



Ontario Konkani Association

e-Samachar (February 2023)

www.ontariokonkanis.com

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President's Message

Dear OKA Family,

Welcome to February! We hope everyone is staying warm and enjoying the Canadian Winter with classic activities such as ice skating, tubing, skiing etc. or lounging with books and warming drinks like hot chocolate, apple cider or masala chai!

As mentioned in the previous e-Samachar, we are glad to debut a new contributor Priya Prabhu, an avid reader, cook and traveler. She has shared a great travel article on London, UK, providing many details about must-visit places in London. We are sure this article will entice you to plan your own UK visit. We hope this will be the first of many travel articles from Priya!

This edition also has an interesting article from our standing contributor Niranjana Kamath on Nakshatras. It sheds light on one of our Konkani wedding rituals and examines it from different perspectives.

Sadanand Mankikar, another standing contributor has shared very useful and relevant information for Seniors, including Senior's safety as well as important phone numbers of note.

We do hope you enjoy this edition of e-Samachar. Please consider contributing to the E-Samachar on a regular or one-time basis. We look forward to hearing from you at OKApresidents@gmail.com.

Anjana and Pravin Pai

Relevance of Arundhati - Vasishta Nakshatra in Marriage

By NIRANJAN KAMATH

If you are married you will know this for sure. There is a very interesting ritual we Konkani's have. Did you know that as part of the marriage the groom takes the bride outside the wedding hall to look at the skies? Well!! In reality the groom is making an attempt to show her a couple of stars from the Saptarashi Mandal. We know these stars as **Vasishta** and **Arundhati** nakshatra.



A little historical perspective:

According to the Puranas, Arundhati was the daughter of Kashyapa and sister of Narada and Parvata. She got married to Vasishta Muni and was leading an ideal marriage. Mahabharata mentions that there is no one as devout and faithful as Arundhati. The Sanskrit meaning of the word Arundhati means wiped from the sun rays". Arundhati, wife of Sage Vasishta, is famous for her chastity, piety and single-minded devotion for her husband. Due to her devoutness and of faithfulness, she became a star in the sky known as Arundhati Nakshatra.

Now let's go back to why does the groom shows his bride the Arundhati Nakshatra. In fact, you might have thought this is some kind of ancient folklore and you would have looked up for the sake of doing so and even laughed it off. Astronomically both Vasishta and Arundhati nakshatra's indulge in a gentle cosmic dance that our Ancient Sages have symbolized this as an ideal marriage of marital fulfilment and honesty. This ritual takes place immediately after the Saptapadi / Saatphere ritual.

Arundhati Nakshatra is located near the Saptarishi (Our Ancient Seven Sages) Nakshatras and more specifically it appears next to the Vasishta Nakshatra. The priest asks the married couples to look towards the constellation that symbolizes conjugal love and affection. It teaches both husband and wife to do everything in sync. It also describes that husband must look after everything happening around his wife and vice versa.

A little of Astronomy:

We amongst Sanatana Dharma call these stars Arundhati & Vasishta. However modern-day Astronomy have given them names as Mizar and Alcor, respectively. For the Astronomy buffs, both are next to each other in the Ursa Major constellation or Saptarashi mandala. It is also known as big dipper.



Galileo spotted it and claimed that both the stars are moving together in proper motions. In binary star format, we find two or more stars are present in the outer space, where one remains constant, and the other revolves around it. The most interesting feature of these two stars is that both have the same centre of mass of their own and rotate around each other which is symbolically equated by our Ancient Sages as one of the ideals of a married couple.

Relevance:

So, in a nutshell both Arundhati & Vasishta Nakshatara's symbolizes the bond of a husband and wife. It portrays that one must support others to reach a common goal together, instead of overpowering one another. This is the reason why the Amchigello Groom takes his Bride out to look at the skies and identify the twin stars. Another very interesting belief is that those people who are nearing their death cannot witness Arundhati Nakshatra. It is also believed that if a person is able to witness the Nakshatra then death will not approach him for next six months.

