



**Canadian
SUPERBILT
SHUTTERS
& BLINDS**



**We Sell Only The Best Brands
Motorized Roller Blinds & Shutters**

HunterDouglas



MAXMAR
WINDOW FASHIONS

ALTEX

John Persaud, CEO C: (416) 239 - 2863 B: (416) 201 - 0109

sales@superbilt.com canadiansuperbiltshutters.com

KEEPING ALIVE THE TIES THAT BIND

NOW IN OUR 42nd YEAR: 1983 - 2025

INDO CARIBBEAN WORLD

Vol. 42 • No 15 • April 2, 2025 • Tel: 905-738-5005 • 312 Brownridge Dr. Thornhill, ON L4J 5X1 • indocaribbeanworld.com • indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com

Our Community Is Thriving!



A perfect picture of calm, profound religiosity, and total, inner concentration via prayer is etched on the faces of the faithful who attended Eid Salah on March 30 at the International Muslim Organisation's mosque in Rexdale. The attendance for Eid worship topped 6,000 faithfuls that day. *Story and more photos on Page 5*



Excitement and anticipation are palpable on our young man's face (third from right) in the line-up of youths awaiting monetary gifts, loot bags, and of course, ice cream, during Imdadul Islamic Centre's Eid celebration, which was held on the evening of March 31. *More photos on Page 11.*

Diaspora mourns passing of stalwart Samlall Persaud

– Our diaspora is mourning the loss of beloved community stalwart, humanitarian, and spiritual beacon Samlall Persaud. Having died before he could be presented with the King Charles III Coronation Medal, Persaud will be remembered for his generosity, devotion, and compassion, qualities in a legacy that will forever mark the profound depths of his humanity.

By Romeo Kaseram

A Local Journalism Initiative Report

Toronto – It was with astonishment, profound sadness, and an overwhelming sense of loss that our diaspora received the news of the death of Samlall Persaud on March 19, following a brief illness. He was 71.

Persaud, lovingly known as 'Ricky' to family and close friends, was an indefatigable philanthropist and tireless advocate for community upliftment. Married for nearly 47 years to his beloved wife, Bidiaawatti 'Ena' Persaud, he was a devoted father to daughters Bindia and Ashwini, son Aditya, and father-in-law to David.

"It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Samlall 'Ricky' Persaud, a devoted husband, father, father-in-law, mentor, professional, and musician," the family's announcement stat-

ed. They also poignantly captured Persaud's essence, describing him as "a man of boundless energy, talent, and compassion for others".

It added, "A true karma yogi, his dharma was to extend his help to others in whatever capacity he could offer. This could take the form of practical advice, a shoulder to lean on, a shared joke, or a warm hug. His generosity and kindness touched many lives, and those of us left behind will endeavour to live up to his example."

Persaud passed away shortly before he could be informed of a significant recognition for his extensive volunteerism and service to community. On March 24, during an emotionally moving ceremony at the viewing at the Ajax Crematorium and Visitation Centre, Ram Mandir's Pandit Roopnauth Sharma presented Persaud's widow, Ena, with the King Charles III Coronation Medal that was meant for her husband.

This prestigious award recognised Persaud's devoted service and tireless community work. He was nominated through the Canadian Multifaith Federation, the national body that represents all faiths in Canada.

Persaud's nomination for the medal was **See Page 14: Humanitarian Persaud**



Samlall Persaud



Widow Ena Persaud (left) received the King Charles III Coronation Medal for her late husband, Samlall Persaud, from Ram Mandir's Pandit Roopnauth Sharma (at right) on the evening of March 24. Presented during the funeral viewing at the Ajax Crematorium and Visitation Centre, Persaud was too ill following surgery to be informed he had been awarded the prestigious award; he passed away shortly afterwards. At centre, back row, is Persaud's son Aditya, who read the citation during the touching presentation ceremony.

LIFE INSURANCE



Paul Ram, Life & Investment Broker

MONEY FREEDOM INC.

| AGE | \$100,000 M/F | \$250,000 M/F |
|-----|---------------|---------------|
| 30 | 10.00/09.09 | 13.73/11.70 |
| 35 | 11.00/09.90 | 15.30/13.05 |
| 40 | 12.78/11.70 | 19.13/16.43 |
| 45 | 16.02/13.59 | 25.88/19.80 |
| 50 | 22.05/17.73 | 36.88/26.65 |
| 55 | 27.27/20.43 | 56.03/40.95 |
| 60 | 39.69/28.62 | 88.65/61.43 |
| 65 | 62.28/43.20 | 142.20/94.50 |

Also offered: *Non Medical & Mortgage Insurance *No Load Funds *No Penalty RESP *Critical Illness *Universal Life *Dental & Drug Plans *Disability. (E&O)
Companies represented: Assumption, BMO, Canada, Empire, Equitable, Foresters, Industrial Alliance, Manulife, RBC.

Instant quote online: www.moneyfreedom.ca
Tel: 416.414.2204

Open 7 Days from 10 am to 10 pm

ALI'S ROTI

* Eat In or Take Out * We also Cater

Specialising in West Indian Dishes - Trinidad Style Cooking

1446 Queen St. W. Toronto
(1/2 Block East of Lansdowne,
North side, W. of Dufferin)

Only HALAL Meat Served

Tel: 416-532-7701

Now two generations serving our community



JAY BRIJPAUL
416-418-BRIJ [2745]

ANJIE BRIJPAUL
416-745-2300



FOR LEASE \$2,850

Charming & Spacious Retreat!

