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Conservative Government receives one and a half month's wait time to present New Economic Plan for current crisis P.M seeks Opposition advice on Economic Reforms - Will it work?



Michael Ignatieff with Stephan Dion

By Siva Sivapragasam

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative Government have been given a respite with a one and a half month's wait time through a prorogation of Parliament which has saved the Government of a defeat in Parliament by a vote of no confidence by the Opposition parties who have formed a coalition. The Governor General's decision was perhaps a pragmatic approach taken in the light of the current developments.

Meanwhile, Harper's new strategy was to seek Opposition advice for economic reforms to be included in the new Budget which his Government will present in late January when the new Parliament meets. This measure was to take the heat off the Opposition's protests that the Government is not seeking proper economic reforms to meet the current economic crisis in the country.

Stephan Dion has stepped down from the leadership of the Liberal Party and Michael Ignatieff, a former Professor of Harvard is to take over the leadership of the Liberal Party.

Bob Rae, another Liberal and friend of Ignatieff who announced his candidature for the Liberal leadership, has now backed out. The dawn of the New Year will certainly seem some fire-works across the political sky. Whether the Conservative Government will continue, or whether the Coalition would take-over or whether Canadians will have another election (fourth in four years is anybody's guess!

Current economic conditions reveal that Canada is entering a recession. Last month alone, nearly 50,000 lost jobs, house sales fell by 50 % as compared with last year, House prices went down by 6% and auto-sector sales, another vital part of the economy, plummeted down. Who ever runs the Government has to come out with a viable and successful plan to avert an economic disaster.

Bringing down a Government is one thing. Running the Government is another. A mere change of Government without a proper economic plan will not be a solution. It will be like changing pillows for a headache!

A.R. Rahman wins Golden Globe nomination for best original score (music) category



Reaffirming his status as a global artiste, music director A.R Rahman has received a Golden Globe nomination for his music in British director Danny Boyle's uplifting underdog tale "Slumdog Millionaire".

At the Los Angeles Film Critics' Association, A.R. Rahman was presented with the Best Music Award for the sound track of the movie, while Danny Boyle was recognized as the Best Director.

Born in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, A.R. Rahman (42) has won numerous awards for his music composition and was hailed by "Time" magazine as the "Mozart of Madras".

Tamil fans have dubbed him as "Isaipuyal" (Musical storm)

Several films became blockbusters mainly due to Rahman's music.


His filmscores and soundtracks have sold more than 100 million records and 250 million audiocassettes.

Rahman is one of twenty – five all time top –selling recording artistes.

Tamils worldwide are excited by the news and hoping that A.R Rahman would become the first Tamil to get a golden globe and hopefully an Oscar.

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Canada Newsline

CANADIAN IMMIGRANT MAGAZINE AND RBC LAUNCH NATIONAL AWARDS PROGRAM CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS OF IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA Nominations now being accepted for "Top 25 Canadian Immigrants of 2009"

Nominations now being accepted for "Top 25 Canadian Immigrants of 2009"

Canadian Immigrant Magazine, a print and online magazine serving immigrants to Canada, has teamed up with RBC to introduce the first ever national awards program designed to celebrate the achievements of immigrants from coast to coast and from all walks of life. Canadian Immigrant's People's Choice Awards recognizes the "Top 25 Canadian Immigrants of 2009" and seeks to uncover and celebrate the untold stories and remarkable achievements of outstanding Canadian immigrants.

"Canada is a nation built by immigrants, many of whom have distinguished themselves by working to make our country a better place," said Canadian Immigrant publisher Nick Noorani. "In fact, one in five people living in Canada were born in a different country. It's time we recognize and celebrate their achievements."

Nominees would be someone who moved to Canada from

another country and has since contributed to the rich diversity and success of this country. Achievements can be either professional or personal and nominees must hold landed immigrant or citizen status in Canada. They could be community leaders, role models, entrepreneurs, teachers or volunteers.

"RBC has a long-standing commitment to helping newcomers succeed in Canada," said Manisha Burman, director, Multicultural Markets at RBC. "We are pleased to be involved in an awards program that not only recognizes the achievements of individuals who are making a difference in Canada, but inspires others to do the same."

"Immigrants need positive role models who motivate them to succeed in a new country as they journey through their new lives in Canada," added Mr. Noorani. "We're calling all Canadians to nominate an immigrant at canadianimmigrant.ca/top25 and help us share their stories with the entire nation."

Nominations are now open at

canadianimmigrant.ca/top25. On the website, visitors can watch a video highlighting how two immigrants have made their Canadian dreams a reality. Nominations will be accepted until January 30, 2009. At that time, a distinguished panel of judges will review all nominees and present a short list of finalists online. From February 16 to March 31, 2009, all Canadians will be able to vote online for their favourite. The Top 25 Canadian Immigrants of 2009 will be announced in May 2009. Winners will be recognized in Canadian Immigrant Magazine, as well as receive a commemorative plaque and a \$250 donation toward an authorized Canadian charity of their choice.

About Canadian Immigrant and canadianimmigrant.ca

Attracting over 275,000 readers each month, Canadian Immigrant helps new Canadians build a successful life and home during their first years in Canada. Its mandate to inform, educate and motivate provides hands-on, easy-to-access content for new-



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comers looking for information - from careers, education and settling in to culture, money and business. The monthly print publication is distributed in Toronto and Vancouver.

canadianimmigrant.ca reaches immigrants nationwide, offering tools and resources that help newcomers settle into their new communities - connecting immigrants with each other as well as with immigrant experts and prospective employers. Along with exclusive online stories and special series, canadianimmigrant.ca offers free access to interactive job, school and home finders plus immigrant experts at Ask the Expert, where immigrants can send in their pressing questions on various topics relevant to newcomers.

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From the Publisher's Desk ...**60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the day - December 10th in 1948 when the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), under the leadership of U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

This is the first global articulation of any form of inherent and universal human rights, and it remains the world's most widely translated document of its kind and stands as a symbol of the highest goals society can achieve.

The Declaration has come to form the basis of much international law and has provided moral and legal backing for UN action against human rights violators.

Pope John Paul II described it as "one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time".

According to former South

African archbishop Desmond Tutu and former Irish president and UN high commissioner for human rights Mary Robinson, the document remains "the single most important reference point for discussion of ethical values across national, ideological and cultural divides".

Today, concerns about the rights of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities - as well as women, homosexuals, and many others - are all viewed as human rights. There are often reports of violation suspects and prisoners' rights, draconian laws for detaining political prisoners, battered women and their children facing difficulties, same-sex couples who are denied basic services, professional women and racial/visible minorities who hit the discriminatory "glass ceiling", worker abuses etc.

Many nations have hardwired

into their system of laws protections enshrined in the Declaration. And, the Declaration has inspired people the world over to advocate for an expansion of individual rights.

However, this momentous document's 30 articles seem like empty promises to many of the humanity around the globe today.

Many governments do not properly adhere to its tenants. This Declaration was written against the horrific backdrop of World War II, when human rights violations reached immense proportion. Similar levels of human rights violations have remained consistent throughout several countries around the world.

On the eve of the 60th anniversary it was announced that Genocide and other mass atrocities are underway or risk breaking out in at least 33 countries including Sri Lanka, by a new compre-

hensive watch list slated for released on Dec 9th.

So while this 60th anniversary is certainly an opportunity to recognize the worthy ideals of the UDHR, it should also be a clear reminder that our deeds must align with our promises for a grander celebration in the future, or the aspirations of the momentous document will forever remain nothing more than words.

Preventive measures to safeguard the rights and lives in countries such as Sri Lanka must be taken without delays.

The Monsoon Journal joins the world humanitarian community, in urging the public and policy-makers to learn more about UDHR and share information about it. An informed conviction on safeguarding the inalienable human rights of each person is the best way of ensuring and or working towards the human rights of everyone.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND OPINIONS

To: The Editor

**From: Regis Jogendra, Retired
Assistant Commissioner of
National Housing (Legal)**

**Ontario Ombudsman
and Transparency, His
motion to Strike off
Claim Dismissed by
Court**

A Canadian Citizen (of Sri Lankan origin) complained to the Ontario Ombudsman of Administrative improprieties by a Ministry of the Ontario Government as provided for under the Ombudsman Act. The front-line

Officers who handled the complaint, on a one-sided and incorrect, version and response by the Respondent, unlawfully and acting in bad faith, decided to close the file, although the Complainant produced documentary evidence to rebut the Respondent's response.

In accordance with the policy and procedure available, with his Office, Complainant then complained about the improper conduct of these officers to Mr.Andre Marin, the Ombudsman personally. But Mr.Marin took no action whatsoever nor did he even care to respond to the complaint.

Continued in Page 5

**Seeing the 'virtue in a political
solution to Kashmir'**

Elites of powerful countries including India, with restive minorities have eagerly embraced the 'war on terrorism' since 9/11. Only seeing the 'virtue in a political solution to Kashmir' will lead to 'a deeper and more enduring alliance for the United States in South Asia', Pankaj Mishra writes.

Pankaj Mishra, author of "Temptations of the West: How to Be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet and Beyond." wrote this piece, "Fresh Blood From an Old Wound"

on NYTimes.com on Dec 2, 2008:

MIDWAY through last week's mur-

derous rampage in Mumbai, one of the suspected gunmen at the besieged Jewish center called a popular Indian TV channel. Speaking in Urdu (the primary language of Pakistan and many Indian Muslims), he ranted against the recent visit of an Israeli general to the Indian-ruled section of the Kashmir Valley. Referring to the Pakistan-backed insurgency in the valley, and the Indian military response to it, he asked, "Are you aware how many people have been killed in Kashmir?"

Continued in Page 40

SOLUTION TO THE WOES OF B-3

By: R.S. Reynolds.

The Oil Barons have bled the Automotive Industry for decades. The rich cannot make a better world, for where greed dwells, loves has gone.

With the changing face of USA and Canada, it is high time the tax payers dollar is made to do constructive work.

Bail out of the B-3 auto makers would only be a stop-gap arrangement and will set up a precedent for more competition to come in from Imports.

For B-3 auto makers to survive, is to be totally free from fossil fuel. Jobs should not be lost as Infra-structure to make a transition already exists with the B-3

MDI-Air Car made by Guy Negre of France, will be in North American market by 2009/2010. Air-Car MDI, has the benefit and features far surpassing

any hybrid, hydrogen or electrically driven automotive. MDI Air is more GREEN, runs on compressed air, and gives the best mileage. It is the car of the future.

History has shown that Government interference in Business Sector has eventually led to disaster. With the ensuing G-20 summit are we heading for another?

A pragmatic and viable solution for B-3 would be to have collaboration with MDI-Air Car, as done by TATA motors, India.. When taken on a war footing, conversion of manufacturing equipment to make AIR CAR engines, the only change needed, should be around 6 to 9 months. Training of personnel for that unit operation about 2/3 months. The diesel, petroleum and electric engines manufacturers can switch to AIR-Car engine manufacturers.

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Canada Newsline

Supervisor's term ends at The Scarborough Hospital

New Board, CEO to continue focus on quality of care, patient safety and community engagement

As of midnight December 5th, The Scarborough Hospital is no longer under supervision.

In a letter confirming the end of his term, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, David Caplan, thanked Rob Devitt for his dedicated efforts in addressing the challenges facing the hospital and building a stronger healthcare system.

"I've enjoyed my time at Scarborough," says Devitt. "When I arrived, there was a very long list of issues to be addressed, both on the governance front and in administration. But I've been very impressed by the way staff and the community have come together to find solutions, and the progress in 15 months has been remarkable."

Devitt's final report to the Minister, which is posted on the hospital's website (www.tsh.to), presents a frank overview of the hospital's many challenges and the intervention that was required to move the organization forward since July 2007.

These challenges included Hospital Standardized Mortality Rates (HSMR) that were among the worst in the province, back-to-back budget deficits, a poor workplace safety record, a backlog of unaddressed patient complaints and serious staff morale issues.

Significant progress has been made towards resolving many of these issues. Achievements include:

"A significant improvement in the HSMR rate;

"A budget strategy that allowed the hospital to go from a deficit position to one that

includes a small surplus;

"The development of a comprehensive workplace safety program;

"The development and implementation of a leading-edge strategy to reduce C. difficile infection rates;

"A significant reduction in unresolved patient complaints;

"Routine staff satisfaction surveying, with programs to improve rates and the creation of a staff Code of Conduct;

"Development of a strong internal communications program; and

"The recruitment of a new permanent CEO and a strong, skills-based Board of Directors who will bring stability to the organization.

"A great deal of hard work on the part of staff and physicians went into achieving these improvements, and I would like to thank everyone at The Scarborough Hospital for their efforts and their support," said Devitt. "Building on that foundation, and with the support of strong leadership at the Board and CEO level, the hospital will continue to move forward positively and productively."

"Rob has done a great job setting us up for success," explains Mike Mueller, Chair of The Scarborough Hospital Board of Directors. "There are still many challenges ahead of us, but he's given us a very solid foundation. I look forward to working with our many stakeholders to move The Scarborough Hospital forward."

"The Scarborough Hospital was truly fortunate to have Rob Devitt as a Supervisor," says Dr.



John Wright, CEO. "It would be impossible for anyone to put more time and effort into an assignment than Rob did on this one. His extensive consultations with stakeholders have resulted in innovative bylaws with checks and balances that allow the hospital to govern effectively while providing important roles and representation for the community."

A hospital supervisor reports directly to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and assumes the full responsibilities of the Board that governs the hospital, the hospital corporation and its officers. With the end of supervision, The Scarborough Hospital will now be governed by its new Board of Directors, and administration will be led by President and CEO Dr. John Wright.

Minister Kenney Addresses the Immigration and Refugee Board's Consultative Committee on Practices and Procedures



The government is committed to protecting the integrity of the refugee protection system and the immigration system, the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, said recently.

"As the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, I believe strongly that Canada is richer for the newcomers who come here," Minister Kenney told the Consultative Committee on Practices and Procedures of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). "Each year we welcome from every corner of the world almost a quarter of a million newcomers who embrace our values of freedom, of democracy, human rights and the rule of law."

Minister Kenney acknowledged the important role that the Committee plays in working with the IRB, noting that it "allows for

a unique and valuable perspective on Canada's immigration and refugee system."

The Minister's address also highlighted recent important improvements that are a part of the Action Plan for Faster Immigration, including the changes that will improve the immigration program's responsiveness to Canada's labour market, reduce wait times for new applicants and reduce the size of the application backlog.

The government is also upholding its commitment to reunite families and maintain its humanitarian obligations to refugees by granting between 26,300 to 27,200 refugees and their family members permanent residence in 2009. "This builds on a longstanding humanitarian tradition of welcoming refugees and displaced persons," added Minister Kenney.

Ontario Ombudsman - Continued from page 4

Left with no alternative Complainant then sued the two Officers Angela Aljbertis and Tim Arkell in the Toronto Small Claims Court in action Nos; SC-08-64426-00 and SC08-64427-00 respectively personally, for acting in "bad faith" and also failing to provide even proof of their delegation by Ombudsman to investigate the complaint as expressly provided for and mandated under section 24(1), though they were duly requested in writing by Complainant, and 26(5) respectively of the Ombudsman Act.

Then Amanjit S.Brar, Lawyer with the Ombudsman, who had no authority to represent the Defendants as they were sued personally for what they did illegally

and not qua office, appeared for the them and without any legal basis moved Court to have the claims of the Complainant struck off even without a hearing.

The Complainant filed objection to this and the motion was dismissed by Provincial Court Judge His Honour Godfrey.

Prior to this Andre Marin had unilaterally dispensed with "Community Open Houses" that were regularly held by his predecessor to enable the public to have transparency and discuss matters openly. When Complainant personally asked Andre Marin why he had done this and requested him to restore it, he never responded to it.

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Monsoon Newsline

Senior Chinese Official Warns of Economic Downturn

A senior Chinese official warns the country's economy is slowing at an "accelerated" rate and could lead to social unrest.

National Development and Reform Commission chairman Zhang Ping said on Nov 27th that data gathered this month shows China's economic downturn is deepening as the impact of the global financial crisis spreads.

He says an increase in bankruptcies and production cuts by major manufacturers would likely cause large-scale unemployment, and trigger social instability.

The Bank of China cut the country's benchmark lending rate by more than a full percentage

point Wednesday in an attempt to help the economy.

Earlier this month, officials unveiled an almost \$590-billion plan aimed at spurring economic growth.

Still, tensions have been rising. Hundreds of laid-off workers trashed the offices of the Kaida toy factory in southern China recently following a pay dispute. Last month, 7,000 people marched in protest after losing their jobs at another toy company.

Also, the Hong Kong firm that owns the Kaida toy factory agreed to improve compensation packages for its laid off workers. [voa]

Sri Lanka having darkest period in sports, says former test cricketer

With extreme politicization, no planning, personal agendas and the unqualified at the helm of administration - sports in Sri Lanka is presently witnessing its darkest period, said Former Test cricketer of Sri Lanka team, Hashan Tilakaratne.

He was speaking at a media briefing organized by 'Development Watch' at Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, on Nov 28th.

"Big names in athletics like Susanthika Jayasinghe, Dama-yanthi Darsha, Sugath Tilakaratne and Sriyani Kularatne are all who had brought glory to our country. But, there is no system in place for youngsters to learn from their international exposure. They can



Hashan Tilakaratne

make invaluable contributions towards upliftment of sport. We also do not have any system to identify rural talent. Therefore, how can the country's sport can go forward or develop?" he asked.

India is our friend, we are not against any country, remove the hindrance of ban: Prabakaran

While conveying his love and gratitude to the people and leaders of Tamil Nadu and leaders of India who have grasped the heartbeat of Eelam Tamils and have come forward with timely support, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader V. Prabakaran in his Hero's Day speech on Thursday November 27th requested them to voice firmly for Tamil Eelam and to undertake conducive measures to remove the ban, a great hindrance to amicable relationship between India and the LTTE.

"At no stage did we ever consider India as an enemy force. Our people always consider India as our friend. They have great expectations that the Indian super power will take a positive stand on our national question", he said.

The LTTE leader also requested the world powers to remove the ban on it, citing that the LTTE never schemed any act against any country and the Tamil struggle is not against the geopolitical, national or economic interests of any country.

[TN]

Financial Crisis Threatens World's Most Vulnerable

By Mandy Clark

As the humanitarian crisis worsens in the Democratic Republic of Congo, aid workers are warning that the global financial crisis will hurt the world's most vulnerable people. Some are now predicting that death rates for the world's poorest could increase rapidly as the global recession bites.

Flipping through his photo album, Buka Mwanza looks back on his last trip to Congo. He says he was kept busy visiting family.

"We're an old-fashioned African family so we have quite a large extensive family," he said.

But it is not just the recent fighting in his homeland that worries him. He is also concerned that humanitarian aid to Congo will be reduced following warnings by aid agencies that the global economic crisis will lead to cut backs by governments and private donors.

"It is human lives that we are talking about. Money is something that comes and goes but a human can't be replaced," added Mwanza.

Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, says the agency relies on donations. If it gets less, it must spend less.

"The UNHCR is almost entirely funded by voluntary contribution so every contribution, from individuals on the street to governments in their capitals, is vital. Obviously when governments are devoting huge amounts of money into stabilizing their economies, those have an effect on the humanitarian programs like UNHCR and our partners," said Kessler.

The UNHCR has refugee camps all over the world, from Afghanistan, to southern Africa and even in the Darfur region of Sudan. Kessler warns that the impact of cutting programs could be devastating.

"People shouldn't forget the fact that there are tens of millions of people who rely upon the UN refugee agency and our partners for food, water assistance, protection and without these programs there will not be the care available, that people will indeed suffer and could indeed die," said Kessler.

It is not just UNHCR that's concerned. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent held a conference in South Africa recently to discuss the issue of dwindling aid.

And there is another danger to the financial crisis - rising global unemployment. The International Labor Organization is warning that as many as 20 million people worldwide might lose their jobs as a result of the financial crisis.

Claire Melamed with Action Aid, an international anti-poverty group, says this is a serious concern for developing countries.

"This is the flip side of the growth that we have seen in China and India which have been based on exporting things to rich countries. This is the downside in a sense, when demand dries up then jobs disappear," said Melamed.

A vicious cycle, aid officials and humanitarian workers warn - and one that could see the world's most vulnerable pushed precariously closer to the edge.

[voa news]



Buka Mwanza




Claire Melamed



Peter Kessler

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Monsoon Newsline



Chief minister M. Karunanidhi pays floral tributes to a portrait of former prime minister Indira Gandhi during her 91st birth anniversary celebration at the secretariat on Wed, Nov. 19th. He later administered the national integration pledge to his cabinet colleagues, legislators, officials and staff on the occasion.

PHOTO: DC

Canada's BMO Capital to set shop in India

Notwithstanding the financial crisis ravaging the world markets, Canadian investment banking major BMO Capital Markets sees opportunities in India and is planning to launch its operations in the country.

"We will mainly concentrate in the advisory business in India and launch our operations as soon as we receive all regulatory approvals which could take another 45 days," BMO Capital Markets India Head Ashutosh Sharma said.

Asked whether it was the appropriate time to launch their business in India amid the ongoing global financial crisis, Sharma said, "We believe in the growth

story of emerging markets and the crisis has made valuations of American firms quite attractive and make the right acquisition targets for outbound deals from Indian companies."

The investment and corporate banking arm of BMO Financial Group completed a tour of global investors in India recently which included a number of enterprises in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi.

"Our group of investors, who in aggregate manage assets worth \$1.5 trillion, were impressed by India's growth trajectory and entrepreneurship which would be driven largely by sustainable domestic demand," BMO Capital Markets Managing

Director Investment and Corporate Banking Ashi Mathur said.

BMO sees opportunities that India present over near and long term and has recently enhanced its commitment to Indian market with the appointment of Ashutosh Sharma," Mathur added.

Further, BMO believes that for global economy to recover from a potentially devastating recession, the key is leading emerging market economies.

"Next year, the world will be looking at India's economic performance with more interest than any time in the nation's history," Group's Global Portfolio Strategist Donald Coxe said. [PTI]

Mumbai has most active online shoppers: Report

Mumbai has the most active online shoppers followed by Delhi and Hyderabad, as a recent report says that eCommerce has picked up fastest in the megapolis.

According to the eBay India Census 2008, India's top five eCommerce hubs are Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai.

"Over 2,427 cities had online transactions in 2007. The IT hubs of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were the most wired states of India with the maximum number of towns where eCommerce originates," eBay India Director (Category Management) B Murali-

krishnan told reporters here.

Muralikrishnan said eCommerce was helping bridge the demand and supply gap.

"Over a third of all products bought by eBayers in the hilly areas (North East, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh) are tech gadgets (Mobile Phones, Digital Cameras and USB Drives). While women from metros are buying a lot of sarees, the sellers are spread across various cities and towns like Devanagere (Karnataka), Chittaurgarh (Rajasthan); Lucknow, Kunnamkulam (Kerala)," he said.

The most bought and sold items on the shopping portal are diamonds, value handsets, MP4 play-

ers, USB MP3 players and Indian stamps.

"The census includes data only from shoppers on eBay India but can be used to get some idea of the market as 42 per cent of shoppers prefer eBay over other portals according to a survey by Juxt consulting," he said.

