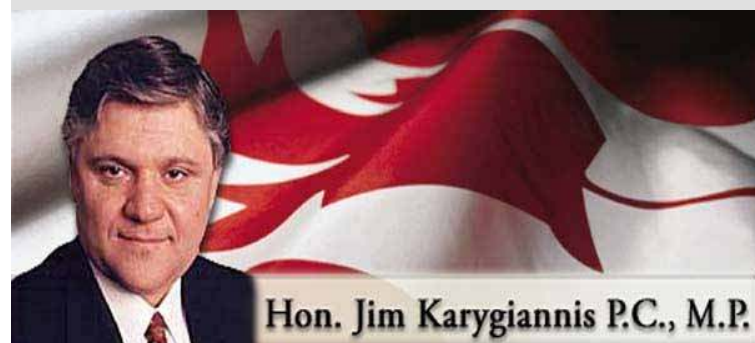
Karygiannis addresses rally against the recognition of "The Republic of Macedonia"

OTTAWA – Today on Parliament Hill, the Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt, addressed a rally of several thousand Canadians of Greek ancestry. The rally was to protest the Harper government's recognition of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) as "The Republic of Macedonia".

are negotiating. Progress is being made. Harper just won't leave well enough alone." Mr. Karygiannis stated. "Harper is demonstrating his total lack of understanding of international affairs."

On September 20, 2007, the Conservative government recognized the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the "Republic of

Scarborough-Agincourt
Tel: (613) 992-4501 Fax: (613) 995-1612 , Email: karygj@parl.gc.ca,
Website: www.karygiannismp.com



"The rain has stopped. It's a good day to be on Parliament Hill," said Mr. Karygiannis. "We gathered in 1992 to tell Brian Mulroney he had made the wrong decision. Today, we are here to tell Stephen Harper that he has made the wrong decision. Mulroney changed his mind, let's hope Harper does."

The dispute over the use of the name "Macedonia" has been referred to the United Nations (UN). All UN member-states have agreed to accept the final agreement resulting from negotiations between Greece and FYROM. Harper's decision bypassed the negotiation process endorsed by the UN.

"Harper is playing with 4,000 years of history. Greece and FYROM

Macedonia".
"Harper made this decision without consulting Canadians. It threatens to divide Canadians and Harper knows that." Mr. Karygiannis further stated. "It's no surprise that Harper's government has not publicly announced the change. Canadians learned about it from a foreign government."

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6 Great Reasons to Stay Home This Festive Season: Limited Time Free Preview of your Favourite Desi Channels on Rogers

In celebration of the festive season, Rogers is offering a limited time free preview of the popular Desi channels Sahara One, ATN Aastha TV, ATN B4U Music, Sur Sagar TV (SSTV), ATN Zee Gujarati and Tamil Vision (TVI) from November 6 to November 20, 2007. The free previews are in conjunction with Rogers Badiya Festival, Badiya Offer in which new customers have a chance to win a gold bar by subscribing to a Rogers bundle or Family Plan. Current customers with a digital terminal can immediately tune into the respective channels to take advantage of the free previews starting November 6.

Sahara One (channel 580)

Sahara One, India's premiere 24-hour Hindi general entertainment channel brings you the ultimate in entertainment. Programming on Sahara One includes daily soaps starring Bollywood celebrities, mega movies from Bollywood, popular children's shows, game shows, thrillers, talk shows, style and fashion, live call-in shows and much more. Sahara One also covers special events like the Sahara Sangeet Awards, Mr. & Miss Bollywood, Indian Divas and the Mrs. World beauty pageant.

ATN Zee Gujarati (channel 583)

Zee Gujarati, a 24-hour-a-day Gujarati-language channel broadcast from Noida, India, offers wholesome family entertainment. Zee Gujarati showcases an entire spectrum of genres including current affairs, news, festival-based programs, talk shows, serials, movies and much more.

ATN Aastha TV (channel 584)

Aastha - The Faith Channel - is India's #1 socio-spiritual channel. The content focuses on religion, devotion-



al music and spiritual programs like discourses, festivals, yoga, folk music, dance, cultural events, alternative therapies and astrology.

ATN B4U Music (channel 587)

B4U Music is a 24-hour South Asian music channel. B4U Music's programming includes the biggest musical hits from the latest Bollywood movies, the Bollywood music charts, exclusive star studded interviews, non-stop dance floor hits from the South Asian music scene, interactive request shows and much more.

Tamil Vision (TVI) (channel 621)

Tamil Vision Inc. (TVI) provides high quality entertainment programs that help the Canadian Tamil community and businesses to integrate into Canadian society. Featuring news and programs covering local issues, local artists, dramas, movies, talk shows, music and debates from around the globe.

Sur Sagar TV (SSTV) (channel 626)

SSTV presents a wide variety of programming from movies to concerts, dramas to music, celebrity profiles to reality T.V, as well as up-to-date news information in Punjabi, Hindi and English.

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From the Publisher's Desk ...

Monsoon Journal
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around us
All lands home, all men kin.

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never have those who are free from
envy been without greatness" - Kural #
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**To place community and
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Letters to Editor & Opinions

Mahatma Gandhi birthday as International peace and non-violence day

Non-violence – the greatest religion

Our profound appreciation and thanks must go to the United Nations Organization for having unanimously adopted October 2nd, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's otherwise known as Mahatma Gandhi, birthday, as "international peace and non-violence day." It took the world body some 59 years to bestow this honor upon the Indian fakir and pilgrim for peace after his assassination in 1948, just one year after India's independence. Gandhi who said "I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill" lost his own life to violence perpetrated by an Indian religious zealot.

Mrs Sonia Gandhi the present day Congress President was rightly invited to speak on the occasion of United Nation commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's birthday as an international day of peace and non violence.

In a world seriously endangered by militancy, terrorism, violence, crusades, genocides and ethnic cleansing

on the one hand and on the other abnormal hikes in military expenditures, new and destructive missile systems, race and black marketing for nuclear weapons and technology, military initiatives and penetrations, occupation and attempts to establish a new kind of imperialism and the resultant violence, can the Gandhian model provide a viable alternative in restoring the peaceful nature of our society?

The answer to this crucial question has to be a resounding yes because the alternative is too gloomy, dangerous, destructive and extremely frightening. The Mahatma answered this question in one sentence i.e., "There is no path to peace. Peace is the path". Further elaborating he said "Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits. Your habits become your values and your values become your destiny". Now you can imagine what might happen when

we as a society reaffirm our belief in peace and make Gandhi's principle "Ahimsa Parmo Dharma" as our guiding light.

Given the ongoing volume of violence in today's world whether it is in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Darfur or Palestine, Gandhi's message of peace and non-violence is perhaps most relevant today than it has ever been. From the Indian point of view paying homage to this naked fakir is especially deserving for he laid the prosperity and future of his family and children at the altar of securing justice, freedom and liberty for hundreds of millions of his countrymen and women while following the dictates of GITA – The gospel of DHARMA & KARMA.

He went into the mindset of murderous riots during the partition of India and risked his own life. During that volatile period full of human turbulence at peace gatherings, a Muslim rioter in an attempt to kill him choked his neck and almost killed him. But the

kindness he expressed even at that time melted the misguided attacker and he fell on Mahatma's feet begging for forgiveness. The Mahatma believed that one should not lose faith in humanity for it was an ocean and if a few drops of ocean were dirty that does not make the whole ocean dirty. He persuasively preached the philosophy imbedded in the proverb "hate the sin and love the sinner."

I personally find it distasteful when Hindus demonise Gandhi for some mistakes he may have made while they ignore the brilliant and great courage of that man to be the main instrument to bring about India's independence. One man's life span is not long enough to eradicate the evils imposed on India from its past 1000 year history. Gandhi did well in his life time. I respect him and am grateful to him. Gandhi paid the price of having lived in free and independent India for year for his mistakes if any.

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Torture Widely Practiced in Sri Lanka, Says Manfred Nowak - a UN Special Rapporteur



An independent United Nations human rights expert said today that although Sri Lanka has measures in place to prevent torture, the brutal practice is widespread and "prone to become routine in the context of counter-terrorism operations."

"The high number of indictments for torture filed by the Attorney General's Office, the number of successful fundamental rights cases decided by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, as well as the high number of complaints that the National Human Rights Commission continues to receive on an almost daily basis indicates that torture is widely practiced in Sri Lanka," Manfred Nowak told the General Assembly committee dealing with social, humanitarian and cultural issues, known as the Third Committee.

"This practice is prone to become routine in the context of counter-terrorism operations," Mr. Nowak, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, added.

Mr. Nowak said that during the course of his visit to the country from 1 to 8 October, he received "numerous consistent and credible allegations" from detainees who reported that they were ill-treated by the police to extract confessions, or to obtain information in relation to other criminal offences. Similar allegations were received with respect to the army.

In an effort to criminalize torture and bring perpetrators to justice, the Government enacted the 1994 Torture Act. While the significant number of indictments filed under the Act was encouraging, Mr. Nowak decried the fact that only three people have so far been convicted.

"Given the high standards of proof applied by the Supreme Court in torture related cases, it is regrettable that the facts established do not trig-

ger more convictions by criminal courts," he stated.

While the Government does not agree that torture is widely practiced, "I'm convinced and I think I have enough evidence for that," Mr. Nowak told reporters after his address to the committee.

He said he found "overwhelming evidence that torture is routine" at a detention facility run by the Terrorist Investigation Department at Boossa, near Galle.

In addition, "serious incidence of corporal punishment" was discovered at Bogambara, the main prison in Kandy, even though that practice was recently abolished by law. The Government has stated it will investigate those cases and dismiss those responsible. "In my opinion they should be dismissed and also brought to justice under Sri Lankan criminal law," Mr. Nowak said.

The Special Rapporteur also highlighted the problem of overcrowded prisons, one of the main reasons for which is the high number of pre-trial detainees in the prisons than actual convicted prisoners. There are some 28,000 people being held in prisons that have the capacity to hold 8,200.

Mr. Nowak added that the most serious allegations of human rights violations, including torture, relate to the ongoing conflict between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). But he noted that he was not in a position to speak about that since he was not able to visit detention facilities in army camps or those run by the LTTE.

In addition to Sri Lanka, Mr. Nowak has visited Paraguay, Nigeria and Togo in the last year. He is scheduled to visit Indonesia next month and Equatorial Guinea and Iraq early next year.

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AOL Launches Portals in Tamil and Hindi

America on Line (AOL) the global Web services company is launching content channels in Tamil and Hindi languages. These portals will have language sections in News, Cinema and Astrology, the company announced in a press release recently.

Tamil language portal is at: <http://www.aol.in/tamil/> - And Hindi on <http://www.aol.in/hindi/>

The Web site offers a host of Web services including instant messenger, Google search, videos, Bollywood channels, city guides, educa-



tion, international music, and access to mobile devices for email, chat, and downloads. Apart from regular features, it offers a wide variety of content around Cricket, Hollywood, Bollywood, and so on. Also, there's an expert advice service named 'Guru'.

Monsoon Newsline

UN's Louise Arbour concerned about human rights violations in Sri Lanka

M. Malaravan, a young doctor from the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, has been trying to wake up from a terrible, 10-month nightmare: Since 15 December 2006, he has been searching frantically for his father-in-law who went missing after attending an academic conference in Colombo.

The disappearance of Professor S. Raveedranath, vice-chancellor of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka in Batticaloa District and Malaravan's father-in-law, has been the most high-profile abduction case reported in the last 20 months.

According to the Law and Society Trust, a Colombo based-rights group, 396 persons disappeared in the first half of 2007, the vast majority from the minority Tamil community throughout the country. Other rights organisations have said 1,100 abductions and disappearances were reported between January 2006 and June 2007, a figure the government disputes.

Malaravan was among 200 family members of abductees who gathered on 11 October near the UN compound in Colombo to plead their case to visiting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, who was on a five-day mission to the country, during mid October.

"She will try to help us as best as she can," Malaravan told IRIN after meeting Arbour. "Her powers are limited here, but she promised she would do what she can."

Arbour hopes for greater cooperation with government

Arbour's visit to the country at the invitation of the government of President Rajapakse renewed hope among many like Malaravan who have been searching for their missing relatives for months. Most have been looking for them for so long that now they simply desire some kind of clo-

sure.

"We are not political, all we want is to find out what happened," Sharmilar Selvarathnam, whose brother, Velu Selvarathnam, has been missing since 6 June 2007, told IRIN. "We have to know for sure what happened to him for us to go on."

At the end of her visit to the country Arbour expressed the view that greater cooperation between her office and the Sri Lankan government was urgently needed to stem rights violations. "There is a large number of reported killings, abductions and disappearances which remain unresolved," she said at a media briefing on 13 October, her last day in Colombo. "This is particularly worrying in a country that has had a long, traumatic experience of unresolved disappearances and no shortage of recommendations from past Commissions of Inquiry on how to safeguard against such violations."

The high commissioner said she had discerned a credible public information gap concerning rights violations in the country and that the deployment of personnel from her office would help to bridge the gap and build public confidence. She also said she felt there were credible allegations of extrajudicial killings and abductions that needed to be investigated.

Human rights "challenges"

"The government's consolidated position is, we are not willing to discuss in any way an opening of a UN human rights office here," Disaster Management and Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe stated at the joint press conference with Arbour. He said, however, that the government was looking for technical assistance and help in capacity building from the Office of the High



Vidrasha Selvarathnam, 3, holds a picture of her missing uncle, Velu Selvarathnam, in front of the UN office in Colombo
- Pic: Amantha Perera

Commissioner, a view Arbour heard repeatedly from government officials during her mission.

While calling technical assistance a good thing, Arbour said it was insufficient. "It became very apparent [during the visit] pure technical assistance would not address the human rights challenges," Arbour said, while

adding, "In contrast, people from across a broad political spectrum and from various communities have expressed to me the lack of confidence and trust in the ability of existing relevant institutions to adequately safeguard against the most serious human rights abuses."

Minister Samarasinghe nevertheless expressed his belief that there was common ground between the Office of the High Commissioner and the government, adding that recently the government had agreed to increase the representation of the high commissioner's office in Colombo to two. They work under the office of the UN resident representative in Colombo, providing assistance to local institutions overseeing rights violations.

US concern about rights abuses in Jaffna

During her visit Arbour held discussions with President Rajapakse, high-ranking government officials, various political parties and civic groups. She also met family members of abductees in Colombo. She did not travel to the east, but made a brief trip, on 12 October, to Jaffna where she met Catholic Bishop Thomas Samudranayagam, UN officials and civilians.

On 11 October, before her Jaffna visit, the US ambassador to Sri Lanka, Robert Blake, in addressing a luncheon meeting of the US Chamber of Commerce said that rights abuses had increased in the peninsula. "We are particularly concerned about the situation in Jaffna, where the most fundamental rights of people to be secure in their persons and homes are being violated almost daily. The number of extrajudicial killings in Jaffna has risen even higher in recent months."

Due to government restrictions,

the UN high commissioner for human rights was unable to visit areas under the control of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Government officials said the Tigers were likely to use the visit for propaganda purposes and that there were security concerns as well.

Arbour's message to Tamil Tigers

"I would have liked to convey directly to the LTTE my deep concern about their violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including the recruitment of children, forced recruitment and abduction of adults, and political killings," Arbour said.

The Karuna faction, which broke away from the Tigers in 2004, also came in for criticism from Arbour for rights' abuse. "I am very concerned by the many reports I have also received of serious violations by the TMVP (Karuna faction) and other armed groups."

Local rights activists, however, expressed the hope that despite the obvious disagreements, the Arbour visit could prove a turning point. "We hope that the government takes stock and makes use of such visits and the assistance on offer," Rukshan Fernando, programme coordinator human rights in conflict at the Law and Society Trust, told IRIN. "The hope is that things will get better now."

That is a hope that many like Malaravan share as well: "Her Excellency the Commissioner, madam, you have the ultimate power in human rights, we kindly and humbly request you to take this case in your agenda and put pressure to solve this issue," he said in a letter, one among many handed to Arbour in Colombo.

[IRIN.org]

US Senator expresses concern of Sri Lanka's rights violations

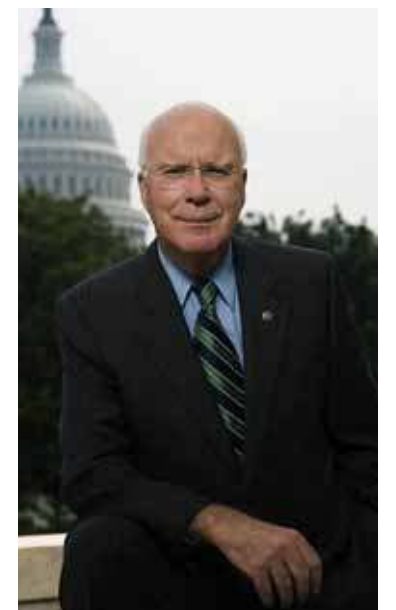
Advocating for "international human rights field presence" in Sri Lanka, and asserting "there is no military solution to Sri Lankan conflict," the Democratic Senator from Vermont and Chairman of Senate Judiciary Committee, Sen. Patrick Leahy, in a statement issued at the Senate sessions on 2nd November said: "We have been increasingly concerned with reports of abuses by Sri Lankan government forces - not from the LTTE or their supporters as some have inaccurately claimed, but from the United Nations, the Department of State, and international human rights organizations."

The Senator added that the reports on human rights by international organizations "contain specific, documented, consistent information

indicating a steady increase in serious human rights violations by both Sri Lankan government forces and the LTTE since the collapse of the ceasefire."

He added that, "while the first acts of aggression were attributed to the LTTE, these reports also implicate government forces in attacks on civilians, extrajudicial executions, torture, and forced disappearances."

