

Monsoon Journal

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Neelotpalam" (Purple Lily) in a pond in
Thavady, Jaffna district in Sri Lanka
[humanityashore.org]

"I will honor Christmas in my
heart, and try to keep it all
the year."

Charles Dickens
(1812 - 1870) English novelist

Welcoming Stephane Dion, the new Liberal Leader

(see Editorial on page 4)

**Season's Greetings
& Best Wishes for a
Happy New Year
from
Monsoon Journal**



**Anton Balasingham's funeral held
on Wednesday, December 20th,
2006
Tens of thousands of mourners pay
last respects in London.**

**Memorial services around the
world paying tribute to
'Voice of the Nation'**

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**A Tribute to
EROS founder
Eliyathamby Ratnasabapathy**

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**Velupillai Pirapaharan, leader of the
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE),
together with his wife Mrs Mathivathani
Pirapaharan, Senior LTTE leaders and
Commanders payed his last respects to
LTTE's theoretician and chief negotiator
Anton Balasingham, in Vanni Wednesday.**

(Courtesy: TamilNet)



Sri Lanka attacks Allan Rock over UN Report

By: Shiyam Loganathan

Allan Rock, the Special Advisor to the United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict on Sri Lanka, was criticized by angry nationalists and the People's Liberation Front, Sri Lanka's main Marxist party, for allegations against the Sri Lankan military.

Mr. Rock accused the military of facilitating and, in some cases, participating in forceful abductions by the Karuna faction. These abductions were of young people for recruitment as child soldiers. In protests in front of the UN's Colombo headquarters Mr. Rock was being called a "Snow Tiger" and PLF parliamentarian Wimal Weerawansa was accusing

Allan Rock of trying to discredit the army by making false allegations.

However, the Nordic Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission that administered the ceasefire agreement between the government and the LTTE supported Rock's claims as the news came as no surprise. The UN and Sri Lankan President Rajapakse also acknowledged Mr. Rock's findings.

The UN released the Special Advisor's statement which included assurances he received from all parties involved including the President's, on their website.

The statement can be found at
www.un.org/children/conflict/pr/2006-11-13statementfromthe127.html.

The original article on Allan Rock, a special report in the Toronto Star is found on page 3



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see page 21

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CSLBC AWARDS GALA 2006 PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNER IS HON. MARIA MINNA

The 2nd Annual Awards Gala presented by the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council (CSLBC) on Friday December 15th ended on a high note with popular federal parliamentarian Hon. Maria Minna winning the coveted President's Award for 2006. The dynamic Deputy Premier of Ontario Hon. George Smitherman was Chief Guest and the event was well attended by a cross section from the Canadian business community.

Senator Joseph Day, Patron of CSLBC opened the evening reflecting on his visit to Sri Lanka in March 2005, soon after the Tsunami.

President of the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council, Kula Sellathurai then addressed the gathering and said that his mission was to build the Council to a formidable organization in order to achieve its mission objectives.

Deputy Premier of Ontario, Hon. George Smitherman gave a rousing speech that covered a lot of ground and explained the numerous plans and programs undertaken by his government to help the people of Ontario. In an eloquent speech, the Deputy Premier congratulated Hon. Maria Minna and the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council for its commitment towards building bridges and promoting business among the large Sri Lankan expatriate community.

The President's Award ceremony was the highlight of the evening. Deputy Premier of Ontario Hon. George Smitherman presented the Medallion to Hon. Maria Minna who was the unanimous choice for the coveted award.

Senior Vice President Jim Coccimiglio from TD Canada Trust, who was the main sponsors of the event, presented Ms. Minna with a plaque in recognition of winning the award.

At last year's Awards Gala, Ontario Premier Hon. Dalton McGuinty was Chief Guest and presented former Ontario Premier Bob Rae with the President's Award. Mr. Rae earned the recognition for his role as head of the Forum of Federations where he promoted the Canadian model of federalism to Sri Lanka.

The President's Award recognizes the dedication and tireless work of a Canadian who has contributed to enriching the Sri Lankan Diaspora and also for work connected with finding a negotiated settlement to the peace initiatives in Sri Lanka. On both counts, Hon. Maria Minna has excelled over the last decade. She led a 22-member Peace/Business Mission to Sri Lanka in March 2005 that included five All-Party Federal Parliamentarians and seventeen businessmen from the Sri Lankan community. The visit to Sri Lanka was coordinated by the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council. She has also contributed in large measure to the ongoing integration of the Sri Lankan community in Canada. In addition to all this, Hon. Maria Minna is

also the Chair of the Canada-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship Group in Ottawa, an organization who are friends of Sri Lanka.

In an emotional acceptance speech, Ms. Maria Minna said that it has been a pleasure to be associated with the Sri Lankan Diaspora in Canada. Her trips to Sri Lanka has given her exposure to the life and times of the local people and helped her to understand the beauty of the country and the sincerity of its people.

Others who spoke were Ambassador C.S. Poolokasingham, Consul General for Sri Lanka in Toronto; Federal Member of Parliament for Simcoe North Bruce Stanton and Senior VP, TD Canada Trust Jim Coccimiglio.

The gala was attended by over 450 guests and was well organized. Chair of the Organizing Committee Nirantha De Silva and his committed team of fellow-directors did an excellent job in presenting the event.

The Board of Directors of the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council is as follows. President Kula Sellathurai; Vice President Nirantha De Silva; Secretary Upali Obeyesekere; Treasurer Ernest Fernando; Director Membership Ganesan Sugumar; Director Media Relations Nalaka Weerasinghe, Directors-at-large Mohan Perera, Vincent Veerasuntharam and Bobby S. Wijey. The Patron of the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council is Senator Joseph A. Day while exofficio chairman is His Excellency W.J.S. Karunaratne, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Canada. The Honorary Auditor is Krishan Suntharalingam, CA. The Legal Counsel is Thushari Suduwelikanda. The Secretariat of the Council is located at 220 Duncan Mill Road, North York.

Photos: Ken Photo



UN's Allan Rock ridiculed in Sri Lanka

Called 'village gossip' for saying military helped rebel faction abduct child soldiers

By Namini Wijedasa [Special to Toronto Star]

COLOMBO—United Nations envoy Allan Rock has been lampooned and accused of collaborating with the Tamil Tiger rebels.

The special adviser to the UN's representative for children and armed conflict has also been called a "Snow Tiger" and a "village gossip" after he alleged the Sri Lankan military helped a breakaway rebel faction recruit child soldiers.

Concluding his recent 10-day fact-finding mission to the island, Rock told journalists "there is both direct and indirect evidence that elements in the Sri Lankan security forces are facilitating and, in some cases, participating in forceful abductions by Karuna of young people."

Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, a.k.a. Karuna, was the eastern military commander of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) until March 2004, when he split from the main rebel outfit over differences with its leadership. His group has since been fighting the Tamil Tigers in a clandestine war that the military has been accused of supporting.



Angry nationalists led by Buddhist monks piled in front of the UN's Colombo headquarters this week, shouting slogans and waving placards that questioned the motives of both Rock and the UN. Rising from above the sea of heads was an effigy of Rock, Canada's former UN ambassador.

"Is whitewashing Tiger terrorists the obligation" of the UN? asked one placard. "Is Allan Rock a Tiger?" asked another.

Nearly 200 people joined the protest organized by the Patriotic National Movement — a key component of which is the People's Liberation Front, Sri Lanka's main Marxist party.

"Allan Rock is a member of the pro-Tiger international lobby and is trying to discredit the army by making false allegations," said PLF parliamentarian Wimal Weerawansa.

"If Rock wasn't acting on behalf of the LTTE, he would have presented his final

report to the UN for appropriate action," Weerawansa said. "The fact that he made sensational announcements to the media even before the report was compiled shows his underhand motives." The PLF later issued a statement accusing the former federal cabinet minister of being part of a conspiracy against Sri Lanka.

Fresh criticism came, too, from government quarters.

"A responsible member of the international community would not have made such unfounded public statements in such an irresponsible manner," said Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera in an interview this week. "Even if they were true, a person of that nature should have had the decency to bring it to the notice of the government discreetly."

But the Nordic Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission that oversees the ceasefire agreement between the government and rebels supported Rock's claims. The mission said his allegations came as no surprise.

"We have known for some time that there is a level of co-operation between certain elements of the security forces and the Karuna faction," says Helen Olafsdottir, acting spokesperson. "We are compiling more information and will present the government with a comprehensive report on the matter."

There has been biting commentary from some who felt Rock had been "mollycoddling" the Tiger rebels while discrediting the state with unverified allegations.

Rights groups have accused the Tigers of enlisting thousands of children to join their fight for a separate homeland for minority ethnic Tamils. The militants have repeatedly appeared on the UN secretary general's List of Shame, which aims to discredit parties that engage in child recruitment and other grave crimes against children.

The Island, an independent English-language newspaper, said in an editorial it was unbecoming of a UN official to go by hearsay "like a village gossip."

The state-owned Daily News said if Rock had done his homework before getting here, he would have learned it is the Tigers who have been committing child abuse, including abducting children and forcing them to join the Tigers' combat ranks.

More than 3,000 civilians, troops and rebel fighters have been killed in Sri Lanka this year and many fear a conflict that has killed more than 67,000 people since 1983 could escalate.

"Backlash Against UN Envoy Allan Rock Indicative of Sri Lanka's Repressive Status Quo"

Ottawa, November 24, 2006 – UN envoy Alan Rock is being lambasted by thousands of Sri Lankan protesters, who are calling the former Liberal Health and Justice Minister's integrity into question and accusing the United Nations delegation of conspiring against the Government of Sri Lanka.

As Special Advisor to the UN's Representative for Children and Armed Conflicts, Rock recently visited Sri Lanka on a fact-finding mission and admitted to journalists that "there is both direct and indirect evidence that elements in the Sri Lankan security forces are facilitating and, in some cases, participating in forceful abductions by Karuna of young people." Meanwhile, Amnesty International is calling for the establishment of an internationally supported Commission of Inquiry in the country, independent of the Sri Lankan Government, which it claims has failed to adequately protect its Tamil citizens from repeated abuses.

A tempestuous mob of Sinhalese nationalists gathered outside the UN's Colombo offices, angrily parading an effigy of Rock and accusing Canada's former ambassador to the UN of being a paid international lobbyist for the LTTE.

The wave of protests and condemnatory news reports that Rock's findings triggered are indicative of Sri Lanka's hostile political environment.

"A violent anti-Tamil status quo is supported in Sri Lanka," noted David Poopalapillai, Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress. "Any dissenting opinion, no matter who delivers it or how true it may be, is immediately discredited by the Sri Lankan government and its supporters."

"Truth is fabricated in Sri Lanka and any voice of dissent is immediately silenced. In the case of a respected

international figure like Mr. Rock, Sinhalese hardliners seek to discredit his findings. On a smaller local level, however, the oppressive status quo is often maintained through state-sponsored violence," Poopalapillai added.

The media is not exempt from the Sri Lankan government's silencing campaign. In August, Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapakse summoned the Sinhalese national media and urged them to "toe the line" in their reporting. Less than a week later, prominent Tamil newspaper editor and former member of parliament Sinnathamby Sivamaharajah was murdered outside his home in Jaffna, whose civilian population is currently subjected to daily aerial bombardments and a rigorous road blockade that is cutting off essential supplies from reaching the area.

"Events like this put things into perspective," said CTC Ottawa Coordinator Julian Francis. "If a UN advisor and former federal cabinet minister cannot conduct an objective inquiry without being accused of taking bribe money and producing biased reports, what chance does the international community stand of gaining an accurate picture of what's going on in Sri Lanka."

"The backlash against Mr. Rock says it all. The international community has been duped long enough by the Government of Sri Lanka. Events like this one are indicative of the silencing campaign that has stifled Sri Lankan Tamils for decades."

Over 3,000 civilians and soldiers have been killed in Sri Lanka this year and many fear that a conflict that has already claimed more than 70,000 lives since 1983 is set to sharply escalate.

Balasingham "stood for federalism"

Norwegian Minister for International Development, Erik Solheim, was among the mourners gathered in London.

Speaking to BBC Sinhala after the funeral, Minister Solheim said:

"He was one of the very few in the SL peace process who has not lied to me. He wanted the peace process to be a success. He believed that an everlasting solution will have to be on the Oslo agreement which is a federal solution".



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**From the Publisher's Desk ...
 Stephane Dion, the new Liberal Leader is here**

Congratulations Hon. Stephane Dion, on being elected as the new leader of the Liberal Party.

The talk of the town in our communities when December rolled in was the Liberal leadership race in Montreal. At the helm now is Stephane Dion as the new federal Liberal leader.

Many in our communities actively participated in the process. And are now eagerly awaiting to see the newly elected leader contributing decisively to the pressing issues on the radar.

Many Tamils in our communities sincerely hope that the new leader, praised by many analysts as "a mild and humble intellectual" will make

pointed contributions as Liberal Leader, Leader of the Opposition and as well as if and when elected as Prime Minister, to the betterment of the lives of their brethren in Sri Lanka.

Two years ago just about this time of the year, Canadians contributed generously in the aftermath of the Boxing Day Tsunami. Prime Minister Paul Martin visited Eastern Sri Lanka and several Liberal MPs have visited Northern parts as well.

Today in Sri Lanka, the political and civic climate has deteriorated completely to the devastation of particularly the Tamils of North East. Kidnappings are rampant with the latest high profile disappearance being that of Vice Chancellor Professor S. Raveendranath of the Eastern University.

Decisive actions by Canada in the international arena will compel the Government of Sri Lanka to respect human rights. Already the much praiseworthy mission of ex-Liberal minister Allan Rock is being heavily criticized by Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, clarion voice of Canada on the international stage has shed light on the plight of children at the hands of Government of Sri Lanka armed forces.

The new leader is being elected at a time when Tamil Canadians are increasingly concerned about the situation in Sri Lanka and wanting Canada, their new

home now - to do more for their families left behind. Mr. Dion is in a position to start new, with matters concerning Sri Lanka and Tamil Canadians.

The new Liberal leader has said he doesn't want an early election but also added recently that he has no intentions to be caught off guard and is preparing for one just in case.

Dion came from third place at the leadership convention in Montreal to dramatically reach the crown to be at the helm of the Liberal Party. Dion did it despite being dismissed early on by the national media – and most Liberals – as a smart but boring policy wonk with no charisma, who was unsaleable in a big part of Canada.

In Dion, Canadians now have an Opposition leader and potential Prime Minister.

Just like the "surprise" come from behind victory the new leader and the Liberal Party are back in full swing to fully debate, engage and contribute profoundly to the pressing issues.

The Monsoon Journal trusts that these pressing issues will include matters involving the situation in Sri Lanka as well.

The new Liberal leader should keep foremost in mind, particularly the Tamil Canadian voters' anticipation of a more quickly responsive international community with regards to the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka. And many believe that Canada could play that all important lead role in the West in bringing a negotiated settlement in the island.



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We appeal to you to contribute generously to this worthy cause, to alleviate the hardship of these patients.



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“It is now crystal clear that the Sinhala leaders will never put forward a just resolution to the Tamil national question. Therefore, we are not prepared to place our trust in the impossible and walk along the same old futile path.... We therefore ask the international community and the countries of the world that respect justice to recognize our freedom struggle.” This is the key sections of the annual Heroes’ Day statement delivered by the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), V. Pirapaharan.

The Sinhalese ruling class in Colombo may simply consider this as a regular political joke of Tamil militancy. However, serious Sri Lanka watchers would agree that such a statement represents not only the Tamil disappointments and distrust, but also it effectively exposes duplicity of five decades old southern Sinhalese politics, which categorically refused to do meaningful political business with the Tamil moderates. Thus statement is strong in its message and accurate in its agendas.

The Tamil Tigers unquestionably are the deadly elements of the Sri Lanka society. Whether the Tamils Tigers are freedom fighters as they claim themselves or deadly terrorists as the Sri Lanka governments describe, history will answer it. My point is here is that the birth of Tamil Tiger movement has roots in Sri Lanka’s history. In my understanding, they are the byproduct of five decades’ old failed politics and policies of the Sinhalese political class. There was not an overnight decision among the ordinary Tamils to approve the agendas of the Tamil Tigers: the failure of Sri Lankan polity to meet the demands of the Tamil moderates was a key foundation for the origin of the Tamil extremism in Sri Lanka. Instead of listening to the Tamil leaders and accommodating their reasonable demands, the Sinhalese ruling leaders of the time assaulted and stoned the Tamils and their leaders, and even hired the Sinhalese to become butchers to kill innocent Tamils and moderate leaders. One needs to realize that successive government since 1956 controlled by the Sinhalese miserably failed to engage the Tamil moderates such as the Federal Party (FP). The FP sought a comprehensive solution without jeopardizing the unity of Sri Lanka. However, Sinhalese collective, competitive chauvinism turned blind eyes to the Tamil moderates. Sadly, the choice of the Sinhala political class to use violence effectively scratched the Tamil trust in the political system and encouraged some Tamils to adopt violence.

Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe, a former Premier of Sri Lanka and considered as an agent of neo-colonialists by the Sinhala chauvinists, during his visit to the United States echoed this truth. He rightly pointed that “the Tamils tried peaceful protests which soon degenerated into violence. With the underlying grievances being unattended the stage was set for terrorists groups to emerge (“Our Approach for a Better Tomorrow Free from Terrorism,” Daily News, July 25, 2002.) This helps us to understand the birth of Tamil violent movements, particularly the Tamil Tigers in the end of 1970. The Sinhalese ruling leaders, however, did not freeze their narrow minded ethnic outbidding policies. They incessantly formulated what I call emotional policies to win the sympathy of the Sinhalese, and continually treat the Tamils inhumanely and refused to offer

Partition Wins When Polity Denies Meaningful Power Sharing

By Dr. A.R.M. Imtiyaz

[Department of Political Science, Temple University, USA]

what political scientists call “consociational democracy” to ease ethnic tensions.

What is more ironic is that in Sri Lanka, even after 25 years of conflict, after victimizing thousands of Sri Lankans, mostly the Tamils, the Sinhalese political class still refusing to recognize that minorities, including the Muslims, have legitimate grievances that require reasonable political solution. In fact, they are deliberately refusing to understand the problems of the minorities; because they hate to challenge the kind of political culture they created to outbid their opponents. To consolidate this narrow political culture, they utilize 5th century Mahavamsa, which plays key role in the formation of Sinhala elite mobilization. According to Mahavamsa, Sinhalese people are the preservers of Buddhism and the entire island is the sacred home of the Sinhalese and of Buddhism.

Separation may not be desirable solution for the Sri Lanka’s ethnic civil war which killed more than 75,000 people out of the island’s 19 millions. In

to the Tamils, seem now strongly believe that an independent state for the people of Tamil Eelam can deliver peace and justice to the Tamils. Pirapakaran and its elusive Tamil Tiger cadres may have their own political aims and programs as other political parties or organization share in a democratic political structure, but what is truth is that the Sinhalese polity totally disappointed the minorities, particularly the Tamils.

Therefore, when they say “the uncompromising stance of Sinhala chauvinism has left us with no other option but an independent state for the people of Tamil Eelam,” it is highly demonstrating their frustration both with the impartial delivery of democratic system and the Sinhalese ruling elites. In point of fact, this is serious political development and should be taken seriously, because such a call for partition generally arises out of deep disappointment on the delivery of political leaders.

The best alternative to the partition is, as I mentioned above, serious political

regardless their ethnic/religious identity, we not only win their trust, but also their loyalty to the common goals. On the other hand, polity may trigger violence and instability when we shove our preferences on others. Unity and peace among the different groups, by and large, occur when there is a spirit for respect, self-determination, and freedom, in other words, tensions between the different ethnic groups can be disappeared when the state offer the space for the minorities to build their lost trust, and to uphold their citizenship through the political autonomy.

If there is a resistance from the Sinhalese polity for a power-sharing, in that case, the final but undesirable option for the Tamils is partition. The demand of separation becomes strong when a power-sharing arrangement is not possible. The world recognizes that if the people do not want to co-habit in the same polity then, partition should not be automatically neglected as a solution. This might be one way to manage Tamils’ demands for political space since 1977. However, partition would not win the blessings of the global community, particularly New Delhi and Washington would refuse to go along with it for the reasons best known to them.

But is it fair enough to turn blind eyes, while the sections of the human community continually suffer both militarily and humanitarially in the chunk of the war torn North-East? How are we human enough to tolerate blood and dead of the Tamils at the hands of oppressive Sinhalese forces who even snub to offer minimum power sharing such as Tsunami pact? Do Tamils continually need to bleed for the desires of corrupt and selfish or bad leaders of Sri Lanka?

If the global community thinks partition is not desirable, then they need to exert tough leverage on the Sri Lanka ruling elites to firmly improve the human rights of the minorities of Sri Lanka, by giving political space for a power sharing democracy. Sri Lanka continue to bleed and remain to be home of deadly but motivated Tamil suicide bombers if there is no outside (effective and honest) pressures. Such a vacuum may further frustrate Sri Lanka, and help to reserve permanent seat in the failed state club. Both the global community and Sinhalese ruling elites would have to share the responsibilities, if such an outcome occurs beyond our expectations. [TamilWeek.com]



LTTE Leader Velupillai Pirapaharan on Nov 27, 2006 (Photo: LTTEPS.org)

other words, separation may trigger further instability. But when a particular community continuously being denied their rights and share, and became prisoners of the majority/dominant community, then there must be a solution to arrest unhealthy political situation and to give justice to the marginalized. However, desire for a partition could be challenged if the ruling elites show real willingness to think and act beyond the ethnic emotions, and commitments to share the powers with the minorities. That is to say, their must be an effective power sharing mechanisms with the Tamil ethnic political movements both at center and region. This would more likely undermine the agendas of the separatist movements provided there is a domestic and international political willingness to implement the agreement.