Similar reports have been brought out for the US and Canada operations of the company, which has a presence in 39 countries.

eBay India, formerly known as Baze.com, is the wholly owned subsidiary of the US-based eBay Inc.

[PTI]

US Secretary of State spotlights Rights violations in Sri Lanka

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice makes remarks at the International Human Rights Awards Ceremony, Monday, Dec. 8, 2008, at the State Department in Washington. A portrait of Thomas Jefferson in the background. (AP Photo/Lawrence Jackson)



United States Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, on Monday Dec 8th, awarded the 2008 Human Rights and Democracy Achievement Award to Michael De Tar, the chief of the Political Section of our Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, for engaging "constructively with Sri Lanka while underscoring our [U.S.'s] human rights," and for proposing the roadmap adopted by the Sri Lankan Government" to induce a paramilitary aligned with the government to begin to release its child soldiers [in the east]."

Rice said that De Tar was "a key actor in the international effort to monitor an official

Commission of Inquiry investigating high-profile cases of human rights abuse, and he has responded quickly and effectively when journalists and other activists have been threatened or arrested."

Human Rights Watch (HRW), the New York based rights advocacy group few weeks ago pointed out, the situation in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka continues to rapidly deteriorate. HRW said the Sri Lanka-backed paramilitaries there were responsible for thirty murders and thirty abductions during September and October.

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Monsoon Newsline



The Indian Government has donated several tons of food and other supplies to the displaced persons in the Vanni District of Northern Sri Lanka. Picture shows the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Alok Prasad handing over the documentation of the supplies to Mr. Paul Castella, Red Cross Society Representative Mr. Paul Castella. Also in the picture is Mr. Divaratne, Sri Lankan Government's Essential Services Commissioner.

Gale force winds, heavy rain lash Jaffna

A 195.5 mm rainfall was recorded from Monday Nov 24th to Tuesday 25th evening alone by the Sri Lanka Meteorological Department in Thirunelveli in Jaffna peninsula. Two feet high sea water has entered Karaiyoor, Paasaiyoor, Kaakkaitheevu and Naavanthu'rai areas along the coast of Jaffna lagoon forcing residents to seek shelter in nearby churches and schools. Electricity supply, transport services and telecommunication have been cutoff due to the collapse of electricity posts, overflowing culverts and trees falling across the roads and electric wires. Jaffna peninsula is plunged in darkness as its people keep indoors unable to face the monsoon torrents that continue to lash for the fourth

day, sources in Jaffna said.

Though Jaffna Secretariat sources said that nearly 500 families consisting of 2,500 people have been displaced due to the incessant rain and intermittent hurricanes the number of persons displaced is said to be more than 4,000.

Sri Lanka Transport Service (SLTB) Koandaavil depot tried to run a few buses Tuesday morning but the attempt was suspended as the main streets were blocked by uprooted trees and culverts overflowing, making them impassable.

The SLTB officials said that it would be impossible to resume bus services until the roads are cleared of the obstacles.

Sri Lanka Electricity Board

(SLEB) in Chunnaakam has completely cutoff electricity supply to the peninsula as electric posts have fallen and supply wires snapped by falling trees.

Almost all residents of the coastal areas in Vadamaraadchi North and East have been driven from their huts seeking shelter in nearby churches, schools and other public buildings.

Many of their dwellings and the roof on them have been ripped off and cast into the sea by the strong gales accompanying the pouring rain.

The people of Jaffna peninsula may have to face more hardships and suffering should the monsoon rain and storms continue to lash, civil society sources said. [TN]

Floods, Fighting, Food Shortages Hit Trapped Tamils

Incessant rains and flooding in the Vanni, the Tamil rebel stronghold in northern Sri Lanka, are adding to the woes of at least 200,000 people stranded in intensified fighting between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan army since mid-September.

On Tuesday Nov 25th, TamilNet reported that floods were "flowing over most of the roads and civilians who had sought refuge in open lands and in temporary huts in low-lying areas were forced to seek shelter in schools, temples, churches and public buildings in Vanni."

There are now conflicting estimates as to how many people are affected by the floods, fighting

and food shortages. Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona put the figure of the entire Vanni population at 200,000, while the United Nations puts the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at 230,000.

On Nov 19th, Amnesty International (AI) assessed that "more than 300,000 people face the next few months crowded together in temporary shelters, surrounded by mud, with no promise of regular access to food or adequate sanitation."

"The Sri Lankan government must immediately end its policy of blocking humanitarian aid needed to reach an estimated 300,000 displaced people in the Vanni region of northern Sri Lanka,"



Sam Zarifi, AI's Asia-Pacific director, said in a statement.

"The Sri Lankan government states that it is distributing aid to displaced families, but AI believes that the government lacks the capacity to uphold international human rights standards and ensure the support is provided to protect the lives of thousands of people," Zarifi said.



Sri Lanka's proposed tallest building with 80 storeys is to be built in Battaramulla, close to the city of Colombo. Picture shows the inauguration ceremony with Dr. Kiran, representing the Builders Messrs. Sukhirne, presenting a model of the proposed building to Mr. Dinesh Gunawardene, Minister of Urban Development. Also in the picture is Mr. Nadarajah, an officer attached to Sukhirne, the building Company.

Photo courtesy: Virakesari.

Protest against Sri Lanka army restrictions on essentials



Participants marched from Number 1 school located near Netthali-aattup-paalam in Tharmapuram towards Kilinochchi GA's office. More than 5,000 civilians took part forming a 1 km long march

The people in Vanni marched in thousands towards two Government Agents' offices and two Divisional Secretariat offices in four locations on Friday Nov 21st, protesting against Sri Lanka Government's restrictions on food and essential supplies, blaming Colombo for using humanitarian supplies as a tool of war to force civilians to flee against their will into the hands of Sri Lanka Army (SLA).

Velamalikithan, a representative of Vanni Peoples Welfare Organisation (VPWO), addressing more than 5,000 protesters in front of Kilinochchi Government

Agent's office at Tharmapuram described how the supplies were reduced from 600 lorries per month in 2007 to 250 lorries per month in 2008, but only 54 have allowed to cross into Vanni in the recent days.

On Nov 20th, Amnesty International has appealed to Sri Lanka's government to allow aid to reach more than 300,000 people displaced by fighting in the north. The human rights group urged both the government and Tamil Tiger rebels to allow international monitors into the embattled northern Vanni region.

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Monsoon Health



Eat healthy for a happy heart

Courtesy: Heart & Stroke Foundation

Research has shown that persons of South Asian descent are prone to developing heart disease and stroke at a younger age, often before the age of 40. And, South Asians have a 3 to 5 fold increased risk of heart attack and death due to cardiovascular disease compared to other groups.

Being aware of your risk factors for heart disease and stroke as well as healthy eating and being physically active can help you prevent these conditions.

It is important to eat a healthy diet that is lower in fat, especially saturated and trans fat. The quantity and quality of the fats are both important factors in a healthy diet. It is also important to watch the amount of salt you are eating in prepared foods.

Limit your intake of saturated fat, which is found primarily in red meat and high-fat dairy products. Choose lower-fat dairy products such as milk, yogurt and paneer.

Include a small amount (30 to

45 ml or 2 to 3 tablespoons) of healthy oils in your meals each day for cooking and salad dressings. Healthy fats can be found in vegetable oils (such as canola, olive and soybeans) and soft margarines low in saturated and trans fats. Limit the use of butter, hard margarine, lard, coconut oil, shortening, ghee and vegetable ghee.

It is important to eat fewer foods that are cooked in fat, such as puris, samosas, pakora, French fries and fried snacks such as gathia, chevdo and chips. Choose lower-fat foods such as plain roti, dhokla, and plain popcorn.

Often a lot of fat is added when preparing South Asian foods such as dhals, sabzis and breads such as roti, chapatis or naan. You can dramatically reduce the fat in these foods by slightly adjusting how you cook and prepare them. When serving vegetables, try preparing them without oil or using only small

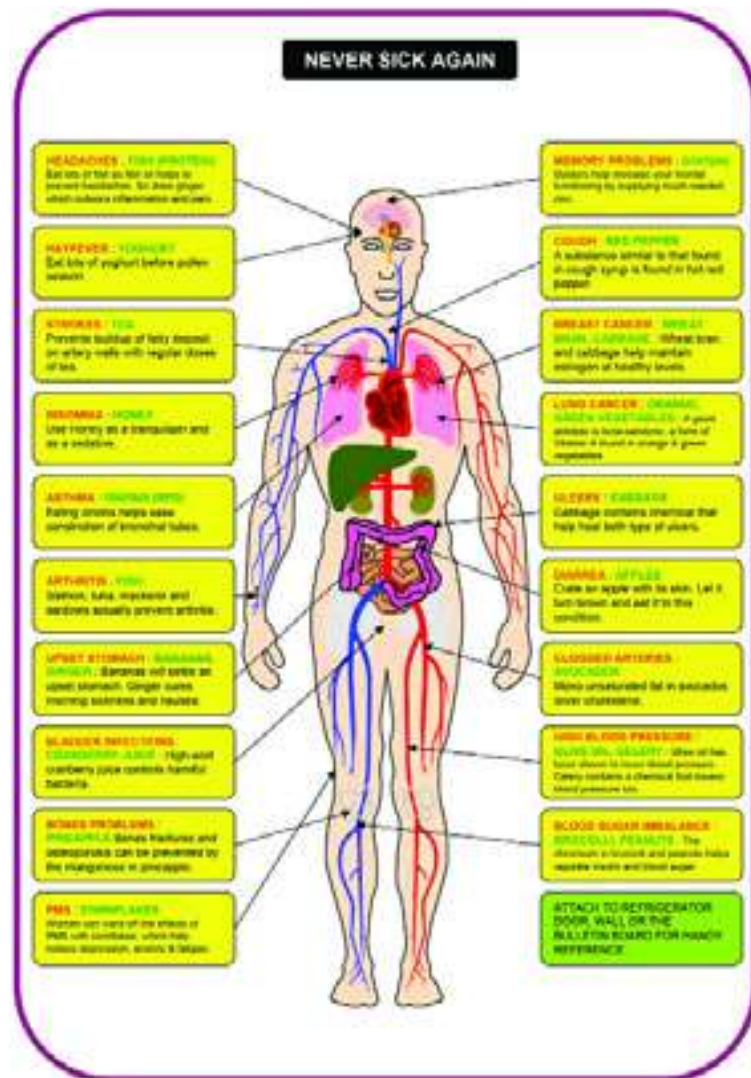
amounts of vegetable oil. Remember a vegetarian diet is only low in fat when the vegetables aren't cooked with a lot of extra fat.

Make at least half of your serving of grains whole grain each day by choosing brown basmati rice as well as whole grain flours when making or buying bread such as chapattis, naan or roti.

Also be aware of high sodium levels. The following foods may be high in sodium. Read the Nutrition Facts Table on food containers before selecting these foods: ketchup, chutneys, chaat massala, pickles (achar), papad, canned or bottled foods and other packaged convenience foods, salted nuts, salted crackers, chips, popcorn, biscuits, pretzels, namkeens and other fried snacks.

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Newsline

Leaders of Mauritius voice against genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka

Leaders of both the ruling party as well as the opposition of Mauritius, including the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Rama Sithenen and the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Paul Berenger attended an agitation against the genocide of Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka on Thursday, Nov 20th. The focal event of the protest was the march of hundreds of Mauritian Tamils to the Indian High

Commission in Mauritius, demanding the Indian government to prevail upon Sri Lanka to effect immediate ceasefire in the island and to commence talks with the LTTE. The agitators also presented a memorandum on their demands to the Foreign Minister of Mauritius and conducted a prayer at the Maariyamman Temple.



Deputy Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr. Rama Sithenen, speaking at the agitation. Standing on his right is the leader of the opposition Mr. Paul Berenger. March of the protesters to the Indian High Commission Women and children participated in the protest.





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Monsoon Newsline

Sri Lanka court decision might damage country's credibility in international financial markets

Sri Lanka's supreme court has ordered the state-owned oil refiner, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC), to suspend hedge payments to banks until a central bank probe into the matter is over.

A report by Reuters on Nov 28th says the decision may have far reaching implications, with possible increase of risk premium for any deals and agreements Sri Lankan entities considering in the future.

Reuters report further says, Opposition politicians have questioned the hedging arrangements by the state-owned Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC), with Citi Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Deutsche Bank and two local banks, which were made in expectation that the oil prices would hit \$200 per barrel.

Prices have dropped instead and the hedges mean the country will not benefit while the banks do.

"The Supreme Court granted interim relief suspending all the hedging payments to the banks until the final hearing," said lawyer Uditha Egalahewa, who appeared on behalf of the peti-

tioners seeking to cancel all hedging payments.

Lawyers said the court had suspended A.H.M Fowzie, the minister of petroleum and petroleum resources development, and Ashantha de Mell, chairman of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation.

The court has yet to issue formal notifications of its ruling.

Asked to comment, Fowzie said he had heard of the court's decision.

"I do not know what the final outcome will be, until the final judgement," he told Reuters.

A spokesman for Standard Chartered in London said: "As the matter is now sub-judice it would not be appropriate for us to comment on the interim ruling."

He said in a statement the bank was not directly affected.

Deutsche Bank declined to comment.

Representatives of the CPC and the other banks involved could not immediately be reached for comment.

Hedging analysts said the island nation would have to pay at least \$300 million during the next seven months if global oil prices remained at current levels around

\$50 per barrel.

They have fallen from a record above \$147 in July.

An analyst said the court decision might damage Sri Lanka's credibility in international financial markets.

"Future agreements with any party are at risk and will have serious financial repercussions with possible increase of risk premium," said the analyst, who did not want to be named.

"This might make it very difficult for Sri Lanka to borrow commercial loans in future as investors will be concerned over termination of contracts on those borrowings as well."

Hedging analysts said the deal, designed to protect oil importer Sri Lanka against large movements in prices, had been done in such a way that CPC had to pay to the banks when the oil price fell below \$100 per barrel.

Financial analysts said the deal could impose a major burden on the \$32 billion economy when Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves have declined more than a quarter since mid-September because of the need to protect the rupee.

CM, Maran Patch up



Cheers, says the First Family after the 'reunion' bringing back grandnephews Kalanidhi Maran (second from right) and Dayanidhi Maran (centre) at chief minister M. Karunanidhi's Gopalapuram residence recently. The main architect of the patch-up was the octogenarian's daughter Selvi (third from left). Others in the picture are (from left) Mr Karunanidhi's wife Dayalu, Madurai-based son M. K. Azhagiri, Chennai-based son M. K. Tamizharasu and heir apparent M. K. Stalin. PHOTO: N. SAMPATH

The bitter feud that fractured the first family of Tamil Nadu has come to an end. Shunned by M. Karunanidhi, his family and the DMK party after their Tamil daily Dinakaran in May last year carried a provocative public survey that gave only two per cent votes to Azhagiri, the Maran brothers finally made it back for a happy family reunion on Monday.

The head honchos of the massive Sun TV network, Kalanidhi and younger brother Dayanidhi, were received with great warmth by Karunanidhi at his Gopalapuram residence. The septuagenarian had only last Friday scolded his grandnephews restating his accusation that they had 'stabbed' him in the back even though he had brought them up, literally on his shoulders, for he loved dearly their father, the late Murali Maran, his elder sister's son.

The entire Kalaingar family was there for the grand occasion. Well, almost the entire family; for, his daughter Kanimozhi, born to second wife Rajathiammal, was not invited. The Rajya Sabha member has never been a Maran favourite. "Anything that makes my father happy makes me happy too," she later said.

The architect of the reunion was Mr Karunanidhi's daughter Selvi, married to the late Maran's brother Selvam. And sources say the foundation for the patch-up was made at the bedside of Mr Karunanidhi's first wife Dayalu Amma, when she was admitted at the Apollo a few days ago. Daughter Selvi was taking care of

her, so also her niece and Azhagiri's daughter Kayalvizhi. It is said that Selvi was able to break the wall between the Marans and Azhagiri through his daughter.

"Azhagiri and Stalin worked for this happy reunion. This has made everyone happy," Mr Karunanidhi told a crowded press conference later at his party headquarters. He had driven there straight from the Gopalapuram 'festival'. He did not want reporters to rake up the bitterness witnessed in the frequent sparring between the Marans' Sun TV and his own columns in DMK organ Murali.

What had led to this change of hearts, a scribe asked. "There was a mind, so the change happened," shot back the chief minister, with a broad grin, perhaps the first time he showed happiness about a Maran issue all these 18 months.

Would Dayanidhi now get back into the Union cabinet? "I do not want to talk about it now," was the quick retort. But now that the families have patched up, Dayanidhi will be part of the DMK team in the MPs' delegation to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the Lanka issue on Tuesday. Sources insist that the 42-year-old former IT and Communication minister has been promised his Central Chennai ticket when the Lok Sabha poll is next held. In return, apart from 'other' things, the DMK government would get better coverage in Sun TV.

Courtesy: Deccan Chronicle

Ex-Indian premier VP Singh, champion of the poor, dies

Former Prime Minister of India, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, passed away in New Delhi at the age of 77 on Thursday, Nov 27th. He was Prime Minister of India between December 1989 to November 1990.

In his condolence message, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the country had lost a great patriot and nation-builder whose empathy for the weaker sections would always be etched in national consciousness.

"As Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and later as Finance Minister and Prime Minister, he consistently strove to translate his convictions into public policy.

Even after being afflicted with a debilitating disease, he continued to be at the forefront of the struggle for social justice."

Mr. Singh earned name as "Mr. Clean" while he was finance minister in mid-80's and took on industrialists by launching tax investigations. At the height of his campaign against fraud, he was shifted from Finance to Defence in 1987. He resigned as Defence Minister and left the party to strengthen the Janata Dal coalition and became Prime Minister of India in 1989.

V.P. Singh withdrew the Indian forces that were engaged in a war with the Liberation Tigers of



Vishwanath Pratap Singh (25 June 1931 - 27 November 2008)

Tamillelam (LTTE) in 1989 when he came to power.

Humble Request from the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada

Please help the displaced people in Vanni District, Sri Lanka!

The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates (ASGC) has launched a fund raising project with the support from the Canadian Red Cross Society to help the people who have been displaced from the Vanni Area in Sri Lanka and are suffering due to the on-going attacks on them. This project named "ASGC: Vanni - Sri Lanka" was launched at the recent ASGC Annual Dinner and will definitely help provide food and essential facilities to these helpless people. The ASGC pleads the public to help them by sending donations to this project.

Those who want to donate, please write a cheque in favour of The Canadian Red Cross Society and send it to reach the address shown below before 31-12-2008. On the cheque, under the section 'memo', please write the Appeal Name: ASGC Sri Lanka - Vanni. Those who donate more than \$ 10.00, please include your mailing address also so that you will receive a tax receipt directly from the Canadian Red Cross Society.

Mailing Address: ASGC - Vanni Project with Canadian Red Cross Society
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C. Ramanathan, Secretary ASGC. Phone: 416 949 3157

Rain, cyclone 'Nisha' cause severe damage to Jaffna peninsula in Sri Lanka

More than 65,411 farmer families along with more than 30,000 agriculture labour force depending on the farmers have been severely affected by the recent rains, floods and cyclone 'Nisha' in Jaffna peninsula, Jaffna District Deputy Director of Agriculture

(DDA), S. Sivakumar said in his report. A loss of around 1,350.67 million rupees in the Maha cultivation (2008-2009) and nearly 274.6 million rupees in highland crops, in the peninsula has been estimated by the DDA.

Monsoon Newsline

United States Mint Releases Designs for Native American \$1 Coin on Native American Heritage Day

The United States Mint released the designs for the new 2009 Native American \$1 Coin, on Nov 28th, 2008 - on Native American Heritage Day.

Public Law 110-82 directs the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue the new \$1 coin to recognize Native Americans for their contributions to the history and development of our Nation. The new coin, slated to be released into circulation in January 2009, will circulate along with the United States Mint's Presidential \$1 Coins.

"We are proud to produce the Native American \$1 Coin," said United States Mint Director Ed Moy. "When Americans use this coin, we hope they reflect on the tremendous contributions Native Americans have made, and continue to make, to our Nation."

Like the Presidential \$1 Coins, the Native American \$1 Coins will be minted in the distinctive gold-colored alloy. The coin's obverse (heads side) will feature the Golden Dollar's striking image of Sacagawea-the young Shoshone woman who accompanied

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their historic expedition by sculptor Glenna Goodacre. Inscriptions on the obverse are LIBERTY and IN GOD WE TRUST. The year, mint mark and E PLURIBUS UNUM are incused on the coin's edge.

The reverse (tails side) of the Native American \$1 Coin will bear a new design each year. The featured design for 2009, by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Norman E. Nemeth, is based on an agricultural theme, a significant part of Native American culture. This design depicts a Native American woman planting seeds in a field of corn, beans and squash, representing the Three Sisters method of planting. Inscriptions on the reverse are UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and \$1.

Throughout the Presidential \$1 Coin Program, the Native American \$1 Coins will be issued in chronological order, to the greatest extent possible, of the events or persons featured. The Secretary of the Treasury approves the designs after con-



sulting with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, the Congressional Native American Caucus of the House of Representatives, the National Congress of American Indians, the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, and the Commission of Fine Arts.

The total quantity of Presidential \$1 Coins and Native American \$1 Coins minted and issued into circulation by the United States Mint will be sufficient to meet the Nation's needs. As required by law, at least 20 percent of all \$1 coins minted and issued in any year will be Native American \$1 Coins.

Customer Service information: (800) USA MINT (872-6468)

"Night of Miracles"

by: jja

A dramatic musical The Eagle Christian Ministries in collaboration with the Alumni Association of St. John's College and Chundikuli Girls' College presented a dramatic musical in aid of the suffering children of Sri Lanka recently at the P.C.Ho Concert Hall at Scarborough.

Breaking from the tradition of singing carols, the Eagle Ministries staged the musical depicting the ever-fresh and awe-inspiring story of the birth of Christ as a dramatic musical. A vast assemblage of cast, dancers, narrators, singers and instrumentalist gave a memorable performance in front of an audience of Sri Lankan Tamils and their friends from all over Toronto and its suburbs.


The drama started with the census-taking scene at the Bethlehem market and portrayed the child in the manger, the visit of the wise men, shepherds and ending up with Nicodemus telling the story of the promise of God as revealed in all the books of the Bible. The drama imaginatively presented the story as scene through the eyes of the first century witnesses. The worship dances added solemnity and

grace to the poignant presentation. It was creatively articulated and presented effectively to the accompaniment of appropriate background music, stage-setting, costumes and make-up.

Shesan Selvaratnam as Joseph, Premini Ponniah as the Inn Keeper's wife, Dinesh Vadivelu as the wise-man acknowledging the royalty of Christ and Joel Joseph as Nicodemus gave sterling performances. There were also a number of soloists and group singers who did their parts with efficiency and ability. Joel Joseph, the producer and Music Director and Premini Ponniah, the Drama Director should be congratulated for their excellent handiwork.

They were able to get the help of the past pupils of both schools as well a number of volunteers to provide the opportunity for the public to participate in this wonderful remembrance of the Birth of Christ through the Arts.

