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Canada's Tamils anxious over homeland battle

Group's terrorist status clouds humanitarian appeals

By MATTHEW LITTLE
 Epoch Times Staff

OTTAWA—As the Sri Lankan government makes a final push to crush the Tamil Tigers, civilian casualties are mounting and passions among Toronto's 200,000 Tamils, the largest Tamil diaspora in the world, are running high.

Tens of thousands of Tamils rallied in Toronto Wednesday, waving the flag of a listed terrorist organization and decrying the deaths of friends and family in the island nation.

"When I hear the news I feel the pain," says Priyanga Nallaratnam, a spokesperson for the community-based protests. The university student said reports of daily casualties and stories shared from direct connections with friends and family in Sri Lanka are leaving Canadian Tamils feeling desperate.

"Tamil people are suffering a lot," he said, citing a lack of food, medicine and shelter. The United Nations estimates that as many as 50,000 civilians may be trapped in the less than two-square-mile (five-square-kilometer) area where the Tigers remain. Casualty estimates vary widely but the U.N. estimates more than 6,500 civilians have died in the fighting.

Nallaratnam said people in conflict areas have been forced to start eating tree leaves.

"I can't keep watching this."
 Canadian Tamils are demanding the Canadian government call for a ceasefire, expel Sinhalese diplomats and pressure Sri Lanka to let media and NGOs into the region.

Massive protests

At the largest Tamil protest in Toronto in March, an estimated 75,000 formed a seven-kilometre human chain around downtown Toronto.

On Wednesday, between 20,000 to 50,000 arrived and closed down a few downtown roads when they moved south just after rush hour.

There were fears earlier in the week that protesters would again block major Toronto highways, an exasperating move for many Torontonians who drive in the notoriously congested city.

Protesters occupied the Gardiner Expressway Sunday and sparked criticism from politicians including Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty.

Support for the Tigers

For many of the protesters, the Tamil Tigers, known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), are seen as the only organization that protects the interests of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, which has been subject to discrimination in the island nation for decades.

CONTINUED ON P3 NATION

Too close to home?



Walkers stand by a cairn amid the turbine blades of the controversial Scout Moor Wind Farm in England, which drew complaints, including for its aesthetic impacts and noise. A number of Canadians living near wind farms allege harm to their health from noise and stray electricity. CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

Wind turbines blamed for residents' ills

Some say wind turbines are harming their health with stray electricity and noise

By JOAN DELANEY
 Epoch Times Staff

There's a boom in wind energy occurring worldwide. Keen to meet environmental targets and cut back on fossil fuels, governments in Europe, North America, Australia, and Japan are increasingly looking to wind as a source of power.

In Canada, wind turbines have become part of the landscape in many rural areas, with Ontario, Alberta, and Quebec leading the way in setting ambitious targets for future production of wind power.

From the Maritimes to Alberta, there are about 1,500 turbines powering almost 700,000 homes and businesses, with plans in the works to build another 1,000 to 1,500 in the next year, including in British Columbia where none currently exist.

But as wind farms proliferate, so do complaints about them. While some people experience no negative effects whatsoever, others have even resorted to leaving their homes to get away from the windmills they claim are making them sick.

While research into the problem is lacking, some who live near the big turbines cite a raft of adverse health effects, including severe headaches, insomnia, dizziness, ringing in the ears, exhaustion, and even blood pressure and heart problems.

Glen Wyllys says he and 11 of his neigh-

bours who live in the Ripley wind turbine complex in Ontario have been afflicted with a wide range of serious symptoms since soon after the hydro configuration to their homes was changed in November 2007. This was done to collect the electricity generated by the 38 turbines surrounding their homes.

Wyllys' first symptom was severe itch, while his wife "just kept getting sicker and sicker." The couple began experiencing intense headaches and earaches, with their hearts "pounding something awful," says Wyllys. Their two dogs developed ear problems and lost their hair.

The problem was traced to stray voltage—electrical pollution from the high-voltage wind turbine lines—invading their homes.