Moreover, it is irrational to demand a particular community to forcefully cohabit with the majority. Also, when there is no space for political accommodation and citizenship for the minorities who claim geographical domination in a certain areas of the country, separation is highly likely. Pirapakaran, who thinks that “uncompromising stance of Sinhala chauvinism” would never deliver justice

package. It would probably provide a political space to cohabit with other groups, while maintaining their own identity and values. The basic logic of unity is acceptance. When we prepare to accept choices made by others

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Tamil Nadu leaders express sorrow over Balasingham's death



"I am unable to bear the sorrow over the death of my friend Mr Anton Balasingham, who I have known for many years. Balasingham grieved for his people dismissing his terrible illness as "merely a pebble compared to the vast ocean of tragedy faced by his people," he captivated Tamils worldwide for his dedicated service to his people, developed, nurtured friendship with Norway and people like us, and kept the flame of self-respect of Tamils burning bright until his last breath," said **M. Karunanidhi, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu**, in a report of condolence issued Thursday. "I express my deep sympathies to his wife and friends," he added.



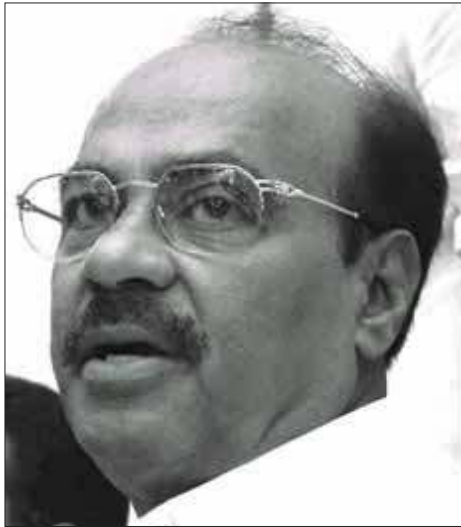
"The news of the demise of Anton Balasingham struck in our heart as a spike. Balasingham, who acted as a pillar to the LTTE leader Pirabhakaran, exposed the false and malicious propaganda of the Sri Lanka Government, and opened the conscience of the international community," **Vaiko, the General Secretary of the MDMK** said.

Vaiko added: "Balasingham served as the main voice of Tamileelam for more than two decades, from Thimpu Talks in 1985 to Geneva in 2006. Sinhala hirelings attempted to kill him Chennai

in 1987. He narrowly escaped many Sri Lankan Army's attacks in Eelam in 1987 and 1988.

"Later, Norway with its magnanimous humanitarian gesture, saved his life by providing facilities to transplant his failing kidneys.

"The memories of my stay with him in 2000 are still fresh in my mind. I will cherish these memories. On behalf of the members of MDMK, I expressed my deep sympathies to the people of Eelam and my sister Adele Balasingham," Vaiko said.



"The loss of Balasingham, who fought for the self-respect and political rights of Tamils, is irreplaceable to the people of Tamileelam," said **Dr. S. Ramathas, the Founder of Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK)**.

"The loss of the main voice of Eelam Tamils at a critical time, when the international community is pressuring the parties for a negotiated solution, is most unfortunate," he added.

"We regret the unconscionable

...he captivated Tamils worldwide for his dedicated service to his people, developed, nurtured friendship with Norway and people like us, and kept the flame of self-respect of Tamils burning bright until his last breath," said M. Karunanidhi, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu,



decision of the Indian Government to deny permission to Balasingham when he requested treatment in Indian soil for his illness, said **Thol Thirumavalavan, the General Secretary of 'Viduthalaich Siruththaigal'**.

"His clarion call to the International community established that the liberation struggle of the Tamil people rested on humanitarian principles to secure democratic rights of the Tamil people," he further said.



"No one can fill the vacuum left by Anton Balasingham who had fully engaged himself in the Tamil Eelam Struggle from its inception and fought with determination in all the talks on behalf of the Liberation Tigers. I convey my condolence to his wife Adele Balasingham and the Eelam Tamils who are grieving Anton's demise," said **Pala. Nedumaran, the Leader of Tamil National Organization**.

Tamil Nadu Leaders



K. Vijayakanth, the Leader of Tamil National Dravidian Progressive Party, in his statement said: "The Eelam Tamils suffered a great loss with the demise of Balasingham. He started his life as a journalist then worked in the British Embassy and finally served as the Theoretician of LTTE. He was a political pundit and represented the LTTE in talks with the Sri Lankan Government."



K. Veeramani, the Leader of Periyar Dravidian Party said, "The demise of Balasingham has made the misery of Tamils twofold at a time when the Eelam issue is fast moving towards a solution."

"No one can fill the vacuum left by Anton Balasingham who had fully engaged himself in the Tamil Eelam Struggle from its inception and fought with determination in all the talks on behalf of the Liberation Tigers.

Young child among 7 killed while fleeing fighting; UN urges end to conflict

A young child was among seven Sri Lankan displaced persons who died on Dec 15th when their boat capsized while they were fleeing fighting between Government troops and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the east of the island, the United Nations said, repeating calls for both sides to protect civilians and end the conflict.

"The United Nations is distressed to hear about the tragic loss of life today of seven internally displaced persons (IDPs), including a young child, whose boat capsized as they tried to reach safety away from Vaharai. More are feared dead as two boats remain missing," the UN office in Sri Lanka said in a statement, warning that people are risking their lives daily to escape.

The statement urged both parties to find immediate means to ensure the

safe passage and protection of civilians in the Vaharai area.

It also called for a cessation of hostilities by both parties and urged the LTTE to help and allow IDPs to leave the area, adding that that the Sri Lankan Army should ensure their safe passage.

The UN also called on both sides to comply with their obligations under International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, particularly regarding protecting civilians and IDPs.

Today's statement is the second this week on Sri Lanka after Amin Awad, Acting UN resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, said on Tuesday it was "critical" to protect these desperate civilians after days of deadly shelling had killed an unknown number, left dozens wounded and forced thousands to flee their homes.

In Trincomalee district, which is also in the east, some 2,500 civilians have left their homes and taken refuge in Kantale, while approximately 35,000 people remain trapped along a sliver of land where Government troops and the LTTE are fighting.

Humanitarian agencies are delivering immediate assistance to the affected population and separately the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has said it was helping almost 4,000 people in Kantale, who were forced to flee their homes because of fighting.

Also this week, the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, highlighted in particular a recent attack on a school and the effect the decades-old conflict is having on the country's young people.

Fighting between Government troops and the LTTE has intensified since April, despite a ceasefire agreed in 2002 aimed at ending the conflict that has lasted for more than 20 years and claimed some 60,000 lives. [UN News Centre]

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Anton Balasingham, whose death from cancer was announced on Thursday, Dec 14th, was the ideologist of the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka.

Officially known as the group's political adviser and theoretician, for over 25 years he played a unique role in the political struggle of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

Over the years, this normally reticent man was the public face of the Tamil Tigers. Living in London, it was his job to communicate with the outside world about the aspirations of his people.

He was the main force in bringing the attention of the world to a forgotten war in this small island nation.

Earlier in his life, Balasingham worked as a journalist in one of the Colombo newspapers before joining the British High Commission in Colombo as a translator.

In his youth he was an activist of the left, before he came to London to study for his doctorate.

Many commentators believe Balasingham was the moderating force - always on the search for a political solution - within one of the most belligerent rebel organisations in the world.

He is known for his relentless attempts to bring the Tigers to the international negotiating arena. It was mainly due to his perseverance that the Tigers



acquired a reputation as a progressive organisation among certain liberals in the west.

He was able to live in Britain even though his organisation is proscribed by the UK government.

For over a decade however, Balasingham was plagued with physical ailments. Apart from bile duct cancer, he suffered from chronic diabetes, motor neurone disease and acute

Anton Balasingham - Brain behind the Tigers' brawn

By Priyath Liyanage

kidney failure.

Despite these illnesses, however, he never stopped his persistent campaigning to extend the armed struggle to the political arena.

In his memoirs, he wrote how sceptical the Tiger leader, Prabhakaran, had been about the national leadership of Sri Lanka.

He described how he managed to persuade a reluctant leadership to engage in peace talks, arguing his point time and time again that this was the right course of action.

Although he was not a part of the delegation in the first round of talks of 1985 in Bhutan, he was the main adviser to the militants in the Tamil delegation. Subsequently, he was actively involved in peace negotiations with many governments in Colombo.

Balasingham represented the Tigers in many of these talks as the chief negotiator.

He accompanied Prabhakaran at almost every meeting held with Indian and Sri Lankan political leaders, where he played a double role as interpreter and as adviser to the reclusive Tiger supremo.

Analysts who had studied the role of Balasingham within the organisation say his departure will create an irreplaceable void within the organisation.

"Balasingham was the only person in the organisation who addressed the leader as an equal. Prabhakaran respected him as a teacher or an elder. There is no one else who has got such influence over the leader any more," says senior Tamil journalist DBS Jeyaraj.

With such power and respect, Balasingham will be remembered as perhaps the only person able to criticise certain decisions of the Tiger leader who is revered - and feared - for his teachings and diktats.

"We respected him as a guru. All of us read his books. He motivated us for our struggle," says the Tiger's military spokesman Rasaiah Illantherian.

Balasingham's high profile in the West, and his knowledge of the politics of the outside world, were an asset for the Tiger leadership which has never had much exposure outside of South Asia.

His death will be a blow not only to the Tamil Tigers but also to many in the south of the country. He provided a thread of hope for a peaceful resolution to the seemingly intractable and escalating conflict of Sri Lanka.

[Courtesy: BBC.co.uk]

[Priyath Liyanage is Editor of BBC Sinhala service]

Journalist who became the chief strategist and negotiator of the Tamil Tigers in their struggle for autonomy

Anton Balasingham provided the intellectual framework for the violence of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. He was the brains behind the brawn, someone the leadership could turn to for ideological guidance, philosophical justification and political explanation while the killing went on.

A forlorn-faced man, ill with a transplanted kidney, he travelled to devastated northern Sri Lanka in 2002 to act as the rebels' negotiator in peace talks brokered by Norway. The Tigers vainly asked India to host the encounter so that Balasingham could be near a hospital in case of an emergency. Everybody feared that he would die before the best chance of peace in more than two decades could be seized.

The difficulty was how to get him to Sri Lanka without his being assassinated. So, accompanied by his Australian wife, Adele, he flew in from London to the Maldives and transferred to a privately chartered De Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter seaplane, which landed on a reservoir in a rebel-controlled area south of Kilinochechi. The Colombo Government had ordered the airspace above northeast Sri Lanka to be kept clear of all aircraft, and the seaplane maintained radio silence throughout its journey lest hostile forces picked up the signal, revealing its whereabouts and mission.

The First Secretary of the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo was aboard. Immediately after it landed a Sea Tiger craft moved in to provide security. On the shore, the plump figure of Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the Tigers, could be made out standing with his wife Mathivathany, and other Tigers leaders. They were awaiting "Bala Annai" and "Auntie", as young Tigers cadres called the Balasinghams. A

Obituary: from London Times, December 15, 2006 Anton Balasingham: 1938-December 14, 2006



house had been constructed for their stay.

This elaborate journey was a measure of the importance the Tigers placed in the one man they could trust with their destiny in what looked like being a breakthrough in talks with the Sri Lankan Government of Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Anton Balasingham (L), GL Peiris (R) and Norwegian deputy foreign minister Vidar Helgesen in Hakone, Japan. Everybody underestimated, however, the determination of hardcore Sinhalese organisations like the JVP and hardline Buddhist clergy to scuttle any deal that gave the Tamils even a

hint of autonomy. The peace deal failed, and Balasingham had made a life-threatening journey with no more to show for it than the continuation of a shaky ceasefire.

Under his guidance the Tigers had entered several rounds of successful talks with the Government, all brokered by Norway, watched suspiciously from the sidelines by President Chandrika Kumaratunga. In the end she used her presidential powers to scupper the deal.

Her successor, President Mahinda Rajapakse, also rejected the concepts of a Tamil homeland and Tamil nationhood. The JVP, in a previous incarnation a fanatically violent organisation but by now the third biggest political party in the country, had threatened "undiplomatic" consequences if the peace deal went through. All of this, Balasingham said with uncharacteristic understatement, represented an obstacle.

In taking the Tigers to the brink of peace, Balasingham had steered the rebels away from their earlier demand for a fully fledged independent state called Eelam. What the Tamils wanted, he said, was "a homeland and self-determination". If that demand were rejected and the "oppression" continued, there would be no option but to fight for full statehood. Those words signalled the collapse of peace hopes.

Balasingham, who gained a PhD from South Bank Polytechnic in London (his dissertation was on the psychology of Marxism), had been the Tigers' theoretician since the early 1990s and clearly had the full confidence of Prabhakaran. He had a British passport and in 1999, much to the Sri Lanka Government's anger, was allowed to

settle in London with his wife, Adele Wilby, an Australian citizen and former nurse he had married in 1978. She lived with him for years in Jaffna, the Tamils' heartland, and became a leader of the Tigers' women's section. Australia sought her arrest for violating a law that prohibits participation in foreign wars.

By the time he moved to London, Balasingham, known among activist Tamils simply as "Bala," was seriously ill with kidney trouble. The Tigers released a large number of Sri Lankan Army prisoners as a goodwill gesture in return for the Colombo Government ensuring his safe passage abroad. The gesture failed, and so the Tigers took Balasingham aboard one of their ships to Thailand, and from there he travelled to Singapore and on to London. No one expected to see him back in Sri Lanka.

When he did return for the 2002 peace talks the reunion with Prabhakaran was emotional. His influence over Prabhakaran was embarrassingly obvious at a packed press conference in Sri Lanka during the 2002 peace process. Balasingham knew about journalists, having been one himself for a Colombo newspaper before working as a translator at the British High Commission.

He was doubtless responsible for the image makeover of the Tigers leader. Eschewing his customary military fatigues and sidearm Prabhakaran attended the press conference in a safari suit and had even shaved off his moustache. After almost every question he would lean towards Balasingham to be primed with the reply, and for the most part Balasingham would do the replying for him. Which led one commentator to ask: "So who is the real leader of the Tamil Tigers?"

Balasingham died of cancer. He is survived by his wife.

Anton Balasingham, chief strategist of the Tamil Tigers, was born in 1938. He died on December 14, 2006, aged 68.

Dr. Vicramabahu Karunaratne, a leader of the Left Front, Sri Lanka A 9 as a dispute

Road A9 has a long history. It was the connecting Rd, between Kandy and Jaffna even during the time of Kandyan kingdom or even before. There is evidence to show that this road was used during Gampola Kingdom. Hence this is a trusted highway used for a long period. It can be used through out the year under difficult weather conditions. Even today there is no accessible road that can be compared to A-9. When this road is closed Jaffna becomes virtually an isolated island with only sea route access. But the latter will be vulnerable to attacks under present war condition. A-9 is today closed at Muhamale. It is open from Kandy up to Muhamale through the LTTE controlled area. Only at Muhamale it is closed to all traffic in and out from Jaffna. Government gives lame arguments for closing this road. If LTTE cam misuse this road it can do it anyway because it is open from Vavuniya up to Muhamale through the LTTE controlled territory. Jaffna is a government controlled area. Hence by closing this road, access is denied to those who are living in Jaffna which is under government controlled. Jaffna people have no access to other Tamil areas leave apart the Southern Sinhala areas. It is like putting Jaffna people in an open prison. While they are denied essential items, armed forces get their supply through air and sea. In other words occupying Sinhala army is provided facilities while Jaffna is starved of essentials. It is almost a story out of Dark Ages, when enslaved people were made to rot by occupying armies. What is strange is this horrible situation is tolerated by Western powers and by India who support Mahinda regime.

Situation created by this enslavement of Jaffna people is reported by various independent sources including Catholic Bishop of Jaffna. Usually Catholic Church keeps away from political disputes taking a rather conservative stand. But Jaffna priests are forced to come out exposing the human misery because of the actual suffering of the Catholic population. Jaffna Bishop has given a detailed account of food prices at grass root level and also about starvation. Lack of milk food has affected newly born children. Old people are suffering due to scarcity of important medicine. On the other hand no one can come out or go in to Jaffna even for a very important matter. One has to linger in the queue for a flight or sea voyage to Trinco.

What are the arguments of the government for this most inhuman embargo? Government says that if A-9 is opened there will be an exodus of Jaffna youth to Tamil areas for military training. On the other hand trained LTTE cadre will



penetrate to Jaffna to make guerrilla attacks. But these are lame arguments. Even if the A-9 route is open, there can be intensive checking by the armed forces to stop all those "harmful" activities. On the other hand if militant youth want to go for military training and comeback as guerrilla fighters to Jaffna that they will do using difficult alternate routes available. There is no way government can stop all infiltrations. There is a contradiction in the argument of the government. The government position is that most of the cadres are forced recruitments. LTTE is claimed to be thoroughly unpopular. Hence government cannot maintain that large numbers- of Jaffna youth are waiting to run away in to the jungle to join the LTTE. In this way from all angles what the government claims is not valid.

Looking closely one could notice a sinister plan that may be behind this irrational position that government has taken. Jaffna Tamils are the main section of the Tamil resistance. Most of the intellectual leadership for Tamil liberation is based in Jaffna. Throttling Jaffna population one could remove the steam from Tamil liberation struggle. We cannot be surprised if such an argument is behind the closing of A-9. It may be a sound military strategy to starve and throttle Jaffna population to hit at the Tamil liberation struggle. Maybe it is less costly and more effective than intense bombing of Kili-nochchi and Mulativ. If such arguments are truly put forward, then the war against Tamil speaking people has come down to Barbarism unparallel in recent history.

It is necessary to make the people both here and elsewhere aware of the tragedy faced by Tamils in Jaffna. Suffering of the SL Tamil people in their struggle to protect their identity will definitely take a special place in human history.

Birunthan Muralidaran to be nominated for bravery medal by police

Police plan to nominate 11-year-old Birunthan Muralidaran for a bravery medal for trying to save a friend before he himself drowned in a Scarborough pond, the boy's father says.

"It gives me comfort that he will be remembered as a hero," Muralidaran Nadarajah said of his son. "Really, he's a hero," Muralidaran told the Scarborough Mirror.

On Dec. 10, Birunthan's friend Kishoban Alakeswaran, 15, fell through the ice of a pond near Morningside and Old Finch avenues. Birunthan went onto the ice to try to rescue Kishoban, but he too fell into the frigid water. Both boys were pulled out by emergency crews. Birunthan was pronounced dead in hospital. Kishoban remains in critical condition.

Police also plan to nominate eight people, a civilian and seven emergency workers, for bravery awards for trying to rescue the boys.

Toronto city officials reiterated to contact emergency services when there is a need. Spokesperson for the Toronto fire department, which responded to the tragedy on Sunday, Dec 10th, said "the message we keep trying to give is that, when someone gets into trouble — fallen through the ice or trapped in a fire — call immediately for help, call us. Don't put yourself at risk too because the odds are you will lose."

"I know this is difficult for civilians to understand, especially when they think someone's life is in immediate danger. They want to help. But it just complicates the situation and makes it more dangerous," he emphasized.

T.O. youth dies after drowning incident

A second Toronto youth passed away on Dec 17th, a week after falling through thin ice into a suburban pond.

Koshoban Alakeswaran, 15, had spent a week in critical condition at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. His parents kept a constant bedside vigil.

Doctors cut off life support as family friends gathered at his parent's home to pray and offer support.

"He was a very nice kid. Very independent," said cousin Nithja Varatharajan, 18. She said the teen was extremely bright, and that family

members saw him succeeding in a career involving computers and science.

According to press reports Councillor Raymond Cho told mourners at the funeral of Birunthan Nadarajah that he has launched a scholarship fund for the boy, "a great Canadian".

Birunthan was buried Saturday Dec 16th in Highland Memorial Gardens on Don Mills Rd., with police officers involved in the rescue effort serving as pallbearers.



Koshoban Alakeswaran, 15, died after falling through thin ice into a suburban pond a week ago.



Birunthan Muralidaran, 11, is seen in this photo drowned on Dec 10th, trying to save Koshoban

Former Sri Lankan President loses UN job



The position held by former President of Sri Lanka Chandrika Kumaratunga at UNESCO has come under scrutiny after the UN organisation had received more than 100 petitions protesting over her appointment, according to informed sources.

Four Non-Governmental Organisations including the Asian Human Rights Commission had petitioned against her

appointment to the UNESCO, stating that there had been human rights abuses during her period and a number of cases pending in courts regarding the allocation of a land in Madiwela after her retirement from the presidency. Its also being reported in the Sri Lankan press that several NGOs sent petitions to the UNESCO making various allegations about her and the controversy over her educational qualifications.

As such, UNESCO has apparently informed Kumaratunga that her appointment as Senior Advisor needs to be reconsidered.



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December 12, 2006 — The Scarborough-Agincourt Provincial Liberal Association has selected Gerry Phillips to be its candidate for the October 2007 provincial election.

Phillips was nominated as the Liberal candidate for the next provincial election in accordance with the Ontario Liberal Party Constitution, at the Liberal riding association's nomination meeting at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Scarborough last night.

"I'm grateful for the continued support of Liberals in Scarborough Agincourt, and am committed to working hard to continue the progress of the McGuinty government," said Phillips. "We have helped bring peace to our schools, we're making significant investments in health care to reduce wait times for key surgeries, and we're making Toronto stronger with a new City of Toronto Act, plus improved funding for the TTC and other services."

"We are making excellent progress, but there is much more to do. I'm committed to continuing our government's work to bring about positive change for Ontarians."

For more information:

Please contact: Joe Bush, President
Scarborough-Agincourt Provincial Liberal Association
416-491-3323

Gerry Phillips Nominated Liberal Candidate for Scarborough-Agincourt for the 2007 Provincial Election

Biography

Gerry Phillips

Minister of

Government Services

Gerry Phillips was appointed Minister of Government Services by Premier Dalton McGuinty in June, 2005.