Our Ancient Sages knew about the Arundhati & Vasishta stars thousands of years before a Modern Telescope was discovered and the likes of Galileo gazed at the skies. What is even fascinating is they knew its orbit and all the features.

Jai Ho!!!!

PS: This being a Hindu ritual, spotting of Arundhati & Vasishta is a crucial part of all Hindu weddings

Ref:

[Abhilash Rajendran](#)

Vedikalogy India

Seniors Forum

By Sadanand Mankikar

UPCOMING EVENT

SVBF/OKA HEALTH AWARENESS SEMINAR:

Dr. Sahil Koppikar and Dr. Natasha Kaur Gakhal of Women's College Hospital will be the speakers at the SVBF/OKA virtual seminar "ARTHRITIS & OSTEOPOROSIS: Diagnosis, Prevention and Management" to be held on Sunday, March 5, 2023 from 10:30 AM to 12 Noon (EST). Details will follow.

USEFUL INFORMATION

OKA EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM: Estate, Will and Power of Attorney and End of Life Planning are two major elements of this OKA Seniors Forum Program.

For **preparing Wills and Powers of Attorney** you may contact Marvin Talksny (905) 405-0199 ext. 257 or Mary Bojkovski (905) 405-0199 ext. 276 of Nanda & Associate Lawyers. For additional information or assistance, you may also contact Raghunath Kamath or Ashok Bhatt.

For **End of Life Planning** one may contact Harjinder Bilku of Chapel Ridge Funeral Home at (905) 305-8128 or (647) 966-0093.

OKA AADHAR CHAT: This interactive web-based chat was established in 2017 as a part of the OKA Seniors Forum to facilitate communication amongst seniors and soon to be seniors. Since then, we have started posting upcoming events and relevant information on this chat. Members can post any questions and we will attempt to get answers. We invite everyone, young and old, seniors or not,

to join this chat and share information including their experiences and expertise. To join this chat group, please send an email to shraddhapai.home@gmail.com

Additional information about OKA Seniors' Forum is posted on www.ontariokonkanis.com

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

STANDARDS FOR LONG TERM CARE: Canadian seniors deserve to live in dignity, safety, comfort, and respect. This week the Federal Government welcomed the release of independent long-term care standards from the Health Standards Organization (HSO) and CSA Group. These standards provide guidance for delivering services that are safe, reliable and patient-centered and foster a healthy and competent workforce aimed at addressing systemic problems exposed by the coronavirus pandemic. While long-term care falls under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government is working together with them to protect vulnerable Canadians in long term care. The Health Standards Organization's updated standards say residents should get at least four hours of direct care every day. The standards from the panel of experts at the non-profit standards organization also say those who work in those residences must be paid more. The standards are intended to be used by policy-makers and leaders in nursing homes to set the bar higher for quality and safe care by promoting good governance, fostering a healthy and competent work force and upholding resident-centred care. Residents, for example, should be free from neglect, protected from abuse, have their privacy protected and their lifestyle choices respected, including living with risk. You can read more here <https://longtermcarestandards.ca/>.

from the January 30 to February 3 weekly update by
Hon. Pam Damoff, MP Oakville North Burlington

SENIORS SAFETY AT HOME AND CRIMES AGAINST SENIORS: During the virtual talk arranged by South Asian Cultural and Health Association for Youth and Seniors (SACHAYS) on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, Officer Gourisha Sardana addressed

various aspects of senior's safety and crimes against them and provides many excellent tips. Please access the YouTube using the following link:
<https://youtu.be/xBpvPBDafdghhttps://youtu.be/xBpvPBDafdgh>

At the same event, Officer Sardana also provided the following contact numbers for reporting crime against seniors.