The Eagle Christian Ministries and the alumnus of St. John's and Chundikuli have added yet another achievement to their services to the Christian community in Canada.



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Monsoon Features

Coalition Government - Patriotism or Power Grab?

By Samy Appadurai

It was a pleasant afternoon on Friday, November 28th 2008, at the conference room of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada office on 5343 Dundas Street East in Mississauga. Journalists from many ethnic backgrounds arrived for the first news conference in Toronto attended by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Jason Kenny was briefing us on the new immigration policy that was presented in parliament. It was an impressive and well planned policy. With high hopes, I returned home and wrote almost half an article about it and went to bed. The following morning, I switched on the TV and read the newspapers in my office. That is when I received the news about the three major opposition parties' intention to bring down the Harper government and form a coalition government. My mind instantly went back to the election campaign and the overly ambitious speeches of Jack Layton saying that Harper would be out of the Prime Minister's chair and that he would occupy it. When I think of it now, I realize that some of the polluted election campaign air circulated through the political atmosphere and brought on this cyclone. Though Mr. Stephane Dion, the leader of the main opposition party very carefully and from the bottom of his heart made his statement to the press saying that "We are ready to form a new government that will address the best interest of the people," he was far from sincere and I believe that most Canadians could see that.

I will venture to say that it is not right time to play political games when the global economy is facing an attack the size of a Tsunami. Creating instability in the government will be adding fat to the fire and will worsen the entire economy. It is the first time in Canadian history that both the effects of the economic Tsunami on the ground and political cyclone have hit with both

barrels at the same time. I do not care about who does or does not care about the state of the nation, but I do care about the actions which should be taken in the best interest of this nation, not at the expense of the nation or what suits the whims of a particular party.

It is crystal clear that the idea of forming a coalition government was made not because of the measures taken by the Harper Government to stimulate the economy were insufficient, as it was said. Rather, other more hidden reasons contributed to this idea such as bringing down Harpers government at any cost, grabbing power, and making use of this opportunity to reestablish their parties.

The two partners of the coalition and its active supporter, the Bloc have one thing in common. Making use of the old adage "The enemy of my enemy is my friend" they are putting all available resources together and are trying hard to achieve their goal. Who cares that the fundamental values and beliefs of the parties are different? In face of acquiring power, these things are immaterial; the end will justify the means. The vision and core intent of the coalition is to bring down the government by taking advantage of the current economic state without any regard for the Canadian people. The NDP had been badly criticized during the federal election campaign by both the Conservatives and the Liberals, insinuating that the NDP was taking the country down the wrong path. The NDP is famous in wanting to bring down the government and that is what they did during Paul Martin's minority government. I do not think they have a balanced interest between national and international political policy to govern this great nation. Their focus is more of distribution rather than the stable increase in production. The basic principle of Socialism centers on the fair distribution of wealth among the contributors of production, land,

labour, capital and workers as well as advocating for a centralized monopoly of the government. Right now Canada has four main economic problems. The workers have to be protected and reassured about the safety of the investments of the entrepreneur. Maintaining employment, creating more employment opportunities and improving social amenities all depend on a stable and sound production level of the diversified Canadian economy. The second problem is the foreign market for Canadian products against the well protected European Union and the fast increasing economic power status of India and China. The third area of concern is the threat of terrorism and the means to defend ourselves if we are attacked. This is an international issue, and if we do not act wisely in collaborating with our neighbours, what kind of right do we have in asking for help? The last problem is that consecutive minority governments weaken national development at a rate that has not encouraged foreign investment into Canada. This is not an issue the rest of the developed world has faced; this is a peculiar problem that Canada has encountered recently.

Who is responsible for this situation? Neither the voters nor the politicians shoulder the responsibility alone. Let us consider the voter first. They do not want to have a minority government that will fall at any time. They do not want to spend their valuable time listening to the politicians explain their plans and policies over and over again. The voters do not want to spend endless hours making their calculations, comparing the leadership of each party with the rest, assessing the capability, reliability and personality of each, examining the policies and finally casting their votes. This is a very grueling exercise. If the voters are not convinced, the tendency is to have a minority government. Those who do not feel obliged to cast their vote believe at times,



that none of the politicians is going to do what they say so why should they bother? A few people also have a preconceived notion about politicians and a few of them told me while I was canvassing in my provincial election that all politicians are liars. Of course, this is a very exceptional circumstance, but I do not underestimate its expression. On the other side of the coin, I being a politician do not know what to say but, there is a room for us to do better. If there is going to be another election, that one should have an absolute majority. "Until someone some day achieves a majority, the fight is not won or lost" said Mr. Steven Harper on the evening of June 28th, 2004. It now appears that the fight will be over and the end is near.

The opposition parties proclaim that Harper's government has lost the confidence of the House of Commons. But the opposition parties have lost the confidence of the voters and have more confidence in the Conservative Party and its leader. In the system of indirect democracy where multiple parties exist, the verdict of the voters could be interpreted conveniently. The naked truth is that Canadians did not vote for a coalition of the opposition parties and the opposition party leaders advocated and revealed their hidden agenda to the voters to whom they must be true and loyal. I do not think that

the idea of a coalition dropped from the sky in the middle of the summer, and Harper did not take any "U" turn from what had been said during the election campaign. From the beginning until now, he was prioritizing the economic issues but, at the initial stage, almost all of the opposition parties picked other issues and all of a sudden, they woke up and cried loudly around economic issues. I appreciate that at least they realized what Harper was planning to do. They may not have liked it but it is good for the country.

To the average person, it may appear that Harper was not panicking as one of the opposition leaders was saying during the middle of the last election, or the respective governments of the USA, Germany and Great Britain. If Harper wanted to ride on people's emotions, he would have brought in rescue measures and ensured a place in the good books of everyone. It does not mean that Harper did not understand the current economic situation of Canada; On the contrary, he is one of the rare people who understands both the present and future economic situations and develops sensible solutions. The financial institutions in the USA, Germany and Great Britain were on the verge of collapsing and sought governmental help.

Continued in Next Page



Sai Baba's Birthday Celebrations were conducted in Colombo, Sri Lanka at the Sai Hall in Barnes Place. Pictures here show the ceremonies in progress and the large crowds that were present.

Monsoon Milestones

Selma D'Souza first began her career in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) as a summer student. While completing her undergraduate degree in Economics, and post-graduate Certificate in Human Resources Management, she moved into a full-time position within the OPS. Yearning to gain professional exposure in human resources, she decided to make the leap into the private sector. Gaining progressive experience in companies such as Toys "R" Us Canada, Cryptologic, and the SoHo Metropolitan Hotel earned her a spot in the highly competitive Ontario Internship Program in the OPS.

To date, her career in the public service includes positions in the Ministries of Government Services, and Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Community Safety and Correctional Services.

In 2007, Selma was one of only two public servants chosen by the Women's Executive Network to participate in Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100™ Wisdom II Mentoring Program. On November 25, 2008, Selma was officially recognized as a Future



SELMA A. D'SOUZA

Leader on the Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100™ list.

When not at work or school, Selma is a serving member of York Regional Police Auxiliary, clocking in more than 500 volunteer hours this past year. Additionally, she's an active member of the OPS Pride Network, and sits on the Board of Directors for Pride Toronto.

Coalition Government - Patriotism or Power Grab?

Continued from previous page

But in Canada, the Finance Minister met with the financial institutions and determined that they could stand on their own at this point in time and in the future, if it is required, extend help. He is a strong finance minister for a strong economy and does not take certain actions merely for the sake of doing them. When the G20 nations met in the USA, some of those nations pinpointed Canada as a role model in handling the current economic situation. Would the Opposition parties want to handle the finances in the manner that Bob Rae did in Ontario? Would they spend more money, not pay back government loans adequately; pay more of the tax payer's money as interest; Would they increase government debt by borrowing more money and passing it on to the next generation, increase taxes such as the GST to 7% and make the consumer suffer more, decrease social services to the masses, build more schools, bridges, hospitals and pass the burden to the next government and future tax payers.

If anything, this coalition is a marriage of convenience. When the honeymoon is over, one hopes the marriage will not end or reach the stage of divorce. Usually coalition governments do not perform well and after their regime, they meet with political disaster. There are two examples that I can give to illustrate this point. In 1873, Sir John A MacDonalld resigned after being censured in the House of Commons. The Governor General asked the opposition leader Alexander Mackenzie to form a government without an election. Mackenzie governed for three months, and then called an election, which he won. The second example is in 1926, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King realized that his minority government was going to be defeated on a non-confidence motion. He asked the Governor General to dissolve parliament and call for an election. But the Governor General refused the dissolution request and called on Opposition Leader Arthur Meighan to form a government without an election. He was able to govern for three months before being defeated in Parliament.

The role of opposition parties in the parliamentary system is to help the ruling party be balanced, unbiased and be more productive to the nation and the people who voted for and against them. Though they have an interest in becoming the ruling party in the future and make use of every opportunity to pinpoint the weaknesses of the government and their

strength to the people, it is understandable. But when an unusual situation arises, they should put the interest of the country first and all others second. I can cite two examples, when the Liberals federalist provincial counterparts to the sovereignist's were not as they expected, the federal leader of the Conservatives was brought to Quebec's provincial leader of the Liberals and safeguarded federalism in Canada. When the Israeli government once planned to attack the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein, the Prime Minister consulted with the opposition party leader, even before it was revealed to some cabinet ministers. Such a mutual trust is made by working beyond party interest. Why is this happening in Canada? It appears to some of us, if not many, that even before the 40th parliamentary session began, a prominent politician wanted to bring down Harper's government without considering the consequences that the nation will face at this critical time.

At this stage, regardless of the acceptance or non-acceptance of Mr. Harper, the tax payers, the voter, the masses, the public, whatever the term we use will have a big say. This will not be done through a formal referendum but through lobbying, writing, gathering, emailing, and contacting the media as individuals and collectively. Public opinion will have a great influence in resolving the current constitutional crisis. It is a very sensitive issue because when the voters cast their ballots in the last election, they were not given any indication that there could be a plan for a coalition government, though Harper predicted that a minority government would be formed again by the Liberals or Conservatives. If the voters were aware of this, their voting patterns would have been different. We cannot take it for granted that the verdict of the people in the last election had given the green light to an alternative form of government.

Thanks to Governor General M. Jean for considering all of her options and for the time being accepting the points made by Mr. Harper and proroguing Parliament until the 26th of January, 2009 when the Federal Budget will be presented on the following day. Whatever the outcome, it should be in the best interest of our Nation as a whole. Whoever tries to gain at the expense of the people, will have to give it all a second thought.

Samy Appadurai is a renowned broadcast journalist, author, educator and public speaker who makes his home in Toronto.

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Monsoon Features

IMHO (International Medical Health Organization) holds event in Toronto

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." - World Health Organization

Once again, the IMHO successfully hosted an event on October 10th in Toronto. Much information was shared during the program as to how IMHO is helping the needy in Sri Lanka regarding health issues. Torontonians once again supported IMHO with a packed audience along with so many enthusiasts

young volunteers helping through out the program. Dr. Raguraj the President of IMHO USA who flew from Maryland and Canadian President Dr. Lambotharan made the key note speeches. Interesting and colorful dance performances were provided for entertainment and a sumptuous dinner was served. The organizers stated that they were overwhelmed with the tremendous support received and were able to reach the goal in serving the needs.

International Medical Health

Organization (IMHO) is a US based charity made up of health care and non-medical volunteers from 20 states and representatives from medical organizations in Canada, UK, Australia, Norway, Malaysia and New Zealand. Projects focus on improving the health and welfare of the people living in the war-torn areas of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean about 20 miles south of the tip of India. It has faced more than 20 years of civil war, which has taken its toll on

the healthcare infrastructure of the North-East of Sri Lanka. IMHO was formed during the peace agreement between conflicting parties as it was felt that it was time for a medical health organization in USA to help the brothers and sisters in the North-East of Sri Lanka.

Mission Statement of IMHO

IMHO is a US based humanitarian nonprofit, nonpolitical organization dedicated to help rebuild the health care infrastructure of the war-torn areas of Sri

Lanka. It was established in 2003 by volunteer doctors, nurses and other health care professionals. By offering training and health care to local populations and medical assistance to people at risk, and with the flexibility to respond rapidly to emergency situations, IMHO rehabilitates devastated health care systems in the war-torn areas of Sri Lanka and helps bring them back to self-reliance.

Seen here below are some pictures taken at the Event.



Front entrance decoration



Dr. Kanna Velauthapillai, Youth Co-ordinator, IMHO Canada



Dr. Lambotharan-President IMHO Canada



Guests seated



President of IMHO USA Dr. Raguraj on left



Dance performance



Dance performance



Volunteers at the registration area



Event committee and volunteers

Monsoon Real Estate

Housing Market Continues to Reflect Economic Times

The erosion of consumer confidence that began with rising fuel prices earlier this year is continuing as the global financial crisis and volatile equity markets have many Canadian households concerned about their own finances. This is clearly reflected in the slowdown of the housing market.

ONTARIO - GTA resale housing market continues to reflect economic times

(November 2008, Toronto, Ontario) The Greater Toronto Area resale housing market reported 5,155 sales in October, Toronto Real Estate Board President Maureen O'Neill announced today. This represents a 35% decline from the 7,915 sales reported in October 2007 and a 25% decrease from the 6,876 transactions that took place during the same period two years ago.

In the City of Toronto, there were 2,136 sales, with sales activity down 38% from the 3,455 transactions recorded last October. In the 905 Region 3,019 sales were recorded, with sales activity down 32% from a year ago when 4,460 homes changed hands. With 68,570 transactions to date this year, sales are within 16% of the 81,563 transactions noted a year

ago. The 2007 market referred to was a record breaking year with each month breaking records for the entire year. Putting this into perspective, 2008 figures are indicative of a return to a more balanced market.

In the City of Toronto, the current average price of a home was \$376,896, down 13% from last October's average of \$434,022 and within 3% of the October 2006 average of \$386,807.

In the 905 Region homes are selling for an average price of \$336,049, a decline of 8% from October 2007's average of \$364,142. Prices in this area however, remain one per cent higher than the October 2006 average of \$332,822.

Advantages of Buying and Owning a Condominium

Condos have become an increasingly attractive home ownership option for many people. Whether you're a young couple looking for affordable housing, or a retired couple wanting to downsize because their kids have moved out, there is likely a condo for sale to fit your needs. A condo is a viable option for anyone who wants to own a home without the worry of repairs, maintenance and dreaded chores like snow shovelling.

Condos require little work, and are maintained by the association, so the condo owner does not have to be concerned with certain maintenance activities.

As well, many people are turning away from the single-family home market and becoming more interested in the condominium market. There are three main reasons why condos are gaining such popularity: they are economical, convenient, and easy to maintain.

1. Economical

In general, condos cost less than traditional single-family homes. Some experts estimate condos are as much as 20 percent cheaper than their single-family home counterparts. Within recent years, such value has given a real boost to condominium sales.

Condominiums will increase your buying power. Condos usually sell for 20 to 30 percent less than similar detached homes, so it is an ideal option for a first time buyer with a limited budget. You will have all the luxury of owning your own home, but will be able to share the cost of upkeep on the building. For most buyers the choice is to buy a condo that meets their living needs or continue to rent.

Condominiums usually cost less to

maintain than detached homes. The replacement cost of a high rise roof may be more in absolute terms than replacing the roof of a detached single-family home, but the cost per owner should be less. Depending on the cost of the repair, there should be enough money from the association fees that can cover the repair without any additional cost.

2. Convenience

Condo living can be extremely convenient. Typically, condos are strategically built near the heart of a city, where most business and entertainment establishments are located. People are choosing to forego the commute required by suburban living, opting instead to centre themselves in the city. By avoiding a long drive or train ride into work, condo owners enjoy more leisure time and a reduced-stress lifestyle.

Condominiums have amenities that some people could not otherwise afford, such as swimming pools or tennis courts, their own community centre with exercise rooms and much more.

3. Easy to maintain

Condos are also popular because they require little effort toward maintenance. Homeowners know that they

are responsible for all of the upkeep and repairs that are associated with keeping a house in good shape. On the other hand, condo owners typically don't have to worry so much about matters of upkeep or liability. Condos are typically managed by a board that makes decisions regarding repairs and other maintenance issues. With condos, taking care of your property is a very hands-off experience that usually involves the periodic paying of fees and the choice to participate, if desired, in regularly-scheduled, condominium board meetings.

Condominiums are ideal homes for first-time buyers, small families or people without children, retired couples and vacationers. While a condo can be the first step on the ownership ladder, it is often a good stand-alone investment in real estate. If the above qualities are appealing to you, you should learn more about the Condo market in your area.

Above News and Information compiled by:

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Monsoon Features

Rouge Valley Centenary Hospital's new Birthing Centre ready for Deliveries

Room at New Centre named "Canadian Tamil Community"

By Siva Sivapragasam

The new regional Birthing and newborn Centre at the Rouge Valley Centenary hospital has been completed with modern state of the art facilities, and will be ready for admissions of expectant mothers coming January.

Leading members of the Canadian Tamil community were taken on a tour of the modern Birthing and new born Centre recently. The Hospital Board has appreciated and acknowledged the funding efforts of the Tamil community for the Centre through Annual Walkathons, by naming one of the Rooms in the new Centre "Canadian Tamil Community".

The new Birthing Centre will provide the community the best possible maternal and newborn care, in a welcoming, comfortable and safe environment that reminds the moms of a place close to home. It was the result of generous corporate and private donors who supported the building and equipping of the new born centre. A sum of \$ 4,346,000 was raised to share the cost of the new Birthing Centre and the Intensive Care Unit. The cam-

paign steering committee and Cabinet was headed by the well-known TV personality Beverly Thomson. Mr.Kula Sellathurai, a former President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce, was the Chairman of the Committee that raised funds from the Canadian Tamil community. Kula Sellathurai's untiring efforts in organizing successful walkathons, along with his team mates in the committee, helped to raise the funds from the Tamil community for the new building.

Mr. Chad Hanna, President and CEO, Rouge Valley Health System Foundation was present at the tour, arranged for the Tamil community.

Seen here are some pictures taken at the tour of the Birthing and new born centre.



Plaque on wall for the room in appreciation for the contribution by the Tamil Community



Suren Balendran - President of Sri Lankan Graduates Association and his wife, Raj Thavaratnasingham from the Sri Lankan Graduates Association and another member



Members of the Tamil community who went on a guided tour of the new Birthing Centre



Kula Sellathurai, Chairperson of the Committee that helped raise funds from the Tamil community, thanks the community for their generous contributions



Mr. David Poopalapillai from the Canadian Tamil Congress, Kula Sellathurai, Chairman of the Committee which helped raise funds from the Tamil Community, Chad Hanna - President & CEO, Rouge Valley Health Systems Foundation and Ms. Tammy Surendran



Ms. Carole Chabot and Ms. Ros Sagar from Centenary Hospital and Ms. Revathy from the Tamil Newspaper Suthanthiran



David Poopalapillai, Piragal Thiru from the Canadian Tamil Congress, Ganesan Sugumar, President Sugshe Financial Inc, Kula Sellathurai, Paul from Scotia MacLeod and C. Ramanathan during Penny Katz Nursing Mgr providing tour

About Mumbai Terror



Statement

Date: November 27, 2008

For release: Immediate

CANADA CONDEMNS COWARDLY ATTACKS IN MUMBAI

OTTAWA – Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the following statement today:

"Canada condemns in the strongest terms the despicable and cowardly attacks in Mumbai, India. On behalf of all Canadians, I wish to express our deep and profound sympathy and condolences to the families and loved ones of those killed and injured by these heinous acts of violence, including many in Canada. These attacks targeted people from India and around the world. They were attacks on values we hold dear, and we share your loss.

As a fellow democracy, Canada stands firmly with the Government and people of India in your fight against terror and as you face with resolve one of the darkest times a country can ever experience. We offer our support as you work to restore order and bring to justice those responsible for these cowardly attacks against innocent people.

The Government of Canada is working closely with Indian authorities to find and assist any Canadians and their families who might be affected by these attacks. Our consular staff in Ottawa and on the ground in Mumbai are working tirelessly to this end."

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PMO Press Office: (613) 957-5555
This document is also available at <http://pm.gc.ca>



Hindu Federation

November 27, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TERRORIST ATTACKS ON INNOCENT PEOPLE IN MUMBAI, INDIA

We of the Hindu Federation are appalled by the brazen acts of terrorism that has happened in India. We extend our deepest sympathies and prayers to all those affected and pray that god will grant them the strength, faith and courage to overcome these atrocities.

We call upon the Canadian Government to take special note of these events and appeal to all concerned to put in place the necessary measure to prevent such occurrences in Canada. We appeal to all to exercise wisdom in responding to these events and encourage each citizen to see these events as actions against humanity.

We pray for divine wisdom to dawn on the minds of the perpetrators of such criminal and inhuman actions and appeal to all for peace and calm.

For further information contact:

Pandit Roopnauth Sharma
President Hindu Federation
416-856-3810

Karthikai Deepam: Biggest festival of Lights in Tamil Nadu where a million Devotees throng Tiruvannamalai

Continued from page 23

Realizing that the blazing pillar is a manifestation of Sivan, who has neither root nor crown, Vishnu conceded defeat and surfaced. In the meantime Brahma had flown upward for many eons without finding a hint of a top. When they met again Sivan stepped out of the fiery lingam and put an end to the squabbling.

Vishnu and Brahma prayed to Sivan to withdraw the Effulgence form and to abide as an immovable Lingam. Sivan in His grace took the lustrous forms of a mountain, and a small Lingam. The small Lingam was to enable the devotees to perform abhisheka, aradhana and puja. The mountain is the eternal, immovable Arunagiri (red hill), the most potent manifestation of the Supreme. The small Lingam is enshrined at the Arunaleswarar temple, at the foot of the mountain. The name Aruna signifies the total annihilation of accumulated sins of the worlds merely at the sight of the holy mountain.

The mount reveals for the sake of the welfare of the world its true Effulgence once a year in the month of Kartikai (November-December) on the evening of the full moon when the star Krithika is on the ascendant (December 11, 2008). Karthigai Deepam commemorates the appearance of the Lord as a Jothi Shambam, an infinite pillar of light at Arunachala (Tiruvannamalai).

About a million devotees throng Tiruvannamalai to witness the lighting of the Maha Deepam atop the Annamalai Hills on the last day of the 10-day Karthigai Deepam festival of the Sri Arunachaleswara temple.

The flame is lit in a kopparai (cauldron) atop the hill. The cauldron is initially filled with about thousand kilograms of ghee and a 350 meter wick. When lit, the flame shoots up to seven feet and could be seen as a point of light from a 35 km radius. The flame, a spiritual beacon, burns for a week. Devotees trek to the top of the hill, which rises to a height of 2668 feet, to make personal offerings of ghee.

After the flame is lit, about a million devotees walk around the hill, a distance of 14 km. This is the immensely popular girivalam. Girivalam is the most important ritual that a devotee is expected to perform at Thiruvannamalai. The Arunaleswarar temple is one of the largest temples of Tamilnadu and is closely associated with many great lives.