"There is also evidence that Sri Lankan government forces have stood by while allied paramilitary organizations have carried out abuses, including forcibly recruiting child soldiers. With few exceptions, the Sri Lankan government has yet to bring the perpetrators, including members of government security forces, to justice."



Indian American elected US State governor

Indian-American Bobby Jindal, a conservative Republican, achieved a major success in breaking the racial barriers when he soundly and decisively defeated 11 candidates to become the youngest Governor of once racially segregated US State of Louisiana.

When he takes over in January next, he would become the first non-White Governor in the country since a Reconstruction era figure held the job briefly 130 years ago.

Thirty-six-year-old Oxford-educated Jindal also becomes the first person of Indian-origin to hold the Governor's post.

Jindal polled more than 50 per cent of votes in the election yesterday, thus avoiding a run off which was set for November 17 if no candidate had got half the votes polled. He had earlier defeated three main rivals in the primary.

Jindal, who had lost the Governor's race four years ago to Kathleen Blanco, this time defeated a slate of 11 opponents including two Democrats, State Senator Walter Boasso, Louisiana Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell and an independent businessman John Georges in a closely watched election.

Jindal, son of Indian immigrants, got 53 per cent votes with 625,036 ballots cast in his favour.



Canadian council supports call to name park after young Tamil hero

Wharnsby Park located in the city of Scarborough, Toronto in Ontario province of Canada will be renamed after Birunthan Muralidaran the heroic 11-year-old Tamil youth who drowned last December trying to save a friend who had fallen through the ice of a pond.

Scarborough Community Council voted Tuesday Oct.30th, unanimously to rename the park located near Nielson and Finch avenues, after hearing from members of Toronto's Tamil community and local Ward 42 (Scarborough Rouge River) Councillor Raymond Cho, about the youth's heroic act.

"This is a young man who played the game - who did the right thing without questioning, without a moment's hesitation," said Dr. Sri B Sri-Skanda-Rajah . a Sri Lankan Tamil peace activist. "He did not even consider that he would lose his life. He is a man of true Canadian values and now is our opportunity to demonstrate that all of us without exception recognize that" he added.

Birunthan died on Dec. 10, 2006. He drowned after trying to rescue his 15-year-old friend Kishoban Alakeswaran, who fell through

the thin ice of a storm water pond in the area.

Birunthan was honoured posthumously by Toronto police, Toronto firefighters and at Queen's Park.

The city received a petition with more than 300 names urging that the Wharnsby Park be renamed Birunthan Park, and supporters packed the Scarborough Community Council chambers Tuesday morning.

Birunthan's father Muralidaran Nadarajah said the renaming would ensure that his son will never be forgotten.

"Birunthan is a true hero . He is going to live forever in the memories of people. He will be remembered by future generations," Nadarajah said.

"I'm very thankful to the community and all the councillors.", the emotionally choked father added.

Councillor Cho urged his colleagues to support the renaming of the park.

"I haven't met him personally, but anyone I met who's known him says he's almost like a prophet child," said Cho, "almost a perfect child - very bright, an excellent student."

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Welcome to Peace Sri Lanka 2008

- Compiled by Rev. Fr M Emmanuel Pius -

The progenitors of the TAMILS and the SINHALA came from India to Sri Lanka. Their main religions were Hinduism and Buddhism of Indian origin. The Muslims came later, married and settled in this land. The Tamils of recent Indian origin were conscripted by the British as tea estate workers in the hill country. The people of Lanka composed of these main racial groups have all contributed to the birth of the modern Sri Lanka and should be treated as citizens of this country. The Dravidian (first recognised in 1816 by F.W. Ellis a British civil servant) and Aryan racist dichotomy is a perverted construct of British colonialism.

One fateful implication is the claim that Lanka is exclusively the land of the Sinhala Buddhist and that all other identities are to be tolerated as alien ethnic minorities. The minorities must be saved from the tyranny of the majoritarian mentality. The whole of Sri Lanka was not always ruled as one unitary state. Tamil Kingdoms existed independently in the North and so did various tribal chiefdoms throughout Wannu and elsewhere. Two Sinhala Kingdoms existed, one in the low country and the other in the upcountry.

The defeat and the occupation of the Tamil Kingdom and the Sinhala maritime kingdom by the Portuguese in 1505 saved Ceylon, from the clutches of the Arabs. Then that the destiny of the Island fell into the hands of the Dutch in 1656 and to the British in 1796 are historical facts. The British captured the remaining Kandyan Kingdom in 1815.

By amalgamation the then existing three kingdoms of Ceylon were unified and brought under one rule by the British in 1833 for their administrative convenience. It was the British colonialism that experimented with a united Ceylon with five constitutions

from 1838 to 1945, resisting opinions for federalism and escalating the divide. Enlightened by the quarrels of the past and moved by the reasonable fear Tamils demanded constitutional and jurisdictional protection from the British who left the whole power in the hands of a permanent majority Sinhala Buddhists forcing the Tamils under the new form of Neo-colonialism which deprives the minorities of their rights, denying their identity and destroying their homeland.

It is this freedom of the Tamil Kingdom that the Tamils in Sri Lanka are seeking now. They continued to retain their own identity, their language, their traditional religion, their traditional land in the North-East, their distinctive culture, and in Jaffna their traditional land law, the the-savalamai. In 1967 the word 'Eylam' was re-introduced into the present vocabulary by C. Suntharalingam ex-PM from Vavuniya. Though the consistent cry from the majority of the Tamils from 1833 may have been for federalism it was altered in 1976 at the Vaddukodai resolution into a demand for the 'Nation of Tamil Eelam'. The magnanimous Tamils are prepared even now to consider Federalism. All the Tamil militant groups and the Tamil parties proposed for a self rule in the North East and a shared one at the centre in Colombo, but their means to attain this end differs. The Holy Roman Empire divided into states according to the languages. The Americas and Africa are divided into states. India split into three while Malaysia into two.

The United Kingdom, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Canada, Switzerland (Leichenstain) and Italy (Vatican) are a few examples of modern day federalism. Preventing separation is the pretext, while the objective result is the protection of the constitutional status quo without accom-

modating even the more reasonable demands of the Tamil and Muslim people. A proposal for 'Interim Self Governing Authority' (ISGA) was tendered but rejected. The presently involved All Party Representative Committee (APRC) under Professor Tissa Vitharana has held more than 50 meetings but is unable to find enough takers (2006=2007).

'Fight now in order to negotiate later' will work only if the Government is ready with a package of political and constitutional reforms that appeal to the Tamils. The peace that has to be arranged is not a peace between the landlord and the tenant, between master and servant but between equals. Sri Lanka is littered with leaders who believed that they would be the ones to rout the fearsome separatists and unify the nation. No one has succeeded.

Peaceful means of opposition by the Tamils in and out of Parliament for more than twenty years since independence did not bear any fruit. Sit-in demonstrations had to face violent oppositions. 1956 the year Sinhala was made the official language marks the series of peaceful protests by the Tamils and violent responses by Sinhala. This had finally led the militancy to a demand for a separate state which in the view of the Tamils was reclamation of a sovereignty which they never lost to the Sinhala.

Banda - Chelva pact of 26th July 1957, Dudley-Chelva pact of 1965, Thimbu talks brokered by India between July to August 1985 have been discarded. The new constitution of 1972 got rid of the entrenched clause 29 of the old constitution. The constitution of 1978 made it sure that it would not be easily amendable or replaceable and included the requirement of a referendum.

The provincial Councils system and the provision to merge the

Northern and Eastern Provinces in the Indo-Lanka agreement of 29 July 1987, originated from political decisions, discussions, understandings and agreements that had been going on since 1956 have been ignored (Rajiv- Jayewardene pact). The central government never moved a centimetre to devolve power to the peripheral units as envisaged by the 13th amendment. Peace talks held subsequently by President Premadasa and President Kumaranunga were found to be deceitful. The Sri Lanka Government and the representatives of the Tamils (Ranil- Praba) made a Cease Fire Agreement in 2002 brokered by Norway which was in force till August 11th 2006. Every time an ethnic problem erupts, the route taken by the winning political parties is to replace the constitutions that they inherited with ones they designed in the most politically partisan and ethnically majoritarian manner (6th amendment made the Tamil North-East members to stay away from the parliament).

All the pundits ranging from think tanks even of the USA to Europe, Colombo, Peradeniya, Jaffna and elsewhere are not looking squarely at the problem at all. In spite of all the reported activities against Human rights, killings of members of National and international Non Governmental workers and the escalation of war America, Europe, Japan and Norway continue to grant financial assistance to Sri Lanka. The benign Indian neighbour watches the situation with seeming indifference. In the mostly Tamil north the separatists are so entrenched that they run a mini-state of more than 90 sq. kilometres comprising greater parts of the Jaffna district, entire Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu districts and part of the Mannar, Vavuniya, Trinco, Batticaloa, Amparai and Anuradhapuram districts with

conventional forces of land, sea, and air. People of these areas have to travel by the transport provided by the militants to cast their votes during the elections in the 'cluster of booths' situated within army-police controlled areas of Sri Lanka.

Either we dismantle the unitary state and begin constructing a pluralistic state to be shared by all nationalities and communities of Lanka to achieve peace or hold on to a unitary state and live in a perpetual state of terror, misery and war. It is no secret that powerful countries have entered into Sri Lanka's conflict in the garb of International Community. They guarantee to buttress the territorial integrity of an erring state. Pledge significant amounts of money, equate freedom struggle with international terrorism.

While praying and working for peace let us understand the sine-qua-non atmosphere needed to talk peace to settle this matter amicably, sincerely and truly without duplicity. Issue a time framed political proposal now or let the United Nations to solve this problem. Guarantee is necessary for any 'agreed settlements'. Great evil can happen when truth is at the mercy of political pressures. MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY.

A request for the Catholics to Pray: Prayer: May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, adored, glorified and loved today and everyday throughout the world forever and ever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on us!

Saint Clare pray for us!

Saint Philomena pray for us!

(Say the above prayer 1 'Our Father' and 10 "Hail Mary"s for 9 days with a lighted candle, publish prayer on the 9th day).

Ganesh Chaturthi

Celebrated at Lake Ontario by several hundred Hindus

On 29th September 2007 a boat cruise was engaged by Hindu Federation to carry the Murti of Lord Ganesh who was immersed in Lake Ontario at 4 PM in presence of several hundred of Hindu devotees, who accompanied the image in a procession, dancing, singing, before it was immersed in the lake.

This annual ritual see-off of the Lord is in his journey towards his abode in Kailash while taking away with him the misfortunes of all man here at this planet. All join in this final procession shouting "Ganapathi Bappa Morya, Purchya Varshi Laukariya" (O father Ganesh, come again early next year). Devotees take fresh spiritual resolves and pray to Lord Ganesh for inner spiritual strength to attain success in all your undertakings.

After the final offering of coconuts, flowers and camphor a special puja was performed by Pandit Roopnauth Sharma, President of Hindu Federation and other Presidents of various Mandirs, who too were present on the occasion along with the devotees, they lifted the Murti of their idol high with their hands and then immersed it in the lake.

There is an interesting story behind the symbolic snake, rat (Ganesh's vehicle) and the singular tusk associated with the childish pranks of Ganesh. The symbolic

mythology behind the story of the mouse, the snake and Ganesh's big belly and their relationship with the Moon on Ganesh's birthday is highly philosophic. The whole cosmos is known to be the belly of Ganesh. Parvati is the primordial energy. The seven realms above, seven realms below and seven oceans, are inside the cosmic belly of Ganesh, held together by the cosmic energy (Kundalini) symbolised as a huge snake which Ganesh ties around Him. The mouse is nothing but our EGO. Ganesh, using the mouse as a vehicle, exemplifies the need to control our ego. According to our Vedanta, one who has controlled ego enjoys the transcendental bliss of Ganesh-consciousness or God-consciousness.

The Ganesh festival has become so popular that the preparations for this festival begin weeks in advance. Hundreds of Ganesh statues are installed at various Mandirs. At the end of the festival, these statues are carried on decorated floats to be immersed into the sea. In Chennai city, hundreds of processions converge on the beaches on the concluding day to participate in the holy practice of immersing the Ganesh idols into the sea. These processions are marked by drum-beats, devotional songs and dancing.

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Monsoon Health



Freaky Fractures

By Mithura Anandarajah, PT

You're in the midst of decorating your house for Halloween this year. You hang up spider webs, pin up skulls and just as you step back to inspect your gory display, you trip over the plastic skeleton behind you. You stumble backwards and land on your wrist and feel significant pain. When you go to the emergency room you are shocked to find that you suffered a wrist fracture. A fall such as this should not have resulted in a fracture. Unfortunately, if you were to do a bone density test or take a full body x-ray, you probably will have signs and symptoms of osteoporosis.

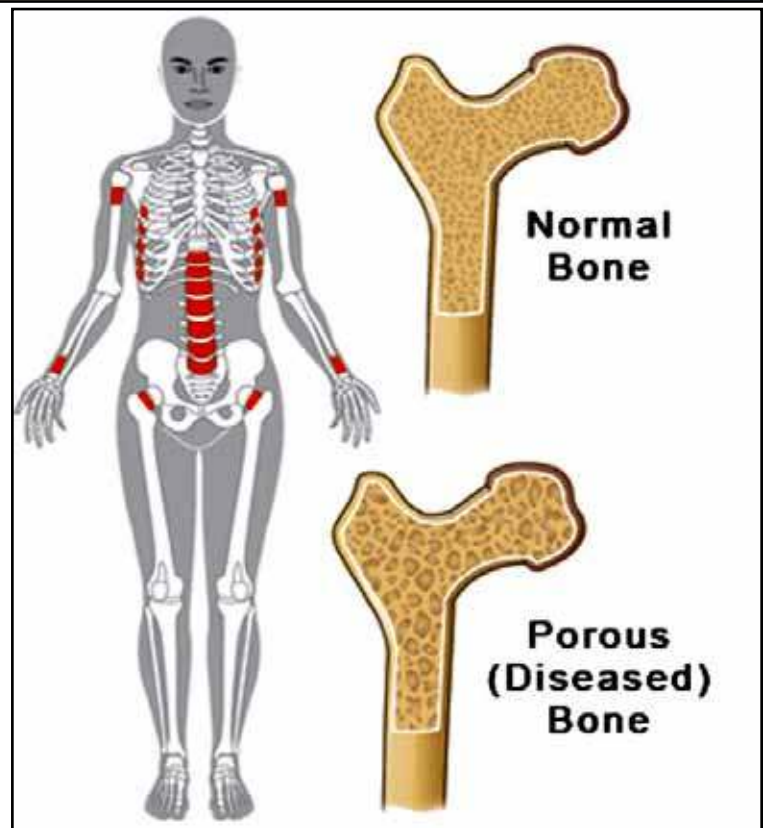
Osteoporosis is a disease affecting one in four women over the age of 50, and one in eight men. Basically, it is a disease resulting in the thinning and weakening of bone. What should be a solid dense structure evolves to a sponge-like foundation responsible for keeping us upright and intact. As the skeleton weakens, we become more susceptible to bone fractures that can occur spontaneously or as a result of a fall. Common locations for fractures include the hips, wrists and the back. In the low back, compression fractures can occur spontaneously without a specific injury. Over years repeated such fractures will result in chronic back pain and a change in the

posture of the individual. What results is the forward stooped posture commonly seen with older women. Hip fractures commonly occur in the elderly and are responsible for significantly affecting mobility and independence.

Often called a "silent thief" osteoporosis may be affecting us for many years before it is diagnosed or we become aware of it. Early detection and prevention therefore, become quite crucial. Anyone 65 or older is at a risk, especially with a family history of osteoporotic fractures. Also any vertebral compression fractures or fractures resulting from minor trauma, all serve as key indicators. Certain medical conditions or prolonged use of medications that inhibit absorption of nutrients can contribute to decreased calcium input. This results in the weakening of your skeletal structure. Bone mass (density) is the amount of bone present in the skeletal structure; the higher the density, the stronger the bones are. Genetic factors play a significant role in the level of bone density that you may have. Men have a higher bone density than women; Caucasians and Asians are known to be more susceptible than other races. Normally bone density accumulates during childhood and reaches a peak by around age 25.

It is then maintained for about 10 years. After age 35, both men and women will lose 0.3 to 0.5% per year as part of the normal aging process. Once menopause occurs and estrogen levels drop, the loss is further accelerated. Although osteoporosis is known generally to be a woman's disease, it is also a serious medical concern for men. Men account for approximately 30% of elderly fractures. Discussing your risk factors with your physician is important and if necessary, testing can then be done. A bone density test can safely, painlessly and accurately determine your bone density.

Once you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis, there are a variety of treatment options available to you. The goal of treatment is to prevent fractures and to maximize your bone density and bone health. Since it is virtually impossible to get back the bone that has been lost, the treatment is not a cure for the condition. Prevention therefore, is equally as important as treatment. There are several medications that can minimize bone loss and facilitate bone strength. Discuss these options with your physician. A healthy lifestyle like quitting smoking, exercise and a diet rich in calcium and vitamin D all contribute to good bone health. Exercise does not necessarily increase bone density, but



it maintains muscle strength and balance which decrease the incidence of falls and injuries. Postural education and strengthening further prevent spontaneous compression fractures in the spine. If you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis and would like to increase your activity level, consult with a physiotherapist how to best do so. You may need to avoid certain activities or high impact sports that could result in spontaneous fractures.

If you do have a fracture as a result of a minor incident, discuss the possibility of having osteoporosis with your family physician. It is better to identify the risks earlier and focus on prevention and treatment. Avoid those freaky fractures this Halloween and always.

Mithura Anandarajah is a physiotherapist working in the Mississauga area. Email at mithura_rehab@yahoo.com for further questions or comments.