CONTINUED ON P3 NATION

Falun Gong marks 17th anniversary

Group faces advertisty in China with celebrations across Canada

Epoch Times Staff

Falun Gong practitioners across Canada and around the world celebrated Falun Dafa Day on Wednesday, marking 17 years since Li Hongzhi introduced the meditation practice to the public on May 13, 1992.

Cities including Vancouver, Ottawa, and Toronto held festivities in honour of the practice that swept China in the 1990s and brought spiritual fulfillment and good health to millions.

A large pictorial display, dancing, singing, and exercise demonstrations took place in Vancouver's Chinatown, while at Queen's Park in Toronto there were speeches, a lion dance, and the sharing of cake. The Toronto Tian Guo marching band performed as well.

In Ottawa, that city's Tian Guo band performed on Sparks Street, while testimonials on the benefits of the practice, singing in Chinese and English, a traditional Chinese Fan Dance, and exercise demonstrations were held on Parliament Hill.

In honour of the occasion, Prime Minister Stephen Harper sent a greeting that said in part: "As you celebrate the 17th anniversary of the introduction of Falun Dafa to the public, I commend the Falun Dafa Association of Canada for sharing your practices and traditions with the public. On behalf of the Government of Canada, I extend my best wishes for a joyous and memorable celebration."

At the Ottawa event, former foreign diplomat and China expert Brian McAdam spoke of the guiding principles of Falun Gong.

"With Falun Gong, the words truth, forbearance, and compassion, of course, are the essence of all human values in the world, so a great deal is summed up in those three words," he said.

"Ultimately, great ideas that have kept the world going have been very simple words."

More than 100 million people in about 120 countries practice Falun Gong. The traditional Chinese self-improvement system leads to mental and physical well-being through gentle exercises, meditation, and the virtues of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance.

CONTINUED ON P2 NATION

India's marathon elections end, but winners unclear

By SUMAN SRINIVASAN
 Epoch Times Staff

India's marathon elections, involving a 714-million strong electorate, finally came to an end on May 13. But when the results are announced on May 16, it is expected to be a free-for-all with no clear winner and a loosely put-together coalition.

The nationwide elections are the first since the May 2004 elections which gave the Congress and its allies a surprise sweeping victory over the then-ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had been projected to win.

India's election is a multi-party poll. The usual lineup features two strong national parties—the Congress and the BJP—allying with several regional parties to produce a loosely bound majority coalition running the central government.

Neither national party has a clear and strong leader, and central and consistent themes have been scarce during this election. The elections have instead been dominated by regional issues, and it is expected that the regional parties will carry more clout in whichever coalition is formed at centre.

CONTINUED ON P4 WORLD



Indian voters line up to cast their vote outside a polling station during the last phase of voting in Kolkata. DESHAKALYAN CHOWDHURY/AFPI/GETTY IMAGES

Hate groups use Facebook, Youtube to spread: report

By JOSHUA PHILIPP
 Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—Tutorials on how to become a suicide bomber, neo-Nazi networking sites, and terrorist recruiting videos are springing up on social networking and video sharing websites, said a new report.

The report, "Facebook, YouTube & How Social Media Outlets Impact Digital Terrorism and Hate" was released by the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) on Wednesday. It outlines how hate and terror groups are using the web to recruit new members and spread their agenda.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the associate dean of the SWC, said that the number of 'problematic' hate and terror websites is continually growing. "In 1995 we had one hate site. We're now looking at 10,000. That's a growth figure we're not happy about, but it's our reality," he

said.

Cooper presented the findings of the report to a group of students and media at the New York Tolerance Center on Wednesday. He was joined in his presentation by Mark Weitzman, the SWC's chief United Nations representative.

Cooper showed a slideshow of the report's findings. While going through the information, he gave reference that in history, the internet has been a major resource for terror groups.

The November terror attack in Mumbai, India, that killed 170 people was coordinated largely through internet communications.

Also, several of the terrorists involved in the 2005 attacks in London recorded videos of themselves preaching their ideology and spreading fear, just prior to the attack. Many of these videos can still be seen online.

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