Mr. Phillips first entered provincial politics in 1987 when he was elected to represent Scarborough-Agincourt in the Ontario legislature. Mr. Phillips was re-elected in 2003, and was appointed by Premier McGuinty to serve as the Chair of Management Board Committee of Cabinet.

In the previous Liberal government, Mr. Phillips served as Minister of Citizenship and later as Minister of Labour. In opposition, he served as finance and native affairs critic, and as chair of the economic policy committee for the official opposition.



After graduating with an honours bachelor of commerce from the University of Western Ontario's School of Business, Mr. Phillips worked for Procter & Gamble. In 1970, he joined the consulting firm of Canadian Marketing Associates and became president in 1977.

Under his direction, Canadian Marketing Associates became Canada's leading marketing management consulting firm. He later founded two spin-off companies. In 1979, he launched the Sales Development Group, which became Canada's largest management consulting firm specializing in sales force consulting. Three years later, he founded the Retail Resource Group, which became one of the largest retail service groups in the country. By 1987, he was chair of all three companies, employing 300 people.

Mr. Phillips served as a school trustee for 11 years and during this period was chair of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board and the Scarborough Board of Education. He was also chair of the board of governors for Scarborough General Hospital and is a past president of the Bridlewood Community Association. Mr. Phillips coached in the Agincourt Lions Club Minor Hockey League for more than 25 years.

His wife, Kay, is a nationally recognized quilt maker who lectures and teaches throughout North America. They have four children and four grandchildren.

Business & Professional Women hosts 2006 World AIDS Day Breakfast in Toronto

Business & Professional Women (BPW) was a co-host of the 2006 World AIDS Breakfast held on December 1st, 2006 at Sheraton Center Hotel in Toronto. Bahi Krishnakhanthan from the Business & Professional Women of Canada presented a cheque for \$20,900 to Voices of Positive Women from last year's proceeds.

The International Federation of Business & Women's Clubs, of which BPW Canada is a founding member, has consultative status with the United Nations as a NGO, Non governmental organization and are actively involved in programs supporting women all around the world. Their mandate is to actively work towards improving economic, political, social and employment conditions for women in Canada and worldwide. They presented Bahi "2006 National Leadership Award" for her exemplary leadership in improving the economic, social, employment and political conditions of women.

In Canada, 25% of new infections in 2005 were women and young women. 35% of these women are youth between the ages 15 and 29 years

Barbara Hall, Chief Commissioner of the Human Right Organization was the Guest Speaker. She shared, that we as a society need to address the stigma attached to those infected with HIV/AIDS and need to change our attitude. We need to develop a deeper understanding of the AIDS crisis as a human rights issue to effectively tackle

the issues that affect the treatment, care and prevention of AIDS. We need to stand up and make their voices heard."



Bahi Krishnakhanthan from the Business & Professional Women of Canada delivering her address



Bahi Krishnakhanthan from the Business & Professional Women of Canada presenting a cheque for \$20,900 to Voices of Positive Women from last year's proceeds.



Barbara Hall, Chief Commissioner of the Human Right Organization was the Guest Speaker

(standing at the far left next to Bahi Krishnakhanthan)

Program to help newcomers find work in Tourism and Hospitality sector

The Working Centre is hosting information sessions about an exciting new program that will connect skilled immigrants in Kitchener-Waterloo to employment opportunities in the Tourism and Hospitality sector.

Interested newcomers will receive sector-specific training, employment counseling and six-month work opportunities through the Ready to Work Program: Tourism & Hospitality Careers for Newcomers, part of a province-wide effort with other pilot sessions offered in Toronto and Ottawa.

The program is a partnership between the Working Centre, a body that serves the training and The training will be delivered by the senior project partner, Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC), an industry human resource development needs of the tourism and service sectors. The Working Centre will help participants with job search support and connections to local employers for work experience opportunities. Ready to Work program is funded by the Government of Ontario.

Participants will benefit from earning certificates in five key areas: Tourism Essentials, Service Excellence, Smart Serve, WHMIS and National Food Safety Training (NFSTP). This will provide a solid foundation for careers in dozens of occupations, such as cook, food & beverage server, front desk agent, guest service supervisor or reservations manager. Jobs are available in a wide number of fields, including accommodation,

attractions, events and conferences, food and beverage, recreation, tourism, transportation and travel trade.

The tourism and hospitality sector employs more than 600,000 people in Ontario, and it is expected that 149,000 new openings will arise in the next 10 years in the province, and almost 400,000 nationally.

There are two information sessions scheduled for December and two more in January. The first classroom session of the program will run from February 19 to March 9, 2007. A second session will run next summer. There are spaces for 20 participants in each session.

To register for the information sessions, or to find out more about Ready to Work, contact

Michael Bernhard at The Working Centre, 519-743-1151 ext. 107.

Information Sessions :

Wednesday, January. 10th,
1:00pm-2:00pm;
Thursday, January. 11th,
5:00pm-6:00pm
at The Working Centre.

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As he completes his first year as President, Mahinda Rajapakse has taken the country back to its bad and dangerous past that many of us thought ended for good in 1994.

The People's Alliance victory in 1994, after a decade of war and violence, had signaled a sea change in the Sinhala political leadership. The change was best exemplified by President Chandrika Kumaratunga who demonstrated a sincere readiness to address the Tamil question through a constitutional change. Alas, the sincerity and readiness could not be translated into peace as fighting between the army and the LTTE resumed in 1995 after a few months of ceasefire.

The ceasefire agreement of 2002, under Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe's initiative, raised even stronger hopes of a permanent peace, while the Oslo Declaration by the government and the LTTE negotiators promised the search for a political solution predicated on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka.

Within one year as President, Mahinda Rajapakse has abrogated the ceasefire with the LTTE all but in name, and swept back the south into the hands of ethnic chauvinists and military extremists.

To indict Mahinda Rajapakse seemingly so severely is not to let off the LTTE any lightly. The LTTE has contributed as much as the Sri Lankan Army and the anti-LTTE groups to the current stalemate of violence. All of them stand thoroughly condemned in the light of UN Ambassador Alan Rock's devastating findings.

Yet, as the Head of a State that purports to include, protect and provide for all the people of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapakse should be held to a higher standard of accountability. The scary aspect of the Rajapakse regime is that there is no apparent southern alternative to it in the near political horizon.

The regime's subordination of the political to the military suits the LTTE just fine because, as an organization, the LTTE needs to fight to survive. When there is no fighting the LTTE suffers like a fish out of water.

Even at the worst moments between 1983 and 1994, there was reason for hope of a progressive southern alternative to the then militarist UNP. Vijaya Kumaratunga more than anyone else personified this hope and his brutal killing by the perpetual enemies of peace did not dampen this hope. Instead it inspired the emergence of the People's Alliance as the alternative to the UNP.

Chandrika Kumaratunga and Ranil Wickremasinghe both created opportunities for peace and political solution but wasted them by failing to work together. Despite their adolescent inability to cohabit, Kumaratunga and Wickremasinghe never wavered in their commitment to devolution and federalism as the framework for a political solution. And after the ceasefire agreement of 2002, all the while squabbling with each other, they scrupulously avoided any misstep towards a return to hostilities with the Tigers.

The first year record of Mahinda Rajapakse is a consummate reversal on both fronts while trying to be too clever by half. It is clear that government is clearly bent on using the military stick as severely as possible while pretending to offer political carrots mainly to deal with international criticisms.

Anniversary Blues:

One year forward for Rajapakse, twelve years backward for Sri Lanka

By Rajan Philips



President Mahinda Rajapakse

On devolution and federalism, the furthest that Rajapakse has shown that he is willing to go is to offer "maximum devolution within the unitary constitution." Even this did not come about as a result of his own conviction but only as a result of the compulsion of India and the Co-Chairs.

Like J.R. Jayewardene between 1984 and 1987, Rajapakse has started a circus of consultation to achieve the elusive southern consensus. What more consensus is required when the two main southern parties, the UNP and the SLFP, are both committed to a federal solution?

Even within this charade of consultation, Rajapakse appears to have given power and prominence in decision making to those who are opposed to any form of devolution. For example, the lawyers who argued the case in the Supreme Court against the North-East merger are also among his advisers on constitutional reform and his delegates at the peace talks. Running with the hare and hunting with the hound, you might say.

Of course there are others, like the isolated Cabinet Ministers belonging to



President Rajapakse in a Kfir during a visit to a Sri Lankan Airforce base

the two Old Left Parties, with a solid record of supporting a federal transformation of the state, but so far they have mostly been seen and not heard. And even when they are heard, they are heard only on such peripheral platitudes as the Panchayats and the Official Languages but not on the core issues of devolution.

Two political anniversaries and one Supreme Court judgment

I wonder whether Mahinda Rajapakse was delighted or disturbed by the Supreme Court judgment setting aside the executive order recurrently issued by all of his predecessors to keep the North and East Provinces merged. Questions have been raised about the priority given to hearing this case while cases filed against the imposition of High Security Zones by the army in Jaffna are still waiting to be heard. There have also been questions about the status granted by the court to lawyers appearing against the

application to quash the executive order for merging. As well, rather than following the old dictum that justice must not only be done but must also appear to be done, the court appears to have diminished its own credibility by choosing a five-member, 'pan-Sinhalese' bench to hear an ethnically sensitive case. Just recall the damage done to ethnic relations by the 1931 pan-Sinhalese Board of Ministers under the Donoughmore Constitution.

The more substantive critique of the Supreme Court judgment, in my view, is about its rather unlearned and hypocritical use of the principle of 'equal protection before the law' as the premise for considering the arguments before it. I say 'unlearned' because the Court chose to apply this principle under a veil of innocence about the ethnic particularities that manifestly suffuse the question it dealt with. It is one thing to imagine such a veil of innocence for thought experiment purposes as John Rawls did in his celebrated Theory of Justice (not to mention that Rawls has been criticized specifically for this limiting idealization), but it is quite a different matter when a court chooses to be oblivious to the ethnic facts in deciding a political case that was in fact provoked by conflicting understandings of those very facts.

More importantly, the court's emphasis on personal rights, as opposed to collective rights, flies in the face of current political and judicial thinking in plural societies. The approach now is to positively use the obvious tensions between the individual and collective spheres while appreciating that for minorities in a plural society the recognition of their individual rights will bear meaning only if their collective rights as a minority are affirmed and respected at the same time.

The invocation of the principle of equal protection is also hypocritical especially considering the fact that the de-merger judgment was delivered in the fiftieth anniversary year of that infamous thirteen-word "Act to Prescribe the Sinhala Language as the One Official Language of Ceylon" that was the ultimate violation of the principle of equal protection. So the one time the Sri Lankan Supreme Court came to invoke the principle of equal protection to decide a political question, it ruled in favour of protecting the majority Sinhalese from the minority Tamils. The judgment therefore is the bitter icing on the Fiftieth Anniversary Cake of Sinhala Only Act as well as the First Anniversary Cake of the Rajapakse presidency.

Prospects for the next five years

The political question after this unwise judicial activism is how Mahinda Rajapakse as President going to deal with the question of Northeast merger. The President could easily meet the procedural requirements laid down by the Court and maintain the merger with the help of UNP support in Parliament. Alternatively, he could propose to the LTTE, other Tamil groups, and the Muslims two new units – one a

contiguous Tamil unit including the Northern Province and the Tamil majority districts of the Eastern Province and a separate Muslim unit including the Muslim areas of the Eastern Province.

But Mahinda Rajapakse would rather seem to take cover under the pseudo-democratic device of a referendum and leave it to the people of the Eastern Province to decide the matter. There is also mounting pressure on the President to insist that the North-East matter should be decided not just by the people of the Eastern Province but by a plebiscite of the entire country. Plebiscites offer a practically convenient mechanism for decision making in a democracy only where there is a priori and normative consensus on the organizing principles of that democracy. Sri Lanka manifestly lacks such a consensus among its 'ethnic co-existences' at the present time and trying to decide on fundamental questions through plebiscites is a sure recipe for more disaster.

The crucial question for a political solution is about the unit of devolution. President Rajapakse or any of his many advisers have yet to say anything at all about the unit of devolution. Some of us have been, for the whole first year of the Rajapakse presidency, making the case for replacing the unpopular and discredited Provincial Council system in the South with a more efficient system of administrative decentralization. We have also pointed out that regardless of the situation in the South there is no alternative to implementing political devolution in the North and East. The recent British experience of devolution – with devolved units in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland without any devolution in England, offers an excellent example for Sri Lanka.

It will not hurt for President Rajapakse to ask Prime Minister Blair for advice and assistance in regard to devolution. And it is more than likely that Mr. Blair, looking to leave the international stage on a high note after his disastrous nadir in Iraq, would be more than willing to help out his Commonwealth colleague. The question though is how serious is Mahinda Rajapakse about devolution and to what extent he is prepared to subordinate the military to the political.

If the first year of the Rajapakse presidency is a taste for the next five years to follow, it is difficult to be optimistic about Sri Lanka's future. The fact that he has just now raised the military budget by 45% clearly shows where his mind is and where he is putting his money in. The military obstinacy of the government is also patent in its handling of the A-9 closure. It is illogical and immoral for a government that waged undeclared war on the LTTE on ostensibly humanitarian grounds over the Mavil Aru closure, to now refuse to reopen the A-9 roadway despite the humanitarian traumas of half a million people trapped in the Jaffna peninsula.

The Rajapakse government is clearly not in a mood to learn from the experiences of Northern Ireland, Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq - that military options do not solve any problem but only aggravate the old problems and create new ones. Unless and until there is a change in the government's and the President's thinking, Sri Lanka will be deepening for the next five years the hole that it fell into this first year of Mahinda Rajapakse's first term in office.

[tamilweek.com]

Veerasingam Dhuruvasangary, B.Sc, M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D(Candidate) was a scientist, an inventor, a writer, an artist, an internationalist and above all, a beloved friend; we called this modest, unassuming man Dhuruva or, more often than not, Inventor.

Dhuruva was the last of 12 children. His parents named him Dhuruvasangary after a poor child who was transformed by the Hindu Lord Siva into the pole star "Dhuruvan Natchathra", a star that has helped fishers, traders and seafarers for thousands of years to navigate the oceans. - From Robin Oakley's Eulogy, Toronto, Ontario, 10 December 2006

WE RECEIVED the news of Inventor's passing away early Sunday morning with shock and profound sadness. We had no idea Dhuruva was in ill health. We had so much work and projects on the horizon to tackle and finish that I never once thought of him not being available. Indeed when I thought of him it was always of this modest and humble hard-working man with his warm smile, lively mind, pure heart, and his steadfast defiance and challenging of imperialist science, dogma and prejudice. Like so many of the Tamil people I have come to know, Dhuruva represented the finest convictions and emotions humankind has given rise to. I send my most sincere condolences to his beloved family, friends, colleagues and comrades.

I would like to express briefly my own appreciation for the life and work of our dear departed friend, and recall several moments in our collaboration. These projects included the publication by our New Media Publications Inc. of the English translation of his *The Story of My Language*. We esteemed this work highly as an important contribution not only to the defence of the four-thousand-years-old Tamil language, a patrimony of humanity, but for all those striving to preserve, renew and strengthen their languages and their right-to-be before the imperialist onslaught on the cultures, history,

In Memoriam Veerasingam Dhuruvasangary A Reflection

By: Tony Seed *



memory and intelligence of the oppressed peoples and nations throughout the world under the pseudonym of the "war on terror."

We worked on and off for some five weeks together in Halifax in the summer of 2005 on this project. Dhuruva was kind enough to comment that he had never before worked in such a collegial atmosphere. Our work was intense but in an ambiance of camaraderie; a disciplined man, he walked forty-five minutes in to work early every morning, leaving late, forever turning down the offer of a ride home, without ever making any demand beyond a small space for his portable computer.

This son of the historic fishing town of Point Pedro, Jaffna on the Indian Ocean expressed an abiding interest in the trials and tribulations of the small

and poor fishermen of the Maritimes, Canada and the grave problems posed by the degradation of the marine environment. Sadly, we will not see Dhuruva's return to Halifax to take up work with our *Shunpiking* magazine as a science editor and columnist, a collaboration we both looked forward to with great anticipation. Of writing and analyses expressing the reality and solutions, the dreams and hopes of the coastal sectors of both our Lankan and Canadian peoples astride two oceans, marginalized until now.

Like Dhuruva, we too had been transfixed by the Tsunami of 26 December 2004. Some 40,000 of his countrymen perished (of whom 7,500 were fishermen), another 90,000 displaced, and the blue became one of the most cursed of colours. We knew something of the lively fishing communities, historic towns and refugee camps along the eastern coasts in Jaffna, Trincomalee and Amparai devastated by that enormous tidal wave, the ensuing flooding, and the grim anarchy and exploitation of state and imperialist relief. His empathy for his people, for all peoples of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean, led him, from afar, to invent simple technological solutions with the aim of preventing the reoccurrence of such a disaster. Indeed, anyone who knew this man was astonished at the innovative inventions and achievements our dear friend made. Though characterized by common sense, unfortunately, few were turned into reality, due to the block people and science face from monopoly capital.

Dhuruva was generous enough to promise unsolicited his expert scientific consultation on research I had started on the self-serving role of the Canadian neo-liberal and "humanitarian aid" in hydro-electric "development" in Sri Lanka since the Colombo Plan, e.g. the Mahaweli Ganga project, the Gal Oya dam, the Allai-Kantali project, etc. What was the outcome of this "aid"? The Government of Canada, CIDA and different multinationals have "aided" the spreading desertification of once fertile Sri Lanka with its 103 rivers, of which Dhuruva had intimate technical knowledge from his own first hand field research as an agronomist for the Ministry of Agriculture in the early

1980s. These "development" projects had another insidious feature and aim; as the violent programs of a neocolonial state to forcibly dispossess the indigenous Tamil people from their ancestral homeland and farmlands, an ethnic cleansing and colonization worthy of Zionist Israel and apartheid South Africa. Together, these contributed to the miserable conditions in which the courageous Tamil people, in refugee camps and fishing villages metres from the ocean's edge, were exposed to and perished from that destructive Tsunami without any defence. Dhuruva's own scientific researches reaffirm the truth bitterly confirmed by reality; the decisiveness of the human factor/social consciousness. Man's vulnerability to such extreme but inevitable natural events has as much to do with those few men who hold in their hands the power of life and death, as with the violence and destruction of nature.

Dhuruva barely reached the age of 56, but such a productive life and glorious internationalist spirit of uniting with all, no matter what their differences in terms of way of life or benefits, led him irresistibly to become an integral part of our collective being and struggle. He had many friends because to struggle for truth, for science, for knowledge and enlightenment, for a people's history, language and culture, and for a just world is to struggle for the hope of life for all peoples.

The life and work of Dhuruva and the transcendent ideals he represented are a pole star for the new generations to navigate the roiling seas engulfing the world and the new disasters being created for our peoples and homelands.

Thank you again, from the bottom of my heart, to all his many friends, relatives and our Tamil and Canadian communities who together have conceived and worked to turn his grievous passing from us into such a noble tribute organized out of friendship, admiration and respect, on which occasion we are congregating in Toronto. Without you and everything you stand for, Dhuruva's work would not have been possible.

We all are standing together in this moment, treasuring Dhuruva's life and work, and unified by his memory, his vision, his spirit and his internationalist ideals.

Let us then collectively carry his memory and our unity forward for the rest of our lives as our radiant beacon in the struggles unfolding before us.

All honour to Veerasingam Dhuruvasangary!

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
7 December 2006

*Tony Seed is editor and publisher of *Shunpiking*, Nova Scotia's *Discovery Magazine* (www.shunpiking.com) and of the *Dossier on Palestine*, and the recipient of the 2006 National Media Award of Excellence from the Canadian Islamic Conference. He visited Sri Lanka in 1999.

A Tribute to EROS founder Eliyathamby Ratnasabapathy

The Tamil Information Centre (TIC) is greatly saddened by the death of Eliyathamby Ratnasabapathy at the Charing Cross Hospital in London, on Dec 12th. He was ill for the last six years and had been housed in Hazlewell Nursing Home in Putney.

Born in Inuvil, Jaffna on 3 November 1938, he became politically active at a young age. He became very concerned at the plight of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka and began his life's struggle against oppression. His untiring efforts came to fruition when he founded the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) in London in 1975. Friends and colleagues describe him as a person steeped in communist ideals and as a visionary leader who campaigned resolutely throughout the major part of his life. Many members of the various Tamil militant groups regard him as a pioneer in the Tamil struggle for equality and justice and look

upon him with great respect.

Ratnasabapathy contested the parliamentary elections in 1989. He was elected to the Sri Lankan Parliament along with nine other members of EROS, but later resigned.

He was closely associated with the TIC during the later stages of his political life. The TIC pays its tribute to Ratna for his historic contribution as guide and philosopher, and as a militant in the struggle against the oppression of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka. He was proud of his people and often said that their resilience in the face of oppression inspired and drove him towards his goals. He believed that the future will be determined by the oppressed people, because their cause is just, and not by the oppressors. We sincerely hope that Ratna's life, his vision and his beliefs will give strength to the Tamil people

May his soul rest in peace.

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Why Sri Lanka Has Sidelined India

By B. Raman

Bolstered by Pakistan's continuing military support and encouraged by the US' diplomatic support to its military operations against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Sri Lankan Government of President Mahinda Rajapakse has been increasingly insensitive to India's concerns over the humanitarian catastrophe facing the Sri Lankan Tamil community. Even while describing India as Sri Lanka's "best friend"--- Mr. Rajapakse continues with his policy of targeted killings of innocent Tamil civilians through punitive air strikes and the use of heavy artillery and has been trying to bring them down to their knees through a policy of starving them.

