



Insight

Man vs Nature



It is widely believed that Man, by nature, has the capability of consciously contemplating a situation and determining whether the outcome is "right" or "wrong," that Man reacts to a situation by ruling of outlook rather than stimuli, and that Man has more priorities than self-fulfillment; such as religious obligation, parental duties, and cooperative behavior amongst his own kind through social contract.

Though these positive characteristics that separate us from our other earthly inhabitants seem superior, these same characteristics, if not harnessed and delivered to provide support and assistance to each other in times of crisis may lead us to our own destruction, as well as that of our own planet.

The recent eruption of the Volcano in Iceland and its aftermath of shutting down the entire skies above Europe is a great example of this phenomenon.

The disruption caused to hundreds of thousands of travelers across the continent and the massive efforts that are being exerted by the EU to alleviate their situation has been headline news throughout April on every single TV channel and newspaper.

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Jaffna International Trade Fair 2010



Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Ashok Kanth, cutting the ribbon to declare open the Trade Fair The Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL) together with Lanka Exhibition and Conference Services and the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Yarlpanam Chamber successfully concluded the "Jaffna International Trade Fair" held in April 2010.

The fair was attended by a large number of entrepreneurs, various businessmen and stakeholders from Colombo and other provinces. The Chief Guest at the Fair was the Indian High Commissioner for Sri Lanka, Ashok Kanth. The Mayor and GA of Jaffna were also active participants in the event.

Speaking at the Fair, Kanth said that, "the Government of India is committed in helping the industry, trade and th socio-economic welfare of the people of Sri Lanka". He also added, "The Government of India is also prepared to construct railroad racks between the South of Sri Lanka and Kankasanturai, and between Medawachchiya and Talaimannar".

"This is the first ever International Trade Fair to be held in the Jaffna peninsular in three long decades and is an idela moment for overseas participants to come and see for themselves the business opportunities and the possibilities of linking partnerships", said Kosala Wickremanayaka, the President of the FCCISL.

Over 30 Indian companies were showcased at the event along with over 140 trade stalls representing leading Colombo based companies interested in dealing in agricultural produce, training, business processes, technology transfer, and joint ventures.

The FCCISL is the national apex body of chambers of commerce and sectoral associations in Sri Lanka.



Family ... ctd from p3

Vast populations migrating due to economic, social and demographic disparities among countries and even between different regions in the same country has increased over the years. Some have also been driven out by climate and environmental conditions. International migration has doubled since the 1960s, reaching 214 million while internal migration has crossed the 740 million mark. Besides the migrants themselves, this phenomenon has affected other members of their families and communities.

The adverse effects of migration have been more pronounced in the case of the migration of women especially mothers. Globally, female migrants have remained constant at 49 percent since the 1990s although more women may migrate independently or leave as the primary migrant. In such families, those left behind, especially children, may face loneliness, psychological problems such as depression and even physical and sexual abuse in the hands of their guardians. The break-up of families is not unheard of in such instances.

During periods of economic or political strife, migrants are more vulnerable than the native communities. They are low paid, in high-risk employment involving hard work and are abused and discriminated.

Refugees and Internally Displaced People are even more at risk with the separation of such families, hardship and neglect being quite common among such communities.



Despite the possible negative consequences of migration, it has a plus side too, mainly in relation to the economic well-being of the concerned families. With remittances from abroad, these families can improve in terms of economy, health, education and basic livelihood and lifestyle and also in gender empowerment. Providing a boost to the local and national economy is another factor.

It is Important to introduce mechanisms where the interests of such migrants and their dependents are safeguarded. Children especially should be supported on their physical and emotional needs through special counseling, school activities and house visits. The host countries should also be open to migrants' safety and welfare. These are some of the issues that could be highlighted on this Day.

Feminine Touch fm pg 2



In recent times however we see a positive change in technology and other sciences that seemed impossible or almost a dream for women is changing the picture. The main factor for this condition is lack of access to equal opportunities.