One of the earliest references to Karthigai Deepam festival is found in the Ahananuru, a book of poems, which dates back to the Sangam Age (200 B.C. to 300 A.D.). The Ahananuru clearly states that Karthigai is celebrated on the full moon day (pournami) of the Tamil month of Karthigai. It was one of the most important festivals (peruvizha) of the ancient.

The Lingodbhava sculpture is usually installed in a niche in the back wall of the sanctum sanctorium of Sivan temples. It represents Vishnu in the form of a boar trying to find the bottom of the lingam, and Brahma in the form of a bird trying to find the top. When they fail, the lingam splits open and the full image of Sivan is seen.

(the writer can be contacted at: skandos@hotmail.com)

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Monsoon Arts

Subramaniam
Kanthaswamy-
Our Chennai Correspondent

CHENNAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

The current popular following for Carnatic music, to some degree, was generated in the nineteen forties. Dramas (natakam) and films were used as a vehicle. S.G. Kittappa's music-soaked dramas brought music to the common man. Then there were the great nageswaram players who occupied the centre stage during temple festivals and weddings. No less important is the role of films. There was a time when Carnatic music was film music. Several top musicians of an earlier generation acted in films or more popularly sang in films. The list includes such stalwarts like T.N. Rajaratnampillai, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and his brother Krishnamurti, Musiri Subramania Iyer, G.N. Balasubramaniam, M.S. Subbulakshmi, K.B. Sundarambal, M.M. Dandapani Desikar and others. Musicians like D.K. Pattammal and M.L. Vasanthakumari lent their voices as 'play-back' singers. But it was 'film actors' like M.K. Thyagarajah Bhagavathar and P.U. Chinappa who played a key role in promoting classical music through the popular medium. One of the great composers, Papanasam Sivan also acted in films. The result of it

and innovative effort from Jayendra, co-founder of the 'Real Image' organization. He says that "the film promises an awesome experience for connoisseurs of the art and also for those who have no ear for the classical. The aim is to entice ears not attuned to the genre." As for the songs and technology, Jayendra says, "I didn't want songs only a connoisseur will enjoy. For the first time in the world, seven RED cameras have been used. Intricate colour corrections have been manipulated with Digital Colour Grading in 4K so that the output is flawless. Surround sound should enhance the impact of the film further."

Featuring two of the most popular and talented carnatic vocalists, Bombay Jayashree and T.M. Krishna, the film opens on December 18th at cinemas all over the country.

Now that the rain has finally abated after turning Chennai into a larger Venice, it is time once again for ragas to fill the air as the various sabhas gear up for their annual music and dance festival. Kartik Fine Arts began the first phase of their festival at the Narada Gana



Suryaprakash performing



Thiruvannamalai



Vocalist Sowmya performing



Vocalist Sowmya with SK

all was that Carnatic music had a broader base. A lot of young people were attracted to music. Today, things seem to be different. The quality of the music, in my opinion, has not gone down. But classical Carnatic music is moving away from the popular base, withdrawing to the drawing rooms of the urban elite.

'Maargazhi Raagam' - A Music Feature Film

The old-world charm is being revived. A carnatic music concert is envisaged in a feature film format. 'Margazhi Raagam' is a pioneering

Sabha auditorium. In addition to the vocal concerts of the top stars, there are a number of Bharathanatya dance ballets in the programme. Kartik Fine Art is conducting a Tamil Isai Vizha from 26th of December to the first of January at Annanagar.

Some of the prominent dancers like Padma Subrahmaniam, Alarmel Valli, Urmila Satyanarayanan, Srekala Bharath, C.V.Chandrashekar, Anita Ratnam, Meenakshi Chitharanjan, Krishnakumari Narendra, Kanaka Srinivasan, Chitra Visweswaran and

Anita Guha, are among those presenting special ballets for the season..

The core of the festival will begin by around the second week in December. This season's programmers have many interesting concerts apart from the strictly classical features. These should interest everyone and rekindle interest in the strictly classical form. I give below some of the concerts of my choice.

'Aadal Kaaneero'-A tribute to M.L.Vasanthakumari

"An Evening of Carnatic Ragas" with cine hits of M.K.T,

P.U.Chinnappa, Kitappa, T.M.S and Seerkazhi by R.Suryaprakash, Kadri Gopinath - Saxophone accompanied by Haridwaramangalam A.K. Palanivel, Pancha Vadyam by Guru Karaikkudi R. Mani, Hindustani music by Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar, and Ramji's 'Isai Mazhalai' - Sastra Sangeethamum Thirai Isaiyum.

Kalakshetra's thematic dance-dramas: Andal, Sita Swayamvaram, Rukmini Kalyanam, Masquerade - Man in the Iron Mask.

Padma Subramaniam's "Paripadal Mudhal Bharathi Varai", Chitra Visweswaran's "Nirantharaha - the eternal cycle." Radhika

Shurajit's dance ballet - "Aadal Kaneero" - A Tribute to M.L.Vasanthakumari.

The music festival is not about music alone, it is also about glamour and fashion. The Hindu newspaper carried an interesting article recently titled "Artists make style statements." The trend, Kanjeevaram and Khamboji, diamonds and Dhanyasi ... the season finds artists giving them equal importance. Most artists, both male and female, are paying great attention to their sartorial elegance. No doubt the lady artists look so glamorous! The men are not far behind. The younger stars pay a lot of attention to the colour and style of their dress. This adds colour to the concert.

Music Lovers will miss Violin Maestro Kunnakudi

This season, music lovers will miss a great and prominent musician, Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan and his captivating concerts. The music world has lost a great artist and a multifaceted personality. "Kunnakudi" was a master of the violin and could make it speak and sing, in slow or at breakneck speeds. He was a very accomplished classical violinist, but he chose to be 'popular with the masses', and therefore crafted his music accordingly. From the classical he would slide into folk tunes and film music, or twang on a string for effect. He believed in the therapeutic effect of music and launched the Raga Research Centre. He was a great composer and much sought after teacher. He held many important posts and wielded a lot of power." (Sruti -November issue). On a personal note, I am sorry I lost a valuable friend. May his soul rest in peace.

(I wish all readers a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year)

(the writer can be contacted at: skandos@hotmail.com)

Karthikai Deepam: Biggest festival of Lights in Tamil Nadu where a million Devotees throng Tiruvannamalai

Subramaniam
Kanthaswamy
Our Chennai Correspondent

Rows of agal vilakkus and flaming torches of all sorts in front of every house... this is the celestial image that comes to mind when we think of Karthigai Deepam - the festival of lights that is celebrated throughout Tamil Nadu and the Tamil-Hindu world during the month of Karthigai (November-December). Behind every important Hindu Festival lies an interesting and fascinating mythological story. 'Karthigai Deepam', hallowed and enriched by song, myth and legend is no exception.

A terrific argument ensued between the two primal beings, Vishnu and Brahma, as to who was the first and mightiest. When they were battering each other's egos in the battle of their relative importance, a gigantic column of fire struck in front of them radiating the



eternal light of truth throughout the universe. Glowing like a million suns, it grew and grew, piercing the heavens above and the underworld below, losing itself in infinity. Stunned by the blazing column of effulgence they decided to find out what was behind this perplexing event. They agreed that whoever found the source of the fiery col-

umn would be the greater of the two. Thus, Vishnu took the form of a rooting boar, to find its roots by digging into the ground, while Brahma changed into a wild gander to fly upward, searching for its top.

The boar tunneled downward for thousands of divine years but found no end.

Continued on Page 22

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Monsoon Features

Gala "Agents Awards Night" for Americas held in New York City by SriLankan Airlines

SriLankan Airlines and its GSA, Sri Lankan Travel Inc, for the US, Canada and the Caribbean, gave away awards for their Agents on 5th December 2008 at the Park Central Hotel in New York for their outstanding contribution. The gathering was well attended by most of their agents based in different parts of America and Canada. This was the first time in the history of SriLankan Airlines that an Agent's Awards

Night was held in the US.

The event was attended by all SriLankan Airlines staff in the US and Canada.

For the US the Gold award was won by "Upul's Travel Service" and the Silver by "Adore Travel" while the Bronze Awards were won by "Safenet Travel", "Hari World Travels" and "E-Destination".

For Canada the Gold Award

went to "Jetspeed Travel & Tours" and the Silver Award to "Air Link Travel" while the Bronze Awards went to "Jet Travels", "Skylawn Travel" and "Huntington Travel".

Mr. Manoj Gunawardena, CEO of SriLankan Airlines attended the function as the chief guest along with Sri Lanka Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Mr. Jaliya Wickramasuriya. and the Permanent Representative for the United Nations, His Excellency, Mr. H. M.G.S Pallihakkara.

In his speech the CEO praised all agents for their cooperation extended towards SriLankan Airlines in the US and Canada. He gave his confidence to all agents in this difficult time of the year in the aviation industry.

SriLankan Airlines has announced to recognize their partners and this will be an annual event from now onwards.



Manoj Gunawardena - CEO SriLankan Airlines



Mr. Chanaka Olagama- Manager UK, Ireland , Scandinavia & the Americas (5th from right)
Manoj Gunawardena - CEO, SriLankan Airlines (6th from right))
Mr. Dillan Ariyawansa - VP Sales & Marketing , USA , Canada &Caribbean (7th from right) together with SriLankan Airlines Sales Team from USA & Canada



Lalith Wickremasinghe, Dillan Ariyawansa, Tom Varughese- CEO Admiral Tours & Travel Mississauga receiving a Performance Award from Manoj Gunawardena - CEO SriLankan Airlines



Lalith Wickremasinghe., Manoj Gunawardena CEO , Gail Ragel & Maria D'Souza - SriLankan Airlines Canada & Gobi Thayaparanithy-Director AJB Travels Scarborough



SEASON'S GREETINGS

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Canadian Medical Dental Development Association

CMDDA's (Canadian Medical Dental Development Association) Lights of Healing Gala 2008 - a very successful event...

Funding Goal for "Save a Heart"- Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory Unit in Northern Sri Lanka almost achieved

Photography by S. G. Shankar - QuickSnaps

Nearly 750 guests were present at the CMDDA's (Canadian Medical and Development Association) annual Healing Gala 2008 event last month, as the Association entered its tenth year. The event was held on 21st. November at the Woodbine Banquet & Convention Hall. The main focus of the Association's Gala this year was the raising of funds for the Cardiac

Catheterization Unit in Jaffna and the commitment of \$200,000 goal was almost achieved successfully. Donations are being accepted till December.

Among the projects and activities of the CMDDA are – Save a Heart project Jaffna, Health forums and seminars for the Sri Lankan community, funding for Providence Health Care Foundation, Funding for CARE

projects, Publication of an annual Health Magazine, Donation to Saivaite Council for spiritual counseling, Donation to Tamil Nurses' Association project, sponsorship of lane at 'Bowl a Thon' to raise fund for Tamil Caregiver projects through Providence Care.

Some of the Donations made by CMDDA during the recent years are-\$120,000 for Tsunami victims,\$50,000 for Providence

Healthcare Foundation Alzheimer Day Program and \$12,500 for the Tamil Care Project of Providence Center, \$50,000 to Renovate Ponnambalam Memorial Hospital Medical & Surgical Ward, \$5,000 for the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, CT Scanner, \$5,000 to renovate and re-establish Dental Services in the Jaffna Hospital, \$ 20,000 – Ambulance donated to Panseni Primary Care Center, Donation of

Dental Equipment in Cuba etc. CMDDA has also engaged itself in social events.

The main office-bearers of CMDDA are, Chairman - Dr.V. Santhakumar, Vice-Chairman-Dr. Rajes Logan, Secretaries- Dr. Asirwatham & Dr. Kirupalini Kirupakaran, Treasurers- Dr.R. Mohan & Dr. Sashi Senthelal.

Seen here are pictures taken at this year's Gala Event



Table Decor at the Event



Mohanraj and wife Suganthi, Logan Velumailum and wife Geetha, Bala Jeganathan and wife Yamuna



Ms. Vijaya Vallipuram & Dr. Gayathri Gangadharan seated before the colorful Kolam done on the floor



Dr. Giri & wife, Past President CMDDA and Dr. Santhakumar and wife lighting the traditional Lamp



Hall where the event took place



Hall where the event took place



Hall where the event took place



Hall where the event took place



Dance Performance by Maheisha Ravendra



Maheisha in a different dance item



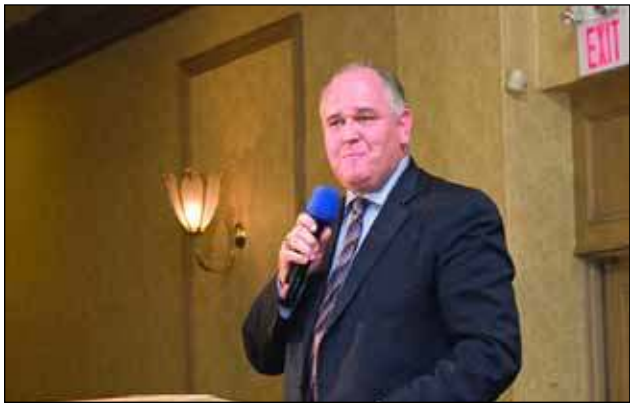
Dr.V. Santhakumar, President CMDDA, addresses the guests outlining the Association's activities



Ms. Jennifer Stewart - President of Providence Healthcare Foundation, addressing the guests



Canadian Medical Dental Development Association



Guest of Honor Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti making his speech



Guest of Honor Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti making his speech



Volunteers at the event



Dr. Giri, Markham Councillor Logan Kanapathy, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Dr. Mrs. Rajes Logan, Dr. Seshantri Viswasam and Dr. Sashi Senthelal



Regional Director for Donor Services from Canadian Blood Services, Bill Coleman thanking the Tamil community for the outpouring support they received by the Blood Drive Campaign launched during July 2008 that saved 1500 lives, he added



Dentist Dr. Shanmugavadivel, one of the co-ordinators of CMDDA addressing the audience



Dr. Surenthirakumaran, from the Jaffna Teaching Hospital speaking at the event



Guests seen enjoying the Dinner



Dr. Surenthirakumaran, from the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, receives a memento from Dr. Rajendra, a member of the Advisory Committee - CMDDA



Dentist Dr. Seshantri Viswasam, one of the Co-ordinators of CMDDA addressing the guests



Maneka Thaker's student performing an Odissi dance recital



Guests seen enjoying the Dinner

Monsoon Business

Global Financial Crisis: A Strategic Approach Needed

Arun Senathirajah

Current global financial crisis were created in the macroeconomic perspective, a prolonged period of excess global liquidity that boosted domestic demands, and other microeconomic factors such as deregulation of financial markets that led to financial engineering products and industry practices that played crucial roles in the build up of the bubble. 'Originate-and-distribute' lending model was mostly adopted by many financial firms in creating the MBS (Mortgage Backed Securities). Risks inherent in the mortgages were mispriced and transferred to unregulated segments of the markets. When the original mortgage borrowers failed the risk bearing assets holders in this markets segment suffered the loss.

House prices continue to fall in most countries

Housing markets look grim all over the world. In the third quarter of 2008, house prices fell in 11 of 16 countries measured by The Economist's house-price indicators. The worst fall was in Britain, where prices tumbled a whopping 5.5% in the three months to September, following a 2.7% drop in the previous quarter. America's housing bubble was the first to burst in 2006, and it has been deflating rapidly since. Many places that recorded gains in the first quarter, such as Hong Kong and China, are now seeing declines. Only in Sweden and Switzerland did house prices grow by more than 1% in the third quarter. Germany, France and South Africa saw tiny rises. Global house prices are expected to fall by 15% in the next two years.

Now Canada Heading for a

Recession

In November alone this year 71,000 jobs have been lost in the Canadian Job Market, a largest monthly net loss figure in 26 years. This has pushed Canada's unemployment rate to 6.3%, and a strong indicator of Canada has finally moved towards a recession. Out of this number 66,000 losses were from Canada's leading manufacturing province Ontario, where the unemployment rate has now been pushed to 7.1%, Ontario is the epicenter of direct impact of the U.S. crisis in Canada. In the U.S. the figure for November 2008 was even worse, a loss of more than half a million (533,000) jobs a largest monthly net loss figure in 35 years and the unemployment rate was moved to 6.7%. There is a fear among economists that another 100,000 jobs may be lost in the coming months and the national unemployment rate to could further be pushed up to 7%. The ruling minority Conservative government in Canada is more interested in safeguarding political power, rather than realizing and addressing the weakening economy. Much criticized budget proposal has not even been submitted in the parliament as it has been prorogued by the Governor General. Actions that should have been taken three months before, has now been postponed by another two months. Similar situation is prevailing in the economic malaise engulfed U.S. as the presidential transition period between election and inauguration, almost three months is unavoidably a long period to be carried with a high cost on the economy.

Central Bankers Commitments

While fiscal expansionary policy can play considerable role in addressing the recessionary situation, monetary policies by central bankers are widely expected in this time of financial catastrophe. At this time of liquidity and solvency problem central bankers worldwide, mainly from western world already have announced slashing down interest rates and provide liquidity support to illiquid bankers. Fed has drastically cut down its key federal funding rate to 1%. Bank of England has brought down its official rate to 3%, and another 1% slash is widely expected. Bank of Canada is expected act fast to remedy the situation, and there is an expectation that key interest rate to be cut down by 1.75% in December 2008. Bank of Japan is keeping its rate to the lowest of 0.3% now. Switzerland central bank has cut its benchmark rate in half to 1% last month. European Central Bank has brought it down to 3.25%.

Valuable Monetary Policy Tool has no Impact on Recovery

Although such commitments by the central bankers some analysts question the effectiveness of this measure since the financial crisis is so huge, and no much improvement even though using this valuable tool. Some rates are already at very low levels. No much room to cut further. Fed rate is further expected to slash down to 0.5%. If no signs of recovery of global economy, what's next? Japan's rate at the very lowest level, it suggests, traditional monetary policy tool doesn't necessarily have miraculous powers to prevent a recession. Another option for the central banks is to buy bonds and channel funds in



order to bring long-term interest rates down. More liquidity may cause inflation as well. Some economists caution deflation is a real possibility as economies around the world contract. Deflation, a persistent, general decline in prices that can cause consumers to delay purchases in the hope that prices would further go down, and that can prompt businesses to cut production and lay-off staff, making demand fall even further.

Bold Strategies Needed

Should taxpayers bail out distressed banks, investment giants or automakers? There should be a more comprehensive approach to resolve the crisis rather than bailouts. New government bodies have to be setup to recapitalize those failing banks and take over their troubled assets and manage it. Rather than a firm wise ad hoc bailout, the body should make a thorough study from the origination, evaluation and remedial action to recover the economy from the mess. Using tactical approach the Federal Reserve and the Treasury have put plenty of taxpayers' money through the central bank's liquidity facilities, loan to Bear Stearns, or the government takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the mortgage giants, insurer

AIG and now the auto makers. This is focused on staving off catastrophe one bail-out at a time. Barney Frank, the leading Democrat on financial matters in the House of Representatives, Paul Volcker, a former chairman of the Federal Reserve have suggested that Congress may need to create a new agency to deal with the mess, similar to Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC), a government body set up in 1989 to deal with the fallout of the savings and loan (S&L) bankruptcies. But the current crisis is much larger and such a body needs wider power to address it.

IMF Study

Results of new study 'Systematic Banking Crisis' by Luc Laeven and Fabian Valencia the IMF economists suggest that 'tactical crisis containment' is expensive and frequently inadequate. In most financial meltdowns a comprehensive solution was required, and the sooner it was provided the better. The study looks at 42 crises in all, spanning 37 countries. The economists conclude, "central banks privilege stability over cost in the heat of the containment phase." The economists say 'for the moment, the bail-out tacticians are in overdrive. But the strategists' moment is approaching.'

How to Repair Your Credit and Improve Your Score

Credit Score is the method used by financial institutes to measure your financial health at a specific point in time. It indicates the risk you represent for lenders, compared with other consumers. In Canada, credit history is recorded in files maintained by at least one of Canada's three major credit-reporting bureaus (Equifax, TransUnion and Northern Credit Bureaus Inc.). These files are called credit reports - a "snapshot" of your credit history.

There is a rising tide of spam offering "credit repair" for a fee. Beware of these companies; their ability to change the information that appears in your credit file is no different than anyone else's! Only your creditors are able to alter this information. Therefore you do not need to pay a third party to obtain, review or make changes to your credit report. You have the right to access your information and make changes to your file if there is an inaccuracy.

What should you do if you have bad credit?

Before you pay someone to

advise you how to fix your credit, check out these simple steps to help you build a better credit rating:

1. Request a copy of your credit report from the three credit-reporting agencies at least once a year to verify that your personal information is up to date and your financial information is correct, and to ensure that you have not been the victim of identity fraud. Because your credit information can be kept by more than one credit-reporting agency, and because those agencies do not necessarily share information, it's important to check all three credit reports carefully. You can get a copy of your credit history from the above agencies websites for a small fee.

2. Check your credit history thoroughly. Look for errors and make sure the information in the report is correct and up to date. If you believe that the information in your credit report is incorrect, contact the financial institution that reported the information to see if an error was made. You

could also file a dispute with the three credit-reporting bureaus explaining your situation.

3. Analyse your finances. Make a list of everything you owe, the interest rate each debt carries, and the minimum payment due each month. Then, prioritize your debt: mortgage, real estate taxes, credit cards and bills should be paid in that order.

4. Negotiate with your creditors for a lower interest rate.

5. Pay your bills on time. Although the payment of your utility bills, such as phone, cable and electricity, is not recorded in your credit report, some companies may report late payments to the credit-reporting agencies, which could affect your score. Try to pay your bills in full by the due date. If you aren't able to do this, pay at least the required minimum amount shown on your monthly credit card statement.

6. Try to pay your debts as quickly as possible. The faster you pay your loans the less interest you will pay in the long run which means more available money to

pay other bills.

7. Don't go over the credit limit on your credit card. Try to keep your balance below 25% of the limit. The higher your balance, the more impact it has on your credit score. You're better off spreading out your debt between three or four different cards than having it all piled on one card.

8. Reduce the number of credit applications you make. If too many potential lenders ask about your credit in a short period of time, this may have a negative effect on your score. However, your score does not change when you ask for information about your own credit report.

9. Make sure you have a credit history. You may have a low score because you do not have a record of owing money and paying it back. You can build a credit history by using a credit card.

10. Don't share credit (except with a spouse). Think carefully before you agree to co-sign a loan. It is easy to wind up in a situation where that friend or relative stops paying his or her bills



(for whatever reason) and your credit will take a big hit. Once you're a co-signer for a loan, you're legally obligated to make those payments, whether or not you can afford them.

Show the credit system that you are a responsible money manager. A bad mark on your credit report will remain on your credit record for a maximum of 7 years. Pay your bills on time. Don't bounce any cheques. Don't overdraw your account at the bank (even if you have overdraft protection). You should only borrow money because you want to, not because you have to. In this way you will repair your credit and avoid a bad credit report in the future.

Monsoon Features

New physician is expert in infectious diseases

Role also has a special focus on children

Dr. Ashley Roberts' grandmother was a big inspiration to her becoming a physician. Her grandmother, who comes from Zimbabwe, often shared stories about her experiences as a nurse treating soldiers during the Second World War and as a human rights activist, who fought for racial equality in southern Africa.

