

PERSATUAN GRADUAN INDIA INDIAN GRADUATES ASSOCIATION



Reg. No. 998 (Est. August 2000)

Address: c/o Dr. Uma Rani, Jabatan Sains Tanaman, Fakulti Pertanian, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor
Email: harris@my.marshallcavendish.com; Website: <http://igaupm.ath.cx>

IGAUPM Council
2004-05

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NEWSLETTER (for internal circulation only)

Issue 3: March, 2005

Editorial – Make a difference!

Greetings! Recently, the media reported that 80,000 of university graduates in this country are *unemployable* for reasons such as lack of quality and skills, poor command of English, and unwillingness to take up jobs outside their comfort zones. Apparently, the present unemployment rate among university graduates is the highest in Malaysian history. (I'm not sure about how many Indian graduates, particularly from UPM, make up this statistic).

Looks like what used to be a polite reference of 'unemployed graduates' has degenerated into 'unemployable graduates'. Someone told me about this person who graduated with 1st class honors in Economics from a local university, and after one year of job-hunting still remained unemployed. My fear is that this is not an isolated case. To add insult to injury, there was a report highlighting the fact that locally-trained medical doctors don't even know how to perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). And I thought that the world had come to an end when 80% of my students didn't know the meaning of a wheelbarrow!

Higher education is the bromide of nation-building; without it, there won't be a corpus of leaders who can steer the country forward. This country, once the pride of the commonwealth in terms of education quality, has turned turtle to become a laughing stock of the education world. Do we have a problem in our hands? Who's to blame? What can we do to remedy the situation? I'm afraid these are questions typically pondered upon at high level discussions year in year out. But unfortunately solutions to this problem have been ineffective, at best. Indeed, 'good planning but poor implementation' has its demerits!

Folks, let's be thankful for the fact that we've passed that stage of having to go through what fresh graduates are facing today. It's time to give back something to society while we can. Bottom line: What role can the IGAUPM play to make a difference? We've tried motivation seminars and career talks. How about mentoring programs? Think hard and give us your views. It wouldn't be a bad idea to read Thomas Friedman's *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*.

Cheers!

Siva Balasundram
siva@agri.upm.edu.my

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

5th IGAUPM Annual General Meeting followed by Reunion Dinner

Date: April 9, 2005 (Saturday)

Time: 6.30 pm (AGM), 7.30 pm (Dinner)

Venue: Crystal Crown Hotel, Petaling Jaya

✍ The Reunion Dinner is priced at RM50.00/pax

✍ Please make crossed cheque/money order payable in favor of **Persatuan Graduan India, UPM** (BCB A/C. No.: 1215-0008803-05-0) with the word IGAUPM Reunion Dinner 2004 written on the reverse side of the cheque /money order and mail in before **April 1, 2005** to Dr. Uma Rani Sinniah (address as above).

Outputs from the Management Council (2004/05)

Activities

- ☞ Capacity Building Forum: August 27, 2004
- ☞ Image Enhancement Workshop: December 19, 2004
- ☞ Financial Planning Seminar: February 27, 2005
- ☞ Reunion Dinner: April 9, 2005

Newsletter

- ☞ Issue 1 (Inaugural): July, 2004
- ☞ Issue 2: November, 2004
- ☞ Issue 3: March, 2005

Details on the activities can be found in the Annual Report

Ushering the Tamil New Year

In India, the Hindu calendar is very much in use along with the Gregorian calendar. Although the Hindu calendar follows a sixty year cycle, it differs slightly from region to region. In the north, the calendar is calculated according to the lunar year and in the south, it is based on the solar year. Hence, Hindus have different 'New Year' days. For the Hindu Tamils whose calendar is based on the solar year, the New Year, falls on the first day of the Chithirai month (in mid April, usually the 13th or 14th).

The sun, after six months of shining in the Southern Hemisphere, appears over the equator on March 21 and continues its apparent movement north of the equator. South India, is in the Northern Hemisphere and the approach of the sun appears to be the main reason for the selection of Chithirai (April) as the first month of the New Year.

The ancient Tamils studied astronomy for centuries and classified the stars into twelve houses or Rasies as called in Sanskrit. Rasi means constellation. Each house was given a familiar name appropriate to its formation or arrangement called in astrology as the signs of the zodiac. The names of these houses are, Merdam (the ram), Idapam (the bull), Mithunam (the twins), Kadakam (the crab), Simmam (the lion), Kanni (the virgin), Thulam (the scales), Viruchikam (the scorpion), Thanusu (the archer), Maharam (the goat), kumbam (the water pot), and Meenam (the fishes).

The movement of the earth brings the sun into each sign of the zodiac once every year. The ancient Tamils reckoned the period taken by the sun to visit the 12 houses as one year and divided the year into 12 months, which were named after the houses of stars. With the lapse of time, the Tamils adopted the Aryans' names of the months, given after the 'natchatrams' or asterisms in which the moon is full. The entering of the sun into the first house, Merdam (Aries or the Ram), in Chithirai is taken to signal the dawn of the New Year.

Puthandu Vaazhthukkal!

-Adapted from V. Kandavanam (<http://www.tamilcanadian.com>)

Politics is not a bad profession. If you succeed here are many rewards, if you disgrace yourself you can always write a book.

- Ronald Reagan

Random Information

☞ **Education**

The Sri Arumugam Pillai Institute has vacancies for Indian students to pursue IT-related programs. Scholarships are available for deserving candidates. The entry requirement is 3 passes in SPM or O-Levels. Next intake starts on July, 2005.

Contact: Ir. Halim Azhar
Institute Latihan Perindustrian Arumugam Pillai
Jabatan Tenaga Manusia, Kementerian Sumber Manusia
Jalan Bukit Panchor, 14300 Nibong Tebal
Seberang Perai Selatan, Pulau Pinang
04-5956000 (tel); 04-5956006 (fax)

☞ **Scholarship**

Japan Airlines (JAL) is offering scholarships to Malaysians pursuing full-time undergraduate or postgraduate education at public universities in Malaysia.

Contact: 03-21611733/ 03-21785900 or kul.jmb@jal.com

☞ **Professional Enhancement**

Global Dynamic Management Training (GMDT) provides courses and seminars covering topics such as *Essential Skills for Managers, Executive Leadership, Team Building Skills, Thinking Strategically, Human Resource Management, Administrative Support, Statistics and Researching Skills*, and many more.

Contact: Assoc. Prof. T. Vasudevan
012-3191403 / 03-78764061 or gdmt@maxis.net.my

☞ **Internet Portal**

MyIndianCafe is the first virtual Indian cafe created specially for the Indians' in Malaysia and around the World. The main objective of this cafe is to create a 'one stop information center' for all Indians of all ages. This cafe provides essential information on business, entertainment, games, shopping, matchmaking, etc.

Check out: <http://www.myindiancafe.com/>

☞ **Health**

Paativaiyyam is for those who want to try traditional Indian medication. It offers tips and treatments for sinus and migraine problems. It also offers a wide range of massage therapies and relaxation solutions at reasonable prices.

Check out: <http://www.paativaiyyam.com>

Truths about Growing Old!

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2) When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- 3) You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- 4) It becomes frustrating when you know all the answers, but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- 5) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 6) Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.