Safety of Seniors

Crimes against seniors to be reported to:

- Toronto: 416 408 4357
- Peel region: 905 453 2121 ext. 3428
- Durham region: 905 668 7711 ext. 2460
- Halton region: 905 825 4777
- Kitchener region: 519 570 9777
- Ottawa region: 613 236 1222 ext. 2400
- Simcoe region: 1 866 299 1011

INDUS COMMUNITY SERVICES: This organization provides very helpful service to South Asian seniors.

- Leadership program for newcomer youth (Ages 12-16) every Monday from January 30 to February 27 from 4:00 to 5:00 PM.
- Boost wellness for South Asian youth (Ages 16-18) virtual and in-person sessions in Mississauga and Brampton.
- Toy library and Parenting. Every Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

For the presentations, please visit <https://www.induscs.ca/seniorstownhall/> If you want to stay connected with Indus, you may sign up for their newsletter.

C.A.R.P. Are you a member of C.A.R.P. – previously known as Canadian Association of Retired Persons? If you are over 45, you may want to consider becoming a member of C.A.R.P. It is a national organization with chapters all over the country. Its mission is to “Promote and protect the interests, rights and quality of life of Canadians as we age”

C.A.R.P. is an advocacy group and from time to time they arrange interesting and informative seminars and workshops. Their monthly magazine Zoomer consists of useful articles and provide information on topics related to insurance, travel, health, entertainment and lifestyle.

Some interesting articles RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

- The rise of centenarian: Why more of us are living to 100?
- Six tips to prevent winter slips – Avoid injuries from unnecessary falls
- Building connection through Transformational Tech
- Enjoy your healthy eating and supercharge your smoothie with a fun, Interactive virtual blender.
- The puzzle of brain health
- A new Canadian program helps people living with Alzheimer’s Disease
- Alzheimer’s Awareness month: How much memory loss is normal with aging?
- Mental health boosters
- 5 ways to age well when living alone
- Body, mind & spirit: easy wellness advice for health and happiness
- Sleep 101: Improve your sleep quality and your health

For additional information, you may contact them by email: support@carp.ca
Phone: 1-833-211-2277 Website: www.carp.ca

ONTARIO GUIDE TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS: Please click on the following link for the latest upgraded guide. [A guide to programs and services for seniors.](#)

SENIORS HOUSING AND HOME CARE DIRECTORY: Help for Mom has developed this very helpful publication which is about 130 pages, softcover and Readers Digest size. To get a copy send an email to helpformom.com or call Mary (647) 967-9821.

The following organizations disseminate very useful information either through regular news release and/or seminars, webinars and workshops:

Canada India Foundation www.canadaindiafoundation.com

C.A.R.P. Canadian Association of Retired People) www.carp.ca

Diabetes Canada www.diabetes.ca

Indus Community Services www.induscs.ca

UHNH (University Network Foundation) www.uhnfoundatiom.ca

(ARTICLES BY AND FOR SENIORS FOR THIS SECTION ARE ALWAYS WELCOME)

The Travel Chronicles- Episode One

By : Priya Prabhu

London, United Kingdom

Hope everyone here is staying warm as we breeze through winter. I was more than elated to share an article on travel with our OKA community. Here we go! I'll begin with the charming city of London, United Kingdom. If you've seen this city, let me refresh your memories. If you haven't; get ready to book your holidays and pack your bags.

London - A city that has its own character. Partly I connect with London thanks to my Bombay upbringing. The beautiful facade of Victoria Station in both London and Bombay, the double decker red buses, streets named after erstwhile chancellors, the rush hour, the entertainment hubs that both are and the professional attitude to boot- one reminded me of the other.

All through my stay in Europe, I was the certified 'Compressed London sightseeing in 3 days' travel guide for infinite family and friends who visited for work, assignments, international flight stop-overs.

London is divided into zones based on the underground or 'tube' lines. A little Oyster card will help you to travel by train or bus anywhere in the city. This is by far the easiest and the fastest way to get around the city.