"It showed me how much health care professionals can contribute to people's lives and taught me about the inherent connection between health and justice in any society," says Dr. Roberts, who hails from Vancouver. She recently joined Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) to fill the new role of medical director of infectious diseases and consultant paediatrician.

Dr. Roberts' role at RVHS is unique as its paediatric infectious disease specialist. While she will focus largely on paediatric patients, she will also see adult patients in her in-patient and out-patient infectious diseases work. Dr. Roberts started seeing patients in the hospital in October and will be starting both her paediatric and adult infectious diseases clinics at Rouge Valley Centenary this month.

"Like the paediatricians at RVHS, the team of infection control practitioners here is excellent, and I'm happy to be a part of both groups. As an infectious diseases consultant, I hope to offer guidance to all areas of the hospital and fulfill this new role to the best of my ability," says Dr. Roberts.

"Dr. Roberts fills a unique niche here at RVHS. She will prove to be a benefit to both our medical team and to our patients. Delivering quality patient care remains our priority, and the addition of Dr. Roberts will allow us to further that commitment," says Sonia Peczeniuk, vice president, medical affairs and clinical support.

Dr. Roberts' extensive education includes a master's of education from Harvard University; a doctor of medicine from McMaster University; a residency in paediatrics from the University of British Columbia; a fellowship in paediatric infectious diseases from the University of Toronto at the Hospital for Sick Children; and a diploma in Tropical Medicine from the Gorgas Memorial Institute of Tropical and Preventative Medicine in Peru.

Her studies have taken her across the world, including Uganda, where she has worked at the Mulago Hospital with the Infectious Diseases Institute in Kampala. Here, she focused on the care of children and adults with HIV. She also gained experience dealing with a variety of adult infectious diseases during this time.

She strongly believes that there is a need to strengthen the link between academic research, community practice, and patient advocacy. It is this desire to stay connected with the community that has brought her to RVHS. Dr. Roberts also hopes to use her background to help further educate clinical staff on infectious diseases issues.



Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) - The best at what we do.

RVHS is an excellent acute care community hospital, with many programs including 24/7/365 emergency, cardiac care and mental health. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two community hospital campuses: Rouge Valley Centenary in east Toronto; Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering in west Durham. Together a team of physicians including 224 general practitioners and 325 specialists, 1,000 nurses and many other professionals, care for a broad spectrum of health conditions. In consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, health care organizations, the Central East Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs catering to the needs of the growing communities of east Toronto, Ajax, Pickering and Whitby.

Contact
David Brazeau, Director
Public Affairs and Community Relations
Rouge Valley Health System
647-294-8885
dbrazeau@rougevalley.ca

Mental health improvements go into place

All mental health services continue to be accessed from each hospital campus

As announced in March, Rouge Valley Health System is now implementing improvements to its mental health services.

"Our new mental health model will allow us to improve our patient care and offer a more diverse range of services to patients," says Cheryl Williams, director of mental and emergency services.

"To transition to this new service model we will be expanding our emergency and crisis intervention services at both Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering (RVAP) and Rouge Valley Centenary (RVC) hospital campuses, and

consolidating all inpatient services to RVC," Williams explains.

"All mental health services will continue to be accessed from each hospital campus," she adds.

Some changes begin on Friday, Nov. 21, when the RVAP inpatient mental health unit officially moves, while other changes occur in December.

For details and dates of the changes, please visit www.rougevalley.ca/improving-mentalhealth.

ROUGE VALLEY HEALTH SYSTEM - THE BEST AT WHAT WE DO

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care community hospital, with many programs including 24/7/365 emergency, cardiac care and mental health. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two community hospital campuses: Rouge Valley Centenary in east Toronto; Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering in west Durham. Together a team of physicians including 224 general practitioners and 325 specialists, 1,000 nurses and many other professionals, care for a broad spectrum of health conditions. In consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, health care organizations, the Central East Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs catering to the needs of the growing communities of east Toronto, Ajax, Pickering and Whitby.

New BlackBerry® Pearl™ 8220 smartphone



Introducing the BlackBerry® Pearl™ 8220 smartphone, in a unique flip form factor, exclusive to Rogers™

It may not look like a typical BlackBerry smartphone but the BlackBerry Pearl 8220 delivers the same email, messaging and phone capabilities in a new compact, snappy design.

With two integrated displays, the 2.4 inch internal screen allows for a great viewing experience

whether it's to check emails, browse the Internet or watch videos while the external screen allows for message preview.

Other features of the BlackBerry Pearl 8220 include:

- > Wi-Fi enabled.
- > Rogers TalkSpot compatible.
- > Bluetooth capability.
- > 2.0 Megapixel camera with video capture.

Oydone Nisha Flooding in Jaffna



Amman Road, Nallur



Nallur Kandasamy Temple



St John's College Jaffna

Monsoon Features

WORDS OF PEACE

Absolute Zero

The concept of zero, says Maharaji, an internationally recognized voice for peace, "is fascinating. When we're feeling perfectly healthy, what do we feel? Your pants aren't too tight or too loose. Your shoes are comfortable. You don't have a headache, your arms don't ache, and you don't have pain anywhere else. What do you feel? You feel nothing."

It's only when something isn't right that people feel pain, Maharaji says, and that hints at the value of zero, which could be used as a metaphor for the absolute.

"It's everything," he says, "without being anything. Its potential is infinite: it will just go on and on. If zero is taken from something, nothing changes, but when something is given to a zero, it changes."

For example, he says, if zero is placed in front of a one, then the value of one doesn't change; but every zero added after that one increases its value.

"One explanation for the infinite can be that it's zero," Maharaji says. "It is not an entity, and yet it is an incredible entity."

"How can you feel this thing called zero? Well, I offer something that works very well when it comes to letting you feel zero. It lets you feel it very beautifully."

For most of his life, Maharaji has traveled from country to country urging people to look within themselves for the answer to the question of what life is all about. He says he can offer the key to finding a lasting peace within the heart that, when experienced, can fulfill a life.

"People try to figure out, 'How do I get fulfillment? How can I be fulfilled?'" he says. "They're told, 'Read this book and you will be fulfilled.' 'Follow this path, and you will be fulfilled.' 'Go to this holy place, and you will be fulfilled.' 'Renounce everything, and then you will be fulfilled.'"

"That's one kind of concept. Other people say that the more money you have, the more fulfilled you will be, or that if you have a good job, the more fulfilled you will



be. The trouble is neither of those two trains of thought has been proven.

"Now, what about you? Do you think what I talk about is another path? Is it a bunch of rituals? No, it's about experiencing fulfillment."

Maharaji frequently makes himself available to answer questions from those who are interested in finding out more about what he offers.

Q: What do you mean by experiencing the absolute?

A: Let me share my perspective. In this body, in this shell made of dust, resides the infinite. What is infinite? It's what was, is, and always will be.

Something within us has the ability to make this dust dance, talk,

walk, and--most importantly--want. When this process is taking place, it's called life. As long as this union is intact, we're alive. As long as we're alive, we can feel. Breath comes into me. I'm conscious. I see, I feel, I understand, and I want to feel fulfilled.

Why do we want to feel fulfilled? Does anybody have to explain to us why we want to feel fulfilled? It's because it is the best feeling. The issue isn't fulfillment. The issue is how to get it--and this is where speculation comes in, because nobody can tell you, "Now you are fulfilled." Either you feel it or you don't.

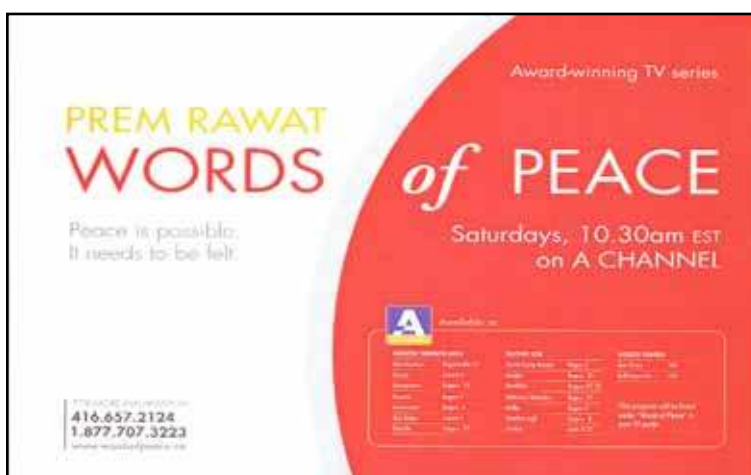
Q: What if I just want to be happy?

A: It doesn't matter what you call it. What would you like to feel? Some say happiness; some say bliss; some say love. We can feel all of these--and much more. We can feel contentment. Not only can we feel contentment, but we can feel joy and happiness. Not only can we feel happiness and bliss, but we can feel the infinite within us--and that's everything.

For a free DVD to know more about what Maharaji offers to learn to go within, call 416 657 2124

1 877 707 3223 Toll Free
For more information about Maharaji, visit:

www.tpfr.org
www.wordsofpeace.ca
www.contactinfo.net



Spirituality, Divinity And You

It is very important that the spiritual dimension of life be brought into people's lives. Many have developed an allergy to spirituality because somebody or the other has always told them that spirituality means leaving everything and going to the mountains. Even if you'll wanted to go, there would not be space enough for all of you. You had

sion. Then you begin to experience that which is not physical, the spiritual, the Divinity of your true nature.

So, there is something else that needs to be looked at, something beyond these dimensions.

Even if I erase all your memory you will still be here. Right? Your family will disappear, your status will disappear, your business will disap-



Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is a realized master, yogi and mystic, who has founded Isha Foundation, an international public service organization that strives for ultimate human well-being. For world-wide program information, visit www.ishafoundation.org Toronto local contact 416 300 3010 or email Toronto@ishafoundation.org

better learn how to be spiritual in your office, in your home, on the streets, wherever you are. You had better learn that, because spirituality is about the inner self and not what you do on the outside. Spirituality is an inner science that creates a conducive inner atmosphere because the quality of life depends on the within. That quality depends on how joyous and how peaceful you are at this moment. You have completely neglected this dimension. Unless you do something about the inner self you will not know what it means to be peaceful and joyous, you will not know how to go beyond the limitations of being just a physical body and mind.

See, your body is simply accumulation of what you have gathered from the Earth - when you leave you can't take an atom of this body along with you. So this body is not really yours. Your mind is not yours too. It is also just an accumulation - what you have gathered from the environment you were brought up in.

When you transcend the limited experience of what you know as yourself, your experience of life will naturally be in a different dimension.

pear, and everything that you own in the world will disappear. But you will still be here. Beyond all the things that you identify yourself with there is something called 'you' that will still exist. That 'you' is not subject to what you accumulate from the outside. But unfortunately that 'you' was so covered and crowded with other things that you never allowed yourself to look at it. You always thought that what you are identified with is much more important than who you really are. If your focus shifts then the other dimension can start opening up for you.

The whole process of spiritual science, yoga in particular, is to somehow elevate you to an experience that is beyond the five sense organs. When you transcend the limited experience of what you know as yourself your experience of life will naturally be in a different dimension. Then you begin to experience that which is not physical, the spiritual, the Divinity of your true nature. If you are ready and willing to experience life in deeper dimension, to be truly happy, I have methods. Then you can begin to experience the joy and blissfulness of knowing who you really are.



Inspiration Driving Institute



S.S. MATHAVAN

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Monsoon Features

ABC celebrates Diwali

By: Seema Gupta

It was the night of 7th November, long awaited by the ABC (Agarwals based in Canada) community to celebrate Diwali in keeping with the tradition of starting the Hindu New Year with joy and enthusiasm flinging out all despair and despondency from their lives. The ABC is a non-profit community organization with a membership comprising of over 260 Agarwal families in GTA, working hand-in-hand to nurture and promote the overall growth of the community.

Dazzling lights, exotic decorations, beautiful embellishments and festooning, centre stage bedecked with the idols of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Laxmi in elaborate ornaments all surrounded by candles and diyas - a quick glance was enough to repose the doom and gloom mood and uplift your spirits, presto.

An overwhelming crowd of more than 400 people graced the Chandni Banquet Hall in Brampton, which hosted the Diwali function with a mesmerizing package of music, dance, cul-

tural and devotional activities, surprise prizes and gifts, not to mention the cordon bleu. It was amazing to watch so much hidden talent within the community especially in the youth. The celebrations started with the customary pooja of Lord Ganesha followed by a mass participation in the 'Aarti' of Goddess Laxmi.

The host for the evening, the gorgeous former Miss India Worldwide Canada, Uppekha Jain had the audience glued to their seats and inadvertently led them into an extravagant five hour journey of one entertaining show after another. The evening also recognized the efforts of Dr. Rayudu Koka, a great humanitarian, community activist, administrator and physician for his professional achievements and contribution to the community. He has contributed in bringing a medical school to Sudbury which has established two scholarships in his name. In 2008, Govt. of Ontario awarded him the Ontario medal for good citizenship.

Talking of festivity, what got the audience bowled over completely was the brilliant dance

performance by Shiamak Davar (an ace Bollywood dance choreographer) troupe. The magic and masti of Bollywood music not only knocked everyone's socks off, it got the dance floor swelling and swirling by the minute. While people danced to their heart's content there was a desperate hope that every step and move would also help step out all ignorance and evil dispositions from our lives. After all, this is what Diwali is all about - shedding hatred and ignorance and spreading love and light. Never mind the country, the place, and the time, Diwali celebration is the celebration of our identity and our quest to find reason and hope in the simple truth of victory of good over evil.

The wing-ding not only offered everyone a wonderful time with their family and friends it made great memories to cherish for a long time. The ABC community's sincere efforts in organizing the whole show proved that times may change but our hearts will always be true to our traditional values and Diwali is the best time to catch up with our heritage and connect with our culture.



J & J Express Kitchen New Restaurant Opened in Whitby

J & J Express Kitchen is the new restaurant added to Whitby's eatery joints. Conveniently located at 6.Campbell Street (Unit 2) in Whitby, J & J caters to casual guests who would like a quick breakfast, lunch or early dinner. The Restaurant serves Canadian style breakfast and rotisserie chicken which is a specialty of J & J.

Deputy Mayor Gerry Emm was present at the opening and graced the occasion. Mayor also

presented a memento to the owners welcoming J & J Express Kitchen to Whitby.

Restaurant opening hours: 7.00 am to 11.00pm.

Address:
6 Campbell Street , Unit # 2
Whitby

Tel: 905 655 7024

Seen here are some pictures taken on the day of the Opening of the Restaurant.

(Picture Courtesy - Shankar of Quick Snaps)



Left to right Jude Francis partner, Deputy Mayor of Whitby Gerry Emm, Tenison Joseph partner



Ribbon cutting- left to right-Tenison Joseph, Deputy Mayor Gerry Emm, Jude Francis & Vinod Rana General Manager J&J Swagat Convention Center



Handing of Memento from Deputy Mayor welcoming the opening of J&J express kitchen. J&J express kitchen is basically a casual eatery joint opened specifically keeping in mind the requirement of the residents of Brooklyn, Whitby. J&J is open for breakfast, lunch and early dinner. J&J serves traditional Canadian Breakfast and rotisserie chicken which is the specialty of J&J express kitchen



J&J Express Kitchen outside view



Restaurant picture after opening ceremony

Monsoon Features

Out of the goodness of her heart

Ayktah Grover

Some donate their time volunteering at their neighbourhood soup kitchen or helping the less fortunate. Others make generous contributions to charitable organizations. But, University of Windsor student, Shikha Chandok, took philanthropy one step further. She decided to give a part of her.

Chandok, now 22, shocked her parents, Ashwani and Kusum Chandok, last fall when she informed them of her decision to donate part of her liver to Sunila Sharma, a friend of the family.

"I was so scared. She's a girl. She has to have her own kids one day, her own life. She wasn't listening to me. She wanted to do it. I do a lot of meditation and I just prayed that everything would be okay," said Mississauga resident, Kusum Chandok.

The idea was born when Chandok eavesdropped on a conversation between her mom and a friend. "My mom mentioned that she [Sharma] was just coming out of the hospital again and her condition was getting worse. It had something to do with bad genes; a genetic condition," said Chandok.

Eight years ago, Sharma was diagnosed with primary biliary cirrhosis (PBC), a chronic liver disease that affects women between the ages of 40 and 60. PBC is not considered to be hereditary,

although it may develop in siblings.

Sharma, who has type O-positive blood, had been on a waiting list for a donor for over four years. Those with O-positive blood can donate to their blood to anyone, however they can only receive blood from each other.

With the odds against her, Sharma's chances of finding a suitable match were slim.

Thus, enters Shikha Chandok.

Hearing the news, Chandok, also an O-positive blood type, and a blood donor for many years, immediately contacted her family doctor to confirm whether she could be a suitable candidate for Sharma.

After withdrawing 16 vials of blood and undergoing numerous tests, doctors at University Health Network Toronto General division confirmed Chandok as a match. "When I found out, it was the hardest week of my life. I had three midterms, I had just quit my job, talked to my professors, and had to pack up my apartment and head back home," said Chandok.

The transplant was set for December 10, 2007. After eight and a half hours of intense surgery and the hard work of a team of eight doctors, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, and surgeons the transplant was completed successfully. For Chandok, it was a life goal accomplished.

"I've always wanted to make a difference. Donating blood was just a start for me doing the surgery was a completely random chance that I got."

But the worst was yet to come. A week later Chandok was released from the hospital. "The first three days I have no memory of at all. Thursday is when I started remembering everything. It was so painful. I couldn't walk. I couldn't get out of bed. I needed help going to the bathroom. I couldn't do anything," says Chandok.

Chandok's recovery from the surgery was neither simple nor speedy. She endured a 10 inch incision to her stomach, which resembled a hockey stick, continuous vomiting, daily shots of Herpin (an anti-coagulant), low attention span, breathing difficulties, a lack of energy, headaches and the daily consumption of medications, including morphine, stool softeners, antibiotics and immunosuppressant agents.

But the gruelling recovery process did not quell Chandok's indomitable spirit. "As much pain as I was going through, not for a second did I regret my decision, thinking to myself that, why did I do this?"

When asked how this experience had changed her life, Chandok replied, "It was a turning point for me. It changed my perspective on things. I figured out



who my true friends were, which was probably the hardest for me to deal with. It's a good reality check, and I needed it. I never thought this surgery would blow up to this proportion. It's caused a lot of awareness, and I'm really proud of that."

To her surprise, Chandok soon became a cause célèbre in her community. Her act of generosity was featured in local newspapers and on radio stations. To many, she became an inspiration and role model. "We all are proud of her, not many people would be able to do this, including me. I think if I couldn't do this then at least one person in my family has done a great job," said her father Ashwani Chandok.

In Canada, more than 300 liver transplants are performed each year. Unfortunately, patients may have to wait anywhere from

24 hours to three years for a suitable donor. In 2004, 68 patients died waiting for a transplant.

"We're all capable of making a difference, giving back," said Chandok. "We take so much and never think to give back until something negative happens. We can take simple steps like donating blood. People need that out there. You are saving someone's life. Some day your family member could need it. We can help so many people by doing a selfless act. We're giving someone a chance the hope to live."

When the ambitious Shikha Chandok is not busy saving lives, she continues to pursue her bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology at the University of Windsor, and volunteers at a school for students with special needs.

A Special Evening of Music with Sri Lanka's Kaffirs held in Colombo

By Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

A Special Evening of Music with the Kaffirs was held at the Barefoot cafe on November 2nd 2008. The event was organised by Internews. There were 300 music and dance lovers who had the rare opportunity of experiencing African music and dance in Colombo. Audience at



The performers slowly begin to dance according to the beat they hear, while moving their hips and feet



The Kaffir Community shared their passion for music and dance with the fellow Sri Lankans

Barefoot cafe enjoyed the show for nearly two hours with the beats of drums and a variety of melodies. It was a unique occasion to witness the Kaffir community members beautifully performing at Barefoot Cafe.

The Kaffir ancestry dates back to the 16th century, when Africans were brought to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese as soldiers and laborers. They settled in the Sirambiyadi area of Puttalam in the 1800s and

stayed. The Kaffirs originally spoke a form of Portuguese Creole. While they no longer use that as their principal dialect, their music, known as Manja and Kaffringna, is performed in Portuguese.

Manja songs have a few lyrics, which can be six or seven lines, and they are repeated. The songs are about love, nature, sea, birds and animals. Kaffirs also sing devotional songs. They say that, they follow the footsteps of the ancestors, and



Naina Mohamed Bawa entertains the audience with his vibrant voice and beats of the tambourine. He displayed his talent in front of large non-Tamil speaking audience

sing and dance like them.

They use tambourine, dholak, daily household items such as spoons, coconut shells and bottles as musical instruments. They were dressed gorgeously, and women wore matching jewelries for their dresses. The 12 member team caught the attention of the audience.

Also at this Special Evening of Music, Farik singer Naina Marikkar Bawa sang songs of faith and devotion dedicated to Almighty Allah. His father and grandfather have been famous singers. Naina Mahamed Bawa sings Sufi inspired songs of

faith and devotion at dawn in the streets of Puttalam, in North West Sri Lanka during the festive season.

The Kaffir people are a forgotten community in Sri Lanka. The funds collected through this event are contributed to the Kaffir community projects in Sri Lanka.

There are approximately 1,000 Kaffir descendants in the Puttalam region, 200 families, and 15 families also live in the East, near Trincomalee and Batticaloa. They speak fluently in Sinhala and Tamil as well. [dushi.pillai@gmail.com - more pictures on:

humanityAshore.org]

Waterloo News



Operation Christmas Child - Season to give

Kitchener: Operation Christmas Child brings joy and hope to children in desperate situations around the world through gift-filled shoe boxes and the message of God's unconditional love. Anyone can participate in this simple, hands-on project.

Last season, 661,530 shoe boxes from Canada were collected and distributed to children in more than 15 countries. Each gift is a special reminder to a child that he or she is loved. Delivered by teams of local pastors, charities, and civic leaders, Operation Christmas Child gifts provide opportunities to make a lasting impact on children, families and communities. Often, the shoe

boxes open doors to provide other aid, allowing Samaritan's Purse to provide resources for a better tomorrow.

Members of the Waterloo region Tamil cultural association (TCAWR) Volunteer their service at the packaging centre, annually. The shoe boxes are received at the centre for inspection and sorting. The shoe boxes don't leave Canada on their journey overseas without first making an impact on the people who pack them. The project fosters compassion in Canadian families, individuals, and businesses by expanding their world view and showing how it is greater to give than to receive.



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Monsoon Features

'Tamils Still Want Safety, Security and A Future In This Country'

Excerpts from the speech delivered by R. Sambandan, Member of Parliament, Trincomalee District and Parliamentary Group Leader, Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (TNA), during the 2009 Budget Debate at the Sri Lanka Parliament on Nov 17th, 2008:

The Tamil people have since 1956, through their democratic verdicts overwhelmingly supported the right to internal self-determination in the areas of their historical habitation. Initially, even several Muslim leaders were elected from the Eastern Province on the Federal Party ticket. If the demand of the Federal Party for a federal arrangement was accommodated, many more members of the Muslim community would have been returned on the Federal Party ticket. The government should realize that not merely did it not accommodate the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people in keeping with their democratic verdicts, you subjected them to several pogroms over several decades when there was no violence whatever on the Tamil side. That was your answer to our legitimate aspirations and our democratic verdicts, to the non-violent Satyagraha campaigns that we engaged in.