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Monsoon Arts



"The short story is specially suited to the concerns of a fast developing culture, characterized by the diversity of its traditions and populations"

Remarks by Chief Guest, Ambassador Robert Blake at the book launch of "Nothing Grows Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories", on Oct 31, Colombo, Sri Lanka: Mr. Pramod DeSilva, Dr. Sarath Amunugama, Dr. Tissa Abeysekara, Hon. Anura Priyadharshana Yapa, Hon. Luxman Yapa Aberwardane, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor for me to be here tonight to serve as Chief Guest for the launching of the anthology Nothing Grows Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories. At the outset let me express my admiration and congratulations to the organizers of this event, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, for undertaking this important initiative to recognize and give encouragement to short story authors writing in English.

I was delighted to receive this invitation. Let me say at the outset that I have never been clever or imaginative enough to write fiction, although I am sure that my friends in the JVP and perhaps elsewhere might say that most of what I say and write belongs in the fictional category! But I am an avid reader of fiction and am therefore happy to be here to encourage the accomplished writers represented in this anthology today.

The United States has its own

awards for short stories known as the O'Henry awards. Named after the prolific short story writer William Sidney Porter who wrote under the pseudonym of O. Henry, the first prizes were awarded in 1919 to "strengthen the art of the short story and to stimulate younger authors." In 1927 Doubleday was chosen to publish the first volume of O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories. This tradition has continued ever since.

The beginnings of the modern short story can, in many ways, be found in America. Many credit Edgar Allan Poe as an originator of the craft. It was he who first undertook to analyze the art form, defining the short story as a narrative that "can be read at one sitting."

Poe had an ambition to create an independent American literary tradition and turned to magazines to help do so. From The Saturday Evening Post to The New Yorker, from Hawthorn to Hemingway - short stories brought ordinary Americans news about the way they live, and why. To this day, the New Yorker, Harper's and Atlantic magazines and many other publications continue to provide a rich menu of wonderful short stories for their readers. Numerous great American writers have arguably done their best work in this medium. Washington Irving, Eudora Welty, Mark Twain, Flannery O'Connor, Jack London, Katherine Anne Porter, Tennessee Williams, Kate Chopin, and

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. - some of these authors' most memorable pieces are short stories.

The short story is both a result and an illustration of two of America's greatest values: democracy and diversity.

Democratically - the nature of short story form lends itself to exploring the life of the common man, the experiences and crises of ordinary life that resonate with us all. Emerson called this equal treatment of life stories, "the new importance given to the single person." Yet, as writer Gail Godwin noted, "The more you focus on the singular and the strange, the more you become aware of the universal and the infinite."

Between the civil war and the outbreak of World War I, immigration was the greatest human story of the time and a slew of eager writers portrayed this experience in the short story genre. Immigrant writers created a literature "with an altogether new substance, saturated with the truth of the life they are experiencing." Our nation's immigrants provided the foundation for our diversity that has given America its greatest strength. American short fiction reflects that same diversity. From Bret Harte's newly settled Far West, to William Faulkner's sweltering Deep South or O. Henry's bustling North Eastern cityscapes. It is the story of the dusty plains of Oklahoma, the factories of Chicago, the mining towns of

the Sierra Nevada, the snows of Alaska or the teaming tenements of New York City.

The short story is specially suited to the concerns of a fast developing culture, characterized by the diversity of its traditions and populations. It is especially notable for the part it has played in telling the story of ethnic minorities in America - the Native American, Asian, African, Jewish, and Hispanic and countless other immigrant experiences of our growing nation. Today, the thriving American short story genre speaks in a host of different voices - those of T. Coraghessan Boyle, Jamaica Kinkaid, Amy Tan, John Updike, Grace Paley, Tobias Wolff, Saul Bellow, even Steven King. In fact, two of the finalists for the 2007 National Book Awards were collections of short stories.

In an age when radio, movies and TV compete for the writer's audience it is heartening to see a leading newspaper like the Daily News encouraging a resurgence of the short story art form. In doing so they create an outlet where English language authors can recognize and celebrate the diverse experiences and cultures of Sri Lanka.

Newspapers like the Daily News have been featuring short stories for several years now, and I commend incumbent ANCL Chairman Mr. Dandula Padmakumara for encouraging writers on the Sri Lankan literary scene by providing them a showcase

and audience for their works.

I offer my sincere congratulations to editors Dr. Lakshmi de Silva and Vijita Fernando for undertaking the arduous task of judging over 300 entries, and I look forward to reading their final selections.

But most importantly, I congratulate the twenty-four authors whose works are featured in Nothing Grows Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories. Their success will share new visions and voices of Sri Lanka with the world.

Let me conclude with a quote from O'Henry who said "There are stories in everything. I've got some of my best yarns from park benches, lampposts, and newspaper stands." One of his stories, "Springtime A La Carte," grew out of a restaurant menu he and a friend were perusing. The story is about a love sick woman who typed daily menus for a New York restaurant. One day she absent-mindedly typed, "Dearest Walter, with hard-boiled egg." Her lost love saw it, realized only she could have typed it and found her.

I hope all aspiring Sri Lankan short-story writers will draw inspiration from this anecdote to believe in themselves. Thanks to the Daily News and Lake House, there will now be fresh opportunities for Sri Lanka's talented writers.

Thank you.

[Courtesy: US Embassy, Colombo, Sri Lanka]

Rajesh Vaidya displays his brilliance in Toronto



Rajesh's daughter Maalavika singing while the father plays the Veena



Mohan Vaidya and Rajesh's daughter Maalavika

South Indian Veena Specialist Rajesh Vaidya's Veena Voyage Recital held at Winston Churchill Collegiate on Saturday, November 4, 2007



Rajesh Vaidya on the Veena accompanied by Jeyanthi Ratnakumar of Veenaalayam



Mohan Vaidya, brother of Rajesh who was the vocal artiste



Lawyer Bala Balasubramaniam presenting an Award to Rajesh Vaidya



Rajesh Vaidya on the Veena accompanied by Jeyanthi Ratnakumar of Veenaalayam

Photo Courtesy: focusdigitalstudio

Be stimulated by Kundalini Yoga



By Madhushala Senaratne

A renowned master of kundalini yoga once said that it is our birthright to be happy, healthy and holy. "However the fulfilment of this right depends on our ability to be in control of our acts and ourselves and yoga is a tool which helps us achieve this state," says Cormac Davey who teaches this form of yoga in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

We live in a stressful, anxious and insecure world, where we are hardly conscious of our acts. "For example consider a simple act such as breathing. Our posture, affects our breathing which in turn affects our health. Yoga trains you to be conscious of such acts," Cormac said.

There are different types of yoga, each emphasising different aspects. For example, Hatha Yoga lays emphasis on posture, while other forms such as Bhakti and Karma emphasise devotion and service respectively. Kundalini yoga encompasses and draws from all yogic systems and techniques. It is a relatively new form of yoga, which was introduced to the West by Yogi Bhajan. "Kundalini yoga too has its many forms," Cormac said.

Kundalini yoga, like any other form of yoga is a potent and effective system of self-transformation and personal development. It stimulates individual growth through systematic techniques that strengthen the nervous system and balances the glandular system (the guardians of health), for increased stability and vitality.

Meditation, which is also an aspect of yoga,

improves mental concentration, sharpens awareness and gives a direct experience of consciousness. "Yoga means a union between the mind, body and soul. It is a union between our human and spiritual self while also recognizing that while we are human beings, we are also spiritual beings," Cormac explained.

It gives you a sense of direction. An ancient philosophy and approach to life, yoga helps you understand what you should and should not do.

Yoga is practised for a variety of reasons such as for weight concerns, relieving stress, for better posture, to feel energetic and flexible or as a form of exercise," he said, explaining that sometimes people fail to comprehend its true benefits.

The word 'kundalini' literally means 'a lock of hair'. It is a metaphor, a poetic way of life describing the flow of energy and consciousness that already exists within each one of us. These practices enable you to merge with, or 'yoke' with the universal self. This merging of individual consciousness with universal unconsciousness creates a 'divine union'.

The kundalini yoga class is simple and includes the chanting of several mantras at the beginning and end of the session. The standard format of the session includes exercises incorporating breathing, relaxation and meditation. Some classes include discussions about life and spiritual philosophy.

[ST]

Rameswaram's songs are a big hit

Jeeva seems to be an actor who reinvents himself with every film he does.

After being critically acclaimed for his role as a mentally-disturbed youth in Kattradhu Tamizh, Jeeva will now play a Sri Lankan refugee in his upcoming flick Rameswaram.

The film's audio release, which took place recently at the studios of Sun TV, was telecast live on the channel and songs from the new film were also aired along with it. Niru (of Kalabha Kaadhalan fame) who is a Sri Lankan Tamil himself has scored the music. Speaking on the occasion, Niru said, "As I also am a refugee, I am well aware of the plight of the

Sri Lankan refugees and have undergone similar hardships. Hence, I could relate to the situations in the songs and the entire story as well. And this has been reflected in my music."

One particular song called Ellorayum Ettri Poga Kappal Varrumaa, which talks about the plight of the refugees waiting for a ship to take them to a safe haven, seems to have struck a chord with the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees across the world.

Apparently, their connection to the song on an emotional level, has contributed to the success of the album.



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CHOLA Dynasty

An Imperial dynasty that emerged in the ninth century, the Cholas went on to rule over much of southern India for four hundred years, during which time they undertook an extensive programme of temple construction that transformed the landscape of the region. Rich endowments funded the rituals activities of these temples and bronze representations of Hindu gods, especially those associated with Siva and Vishnu, were specially commissioned from master craftsman for ritual worship in the new temples. These figures, many of which are still the objects of devotion in temples a thousand years after their creation, constitute one of the greatest bodies

of cast-bronze sculpture in world art.

Before the middle of the ninth century the Cholas were one of a number of powerful independent cultural groups jockeying for position in Southern India, the region today known as Tamil Nadu. Their rivals were principally the Pallavas, the Pandyas, the Cheras and, further north the Chalukyas. Little is known about the early Cholas until the rise of Vijayalaya, whose exploits are known because they were recorded in stone inscriptions and copper plate foundation documents.

Taking advantage of conflict between the Pallavas and the Pandyas, Vijayalaya captured the town

of Tanjavur where he established a royal court and founded the dynastic line of the Cholas.

During their reign the Cholas ruled most of South India, Sri-Lanka, Maldives Island and even parts Indonesian island of Java from their homeland in Tanjore. The great agricultural wealth of the region combined with control of the seaboard gave the Cholas access to the prosperous maritime trade routes which included those of the Tang Dynasty of China, Jewish traders in Aden (Yemen), the Srivijaya empire in the Malayan archipelago and the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad. Their empire maintained diplomatic relations with China,

Myanmar, and Malaya across the Indian Ocean.

Following the Medieval period the Cholas intermarried and formed political alliances with the Chaluka dynasty to consolidate their regional position. The Chaluka-Chola period, lasted from 1070-1279AD, during which time Kulotunga I (ruled 1070-1120 AD), who oversaw an important flourishing of the arts, is perhaps their most celebrated King. This period also witnessed the gradual decline of the Cholas, beginning with the loss of Sri-Lanka and the increasing threat of a revitalized Pandyan empire to the South and the Hosalyas to the north. Following the death of Rajendra Chola

III (ruled 1246-1279); the already shrinking Chola Empire was absorbed by the increasingly forceful Pandya Monarchs.

The Chola rulers are remembered for what they created rather than what they conquered. The Chola rulers were active patrons of Arts and during their reign, poetry, drama, music and dance flourished. They also constructed stone temple complexes decorated inside and out with painted and sculptured Hindu Gods. Some of the best known artistic remains from the time period are the bronzes that were commissioned for each temple of South India.

Chola Dynasty

Name of King	Period	Capital
Vijayalaya Chola	848-871AD	Tanjavur
Aditya Chola	871-881AD	Tanjavur
Paranataka Chola-I	907-955AD	Tanjavur
Kandaratiya Chola	950-957AD	Tanjavur
Arunchchaya Chola	956-957AD	Tanjavur
Parantaka Chola II	957-970AD	Tanjavur
Uththama Chola	970-985AD	Tanjavur
Raja Raja Chola I	985-1014AD	Tanjavur
Rajendra Chola I	1014-1044AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
RajathiRaja Chola I	1018-1054AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Rajendra Chola-II	1052-1064AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Virarajendra Chola	1063-1070AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Athirajendra Chola	1067-1070AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Kulotunga Chola I	1070-1120AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Vikrama Chola	1118-1135AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Kulotunga Chola II	1133-1150AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Rajaraja Chola II	1146-1163AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Rajathiraja Chola II	1163-1178AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Kulotunga Chola III	1178-1218AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Rajaraja Chola III	1216-1256AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram
Rajendra Chola III	1246-1279AD	Gangaikonda Cholapuram (GKC)



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Deepavali celebrated in Parliament House of Canada

.. from darkness to light,
 ...from ignorance to knowledge,
 ...from death to eternal life
 lead me, my master; let thy peace
 pervade the universe.

Deepavali is celebrated by all Hindus worldwide, and true to its multi-culturalism Canada was no exception. On 1st November 2007 Pandit Roopnauth Sharma, the Hindu spiritual leader led a group of nine priests from Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, who all together chanted Vedic mantras at the parliament house, which was attended by several dignitaries besides RT Hon Stephen Harper Prime Minister of Canada, Opposition leader in Parliament Stephen Dion and the High Commissioner of India to Canada Shri R L Narayan.

Over 500 Indo-Canadians dressed in their traditional attire from nine Indo-Canadians organisations participated in the function. This special ceremony was attended also by over 50 members of parliament, 20 Ambassadors and High Commissioners from different parts of world. The inaugural festival lamp was lighted by RT Hon Stephen Harper, prime minister of Canada . By lighting the oil lamps, the Hindus are thanking the gods for the happiness, knowledge, peace and wealth that they have received.

Prime Minister Harper commended India 's cultural heritage and its commitment to linguistic, ethnic and spiritual pluralism. " India has

amassed a millennia-old history of linguistic, ethnic, and spiritual pluralism. Such diversity has, at times, posed significant challenges for India and complemented the country in successfully meeting the challenge," he said.

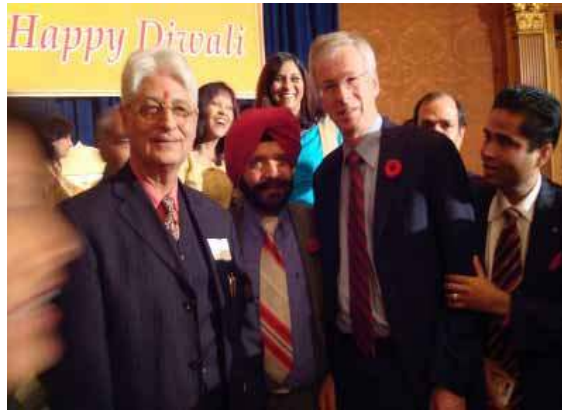
Speaking on the occasion, Shri Narayan said the festival is celebrated as victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.

There are various alleged origins attributed to this festival. Some hold that they celebrate the marriage of Lakshmi with Lord Vishnu. In Bengal the festival is dedicated to the worship of Kali. On this day also Sri Krishna killed the demon Narakasura.

It also commemorates that blessed day on which the triumphant Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana. O Ram! The light of lights, the self-luminous inner light of the Self is ever shining steadily in the chamber of our heart. We sit quietly, close our eyes, withdraw the senses, fix the mind on this supreme light and enjoy the real Deepavali, by attaining illumination of the soul.

He who Himself sees all but whom no one beholds, who illumines the intellect, the sun, the moon and the stars and the whole universe but whom they cannot illumine, He indeed is Brahman, He is the inner Self. Celebrate the real Deepavali by living in Brahman, and enjoy the eternal bliss of the soul.

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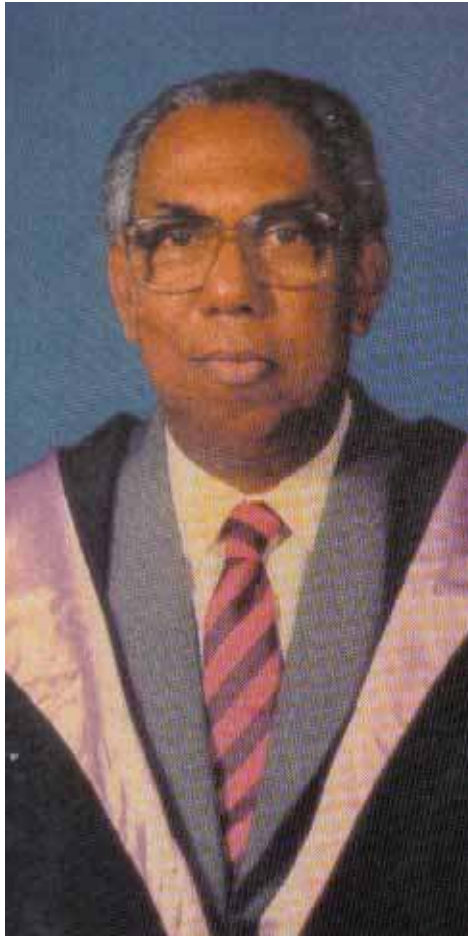
Late Dr. ES Thevasagayam Academician and Philanthropist

J.J. Atputharajah

Eliyathamby Samuel Thevasagayam who passed away recently in Colombo, Sri Lanka was a recognized academician and philanthropist. He is a son of the late Mr. Eliyathamby, head master of the primary school at St. John's Chundikuli, Sri Lanka. He earlier served as a Zoology master at St. John's Jaffna. He was a calm and confident teacher of science in the higher forms and he also served as a house master. Many of his students consider him as a pedagogue of consciousness and capability with the appropriate disposition.