2. His lack of concern for the humanitarian catastrophe and his indifference to India's anxieties in the matter became evident after the meeting of the representatives of the Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donors' Conference of 2003 --- Japan, Norway, the European Union and the US---held in Washington on November 21, 2006. This meeting, while articulating proforma criticisms of the acts of violence and indiscriminate killing of civilians by the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE, came out strongly in support of the Sri Lankan Government and showed a calculated indifference to the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

3. The US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. R. Nicholas Burns, was particularly forthcoming in support of the Sri Lankan Government during the joint press briefing by the participants at the meeting. The remarks of Mr. Burns and others at the press briefing have been interpreted by the hard-liners in the Sri Lankan Government as amounting to an indirect endorsement of the methods followed by the security forces in their operations against the LTTE and as indicating that the Co-Chairs are decreasingly averse to the Sri Lankan Government's efforts to solve the problem of the Tamils militarily. The hardliners have come to believe that the Co-Chairs are increasingly inclined to close their eyes to the brutal suppression of the Tamils.

4. There has been a revival of the pre-1983 interest of the US Navy in acquiring a presence in Trincomalee and hopes of achieving this with the support of the Government of Mr. Rajapakse should at least partly account for the growing open support of the US for Mr. Rajapakse and its disinclination to take a firm stand against the methods employed by the Sri Lankan security forces against the Tamil population. Trincomalee has acquired a new importance in the eyes of the US and the NATO forces presently fighting against the Taliban in Afghanistan as an alternative naval base for logistic support to the NATO operations in Afghanistan should instability in Pakistan after the next year's general elections there make the continued use of Karachi untenable.

5. Mr. Burns has showered encomiums on what he described as India's responsible attitude on Sri Lanka--- which is nothing but an euphemism for its in-activism. Even while making from time to time proforma statements expressing themselves in favour of a more active role by India, the US and Sri Lanka seem happy with the present in-activism of New Delhi.

6. When Mr. Rajapakse talks of the



B. Raman (Photo: Frontline)

need for Indian activism, what he has in mind is military activism in support of the operations of his security forces against the Sri Lankan Tamils and the LTTE---in the form of more training for the Sri Lankan Police and Security Forces, supply of military equipment, intelligence-sharing and joint patrolling by the Indian and Sri Lankan Navies to prevent arms smuggling by the LTTE.

7. He does not want Indian activism in the political and humanitarian fields. While India has never sought an activist role in the political field, the initiatives recently taken by our Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, for humanitarian activism under pressure from the Chief Minister, Shri M. Karunanidhi, and other leaders of Tamil Nadu have been given short shrift by Mr. Rajapakse. While welcoming the Indian offer of humanitarian supplies, Mr. Rajapakse is reported to have turned down suggestions that these should be routed to the Tamils through the International Red Cross and insisted that these should be sent to the Sri Lankan Government, which would decide how they would be distributed.

8. The Indian predicament in the face of the strong line taken by Mr. Rajapakse after the endorsement which he received from the US was obvious during the press briefing held at Chennai on November 24, 2006, by Shri M. K. Narayanan, our Prime Minister's National Security Adviser, and Shri Shivshankar Menon, our Foreign Secretary, after a meeting with Shri Karunanidhi. Shri Menon was on his way back to New Delhi after meeting Mr. Rajapakse in Colombo and Shri Narayanan had specially flown from New Delhi for the meeting.

9. Shri Narayanan told the media as reported by "The Hindu" of November 25, 2006: "We will decide if there is a necessity for it (sending humanitarian aid) at all. And, if so, we will decide what will be the modalities."

10. The "Deccan Chronicle" of November 25, 2006, has reported that when our Foreign Secretary raised the possibility of the humanitarian assistance being sent through the Red Cross, Mr. Rajapakse "said a big 'no' arguing that such an action would mean damning his Government as untrustworthy, apart from interfering with the island's sovereignty." But, at the same time, he has issued an appeal to all local and international non-governmental organisations to get involved in the distribution of food.

11. How to address the humanitarian catastrophe which has been facing the Tamils without seeming to support the

present leadership of the LTTE, which was involved in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi? That is question of immediate relevance to India. India should seriously consider organising a meeting of Sri Lanka, the US, EU, Norway, Japan, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross to discuss only the humanitarian aspects of the present situation in Sri Lanka and find out ways of assisting the Tamils. India should take over the leadership role in mobilising the international community on the humanitarian issue.

12. The strong support for the Sri Lankan Government from the Co-

Chairs---particularly from the US--- has had two reactions in the Sri Lankan Tamil community---desperation and total disillusionment with the international community on the one side and a trend towards a greater radicalisation of Tamil opinion and a greater determination to keep up their armed struggle against the Government on the other. What impact it will have on the ground situation remains to be seen. [saag.org]

(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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Fast to condemn killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka

India must be firm in resolving the crisis: speakers Three resolutions passed by the 'Tamizh Iyakkam'

Artists observed a daylong fast here on November 27th, to condemn the killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

They demanded that the Centre should not sign any military pact with the island nation.

Food and other provisions promised should be distributed directly by the Centre to the affected persons.

The A-9 pass to Jaffna should be immediately opened and military attacks on the Tamils should stop at once, they said.

Passing these resolutions at the end of the fast here, speakers from various walks of life, who had gathered under the banner of "Tamizh Iyakkam," stressed the need for the Indian government to be firm in resolving the crisis.

How could one remain silent when the Sri Lankan forces did not spare even children, asked Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani.

Poet Kanimozhi said the presence of various personalities at the one-day token fast showed their zeal and a sense of commitment. "We are all

eager to extend our wholehearted support to the resolution of the issue, which would end the sufferings of Tamils."

"Be united"

Tamil Nadu Planning Commission vice-chairman M. Naganathan said Tamils should be united in the cause.

Dalit Panthers of India MLA Ravikumar said the Centre should take up the cause of Tamils with the Sri Lankan Government to bring peace to the nation.



Poet and writer Kanimozhi addressing writers and artists at a fast organised to condemn the killing of Sri Lankan Tamils, at Valluvar Kottam in Chennai on Monday.

---Photo: M. Vedhan

Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's wife Rajathi Ammal presented a shawl to Mr. Veeramani.

Journalist R.R. Gopal, film director Seeman, Kavingnar Tamarai, actors Sri Priya and Satyaraj spoke. [hinduonnet.com]

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India should take steps for peace in Sri Lanka, says Sri Sri Ravishankar

Founder of the Art of Living Foundation, Sri Sri Ravishankar has appealed to the Centre to intervene in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and put an end to the two-decade-long sufferings of Tamils in the island nation.

Speaking at the Athmanandha Utsavam, which was attended by more than 20,000 people at Arumugam Nagar grounds on Sunday Dec 3rd, Sri Sri Ravishankar said that he was at a loss to understand why the Indian Government was refusing to involve itself in the issue.

Stating that the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were asking India to solve the ethnic conflict, Sri Sri Ravishankar stressed that India should play a big role in the issue.

People in the island nation were undergoing great suffering - without proper food, health care and transportation. Sri Sri Ravishankar said that Indian Government was not coming forward to do anything.



Sri Sri Ravishankar, founder of Art of Living Foundation, speaking at the Athmanandha Utsavam at Pollachi on Sunday, Dec 3 06 —Photo: M. Balaji

Recalling the red-carpet reception India had extended to Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf after the Kargil war in which 2,000 Indian soldiers were killed, Sri Sri Ravishankar wondered why the Government did not involve itself in the Lankan issue.

Every citizen had the right to live in a terror-free world and all should work to achieve it, he said.

His followers offered him a rousing reception in Pollachi. Many of his followers came to the venue from far off places. [hinduonnet.com]

Vijaykanth backs Tamil Eelam demand

Chennai, Dec 4: In his first open support of the LTTE's demand for Tamil Eelam (separate home land for Tamils) DMDK President and actor Vijaykanth today said the "struggle" would certainly succeed, though it would take time.

Vijaykanth, who had decided against celebrating his birth day till a solution was found to Sri Lankan Tamils problem, told reporters here that "though success in a struggle for the homeland is delayed, it will certainly succeed".

He was replying when asked why there was a delay in a solution (to the Sri Lankan Tamils problem).



He praised the militants saying "those who struggle for their homeland are warriors. Those who are fighting for money are politicians".

(Chennaionline.com)

Kentucky Fried Globalization

By Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom

For anyone who follows the American media's treatment of Asia, coverage of President Bush's recent whirlwind visit to Vietnam was bound to trigger a sense of deja vu. Why? Because the approach reporters took to Hanoi's embrace of capitalism with authoritarian characteristics was so similar to the one they took to Beijing's moves in the same direction when Bill Clinton visited China back in 1998.

What remains to be seen is whether, over time, the American press corps will find a better way of handling the complex cultural dimensions of Vietnam's re-engagement with the West than the approach it took to China's in the 1990s. Will reporters manage to avoid, as some have failed to do so far, two pitfalls that marred treatment of China during Clinton's presidency? First, equating globalization with Americanization. Second, assuming that American products continue to mean exactly the same things as they do at home after they cross the Pacific.

Eight years ago, what might be called the "burgers and bowling" storyline shaped reporting on Clinton's trip. The idea conveyed in words and backed up with photos of Chinese eating Big Macs and shots of billboards for new Beijing bowling alleys, was clear: whatever was happening politically, American ways were transforming cultural life in China's cities.

Fast forward to the present and we find reports on Vietnam that take the same basic approach. McDonald's isn't there yet and bowling hasn't caught on. But stories about the first KFC to open in Hanoi have often read just like reports that appeared whenever a new American fast food chain gained its first foothold in China.

Once again, reporters and broadcasters have played up the irony of an icon of U.S. enterprise being welcomed by a once bitterly anti-American Communist Party. Once again, they have speculated that a wholesale "Americanization," particularly of local youth, is imminent.

It's natural that there should be carry-over from 1990s China reporting to coverage of Vietnam today. After all, Hanoi has taken a page from Beijing's post-Tiananmen playbook. The Vietnamese Communists, like their Chinese counterparts, strive to stay in power by limiting political freedoms while increasing the choices that people have about what to consume and how to spend their private time.

One thing that should not be carried over, though, is the burgers-and-

bowling approach to cultural change. This approach, with its emphasis on Americanization and its failure to note that even something as generic as a Big Mac can mean very different things depending on the context, should be retired. There are more accurate, and more interesting, ways that the story of an Asian Communist country's re-engagement with the West can be told.

Yes, some Chinese learned how to score strikes and spares in the 1990s, but a far more popular leisure time novelty was karaoke. A more appropriately complex vision of globalization would have been conveyed by stories focusing on that cultural import. It's an activity that has roots in the Philippines and has become associated above all with Japan, but in China involves play lists that include some American songs.

When it comes to generic products taking on localized meanings, the cases of Chinese McDonald's and Starbucks are illustrative. Thomas Friedman of the New York Times insists that a Big Mac is a Big Mac wherever it's bought and whoever eats it. But UCLA anthropologist Yan Yunxiang has shown convincingly that the same burger means different things in Beijing and in Boston.

In 1990s China, for example, Big Macs were thought of not as meals but snacks (because of their resemblance to pork-filled buns that were never imagined to constitute a main course). And Chinese yuppies (unlike their U.S. counterparts) viewed McDonald's as a good venue for a romantic dinner date.

The arrival of China's first Starbucks six years ago was often told as a simple tale of Americanization. But, again, this was misleading. The management company that oversaw Chinese branches was based in Taiwan, not Seattle, and local guidebooks in Shanghai classified these outlets as "European-style" as opposed to "Japanese-style" cafes.

So if -- or, perhaps more realistically, when -- burgers and bowling alleys follow buckets of The Colonel's chicken to Hanoi, let's hope American reporters learn from past misreadings. It is seductive to contemplate the imminent Americanization of a country governed by a once intensely anti-American regime. But reporters and broadcasters owe it to their readers and viewers to come up with a better way than burgers and bowling to frame this tale of globalization. [hnn.us]

[Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom is a professor of history at the University of California, Irvine, and a writer for the History News Service.]

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In the 100 year old proud history of St. Henry's of Ilavalai, the College had Rectors who were essentially educationists cum disciplinarians moulded into one. Following Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai's illustrious stewardship as Rector of St. Henry's during 1954 to 1956 - came Rev. Fr. L.A. Singarayer as the next Rector who was cast into this twin-mould so splendidly.

An oblate by order, he had his Master's from the University of London and Diploma in Education from the University of Ceylon and was endowed with a wealth of 16 years experience as Principal of the Teachers' Training College at Colombogam. With this imposing background, he soon began to elevate the level of education at St. Henry's from secondary to University Entrance levels in Arts, Bio and Maths. He got around the teachers to chip in extra hours of work and they too responded ungrudgingly to enhance activities in sports, elocution, drama etc.

All these efforts of Father Singarayer cumulated into raising St. Henry's with other frontline 'A' Grade schools in the North. His yet another impetus was the home and school integration by reinvigorating the Parent Teachers' Association (PTA). He laid larger emphasis on children growing into adults and that character formation and intellectual education could only be imparted best when home and school shared the responsibility. Away from the school, an irate storm was brewing in the nation's political arena. With his customary missionary zeal Father Singarayer began to sense an uneasy feeling of what was in store for the College and the educational sphere.

Rev Fr. Dr. L.A. Singarayer remembered at birth centenary

By Meno Thiruchelvam [Secretary, Henricians Colombo (OBA)]

1956 marked the beginning of the politics of estrangement imbued with conflict and turmoil, which saw to appease Sinhalese sentiments with the 'Sinhala Only' advocacy and moves to take over private schools. These political rumblings left Father Singarayer a deeply disturbed man. One could measure his tormented sentiments embodied in his Rector's Report of 1957-58 where he said, "There is so much of talk in public platforms and political coteries about State Education, that the very mention of it changes the whole atmosphere with tension".

He emphasised that the State had a duty to see that through education the young should grow up in national ethos and its influence should not ride roughshod over factors that contributed to the welfare of education. Thus he summed up his vision saying, "Hence, we believe that the secular State as representative of the whole community should control, though control should not be mistaken for monopoly of education or direct management of schools".

In 1960, Fr. Singarayer's fears began to unfold and we witnessed the escalation of the conflicts in the process of the takeover of private schools by the Government. Fr. Rector sought to fight the change in the prevailing order of things. He commanded the support of the Henrician Old Boys' Association of Colombo.

Veteran OBA steward A. Jesuthasan vividly recalls Fr. Rector's fervent endeavours against the takeover of private schools, by sending his Vice Rector Rev. Fr. Anton T. Rajanayagam as his special emissary to revive the then defunct Colombo OBA, to re-tool and shore up support against the takeover.

He wanted the OBA to give its mind to the proposed take over of private schools by the Govt. which move was detrimental and would have adverse effects on the system and the standard of education at large. Fr. Rector specifically requested Fr. Anton to move a resolution against the takeover of private schools at the meeting of the OBA. But sadly enough, many top rungs of the then OBA were government servants who had been understandably disdainful of a forthright challenge because of their positions, but sought to subtly influence a fair play of the issue in question.

But the tide was too awesome for any onslaught by anyone. St. Henry's and many a Catholic and Christian schools were deprived of the State funding assistance. Lost in the struggle against the takeover, St. Henry's had to saddle as a completely private school, solely sustained by the Bishop of Jaffna, who found that the luxury of playing Cricket was no longer manageable. So since 1960, playing cricket was halted at St. Henry's, the greatest pinch the college experienced immediately after the

takeover.

Father Singarayer was indeed an emblem of Christian leadership, as an educationist himself he bore public responsibility on the ethos of education on which he gave his concrete expression to his vision against the takeover of private schools during the transitional phase of political upheaval in the post independent era of the nation.

Fr. L.A. Singarayer was truly a revered persona, to whom spirituality was not an ethical choice or a lofty idea rather an encounter with the Creator. These thoughts Fr. Rector had instilled in us with pragmatic discipline guidelines all the time.

His beaming influence lasted at St. Henry's until 1963, as by then he became somewhat unwell to shoulder the heavy responsibility of the College. Afterwards, during 1964 to '68 he took Professorship at a Papal Seminary in Ampitiya and then as Spiritual Director at Holy Family Novitiate in Pasaiyoor in 1969.

He sought that his journey's end be in the midst of the familiar surroundings of his native Mathagal Parish, ebbing his twilight years yet in the service of the Lord as Assistant Parish Priest until his eternal rest in the arms of the Lord.

The annals of Henrician history have no small measure to report to posterity of his unswerving stance against the takeover of private schools.

The entirety of the Henrician fraternity here and abroad will remember Dr. L.A. Singarayer fondly with gratitude at the most opportune time of his birth centenary this year and the centenary next year of the founding of Ilavalai.



Following were appointed as members of the executive committee for 2007

Executive Position	First Name	Last Name
President	Rathy	Arulanantham
Vice President	Ratnes	Sanmuganathan
Secretary	Thilaga	Sivakumaran
Treasurer	Kamalamanohari	Yuhendran
Auditor	Chelvi	Elanganayagam (absent for photo)
Asst. Secretary	Gayathiri	Gangadharan
Asst. Treasurer	Gnanambikai	Pararajalingam
Sport Secretary	Jayashree	Kanapathipillai
International Coordinator	Sivamany	Navarathnam
Web Coordinator	Usha	Chandrakumar
Committee Member	Kuhambikai	Sivarajah
Committee Member	Shyamala	Kumar
Committee Member	Rita	Stanislaus
Committee Member	Manjula	Devendran
Committee Member	Rojana	Kuganesan
Committee Member	Rohini	Krishnadevan
Committee Member	Dharani	Shanmuganathan
Committee Member	Pamothy	Karunakaran
Committee Member	Bavani	Selvasingam
Committee Member	Vathsi	Subramaniam (absent for photo)
Past President	Kiruba	Paramanathan
Advisor	Ranji	Thambirajah
Advisor	Leela	Emerson

JAFFNA VEMBADI OLD GIRLS ASSOCIATION (Canada) Appoints New Executive Committee for 2007



Photos by: Gnane Gnanendran

Season's Greetings from

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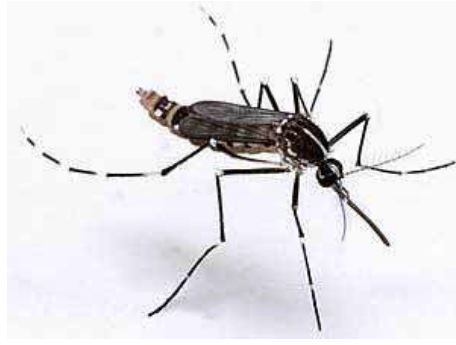
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To be laid low for more than a week by a virtually invisible enemy as a virus was indeed a very humbling experience. Not that as a journo one expected to be somehow immune to the sweep of those micro monsters. But with several eager volunteers ever in readiness to count the bones of a journo in these days of media activism, that the bone-crunching should happen through such an innocuous though lethal source is quite ignominious, so to say. Yet, being part of the exalted Chikungunya club brings to your system more than just pain; it imparts some enlightenment too. And the primary wisdom that dawns is that the mosquitoes out there are dead set to get you and we are all sitting ducks! Or crouching chicks, if you wish.

Yes, Chikungunya was a raging issue a month or so back with politicians of all hues oozing concern for the denizens of the State. But those were heady electoral days and the virus was just another political weapon in the unseemly battle between the Kazhagams. Once the dust settled down after the local body polls and the political parties had counted their chickens, chikungunya too was given a decent burial. So are we too assume that the virus has vanished after doing electoral duty and that the self respecting people of TN are all now standing tall and erect? If anything, post polls, not just chikungunya, but a host of sundry other gunyas wrought by a variety of viruses with varying degrees of virulence have taken grip of the State rendering more and more people on all fours. Last month, the Government was at least denying; but this time around no one is even talking. That grave humanitarian issues should be lost in the political wilderness is indeed sad. And more painful is the fact that while people are coughing and crawling their way around, the overwhelming concern of those in power seems to be on



how to keep the statues of their near and dear up and standing. The apathy and insensitivity of the political class is so stark and striking and has percolated down the line too with the official health machinery at a virtual standstill. Not just afflicted individuals, but the entire public healthcare system is creaking at its joints, more out of disuse than overload! But men in power seem to care less. That the national health minister hails from Tamilnadu is an irrelevant detail here! The priority looks to be that the loose-jointed UPA should not creak and crumble! There is nothing surprising about the sudden spurt of viral infections. It is a post-rains phenomenon and a matter of conventional medical wisdom. Like politicians viruses too mutate and are good at beating the system, almost always remaining a step ahead of the defence mechanisms that the body has or acquires. It is always virus first and vaccines next and new viruses keep emerging. For chikungunya and its family of viruses, effective vaccines are yet to be found. Even for those viruses for which there are vaccines, like in the case of

March of the mosquitoes

By T.R. Jawahar

small pox and polio, the viruses themselves cannot be said to have been eradicated. At best, they are in abeyance and could mutate and rear their head in a more potent form sometime in future. Even the notorious H5N1 virus of birdflu fame has not yet caused a pandemic because it has not found it easy to spread from humans to humans. Once it does, humanity has had it.