Several decades later after the armed struggle commenced, some areas in the North-East went out of government control and when elections were held you did not want to locate polling booths in such areas. You did not want the electoral process to take place in areas not under your control. You clustered such polling booths and located them in government controlled territory, some considerable distance away from the residence of the voters. But, it is true that the LTTE discouraged voters living in areas under their control from voting in clustered booths located in areas under government control. The losers were Tamil candidates, such as myself and several others like me-nobody else- certainly not any one of you.

Nevertheless, the Tamils who were returned at those elections were returned on the basis of the same policy - the right to internal self-determination in the areas of their historical habitation.

At the 2001 Parliamentary Elections, when the peace process had virtually commenced and the Norwegian facilitators were functioning in the country,



[File Pic ~ R. Sambandan MP, at a press meeting on Dec 10th, 2007 at the Galle Face Hotel, Colombo]

the Tamil people in large numbers in the uncleared areas attempted to come through the army checkpoints and vote at the clustered booths in the government-controlled territory. They were prevented by the armed forces from crossing the checkpoints and voting. Several of these persons filed fundamental rights applications in the Supreme Court and I believe about five or six of them, from both the North and the East, were awarded damages by Justice Mark Fernando, then a senior judge of the Supreme Court. Who subverted democracy by preventing these Tamil people from voting? Was it not the government of which you were a member? And you have the impudence to talk about restoring democracy to the Tamil people.

At the 2004 Parliamentary Elections these Tamil people in the LTTE controlled areas who were able to cross the checkpoints voted liberally. There may have been some irregularities-but these people were voting for the first time after several decades. There was however, not the slightest doubt about whom the people wanted to elect. Twenty out of twenty-one Tamil members elected from the North and the East were from the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi. The Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi also obtained two seats on the National List on the strength of the vote they polled in the North-East. The twenty-two of us in parliament are unquestionably the representatives of the Tamil people of the North-East, which unfortunately, your government does not want to acknowledge in view of the agenda that you have.

Having conducted a disgrace-

ful and shameful election in the Eastern Province, you have the temerity to talk about the election of the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi Members in 2004. We know what happened at the Eastern Provincial Council Election. On my recent visit to Trincomalee, I met with some people from the North of my district where several booths had been clustered during the Provincial Council Elections.

Many voters had left the villages and had gone away to other parts of the country or had left the country. At 5 o'clock in the morning, on election day, I was told that a bus and 25 other vehicles arrived in that particular village where the booths of several villages had been clustered and that about 150 people alighted from these vehicles. Then they had gone into several houses in that village, used their toilets and their water facilities to freshen themselves and set about stuffing the ballot boxes.

Still, you could not win a single seat. Not one Tamil Member from your party was elected in Trincomalee. That was the way you got about conducting elections; that was the way you conducted the Eastern Provincial Council Election. In fact, there have been certain actions filed in court and I believe, when those hearings take place more facts in regard to the manner in which you conducted the Eastern Provincial Council Election will come to light and it will be proved in court how young fellows, members of a paramilitary group were moving around with weapons and having their own way.

All these matters will come to light. And you have the impudence to say that you conducted

a proper election.

Before I deal with development and devolution, the other two concepts of this government towards the resolution of this national question, I should place on record the government's multifaceted position on the people who inhabit this country, their status in this country, their rights in this country, and other relevant issues.

When I last spoke in Parliament during the Second Reading of the Budget, I placed on record details of several events that have occurred in the Wanni after the special envoy, Basil Rajapaksa went to New Delhi and gave an assurance to the Central Government in New Delhi that Tamil civilians will not be harmed. I also placed on record pictures of several events to prove that people had been killed; non-combatant civilians had been killed; had been injured; houses destroyed or damaged; temples damaged and even the Kilinochchi Hospital had been damaged.

Despite the assurance of the President, all these things have happened. I placed on record in this House, in the course of an Adjournment Debate in September, 2007, the names of 261 Tamil persons who were killed in the Eastern Province during the course of your military activities in the Eastern Province. Have you paid compensation to any one person?

I called upon your government to appoint a commission of inquiry comprising three retired members of the higher judiciary, a Sinhalese, a Tamil and a Muslim with the Muslim as the Chairman to go into that question and ascertain the truth. Have you done that? You see, you say one thing but you never act accordingly. This has been your history.

We know of the 'Mahinda Chintana.' We know of the two pacts the President signed with the JVP and the JHU before the presidential election. The 'Mahinda Chintana' and the pacts signed with the JVP and the JHU are only for a unitary state and no ISGA, no P-TOMS arrangement, nothing whatever. They are all at complete variance with the position that the President has taken in an interview to the 'Hindu' where he talks of a political solution and the equality, liberty, fraternity and all that type of thing. The positions taken up by him when he contested the presidential election are in complete vari-

By Rajavarodhayam Sambandan

ance with the concepts he has defined.

Of course his main military man, and I would say his main political man have enunciated their positions.

You are merely trying to assuage the international community who are constantly, whether it be India, the USA, the co-chairs, the European Union or any other country, wanting you to come to a political solution, emphasizing the need for political proposals that can lead to a solution. In fact, I quoted when I spoke in Parliament last during the Second Reading debate, Mangala Samaraweera's press interview where he said that the President had assured the Prime Minister of India that the final political proposals will be made public before the end of August 2006-two years ago. Of course, the President cannot defy the international community. He has got to keep on saying something. I saw the Prime Minister speaking on TV last evening. He was also striking a slightly different note.

You are hoping that you can show the world that the Tamil people have come to your side and that by political conviction, they have embraced the 'Mahinda Chintana.' Then you can tell the whole world "we are doing development, we do not need devolution, and everything is in our hands."

We urge the government to rethink this whole question. I knew this problem would arise and that is probably one of the reasons why I called for a division, to make sure who was where, and what the government's reaction to that would be. We are not 'koti'; I am not a 'kotiya.'

Of course, I negotiated with Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. There is no question about it. I did not hide that. The whole world knew about it. The whole world knew that I was very seriously involved. The Prime Minister knew. So, sir, we are interested in the cause of our people. We are interested in this problem being resolved in a manner where our people will be secure, safe and will have a future in this country.

We still want that.

But, if you cannot give us the right to internal self-determination in our areas of historical habitation, then, international law says that we shall be entitled to the right of external self-determination. Please remember that! And, do not think that you can shout down reason, that you can shout down justice and that you can suppress us. That will be a mistake.

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Monsoon Food Court



Baked Whole Wheat Samosas (Pastry stuffed with curried potatoes, peas, and spices) Serves 12

Ingredients

For the dough:

- 2 cups (500 mL) whole wheat flour
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) salt
- 1 cup (250 mL) plain, non-fat yogurt

For the filling:

- 2 cups (500 mL) mini new potatoes, skin on, cubed
- 1 cup (250 mL) onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) canola oil
- 1 clove of garlic, chopped
- 1 inch cube of ginger root, peeled and grated
- 1 tsp (5 mL) cumin seed
- 2 tsp (10 mL) curry powder
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) salt
- 1 cup (250 mL) frozen green peas
- Cayenne pepper (optional)
- Canola oil for brushing

Directions –

- 1. Dough:** Mix flour, salt in bowl. Add yogurt. Form into a ball. Knead adding more flour as needed. Wrap tightly. Place in the fridge until ready.
- 2. Filling:** Boil the potatoes 15 minutes or until tender but not mushy. Drain. Set aside. In the same pot, heat oil over medium heat, add onion, oil, garlic, ginger, cumin, curry powder and salt. Cook until the onion starts to soften. Add peas and cook until heated. Remove and add the potatoes. Toss to blend.
- 3. Assemble and bake:** Preheat oven to 425° F (220° C). On floured surface, roll dough into a long rope. Divide it evenly into 12 pieces. One by one roll each piece into a circle. Place about 2 tbsp (25 mL) of filling on each circle and fold over. Dampen inside edge with finger dipped in water and crimp edges with a fork. Brush sparingly with oil. Place the samosas on greased baking sheet and cook 15 minutes. Remove them from the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 350° F (180° C). Flip the samosas over and bake for an additional 5-10 minutes. Serve with your favourite dipping sauce.

Nutritional information per serving (1 samosa): • Calories: 142 • Protein: 5 g • Fat: 3 g • Saturated fat: 0 g • Dietary cholesterol: 0 mg • Carbohydrate: 25 g • Dietary fibre: 4 g • Sodium: 99 mg • Potassium: 266 mg



Aloo Gobi (Potato and cauliflower curry) Serves 6



Ingredients

- 2 tbsp (25 mL) canola oil
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) cumin seeds
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) curry powder
- 1 hot green chili pepper sliced
- 4 cups (1 L) cauliflower, chopped
- 2 cups (500 mL) new potatoes, diced
- ½ cup (125 mL) water
- ½ tsp (2 mL) salt

Directions –

1. Heat oil in a large fry pan over medium heat. Add the cumin seeds and heat until fragrant. About 1 minute.
2. Add the onion, curry powder and green chili and cook for 1 minute.
3. Add cauliflower, potato, water and salt. Stir well. Cover with a lid and cook over medium low heat for 15 minutes. Serve.

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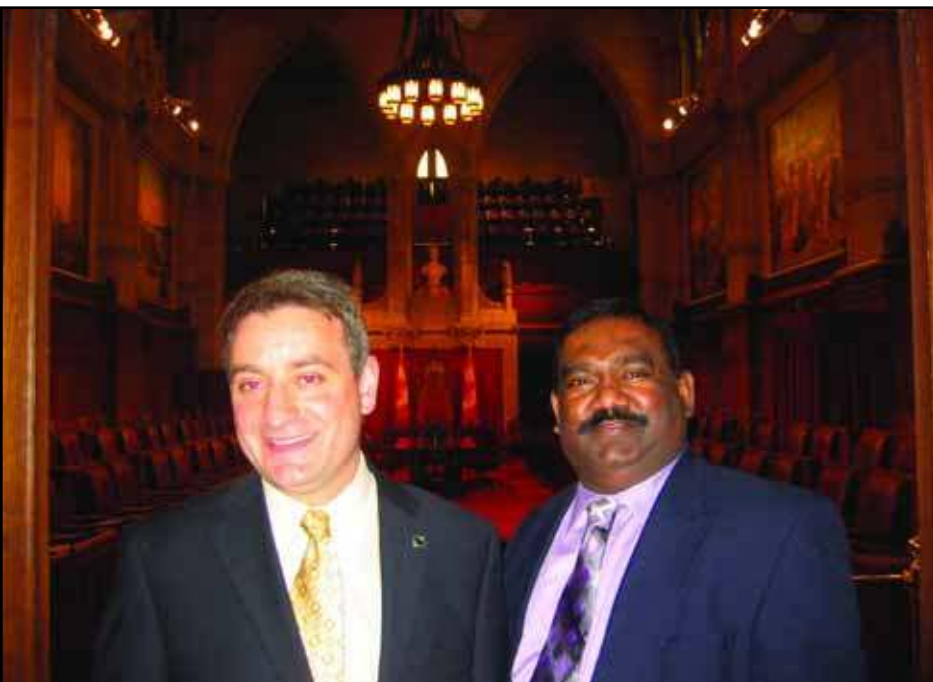
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Taken at Parliament on Nov 17th during Paul Calandra's
Swearing-In Ceremony with Sridhar Suppiramaniam



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Margosa appoints 2 new Directors

Two new alternate Directors appointed for Margosa Credit Union.

Two new alternate Directors, Mr. Manickam V Jeganathan and Mr. Selliah Kulasingham have been appointed to the Board of Directors of Margosa Credit Union. Margosa Credit Union is the first of its kind established to meet the financial needs of the Sri Lankan community. The two new alternate Directors have helped the organization in bringing in investors and in the promotional activities of the Company.

Below are short profiles of the new alternate Directors.



Manickam V Jeganathan

- Margosa Incorporator one of 43 - Participated in various promotions
- Recipient of Ontario Voluntary service Awards proposed by SACEM (twice) and also by Senior Tamils centre
- Treasurer S T C 2008/09 and Chairperson of Finance Committee

2008/09 Member Since 1996

- Treasurer K H C OSA 2008/09 - Member since 1993
- Assistant Secretary SACEM 2008/09 - Member since 1986
- Chrysler Canada (Production and Inspection) 20 years experience and
- Browns Group of Companies (Management Team) for 17 Years



Selliah Kulasingam

- Owner of Rubini West Indian Grocery Store for the past 12 yrs
- Leading Business Man of West Indian Grocery Companies
- Volunteer at the Analai Cultural Organization of Canada last 7 yrs
- Served as a Director on the board of Ayyappan Temple for the last 3 yrs and functioned as a President
- Has been very active with the Sri Lankan community and an active voluntary worker amongst Hindu Devotees

Other changes in the administrative board



Vinasithamby Thurairajah

Vinasithamby Thurairajah is the President of Community Financial Service Group Inc. He is also Commissioner of Oaths. He has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Sri Jayewardene University in Colombo, Sri Lanka and is an Agent for Life Insurance.

Thurairajah is the Chair for Community Development for Margosa. He has now been appointed as Vice-Chair of Margosa Credit Union Limited with immediate effect. He was one of the founder members who initiated the establishment of a Credit Union for Sri Lankans. The Board is delighted to have him as their Vice-Chair.



Victor Santhiapillai

Victor Santhiapillai is a Real Estate and Insurance Broker.

Victor has been the owner of a Century 21 Affiliate Realty Inc. for the past ten years and owner of Alpha Insurance Services Inc. for five years. He holds a Degree in Civil Engineering and a Masters in Construction Management. At the community level, Victor is a past director of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce, the president of Josephian-Peterite Alumni Association, and a first degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

Victor is the Chair for Membership and Investor Relations. He has now been appointed as Chair for the Audit Committee.

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Monsoon Features

Muktipath Meditation - a path towards utter freedom - VIII

Think Positive to be Positive

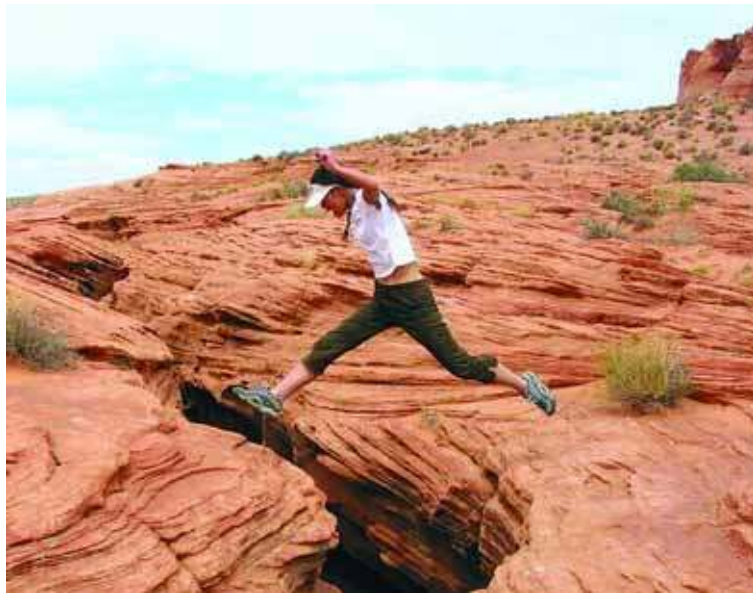
Prof. Saran Ghai

Let's take an assignment. To start with, just for today. OK. Forget even for a day. Just for one hour. Yes, you can do it. While reading this article, take a vow, in the next one hour you will not think anything negative, you will not let any negative thought come into your mind. You will think all positive and your brain will accept only affirmative thoughts. In that one hour negative word is out of your dictionary.

What do you think? Can you do it? Is it not that more you try not generating any negative thoughts in your mind, more negative thoughts come in there. Negative words starts striking your mind again and again, again and again. That is the specific nature of our mind. The more we try to avoid thinking about any particular thing, more that thing strikes our brain. It is as similar as you want to forget any of your beloved one but you find more and more that person strikes his/her memories in your mind. This is the moment when meditation plays its supreme role in concentrating your mind. It's only the meditation that would help you control your emotions.

If you really want that negativity should disappear from your mind, concentrate on positivity. Engage your brain in positive thoughts. Start recollecting all those moments which gave you pleasure or you became a tool in making someone happy. Think about those small and big events when you found yourself the happiest person on this earth. They will bring positive thoughts in your mind.

A few days before someone called me on phone and started discussing on my article in Hindi titled - "It is not difficult identifying God". On one side he wanted to maintain his theory that it is impossible to identify God and on the other side he himself named a few great souls who he was sure have identified God. To me he was quite a confused person - a person who can not decide he should be on the positive side or on the negative side. My simple explanation to him was - you have yourself given examples of some great souls who have been enlightened with the power of that super soul that simply proves that God exists. Now, the only question remains - whether a common person can get that enlightenment, the simple thought is - if they can do it, you can do it. Ultimately he agreed to



my point.

During discussions, he brought out one more controversial point. He said - Lord Krishna sacrificed his whole life for others but Lord Rama did everything only for himself. He did not do anything good for the society. I realized that he is a totally misguided person. Whatever people say, he agrees. He does not apply his own brain to judge and properly understand the matter. I did not argue with him on any of this question but simply asked him, "Do you agree that Lord Rama was a great soul who incarnated on this earth and billions of people recognize him as their God and worship him?" He said, "Yes." Then I asked him - what about you. "Do people think you are also a person who has equal status as of Lord Rama and you have the ability to comment on his achievements and his giving to the humanity?" He said, "No." Then finally I concluded advising him with the help of an example that if a candle stands in front of the Sun and start scolding the Sun that except warmth and skin burning temperature, what else the Sun gives us? Would those words diminish the giving of the Sun to the human being and the earth where we live?

I advised him to not to spread negative thoughts about a person who is way higher in status than of you. We should not forget that our brain is too small to understand their acts they did for the betterment of the society. Never compare religions and Gods. Lord Rama, Lord Krishna. Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira. Jesus Christ, Guru Nanak, Sant Kabir, Mohammad Sahib, all these supreme powers were so great and so benevolent that they incarnated time to time on this earth and as per the contemporary circumstances they showed the path of truth and humanity to

and with whose consent we spread hate? If we do not like any ideology, just keep that within ourselves.

To love is a positive foot mark whereas to hate is the negative one. Stop negative thinking. It will not give you anything except boiling and burning your blood. I am getting another example of a person in my mind who is a negative thinker. He only thinks negative and would always remain engaged in spreading negative messages. First let me introduce you to him. He is a person who considers himself a messiah of pure Hindi. He is deadly against the use of English or words of any other language to be used in Hindi language. He does not only criticize the Hindi Newspapers but also Hindi writers if they use English words in their language. Up to this point, you will ask what wrong he does? Let me tell you what wrong he does. Firstly the language he uses to criticize is amalgamated with direct scolding with application of un-parliamentary words, insulting viewpoints.

But the most laughable thing he does is that he writes all his criticism in English and not in Hindi. He and such kind of people are the messengers of hate and dirty criticism. They are negative brains. But as I wrote in one of my previous articles quoting Shakespeare - This world is a big stage and we all are the characters of a drama being played here. We incarnate on this earth to play our characters pre-ascertained for us. When our role is over, we leave this stage and take an exit from this world. In this light the person I referred to above has been sent to play a negative character and he is doing his part. But pray God, you and we do not have to play negative roles. Let us be positive characters.

- Continued...

(Prof. Saran Ghai is an author, editor and publisher of a number of books, magazines and newspapers. He is also a palm reader and a numerologist. Readers of Monsoon Journal can contact Prof. Ghai at (416) 816-5559, E-mail: muktipath@muktipathmeditation.com, and website:

www.muktipathmeditation.com

Sri Lankan Graduates Association Annual Dinner

Sri Lankan Graduates Association held their customary Annual get-together and Dinner last month at the J & J Convention Center.

The highlight of this year's event was the award of scholarships to winners selected from participants who attended the career counseling workshop. The

scholarships were presented to the winners by Dr. Manivannan. The Association conducts regular programs, workshops and seminars on career counseling. The Association also raised a sum of \$3,000 for the displaced persons in the Vanni district in Northern Sri Lanka and the funds were channeled through the Red Cross

Society for distribution.

The main Office Bearers of the Association are - Suren Balendran (President), Yoga Arulnamby (Vice-President), and C. Ramanathan (Secretary).

Seen here are pictures taken at the event. (Picture Courtesy- Mahesh Abeywardene)



Winner Pranavan Ganeshalingam receives scholarship award from Raj Thavaratnasingham



Winner Banuja Sivarajah receives scholarship award from Yaso Somalingam



Board Members:

Front row-L-R- Samy Ramachandran, S. Sivanayagamoorthy, Suren Balendran, Dr. K Theivendirarajah, Yaso Somalingam, C. Ramanathan
Back row-L-R- Varathan Shanmuganathan, Raj Thavaratnasingam, Dr. V. Mannivannan, P. Balendran, Raveena Rajasingham, Y. Arulnamby - **Photography - Abeywardene**

Monsoon Features

The baby in the manger

by Raymond Rajabalan

And the world became flesh and dwelt among us John 1:14

Hope is the very essence of the act of birth. It is the purpose of a new beginning, the fulfillment of every true love's hope.

Countless number of babies have been born during the past 2000 years. A few of them, who happened to be born into royal families, had the privilege of having their birthdays celebrated with pomp and glory in their own countries. However with the passage of time not only their birthdays but the people themselves have been forgotten forever.

However, there is but one child - infant Jesus-whose birthday has been celebrated, not only in his country of birth, but also throughout the entire globe and in every age for almost twenty centuries.

What is the difference between the child who was born in a stable 2000 years ago and every other child who has been born or will be born into this world? What is special about the birth of this child?

"Christ was born in the first century. Yet he belongs to all centuries

"He was born a Jew. Yet he belongs to all races

"He was born in Bethlehem. Yet he belongs to all countries. His love encompassed the entire world

Christmas is the birthday of God made man. If we make a quick run through theology of the Incarnation-the taking of flesh by the Word of God-might help us to realize that Christmas is more than a worldly festival and a commercial feast.

The church teaches us that Jesus Christ from the first moment of his conception, was truly God and truly Man; that the second person of blessed Trinity who had a divine nature from all eternity, in time took a human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary and is therefore fully and completely God and also fully and completely man.

Some might be tempted to ask "Does it matter that much? Does it make much difference to our lives?" Well if it doesn't, it should

If the Christ child in the crib was not both God and man, then the man who underwent so much agony and died on the cross 33 years later could not have been both God and man and none of us would not have been redeemed. If we have not been redeemed, then we can never get into Heaven



Christmas is not just the vague commemoration of a single event that took place 2000 years in a remote village in Bethlehem. Paul said that "in the fullness of time God sent his son, born of a woman, to redeem us and to make us His adopted sons".