After his Masters Degree from the University of Madras, he obtained his MSc from the University of California and subsequently got his PhD. from the University of Korea. He took up the career as an entomologist and served in the Medical and the Agricultural Departments in Sri Lanka. Later he assumed duties as a consultant entomologist with the W.H.O serving in the Far East and the Pacific countries. Thus his academic excellence enabled him to serve his own school, his country and the world at large.

His contribution for the welfare of others was not in the least insignificant. He took over the role of principal-ship at St. John's at a time of great need. After his predecessors has had a very tragic and trying experience, he dared to come back to assume principal-ship in January 1987 to fill the leadership vacuum. During his time he was able to collect funds from old boys and foreign benefactors and build a new science bloc consisting of laboratories, administrative bloc and gymnasium. Though the situation in Jaffna prevented him from spending his time at St. John's, he looked into the interests of his Alma Mater from Colombo, when the late Mr. Thanapalan helped him with the administration of the school. At Colombo he established a firm to provide IT skills for the Tamil youths and also give them opportunities of employment. During



the latter part of his life span he built two blocs of buildings for the primary school at St. John's-one in remembrance of his father and the other in his memory. Later in Colombo he established a firm to provide IT skills for the Tamil youths and opportunities of employment as well.

Eliyathamby Thevasagayam was a man of many parts. He used his knowledge, skills and benevolent attitude to help his fellowmen in his own country as well as in the international arena. May the Almighty grant him all solace in the yonder world.

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Beloved Spiritual Teacher Sri Chinmoy Passes Away

Sri Chinmoy 1931 - 2007 - Eulogised by World Leaders and Luminaries

Internationally renowned world harmony leader, spiritual teacher and humanitarian Sri Chinmoy, who passed away on the morning of 11 October at the age of 76, was buried near his home in Queens, New York. During the memorial week at a private ceremony, UN officials, religious leaders of all faiths, political figures, humanitarian workers, renowned musicians and world-class athletes from all around the world joined thousands of followers to pay final tributes to the beloved spiritual teacher, Sri Chinmoy. They gathered to express their condolences on Sri Chinmoy's sudden passing at a meditation garden in New York where his body lay in wake.

Leaders who could not be present but who sent letters of condolence ranged from national leaders and Nobel laureates from countries as varied as United States, Germany, Russia, Nepal and Namibia, to senators and members of congress.

President Mikhail Gorbachev wrote, "With deep regret I have learned that my long-term close friend, the friend of my family and of our Foundation, Sri Chinmoy, passed away yesterday... This is a loss for the whole world. Through many years of his selfless work for the sake of peace, Sri Chinmoy has gained recognition and love in the farthest corners of our planet... In our hearts he will forever remain a man who dedicated his whole life to peace... We shall remember Sri Chinmoy forever!"

President Nelson Mandela wrote: "It is with great sadness that I learnt of the passing of my dear friend, Sri Chinmoy. Today, the world is a lesser place as I recall his lifetime of service to humanity in the great cause of world peace. I will remember always the time we spent together and treasure his support and encouragement over the years."

President Bill Clinton wrote: "Throughout his many years, Sri Chinmoy enriched the lives of countless others and served as a model of

generosity and discipline to those he met, fostering an atmosphere of compassion, harmony, and unity. Sri Chinmoy was a leader, humanitarian, artist, athlete, and public servant who will be sorely missed. His legacy of kindness, reflection, and resolve will endure for many years to come."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote, "Sri Chinmoy was a great man. God is smiling to know the immense good he has accomplished and encouraged in others. In a world of suspicion, hostility and conflict, he worked tirelessly to bring the different faiths together and inspired many to emulate."

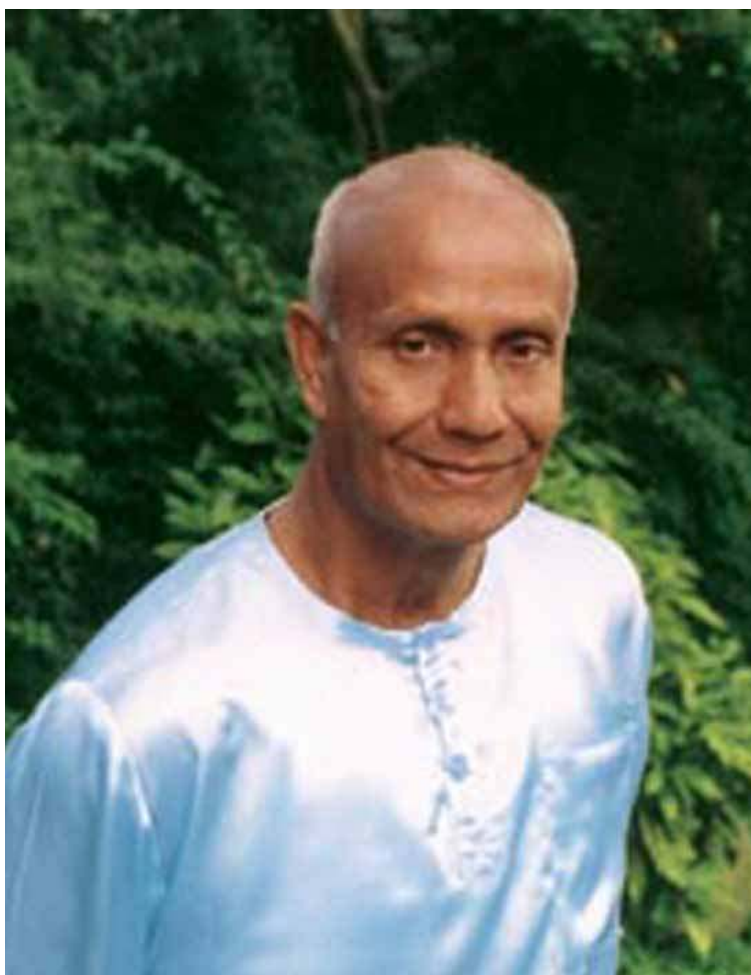
Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Chief of Staff to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon remarked, "I am sure I represent the Secretary-General when I express my profound respect and gratitude to Sri Chinmoy for his contribution to the building up of inner peace in the United Nations as in the world at large."

Sri Chinmoy was an ardent supporter of the United Nations. Since 1970 he served as the leader of the Peace Meditation at the United Nations, an association of delegates and staff he founded under the aegis of the third UN Secretary-General U Thant, which he led twice-weekly.

Respected and loved worldwide, Sri Chinmoy's philosophy for world peace was manifested through a wide array of activities, ranging from literature to art to sports to music. The universal nature of his philosophy embraced and encouraged people of all backgrounds, faiths and nationalities to work together for peace.

Sri Chinmoy's love of sports spanned a lifetime and resulted in a number of landmark programs for peace and self-transcendence. In 1987, Sri Chinmoy founded the World Harmony Run, the world's largest relay for peace involving millions of participants in 140 nations.

Sri Chinmoy also founded the Sri Chinmoy Marathon team which is a leading promoter of ultra-distance races, sponsoring events ranging from



marathons to the world's longest footrace, a 3100 mile run.

Hailed as a modern day renaissance man, Sri Chinmoy wrote over 1600 books of prose and poetry, composed nearly 21,000 pieces of music, and performed more than 750 Peace Concerts worldwide - all offered free of charge - in venues including Royal Albert Hall in London, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall in New York, San Francisco's Davies Hall, Moscow's Russia Hall and Tokyo's Budokan Hall. He was an avid runner, tennis player and champion weightlifter.

A dedicated humanitarian, Sri Chinmoy's service organisation, The Oneness-Heart-Tears and Smiles, collected worldwide and distributed millions of dollars of medical supplies

throughout Asia and Africa. Devoted to easing pain and alleviating suffering, Sri Chinmoy once wrote, "My Lord, do give me the capacity to wipe every tear from every heart."

Sri Chinmoy was born on August 27, 1931 in a small village in east India. Orphaned at the age of 11, Sri Chinmoy then lived with his six brothers and sisters at a spiritual community in southern India, where he spent the next 20 years in intense prayer and meditation. Heeding an inner call, he travelled to the United States in 1964 and made New York City his home.

In the 43 years since his arrival in the West, Sri Chinmoy became a model of the potential of humankind. Opening meditation centers through-

out the world for peace and harmony he tirelessly traveled the globe to share his inspiration and goodwill.

A champion of interfaith harmony, Sri Chinmoy was beloved by religious leaders of all denominations. From Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II to Mother Teresa to the Buddhist patriarchs in many countries, Sri Chinmoy was celebrated as a true servant of God.

"I am so pleased with all the good work you are doing for world peace and for people in so many countries," wrote Mother Teresa. "May we continue to work together and share together, all for the glory of God and for the good of man."

"The physical and the spiritual must go together," taught Sri Chinmoy. "They cannot be separated."

In this light, Sri Chinmoy astounded sports heroes and luminaries through a weightlifting career which he began in 1985, at the age of 54. Weight being anything but insurmountable, Sri Chinmoy credited God's Grace which gave him inner peace for the ability to lift thousands, sometimes even tens of thousands of pounds. From cars to elephants to planes, Sri Chinmoy lifted almost every object imaginable in various styles of strongman lifts.

"I have learned from Sri Chinmoy that the size of the arm does not make the man; the size of the heart makes the man," said five-time Mr. Universe and Best Built Man of the 20th Century, Bill Pearl. "Nobody on earth has done what Sri Chinmoy has done."

At galleries worldwide, including the Carrousel du Louvre and UNESCO in Paris and the Russian National Museum of Decorative Arts, selections of Sri Chinmoy's paintings and 16 million "Dream-Freedom-Peace-Bird" drawings have given joy and inspiration to countless people.

Over 7,000 people continue to follow his philosophy through more than 300 Sri Chinmoy Centres worldwide.

South Africa's Freedom Charter

In 1952, during the Defiance Campaign, Z.K. Matthews of the African National Congress (ANC) had the idea of writing a Freedom Charter for the Democratic South Africa of the future. People were asked to contribute what they thought the Freedom Charter should contain and thousands of ideas were sent in, some just on scrap of paper. From these the Freedom Charter was written. In 1955 the final Charter was approved by thousands of people of all races who gather at Kliptown near Johannesburg. A year later the Apartheid government tried to prove that the Freedom Charter was treacherous. More than 150 people, including Nelson Mandela, were arrested and tried in the famous Treason Trial. The court failed to prove that the Freedom Charter was treacherous, but later banned it anyway. It remained banned until 1990. The freedom Charter forms the basis of South Africa's present constitution.

South Africa's Freedom Charter

We, the people of South Africa, declare, for all our country and the world to hear, that this land of beauty and rugged places will grant equality to its rainbow of races.

We pledge that all will enjoy the same rights; that all shall be equal before the Law and it's might; that the doors of learning and culture shall stand wide for the sharing of knowledge and rekindling of pride. We pledge to our children, our aged, those in poor health that all will share in our country's great wealth. There will be no hunger and all will have homes. There'll be friendship and warmth so none stand alone. We will have freedom of worship and freedom of expression with welfare and safety and no need of repression. There'll be work for all and wages well paid with a strong new economy and vibrant trade. No laws and cruel passes will keep cultures apart, for our people will unite with one heart.

Wonders of Jesus Christ in Toronto

Jesus said "I tell you the truth, whosoever believes in me will do what I do - yes, he will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12)

"Those who believe; In my name they will drive out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up snakes with their hands and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all, they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well" (Mark 16:17-18)

These words do not come to pass in the life of every Christian, but in the life of Rev. Sadhu Paul Solomon of Madras, India every single word is fulfilled. Lot of people who are possessed with devils or dirty spirits are being delivered. Many people with different types of deadly diseases are healed through his prayers. People who faced failures in their life are finding success in business and other matters and shine in the society after his prayers. Broken families have been reunited and rejoice in the Lord. Barrens have been blessed with children.

In Canada also there are a lot of people from different walks of life with different problems in life. Many have depression and time to time some



commit suicide. Many have no peace of mind and no peace in their families. We hear of murders here and there. Some people suffer because of witch craft and dirty spirit attacks.

At a time like this, it is very helpful if a prominent servant of God comes here to have a healing crusade at Toronto. All are welcome irrespective of race, religion or language to participate in the healing crusade that is going to be held by the end of October, 2007 and receive the blessings. Dates and time will be notified later.

Contact :
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Non-Violent Approach Can Lead To Positive Political Changes

by His Holiness The Dalai Lama

The thousands of people who marched in the cities of Eastern Europe in recent decades, the unwavering determination of the people in my homeland of Tibet and the recent demonstrations in Burma are powerful reminders of this truth.

Freedom is the very source of creativity and human development. It is not enough, as Communist systems assumed, to provide people with food, shelter and clothing. If we have these things but lack the precious air of liberty to sustain our deeper nature, we remain only half human.

In the past, oppressed people often resorted to violence in their struggle to be free. But visionaries such as Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. have shown us that successful changes can be brought about non-violently.

I believe that, at the basic human level, most of us wish to be peaceful. Deep down, we desire constructive, fruitful growth and dislike destruction.

Many people today agree that we need to reduce violence in our society. If we are truly serious about this, we must deal with the roots of violence, particularly those that exist within each of us. We need to embrace "inner disarmament," reducing our own emotions of suspicion, hatred and hostility toward our brothers and sisters.

Furthermore, we must re-examine how we relate to the very question of the use of violence in today's profoundly inter-connected world.

One may sometimes feel that one can solve a problem quickly with force, but such success is often achieved at the expense of the rights and welfare of others. One problem may have been solved, but the seed of another is planted, thus opening a new chapter in a cycle of violence and counter-violence.

From the Velvet Revolution in the former Czechoslovakia to the popular pro-democracy movement in the Philippines, the world has seen how a non-violent approach can lead to positive political changes. But the genuine practice of non-violence is still at an experimental stage. If this experiment succeeds, it can open the way to a far more peaceful world.

We need to embrace a more realistic approach to dealing with human conflicts, an approach that is in tune with a new reality of heavy interdependence in which the old concepts of 'we' and 'they' are no longer relevant. The very idea of total victory for one's own side and the total defeat of one's enemy is untenable. In violent conflicts, the innocent are often the first casualties, as the war in Iraq and Sudan's Darfur crisis painfully remind us.

Today, the only viable solution to human conflicts will come through dialogue and reconciliation based on the spirit of compromise.

Many of the problems we confront today are our own creation. I believe that one of the root causes of these manmade problems is the inability of humans to control their agitated minds and hearts — an area in which the teachings of the world's great religions have much to offer.

A scientist from Chile once told me that it is inappropriate for a scientist to be attached to his particular field of study, because that would undermine his objectivity. I am a



Buddhist practitioner, but if I mix up my devotion for Buddhism with an attachment to it, my mind will be biased toward it.

A biased mind never sees the complete picture, and any action that results will not be in tune with reality. If religious practitioners can heed this scientist's advice and refrain from being attached to their own faith traditions, it could prevent the growth of fundamentalism. It also could enable such followers to genuinely respect faith traditions other than their own. I often say that while one can adhere to the principle of "one truth, one religion" at the level of one's personal faith, we should embrace at the same time the principle of "many truths, many religions" in the context of wider society. I see no contradiction between these two.

I do not mean to suggest that religion is indispensable to a sound ethical way of life, or for that matter to genuine happiness. In the end, whether one is a believer or a nonbeliever, what matters is that one be a good, kind and warmhearted person.

A deep sense of caring for others, based on a profound sense of interconnection, is the essence of the teachings of all great religions of the world. In my travels, I always consider my foremost mission to be the promotion of basic human qualities of goodness — the need for and appreciation of the value of love, our natural capacity for compassion and the need for genuine fellow feeling.

No matter how new the face or how different the dress and behavior, there is no significant division between us and other people.

When I first saw a photograph of Earth taken from outer space, it powerfully brought home to me how small and fragile the planet is and how petty our squabbles are. Amid our perceived differences, we tend to forget how the world's different religions, ideologies and political systems were meant to

serve humans, not destroy them.

When I traveled to the former Soviet Union in the late 1970s, I encountered widespread paranoia, even among ordinary people who feared that the West hated them so much that it was ready to invade their country. Of course, I knew this was mere projection.

Today, more than ever, we need to make this fundamental recognition of the basic oneness of humanity the foundation of our perspective on the world and its challenges. From the dangerous rate of global warming to the widening gap between rich and poor, from the rise of global terrorism to regional conflicts, we need a fundamental shift in our attitudes and our consciousness — a wider, more holistic outlook.

As a society, we need to shift our basic attitude about how we educate our younger generation. Something is fundamentally lacking in our modern education when it comes to educating the human heart. As people begin to explore this important question, it is my hope that we will be able to redress the current imbalance between the development of our brains and the development of our hearts.

To promote greater compassion, we must pay special attention to the role of women. Given that mothers carry the foetus for months within their own bodies, from a biological point of view women in general may possess greater sensitivity of heart and capacity for empathy. My first teacher of love and compassion was my own mother, who provided me with maximum love.

I do not mean to reinforce in any way the traditional view that a woman's place is confined to the home. I believe that the time has come for women to take more active roles in all domains of human society, in an age in which education and the capacities of the mind, not physical strength, define leadership. This could help create a more equitable and

consumed its resources as if there were no end to them. Now not only individuals but also governments are seeking a new ecological order. I often joke that the moon and stars look beautiful, but if any of us tried to live on them, we would be miserable.

This blue planet of ours is the most delightful habitat we know. Its life is our life, its future our future. Now Mother Nature is telling us to cooperate. In the face of such global problems as the greenhouse effect and the deterioration of the ozone layer, individual organizations and single nations are helpless. Our mother is teaching us a lesson in universal responsibility.

The 20th century became a century of bloodshed; despite its faltering start, the 21st century could become one of dialogue, one in which compassion, the seed of nonviolence, will be able to flourish. But good wishes are not enough. We must seriously address the urgent question of the proliferation of weapons and make worldwide efforts toward greater external disarmament.

Large human movements spring from individual human initiatives. If you feel that you cannot have much of an effect, the next person may also become discouraged, and a great opportunity will have been lost.