But the current viruses doing the rounds in our neighbourhoods have been smarter. Taking off from their reservoirs in monkeys and some other animals, these viruses have found mosquitoes and flies as safe transport to spread themselves around. The Man-Mosquito-Man network has a proven track record and the viruses seem to have no reason to doubt its efficacy. Also, they seem to be dead sure that mosquitoes are here to stay and will never become extinct, particularly in third world countries, where proper sanitation is a far cry. In this, the viruses seem to have struck an unholy alliance with, who else, the politicians who all appear to have a vested interest in sustaining squalor. Indeed, poor urban planning, improper water management and sordid sanitary facilities are all primarily political legacies that have in turn facilitated viral epidemics. That billions of rupees of tax-payers' money have failed to ensure their most vital necessity --basic health care -- is a stinging indictment of the ruling classes down the years. Then there is the proplem of misplaced public priorities. Viral and bacterial infections like diarrhoea, malaria and dengue, do not

normally hog headlines unless there is a political angle to them. They are not fancy illnesses that would interest the elite or gain the instant attention of donors, let alone eliciting healthcare 'package deals' from corporate hospitals or even bank loans to fund them! The world diabetes day was celebrated like some kind of a festival recently. While awareness of diabetes is good and the need for its control cannot be gainsaid, it still remains a lifestyle disease, wrought by affluence or a sedentary living, besides heridity. It is on the rise because of rising incomes and we invite it by our own actions or rather, inaction. But virals are beyond one's control. You may close your windows and use repellants to keep off mosquitoes, but what about the open drainages and streets of sludge that breed them by the millions? And with a great part of the populace living on pavements and in inhuman conditions, with neither roof nor doors, is not talking of mosquito nets akin to asking them to eat cake? Really, no amount of individual endeavour can make up for Governmental lapses. But the failings, alas, are glaring. A recent report in

Time magazine claims that water and airborne viral and bacterial infections are greater killers than AIDS and diabetes. But in India, epitomised by TN, denial, cover up, cultivated ignorance and gross indifference to these all-too-visible dangers seems endemic. When diagnosis itself is deemed politically taboo, where is the question of prevention or cure? Little wonder, India tops the list of nations least prepared to meet a pandemic. Indeed, a country aspiring to be a world-beater should be doing better than sneezing, coughing and blowing its nose, let alone crawling and crouching. [Courtesy:newstodaynet.com]

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Address at the 25th Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Nov 22, 2006 By President of India His Excellency Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh

I am indeed honored to deliver the 25th convocation address to the members of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of



Higher Learning (SSSIHL) in the presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in this divine environment. My reverence to Baba and greetings to Vice-Chancellor Dr. A.V. Gokak, Professors, faculty members and staff who have been responsible for shaping not just graduates but human beings with great value systems drawn from our civilization heritage. At this point, I would like to quote a message from Baba "today people think that spirituality has no relationship to mundane life and vice versa. This is a big mistake. True divinity is a combination of spirituality and social obligations. National unity and social harmony are founded on spirituality. It is the divine that links spirituality and social existence." Dear graduating students, when I see you all, how fortunate you are, getting full-fledged education with two components: the combination of learning which will make you a life-long learner and the value system derived from Prasanthi Nilayam presided over by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Uniqueness of SSSIHL graduates

Every year, 3 million graduates are graduating from 300 universities with about 17,000 colleges affiliated to them in our nation. I realize today, that 418 graduates from Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning are getting ready to enter into the world. Also during the last 25 years, over 8500 graduates have

joined many organizations from this institute in various parts of the country and the world. What is the uniqueness of these graduates? I was asking myself. I have visited this university number of times and interacted with students. I have also addressed the 21st convocation in 2002 in the presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. For me, it is indeed a birth of a truth that the graduates of this Institute with the education edifice grounded in the value system of this divine campus will always shine as life long learners.

Above all friends, you are blessed with a divine environment which flows from our civilization heritage creating a value system that you will cherish throughout your life. During your education period, apart from this divine environment what you have, the great teachers you have, you also have seen pain and sufferings, in many villages around the institute which is a learning process for you to fulfill your social obligations. That means you have imbibed the combination of spirituality

and social responsibility as propounded by Sri Sathya Sai Baba during your prime education period. Since, Prasanthi Nilayam transforming into a spiritual meeting place and Baba himself during discourse provide many examples of great lives, of great human beings from different religions and graduation from religion, spirituality Sri Sathya Sai Baba is spreading. Now I would like to discuss with you friends the purpose of human life, examples of spirit of service demonstrated by few of the alumni's of Prasanthi Nilayam, which symbolizes the unique contribution made by SSSIHL to society and human indomitable spirit which has a blessing of almighty.

Purpose of human life

The purpose of human life is beautifully described in "Bhagawat Gita". In the battle scene, where Arjuna was hesitating to fight against his own kith and kin in Kurushetra, Lord Krishna showed Arjuna a vision of Vrindavan where the whole garden was blossoming with beautiful flowers and fragrance and the flowers attracting honeybee. It was an enchanting scene. In another vision of the garden all the flowers which blossomed in the morning had now fallen on the ground. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna, "See the flower, how generously it distributes perfume and honey. It gives to all, gives freely its essence. When its work is done, it falls away quietly. Try to be like the flower, unassuming despite all

"You are what you are because of society"

its qualities". Lord Krishna conveys this message to the humanity. This characteristics is being imbibed in every student of this institution and they follow in all their areas of work. I would like to share some of the experiences of students who graduated from this institution and working in different parts of the country:

Leadership quality: Respect, hear and solve the problems at right time.

I recount the case of a MBA student from the Institute, Jasti Vamsee Krishna, who was deputed to Jalgaon District Milk Producers Co-operative Milk Union Ltd. as Head of Sales and Marketing functions. It had, what was said to be the strongest among the Milk Unions. Working hours stretching from early morning to late-nights, he now had to manage a team of people some of whom were the strong union leaders in the organisation. Vamsee's success laid in effective management even of the toughest personalities. This stemmed from his love for humanity, and skill in recognizing, and rewarding, outstanding performance even among "difficult" personalities. Vamsee's contribution to enhancing performance and productivity of the cooperative was by humane, ethical dealing of people with strong views. He heard them patiently, discussed with them with reason. Whenever he found truth in it he found solutions and nurtured peace purpose and hard work amongst all.

Righteousness Protects the Righteous

Here is another example of Sai Alumni, Sri Vidyadhar, Director of Lotus Energy Systems based in Bangalore, this time from an altogether different setting in the corporate world. The case being illustrated how high standard of ethics in financial negotiations for providing sound proofing equipment for a large genset (power generator) room for one of India's most prominent home-grown IT giants.

His company was short listed as being technically best suited for the job. The price was the only criterion that was against them. Because of higher technical standards, Sri Vidyadhar could not offer a lower price, and he perhaps felt that it was in the buyer's interest to uphold quality when the price difference was relatively small. Above all, he defended only his company's product performance and the quality was his focus rather than belittling the competitor's products.

But the product performance of the company and his supporting arguments and the behaviour had all the potential of the winner and it was focused. The buyer became reflective then asked curiously, "What is your philosophy in negotiation?" I didn't quite know what to make of it or what to say." Then Sri Vidyadhar, said the first thing that came his mind "...do your best and leave the rest, if it has to happen, it will. That is our philosophy." When the buyer asked "...and if it means that you lost the order?" he replied spontaneously Dharmo Rakshathi Rakshitha (Righteousness Protects the Righteous) that also reflected his company's ethical standards.



Because of his high standards of ethics, his company lost the contract even though it was needed for their very survival. Then, a year or so later, something very interesting happened. Out of the blue he got a call from the buyer. They had a plan for a TV broadcast studio that needed acoustics for the project, something they had not done before.' 'But can you do it?' he asked and the buyer was eager to deal with Sri Vidyahar's company. He immediately said, "Yes",

From that day on, his company has done a great deal of work for the facilities infrastructure of this one company across the country without ever having to sit across the negotiation table again. The buyer after his earlier experience buying soundproofing equipment for his large genset made him realize that he should have accepted his Sri Vidyahar's offer because the later had upheld the truth that their product had a higher quality. That event changed the buyer's outlook and the fortunes of both companies turned upwards, for they were truthful in their dealings with each other. This ethical conduct of Sri Vidyahar transformed the whole outlook on life of another person and organization.

Leadership changes the course

The third example of human values in professional life is that of Sri Venkatesh Prasad, who is currently the CEO and Director of Trayee Impex Pvt. Ltd., has a similar life experience.

Venkatesh, in his previous work assignment, was given independent charge of a loss-making unit in the business group and was assigned the task of reviving it. He was also given a free hand to change any of the staff so as to turn it around and attain profitability. At the end of two and half years, Venkatesh says, "We had turned profitable, repaid all the outstanding loans to banks and had declared a dividend for the first time in two decades. To cap it off, we had a very healthy bank balance. Throughout this phase, I did not change any of the staff or the workers."

So how did he achieve this feat? Venkatesh gives a revealing instance.

"One of the key personnel I was involved with was an accountant who was over sixty. He had retired from service but I asked him to continue in order to help me tide over the crisis. I valued his experience and treated him with a lot of respect. I trusted his ability in spite of his age." But at the same time, from an organizational point of

...continued on Page 17

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view, Venkatesh ensured that a second line was in place and that the older man's presence did not discourage the young employees, so the company was in no way disadvantaged.

One evening, months later after the company had its turn around, when Venkatesh was sitting across from the accountant's desk, the older man stunned him to silence when he said, "Sir, thank you very much". There was a smile of satisfaction on his face and continued, "You have behaved in this way because you are a Baba student". Venkatesh was dumbstruck. "In all those years, I never mentioned to any of the staff in the unit about my academic background or Swami. I was amazed. I didn't know how to respond."

These examples illustrate how the Prasanthi Nilayam environment has inculcated self-confidence in their students that wherever they go they uphold human values. That is why Swami says,

**Where there is confidence,
there is Love.
Where there is Love,
there is faith.
Where there is Faith,
there is peace
Where there is peace,
there is Truth
Where there is Truth,
there is bliss.
Where there is bliss,
there is God.**

Now I would like to share with you dear young friends, a story what my father told me when I was a high school boy about how to bring the divine goodness in the difficult and tempting circumstances.

Human Indomitable spirit has a blessing of Almighty

Imam Ghazali was a saint teacher lived in the 12th Century. My father narrated me a scene when Imam Ghazali has been tested by Shaitan, the transgressed Angel. One day Imam Ghazali was unfolding his prayer mat for Maharif Namaz. At that time, the Shaitan appears in front of him and said, "Respected Imam Sahib, I am just now coming from heaven where there was a discussion about great human beings and you have been judged as the best human being living on Earth. As a recognition of your great stature you have been exempted from the trouble of performing Namaz in future. Imam Ghazali was restless as the Namaz time was approaching. So he looked at Shaitan and said, "Shaitan Sahib, first of all performing Namaz is not a trouble at all and when even Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), was not exempted from performing Namaz five times a day, how can a poor Imam like me be exempted?. Thank you. He went on to perform the Namaz. When he completed the Namaz, Imam Ghazali still saw Shaitan was standing. Imam Sahib asked him what he was waiting for. Shaitan said, "O Imam you have excelled even the most favoured Prophet Adam, who could not win over my deception and I made him to eat the forbidden fruit. Realizing that Shaitan was flattering Imam Sahib prayed to Allah, Oh almighty, help me and save me from the deception of the flattery making a disappointed Shaitan finally disappear. His mission failed. But one of the great human being succeeded. Friends, what is the message? When you are studying in this campus of Prasanthi Nilayam, no Shaitan and no devil in all your lifetime should deceive you with flattery. You will certainly

defeat the Shaitan and succeed in your missions in life.

Learning results into good citizens with social consciousness. The science and technology environment in which you live, will take to you towards knowledge society. I would like to share with you the typical technological profile that awaits you in the future.

Convergence of Technologies

From the university website, I found that SSSIHL is attracting faculty members from many parts of the world. This resource can definitely be utilized for providing courses to the students in the emerging field of "Convergence of Technologies".

The information technology and communication technology have already converged leading to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Information Technology combined with biotechnology has led to bio-informatics. Now, Nano-technology is knocking at our doors. It is the field of the future that will replace microelectronics and many fields with tremendous application potential in the areas of medicine, electronics and material science. When Nano technology and ICT meet, integrated silicon electronics, photonics are born and it can be said that material convergence will happen. With material convergence and biotechnology linked, a new science



called Intelligent Bioscience will be born which would lead to a disease free, happy and more intelligent human habitat with longevity and high human capabilities. Convergence of bio-nano-info technologies can lead to the development of nano robots. Nano robots when they are injected into a patient, my expert friends say, it will diagnose and deliver the treatment exclusively in the affected area and then the nano-robot gets digested as it is a DNA based product and there are many more applications. Our core competence in convergence of technologies will enable us to be a partner in a World Knowledge Platform with many friendly countries for design, development, production and marketing of world class knowledge products.

World Knowledge Platform

During my visit to Singapore, Philippines and Republic of Korea early this year, I have put forward the concept of "World Knowledge Platform", which will integrate the core competencies of the partner countries to develop knowledge products. This platform will enable joint design, development, cost effective production and marketing of the knowledge

products in various domains based on the core competence of partner nations to international market.

Initially, the mission of World Knowledge Platform is to connect and network the R&D Institutions, Universities and Industries using fiber broadband from the partner nations on selected R&D Missions. The underground fiber cable infrastructure already exists between the many partners. It is only waiting to be lighted up with state-of-the-art optical networks and to ignite the minds of the knowledge workers. This knowledge GRID will support multitude of seamless connections supporting both synchronous and asynchronous communication, carrying either text or audio or video. We can then use this network in the academic environments to teach courses online and share expensive equipments remotely. In the Industrial environment, it can be used to design complex systems – even ones that are as complex as an aircraft in a collaborative way using virtual prototyping concepts in the cyber space.

Missions of World Knowledge Platform:

The "World Knowledge platform" will take up the missions, in some of the areas given below, which are of utmost urgency to all of us to make our world a safe, sustainable and peaceful and prosperous place to live:

1. Energy: exploration, storage, production and conversion
2. Water: treatment, sustainable use, efficiency in use and minimal utilization for maximum use, desalination
3. Healthcare: Diagnosis, drug delivery system, life long care.
4. Food: preservation, storage and distribution
5. Knowledge products: Hardware, Software and Networking Products and user interfaces.
6. Automobile: Hardware and embedded software integration, assistance in transport system through GPS.
7. Healthcare: Gene Characterization, Stem Cell research and molecule to drug towards the diagnostic and treatment of the diseases like Cancer and Diabetics.
8. Traditional medicine: Herbal and natural products, sharing experiences with modern bio products.

In short, the World Knowledge Platform would be launch pad for many innovations that are waiting to be unearthed only by the combined power of multiple nations. Since many



devotees of Swamiji are spread in different in parts of the world, world knowledge platform will provide a common medium for all of them to converge and work.

Conclusion

Conscience is the light of the Soul that burns within the chambers of our psychological heart. It is as real as life is. It raises the voice in protest whenever anything is thought of or done contrary to the righteousness. Conscience is a form of truth that has been transferred through our genetic stock in the form of the knowledge of our own acts and feelings as right or wrong.

A virtuous and courageous person can alone use the instrument of conscience. He or she can alone hear the inner voice of the soul clearly. In a wicked person this faculty is absent. The sensitive nature of his / her conscience has been destroyed by sin or corruption. Hence he or she is unable to discriminate right from wrong. Those who are leading organizations, business enterprises, institutions and governments should develop this virtue of the ability to use their own conscience. This wisdom of using the clean conscience is being provided to all the students of SSSIHL.

Giving drinking water to millions of people for hundreds of villages, conducting 15,000 open heart surgeries successfully, giving higher level of education with value system, and above removing the pain of people psychologically and physiologically with heavenly blessing and modern medicine is indeed a divine mission. Baba is spear-heading this great God's mission wordlessly. We pray Almighty for his divine service.

Once again let me congratulate all the graduating students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning for their excellent academic performance. My best wishes for success all the members of Sri Sathya family in their mission of promoting value based education to the youth of this country.

May God bless you all.

Earth shining in Glory

Our Milky Way is shining, with millions and millions of stars.

Our beloved star Sun, along with eight other planets around.

Orbits the Milky Way, finishes one orbit in two hundred and fifty million years.

Somewhere in the galaxy, echoed a voice in surprise. "See there the Earth shining in glory how come it got its light?"

A sweet and soft reply comes:

"It is not the mere light, It is the light of knowledge, It is the light of service, It is the light of peace.

Specially radiating from Prasanthi Nilayalam When Earth completes its eightieth orbit Carrying a great soul in its bosom"



Guru

A Mani Ratnam film is special. So what if he hasn't tasted box office success in Hindi films so far, his work has always been par excellence, whether it is 'Dil Se' or 'Yuva'. With 'Guru', he embarks into narrating an epic tale that is supposed to be based on none other than Dhirubhai Ambani. Coming together of Abhishek Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai, Mithun Chakravorty, Madhavan and Vidya Balan along with A.R. Rehman and Gulzar handling the music department is a good enough reason to check out the film. Want to see this tale unfold on the big screen? Then wait for next year to begin as the film releases all over on January 12th.



Baabul

B R Films have been associated with making socially relevant films for half a century now. Last film coming from their stable was 'Baghban' which turned out to be a phenomenal success when released. Film's success was special because it came at a time when the trend of making money in the first couple of weeks was just about catching up in India whereas 'Baghban' didn't really set the cash registers ringing in the first few days. Later, it was due to audience's nod of approval that the film rose from strength to strength and word of mouth ensured that 'Baghban' continues to be one of the most talked family films even today. This time around director Ravi Chopra picks up the issue of widow-remarriage and creates a film with his 'Baghban' cast of Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini and Salman Khan. A soul stirring drama that promises to raise a lot of questions and act as an eye opener for the society we live in, 'Baabul' also stars Aman Verma, Parmeet Sethi, Rajpal Yadav, Smita Jaykar, Avtar Gill, Gargi Patel, Sharat Saxena and Vaishnavi with music by Aadesh Shrivastav. The film releases all over on December 8th.



Salaam-E-Ishq

Come 2007 and the year begins on a blockbuster

BollyBlitz



By: Anand. J

note with 'Salaam-E-Ishq' that is destined to be an ideal follow-up to an eventful and highly successful 2006. Directed by Nikhil Advani who made his directorial debut with 'Kal Ho Na Ho', 'Salaam-E-Ishq' is in one word - HUGE. With half a dozen stories running in parallel and then coming to a common conclusion in the end, this certainly is going to be one cinematic experience of its kind. 6 different couples 12 different lives. 6 different worlds. One common problem - LOVE. That's the essence of this film which goes by the name of 'Salaam-E-Ishq' which narrates the tale of 6 couples who are not related to each other by any means but are eventually brought together by one destiny. For knowing more await the release of the film which happens all over on January 24th next year.



Provoked

What happens when a woman is pushed to the hilt? What happens when her suffering becomes unimaginable? What happens when the only way to escape is death - either yours or your tormentor's? What happens when the tormentor is none other than your husband? That's the essence of Jagmohan Mundhra's 'Provoked' that is slated to release early next year. Starring Aishwarya Rai in the lead, it is based on a story about a woman who was based in London.



Kabul Express

What happens when India's biggest and highly successful movie making house 'Yash Chopra' moves away from the formula to make a film that has world audience as a target and a subject that is its most unconventional and challenging ever? 'Kabul Express' is born! A film for which the shooting was completed last year followed by an extensive post production and rounds of various film festivals, 'Kabul Express' marks the debut of director Kabir Khan who takes you to a journey of war-torn Afghanistan and tells a tale through his own experiences in the country. The story revolves around 5 different individuals - 2 Indians, 1 Afghan, 1 Pakistani and 1 American. The movie stars John Abraham, Arshad Warsi and Salman Shahid in the lead roles and is slated for release on December 15 all over.



Bhagam Bhag

What happens when Priyadarshan, Akshay Kumar and Paresh Rawal come together? Probability of a riotous hungama becomes close to 100%. Now add on Govinda to the enterprise. Well, there is no way that the product won't be superlative! Now how about pushing in some thriller and mystery element to the comic genre of the film. Irresistible would be the term that would be left to describe the kind of film that goes by the name of 'Bhagam Bhag'. The movie has an impressive starcast with Akshay Kumar and Govinda in the lead roles supported by Paresh Rawal, Jackie Shroff, Lara Dutta, Tanushree Dutta, Rajpal Yadav and Arbaaz Khan. Produced by Shree Ashtavinayak Cinevision Ltd and Popkorn Motion Pictures Private Limited, 'Bhagam Bhag' is now THE most waited film of the year before 2006 comes to a close. It releases all over this Christmas i.e. on December 22nd.



Bollywood Marriages

December is the month of marriages and this year is no exception. On December 9, actress Perizaad Zorabian, who won acclaim for her performances in JOGGERS PARK and EK AJNABEE, will marry Boman Irani. Wait, Perizaad's prospective husband is not the famous actor Boman Irani [KHOSLA KA GHOSLA, MUNNABHAI series], but he's into the construction business, heading the leading Keystone Group. Will Perizaad continue to work in movies, post marriage? "Of course, I will. 140%. I have three films lined up for release -- HIGHWAY 2003 [with Kay Kay Menon], KABHI UP KABHI DOWN [with Sanjay Suri] and P.N.C.-Meghna Gulzar's JUST MARRIED. Plus, there are a couple of offers in the pipeline," Perizaad truly sounds excited. Is Boman cool with the idea of an actress-wife? "Of course! He respects me and my thoughts. He's a sweet guy," she adds. A few days later, on 14th December, Emraan Hashmi will wed his sweetheart Parveen at an elaborate ceremony. At the launch of AWARAPAN a few days ago, when this writer quizzed Emraan whether he'd continue 'kissing' his co-stars in movies, post marriage, the actor had remarked, "I think the media took the issue too far, going to the extent of stating that kissing in movies ensures success. I don't believe in it," he smiled. Okay, we got the answer!

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Roger Nair Productions has acquired Canadian rights to writer/director Mani Ratnam's controversial "Guru". Guru is rumored to be based on the life of Reliance corporation founder and the richest man of India, Late Dhiru Bhai Ambani's Life ,Roger Nair Productions spokes person Mr. Nair and Kaleidoscope Entertainment Mr. Bobby Bedi announced Wednesday in a press conference,held at "The Host" Star studded World Premiere of "Guru" is to be held in Toronto on January 11th 2007 said Mr. Bedi.

This has been a landmark Deal between Canada and India making Canada an official territory of Bollywood films. Historically Bollywood film industry has always looked upon North America as one unit and lobbying of Canadian companies to be given Video and television rights have been futile, forcing them to get only exhibition rights that did not give them much right to go after video piracy. With a Canadian company acquiring absolute Theatrical, video and TV rights ensures every legal right to curb piracy with the help of police and the justice system.