Central London or Central as they call it has something to offer for every person who walks through its streets. I always loved beginning at Westminster, the beautiful Gothic styled parliament structure. Seeing it day or night, I was mesmerized every time I walked across Westminster bridge to see it. Right behind this is Westminster Abbey. The London eye is another attraction which gives you a bird's eye view of Westminster.

Hyde park is one of my favorite spots. This place lets you be. Enjoy a cup of coffee at the 'Serpentine' Cafe or a thin crust pizza at 'Lido'. Regent's park and

Princess Diana Memorial park along with Kensington gardens are the lovely green patches that this wonderful city has to offer amidst the hustle and bustle. Saint Paul's Cathedral remains another favourite spot to walk around. Stare at the magnificence that this cathedral is. Walk across the millennium bridge and over to Shakespeare's Globe theater. I remember watching 'As you like it' here How I wish to go back and see 'Merchant of Venice' here.

Further down, a unique stretch- The Queen's walk is beautiful and makes you ponder about life as the gentle (or sometimes bitter) winds over the river Thames touch you softly.

If you are into museums (like me), the British museum, Science museum, the National Portrait gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, History museum and the magnificent crown jewels at the Tower Hill have all been standing witness to see this city progress to be a hub of trade and commerce that it is today.

And of course, what is London without Royalty? The Queen's own residence of Buckingham palace is a must visit. The change of guards is a ceremony that happens every morning and evening. Just next door are the wonderful fountains of Trafalgar Square. Here stands the tall Nelson monument.

For avid readers like me and fans of Benedict Cumberbatch... oops I meant Sherlock Holmes, his home at 221 Baker Street is a place one cannot miss. Likewise, Potter fans can take a click at Platform 9 and 3/4 at King's Cross station.

Theater fans can watch numerous plays that run-in town based on different schedules. I caught up with a mystical performance of 'The Phantom of the Opera' at Victoria theater. Another brilliant performance that moved me to tears was 'War Horse' at Covent Garden.

On the East end, go up to Greenwich village to check out the Greenwich Observatory. Fancy standing on a line where 'time begins'? Or the line that divides the earth's time into East and West? This is indeed the place to visit. While you are in the east end visit the banking district of Canary Wharf. The Dockland Light Rail or DLR is a wonderful driverless train in this entire region.

Covent Garden is a must visit area for anyone who wishes to enjoy the nightlife of Central London. The old Municipal area has been retained with its cobblestone look. Leicester Square and Piccadilly circus are also popular for their night clubs and eating joints.

If local markets appeal to you, one can visit Camden town and Portobello markets at Notting hill. Pick up some antique stuff such as old posters and mariner's clocks here. Walk along the white buildings at Notting hill and tuck into a delicious cupcake from a local bakery here.

The triple treats of -Oxford Street, Bond Street and Marble Arch all in a row are home to some of the major retail brands in the United Kingdom. The likes of giants – Ferrari, Apple and Burberry stores at Regent Street might catch your eye. For the latest in malls- the Westfield malls at Stratford or Shepherds Bush are worth a visit if shopping on a high street isn't your thing. A legacy shop that is worth mentioning is Harrods at Knightsbridge.

The summery month of June sees the top-notch tennis women and men battle it out for the prestigious grand slam -Wimbledon. I have been to Wimbledon twice. Wear white, your shades and drink some champagne with strawberries and cream. I was lucky enough to have witnessed the Olympic and the Paralympic matches during London 2012 at the Stratford Olympic stadium. One must catch a Football match at the Emirates stadium in this football crazy nation. Cricket fans can visit their Mecca of Cricket – The Lord's Cricket stadium.

Waterloo station, Victoria station, Charing Cross station and Paddington station with a bronze statue of the famous Paddington bear are four heritage stations that one must visit.

My words flowed naturally here, my heart sings a mellifluous song in sweet memory. Leaving aside politics, Brexit, Royal chaos and everything else- The heart of a traveler always sees the good in this world.