On the other hand, each of us can inspire others simply by working to develop our own altruistic motivations — and engaging the world with a compassion-tempered heart and mind.

[The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the spiritual leader of Tibet. Since 1959, he has been living in Dharamsala, in northern India, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile]

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Monsoon Newslines

Indian Stock Markets Surge, But Some Fear Too Fast

By Anjana Pasricha

Indian stock markets touched record highs this week as foreign investors pour massive funds into one of the fastest-growing economies in the world; reports say that there are concerns that the sharp rise in the markets could lead to volatility.

Even the most optimistic investors had not predicted the level India's stock markets reached this week. The Mumbai Stock Exchange's Sensex index went past 20,000 points - a 45 percent rise since the start of the year.

Market analysts say share prices have been driven to record highs by foreign investors, who have pumped in \$18 billion this year.

The overseas buyers are attracted by an economy that has grown an average of 8.5 percent a year since 2003.

But the celebrations are tinged with caution.

India's trade minister, Kamal Nath, is optimistic about the surging markets - but says the government is watching carefully.

"Sometimes it concerns us. But again, the fundamentals being strong, we feel India is emerging as a major parking lot for investors," he said.

Economists say there are worries that the huge flow of foreign capital into the country could just as easily be pulled out, leading to a sudden drop in share prices. The flood of money could also stoke inflation.

Such concerns have prompted the Central Bank to take measures to

moderate the investment flood.

It has ordered banks to set aside more cash reserves to slow down lending. It is also tightening the rules under which foreign funds and businesses make stock purchases through brokers. The bank is concerned that anonymous investors could be creating excessive speculation.

Virendra Kumar heads a financial analysis firm, Value Search. He says the concerns have been triggered by the massive price rises in a very short period. The stock index levels have risen 25 percent in just six weeks.

"Investors are coming today into the market with huge expectations. To sustain this momentum at this level could be difficult... It has to slow down. Today, expectation is very exaggerated. Investors have to moderate their expectations," he said.

Still, recent estimates are that India's strong economic growth will remain on track, and this is triggering confidence that the good times will continue.

Central Bank Governor Y.V. Reddy recently said he expects the economy to continue its surge.

"While there could be unexpected global shocks ... the growth path is likely to be not much different than what it was a few months back," he noted. "We have at the end of it retained the growth projection at 8.5 percent."

Analyst Kumar says he expects that Indian market to be an attractive one for long-term investors, because



domestic companies are continuing to post healthy profits.

"Five, seven years, I think [the] market will be surely in a much stronger position," he said. "That is primarily driven by a lot of strong Indian companies. ... They are proving their mettle ... and that is why one can be very hopeful of the Indian stock market."

That appears to be the dominant sentiment. Analysts here are not expecting the funds pouring into the market to slow down - from overseas or domestic buyers.

They point out that foreign investors are not just attracted by the rising share prices. The 12 percent appreciation in the Indian rupee's value against the dollar this year has added to the foreigners' large profits.

[VOA]

Sethu issue: Now, Rajnikanth urges Karunanidhi to step in

The Ram Sethu issue once again took centre stage in Chennai, this time on an unusual platform, with superstar Rajnikanth urging Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, the chief guest at the state film awards function held recently, to use his political clout and "good offices" at the Centre to resolve the deadlock stalling the Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project.

Though the occasion was not the

travel to Himalayas, should inform the samiyarkal (rishis) that though he (Karunanidhi) was an atheist, he was not a 'Ram hater.' The fact that his mentor was E V Ramasamy Naicker (or Periyar as the late Dravidar Kazhagam founder-leader was referred to) itself would prove that, Karunanidhi said. "If the samiyarkal knew the truth, then the country would come to its senses," he added.



most appropriate one to raise the issue, as a citizen he was compelled to speak about it, the actor said, adding that while both positive and negative views had been aired on the issue, "there were efforts to blow it out of proportion." Being a senior political leader in the country, Karunanidhi "should find a good solution to the problem using his political clout with the national leaders," Rajnikanth said.

Later, when his turn came to speak, Karunanidhi retorted that the 'superstar,' who had the opportunity to

The superstar should keep in mind that the DMK had been functioning as a rationalist movement for many years and the party had been successful, propagating this ideology, he said, adding that neither he nor his party were enemies of Ram.

Caste, creed or religion should not be allowed to come in the way of Sethusamudram project, meant for the people, Karunanidhi said. The Ramayana, he pointed out, was not history, but a story written by Valmiki.

[Courtesy: Express News Service]

India's Mobile Phone Market Fastest Growing in World

By Anjana Pasricha

India's mobile phone market has become the fastest growing in the world, with Indians adding nearly six million new connections every month; much of the growth is among low-income consumers.

Ramu Prasad, 40, has been wheeling his cart loaded with fresh vegetables through a South Delhi residential area every morning for the past 15 years. He has many regular customers, but until recently, he could only do business with them when they were home.

Prasad solved the problem six months ago by purchasing a mobile phone.

Prasad's customers now place their orders from anywhere, over his mobile, and he delivers the vegetables when they are in the house.

When mobile phones were introduced here more than a decade ago, they were considered a luxury. But low calling charges and cheap handsets have brought them within the reach of tens of millions of people like Prasad.

Telecom companies are going all out to woo such customers, offering them deals that make cell phones affordable for even those who earn as little as \$125 a month.

Handsets are available for \$45. Users can buy new pre-paid phone cards for less than 50 cents. Companies offer consumers the option

of paying one lifetime fee of about \$25, and never having to pay for incoming calls again. In most of the world, mobile phone operators charge for incoming as well as out-going calls.

As a result, low-income, self-employed people like maids, cooks, taxi drivers, plumbers, and construction workers are snapping up mobiles at a frantic pace. Six million new connections are being added every month. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India says this is the fastest pace in the world.

Two hundred fifty million people now have mobile phones in India. The government expects that number to double by 2010.

Naveen Mishra, a senior marketing analyst with the telecommunications consulting firm IDC in New Delhi, says that in a country of more than a billion people, there is still a vast market to be tapped.

"If you see the penetration, we are still at 20 percent, not more than that. So that leaves a huge opportunity," said Mishra. "It is a very hot market, that is why people are eying the Indian market."

So far, most of the growth is coming from urban areas. Telecommunication companies say they will invest billions of dollars in coming years to expand their presence into the country's vast rural areas, where most of



the population lives.

International telecom companies are joining domestic firms in rushing to tap into all these potential customers. The world's largest mobile phone company, Vodafone, established its presence earlier this year by acquiring a controlling stake in Hutchison Essar, an Indian-Hong Kong joint venture.

This month, U.S network provider AT&T applied for licenses to operate in India in partnership with a local group.

[VOA]

Sri Lankan Airlines eyes aggressive expansion in India

With India contributing one third of its revenue, Sri Lankan Airlines has set its eyes on expanding its operations, by entering more destinations, particularly tier-II cities in the country.

"Sri Lankan Airlines has positioned Colombo as the gateway to India and we are continuously increasing our services... we have seen growth in the metros and want aggressive growth in tier-I cities so that we can present India to the world," Manoj Gunawardena, Head of Worldwide Passenger Sales, said recently.

Addressing the media on the occasion of launch of Colombo-Coimbatore flight service, he said there was good potential in cities like Patna, Lucknow, Varanasi, Amritsar, Gaya, Guwahati, Vizag, Bhubaneswar,

Ahmedabad and Pune.

In 2006-07, the company had registered a turnover of 68.9 billion Sri Lankan rupees of which Indian operations contributed one third, Gunawardena said.

The airlines was also looking at Mangalore and Madurai in the south for its expansion and had already

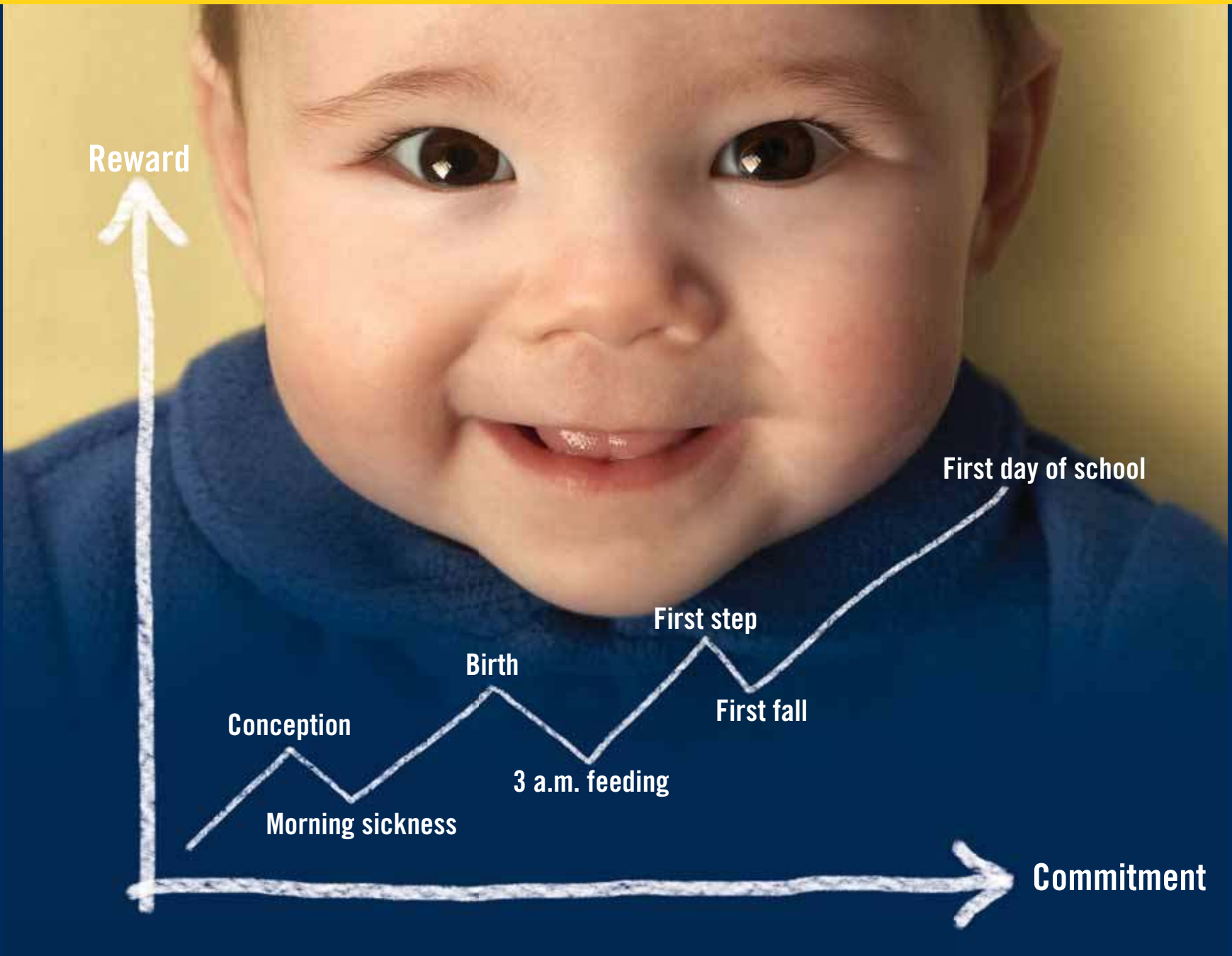
made a request to the governments in this regard, he said, adding that the company was covering five of the six major cities -- Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad barring Kolkata.

Stating that the thrice a week Colombo-Coimbatore flight would be made into four days a week next month which would take the airlines total international flights to the 100 mark, he said it had plans to increase the frequency of services from Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad after the completion of the ongoing airport infrastructural expansion works.

[PTI]



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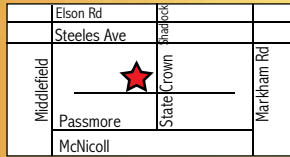


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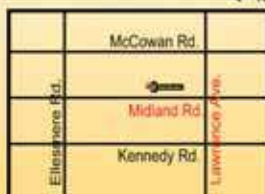
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The Annual Awards Gala sponsored by Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council was held recently at the Holiday Inn hotel in Markham. The highlight of the event was the President's Award presented to Mrs. Indira .V.Samarasekera, President of the University of Alberta. Dr.Samarasekera is a Canadian of Sri Lankan origin. She was recently named as one of the most powerful women in Canada. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada. She obtained her first Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Ceylon and subsequently got her Ph.D in Metallurgical Engineering from the University of British Columbia. She now holds the prestigious post of President of the University of Alberta. She gave an impressive speech to the audience present.

The Chief Guest at the function was Hon.Chief Justice Salvatore Merenda and the Guest of Honour was Hon.Gerry Philipps. Awards were also presented to the sponsors of the Event. The function ended with a sumptuous dinner and a raffle draw. Mr.Ganesan Sugumar (Director) was the Chairperson of the Awards Gala.



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Monsoon Newsline

LTTEs Anuradhapura Raid: Determination and Precision

By B. Raman

Reliable details of the combined air and land attack launched by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the Anuradhapura air base of the Sri Lankan Air Force early in the morning of October 22, 2007, indicate that it was neither an act of desperation as projected by the embarrassed Sri Lankan military spokesmen nor an act of needless dramatics as suggested by others. It was an act of unbelievable determination, bravery and precision successfully carried out by a 21-member suicide commando group of the Black Tigers—significantly led by a Tamil from the Eastern Province—with the back-up support of two planes of the so-called Tamil Eelam Air Force.

Reliable Western sources say that no other terrorist organisation in the world would have been capable of organising such a raid, which had been preceded by painstaking intelligence collection, planning and rehearsal. The commandoes, divided into groups, infiltrated into the air base from two directions and, within 20 minutes, took the security guards by surprise, overwhelmed them, seized their weapons and communication equipment, neutralised a radar and an anti-aircraft gun position and then intimidated their headquarters that they were in effective control of the air base. Only then the two aircraft of the LTTE's air wing flew to Anuradhapura and dropped two bombs on the base and flew back safely to their hide-out.

The commandoes remained in effective occupation of the base from 3 AM to at least 9 AM. During this period, they blew up three helicopters, two fixed-wing aircraft—one of them a trainer—and three unmanned drones. After losing communication with the air base, the Sri Lankan Air Force base at Vavuniya sent one of its helicopters to Anuradhapura to find out what had happened. As it was

approaching the air base, it was shot down by the LTTE commandoes manning the anti-aircraft gun in the air base.

The commandoes also blew up an ammunition storage depot in the air base and damaged its runway. It is learnt that the Black Tiger commandoes remained in communication with their headquarters till 9 AM. Thereafter, all communications ceased, indicating thereby that all of them had either been killed by the Sri Lankan Security Forces or had committed suicide to avoid falling into the hands of the Sri Lankan security forces, who had counter-attacked the base. Thirteen SLAF personnel were killed, nine inside the base and four in the helicopter crash.

The LTTE has been silent on the fate of the commandoes. However, it has released their personal particulars. Two Lieutenant-Colonels, six Majors, 12 Captains and one Lieutenant rank Black Tiger members took part in the operation. A Lieutenant-Colonel who led an attack team was from Trincomalee, two of the members, a Major and a Captain, were from Batticaloa, one from Mullaitheevu, one from Mannaar, three from Kilinochchi and eleven members from Jaffna. Three Captains were women.

Initial reports of the raid had indicated that the raid started with an air attack by the LTTE's aircraft and that it was only thereafter that the commandoes had infiltrated into the air base by taking advantage of the confusion. Subsequent reports, however, indicate that the Black Tigers initially infiltrated the base and took control of it and that it was then that the air raid was launched more to test the capability for co-ordination between the air wing and the Black Tigers than to cause damage to the base. Since the Black Tigers were already in effective control of the base, they did not need any air support.



Embarrassed by the spectacular display of the LTTE's prowess, the Sri Lankan authorities have been trying to play down the successes of the LTTE operation. They claim that only two helicopters and one fixed wing aircraft were damaged and another helicopter was destroyed when it crash-landed due to technical reasons. The Colombo correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph" of London has reported that the Black Tigers destroyed an expensive Beechcraft surveillance plane worth £14 million, two Mi17 helicopters, two Mi24 helicopters, three unmanned aerial vehicles, a K-8 jet and eight PD6 propeller trainer aircraft.

The Anuradhapura air base was essentially used by the SLAF as a training base. The training command of the SLAF was located there. In

addition, it was also providing intelligence support to the SLAF and the Navy through the sophisticated Beechcraft plane fitted with equipment for aerial photography and the collection of electronic and technical intelligence and the unmanned drones. Instructors from Pakistan, China and Israel were periodically attached to the base.

The helicopters destroyed by the Black Tigers were being used as helicopter gun ships or for VIP transport. While the damage sustained by the SLAF is considerable in money terms and reduces its capability for intelligence collection for air and naval operations, its impact on the SLAF's capability for air strikes over the LTTE controlled areas would be limited.

The successful operation would seem to have been launched by the

LTTE in retaliation for the recent operations of the Sri Lankan Navy against the transport ships of the LTTE and the air strikes of the SLAF over LTTE positions in the Northern Province. It once again underlines the LTTE's reputation as an organisation with a tremendous tenacity of purpose, grit and sophistication in thinking and planning. Its recent set-backs have not weakened its morale. They have only redoubled its determination to keep fighting for its political objective unmindful of the losses in the Eastern Province. [Courtesy: SAAG]

(The writer is Additional Secretary (retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, New Delhi, and, presently, Director, Institute For Topical Studies, Chennai.