Mr. Bedi Was in Toronto for mere hours with a very hectic schedule He was shown the world class Toronto venues fit to host a premiere of this magnitude by OMDC officials followed by a City of Toronto hosted luncheon in celebration of signing of a pioneer deal signed between the two companies. Mr. Bedi also chairs CII (Chamber of Indian industries), FFI (film finance of India) and is on the committee of India 's International film festival held in Goa each year.

Guru has been creating ripples in India, because Anil and Mukesh Ambani the two feuding sons of the Late rags to riches man of India have taken pro and against positions against "Guru".Mani Ratnam's rejection to the request of Mukesh Ambani's wish to see the film before it hits theater so as to see if it portrays his father in a good light has angered the polyester Prince's son. A point of note is Mukesh Ambani didn't let his father's biography "THE POLYESTER PRINCE: The Rise of Dhirubhai Ambani" by Hamish McDonald" see the light of day in India .

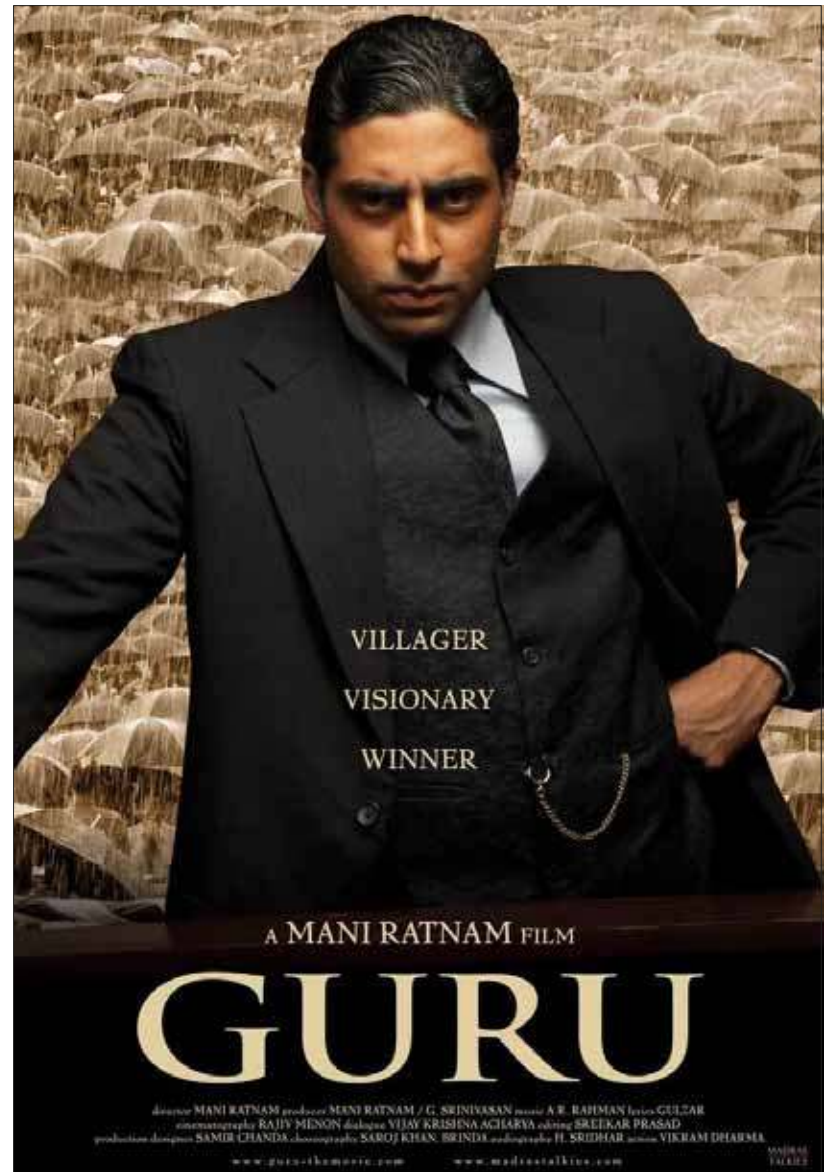
Roger Nair productions will hold a world premiere in Toronto with most of the cast and crew attending on January 11th 2007 including Aishwarya Rai, Abhishek bachchan, AR Rahman and Mani Ratnam.

The film opens in theaters Canadawide Cineplex,AMC and Empire January 12th, 2007.

Mr. Nair can be contacted at 415 560 1415 / 416 786 1967
 website : www.guru-themovie.com
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Mani Ratnam's Guru

World Premiere in Toronto on Jan 11, 2007



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Vadivelu



After *Imsai Arasan Pulikesi* Vadivelu remains as the number one comedian. He features in at least two out of every 3 movies released. Vadivelu's speciality is that he doesn't depend on any heroes. He has costarred from Super Star, Super Actor to Small stars. Many Directors and Producers have approached him to continue doing Heroic roles but the intelligent comedian has refused all such offers. He wants to continue doing good roles and in the meanwhile if he gets a subject that is as captivating and interesting as *'Imsai Arasan'*, he will not think twice to act as a hero in that movie. Super Star Rajinikanth recently praised actor/comedian Vadivelu saying that but for his color, Vadivelu would have stood number one among other heroes.

Vivek



SOLLI ADIPPEN is Vivek's first film as Hero. He was able to bring his mentor Director K.Balachandar, his Sivaji film hero Rajini and also Director Shankar for the Audio Release of his movie *'Solli Adippen'*. Rajini praised Vivek's intelligence and his interest in various subjects. As we all know, amongst all the comedians available now, Vivek is the only comedian who always delivers thought provoking social messages through his comedy script. He is eagerly awaiting the release of *'Solli Adippen'* after which he will decide whether to continue doing heroic movies or just remain a comedian forever. All said and done he only has a couple of movies in hand unlike his arch rival Vadivelu.

Karunaas



– is a well known comedian and has now turned to

TidBitz

By: Anand. J



film distribution as well. He was introduced by Director Bala in the Vikram & Soorya starrer *'Pitha Magan'*. He consulted with his advisors and took up the distribution rights for movies *'Tirunelveli'* and *'E'*. He did earn good profits through the movie *'E'* and now he is looking forward to taking up the distribution rights of another big movie. This will be his third movie as a film distributor. Kudos to Karunaas as he has established himself as a good comedian, a talented singer and now a profitable film distributor.

Madhavan



He is number four in getting overseas fans as his new film *Irandu* has proven. The film's collection overseas is more or less comparable to Ilaya Thalpathi Vijay's film collection overseas who stands number 3 after Rajinikanth and Kamal Hassan. He has been pet named as Maddy by his lady fans. This pet name of his is a rare distinction to an actor since no other actor in the Tamil film industry has earned this distinction. He started his career as a model and then turned to television comperer and finally found his star status after his movies *'Alai Payuthey'* and *'Minnale'*. Director Maniratnam is impressed by actor Madhavan and he has starred him in many of his movies including his latest magnum opus *'Guru'*.

Bharath



Suddenly became a second hero in Director Shankar's film *Veyyil*. Bharath became a successful hero after his two back to back hits *'Kadhal'* and *'Pattiyal'*. According to the Producers Guild Association, no two movies of the same hero can be released on the same day. But Director Shankar and Director Vikraman decided to release their movies *'Veyyil'* and *'Chennai Kadhal'* on the same day and both the movies starred Bharath in the lead role. When the producers association raised a ruckus about this, Director Shankar stated that Bharath is only a second hero in his movie *'Veyyil'* and the actual hero of the movie is Actor Pasupathi. Although it was not convincing to the producers they accepted the argument and decided to release both the movies on the same day. Hopefully the luck holds good for Bharath and both his movies turn successful.

Sathyaraj

Is Actor Sathyaraj following the foot steps of the great comedian/villain actor M R Radha. He is currently busy shooting for his dream movie *'Periyar'* in which he stars as the stalwart politician E.V.R Periyar himself. Apparently he is acting in this movie without even getting paid since it was one of his ambitions to Sathyaraj act as the famous political leader.



Sathyaraj has openly admitted that he would like to feature himself in the remake of *'Ratha Kanner'* which was immortalized by M R Radha. In this remake world, remaking *Ratha Kanner* might soon turn to be a reality and it may well be Sathyaraj's turn to prove that his version of the movie is better than the original. Sathyaraj also stars in another untitled movie as *'Election Commissioner'* which no other actor has acted so far.

Jeeva

Son of ace producer R B Chowdhry, actor Jeeva is flying high after the release of his movie *'E'*. He has won critical acclaim for his role in the movie and the



movie is a commercial success too. All of Jeeva's movies has had a decent run at the box office which includes *Aasai Aasaiyai*, *Ram* and *Aran*. He is currently working on a movie named *Tamizh M A'*. His movie *'Aran'* where he costarred with Malayalam Super Star Mohanlal was released in Kerala (dubbed in Malayalam) as *'Keerti Chakra'* and has won lots of accolades. Jeeva might soon turn to acting in Malayalam movies as well since he has got a huge fan following after *Keerti Chakra's* release.

Sibiraj

Son of actor Sathyaraj is onle of the unlucky heroes since he doesn't have even a single hit to his credit. He has mostly costarred with his father Sathyaraj and that has not run into Sibiraj's favour. Sibiraj has



decided to go all alone this time with his latest movie *'Lee'* which is produced by his father/actor Sathyaraj. Hopefully this time luck will favour Sibiraj and may bring more offers to him. Sibiraj opines that he is shy to act with heroine actresses whom his father has acted with. The latest in the list being the notorious *Namitha*. Sibiraj was not comfortable doing the intimate scenes with his screen lover *Namitha* and apparently Sathyaraj had to convince his son to act boldly with his co-actresses.



Film Reviews

By: Anand. J

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BollyBitz

By: Anand. J

VALLAVAN



Vallavan a milestone film to Silambarasan after Manmathan is definitely a Director cum hero subject well chosen by Simbu after seeing and collecting notes from English and Hindi movies. How long will the self styled or father T.Rajendar named Little Super Star name will help him is a mystery. However compared to other young actors like Dhanush, Bharat, Prasanna he is better and becomes a highly saleable actor.

The movie begins with a college student Vallavan (Silambarasan) falling in love with a professor Sandhya (Nayantara). Desperate attempts to impress her succeed. But Vallavan hides the truth that he is a student and three-years younger to Sandhya. Later, Sandhya, coming to know the truth, decides not to go ahead with her plans to marry a youth, who is younger to her. Meanwhile a flash back reveals Vallavan's romance with a classmate Geetha (Reema Sen). A hysteric Geetha ensures that Vallavan runs crazy behind her. Coming to know of her true nature, Vallavan resorts to teaching her a lesson.

Geetha returns one fine day only to inform Vallavan that she was the one who played spoilsport in the affair between him and Sandhya to teach him a lesson. The remaining story is about attempts of Vallavan to marry Sandhya but with Geetha going hammer and tongs to prevent it. Silambarasan has utilized the opportunity well to glorify himself. He boasts himself uttering lengthy dialogues. But the man sure has oodles of energy and is a livewire all through

The film has Yuvan Shankar Raja music and out of the 7 composed by him four are good numbers. The film also has Sandhya, S.V.Sekar, Venu Aravind in some small roles. Nayanathara and Simbhus connection started well and ended not so well. Simbhu can now fight with equal heroes but not with senior heroes like Vijay and Ajit is the lesson taught to him as his movie stands third among the Deepavali releases.

Vallavan - Nallavan dhan but Villanum kooda.

VARALAARU



VARALAARU- renamed from the old title of GOD FATHER with lot of difficulties released on Deepavali day and is believed to be the number one in collection point of view. The picture has lot of kolaru in logic, story and many more. But it did one good thing to hero AJIT KUMAR that is what he lost in few of his earlier releases have been completely repaired and he got his old place as hero and got the appreciation of none other than the Super Star Rajini for his three varieties of action in one film.

Shall we have a round up of the story first? The story takes off with Shivashankar (Ajit), a millionaire with a debonair son Vishnu (Ajit). The former is confined to a wheel-chair, the latter is larkie youngster enjoying the pleasures the world has to offer. While on a visit to a village, he falls for the charm of Divya (Asin). But when he is about to get married to Divya, he acts crankily and shows lunatic tendencies (he even tries to bump off his father).

Why? Well, it is all the handiwork of Jeeva (Ajit). He is also the son of Shivashankar.

Pray why is he after his dad's blood? Well, that is the surprise (?) as it about an incident

involving his mother (Kanika) and his father.

Ajit kumar no doubt has done a wonderful job. As a father in wheel chair he punishes his son is a good scene and there was acting scope for both the roles. When the mysterious second son doing all mischieves are also nicely picturised. We can appreciate ajit for his good performance. But ladies side the picture is weak. Only Kanika, the new face and sun TV's Thangavettai pugazh dance heroine has some good chances and she has passed the very first test. She may be likely to be seen in future films too as her Tamil is good. Asin, another heroine just filled the role. Ajit's role as dancer is the highlight and so far no Director or story writer touched such a character. Ramesh kanna comedy is ok. Music by A.R.Rahman is good in two songs. Ditractor K.S.Ravikumar also seen in one scene as usual.

To sum up it is all in all Ajit movie and may get him few more good films. But will it make any history?- Very doubtful.

Bollywood-Clooney



George Clooney is quite impressed with Hindi film music and is considering signing up for a Bollywood movie to improve the status of Indian cinema in the US. Clooney praises the recent advances in the genre and says he would love to broaden his acting horizons by appearing in a high-profile musical set in India, reports *hollywood.com*. He says: 'I'd love to. There are some filmmakers whose films when you see (them) you say, 'That could be an interesting story to tell.' I was watching a film the other day and the music was just amazing. It's become such a huge industry.' "There is a small market in the States as of now, but it will be fun if it catches on because it is such a positive way of looking at filmmaking and I really love that. I truly think it's fun," Clooney added.

Hrithik-Abhishek



Hrithik Roshan is elated at the world over praise for his performance as the suave Aryan in *Dhoom 2*. "The thing is, I've never played someone as cool as Aryan before. That's what people like so much, I guess. It's too early to gauge the film's impact. The one thing that Hrithik is gung-ho about is actor Abhishek Bachchan. 'I'm not saying this for effect. But Abhishek really inspires me. He has the potential to be one of our truly great actors. In fact we've made a pact. Abhishek and I will do one film together every two years. You've no idea how much fun Abhishek, Uday and I had doing *Dhoom 2*. There was never any one upmanship between Abhishek and me. We were constantly giving each other inputs to better our scenes together," said the actor. And now Hrithik is looking forward to the world tour with the two Bachchans in mid-2007. For now, Hrithik seems to be looking at *Dhoom 2* as the present tense and *Jodha-Akbar...* as the future perfect. "I never knew a costume drama could be so tiring! We've shot a battle sequence and I've been oblivious to the current world. Now I feel I'm back into the land of the living. Doing *Jodha-Akbar...* is like entering a totally different world. I feel I'm getting to know things about myself as an actor that I hadn't known before," said Hrithik.

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TidBitz

By: Anand. J



Prithvi

After making his debut in his father's direction, Prithvi (son of Pandiarajan) has commenced his next film. His next movie has been titled Machchan and it features a newcomer opposite him. Being directed by Gemini Raghava, the movie went to floors recently. Prithvi is thrilled to act in outsider's direction. 'Doing a movie for my father gave me enough liberties. At the same time, helped me to learn a lot about acting. Now, I am confident and brimming with joy to be part of Machchan', says Prithvi. According to Gemini Raghava, 'Plans are on to complete the movie in single schedule and release it at the earliest'.



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An enchanting musical evening with “Kalaimamani” O.S. Arun!

By: Chelvi

Before I begin to share my views of the program conducted by “Isaiyaramam” On the 19th of November, should you know that the purpose of the musical concerts “Isaikkethu ellai” is to bring the “rasikas” closer to the classical world of music by presenting more of simplified songs, in understandable language, Tamil, with as much classical touch as possible. The past fourteen “Isaikkethu ellai” programs have proven that “Isaiyaramam” is gradually achieving its goal.

mannerisms. He was very happy to be performing and made it clear many times through out the performance that how inspired he was not just to sing but sing happily. I think Mr.Sornalingam’s ambition for starting such a program, to explain carnatic music in an easy and friendly manner had been fulfilled by Arun’s audience-friendly performance. It is one of the most important aspects that should be adopted by the artists who perform at “Isaikkethu ellai”. Arun has set a very good example for the young, upcoming



For the very first time, the musical show “Isaikkethu ellai” was staged by a South Indian artist, “Kalaimamani” O.S.Arun. O.S.Arun is one of the foremost vocalists in South India. Coming from a famous musical heritage, O.S.Arun has blossomed into a mature artist whose very own style of blending the Carnatic and Hindustani music, would bound to pull the attention of any audience.

Since Arun has released a Tamil Gazal album “Muthal Paarvaiyil”, with the well-known musician P.B.Srinivas, “Isaikkethu ellai”’s concept was not very new for Arun. He started the show with the theme of “Isaikkethu ellai” and it was enough for the audience to get into the mode for the evening. The first song was “Nilavum Vanum” of raga Hindolam. Hindolam is one of my favorites and Arun brought out the full beauty of Hindolam with his singing. Every single song he performed that evening was full of life and gave the utmost enjoyment to the audience. Whether it is the beautifully written lyrics or the perfectly composed music, it is undeniable that Arun’s performance brought it out to its best.

Arun took Kalyani as the main raga for the evening and the subtleties and nuances of the raga was brought about with dexterity. Every song was dipped in beauty and draped in sophistication while maintaining elegant simplicity. His ornamentations were not overdone. He proved himself as an elegant singer with delicate touch. Arun was clever in not only bringing out the beauty of the songs but also in making the audience enjoy the beauty as well. I am sure that audience not only admired his singing but also his

singers. Those who were present that evening, are very fortunate.

A singer’s performance cannot be successful without the suitable accompaniments. In Arun’s show it was explicit. Violin “Melakkaviri” K.Thyagarajan’s performance left no doubt to the audience of his in-depth knowledge of the art. Mridangam A.V.Manikandan was soft when required and forceful when showcasing his talent. Tabla A.Kirankumar proved his expertise in various ways. The chemistry between the Tablist and Mridangist was obvious and their performance was a delightful treat to the audience. Surendar Chandralingam on Morsing is a young talent and seems to be well on his way to establishing a name for himself. Octopad Raghavan also did a wonderful job. The session between the percussionists, was very interesting. As the pace kept increasing listeners were enthralled and hypnotized by the unique experience. Iyan Collins on Bass guitar did a good job on his part. Even though Raju Raghavan on Sitar played excellently, the microphone did not carry the sound well enough. Last but not least, Fayaz Zavahir on Keyboard did an amazing job. He once again has proven his immense talent.

On the whole, O.S.Arun’s show is a beautiful example of how music would draw the audience closer to the artist when the performance is enjoyed by the artist himself. He has much to give to himself, to music and to the world. We have tasted only a minute portion of his immense talent and still are eagerly awaiting for the full flavor!!!



O.S. Arun interacts with youngsters

By: Vithya

Isaikkethu Ellai was born out of the desire to bring classical music to the ordinary person; to open the ears of someone with no prior exposure or understanding of its nuances. It is meant to help you cross over the high fence and into the wealth of beauty and art that has developed into carnatic music over the past few centuries.

However, it also applies to people like me. I am a student of carnatic music for the past 15 years. I can grasp its concepts, point out ragas and understand the theory but have a hard time still appreciating the music. As far as I was concerned carnatic music was too technically laden with not enough soul. I have been to about 60 carnatic concerts and my soul has never been captured for more than 3 minutes.

The last concert run my Isaiyaramam featured South Indian O.S. Arun. He is an acclaimed artist who is well versed in both Hindustani (North Indian classical music) and Carnatic (South Indian classical music). He has also recorded several tamil ghazals combining the Hindustani and Carnatic styles in his performance.

Armed with his skill and experience, he started off the performance with Isaikkethu Ellai’s theme song. Already his incredibly intricate nuances and confidence took presence on the stage. He followed this by “Nilavum Vanum” in raga Hindolam. Although Hindolam is considered a simple raga, his manipulations and delivery were anything but simple. He took hold of the song, he embodied the raga and brought you in. Already he had beat the record of 3 minutes for my

attention span.

Throughout the course of the evening he truly entertained us. Not only with his singing, but with the undulations of his arms which mimicked his voice. His hair would rise and fall violently with the shake of his head, and when he was soothingly singing, so too would his body gently rock. You could see the music in his every movement.

It wasn’t only his accompanying motions that were mesmerizing and entertaining. So too were his explanations and text that he offered in between songs, and indeed sometimes during a verse so that the audience was up to speed in what he was doing. He clearly demonstrated phrases from ragas so that the audience could identify with them. He also explained the lyrics, gave historical context, and even did a demonstration of the navarasa bhavam (the 9 main emotions). He provided the most technical Isaiyaramam concert to date. However, it was the furthest thing from being dull.

In the midst of this concert, he sang one purely classical song, along with a long, elaborate raga. To me, although I was opening my heart and accepting this path to carnatic music it was perhaps too much. That being said, perhaps the mandate of Isaiyaramam shouldn’t be to build a bridge to carnatic music. Rather, it should be to carve out a new form of music; one that can be appreciated by ordinary people and classical lovers alike. Finally, we’ll have common ground.



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Thiruvembavai

By Kumar Punithavel

Thiruvembavai is a festival celebrated by unmarried females to invoke the blessings of Lord Shiva. The festival is said to procure good partners for the unmarried women and also prosperity to their country. This festival is also known as "Pavai Nonpu" meaning penance of damsels.