The UN Women's Day theme 'Equal Rights Equal opportunities and progress for all' in the Sri Lanka scenario very less attentior is paid to this issue.

Patriarchy, patriarchal mindset and domination is a lens that keeps opportunit and achievement out of focus. It defines men as the standard of humanity. And woman is often 'something' slightly less than that. Male is the centre of attention and women occupy margins- like it or not.

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Man vs ...

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While the airlines and other related travel agencies, hotels and transportation companies suffered severe financial losses during the crisis many were the wonderful Samaritans who came forward to assist the stranded passengers to find suitable alternate arrangements to travel by road and other available means in order to get to their final destinations.

New York hotels and guest houses cut down their room rates by half in order to provide suitable accommodation at a lower cost to those stranded passengers who were unable to board their flights to Europe.

On the other hand, several other agencies and resorts within Europe and other Middle Eastern and Asian locations, have chosen to make economic advantage of the event to increase their revenue by jacking up rates on account of the created demands across the globe.

Calamities caused by nature are not within the ambit of human scientific and technological advances to be able to cope successfully, all of the time. In such times it is very necessary that humanity looks at the big picture as a global calamity, that affects each and every human being, and, thereby lends a hand to provide comfort, shelter, and sustenance to those affected.

The horror of the volcanic ash billowing over Europe should also bring fear into the hearts and minds of those living in safer continents that they could also be easily affected by what nature could dish out in the years to come.

While seismic activity and other natural events within the bowels of the earth can be monitored by scientists to a degree there are still many unknown factors that take humanity by surprise and hence caught in such difficult situations.

The lessons we learn from such events must surely encourage us to try and be unselfish in our attitudes and warm with our willingness to come forth and assist the affected.

Feminine Touch In The Skies

SriLankan Airlines has evoked much admiration and a sense of national pride amongst the public. It had much to do with the media publicity about the achievements of the "all female flying crew at SriLankan Airlines". Women are proud of Captain Anusha Siriratne (nee Mohamed), UL 4 Senior First Officer Roshani Jinasena, Senior First Officer, Chamika Rupasinghe and Junior First Officer Madiur Chandradasa.



News about the female crew invading a male dominated profession by sheer perseverance training and pursuit of merit is indeed a historical achievement in Sri Lanka by any means. As Sri Lanka understands cadet pilot training, for quite a long period, had been strictly the career abode of males. Or was it that there were no female takers in this field?

Having commended these young achievers let us dive into memory and the new aspirations in the 20th and the 21st Century. Several Airlines round the world do have large numbers of Stewardesses. They are images of fashionable attraction to passengers and distinguish themselves in the traditional role of caring, serving, and nursing (on call) for flight passengers.

In most Asian countries including Sri Lanka, pursuing careers such as Pilots Training is a daring move for the average young woman. Therefore pioneer efforts of this nature shall emerge as role models in Sri Lanka to attract young women not only to make them pursue air careers in the future but also to create a wave of enthusiasm and bring science and technology closer to their career pursuits. Several career guidance workshops conducted in schools in a variety of career fields have brought unbelievable results.

Asia is well-known for its patriarchal structures and patriarchal leanings both within the family and outside, in place of employment, hierarchical institutions and even in media programs Women's capacities are often devalued. In job seeking women resist science and technical related jobs due to lack of confidence.

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Jewel of Muscat arrives at Galle Port

The Jewel of Muscat, a replica of a 9th century sailing vessel arrived at the Galle Port yesterday. Coinciding with this historic occasion a welcome ceremony was organized by the Foreign Ministry.



The 9th century sailing vessel Jewel of Muscat at the Galle Port

The Jewel of Muscat epitomizes a great feat of maritime engineering. She doesn't have an engine and only wind has helped her to reach her destinations. Her voyage commenced last February from Oman and the final destination will be Singapore. This ship is equipped with no modern techniques and only the old navigation system paves the way for her to call at selected ports in the Indian Ocean.