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Monsoon Newslines

Fear of partition may lead to peace

By Dr. A. R. M. Imtiyaz

There was speculation in Colombo that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the major ethno-political movement of the Sri Lankan Tamils, is planning to declare the formation of a separate state for the Tamils in Sri Lanka's violent North and East on January 18, 2008. Sri Lanka's violent conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhalese has denied its people an opportunity to embrace ethnic peace. Peace is the key to the stability of the island and security of ethnic groups, particularly the conflicting Tamils and the Sinhalese. The question here is what we have to do to begin to make peace right? The simple but the right answer can suggest only two alternatives - power-sharing and partition.

Sri Lanka has witnessed a few power-sharing deals between the Tamils and Sinhalese since 1957. These pacts represented a wide ranging and comprehensive devolution of power to alleviate ethnic disharmony. Sadly, but as expected, these pacts could not defy the Sinhala opposition. For instance, when S. W.R. D. Bandaranaike signed what is popularly known as the B-C pact with Federal Party leader S. J. V. Chelvanayakam on July 26, 1957, the UNP opposed it saying that it would lead to the collapse of the unitary state. A senior UNP politician, Junius Richard Jayewardene organized a "peacemarch" to Kandy making his way through the Sinhalese heartland.

What Sri Lanka's five-decades old post-independence history evidently proves is that the Sinhala political class whether they hail from the UNP or the SLFP, employ the emotions of the Sinhalese to outbid their opponents on anti-Tamil and/or anti-devolution programmes. The JVP and the JHU which vehemently oppose political power-sharing to end the ethnic conflict are the latest addition to this Sinhala ethnic club. It is important to point out that war and anti-Tamil policies have been the serious agendas of the Sinhala political class rather than brokering an honorable peace and genuine democracy.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa is not ready to retract his 2005 election policies, which rejected a federal solution, in order to outbid Mr. Wickremesinghe who favoured a federal solution to win the trust of the minorities, particularly the rebelling Tamils. Mr. Rajapaksa knows that he would face tough opposition from his constituencies and Sinhala nationalist groups if he negotiates a political solution based on a federal system. In fact, this is the phenomenal consequence of symbolic politics which is a new term in political science meaning the use of ethnic symbols to win or hold on to votes. When politicians employ such a deadly strategy to lock votes, they can certainly win the votes of the lower middle and working classes, but that strategy hardly would allow them to secure harmony and reconciliation among the different ethnic groups.

One alternative to improve the situation is to bring global pressure upon the key actors who like to break the

circle of violence. It seems there are some forces prepared to do this and have been making some efforts to carve out a political solution to the three-decades-old deadly ethnic conflict. It is, indeed a good sign as far as Sri Lanka's peace is concerned, because a liberal peace is convincingly a better option than an inhuman war, which only helps strengthen ethnic and religious identity, as well as give breathing space for ethnic mobilizers to manipulate ethnic and religious symbols.

The question here is whether the global community can win its quest for a political solution based on substantial and sustainable autonomy and power-sharing in Sri Lanka? The Sinhala political class is doing pretty good job in defying global concerns and pressures. This is another side of symbolic politics which is capable of producing leaders like Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who thinks the existence of Israel is an "insult to human dignity" and suggests that Jews do not deserve Israel and should be relocated to parts of Europe or even Alaska. Those who cuddle symbols for their political profits would use all their political capital, just to consolidate power and to resist external pressures.

Hence, it is highly unlikely that the political class in the South would easily abandon its symbolic ethnic agenda which has roots in Mr. Bandaranaike's 1956 Sinhala-only slogans.

However, all is not bad. Power-sharing democracy still can shine as the only viable alternative even though it confronts strong resistance from the Sinhala political class for electoral gains. Scholarly studies on Sri Lanka's violent ethnic conflict suggest different reasons for the failure of the peace accords administered by the Sinhala political class. One major reason is that the Tamils in the past, particularly before the inception of the violent movements, did not have a strong and territorially well-established leadership to challenge the Southern political class. Mr. Perumal, the leader of the EPRLF briefly demonstrated cohesive leadership in 1990, when President R. Premadasa drastically reduced the devolved powers under the 13th amendment. Mr. Perumal, who was frustrated with the behaviour of the UNP regime, declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) at the end of his tenure. Sadly, Mr. Perumal was not politically and ideologically strong enough to challenge Mr. Premadasa and his clique. Also, he neither represented territorial control nor mobilized a mass movement to run the Tamil state under UDI. Winning meaningful power-sharing is tough political business. But the Tamils need a strong leadership to resist the Sinhala people's unwillingness to share power. The current brutal war against the Tamils can be understood in this theoretical understanding. Mr. Rajapaksa, who won the elections in 2005 on an anti-Tamil and anti-federal programme, would love to negotiate a peace solution with a politically and militarily enfeebled Tamil leadership



Peace hoarding, sponsored by a Sri Lanka media organization at the dawn of last year - Pic: HumanityAshore.org

for an obvious political reason. Hence, it is highly unlikely that marginalized Tamils would get a sustainable and substantial power-sharing arrangement that addresses the grievances and aspirations of the minorities, particularly the Tamils if the current war continues without international intervention.

Practically speaking, power-sharing can produce good progress provided it deals with those strong actors who have territorial control with the ability to establish an independent state. In other words, territorial domination by an ethnic movement can become an important factor for any power-sharing leading to a successful solution. This understanding has been

well proved in South Sudan (2005) and hopefully would be confirmed in Kosovo which has been exercising UN administered autonomy for a while from Serbia. This success exercise recommends "a loose integration model" to facilitate "more than autonomy, less than independence." The point here is that both in South Sudan and Kosovo, ruling elites have agreed to give substantial autonomy in the face of fear that territorially based (rebelling) movements would disintegrate the state.

The major problem with the Sinhala political class is that they neither have any serious respect for the minorities of the island nor entertain any fears that refusal of respect could

lead to the collapse of the state.

This mentality is dangerous, and would never lead to any meaningful solution accommodating the interests of the minorities. Thus, it is the duty of global actors to pressure the ruling class for a substantial political solution. If not, global actors ought to extend tactical support for Tamil aspirations. The global community's support to the Tamil struggle could build some genuine fears. Such a mental-pressure from the fears of opposition to the state in its own backyard, may compel the Sinhala political class to negotiate a sustainable political solution through the channel of power-sharing democracy.

Sri Lanka's ethnic civil war needs a peaceful political solution. We have only two alternatives to confront the continuing vicious war. They are (1) an ethnic partition or ethnic un-mixing, and (2) a power-sharing. The latter can best serve as a viable solution provided the dominant actor realizes the fact that the failure to accommodate the reasonable aspirations of minorities would strengthen the hands of ethnic partitionists who are sufficiently able to run an ethnic state. This would answer the basic question - will fear of partition engineer sustainable peace through power-sharing?

(The author is a Sri Lankan political scientist who is currently affiliated as a visiting scholar at the Department of Political Science, Temple University, USA.)

Karunanidhi laments the death of Thamichelvan

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and veteran leader of Tamils, M. Karunanidhi, has condoled the demise of Thamichelvan, leader of the Political wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Kalaigarr Karunanidhi, quite typical of his style, used the medium of poetry and pun to pass a subtle message that the Tamils of Sri Lanka haven't gone brotherless. The Chief Minister's emotion-filled condolence gains significance in the background of a prevailing impression that the government of India is fully backing the war efforts of the government of Sri Lanka aiming for a military solution to the ethnic crisis in the island.

According to media reports for quite some time, the government of Sri Lanka was pressing the Indian government with a long list of sophisticated weapons for air combat.

It is speculated that advanced technology was put in use in the pinpoint bombing of the residence of the members of the political division of the LTTE, which claimed the life of their Political Head Brigadier S.P. Thamichelvan, on Friday.

Mr. Karunanidhi has been an opponent to military option to resolve the Tamil ethnic question in Sri Lanka.

In March 1990, when the IPKF was withdrawn from Sri Lanka, Mr. Karunanidhi, who was then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, refused to attend the reception of the returning troops in Madras.

Condolence poetry by Kalaigarr Karunanidhi

Always smiling face -
A mind that sets ablaze opposition!

Young, young, yet a heart of
Himalayan strength, strength!
A commander seasoned in the
line of the old lion Balasingam
The virtuous youth whom with
determination

offered himself to the War for
Rights -
his soul hasn't gone extinguished

He hasn't gone brotherless
A beloved son who wrote his
fame
all over the earth, wherever
Tamils live -
where have you gone?

English translation by
TamilNet.com



TamilNet Transcription of
the text:

Eppoathum chiriththidum
mukam -
Ethirppuka'lai eriththidum negn-
cham!

I'lamai i'lamai ithayamao
Imayaththin valimai! valimai!

Kizhach chingkam paalasingkam
vazhiyil
Pazhamaay pakkuvampetta
padaith tha'lapathi!

Uramaay thannaiyum urimai
poarukkenna uthaviya
Uththama vaalipan - uyir
a'naiyaan
Udan pi'rappa'naiyaan

Thamizhar vaazhum nilamelaam
avartham manaiyelaam
Thanpukazh chethukkiya chel-
vaa - engku chen'raay?

Monsoon Newsline

Canada Marks United Nations Day

The Honourable Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement on United Nations Day, October 24th.

"The Government of Canada is pleased today to commemorate 62 years since the founding of the United Nations. Since 1945, the UN has been the central forum for promoting international peace and security, human rights and the application of the rule of law—the fundamental principles upon which global stability is based.

"In a time of unprecedented interconnectedness, international cooperation is a vital means of resolving global issues. Regional instabilities and human rights violations are increasingly international concerns, placing the UN in a unique position to respond. Only through collective action can we ensure a safer and more secure future.

"It is for precisely these reasons that Canada is a proud contributor to the UN-sanctioned mission in Afghanistan. In order to ensure long-standing peace in the region, Canada is committed to promoting security and democratic governance, as well as to advancing development in that



country. With support from Canada and the international community, Afghanistan is making strides toward a brighter future.

"Canada's history attests to the value we place in UN-led solutions. Our ongoing contributions to UN missions in Haiti and around the world exemplify our commitment to lasting global stability.

"The UN offers a unique and crucial arena for global cooperation. Canada continues to support the work of the UN and remains committed to working through its bodies to ensure a better future for the world."

Sen. Hillary Clinton says not all terrorists are the same

Senator Hillary Clinton, says all terrorists cannot be lumped together whether the LTTE or the Basque separatists, and that, though they all may be connected in the tactics they use, the goals they are fighting for are different.

In an interview with Guardian, Mrs. Clinton, a US Presidential candidate, says that in her view terrorism is a tool that has been utilized throughout history to achieve certain objectives — some ideological, others territorial.

"The bottom line is: you can't lump all terrorists together. And I think we've got to do a much better job of

clarifying what are the motivations, the *raison d'être* of terrorists. I mean, what the Tamil Tigers are fighting for in Sri Lanka, or the Basque separatists in Spain, or the insurgents in al-Anbar province may only be connected by tactics.

They may not share all that much in terms of what is the philosophical or ideological underpinning. And I think one of our mistakes has been painting with such a broad brush, which has not been particularly helpful in understanding what it is we were up against when it comes to those who pursue terrorism for whichever ends they're seeking," she said.

Kamalammal, Sivaji Ganesan's wife passes away

By Meera Srinivasan

Kamalammal, wife of legendary actor Sivaji Ganesan, passed away here on Friday after a brief illness. She was 68.

Kamalammal was admitted to a private hospital after she complained of difficulty in breathing recently. She passed away there after a cardiac arrest, caused by pulmonary embolism (blood clot) Friday Nov 2nd morning.

Friends and associates who gathered at her T.Nagar residence Friday afternoon recalled her as innocent, affectionate and caring. Her body was placed near a big portrait of her husband, around whom her life revolved.

"She had some difficulty in breathing due to chest congestion. We were shocked when we heard she succumbed to a cardiac arrest," said her son actor Prabhu. "She was such a loving mother. To her, appa meant the

world," an emotional Prabhu said.

Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and AIADMK general secretary Jayalalithaa also paid homage.

Actor Kamal Haasan, a close associate of the family, paid homage at the hospital, before the body was brought to the actors' residence. He later told The Hindu over phone that her passing away was a personal loss. "I am grateful that she passed away after her husband expired, or the man could not have coped with her loss. They were such an intimate couple. I saw their love for each other grow beautifully over the years," he said.

"She made sure that actors like us, who would not speak a word in front of Sivaji Ganesan, felt at ease. I played some of my films such as 'Virumandi' in her house and she gave me very honest, valuable feedback," he said, adding, "She is the first lady

Canadian MP recalls meeting slain Tamil Peace Negotiator

Statement by the Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt, Ontario:

I would like to express my distress at the news of the death of Mr. S.P. Thamilselvan, the political leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on November 2, 2007.

I wish to extend my sympathies to the family of Mr. Thamilselvan and to the Canadian Tamil community. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

In January 2005, following the Tsunami, I visited Sri Lanka and had

the opportunity to meet with Mr. Thamilselvan. He expressed thanks to Canadians for their magnanimous generosity in a time of great need. He said there "is a thread of hope" for building mutual trust in the nation, as Sinhalese and Tamils work together in rescue and relief efforts.

Mr. Thamilselvan devoted more than a decade to the pursuit of peace, with justice, to bring an end to the protracted civil war in Sri Lanka. During this time, he was a member of the Tamil Tiger's negotiating team that

held direct peace talks with the Sri Lankan Government; sat at the negotiation table during Norwegian brokered peace talks; and, as recently as last year, represented the LTTE at talks in Geneva.

During the meeting with Mr. Thamilselvan, he told me that since Canada had provided asylum to Sri Lankan immigrants, he believed Canada should play a more significant and permanent role in the peace process in Sri Lanka.

India must be given 'augmented' voice in UN: Hillary Clinton

India, which has "special significance" as an emerging power, should be given a bigger voice in regional and international institutions like the UN, Hillary Clinton, the Democratic frontrunner for the upcoming US Presidential election has said.

"...India has a special significance both as an emerging power and as the world's most populous democracy. As co-chair of the Senate India Caucus, I recognize the tremendous opportunity presented by India's rise and the need to give the country an augmented voice in regional and international institutions, such as the UN," Clinton, who according to polls is leading in the race to become the next US President, said.

The former first lady also said terrorists are increasingly finding safe havens in Pakistan, its staunch ally in the war on terror, and called for

"redoubling" of efforts in the South Asian country.

"Terrorists are increasingly finding safe havens in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan," Clinton wrote in an Essay in the respected Foreign Affairs Magazine.

She also said America's relationship with China will be "the most important bilateral relationship" in the world.

"The US and China have vastly different values and political systems, yet even though we disagree profoundly on issues ranging from trade to human rights, religious freedom, labor practices, and Tibet, there is much that the US and China can and must accomplish together," Clinton said.

The Democratic senator slammed the Bush administration for "squandering the respect, trust, and confidence of even our closest allies and



friends."

After 9/11, Clinton said the world rallied behind the US and "we had a historic opportunity to build a broad global coalition to combat terror, increase the impact of our diplomacy, and create a world with more partners and fewer adversaries." [PTI]

Sri Lanka troops 'abused Haitians'

The UN is sending home more than 100 of the 950 Sri Lankan peacekeepers in Haiti, accusing them of sexual abuse, including with underage girls.

The UN said the troops had paid for sex and that some of the girls were minors.

UN peacekeepers have been involved in a series of sex-abuse scandals, including this year in Ivory Coast, where 800 were suspended.

The organisation said it had a "zero tolerance" policy but it was up to the supplying nations to discipline troops.

A 2005 UN report suggested a

central disciplining policy but member nations could not agree.

A total of 108 of the Sri Lankan peacekeepers are being sent home.

The UN Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Sri Lankan authorities had overseen the investigation.

UN spokeswoman Michele Montas said: "The United Nations and the Sri Lankan government deeply regret any sexual exploitation and abuse that has occurred."

She added: "The [soldiers] are back under national jurisdiction. So far Sri Lanka has said... that they are going to be prosecuted in Sri Lanka."

The UN was working to help the victims of the abuse, she said.

Member states are supplying about 100,000 troops to peacekeeping operations worldwide.

In recent years, peacekeepers in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo have also been accused of sexual exploitation.

In July, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, said the standards for selecting peacekeepers were too low.

Mr Nowak said concerns about the quality, training and ethics of peacekeepers were growing.

[bbc.co.uk]



in the history of Tamil culture."

Director Santhana Bharatahy said: "She had no airs about being a world-renowned actor's wife. To all of us, she was like an affectionate mother who showed genuine interest in our well-being and progress." She had time for everyone and was easily accessible to all.

Associates recalled her personal



Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi paying homage to Kamala Sivaji Ganesan

touch in everything she did for her relatives and friends. "Even if I told her I had to leave in a hurry, she would make sure I quickly ate something before I left," said Sudha. S. Ramachandran, a doctor practising at Apollo, and a family friend of the

Ganesans. In her was an enthusiastic child-like woman, who loved admiring saris and accessories her friends wore, Dr. Ramachandran said.

Her eye for detail and ability to plan for the family was amazing, her relatives said. She ran the joint family so well that everyone knew their part and did it with pleasure, they added.

Several artistes and technicians of the Tamil film industry, including actors Rajinikanth, Sathyaraj, Pandiarajan, Srikanth, director Bharathiraja, music director Illayaraja and politicians such as Minister Parthi Ilayaraja came to pay homage. Mr. Rajinikanth spent over half-an-hour with Ramkumar, another son of Sivaji Ganesan.

[Courtesy: The Hindu]

Life of a leader greatly respected by the international community taken away, says LTTE Leader Pirapaharan

The Sinhala nation has taken the life of a political leader "deeply loved by the Tamil speaking world" and "greatly respected by the international community," said Velupillai Pirapaharan, the leader of Liberation Tigers, in a message to the Tamil people, following the demise of LTTE's Political Head and Chief Negotiator, Brigadier S. P. Thamichelvan.