Thiruvembavai is a liturgy of twenty verses composed by a canonized saint of the Saiva religion- Manickavasagar. During the Lunar month of Markali (December/ January) in all parts of the country where Tamils live, every devout Hindu, man and women, young and old will group themselves and go to the nearest temple in the village or town to offer prayers and sing the song Thiruvembavai. When the verses are sung in the temple, other devotees join in the singing of the hymns in soft and subdued voices. Every verse is followed by short ritual to the chiming of bells, beating of drums, the blowing of conch shells, and cries of "Arohara!" The word 'Aro' is the shortened version of the word 'arogam' which means blissful and 'Hara' is another name for Lord Siva. Hence 'Arohara' means 'blissful Siva'. The language and music of the songs fills one's soul and mind with awe and religious emotion. The existence of the physical body is entirely forgotten for the moment and one is conscious only of the existence of the mind and soul.

"Thiruvembavai" is said to be composed by St. Manickavasagar to be sung by young damsels during the early mornings while going to the temple of Lord Shiva in Annamalai - a holy place of worship from ancient times. This penance as mentioned earlier is called "Pavai Nonpu". This festival is performed in honor of Lord Shiva and his consort the Goddess Shakthi in the Tamil month of Markali between the second half of December and the first half of January. The verses are in the form of an address by one lady to her companion and vice versa. Traditionally

the ladies of the village irrespective of age and caste rise before dawn and walk through streets rousing their friends from door to door to proceed to bathe in the holy tank in the temple. This is done for ten continuous days.

It is believed that a year on earth is equivalent to one day among the celestials! The month of Markali thus becomes the awakening of the celestial world from long a slumber. It is the dawn of a new way of life. A revolution of our hearts and minds towards a better way of life, in which religious and noble ideals play a prominent part in the triumph of mind over matter or good over evil. It is the dawn of a new creation and of secular evolution. Now this creation is the work of Sakthi, the manifested energy of Shiva, the consort of Shiva, who is the author, not of life indeed, but of the whole phenomenal system in which and by which life exerts its energies and achieves its destinies.

The hymns themselves depicting the scenes where ladies go from door to door in their neighborhood speak of the great gift and command of the Tamil Language possessed by the saint. It would be appropriate to quote one or two lines of the hymns as samples. Some maidens upon getting up from their beds before dawn go to their friends' houses in the neighborhood, find their friends still asleep and thus exhort them as follows;

"Oh Lady of the large bright eye!-is thine ear dull

That it perceives not sound of praise that hails

The great God's cinctured feet?"....



Thiunnamalai Temple where Thiruvembavai was sung

Seeing the dame in slumber the hymn continues

"She hears the strain resound

Through all the street, yet in forgetful sleep

On her flower-couch she muttering turns!-

See, here she nothing noting lies! Why thus why thus?

Doth this our friend beseem? - our ladies fair arise!"

Half way though the song the saint mentions how one by singing these hymns one could see the one who cannot be seen by even Mal and Ayan,

"The 'Mount' that Mal knew not, and Ayan saw not, - we

Can know; so Thou dost utter falsities,

Oh guileful one, whose moat with milk and honey flows,

Open thy door!

The saint implores the mighty God for not waking up in the following words,

"Like wax before the fire

Melting- 'my own, my king, Ambrosia,'

we all

Have sung! Hear thou! Apart from us yet thou sleep?

Dost thou yet speechless lie, like the hard hearted silly ones?

What grace in thy sleep?

A very solemn atmosphere is created by the solemnity of the songs and rituals, time stands still and one feels the presence of the deity himself. The devotees pay homage by lighting camphor and joss sticks.

The language used in the songs by the poet is so majestic that one becomes aware of the existence of one's soul and the eternity of it. He feels the evanescence and vanity of mundane existence with its moods and changes. As a result he longs for higher and better existence. Perhaps every year you all can wake up early in the morning and sing these songs with your children. This year the Thiruvembavai festival will be celebrated starting from the twenty fifth of December the Christmas day and will last for ten days as usual.

"Karthigai" is a month of purity and devotion. Hindu devotees in Sri Lanka celebrated the festival of "Karthigai Deepam" in the temples and houses.



The earthen lamps are lit in the shrine room of a house.

The lamps are first lit in the shrine room of the house, and moved to other places in the house

The lighting of a large number of lamps has been a very ancient observance

Month of purity and devotion

By Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

There is a story linked between "Karthigai" and lamps according to religious references. Brahma- The Creator, and Vishnu- The Preserver had a dispute between them as to who was greater, and who was the supreme. The Lord Shiva wanted to teach them the truth. He appeared before them in a form of huge column of fire.

Both of them referred their quarrel to Lord Shiva. He told them that he who could discover the crown of the light or its foot first might be considered as the superior. Accordingly Brahma took the form of a swan and flew up in an attempt to find the crown of the Light, while Vishnu

took the form of a boar (Varaha) and began to dig down to find the foot of the Light. Neither of them succeeded. The knowledge dawned upon them that the Light was superior to both of them.

The Karthigai Deepam is celebrated to bring out this great truth that the supreme God is far beyond the Creator and the Preserver. Brahma and Vishnu thereupon prayed to the column of Light.

In the 'Kalavazhi Narpadu', which dates back to the third Sangam period (after 1,000 BC) the poet says, "In the battle the blood oozing out from the dead soldiers' bodies is like the red coloured flame of the lamps lit during Karthigai Deepam festival".

Tolkappiyam, the oldest available work dating back to 2,000 or 2,500 B C, has concise verse form rules for Tamil grammar. In one of the formulae, Tolkapiyar uses the phrase "like the lamp's flame pointing upwards".



Karthigai Deepam is the oldest festival, which is celebrated in South India, and Sri Lanka. It falls on full moon day. It's also called as "Vilakeedu" among the Hindus in Sri Lanka

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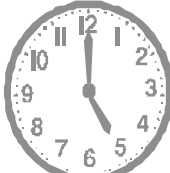
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ALWAYS  ON TIME!

For unto you are born this day
in the city of David a saviour,
who is Christ the Lord

And this shall be sign unto
you .Ye shall find the babe
wrapped in swaddling clothes,
lying in a manger

LUKE 2: 11-12

We are in the midst of Christmas, a festive period concerning the birth of a child that altered the courses of history of mankind, the arrival of angels, three wise men –**Gasper, Melchior** and **Balthazar**- who came from the east to Jerusalem and the star of Bethlehem that guided them to the place of birth of Jesus, the son of God. No other holiday boast of such a wealth of traditions and customs.

Christmas, the most widely celebrated festival in the world brings joy, hope and light to mankind in the darkest month of the year. The season is marked by an outpouring of good will on the path of making peace and this is also a time of sharing and generosity.

A collection of interesting information relating this global festival that binds a variety of religions and beliefs across the continents is listed below.

1. Origin of the word “Christmas”:

The word Christmas arose from the old English word **Christes Masses**

2. Christmas Star: It is generally accepted that Christ was born during B.C 5-7

It is believed that during this period the planets Jupiter and Saturn were on the same orbit and the galaxy of Pisces approached these planets resulting in a blinding light that shone for a brief period .This could have been the Christmas Star (**Star of Bethlehem**) that guided to the manger where Jesus was born. It was at this time an angel appeared in front of the Shepherds who were guarding their sheep. It was also at this time the first carol was sung by a chorus of angels” *Glory to be god in the highest and peace to his people on Earth*”

Christmas

A historical Review

S Raymond Rajabalan

Another view is that this bright star would have been the comet named **Hailley** that appeared during B.C 11-12 providing a bright glow.

Generally, stars had an important place in the history of Jewish people

Jesus was often referred to as the descendant of Abraham.The birth of Abraham is indicated by a rising star.

According to Old Testament, the galaxy of Pisces, Jupiter and Saturn were associated with the life of prophet Moses

3. Why is Christmas celebrated on Dec 25Th?

The year and date of birth of Christ are uncertain and even the place of birth is open to dispute.

According to the Gospel of Mathew, it is stated that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, during the reign of Emperor Herod, who died in year B.C 4. Based on this and various other information, it is believed that Christ was born in the period B.C 4-5

However, until the 4th century, there was some dispute regarding the actual date of birth of Christ. To settle this conflict, an appeal was made to Pope John 1 by Saint Cyril of Jerusalem in 4th century A.D and as a result it was decided that effective A.D 354 Christmas should be celebrated on Dec 25th.

4 Significance of the colours Red, White and Green

Red: Indicates Charity, Blood and Faith .Out of these three, Blood signifies that throughout the world, mankind is the same.

White: Refers to Purity, Light and Happiness

Green: Symbolizes New Life, Hope

and Nature

5. Santa Claus: In 1809 an American writer Washington Irving wrote in an article titled ‘A History of New York’ describing **Saint Nicholas**, a fourth century Bishop as a chubby and jovial person who used to travel by a sledge pulled by a herd of reindeer.During his life time **S a i n t Nicholas** was said to h a v e performed numerous miraculous deeds and brought gifts to countless needy people.

Based on t h e description o f Washington Irving, in 1822 , Dr.Clement Moore, a professor of Hebrew and Literature at the University of New York wrote a poetry “The night before Christmas “ and read it to his children. In the following year this poem was published in a local magazine Tory Sentinel (New York) on Christmas Day.

In 1863, Thomas Nast , a famous political cartoonist drew a rotund elf dressed in a furry suit and jaunty cap decorated with holly sprigs in a periodical named “Harper’s Weekly”and named the picture as **Santa Claus**.This picture soon became famous across the continents and today Santa in red robes is one of the most recognizable figures in the world. Santa now colours the language and customs of people every where and wherever he appears he radiates the warmth and good cheer that is Christmas.

6. Origin of the name Santa Claus:

The geographical region presently referred to as Turkey was referred to as Asia Minor in the 4th Century .Saint Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra (a city of Demre located on the south coast of Turkey) lived during this period and because of his helping the needy people, his fame spread northwards towards medieval Europe.

In Holland (present day Netherlands), the name of Saint Nicholas was referred to as

“Sinterklass” and in this country Dec 6th

The central theme of Christmas is: Peace on Earth, Good Will towards men as proclaimed by the angels who announced the birth of infant Jesus on the first Christmas.

is celebrated as a special day of St.Nicholas, the children’s saint.

When a few people from Holland (present day Netherlands) arrived on Christmas day in Manhattan in United States, these Dutch settlers named Saint Nicholas as their patron saint and the first church built by them was

dedicated after the saint. As more colonists from Holland began to arrive, they brought their Christmas customs along with them. When British forces gained control of New York in the 17th century, the name **Santerklass** was anglicized into **Santa Claus**.

7 .How did Christmas tree became part of Christmas celebrations?

Egyptians celebrated mid winter using palm trees having twelve shoots. The number of shoots indicated the number of the year.

Meanwhile many centuries ago, Romans used to have a lavish mid



winter festival called **Saturnalia** which was held to honour God Saturn, the god of peace and abundance. During this feast held during January, they lighted pine trees with candles. This festival could have been prelude to Christmas trees.

The first Christmas trees were used in Germany in the town of Alsac, then a region of West Germany. Decorating evergreen trees was begun in 1550.When Martin Luther, a religious leader in Germany tied candles to the branches of fir tree. He wanted the children to watch the candles shining through the dark to remind them of the stable in Bethelhem .In Germany Christmas trees were then called Christbaum.

In 1940 , the German born Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria introduced Christmas tree to Britain .Tinsels , garlands, candles and lights were added to these trees as Christmas decorations.In1894 , the prince arranged to have a beautifully decorated tree at Windsor Castle.Since them the Royal family began the practice of taking photographs around the tree each Christmas.A number of people in the country rushed to follow the example set by royals and as a result , the popularity of Christmas trees began to spread throughout the world..

8. Christmas Cards

“Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year”.Millions of people around the world across express this familiar sentiment using a variety of Christmas cards of every imaginable size , shape and colour.Like gifts, these greeting cards are also a token of

friendship and good will. They help to convey the feelings that sometimes are difficult to express.

It is generally believed that the first Christmas Cards were produced by an English businessman Sir Henry Cole.They were designed by Cole’s fiend, an artist named John Calcott Horsley .In 1843 Cole printed 1000 Cards and by 1870 they became popular and now they have become a pleasant part of Christmas festivities.

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Some extracts from the Message are given below:

"At the beginning of the new year, I wish to extend prayerful good wishes for peace to governments, leaders of nations and all men and women of good will"

"As one created in the image of God, each individual human being has the dignity of a person; he or she is not just something, but someone, capable of self-knowledge, self-possession, free self-giving and entering into communion with others."

"Likewise, peace is both gift and task. If it is true that peace between individuals and peoples - the ability to live together and to build relationships of justice and solidarity - calls for unflinching commitment on our part, it is also true, and indeed more so, that peace is a gift from God."

"The body of rules for individual action and the reciprocal relationships of persons in accordance with justice and solidarity is inscribed on human consciences, in which the wise plan of God is reflected. ... Peace is thus also a task demanding of everyone a personal response consistent with God's plan. The criterion inspiring this response can only be respect for the 'grammar' written on human hearts by the divine Creator."

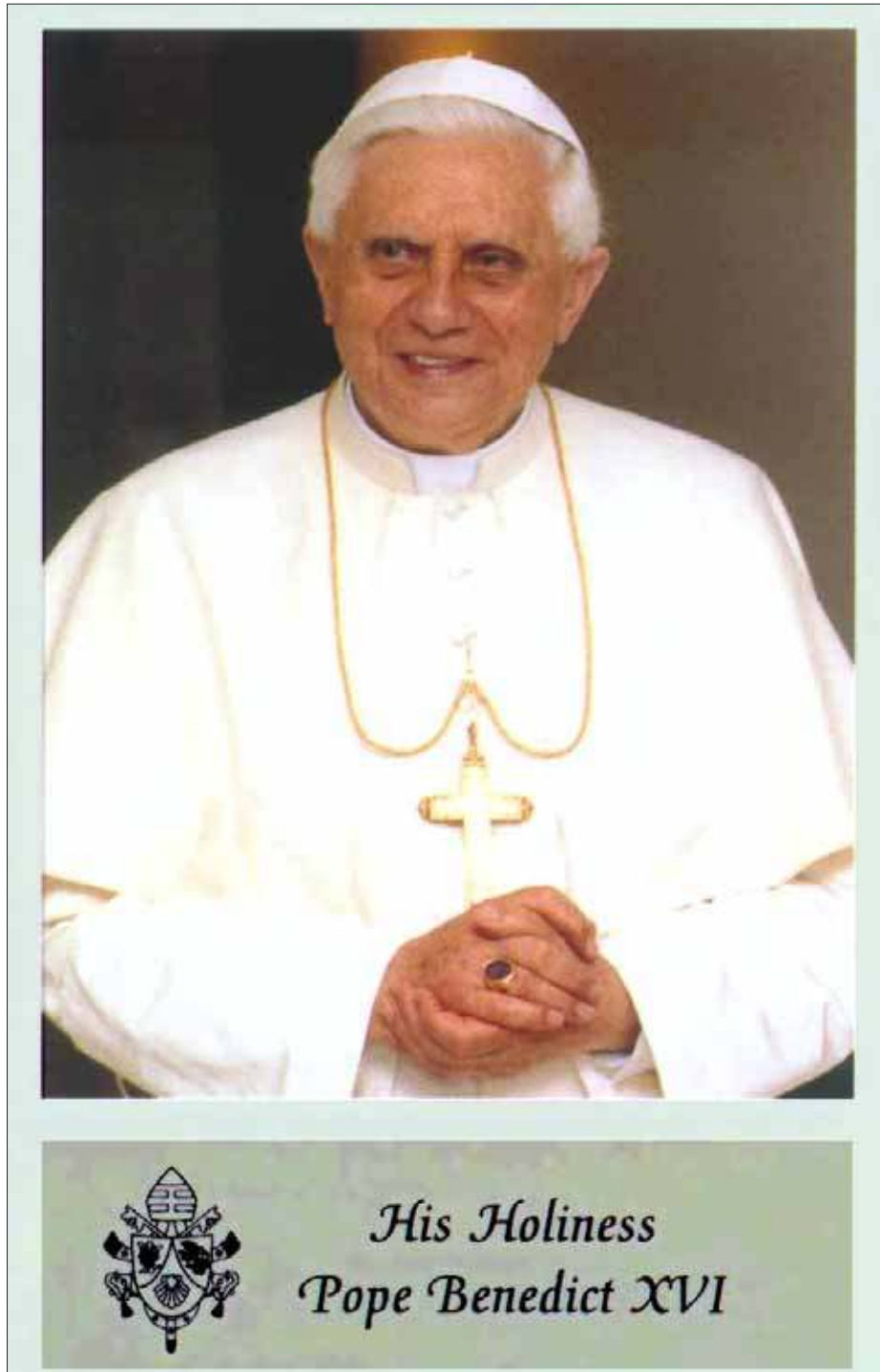
"In particular she promotes and defends respect for the life and the religious freedom of everyone. Respect for the right to life at every stage firmly establishes a principle of decisive importance: life is a gift which is not completely at the disposal of the subject. ... The right to life and to the free expression of personal faith in God is not subject to the power of man."

"As far as the right to life is concerned, we must denounce its widespread violation in our society: alongside the victims of armed conflicts, terrorism and the different forms of violence, there are the silent deaths caused by hunger, abortion, experimentation on human embryos and euthanasia. How can we fail to see in all this an attack on peace? Abortion and embryonic experimentation constitute a direct denial of that attitude of acceptance of others which is indispensable for establishing lasting relationships of peace."

"There are regimes that impose a single religion upon everyone, while secular regimes often lead not so much to

Pope's Message for the World Day of Peace Jan 01, 2007

"The Human Person, the Heart of Peace."



violent persecution as to systematic cultural denigration of religious beliefs. In both instances, a fundamental human right is not being respected, with serious repercussions for peaceful coexistence. This can only promote a mentality and culture that is not conducive to peace."

"Humanity, if it truly desires peace,

must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology. Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence, and vice versa."

"The destruction of the environment, its improper or selfish use, and the violent hoarding of the earth's resources cause grievances, conflicts and wars, precisely because they are the consequences of an inhumane concept of development."

"Today, however, peace is not only threatened by the conflict between reductive visions of man, in other

words, between ideologies. It is also threatened by indifference as to what constitutes man's true nature. ... A 'weak' vision of the person, which would leave room for every conception, even the most bizarre, only apparently favors peace. In reality, it hinders authentic dialogue and opens the way to authoritarian impositions, ultimately leaving the person defenseless and, as a result, easy prey to oppression and violence."

"Were that to happen, the international bodies would end up lacking the necessary authority to carry out their role as defenders of the fundamental rights of the person and of peoples, the chief justification for their very existence and activity."

"The new shape of conflicts, especially since the terrorist threat unleashed completely new forms of violence, demand that the international community reaffirm international humanitarian law, and apply it to all present-day situations of armed conflict, including those not currently provided for by international law."

"Moreover, the scourge of terrorism demands a profound reflection on the ethical limits restricting the use of modern methods of guaranteeing internal security. Increasingly, wars are not declared, especially when they are initiated by terrorist groups determined to attain their ends by any means available. In the face of the disturbing events of recent years, States cannot fail to recognize the need to establish clearer rules to counter effectively the dramatic decline that we are witnessing."

"Another disturbing issue is the desire recently shown by some States to acquire nuclear weapons. This has heightened even more the widespread climate of uncertainty and fear of a possible atomic catastrophe."

"Unfortunately, threatening clouds continue to gather on humanity's horizon. The way to ensure a future of peace for everyone is found not only in international accords for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also in the determined commitment to seek their reduction and definitive dismantling. ... The fate of the whole human family is at stake!"

"Finally, I wish to make an urgent appeal to the People of God: let every Christian be committed to tireless peace-making and strenuous defense of the dignity of the human person and his inalienable rights. ... In Christ we can find the ultimate reason for becoming staunch champions of human dignity and courageous builders of peace."

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It's with feelings of joy, happiness and peace; I wish to write about our emotional feelings that influenced our mind, soul and spirit, within a short period of our visit to the Holy-Land. This trip has been well organized by Mr. Anton Philip, whose special care and guidance encouraged and supported us to enjoy this trip with full of happiness. The Holy-Lands that we visited are namely: Galilee, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Rome. Every event that we saw and enjoyed enlightened us and helped us to recollect the memorable events that took place during the life of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, all the saints and ancient philosophers who dedicated their lives as to increase the faith of the Catholic community and to give life and light to all of us.

About forty of us joined in this pilgrimage. We prepared all the necessary preparations full of happiness and confidence. We started our journey from Toronto to Milan at 5:45 p.m., by (Alitalia) air plane. We reached Milan airport on the 20th November at 7:25 a.m. At the Milan airport, Rev Fr. Chawkan Paul SSS joined us, who was our spiritual director as to encourage us in prayer services and meditations. From Milan we proceeded our journey

MY FOOTPRINTS IN HOLY-LAND A Journey in Search

By: Mrs. Lourdes Stanislaus

to Telaviv the Capital of Israel. The bus that was arranged for our trip by Mr. Anton Philip was at the gateway. We all traveled by bus to the Hotel named Maagan Holiday Valley. We stayed at this Hotel for three days. From there we paid visit to the places around Galilee and visited the church at-Gana, where Jesus performed his 1st miracle, changing water into wine. Rev FR. Soughan offered Holy Mass and renewed the marital vows of seven married couples.

Following this we visited the church of Annunciation which was built-up by Franciscan Friars in 1920. We visited the St Joseph church, His work place (carpentry work), the caves where they lived and the well used by them. (Joseph's Family). The ravel guide Mr. Peppi gave us all about the historical in formations and details of the whole town. The visits of these sacred places really changed our mind and increased our faith in every way. The places that we visited are namely:

1. The church of Multiplication of Loaves. Holy Mass offered in this church.
2. Mount Sermon, where Jesus gathered the Apostles and a multitude of people were with him.
3. The place, where Jesus appointed St. Peter as the rock to build up the Catholic Community.

4. The Place of

Jesus Transfiguration.