We are still living in the fullness of time, being redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus. The angel said to Joseph, "She will give birth to child and you must call his name Jesus, for He will save people from their sins." Mathew 1:21

In the Acts, St. Peter says "There is no other name under Heaven by which we can be saved"

This then is the wonderful exchange of form that took place at the Incarnation. God assumed human nature so that He may communicate to us a share in his divine nature or sanctifying grace. Without that grace, we could not enter Heaven and without the death of Christ, we could not have won back for ourselves the grace which Adam had lost.

Without the crib we could not have had the cross. Christ had to be born that He might die. We all die, but we are born for life. Christ on the other hand was born into this world so that He may die for us. Our salvation is not an automatic process but it was won for us by Christ.

If we are to benefit from the salvation which Jesus Christ won for us, we must live in such a way that we are worthy of it. That is the significance of life of Christ between the crib and the cross. He opened the gates of Heaven and showed us the way to get there. He did that by living according to the values of God. In His life, we can find every value.

He was detached from things of this world.

Perhaps it might be worth while dwelling on this fact

Paul tells us that whilst He was rich before He became poor for our sakes. The King of Kings chose to be born in the manger. Christ could have come into the world as a rich man, a man of immense power and worldly influence but He chose not to. It certainly teaches us a very valuable lesson. Today the world society in general has become so materially minded that men measure success in terms of making money. Yet when God came down into this world to show us what He considered a perfect and successful life, he came as a relatively poor man though he had all the necessities in life. He was born in a stable; He worked at a trade: He died almost naked on a cross and He said: "I have given you an example that as I have done so also you should do"

He never attended any institution of higher education. Yet all the scholars and philosophers are to this very day trying to comprehend his teachings.

He was not a business magnate. Yet even the wealthiest and the powerful in the world shudder at the mere mention of his Holy name. Yes the name of Jesus has made such a profound impact.

Let us remember the innocent baby born in an occupied and troubled land for the purpose of dying. It was a great paradox of history. A birth that found ultimate purpose of death. God who came to the earth in the most vulnerable form - Victory in defeat. Glory in humiliation.

The silent babe in the manger has so much to say to us, if only we will listen. If we have still have not listened let us make an effort to do so and transform our lives.

Solution to Kashmir - Continued from page 4

In a separate phone call, another gunman invoked the oppression of Muslims by Hindu nationalists and the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992. Such calls were the only occasions on which the militants, whom initial reports have tied to the Pakistani jihadist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, offered a likely motive for their indiscriminate slaughter. Their rhetoric seems all too familiar. Nevertheless, it shows how older political conflicts in South Asia have been rendered more noxious by the fallout from the "war on terror" and the rise of international jihadism.

Pakistan, a nation-state founded on Islam, has long claimed Muslim-majority Kashmir, and has fought three wars with India over it since 1947. In the early 1990s, as an anti-India insurgency in Kashmir intensified, groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba became the Pakistani government's proxies in its war of attrition with its neighbor.

American pressure after 9/11 forced Pakistan's president, Pervez Musharraf, to ban Lashkar-e-Taiba, which had developed links with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. With General Musharraf's departure from office in September, it would be no surprise if this turned out to be the Muslim group's first major atrocity since 2001.

Pakistan's new civilian government is too weak to control either the extremist groups within the country or the various rogue elements within its military and intelligence. The American military was reported to have started bombing supposed terrorist hideouts inside Pakistan's borders even as General Musharraf stumbled to the exit. As its increasingly desperate pleas to the Bush administration to stop the attacks go unheeded, Pakistan's government appears pathetically helpless to its own citizens.

The sense of humiliation and impotence that this loss of sovereignty creates in Pakistan, a country with a strong tradition of populist nationalism, cannot be underestimated.

Meanwhile, India's influence in Afghanistan has grown as it pours reconstruction money into the country, as have its military ties with Israel. Add to this the Bush administration's decision to reward India with an extraordinarily generous nuclear deal and to more or less ignore Kashmir, where in August Indian security forces brutally suppressed the biggest nonviolent demonstrations in the valley's history, and recent attacks against the Indian Embassy in Kabul, the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, and now in Mumbai begin to appear to be connected by more than chronology.

Meanwhile, Indian intelligence experts and others suspect that jihadists and disaffected members of Pakistan's armed forces and intelligence agencies have forged closer links and, as the string of recent bomb attacks on Indian cities reveals, are rapidly making new allies among the 13 percent of Indians who are Muslim.

It is very likely that Barack Obama will take a different tack from the Bush administration in antiterrorism efforts in South Asia. In an interview with MSNBC last month, he said that his administration would encourage India to solve the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan, so that Islamabad can cooperate with the United States in Afghanistan.

The idea that the road to stability in South Asia goes through Kashmir is as persuasive as the notion that the path to peace in the Middle East goes through Jerusalem. It is also equally hard to realize. Mr. Obama could act

quickly to stem growing extremism in Pakistan and strengthen civilian authority by ending American missile attacks within its borders and shifting the allied strategy in Afghanistan away from military force and toward political nation-building and economic reconstruction. At the same time, he will have to find a solution in Kashmir that endows its Muslims with a measure of autonomy while pacifying extremists in both India and Pakistan.

The new president's moral and intellectual authority will be vital in negotiations with India, which, like China regarding Tibet, adamantly rejects third-party mediation in Kashmir. Mr. Obama could point out the obvious to Indian leaders: they have paid a huge price for their intransigence over Kashmir, with an estimated 80,000 dead in the valley in the last two decades and a resultant rise in terrorist attacks across India.

Indeed, the outrage in Mumbai is the latest and clearest sign that the price of India's uncompromising stance on Kashmir has become too high, imperiling its economy as well as its security. Indian anger over the fumbling response to the brazen attacks disguises the panicky realization that there can be no effective defense against terrorists in a country with a long coastline and densely populated cities. The best India can hope for is to improve what Ratan Tata - the country's leading industrialist and the owner of last week's main terrorist target, Mumbai's Taj hotel - calls "crisis management."

As the economy falters (Mumbai's stock market has lost nearly 60 percent of its value this year), India can barely cope with homegrown violent movements like the Maoist insurgency in its central states, which Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has described as the biggest internal security threat to India since independence.

Pointing to the Bush administration's vigorous response to 9/11, Indian commentators lament that India is a "soft state," unable to defend itself from internal and external enemies. But India cannot turn into a "hard" state without swiftly undermining its secular, multicultural democracy.

The government has already experimented with draconian laws like the Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act of 2002, which among other measures allowed the police to hold suspects without charge for six months. It was repealed in 2004 after many abuses against Muslims were revealed. While these attacks may lead to calls for more tough measures, Indians cannot lose sight of the peril that 150 million Muslims would lose their faith in India's political and legal system. And it is obviously dangerous to threaten Pakistan, a nuclear-armed state, with war.

As president, Mr. Obama could conceivably persuade India and Pakistan to see the virtue of a political solution to Kashmir. But he would first have to set an example by rejecting the false assumptions of a global war on terrorism based primarily on military force - assumptions that the elites of powerful countries with restive minorities like India, China and Russia have eagerly embraced since 9/11.

"The people of India deeply love you," Prime Minister Singh said to President Bush in September while thanking him for the nuclear deal. Yet it is President-elect Obama who has the opportunity to create deeper and more enduring alliances for the United States in South Asia - and he should start with Kashmir.

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Monsoon Features

Happiness

By: Devadas Chelvam

The primary virtue of man is happiness. All other virtues flow from happiness.

Happiness is man's first duty. He is able to fulfill all his other duties well, if he is happy.

Misery leads to selfish and evil acts.

A happy person serves others selflessly.

Happiness is not derived from outer circumstances, objects or other people.

Happiness is our essential nature. When we are completely true to ourselves, we are happy.

Happiness is a choice. We can choose to be happy here and now.

When we accept ourselves completely as we are, with the good and the bad, without any resistance whatsoever, we are happy. Of course, we are free to change whatever needs to be modified or changed.

Blaming and condemning others makes us miserable. Thereby we are condemning ourselves as well.

Who am I?

Who am I? What am I? What is my true self? What remains the same, while everything around me changes continually?

What changes or can change cannot give me authentic identity. Then who am I?

The great modern sage Ramana Maharshi was only sixteen years old when he intuitively found the answer to this question beyond thoughts and words. One's true Self underlies all thoughts, words and acts. It is the permanent screen in which all the play takes place. It remains the same in everything and everyone. The Self is the substratum of all that is or can be.

As the source of a wave is the ocean, the source of my being and becoming is the Pure Self, the ultimate Reality or God.

God is the source of our belief, our unbelief and doubts. Belief and unbelief are mere thoughts. Pure Self or God is the reality behind the thoughts.

We use God's energy to deny Him as we need a tongue to say that there is no tongue.

Unfortunately there is much confusion about the concept of God. He is often conceived as essentially separate from us. Some may imagine God as an ancient, venerable personage up in heaven far removed from us. That is completely a false idea about God.

God cannot be separated from



us and we can never be separated from God. "In Him, we move and have our being" in the words of St. Paul. We are always one with God.

God cannot damn anyone. We tend to project our fears, anger and judgments on to God. Though understandable, it is not accurate.

Love

To love is to be happy with someone or something.

God loves us unconditionally. He/She is pure joy within us, here and now.

To know God is to be happy with Him in this world itself.

As God loves us unconditionally we can and must love Him unconditionally.

Love is not necessarily a feeling but a commitment. Repeated acts of love can make us grow in love and feel it joyously.

Love is a choice. You can choose to love anyone at any moment.

TCCC celebrates 22 years of service

The Tamil Christian Church of Canada celebrated its 22nd Anniversary on the 16th November 2008 at their Church at Scarborough. The Rev. Dr. A.W. Jebaneson, principal, Pilma - Talawa Theological College, Kandy, Sri Lanka was the chief guest and he preached the sermon. He related how people who met him at various functions in Toronto asked him 'what is happening in Sri Lanka'. The preacher was not sure what their intentions were when they put such a question from him as most of them would have already known the answer from the media and other sources. Relating the story of prophet Nehemia who as cup-bearer for the King of Persia who wanted to get involved personally in the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem which was destroyed by the Persians, he stressed the need for action with the words 'come let us build'. There is no point in trying to get information

and be inactive. Even in Church matters one should get involved and contribute his/her mite towards its services. Being a member of a church for 22 years doesn't count anything unless one had dedicated himself/herself to the service of the Lord and made constructive contributions. Many members and well-wishers attended the service which was replete with excellent singing rendered by the choir and the instrumentalists. The special number 'amaithi tharuvathu aalayam' (church bestows peace) sung by the choir was meaningful in content and soothing to the soul. The Almighty God has enabled the church to function effectively for over two decades and his grace and sustenance will abide with it to work mightily in the years to come. The Holy Eucharist, presided over by the parish priest the Rev. Isaac Selvaratnam brought the service to a blessed conclusion.

Mental Strength is Highly Appreciated

Rajaguru Martial Arts Academy's Student Achievement

Rahul Eswaran has proved nothing in life is as important in front of mental strength. Not only has this 13 year old recently achieved his black belt in martial arts, however has also participated in the karate Ontario tournament held by Rajaguru Martial Arts Academy and won bronze in both kata and kumite.

At the age of 7 he was famed into Rajaguru Martial Arts Academy and at the age of 13 he achieved his black belt. What achievement is in this, do you ask? Indeed, this is an achievement. The reason being he only has half of his right hand. This international fame that comes from Pandathirippu, Jaffna started martial arts at Rajaguru Martial Arts Academy at the age of 7.

Among those who complain "It is all up to fate", "Time is bad", Rahul who has high mental strength and achieved his black belt in martial arts is a tamilan and brings pride to our tamil community. The people behind this pride are his father Mr. Eswaran and his mother Mrs. Meera Eswaran. We must appreciate

Rahul's parents for encouraging and motivating him towards his success.

Without thinking he is disabled and without treating him any differently from other students, the one who taught and gave Rahul his black belt is no other than the international braveness fame in martial arts, the best social worker, and a spiritual thinker So Shihan Rajaguru T. Ravindran and his Rajaguru Martial Arts Academy.

In India Rajaguru T. Ravindran has taught martial arts for those who are visually impaired, verbally impaired and hearing-impaired is an achievement to be stated. Currently in Canada through Rahul, Rajaguru Martial Arts Academy has made another achievement.

We would like to appreciate Rahul, his parents Mr. Eswaran and Mrs. Meera Eswaran, Rajaguru Martial Arts Academy Organization, as well as International Chief Instructor Sriram Rangan for bringing pride to the Tamil community.

Karai Vasantham - 2008

Canada-Karai Cultural Association had their 9th annual cultural show 'Karai Vasantham-2008' at Armenian Youth Centre on Saturday November 8th. The show commenced with the lighting of traditional lamp followed by the National Anthem, Tamil Thai Vazhthu and Manra Geetham.

The Chief Guest at the event was Dr. R. Selvarajah from USA accompanied by his wife Dr. Mrs. Saro Selvarajah. Markham Councillor Mr. Logan Kanopathy graced the occasion as a guest of honour. The agenda consisted of music, dance and playlets all conforming to the cultural tastes. As

an exception Ms. Biruntha Jeyanathan displayed her talent with Hindustani songs.

Prizes were given away to children who won awards at the Tamil literacy and Pannisai competitions. The chief guest in his keynote address commended the Association for their activities in aid of the welfare and development work in their home town, Karainagar. The President Mr. A. Carunakaran in his address mentioned this show helped to bring out youth's talents show casing our culture and heritage.

The souvenir 'Karai Vasantham - 2008' published to

mark the event was distributed to the audience after auspiciously handing over a copy to Mr. P. Kanagasabapathy, former Principal of Mahajana College. Mr. Gnanapandithan who was the Master of Ceremony was commended for his Art work for the cover of the souvenir.

The event concluded with the Vote of Thanks proposed by the Association's Honorary Secretary Mrs. Krishnaverney Sothinathan who especially appreciated the producers and participants who contributed to make the event a success.



Lighting of Lamp by Prof T. Sivakumaran



Manra Geetham



Thaai Mann Dance

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Monsoon Events



Monsoon Journal

*wishes its readers, advertisers,
patrons and well-wishers a
Merry Christmas and
Prosperous 2009*

SAVE THE DATE: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Ontario Black History Society

(OBHS) is the organization that

successfully petitioned the City of

Toronto for the first ever official

proclamation in Canada for

February as Black History Month.

To commemorate this celebration

- that has grown into a national

celebration through the initiative

of the OBHS, the OBHS will host

a brunch to mark this 30th com-

memoration of BHM. It will be at

the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel

on Sunday, January 25, 2009! All

are invited!!! More details to fol-

low or contact the OBHS at 416

867-9420 or admin@blackhisto-

rysociety.ca for sponsorship

opportunities or to order tickets.

Regards,

Rosemary Sadlier, President

Ontario Black History Society

10 Adelaide St. E. Suite 402

Toronto, ON, M5J 1E2

Sadlier direct: president@black-

historysociety.ca

OBHS office: admin@blackhisto-

rysociety.ca/416 867-9420

SAVE THE DATE: The OBHS

Annual kick-off brunch to launch

the 30th celebration of February

as Black History Month will be on

Sunday, January 25th at the

Westin Harbour Castle Hotel,

Toronto. All are invited!!!

Mahajana College Old Students' Association - Canada Maths - General Knowledge contest 2009!!!	
Contest Divisions: Grade 1, Grade 2 Grade 3, Grade 4 Grade 5 + 6, Grade 7 + 8 Grade 9 + 10, Grade 11 + 12	Requested Information: First name: _____ Last name: _____ Grade at school: _____ Mathematics: <input type="checkbox"/> General Knowledge: <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Number: _____ Email address: _____
Place: Sir John A MacDonald C.I. 2300 Pharmacy Avenue Scarborough, Ontario (Finch and Pharmacy) Date: January 11, 2009 Time: 9:30 a.m.	Closing date for application: January 5, 2009 Admission fees: \$15.00 For Additional informations: Telephone numbers: (416) 915-0516 (416) 438-3141 (416) 910-1227 (416) 532-7897 (416) 260-9482 (416) 291-0130 (416) 283-4178 Web Site: www.mahajanan.org/contest2009.htm

**First Prize: Gold Medal
Second Prize: Silver Medal
Third Prize: Bronze Medal**

" South Asian Autism Awareness Center "

Work-shops are held every month.

Main aim of the organization is to:

- 1) Educate the parents who has children with Autism
- 2) To improve the life style of the children

Mission Statement:

The mission of the South Asian Autism Awareness Center- D.E.C.A. (Defeat Embrace Conquer Autism) is to inform and inspire families impacted by autism and other childhood learning disabilities, with a special focus on those cultural elements in the community that pose particular challenges. By involving child health authorities in various autism-related fields including nutrition, behavioural therapy, neurology & primary care, among others, we hope to enrich and engage the South Asian community and its children. Through this forum we look to advocate for Autism awareness and research across communities and beyond. Ultimately, South Asian Autism Awareness Center- DECA can act as a conduit for growth and support surrounding Autism and childhood learning disabilities, helping parents, children, and the community move forward into a more confident future.

For more information on this, please contact:

Geetha Yogendran

Tel: 416-824-8847 or

e-mail: geetha_1900@yahoo.ca

or saaacinfo@gmail.com

"Mystical Twilight"

St. Bridget's Convent Past Pupils Association

New Year Eve's Dinner/ Dance

Dec. 31st. at Radisson Hotel, Dixon Rd, Toronto

St. Bridget's Convent Past Pupils Association will hold their Annual New Year Eve's Dinner/Dance this year at the Radisson Hotel in Dixon Rd, Toronto on Dec. 31st. The highlights of this year's function will be music from Mignonne Fernando of the Jetliners, the Skyliners and DJ Contempo.

Parking will be free to the guests.

Tickets for the Dinner/ Dance priced at \$ 75.00 per person can be obtained from the following:

Pushpa Collure: 416 674 0585

Lohani Pethawadu: 905 773 0737

Mallika Mahendran: 905 826 8320

Chris Pelpola: 905 775 2567



Canada - Karai Cultural Association

Memorial Meeting

On the First Anniversary of

Late. Hon. Minister of Hindu Cultural Affairs
And Colombo District Parliamentarian

Thiagarajah Maheswaran

Time: Sunday, December 28, 2008 at 3:00 pm

Venue: North York Civic Centre
5100 Yong Street (Yong & Sheppard)

All are Welcome

For more info: Siva Sundram: 416 529 8872

Jaffna Central College Old Boys Association Canada celebrated its 16th annual dinner dance night 2008

by: Pudhuvai N. Raman

"Sweet sixteen" is a popular film song from 'sound of music'. Similarly students' life throughout the world remains with everlasting green memories of their teenage as an unextinguished fire, to remember often their alma mater, particularly the school teachers, masters, professors who were the back bones to enrich their knowledge through the education derived. reciprocally to dedicate their humble gratitude for their selfless service, who guided them since their teen age, who made their life to achieve a higher status in their life as well to fulfill their ambitions and aspirations in general.

As such migrated Srilankans in Canada, particularly Jaffna central college students established 'Jaffna central college old boys association' during 1992. Though years have passed by, they still honor and respect their educational institutions with green memories and do no of social services as a mark of gratitude to this institution. they conduct number of cultural events, raises funds to donate to their alma mater annually, since most of the Sri Lankan Tamils in Toronto who are at present in high position as eminent literate scholars, business people in all trades and commerce and leaders of various social organizations of Tamil communities were the students of this college.

To commemorate the annual event of this year, JCCOBA-Canada celebrated its 16th annual dinner & dance night 2008 in grand manner, at Clairport place banquet hall, Etobicoke, which was presided over by Mr Siva Kanapathypillai, in the presence of special guests Rev. Dr. Albert Wilfred Jabanesan, Mr Arul R. Mahendiran and Jey Clairport. Most of the business dignitaries, members and invitees from us & Australia also participated in this colorful function.

President/Director - India Rainbow community services of Peel, Esa Para Esananda, being the master of ceremony highlighted the achievements of JCCOBA-CANADA in beautiful manner and as a matter of fact, his

comments and comperes of the whole events really were very nice and rewarding. In his introductory speech he reviewed JCCOBA's social service activities of the past years. Walk-a-thon project, annual cricket play competition & annual dinner nite etc have given a high reputation since funds raised are being donated to the hospital for sick kids foundation as well to the Jaffna Central College. Further as a new project of this year, through the scholarship scheme, 18 best outstanding students of Jaffna Central College, each gets Rs.10000 (\$200/-) scholarship for academic distinction) as well \$600/- for the development activities of the college are being contributed.

Mr Siva Kanapathypillai, president of JCCOBA.CANADA in his welcome speech appreciated the members' role for the success of the event as well their contribution for the past 16 years. He also thanked the sponsors and medias for their moral support and announced that a sum of \$4042 was raised through this year walk-a-thon and donated to the hospital for sick kids foundation. Similarly under the new scholarship scheme project \$2000/- raised through various social events, film shows, advt in souvenir donated to the college. He also congratulated for 10 tables reserved by the students on this dinner event at the cost of \$6000/- as well advertisers who have extended moral support so as to enable the association to donate the sum to the college development works. Introducing the chief guest Mr Sara Ananda, he also mentioned that recognizing and honoring various dignitaries award ceremony to those, who have rendered excellent services during this year also are the special events today and thanked everyone for their support.

Mr Sara Ananda, chief guest, in his special address extended good wishes and congratulated one and all, who have made this event a grand success with their profound support in various ways and means. He also expressed his sincere gratitude, that being an old student of Jaffna Central College which has given him to

achieve a lot in his life.

Various cultural entertainments intermittently made everyone to enjoy in full swing. Performances viz welcome dance by Miss Layana Kirupainathan, Kalaivendan Mr Ganapathi Raveendran's humour, light music by Mr Ravi, Prabha Balakrishnan and Mrs Sangeetha Kokulan team and dual dance by foot steps dancing school artists really were fine. Above all two Canadian belly dancers' dance for western music as well variety of South Indian film songs really were not only super, which made all the participants to dance at the end with splendor of applause and enjoyment.

Special guest Rev. Dr. Albert Wilfred Jebeenesan congratulated all and expressed that the JCC. students' contribution to this college is beyond words of appreciation.

14 teachers were honored with mementoes presented by ex-presidents viz Mr. Yognathan, Krish Jayanathan, Selvaratnam, Balaraja, Dr K. Theivendirarajah and present president Mr Siva Kanapathypillai.

Award for donors given by the chief guest Mr Sara Ananda. Appreciation award for the special guest was given by George Williams and awards to the advertisers as well to the cricket play winners were given by the president and special awards given to the members by Mrs Siva Kanapathypillai.

Appreciation certificate awarded by the coordinator of the hospital for sick kids foundation was presented to the president of the association Mr Siva Kanapathypillai and Vembadi Girs High School O.G.A. Canada President Mrs Dr. Saku Pathy.

At end Mr Esa Para Esananda proposed vote of thanks to all, extending good wishes for happy Xmas and new year and till midnight dance and music continued reflecting the success of this annual get together.

Monsoon Journal extends its good wishes to the team of JCCOBA-CANADA to continue the same spirit and create a history in Canada.



Sanath Jayasuriya: Sri Lanka's humble cricketing hero

Growing up in a small Sri Lankan fishing town, cricket changed Sanath Jayasuriya's life. But his association with the game and humanitarian work has also helped transform the lives of many others, says a CNN.com report.