"I raised him as a great commander, an unparalleled political head, a diplomat who communicated with the entire world, and a skilled negotiator," Mr. Pirapaharan said. "Buried within his beautiful smile, I recognized, right from the beginning, a thousand profound meanings, his abilities, and his leadership qualities," the message further said.



Karunanidhi defends eulogy to slain LTTE Political Head

Taking strong exception to AIADMK supremo Ms Jayalithaa's demand to dismiss the DMK government, for his poem eulogising slain LTTE leader SP Thamichelvan, Tamil Nadu chief minister Mr M Karunanidhi said he condoled the death as "Tamil blood is flowing in my veins".

Strongly defending his praise for Thamichelvan, who belonged to the LTTE, a banned organisation in India, Mr Karunanidhi said "I condoled his death because he is a Tamil".

MDMK leader Mr Vaiko, an ally of AIADMK, had also praised Thamichelvan, Mr Karunanidhi said. "How can Ms Jayalithaa, who has not objected to Mr Vaiko's eulogy on Thamichelvan seek the DMK government's dismissal for the same action?" he asked.

Mr Vaiko, in his condolence message, had hailed Thamichelvan as a loyal, shrewd and amicable warrior who had fought for the liberation of a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka. He had also condemned the Union govern-

ment "for providing weapons to the Sinhalese government, indulging in a genocidal war against Tamils".

Ms Jayalithaa had charged Mr Karunanidhi of acting against the Constitution and expressing support to a banned organisation. Apart from the AIADMK, the Congress and the CPI-M are the only parties which have not condoled Thamichelvan's death.

Mr S Ramadoss, leader of PMK, a constituent of the UPA government, said India should insist the Sri Lankan government stop the "genocidal war" against Tamils. State CPI secretary had also issued a similar statement.

VCK, a Dalit outfit, held a meeting to condole Thamichelvan's death in the city, while Mr P Nedumaran, a staunch LTTE supporter, had called for public meetings throughout the State to condole the Tiger's death.

Actors Vijaykanth and Sarathkumar, who had recently floated political parties, also expressed their grief and sought a change of approach by the Indian government.

[Statesman News service]

Disaster strikes premier seat of learning in the North

Recently there have been attempts at discouraging experienced and qualified lecturers continuing to serve at the Jaffna University. The killing of Ponniah Mahinnon, senior maths lecturer at the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka is a great loss to the academic community in Jaffna or the country at large.

The late Mr. Mahinnon used to go Colombo to mark the GCE Advanced level papers every year. He enjoyed his work as a maths lecturer and refused to move out of the place even after being pressed by the members of his family. He carried on with a spirit of service regardless of threats

to his life owing to the escalation of violence in the area.

He was a simple and down to earth without any kind of political inclinations. He was an ardent Hindu devotee who worshipped regularly at his family temple situated just at his door step. He looked after the temple diligently with the help of the members of the family. It is a very sad loss to hear of such a cruel demise for such a great man of peace and commitment. He leaves behind his wife and only daughter Vinayagi whom he loved so dearly. May God grant him solace in his heavenly abode.

Erik Solheim concerned for consequences

Erik Solheim, the Norwegian International Development Minister and facilitator for the peace process in Sri Lanka, who was apparently uneasy over the killing of Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam (LTTE) Political Head S. P. Thamichelvan, has said that he was deeply concerned about the consequences of the present escalation of war in Sri Lanka, the NTB news agency of Norway reported on Nov 2.

Characterizing the death a big loss, Mr. Erik Solheim further said that Mr. Thamichelvan was an important

contact point between the LTTE and Norway in the facilitation of the peace process.

Vidar Helgesen, former state secretary of Norway, who was earlier responsible for the Sri Lankan peace process, has told the NTB agency that Thamichelvan who served the political division of the LTTE for more than 10 years played a key role in the peace negotiations.

Thamichelvan who was the Chief Negotiator of the LTTE in the last rounds of talks held in Geneva in

October 2006, had said in the process that the LTTE is more committed to democratic principles than the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and challenged the GoSL to repeal the sixth amendment to the SL constitution as a token of its commitment to democracy and pluralism.

The sixth amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution prohibits peaceful advocacy for a separate state through democratic means.

[TN]

Thamichelvan killed in SLAF air attack

S.P. Thamichelvan, Liberation Tigers Political Head was killed in Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) aerial bombardment Friday, Nov 2 morning in K'ilinochchi. The Head Quarters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam (LTTE) in a press communique said it was conveying the loss of Brigadier Thamichelvan with profound sadness

to the people of Tamil Eelam, the Tamil Diaspora and the Global Community. The Sri Lanka Air Force attack has specifically targeted the residence of the members of the Political Division.

The Secretary General at the Head Quarters of the LTTE, S. Cheeran said the LTTE Political Head was killed

in the SLAF bombardment that took place at 6:00 a.m. Friday along with Lt. Col. Anpumani (Alex), Major Mikuthan, Major Neethaaji, Lt. Aadchiveal and Lt. Maavaikkumar.

The LTTE has conferred its highest military rank, Brigadier, to Mr. Thamichelvan.



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Monsoon Features

Hong Kong in China: Two Systems in One Country

by D.B.S. Jeyaraj

The Ceylon Workers Congress which held its party convention in Chilaw on Sunday October 28th has passed a resolution urging that a scheme on the lines of the "Hong Kong" model be set up for the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka.

In adopting the resolution the CWC noted that a special administrative region like that of Hong Kong coming within the People's Republic of China was an admirable solution that has led to two systems in one nation and that a similar system in Sri Lanka would effectively meet the aspirations of the Tamil people in the north and east, said media reports

"A negotiated settlement in the format of the Hong Kong special administrative region can see an end to the on going shooting war that continues to decimate young lives on both sides of the ethnic divide," the CWC resolved.

In adopting the party position, the CWC also recalled that the Hong Kong model solution had been proposed

Even the "red" dragon has been "soft" enough to understand that it cannot be rigid in all situations.

The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) cannot be classified as a federation, quasi - federation or confederation. According to Constitutional experts it is a Country that is structurally unitary in the sense that "ultimate authority rests with the Central government". It can however be called a Constitutionally de-centralised union because it "incorporates Constitutionally protected sub-national units of government which have functional autonomy".

The PRC has twenty - two Provinces, five autonomous regions, four municipalities and two special administrative regions. The first special administrative region was set up for the former British colony of Hong Kong in 1997. The second one was set up for the former Portugese colony of Macao in 1999. The Hong Kong Special Administrative region (HKSAR) was the pioneering model emulated with appropriate changes for Macao. It is the HKSAR model that the CWC

Britain. China never accepted these. But the impending expiry of the lease held potential problems.

Meanwhile the Mao Ze Dong was no more and in 1978 the pragmatic Deng Xiaoping took over the reins. China commenced negotiations with Britain and in 1984 both Countries agreed on the "Joint Declaration" that affirmed Hong Kong's reversion to China at the end of the lease.

There were a lot of intense negotiations preceding the handover of 1997. In an unprecedented display of "flexible magnanimity" Deng agreed that the transfer of power will be on the basis of "one Country, two systems". Until 2047 Hong Kong would have its own economic and political system and also autonomous powers in everything except Defence, National security and foreign affairs.

These were hailed as extraordinary compromises by China. Deng's pragmatic approach is best illustrated by his famous remark to Margaret Thatcher "it matters not if the cat is black or white; so long as it catches mice".

The virtual mini - constitution that governs Hong Kong is the "Basic law of the Hong Kong Special administrative region of the Peoples Republic of China".

The Basic Law was drafted by a Committee composed of members from both Hong Kong and the Mainland. The Basic Law was formally promulgated on April 4th 1990 together with the designs for the flag and emblem of the HKSAR.

Some of the notable features enshrined in the basic law are:

* The HKSAR has a high degree of autonomy and enjoys executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. The former judicial recourse by appealing to the UK's Privy Council is not available. Instead, the Court of Final Appeal was established within the HKSAR to take up the role.

* The executive authorities and legislature of the HKSAR is composed of permanent residents of Hong Kong in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law.

* The socialist system and policies are not to be practiced in the HKSAR, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years.

* The laws previously in force in Hong Kong, that is, the common law, rules of equity, ordinances, subordinate legislation and customary law (such as Chinese clan law) shall be maintained, except for any that contravene the Basic Law and subject to any amendment by the legislature of the HKSAR

* The HKSAR shall protect the right of ownership of private property in accordance with law.

* All Hong Kong residents shall be equal before the law. Permanent residents of the HKSAR shall have the right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with law.

* The freedom of the person of Hong Kong residents shall be inviolable. No Hong Kong resident shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful arrest or imprisonment. Arbitrary or unlawful search of the body of any resident or deprivation or restriction of the freedom of the person shall be



View of Hong Kong, from Kowloon

prohibited. Torture of any resident or arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of the life of any resident shall be prohibited.

* The selection of Chief Executive is to be ultimately by means of Universal Suffrage.

According to observers "Although the PRC has responsibility for Hong Kong's foreign relations and defence, Hong Kong is permitted to participate in international organizations or conferences in appropriate fields limited to states and affecting the HKSAR, or may attend in such other capacity as may be permitted by the PRC government and the international organization or conference concerned, and may express their views, using the name "Hong Kong, China". The HKSAR may also, also using the name

through special "functional constituencies". The Chief executive was elected by an 800 member elections committee. The Basic law "mini - constitution" pledged that the "Ultimate aim" was full suffrage whereby the chief executive and Leg Co members will be eventually directly elected by the people. This however has not happened as Beijing is reluctant to promote speedy democratisation in HKSAR because of its demonstration effect on the rest of China.

There are 30 functional constituency representatives who are accused of acting as stooges of Beijing. The Elections committee too is manipulated to echo Beijing's line. The chief executive Donald Tsang who was earlier a British lackey has now switched loyalties completely and follows the new master's wishes.



The HKSAR has a high degree of autonomy

"Hong Kong, China", participate in international organizations and conferences not limited to states."

When Hong Kong was handed over in 1997 few expected China to honour its assurances. But to everyone's surprise they have been basically honoured and in July this year the 10th anniversary of the transition was celebrated. Economically China has grown and Hong Kong has grown. Much of Hong Kong's growth has been achieved in symbiosis with that of the mainland.

Everything however is not rosy. The judiciary and media continue to function but not as vigorously in the past. The calibre of judgements are seemingly deteriorating while most media are becoming pro - government. Self - censorship is on the rise.

One area where Beijing seems to be defaulting is the democratisation of Hong Kong. A system consisting of a 60 member legislative council (Leg Co) and a Chief executive is in force now. The Leg Co comprised of representatives directly elected and elected

China's "Parliament" the National Peoples Congress is the final arbiter of the Basic law governing the HKSAR. The NPC has ruled unequivocally that the time is not ripe to grant full franchise to the people of Hong Kong.

Whatever the problems, the setting up of the HKSAR and Beijing's adherence to its commitment is commendable. In 1999 another Special Administrative Region was set up for Macao. China has also wooed Taiwan to re-merge with China and offered even more flexible autonomous terms.

The basic principle in all this however is the recognition of the need for special arrangements to solve difficult problems. This then is the reason why the "Hong Kong in China model" is cited as worthy of emulation. It is a case of "two systems of governance" functioning within "one Country" to cope with an extra-ordinary situation.

[federalidea.com]

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2007 marks the 10th Anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong from British colonial rule back to Chinese Government

earlier by the departed leader Saumyamoorthy Thondaman.

According to sources who were close to the Plantation patriarch, Soumyamoorthy Thondaman, had suggested the Hong Kong model to both Chandrika Kumaratunga and Ranil Wickremasinghe at different times and both had been agreeable in principle. To what extent the senior Thondaman pursued this idea with previous regimes is not clear. It may simply have been an idea that he tossed about.

Likewise it is equally unclear as to what importance the CWC attaches now to this proposal. It also seems unlikely that the CWC has thought this thing through and compiled tangible provisions related to this idea.

It seems more of a "token" proposal to demonstrate that the CWC is concerned about finding a solution to the Tamil National Question just as in the past Sri Lankan Tamil political parties used to pass resolutions calling for citizenship rights to Plantation workers.

Whatever the outcome of the CWC resolution on the Hong Kong model, the prevailing relationship between Hong Kong and China provides an interesting example of a political system being flexible enough to adopt "unorthodox" arrangements to meet extra - ordinary situations.

cites.

When speaking of the HKSAR it is important to note three things. One is that this special arrangement was done to reclaim Chinese territory "lost" to colonial powers in a smooth manner with the full cooperation of Hong Kong residents. Secondly it is of a transitory nature applicable only for 50 years till 2047. Thirdly the different system principle was adopted for purposes of economic and democratic governance rather than reconcile ethnic differences.

Nevertheless the HKSAR is a shining example of "creative flexibility" depending upon compelling circumstances. The special "heritage" of Hong Kong is recognized leading to a different system of administration to that of mainland China. While China remains nominally "socialist" the Hong Kong economy continues to be a "free enterprise" one.

There is a different system of governance for Hong Kong that is run by the people of Hong Kong alone. There are also safeguards to prevent swamping of Hong Kong by mainland Chinese through unrestricted internal migration.

The greater part of Hong Kong's land area - New territories - became British under a 99 year lease "granted" in 1898. Two treaties ceded Hong Kong and Kowloon permanently to

Waterloo News



A TAMIL CULTURAL NITE TO remember

Waterloo region and the City of Guelph Tamil community celebrated their annual Tamil Fine Arts Festival on Saturday, 13th of October. TAMIL CULTURAL NITE 2007 was organised by the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region (TCAWR) and was held at Humanities theatre, University of Waterloo. The Chief Guest was Mr. Micheal Mann, Deputy Chief of Police, Waterloo Region.

The event was introduced to the guests by the Secretary, Mrs. Rajivi Nadarajah followed by a moment of silence for world peace. The Master of Ceremony for Tamil was Mrs. Suneetha Prakash and English was Master. Thiru Sivakumaran. The program started with a tribute to Tamil language and to Canada. Mr. Murugathas of Nathaswara Thavil Music International of Toronto provided the Thavil and Natheswaram Musical recital. The group's introduction of Melodies of famous Tamil music was amazing. His talent and love of music was appreciated by all. It is prudent to mention that he has won several awards in Canada, Sri Lanka and South India.

Mr. Sivakumar Somasundram, the President of the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region, welcomed all Guests and stressed the need for the community to do more in preserving Arts and culture in the Waterloo region and City of Guelph. He highlighted that the bond between Artistes from Waterloo region and Toronto and pledged the association will do more to build a stronger bond. It's a general feeling among the Tamil Artistes from Toronto that "Tamil Cultural Nite" gives them an opportunity to showcase their talent beyond the borders of GTA.

The Puspanjali dance program was staged by Cambridge sisters, Selvi. Janaki and Ravathi Logendran. It was followed by a Tamil Folk dance by the local artistes. These local artistes, admits their day to day family commitments performed and showed everyone that their talent is still intact and they are par to the younger artistes. The Chief Guest for the evening was Mr. Micheal Mann, the Deputy Chief of Waterloo Regional Police. He congratulated the local Tamil community for preserving the Tamil culture and banding under TCAWR. He is being an immigrant from England, it is tough to preserve cultural identity in Canadian society. He also was touched by family unity in the programs seen at this evening. He spoke a few words in Tamil and won the praise of the appreciative audience. Laya Lasya Dance Studio of Cambridge provided a group Bharatha Natiyam Dance. The local artistes

moved their skills with that of the fast music. A difficult dance for young artistes was enjoyable to watch.

The students of Mrs. Nanthini Aravindan of Sabtha Swara Nalaya, Toronto performed a Veenai recital. Their musical talent and dedication was seen throughout of the program. It was followed by a speech by the Tamil Guest speaker, Mr. Ponniah Vivekanandan. Mr. Vivekanandan is a young popular speaker from Toronto and has dedicated his service to bring awareness of Tamil literature to the society. He spoke of the history of Tamil language and literature.

The students of Mrs. Senthil Selvi Sureshwaren of Shri Abiramy Dance Academy of Waterloo provided a Fusion South Indian Classical Dance. A combination of colourful light setting and a mixture of Western and Eastern music kept the audience still. The choreography by Mrs. Sureshwaren was different and took the Bharatha Natyam dance to the next level. The local children deserved and won everyone's heart. It was good and talent was brought out.

Fusion Musical Instrument was provided by local artistes lead by Prakash Venkatraman. Mr. Prakash is a multi-talented artist. He single handedly played Western and Eastern musical instruments. It was a blend of karnatic music by Shyamala Venkat and the instruments. Shyamala, a resident of Kitchener and is popular Tamil vocal singer among Toronto Tamil community. This program was followed by Semi-classical song and a group dance by Students of Laya Lasya Dance Studio, Cambridge. The curtain closed with a Villu Paattu (Bow Folk song). A large number of audiences from Waterloo region and Toronto stayed till late to enjoy this annual event.

This 7th annual event was sponsored by the City of Waterloo, City of Kitchener, City of Cambridge and Delta Hotels, Kitchener. It's an admission free event to enable everyone to enjoy Tamil Arts and Culture.



**Tamil Guest Speaker,
Mr. Ponniah Vivekanandan**



Bharatha Natyam Dance by Selvi. Janaki and Ravathi Logendran



Awards presentation to Artistes and Teachers



Mr. Sivakumar, President of TCAWR, Dharini Sivakumar and Mr. Michael Mann, Deputy Chief, Waterloo Regional Police



Laya Lasya Dance Studio, Cambridge



Natheswaram Music by Mr. Murugathas of Nathaswara Thavil Music International, Toronto



"Muniyamma" Folk Dance



Veenai recital by the students of Sabtha Swara Nalaya, Toronto



Fusion Dance "Samudra" - Shri Abiramy Dance Academy, Waterloo

HAPPY BIRTHDAY KAVINAYAGAR KANDHAVANAM

Poet (Kavi) Kandhavanam celebrated his birthday at the University of Waterloo on the 28th of October. A book release of the English version of Aathichudi was held. The Waterloo region Tamil community hosted the event.