It makes its passage through ancient sea routes where the Galle Port stood as a significant doorway for trade and commercial ties.

Foreign Ministry Secretary, Romesh Jayasinghe, said the Galle Port has been for many centuries a doorway for dealing with foreign lands including Arabia. As we all know the Jewel of Muscat is an exact replica of a 9th century sailing vessel which was constructed and operated from Gulf sea.

The Voyage from Oman to Singapore which called at Indian, Sri Lankan and Malaysian Ports is being made using the same sea faring techniques that were used 1100 years ago.

One of the objectives envisaged by Jewel of Muscat project is to further consolidate the bilateral ties that Sri Lanka and Oman enjoy. Introducing Sri Lankan as a fine tourism destination to the Omani market is among the objectives of the project.

Family First



The decision to commemorate May 15 as the International Day of Families was taken by the United Nations General Assembly on September 20, 1993. The Day has been observed since 1995.

The UN dedicated this day to encourage governments and other organisations to initiate family-oriented projects, hold special conferences, symposia and cultural events on the family, bring into force family legislation and discuss national family policies.

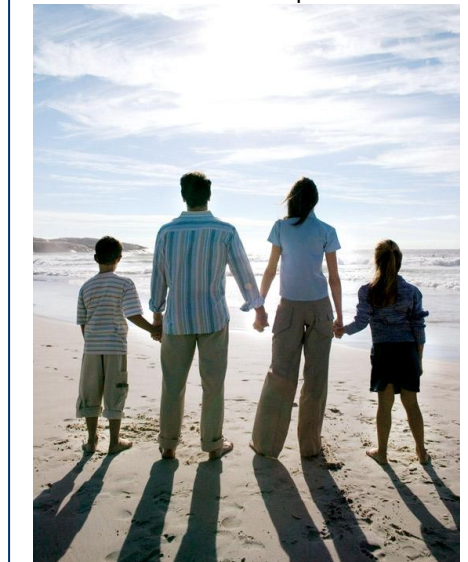
A family is the most fundamental unit of society. Nuclear or extended, this basic component is the thread that holds the fabric of a community together, lending physical or mental support to each of its members. It's the most essential centre of society and provides a stable and safe sanctuary for people of all ages.

The increasing deterioration of societies all over the world that we have been witnessing of late is a result of the break-up of this basic unit. For society as we know it, to thrive, it's important that the sanctity of family is maintained. It's to pay special attention to families and acknowledge the vital role that they play in life that the United Nations commemorates the International Day of Families every May 15.

The global observance celebrates the importance of the family unit to people, society and cultures around the world and focuses on continuing the work started during the International Year of Families in 1994. It gives an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to promote action in this regard.

This year's celebrations are due to take place on May 13 organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Department of Public Information with support from the UN Program on the Family and Division for Social Policy and Development. In Sri Lanka too, the traditional family structure has come under intense pressure over the past few decades

According to Senior Professor of Sociology of the University of Colombo, S. T. Hettige, there are two primary reasons for these developments.



"Firstly, the socio-economic transformation brought about as a result of the introduction of the open economy in 1977. This increased the mobility of the people, particularly of women, both within and outside the island. Migration in search of greener pastures increased by leaps and bounds. The migration of women for employment, especially to the Middle East, has brought in its wake a heap of social problems with children from such families being severely affected. "Secondly, the conflict which raged in the country for over three decades had a direct and indirect impact on the people from not just the theatres of war in the North and the East, but throughout the country. Soldiers from all areas of the island lost their lives and limbs in the war while thousands were killed or maimed in bomb explosions and other terrorist attacks elsewhere in the country. Naturally, such tragedies placed immense pressure on families," he said.

He cited natural disasters such as the 2004 tsunami as other major events affecting the family in Sri Lanka. "Disasters have robbed the lives of thousands of people over the years, leading to many broken and disorganized families."

Prof. Hettige's words seem to have special significance with this year's International Day for Families being conducted on the theme 'The impact of migration on families around the world'. ctd on p4