The report further said:

"Without cricket I would have a small job in my home town. My mother is happy to say my name," Sanath Jayasuriya says.

His mother's pride in his success has an extra poignancy as Jayasuriya's fame in some part helped his mother survive the south Asian tsunami on December 26, 2004.

She was swept away by the first wave and only by calling out to get attention, saying she was Jayasuriya's mother, did a rescuer manage to spot her among the debris and destruction and pull her to safety.

Thousands of others, including many of Jayasuriya's friends and neighbors, were not so fortunate, and the impact that the disaster had on Jayasuriya's home-

town of Matara and many other parts of Sri Lanka is still felt today.

"Even now when many people hear the word (tsunami), they are still scared. When my mother hears it, she still can't run," he said.

After nearly 20 years of international cricket, the 39-years-old is now just as happy to put bowling attacks to the sword as well as working as a UN Goodwill Ambassador.

"Coming from Sri Lanka you need to do a lot of charity work and help in anyway you can. People love cricket and they look to cricketers, so as a team Sri Lanka also does a lot for charity. It's a personal commitment," Sanath Jayasuriya said.

On the pitch he has always been just as committed to helping his team. Making his international Test match debut in 1991 he retired from the five-day version of the game in 2007 having captained the Sri Lankan team for four years until 2003 and hit memorable centuries against every other Test side, bar the

West Indies and New Zealand.

However it was in the one day game that the all-rounder has really made his mark.

As part of the Sri Lankan team that won the World Cup in 1996 he played an explosive innings of aggressive shot-making that has been credited with revolutionizing the way in which batsmen play the game.

In 2005 he became only the fourth batsman to reach 10,000 runs in one-day matches and his current stats stand at 12785 runs from 421 one-day internationals.

Having made his name in the 50-over version of the game he's still involved in cricket's latest revolution; the even shorter Twenty20 game that is being touted as the future of popularizing the sport.

"Cricket has changed all over the world. For the public to watch this game we need for it to change. You can now enjoy all that in around 3 hours (with Twenty20). The Indian Premier League (IPL) is good for cricket and good for cricketers. The one-

day game will be phased down."

Throughout his career he's shown his own resilience adapting to changing circumstances on the cricket pitch as well as off it. Before the 2003 World Cup he took the decision not to sign a contract with the Sri Lankan cricket board, citing the loss of potential earnings it would mean for him and fellow players.

Despite not being a confrontational personality, the tension between himself and the Sri Lankan cricket board led to his resignation from the captaincy in 2003.

With no Test cricket to play this year, Jayasuriya found himself omitted from the Sri Lanka squad for 2008 series one-day series against the West Indies.

However his fine form while playing in the IPL -- he ended its inaugural season as the third highest run scorer with 514 runs and hitting 31 sixes -- convinced the selectors to pick him for the upcoming one-day series between Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.



Sanath Jayasuriya: The first cricketer to be a U.N. Goodwill Ambassador and campaigns

"Looking back I could never have thought I would have come this far. Buddhism helped me a lot. It says that you should take the middle path and you will never go wrong," he said.

"But I've done a lot of hard work and everyone, my family and coaches, have given me support. Without that I wouldn't have got here." When he does finally retire you can expect Jayasuriya to keep giving all he can to the game and causes he loves so much.

Monsoon Features

M.N. Nambiar

Legendary 'Villain' of Tamil cinema

By D.B.S. Jeyaraj

Manjeri Narayanan Nambiar, or M.N. Nambiar, as he was generally known, passed away after a prolonged illness at around 1 p.m. at a private nursing home in Chennai on Wednesday, November 19. He was 89.

His remains were taken to his residence at Gopalapuram for fans and members of the film fraternity to pay their respects to the legendary 'villain' of Tamil cinema.

Rare individual

Nambiar was a rare individual who played villainous roles on screen while remaining a virtuous person with saintly qualities off-screen. Contrary to his villainous screen persona, Nambiar was in real life a teetotalter and vegetarian and, above all, a man who upheld ethical values without any scandal or gossip ever being attributed to him.

He was also a great devotee of Sabarimalai Shree Aiyappan and undertook annual pilgrimages to the shrine for over 65 years. He was one of those instrumental in popularising the comparatively unknown deity over the years.

He initiated mountain-trekking pilgrimages at a time when it was not 'fashionable' to worship Shree Aiyappan on the scale it is being done today. As a result, he was hailed not merely as a 'Guruswamy' but a 'Mahaguruswamy' by Aiyappan devotees.

Recently, former film actress and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha Jayaram worshipped at the octogenarian's feet and sought his blessings on her 60th birthday. Tamil superstar and Aiyappan devotee Rajinikanth is another who regularly got himself blessed by the Mahaguruswamy.

Ironically, Nambiar, in spite of his unblemished character, was perceived as a dastardly villain by millions of movie-goers on account of his on-screen image while others guilty of off-screen villainy were hailed as good men due to their screen performances.

In this, Nambiar was like P.S.

Veerappa, another actor who played the villain in Tamil cinema while being of exemplary virtue in real life.

The 'villain'

To those Tamil cinema fans like this writer who grew up on a diet of Tamil movies, the demise of Nambiar evokes a sense of deep sorrow. Just as much we relished the great heroes like M.G. Ramachandran, Sivaji Ganeshan or Gemini Ganesh, we also appreciated the actors who played villainous roles opposite them.

Without these villains, the heroes could not make their mark. How could the lead actor perform his heroic deeds and win rounds of applause if the villains did not battle it out with guns, swords and fists or abduct the beautiful heroine?

Ramayana without Ravana or Mahabharatha without Duryodhana is unimaginable. Likewise, a Tamil movie without a villain or henchmen cannot be visualised. Villains were an integral part of moviedom.

Their impact was so great that the word 'villain' was adopted as a Tamil word 'villan,' with its amusing feminine equivalent 'villi' for 'vamp.' We jeered the villains and cheered the heroes.

The older generation of villains faded away and a new breed is taking over but then for some of us, 'old is gold' indeed. The villains who faded away or transformed into actors playing character roles have all gone one by one.

P.S. Veerappa, T.S. Baliah, M.R. Radha, S.A. Asokan, R.S. Manohar, O.A.K. Devar and S. Ramadas have all passed away and now it is the turn of Nambiar. He was the last of the great villains of Tamil cinema.

Each actor had a distinctive trait or mannerism. Veerappa was known for his raucous laugh; M.R. Radha for his swift change of voice from squeaky and high-pitched to guttural rasps; and R.S. Manohar would thrust his chest



out and impose his personality.

His speciality

As for Nambiar, his speciality was the way in which he would shake his head from side to side with a scowl and/or grimace. He would arch his eyebrows, expand his nostrils, screw up his mouth in a leering smile or merely purse his lips tightly.

This was enough to project a sense of evil and terror. Sometimes the lighting was dimmed to enhance the ominous threat. Chilling, powerful music in the background added to the fear. At times he would wear false, protruding teeth. When he grinned from ear to ear with those wolfish dentures, the effect was truly menacing.

Recollecting Nambiar's facial expressions revive nostalgic memories in this writer. Imitating actors is a phase many of us have passed through in childhood. Sivaji's dialogue, MGR's action, Veerappa's laughter and Chandrababu's slapstick are but some of these.

One of my favourite acts during childhood was to imitate Nambiar's threatening facial expressions. Upon hearing of his death I could not resist a few attempts before the mirror. Hmmm!

Apart from his facial expressions, Nambiar could also deliver his dialogue with appropriate modulation. He would lower or raise his voice when necessary. Even his hoarse whispers were terrifying.



Unlike many of the present actors, these 'oldies' could speak perfect, fluent Tamil with correct diction and pronunciation.

Nambiar was ethnically a Malayalee but like those of his era could speak other 'Dravidian' languages like Tamil well. Nowadays, even 'Tamil' actors and actresses cannot speak Tamil properly.

Nambiar could also play the 'cool' villain without engaging in melodramatic histrionics. He could also act the womanising playboy who seduces suavely and then ditches the unfortunate damsel.

A true master

Like most actors of the older generation he mastered sword-play, wrestling, stick-play, horse-riding, etc. This enabled him to play a realistic, swashbuckling villain on the screen.

It is as villain that Nambiar established himself as an actor. But the great thespian has played other roles like comedian, hero and character artiste on screen. Interestingly, the 'macho' Nambiar has also acted as a woman and girl on the stage during his formative years.

In a stage and screen career

that spanned more than seven decades Nambiar has acted in more than 850 films with different generations of actors. Most of them were in Tamil but some were in Malayalam and Telugu. He has also acted in a Hindi and English film.

It is difficult indeed to single out specific roles from a galaxy of stellar roles played out over several decades. Nevertheless, I shall mention some outstanding ones lingering in memory.

In 'Ambikapathy,' the classical villain was the poet Ottakoothan known for his rivalry with poets Kamban and Pugalenthi. Kamban was played by the veteran M.K. Radha while Nambiar played Ottakoothan. Nambiar also played the crafty maternal uncle villain in 'Uthama Puthiran.' Sivaji played a dual role in this movie based on 'The Man in the Iron Mask' by Alexander Dumas.

Making an impression

Another movie where Nambiar made an impression despite a small role was in A.P. Nagarajan's 'Thillana Mohanambal,' where he played the Maharaja of Madanpoor who was eying the danseuse played by the gorgeous Padmini.

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Nambiar also played villain in a historical movie made by Nagarajan starring Sivaji Ganeshan. This was 'Raja Raja Cholan,' where Sivaji essayed the titular role while Nambiar played Baladevar, a cunning counsellor. The clash between both was like an intricate game of chess and the verbal duelling was captivating. It was truly a clash of titans.

Nambiar also played the ambitious Dewan in 'Sivantha Mann,' made by maestro Sridhar. Sivaji was the hero. Nambiar also played villain remarkably in two other Sridhar movies. One was in 'Then Nilavu,' starring Gemini Ganesh and Vyjayanthimala. Nambiar acted as a sophisticated cheat and impersonator.

The other was 'Nenjam Marappathillai,' starring Kalyanakumar and Devika. In this film on the rebirth theme, Nambiar played a villain crazed with the revenge motive who tries to disrupt a union between two souls in two incarnations.

Nambiar has played villain to MGR in a number of films. Some of the notable ones are 'Ulagam Sutrum Vaaliban,' where he plays a karate expert assassin; another one was 'Vettaikaran,' where Nambiar played double as bandit and estate manager.

Nambiar played the bandit chief Kaangeyan to MGR's Kathiravan in 'Puthiya Bhoomi.' The names were not so subtle references to the Congress called 'Kaangiras' in Tamil and the DMK with its symbol of Sun also called Kathiravan in Tamil.

Among other noteworthy MGR movies where Nambiar made a strong impact were 'Enga Veetu Pillai,' 'Naan Aanaityittai,' 'Theiva Thaa,' 'Thirudathe,' 'Raman Thediya Seethai,' 'Pallandu Vaalha,' 'Aayirathil Oruvan' and 'Arasa Kattalai.'

Early days

Nambiar, who was born on March 7, 1919, hailed from Chirakkal in Kannur District in present day Kerala state. The name Nambiar is a caste identity. The Nambiaris are a sub-caste of the pre-dominant Nair caste in Kerala.

It is believed that Nambiaris are a mixture of the Namboodri (Brahmin) and Nair castes. They are concentrated mainly in North Malabar in the Kannur region. The Manjeris are a Nambiar clan with claims of a martial lineage.

Young Narayanan Nambiar's mother tongue was Malayalam but he opted to join a Tamil drama troupe at the age of 13. He joined the Madurai Devibala Vinodha Sangeetha Sabha run by the famous "Nawab" Rajamanickam Pillai.

This was one of the famous 'Boys Company' drama troupes, so called because all actors were



mainly young boys who played both male and female roles. Young Narayanan Nambiar learnt to speak perfect Tamil and played many roles, including that of women.

His monthly salary then was just Rs. 3, of which he sent Rs. 2 regularly to his mother. Board and lodging was the responsibility of the troupe.

After three years of stage acting, Nambiar got his first screen break. A film company called Parameswar Sound Pictures produced in 1935 a film titled 'Bhaktha Ramadas' at the Ranjit Studio in Mumbai (then Bombay).

All the actors were males and several from 'Boys Company' were recruited. Nambiar, then 16, played two or three roles in the film. He was paid Rs. 75. The director was Murugadas Swamikal.

Unexpected boost

Thereafter, Nambiar did not get any more screen roles for many years. Meanwhile, his stage career received an unexpected boost when lead actor K. Sarangapani quit Rajamanickam Pillai's troupe.

Now Nambiar began to get better and prominent parts to play. His drama career began taking off. Soon Nambiar passed teenage and sought a place elsewhere in more 'mature' troupes. He joined the 'Shakthi Nataka Sabha' of "Shakthi" Krishnaswamy.

One of the roles played by Nambiar was that of the cruel monarch in 'Kaviyin Kanavu,' a play about the poet Kalidas. S.V. Subbiah played the poet. The play, written by S.D. Sundaram, was a runaway hit. Nambiar's name gathered fame in drama circles.

It was then that Nambiar and Subbiah caught the eye of Producer Somasundaram of Jupiter Films. "Jupiter Somu," as he was known, placed both on a contract for his production company. This was in 1946.

Nambiar's first movie was 'Vidyapathy.' This was based on a detective novel written by Vaduvor Duraiswamy Iyengar and directed by A.T.

Krishnaswamy, who also wrote the screenplay.

Nambiar played an evil Brahmin role. His wife was played by M.S.S. Bhagyam. Subsequently Nambiar and Bhagyam were paired in other light, comedy roles. But the duo was not a hit like N.S. Krishnan-T.K. Mathuram or Kali. N. Ratnam-C.T. Rajakantham.

Big break

In 1947, Nambiar got his big break as hero in the film 'Kanjan' (Miser). It failed miserably. He was relegated again to secondary roles. Nambiar played 'friend' to M.G. Ramachandran in 'Rajakumari' (Princess). He also played the scheming uncle Shakuni in 'Abimanyu.'

Then 1949 saw the film 'Velaikkari' being made. The story and dialogue was by DMK founder and ex-Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai. A.S.A. Samy directed it. Nambiar played a dual role acting as the landlord's son and a crafty priest. His Harihara das Swamy role attracted widespread attention.

Nambiar's stock rose and the turning point came when the legendary T.R. Sundaram of Modern Theatres sought him out. He was placed on a contract as was the custom then.

In 1950, Nambiar acted as the conspiring Rajaguru in 'Manthiri Kumari,' for which the dialogues were written by M. Karunanidhi, the present DMK Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The movie was a roaring success. Nambiar had arrived.

This was followed by 'Thigambara Samiyar,' another screen version of a Duraiswamy Iyengar detective novel. M.N. Nambiar played the title role and adopted 11 different disguises for the film. It was a novelty then and Nambiar's acting skills were recognised widely.

In 1951, Nambiar played the villainous title role in 'Sarvathigari' (Dictator). It was a re-make of an English movie, 'Gallant Blades.' Nambiar's skill as swordsman was praised.

Interesting anecdote

Nambiar was one villain actor who could fence on equal terms

with M.G. Ramachandran. An interesting anecdote relates to this.

When the movie 'Aayirathil Oruvan' was being made in 1965, MGR sustained a cut on his little finger when a sword-fighting scene between both was being shot. MGR bled profusely. Nambiar apologised and MGR graciously accepted it.

One year later the film 'Arasa Kattalai' was being made. Another fencing sequence was being shot. This time it was MGR who nicked Nambiar's little finger.

As Nambiar was being bandaged, the actor wisecracked, "Settan marakkavillai. Mannikkavum illai" (brother has not forgotten or forgiven). MGR, of course, claimed it was an accident.

Meanwhile, Nambiar was also cast as comedian in some movies. Notable among them was 'Marmayogi,' but he did not click in comic roles.

In 1952, an English movie, 'The Jungle,' directed by William Burke, was shot in India. It was a USA-India co-production starring Rod Cameron and Marie Windsor. Nambiar also acted in it, playing the villager Mahaji.

T.R. Sundaram of Modern Theatres also tried out Nambiar as hero in the film 'Kalyani' in 1952 with B.S. Saroja as heroine. It was a disaster. Some years later Sundaram used him as hero in another movie, 'Kavitha.' That too flopped.

Road to success

But Nambiar began zooming to success as a villain on screen. He acted in a vast number of roles with different actors playing the hero. He also acted as second hero and also in 'grey' roles where the characters were not clearly black or white.

In some of these roles, Nambiar played the brother to the hero who teams up with the villain and then repents; in others he played the lover or husband to the hero's sister and is antagonistic to him.

Among such roles Nambiar made his mark as MGR's brother-in-law or lover of his sister in films like 'Arasilankumari,' 'Nallavan Vaalvaan,' 'Parisu' and 'En Kadamai.' In these Nambiar played opposite Padmini, E.V. Saroja, Ragini and L. Vijayalakshmi.

A Sivaji film where he played a role in similar vein and shone was as Kannan in 'Makkalai Petra Maharasi.' M.N. Nambiar was paired with M.N. Rajam (no relative).

A highlight of that film was the song 'Ondru Serantha Anbu Maarumaa? Unmai Kaadhal Maari Pohuma?' picturised on Nambiar and Rajam. It was composed by K.V. Mahadevan and sung by P.B. Sreenivas and U. Sarojini.

In some other films Nambiar

was depicted as a bad guy for most of the time, only to be revealed near the finale that he was in reality the good guy. But it was as the archetypal villain that Nambiar excelled. He played them all with consummate ease. He did not identify with any particular actor, director or producer and avoided being categorised as belonging to a certain camp.

Sivaji, MGR, Gemini, SSR, Anandan, Jaishankar, Ravichandran, A.V.M. Rajan, Muthuraman, Kalyanakumar, Muthuraman, Sivakumar, Bhagyaraj, Kamalhasan, Prabhu, Rajnikanth, Vijaykanth, Arjun, Prashanth, Vikram and Manoj - he acted with them all.

Renaissance

Nambiar had a filmy renaissance in 1982 when Bhagyaraj cast him in a refreshingly different role in 'Thooral Nindru Pochu.' The wrestling match between Nambiar and Bhagyaraj coupled with the drunken song 'En Soha Kathaiyai Kelu Thaaikulame' were the highlights of this film.

Thereafter, Nambiar played a number of character and comic roles. His last film role was with Vijaykanth in 'Sudeshi,' released in 2006.

He has acted in a number of TV serials. He has also appeared frequently on TV with his reminiscences of Tamil film. He was perhaps one of the oldest and most articulate actors of Tamil cinema.

He also spoke regularly on TV about Sabarimalai Ayappan. He embraced controversy in an uncharacteristic manner by refuting claims made by some actresses about Ayappan temple.

Nambiar did not forget his first love: the stage. He formed the drama troupe Nambiar Nataka Mandram and staged plays. Two such ones were a revival of 'Kaviyin Kanavu' and a comedy, 'Kalyana Supermarket.'

In tribute

He was a deeply religious man and led an austere, pious life, despite being in the tinsel world of Kodambakkam. He was admired and respected for this.

Nambiar is survived by two sons and a daughter. One of his sons, Sukumaran Nambiar, is a stalwart of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Tamil Nadu. Nambiar, however, steered clear of politics while being an ardent nationalist.

He was ailing for some time and was hospitalised. Nambiar passed away peacefully on November 19 at the age of 89. The last of yesteryear Tamil screen villains has breathed his last! We, his rasikas, can only think of the past and pay tribute to his memory.

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Color Me competition - 9

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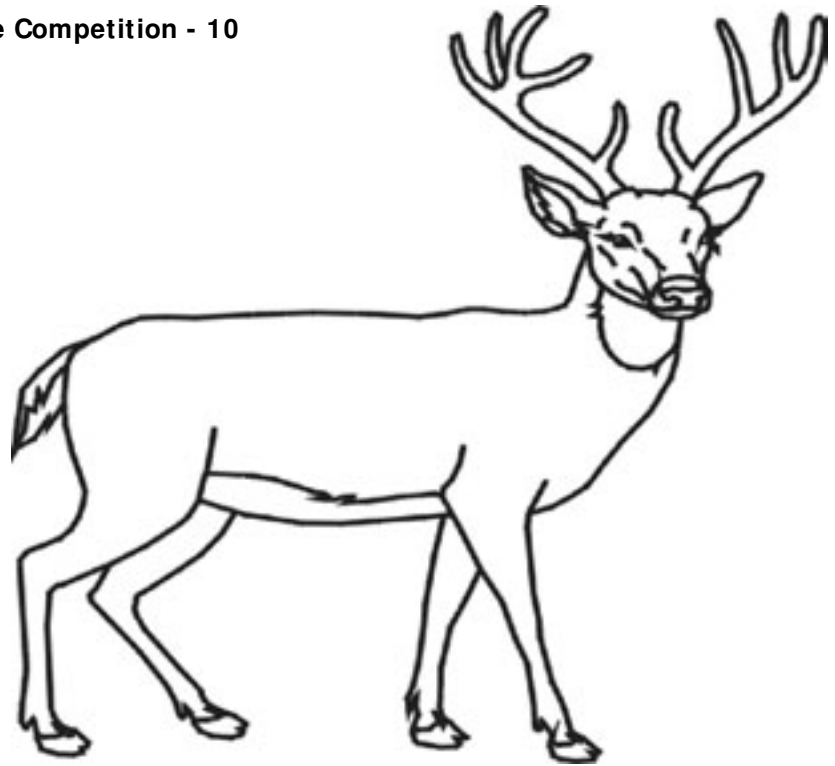
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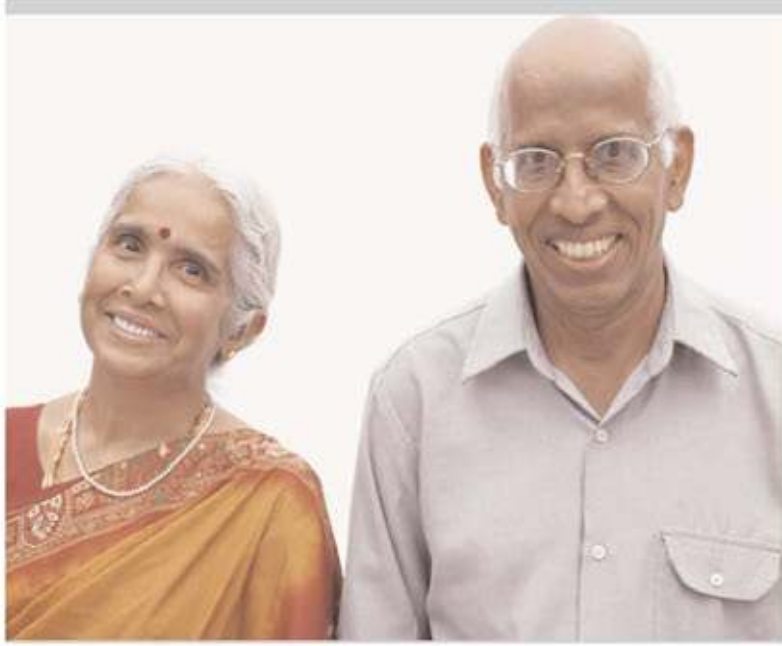

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