Prof. Pala Kannapan, Mr. V. Nandheeswarar, Dr. Lambodharan, Poet (Kavi) Kandhavanam and Mr. M. Paramanathan.



Villu Paattu by association members

Waterloo News



Oktoberfest German Festival

The cities of Kitchener and Waterloo have a long German tradition. There are many people of German descent who call the area home. Kitchener used to be called Berlin until World War II. The Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is known as Canada's Great Bavarian Festival.

Oktoberfest is held for nine days every year, and it begins on the Friday before Canadian Thanksgiving and ends the Sunday after. This celebration is the largest Oktoberfest celebration outside of Bavaria. It brings some 700,000 people to downtown Waterloo and Kitchener every year.

Since it was first held in 1969 this beer and entertainments festival has grown each year to become one of the highpoints of the social calendar. After the original namesake in Munich, this is one of the biggest Oktoberfests in North America at which visitors can expect plenty of beer, traditional Bavarian food and entertainment. The spectrum of events includes a street parade with marching bands, a Miss Oktoberfest pageant, an Oktoberfest Idol, a fashion show, kids' shows, cabaret and music events. Beer is not neglected, either, served in frothing tankards along with traditional mouth-watering snacks and dinners in assort-

ed "Festhallen", each chosen carefully for its high quality and festival atmosphere. Souvenirs, including the crucial beer stein, are on sale throughout the event.

Bundhosen-clad Waterloo Regional Chair Ken Seiling tapped the ceremonial first keg to kick off the nine-day celebration. Oktoberfest president Mark Kreller said he was thrilled with the summertime temperatures for the fall celebration.

Nearly 480 volunteers are helping to organize events that run across 16 festhallen, along with a Thanksgiving parade with 30 floats and 16 marching bands.



Second Tamil School Starting in Guelph

"Tamil Heritage School of Waterloo region & Guelph", announces about starting of their Second Tamil School in Guelph on Friday October 12, 2007 @ Centennial CVI (Centennial Collegiate & Vocational Institute). They were running their first Tamil school in Waterloo for the last three years.

The location of the new one is : Centennial CVI (Centennial Collegiate & Vocational Institute) 289 College Avenue West, Guelph

Located at the Intersection: College Ave. West and HW6 North.

They thanked for the efforts of Puni, Rajah & Siven.

They are in the third successful year of the Tamil Heritage School of Waterloo Region & Guelph as an Independent registered entity with many successes so far and triumphantly moving forward to achieve more for our Mother Language, because.

We Love our Mother, Mother Land

& Mother Language

They also sincerely thank to all who supported our Third Very Successful Comedy Show (Nagaichuvai Maalai) in Toronto this year on Sept. 15, 2007.

Entrum Anpudan, Reporting: Kuna-S-Kunasekaran

On Behalf of Tamil Heritage School of Waterloo Region and Guelph Administrative Board

For More Info: Kuna@ 519-404-6707

The Dandia Ras and Garbaa Dance

During the last 5 nights of navratri function, Garbaa and Dandia dance was celebrated at Shri Ram Mandir with lot of devotion and love to Durga Maa. The devotees spent 5 nights of navratri in song, dance and merriment. Garbaa is a graceful form of dance, wherein women dressed in exquisitely embroidered choli, ghagra and bandhani dupattas, dance gracefully in circles. The word "Garbaa" or "Garbha" means "womb", and in this context the lamp in the pot, symbolically represent life within a womb. Besides the Garbaa is the "Dandia" dance, in which men and women participate in pairs with small, decorated bamboo sticks, called dandias in their hands. At the end of these dandias are tied tiny bells called ghungroos that make a jingling sound when the sticks hit one another. The dance has a complex rhythm. The dancers begin with a slow tempo, and go into frenzied movements, in such a manner that each person in a circle not only performs a solo dance with his own sticks, but also strikes his partner's dandias in style! More than 250 devotees each night were at a time seen dancing making merriment and trying in turn make Maa Durga happy.

Attached Photographs - Courtesy Kanayalal Raina



Another Great Service by the Graduates' Association

Parents and Children Immensely Benefited From the Workshop

The community has witnessed and been immensely benefited this year too by attending the annual Career Counseling Workshop for High School Students organized by the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC) jointly with the Canada Tamil Parents' Association (CTPA) on Saturday October 13, 2007. This useful event was conducted from 9:30 am to 4 pm at the Milliken Mills High School in Markham for helping the high school children of Tamil heritage. As usual, they conducted the event free of charge and provided free lunch to about 250 students and their parents from Toronto, Mississauga, Markham and Brampton.

The plenary session of the workshop started with the welcome speeches by the ASGC President Dr. K. Theivendirajah and the CTPA President Mr. C. Ramanathan. Following the welcome speeches, Mr. Cecil Roach, Special Assistant to the Director and Ms. Deanna Heron, Guidance Counselor both from the York Region District School Board in their speeches showed their appreciation of the magnificent program organized professionally by the ASGC and the CTPA. Cecil expressed YRDSB's happiness in supporting such an excellent workshop. Deanna described how a high school student

could systematically select his or her career and the sources of information available to aid the selection. Mr. Neethan Shan, Trustee, YRDSB in his greeting speech thanked both Associations for rendering the enormous services to the Tamil community for more than 15 years.

Thereafter, a very eloquent and inspirational keynote speech was made by Dr. V. Manivannan, Assistant Curriculum Leader, Jarvis Collegiate Institute. Followed by the presentation of the workshop format by Mrs. Suganja Sinnathamby, Tamil Community Liaison Officer from the YRDSB and the ASGC executive committee member, the students were grouped into three groups namely Life Science, Applied Science & Information Technology and Social & Business Studies. While the children actively participated in the workshops, their parents enthusiastically attended a specially designed workshop which was coordinated and presided over by Mr. Raj Thavaratnasingam, an experienced Chairperson from a school council and a senior executive committee member of the ASGC.

The high school students were able to receive significantly large amount of vital information about the career selection strategies and essential details about different professions

from the young graduates from the Tamil community. Similarly the parents collected very valuable information from a panel of experienced educators, school council chairpersons, teachers and others knowledgeable in various areas related to their children's post secondary education. Supporting Mr. Raj Thavaratnasingam, those who answered parents' questions included Dr. Xavier Fernando, Mrs. Suganja Sinnathamby, Dr. E. Balasunderam, Ms. Janani Pathy, Mr. Fernando Rajasoorier, Mr. Yaso Somalingam and Mrs. Luxmy Vasam.

Finally all the children and parents gathered in the main auditorium for summary and a recap of the discussions. The moderators for each group presented their summary and the discussions continued. The panel of presenters and moderators happily answered the questions raised by the participants. Before ending the workshop, the ASGC as an appreciation of the volunteer service, presented volunteer certificates to each of the presenters, moderators and the volunteer students. The workshop ended with a vote of thanks delivered by Mr. C. Ramanathan, Secretary of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada.



Karva Chauth Day

It is heartening to know that Hindus have always believed in worshipping the Male and Female aspect of God together and that Sri Ram was a staunch devoted husband. Not only that, one says Seeta Ram and Radha Krishna and as one can see the female name gets precedence. Over 3000 female devotees of Shri Ram Mandir here celebrated the Karva Chauth day. As the name signifies, Karva meaning a clay pot and chauth corresponding to the fourth, this festival is commemorated on the fourth day after the Full Moon in Kartik month of Hindu calendar. The fast of Karva Chauth is kept 9 days before Diwali. In the olden days, a woman was dependent on a

man, whether he was her father, brother, husband or Guru. Without a man she was considered incomplete. Today that may not be the case. But it is still refreshing to see a loving wife or a loving husband.

is customary for the wife to fast the whole day. She does not drink water either. She paints her hands and feet with henna, dresses generally in red apparel and on her hair parting she smears vermilion powder. It is believed that a Pati-Vrat woman has the power to confront the God of Death, Yama. This Karva Chauth fast is undertaken by the wife, so that the husband enjoys a long and prosperous life.

The story of Karva is well known. Her husband was caught by a crocodile. Karva bound the crocodile with a cotton yarn. She then asked Yama to send the crocodile to hell. Yama refused. Karva threatened to curse

Being a Pati-Vrat wife, Savitri would never any other man, be the father of her children. Yama was left with no other choice but to restore Savitri's husband to life.

A few days before Karva Chauth, married women buy new karvas, the spherical clay pots and paint them on the outside with beautiful designs. Inside the pot, they put bangles and ribbons, home-made candy and sweets, make-up items and small clothes e.g. handkerchief. The women then visit each other on the day of Karva Chauth or immediately afterward, and exchange these karvas. Season-wise, soon after the harvest, it is an excellent time to enjoy festivi-

ties, meet one another and exchange gifts. During the time of Karva Chauth, parents send gifts to married daughters and their children.

the shringar or the traditional adornments and the other pooja items the karwa, matthi, heena etc.

Early in the morning they prepare food and have it before sunrise. The morning passes by in other festive activities like decorating hand and feet with heena decorating the pooja thali and meeting friends and relatives.

The essentials of this gathering and listening of the karva chauth story a special mud pot, that is considered a symbol of lord Ganesha, a metal urn filled with water, flowers, idols of Ambika Gaur Mata, Goddess Parwati and some fruits, mathi and food grains. A part of this is offered to the deities and the storyteller. They sit in a circle, and many such circles are made depending on the number of devotees attending the function as it is easy that the thalis are passed in a circle (fera) amongst themselves. Here is the puja song sung by women, while they exchange thalis seven times. They place 'Bayen' in the thali....

Veero Kudiye Karwada,
Sarv Suhagan Karwada,
Aye Katti Naya Teri Naa,
Kumbh Chrakhra Feri Naa,
Aar Pair payeen Naa,
Ruthda maniyen Naa,
Suthra Jagayeen Naa,
Ve Veero Kuriye Karwara,
Ve Sarv Suhagan Karwara..... (6)

This Stanza is sung 6 times i.e. It keeps on repeating till the time Thalis have been exchanged and all women have their own thalis... it goes on six

times, 6 feras / circles. The seventh fera or circle or exchanging goes like this...

Veero Kudiye Karwada,
Sarv Suhagan Karwada,
Aye Katti Naya Teri Nee,
Kumbh Chrakhra Feri Bhee,
Aar Pair payeen Bhee,
Ruthda maniyen Bhee,
Suthra Jagayeen Bhee,
Ve Veero Kuriye Karwara,
Ve Sarv Suhagan Karwara.....

Earlier an idol of Gaur Mata was made using earth and cowdung. Now just an idol of Goddess Parwati is kept. Every one lights an earthen lamp in their thalis while listening to the Karva story. Sindoor, incense sticks and rice are also kept in the thali.

At this time the women wear heavy saris or chunries in red, pink or other bridal colors, and adorn themselves with all other symbols of a married women like, nose pin, tika, bindi, bangles, earrings etc.

Once the moon rises, the women see its reflection in a thali of water, or through a dupatta or a sieve. They offer water to the moon and seek blessings. They pray for the safety, prosperity and long life of their husbands. This marks the end of the day long fast.

Kanayalal Raina

Brampton

Photo courtesy Kanayalal Raina



man, whether he was her father, brother, husband or Guru. Without a man she was considered incomplete. Today that may not be the case. But it is still refreshing to see a loving wife or a loving husband.

The festival of Karva Chauth was earlier emerged as a day to celebrate the season of autumn and enjoy the company of friends and relatives. But later on, many mythological legends were added to give it a religious touch. This festival is glorified and widely solemnized by the Hindus and Sikh all over the world. On this day it

Yama. Yama, afraid of being cursed by Pati-vrat (devoted) wife, sent the crocodile to hell. Karva and her husband enjoyed many years of wedded bliss. The fact that Yama was afraid of being cursed by a devoted wife showed the power a good faithful woman!

Maybe you have heard the story of Savitri. The latter followed Yama, who carried away her dead husband. Yama said that she could ask for any other boon except for the life of her husband. Savitri asked that she be blessed with children. Yama agreed.

The Ritual

They are not supposed to eat or even drink water during the day. In the evening the ladies listen to the Karva Chauth Katha (the legend). The fast is over after the moonrise.

The Puja Process

The pooja preparations start a day in advance. Married women buy

Pictures taken during the free diabetes clinic held on Wednesday, September 19th at Kennedy Road Pharmacy.



The nurse examining and explaining the patient.

Batti Nite-2007

held at Claireport Banquet Hall on October 13,2007. Over 500 attended the event



IMF Predicts Global Economy to Slow

By Barry Wood

The International Monetary Fund has released its semi-annual global economic forecast, marking it down by nearly .5 percent, mainly because of a slowdown in the United States.

Global growth is expected to slow to 4.8 percent in 2008, from the 5.2 percent advance of this year.

For the first time, says the IMF, fast growing China and India are the principal contributors to global growth. Those economies have been growing at a more than nine percent annual rate, a pace expected to moderate only slightly in 2008.

IMF chief economist Simon Johnson says the U.S. slowdown has added to downside risks in the world economy. He says the recent turbulence in financial markets may not yet be fully contained. The U.S. treasury secretary and central bank chief are warning of further problems in the housing and home mortgage sectors.

Johnson says while the August and September turbulence in U.S. financial markets spread to Western Europe, it has not had much impact on Asia and most emerging market economies.

"Emerging markets have made tremendous progress [in strengthening their financial systems] and I think that progress is partly why the shocks did not jump that particular fire break,

the fire break that separates industrialized from emerging markets," he said. "Going forward, I would not want to assume that that fire break will always hold."

The IMF does not foresee that soaring oil prices will push the world economy into recession. Major economies, it says, have boosted energy conservation so that economic growth is no longer so heavily linked to the price of oil.

In 2005 and 2006, the world economy grew at its fastest pace in 40 years. That recovery, says the IMF, is still intact, but there are more uncertainties now than two years ago.

IMF economists say the Chinese currency is undervalued and its exchange rate needs to rise at a faster pace. They generally applaud the 20 percent decline since 2002 in the value of the dollar. They say its decline has been orderly and has contributed to an easing of financial imbalances. The dollar's decline has reduced the U.S. trade deficit from seven percent to 5.5 percent of U.S. economic output.

China, however, aided by a weak renminbi, is still accumulating huge reserves as its trade surplus continues to rise.

The IMF forecast is released twice a year in advance of meetings of world finance ministers.

[VOA]

The 8th Annual Navarathiri - Saraswathi Pooja -

The 8th Annual Navarathiri - Saraswathi Pooja by the Sri Lankan Tamils in New Jersey was celebrated on October 13, 2007 in South Brunswick, New Jersey.

There were bajans, children cultural programs performed by the local residents. Mrs Sarojini Thanabala-singam led the bajans and her students performed vocal

concert after that. The students of Mrs Selvi Chandranathan and Mrs Pathma Thiyagaram performed Bharathanatyam dances. The Veena performance by Miss Shauna Suthersan was applauded by the audience. The Miruthangam concert and the Violin performance was also received well by the audience. The celebration was completed with Prasatham dinner by volunteers. Below are some of the pictures taken at the Saraswathi pooja.



Madurai airport to be named after Thevar

Efforts will be initiated to rename the Madurai airport as the Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar Airport, Chief Minister M Karunanidhi has announced.

Speaking at a function at Pasumpon village in Ramanathapuram district recently, the Chief Minister said that it was because of his efforts that the Chennai airports had been christened Kamarajar and Anna airports.

U. Muthuramalingam Thevar, also known as Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Thevar (October 30, 1908 – October 30, 1963) a political leader, hailed from the village of Pasumpon, Ramnad district, southern Tamil Nadu. Thevar became the leader of the All India Forward Bloc in Tamil Nadu, and was national deputy chairman of the party from 1952 onwards. He was elected thrice to parliament.



Monsoon Cine Glitz

Kamal Haasan's 10 avatars

After the roaring success of Rajnikanth's Sivaji: The Boss in India as well as overseas, the next most awaited Tamil feature is Kamal Haasan's Dasavatharam.

Unlike Sivaji though, Dasavatharam does not boast of a bombastic budget nor glitter. But what it boasts of is Kamal Haasan in 10 roles!

Add director K S Ravi Kumar to the mix and what we have is unadulterated fun! Some of the successful films as a result of the duo's (Haasan and Ravi Kumar) combo are Avaai Shanumughi, Thenali and Panchathanthiram.



Like the Dasavatharam of Lord Vishnu, in the film, Kamal Haasan is said to be coming in ten different incarnations -- avatharams.



Kamal Haasan has dubbed in ten different voices for the ten characters.



Dasavatharam comes with Kamal Haasan's story, screenplay and dialogue. "It was a daunting task. My 10 acting roles may blur the face of the writer now. But once the film is out, the 11th man is bound to get noticed," Kamal Haasan said recently, in an interview



Dasavatharam will be simultaneously released in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi.



Director K S Ravi Kumar is planning to record the crowd voices of the opening sequence using 5000 people to match the 10,000 on screen.



The chief of American stuntmen, Andy Dixon, who has also acted in the film, says Haasan is good enough to earn a union



Another interesting feature of the film is Mallika Sherawat.



Asin plays Kamal Haasan's heroine in the film.

Kollywood Film Review



Remembering The Legend



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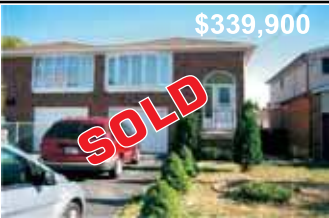
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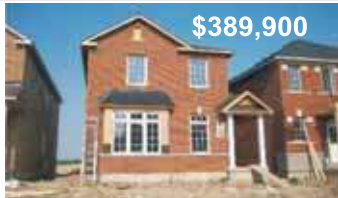
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