5. The graves of the Jewish people, the burial place of St Mary Magdalene.

6. The place where Jesus had his last supper with his disciples.

Museum, there we saw the boat used by Jesus and his disciples.

We all enjoyed a boat ride for an hour in the Sea of Galilee, the sea that Jesus sailed with his disciples. In the Jordan River we renewed our Baptismal vows. This ceremony has been conducted by Rev Fr. Soughan. We saw the place where Jesus fasted for forty days and nights.

The Red Sea has the power of healing, so with firm hope and faith, we all bathed in the sea and refreshed ourselves and tasted Peter's fish at the Restaurant.

Jerusalem is the city of God. The main temple is at Jerusalem, we visited the place where Mary visited Elizabeth.

David's tomb, memorable statues and the synagogues. We visited the place where Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, the olive mount and the church of Assenion. In Gethsemane we meditated, Jesus passions, sufferings, crucifixion and death. While we walking along the path used by Jesus. We also participated in the Holy Mass service.

In Bethlehem, we saw the manger where Jesus was born, the cradle used by Jesus. The caves used by the Shepherds.

In Rome, we visited St Peter's church. St Peter's tomb Vatican, Rome was a big territory during the time of Jesus.

Coliseum, symbols of Greeks, Greeks, museum, Popes Mona slay. The special sanctuary where pope offer Holy Mass. The churches were built in Mosaic stones, and the craft works were so attractive. Rev. Fr. Clarence gave us a brief explanation of the places around Vatican, Basilica and Rome.

In visiting these places, we really feel that we had been touched with new feeling as to changing our life and to light our faith with god's love and faith. The holy land visit is of infinite value to all of us. Let us thank god for the golden opportunity offered to us, in visiting all these places. We thank our chief organizer Anton Philip for the great care and support given to us to make this trip a successful and valuable one to all of us. Truly we feel that everyone should use this opportunity in the upcoming year to enlighten their spiritual life.

May God Bless Us All!



58 People renewing their baptismal vows in Jordan River



41 Pilgrims sailing at the Sea of Galilee

'Bharathi, if alive, would have rooted for Tamils'

If national poet Subramanya Bharathi were alive today, he would have raised his voice in support of Sri Lankan Tamils', general secretary of Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) Vaiko has said.

Stating this at a function to mark the 125th birth anniversary of Bharathi on Dec 11th, Vaiko showered praise on the poet and recalled his love for Tamil, patriotic songs, fearless writing in support of freedom movement and support to women's liberation.

Releasing a Tamil book Karisal Kattin Kavithaisolai Bharathi, the MDMK supremo said, 'Bharathi never failed to raise his concern for Tamils living in other parts of the world, while writing in support of freedom movement'. He noted that the poet called for an armed struggle, too. In fact, he supported the Russian Revolution and wrote in support of it in an Indian magazine. The poet wanted nationalists to follow the footsteps of the revolutionaries by setting up secret association to carry out armed rebellion to ouster the Britishers.

MDMK headquarters secretary K S Radhakrishnan, who edited the released book, said Bharathi always leaned towards radicals led by Tilak in

Congress and wrote articles and editorials in support of militant struggles against the colonial rulers.

Veteran Parliamentarian Era Sezhiyan said revolutionary poet Bharathidasan, who admired Bharathi and considered him as his mentor, has said many a times that no one had spoken against casteism and religious practices like Bharathiar did.

Descendants of Bharathi including his grand daughter Vijaya Bharathi were honoured at the function. Film actor Sivakumar received first copy of the book. Former bureaucrat B S Raghavan and Tamil scholar Bharathi Baskar also spoke.

[newstodaynet.com]



MDMK supremo Vaiko releasing a Tamil book 'Karisal Kattin Kavithaisolai Bharathi'. Actor Sivakumar is seen receiving the first copy.

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The information will help prepare you for the challenges associated with quitting smoking. Even though it seems there is no easy way to stop smoking, yet studies have shown that by using "quit smoking products you may double your chances of quitting."

Quit smoking aids can also help you manage your cravings while you quit smoking. Quitting tobacco is not easy, in fact it is quite hard, but it can be done, for every smoker out there, there is a non-smoker who has successfully been able to quit smoking.

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The Tamil community of Waterloo Region participated in the annual Operation Christmas Child program on the 21st of November in Kitchener. A large processing Center is opened during the Christmas season with the help of 3000 community volunteers. They wrap shoe boxes filled with gifts and cash, recheck for items that are prohibited for the use of children, culturally sensitive materials etc. The project is carried over a period of 3 weeks. The gifts are flown to developing countries like Sri Lanka, India, Afghanistan and South America. The gifts are donated by school children and individuals from southern part of Ontario to global children.

The members of the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo region have been volunteering their services over the past 5 years. The association also help local Soup Kitchen for Homeless and during Tsunami raised \$120,000 for the victims in Sri Lanka and South India.



TAMIL CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF WATERLOO REGION
 (Kitchener - Waterloo - Cambridge - Guelph)

6th annual

Christmas and New Year Celebration

Saturday, December 30th 6.00pm

Tamil Carol Service, Nativity Play, Western Music, Speech etc. Raffel Draw & Santa Claus

Potluck Dinner to follow

Christ Lutheran Hall,

445 Anndale Road, Waterloo, ON

Free Parking

Meet the community and Enjoy the New Year

8th Annual Christmas Party hosted by Scarborough Rangers Soccer Club

on
Saturday December 16th, 2006
at 6:00 PM

Father Michael McGiveney Catholic School Auditorium

Photos By: Gana Arumugam



President Anton Sandrasagra, Mrs. Sandrasagra, seated with Scarborough Soccer Association President and District Secretary



Scarborough Rangers Soccer Club committee being recognized



District Registrar Sue Prohaska, President Laura Civik of Scarborough Soccer Association, Mrs. Sandrasagra, and Srimal Abeyewardena, Editor Sri Lanka Reporter



President Anton Sandrasagra presenting a plaque to one of the sponsor Yaso Sinnadurai, Barrister & Solicitor



One of the dance performance to entertain the participants



Aathavan Senthilathan and Lucsiga Shanmugadasanthe MCs for the entire event



Santa Claus did not forget to bring gifts to handover to all the Children at the Party



A Section of the Audience watching the performances at the Christmas party



President Anton Sandrasagra presenting a plaque to the President of Scarborough Soccer Association Laura Civik

A Memorial Service held in Toronto for MP, Nadaraja Raviraj

A simple private Memorial Service was organized by the past students and colleagues of St.Johns College , Jaffna , and held on Sunday, December 10th at the Burrows Community Hall.

It was attended by many well-wishers mainly past students of St.Johns College . There were prayers, speeches about how Raviraj served the community fearlessly in difficult situations from the troubled areas. How he served as Mayor for Jaffna , Member of Parliament for Jaffna and spoke in and out of Parliament, attended all sections of protest marches

and spoke in English, Sinhala and Tamil.

He was well liked by all. He visited Canada about 4 years ago and briefed at meetings attended by Tamil Canadian Community.

A petition was signed by the attendees and sent to Hon. Peter MacKay MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada , drawing attention to the tragic demise of N.Raviraj.

Contributions were made by the attendees to send to the families of Raviraj and his bodyguard Luxman Lokuwelage who was also killed in the incident.



St. Johns College Past students association President Rajkumar Parameswaran reading the petition sent to Hon. Peter MacKay



Past students and classmates Anton Balarajah and Thushyanthan preparing for the service

A Poem written by a student from Bishop's Colledge is given below

For Raviraj: Away with tit-for-tat

By M.S.S. Fernandopulle
[Student of Bishop's College, GCE A/ L - Year 1]

*A lawyer by profession
he was wise and brave
To speak up the truth
in every way
he did crave.
The attainment of
true deep peace was all he cared
So on he went
with ideas with all well shared.
But certain savage humans
do not understand
The ways of a gent
who would always outstand.
So on they went and took his life
Casting the ugly weapon on his crown
Time was clear day light,
place was Manning Town
That this crime took him
in prime of his life.*

*Now whoever may come here and go
Whatever is said to make grief go
It is of not much real use today
Because he is no more anyway.*

*But the Omnipotent above
sees and knows
Each act that will be,
that is and that which was.
Courage love and perseverance
He bestows
Of kith and kin of the great leader
he was.*

*Only deep love can save
misguided men
Let overwhelming love
bring these brethren
To the path of peace
that we all need much
Away with tit-for-tat
doing much for much.*



Freelance Journalist DBS Jeyaraj paying his tribute



Pon Ganeshalingam past student of St. Johns college starting the service with prayers



Former classmate and hostelmate Ragunathan from St. John's College



Former Teacher of St. Johns College Thambiah Thavarasalingam in his respectful message



St. Johns College Past student & classmate Hudson Solomons delivering Vote of thanks

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National Award for Small Business Excellence from Dell and RBC

Big Idea for Parents with Small Children earns National Award for Small Business Excellence from Dell and RBC

Manitoba's Baby Sherpa Named Winner of 2006 Dell and RBC Small Business Excellence Award

Dell Canada and RBC Royal Bank today announced that Stony Mountain, Manitoba's Baby Sherpa, maker of the Baby Sherpa Diaper Bag, is the winner of the 2006 Dell and RBC Small Business Excellence Award.

The Baby Sherpa Diaper Bag is an ergonomically designed combination diaper/gear backpack, designed to fit the needs of multitasking parents on the go. Since the company introduced it four years ago, the bag has been sold around the globe with only minimal retail presence, instead utilizing online sales channels to reach customers.

"We couldn't run our business without technology," said Heather Campbell-Dewar, CEO, Baby Sherpa. "If there's a technology that we aren't using, it's because we can't afford it or it doesn't apply to our business. Our current solutions allow us to receive and ship customer orders within 24 hours. As a small business, operating primarily online, we're extremely proud that we're able to do that for our customers around the world."

The Dell and RBC Small Business Excellence Award challenged entrants to illustrate how they use information technology to foster a competitive advantage and deliver superior customer experience. While Baby

Sherpa is based out of rural Manitoba, much of the design, production and distribution of the Baby Sherpa Diaper Bag is handled remotely. The company relies on technology to collaborate, as well as to serve their customers - customers who can count on turnaround in less than a day.

As the winner of the Dell and RBC Small Business Excellence Award, Baby Sherpa will receive \$20,000 in technology and up to \$5,000 in professional services from Dell - rewards that will go a long way to help the company grow their business. They will also receive a "Day with Dell" program with Dell executives, including company founder and Chairman Michael Dell, to share best business practices.

With the grand prize from the Dell and RBC Small Business Excellence Award, the company will be able to implement the additional tools needed to help Baby Sherpa move new models of the Sherpa Bag from the research phase into the market.

"It's inspiring to see so many entrepreneurs combine creative energy, business focus, and smart IT use to achieve their dreams," said Greg Davis, president of Dell Canada. "Baby Sherpa exemplifies the drive, innovation and customer focus that helped Dell grow from its small-business roots over 20 years ago."

"This award was introduced to support and recognize small business entrepreneurs who have taken a creative and ambitious approach to incorporating technology into their

business," said Kris Depencier, national manager, Small Business, RBC Royal Bank. "We are delighted to be a part of this program with Dell, and we wish Baby Sherpa continued success."

Dell and RBC also recognized two runners-up to the contest: Benner Funeral Services of Fort Erie, Ontario

and Periwinkle Flower of Toronto, Ontario. Each will receive a Dell INSPIRON(TM) notebook. With hundreds of applications received from across the country, the annual Dell and RBC Small Business Excellence Award continues to grow.

To learn more about the winners and the Dell and RBC Small Business Excellence Award, please visit: www.dell.ca/sbcontest.

[CNW - Press Release]

Farewell and Welcoming RVPs

Chris Lobbezoo, Regional Vice President of RBC was transferred to a new Region, Toronto North after serving for 3 years at Toronto East. A farewell was organized on Thursday, Dec 14th and was attended by Lawyers, Branch Managers, Account Managers, Senior Mortgage Managers, Community Organization & Business Association Leaders, Real Estate and RBC Insurance Broker Owners and Managers. Ms. Lisa Gallacher the new Regional Vice President for Toronto East was welcomed at this event.



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Arajen Beauty Center presents, Miss Tamil Toronto Queen of Angels 2006

Arajen Beauty Centre's Sasi & Naren's second annual beauty pageant was held on Sunday Nov 19th 2006 at the Celebrations Banquet Hall in Toronto. Totally nine beautiful young women participated in the race for the crown. Among them the following were announced finalists for year 2006 by the judges. They were **NIRAJA ARULANANTHAM** (winner), **SHARMINI EMMANUEL** as 1st runner up and **RUTH KANGASABAI** as 2nd runner up. Leading lawyer from the community Meleni David graced the colourful and packed house occasion as the chief guest.



Finalists: [L-R: Ruth Kanagasabai (2nd runner up), Niraja Arulanantham (Winner), Sharmini Emmanuel (1st runner up)]



2006 Winner
NIRAJA ARULANANTHAM



2005 Queen Melani Navamanikkam



Chief Guest Meleni David (Lawyer)



Beauty Pageant Organizers (ARAJEN BEAUTY CENTRE) with the finalists

Photos by: Gnane Gnanendran

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The New Dot-Economy

By: Shiyam Loganathan

A bubble which burst a half a decade ago is booming again. A wave of internet savvy entrepreneurs are cashing in on a few new ideas, and a few old ones too. These individuals are taking advantage of the fact that the costs to start-up and run an internet company have been significantly reduced. Technological advances in computer chips, high-speed internet access, and software have given the means to business-minded individuals to enter the internet market without that "great innovative idea" which once was essential to go up against industry giants like Microsoft and Cisco. Companies like Vyatta, are producing their product at such a low cost they can sell it at one third the price of which Internet hub giant Cisco Systems is selling. This means the consumers are now getting greater variety and lower costs. Great to have some viable competition in the internet sector finally. Here below is the article appeared in Washington Post.

Plummeting Costs Give Rise to a Wave of Internet Entrepreneurs

By Alan Spress
Washington Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, December 5, 2006; D01

SAN MATEO, Calif. -- Allan Leinwand's start-up, Vyatta, sells networking products for one-third the price of those sold by his former employer, [Cisco Systems](#).

In the same office park, serial entrepreneur Munjal Shah recently launched an Internet search engine for images, a gamble that would have been prohibitively pricey just a few years ago.

Half a mile away, tiny Zimbra is going head to head with mighty [Microsoft](#) by peddling cheap e-mail programs to businesses.

Across Silicon Valley and beyond, young companies are capitalizing on a freefall in technology costs to enter markets considered too expensive to brave as recently as two years ago. The resulting boom in new Web sites has been widely chronicled, but the economics making it possible have stayed mostly out of sight.

Computer costs have been falling inexorably for decades, driven down by steady improvements in the tiny chips that serve as their brains. But new factors are compounding those gains, unleashing a second wave of Internet start-ups.

Computer chips are being paired in new ways to dramatically expand their abilities. At the same time, the free-software movement born in the 1990s is arming a new generation of entrepreneurs with powerful development tools -- at little or no cost. Other advances have slashed the cost of high-speed Internet access, another key expense for start-ups. Today, a Web site pays one-twentieth of what it did six years ago to reach visitors over its broadband connection.

These cascading cost reductions are transforming every layer of the computer industry, from components inside machines to the arcane innards of the Internet and all the way up to e-mail software and Web applications used by millions of people.

"The threshold for starting a young Internet business has never been lower," said Ram Shriram, a venture capitalist and an original board member of Google.

Shah, who launched the online shopping service Like.com last month, said his company could not have existed

five years ago because it would have cost too much to develop the technology for scanning and analyzing the millions of product images on the Web.

"There are structural reasons this boom is happening," he said.

His firm, Riya, paid about \$50,000 for its software by relying mostly on free, open-source programs for its operating system, Web server and database manager. That compares with the \$4 million Shah spent on software seven years ago when he started his first online company, which made software for managing eBay auctions.

Shah said the cost of the servers powering his new Web service is one-tenth of what it would have been a few years ago, a reduction made possible by the new ways computer chips are harnessed to work together. And instead of paying for advertising, Shah looks to the free buzz of the Internet to attract customers.

Like.com is exploring a new idea -- using visual recognition software to automatically find images on the Web that resemble each other. Other start-ups are pursuing older ideas using cheaper technology, exposing such industry giants as Microsoft, Cisco, SAP and Oracle to unprecedented competition.

In the early years of the Internet boom, established companies came to fear the rise of rivals with new ideas, at times just a couple of young engineers working out of a dorm room or garage. Now, a new idea is no longer essential, because the massive cost reductions mean start-ups can enter the marketplace simply by offering cheaper wares.

"When factors of production are in flux, they require new mind-sets," said Robert Metcalfe, general manager of Polaris Venture Partners and an inventor of the Ethernet networking technology. "That's an opportunity for new companies who get it. It doesn't necessarily mean they win and that big companies squander the opportunity. But it happens."

The three friends who founded Zimbra in 2003 during brainstorming sessions in a California coffeehouse saw the potential of using free software tools.

They used this software, developed by volunteers and available on the Web, to create Zimbra's e-mail product and began selling it in February for barely two-thirds of what Microsoft charges. Since then, Zimbra's software has reached more than 4 million paid e-mail accounts at more than 1,000 businesses and organizations, including universities and H&R Block.

Zimbra has raised about \$30.5 million in venture capital, including \$14.5 million earlier this year. But its costs have remained so low that it has not spent any of the \$14.5 million -- and still has money left over from previous investment rounds, said chief executive Satish Dharmaraj.

Microsoft remains the heavyweight of business e-mail, with 140 million users. But some analysts think the shifting economics eventually could pose a problem for Microsoft and other industry leaders. For one thing, incumbents with profitable businesses face obstacles to exploiting lower-cost technologies. Most large software makers, for example, sell programs

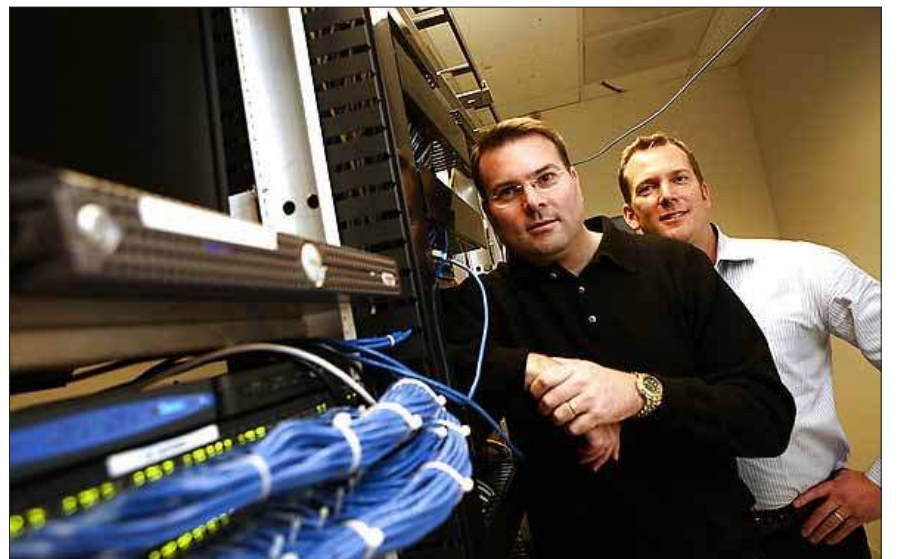
machines, such as those sold by Dell, to support routing, and lowered software costs by using free development tools.

As a result, Vyatta's customers can pay \$1,000 for a Dell computer and another \$500 for an annual subscription to Vyatta software -- a sharp discount off the prevailing router price of about \$4,500.

While Cisco's routers still dominate the market, the company has not ignored the growing demand for cheaper products.

Three years ago, as more people set up computer networks at home, it bought a 15-year-old company called Linksys that was a leader in low-cost routers and turned it into a division that sells the devices using open-source software and off-the-shelf processors -- not unlike Vyatta. Mike Volpi, a senior vice president at Cisco, estimated that Linksys now commands about half of its market segment.

"We have been challenged by many start-ups in the past and managed to get through," he said, playing down



Dave Roberts, left, and Kelly Herrell are executives at Vyatta, which has slashed the price of computer networking by separating software from hardware. Photo Credit: By Thor Swift For The Washington Post Photo

based on proprietary code. Exploiting free, open-source software to sell cheaper versions could cannibalize their established products and cut profits, provoking resistance from shareholders and employees.

"They're going down a road that has big, deep ruts in it. Getting out of those ruts is very hard," said Forest Baskett, a general partner of New Enterprise Associates, a venture capital firm.

Yet the giants of technology are hardly standing still. Some analysts point to Cisco, in particular, as a company trying to adapt.

For years, Cisco has called itself "the plumber of the Internet" because it makes most of the technology that routes data through local and global networks. Its high-performance devices called routers dominate their industry and bring in nearly \$6 billion in revenue annually. Cisco and its rivals, including [Juniper Networks](#), mostly sell router packages that combine hardware and software into a single product.

But Vyatta, founded two years ago by Leinwand, slashed the cost of routers by selling the software and hardware separately. It exploited computer-chip advances that have allowed cheaper

Vyatta's attack on the market.

Leinwand set up Vyatta two years ago after colleagues at other companies told him they were looking for cheap routing software to run on standard computers.

By the time Vyatta got its first customer, in July, its workforce was still fewer than 20 people. The marketing chief took the first order on a Post-it note.

Among the initial customers was Adify, an online advertising service that tried a Vyatta router in a low-risk part of its operation in July, even though its executives were skeptical of open-source software. The trial went so well that Charles Stewart, Adify's vice president for operations, said he ripped out a strategically located Cisco router in November and replaced it with Vyatta's product.

Kelly Herrell, Vyatta's chief executive, acknowledged that Cisco and Juniper still hold an advantage at the top end of the market, where standard computers cannot yet support the most sophisticated networking needs. But in the middle of the market, standard hardware and Vyatta's software can satisfy the needs of most businesses, he added.

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