Stunning bungalow perfect for small family seeking comfort, style. Gleaming, well-maintained hardwood floors, 3 generously sized bedrooms, updated bathrooms, well-designed kitchen - all warm & elegant! Sprawling deck for BBQ'S, gatherings, or peaceful mornings. Don't miss out on this inviting haven!



\$899,999

Your Dream Home Awaits!

Perfect blend of comfort, sophistication & modern living in this maintained, updated home. Has 3+1 spacious bdrms, 3 luxurious bathrms for growing families & array of modern upgrades. Backyard is an oasis with underground wiring & certified outlets for a peaceful retreat to relax or host gatherings!



\$519,900

Luxury Midtown Condo Penthouse!

Elevated living in luxury midtown penthouse condo! Breathtaking south view, 9-foot ceilings, convenience - just 3 mins to DVP, steps to 24-hour TTC. Master suite has spa-like 4-piece ensuite, building has outdoor pool, tennis court, 24-hour library, party room, round-the-clock security, spacious locker. Indulge in style & convenience like never before!



\$619,900

Refined Living Awaits!

Luxury, opulence, modern living await in a renovated suite. Italian marble floors, black laminate cabinetry, heat-resistant granite countertops in kitchen & top-of-the-line LG appliances mix elegance & functionality. Walk-in closet, custom organisers in main bedroom. By Humber River & a sprawling park, a prime location that is perfect for nature lovers and families alike.



\$1,399,000

Bright and Spacious!

Impressive home on premium corner lot boasts large rooms & a larger lot! Spacious bungalow with an oversize garage with parking for more than 8 cars, large concrete patio & separate entrance to basement. Well-landscaped lot & wrought-iron fence gate lends unique beauty to an amazing property.



\$939,000

Charmingly Delightful!

Spacious semi-detached bungalow in serene community! Beautiful home nestled in quiet neighbourhood - the perfect blend of comfort, convenience, & community spirit. 2 roomy bedrooms ideal for relaxation & privacy, 3 well-appointed baths, large fin. basement & lovely green-spaced backyard.



\$1,049,900

Double-Sided Coin!

A roomy 5-level split home on a lovely premium location. Features internal access from garage, open conc. liv. & din. rooms, large kitch. & fam. room leading to covered patio. Lower level feat. in-law suite with kitch., bedrm & washrm. Ideal for investor looking for top-notch quality tenants willing to stay.



\$525,900

Location! Location! Location!

On the 27th floor, this lovely suite has an unobstructed view of the city. The eastern exposure is ideal for extra sunlight. This suite has an open balcony, looking down at the Humber River & nature. One of the best features is the storage/locker is on the same floor. We invite you to visit.

TheBrij.com

3,500+ HOMES

* Sales mean both buyer and seller transactions from 1990 to 2016, Team Sales combined.

Jay Brijpaul, Broker, FRI

Direct: 416-418-2745 (BRIJ)
Office: 416-745-2300 ext 5292
96 Rexdale Blvd., Toronto M9W 1N7

RE/MAX

West Realty Inc. Brokerage
Independently Owned and Operated



Anjie Brijpaul, MA
Broker

Office 416.745.2300
Fax 416-745-1952

anjiebrijpaul@gmail.com

Call to Guyanese diaspora to attend Toronto job fair

Toronto — The Guyana government, in collaboration with private sector partners, is calling on members of our Guyanese diaspora to participate in a pivotal job fair designed to connect skilled professionals with Guyana's leading industries and public agencies. (See display on Page 19).

The event is set for April 5 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will take place at the Don Valley Hotel and Suites, located at 175 Wynford Drive in North York.

It will provide attendees with access to employment opportunities, resettlement programs, and expert guidance on returning home. The Toronto leg concludes a successful series of fairs that have already been hosted in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and New York.

With Guyana being recognised as one of the fastest-growing economies globally, fueled not only by oil and gas but by expansion across multiple sectors, the fair aims to position diaspora professionals at the heart of the homeland's ongoing transformation.

Participants will have the chance to engage directly with representatives from top Guyanese companies and key government agencies, among them the National Insurance Scheme, the Passport Office, and the General Registry Office.

Officials will offer information on employment pathways, resettlement initiatives, housing, and training programs, as well as provide assistance on essential government services.

This event is more than just a networking platform. Companies will be able to meet potential employees face-to-face, answer any questions, and even begin the recruitment process, making it a highly practical and actionable event for diaspora members looking to contribute to Guyana's growth.

It is a chance for participants to get an insider's view of the booming industries and projects back in the home country, while exploring what role they could play in its future.

For more information, call the Guyana Consulate General in Toronto at **416-494-6040, 416-494-6059, and 416-494-2679.**



The Kisson family once again religiously celebrated the birthday of matriarch Latchmin Kisson, which took place with *pujas*, singing celebratory *bhajans*, and reciting from the *Shastras* at Vishnu Mandir from March 23-March 25. Well-regarded for their generosity and charitable work, the family treated devotees to sumptuous meals following the celebration of Shrimati Latchmin's 88th birthday. Yet again, family spokesperson, Dhaman, announced that the upcoming golf tournament, named after their matriarch, will be happening come June. He also announced the upcoming **Law & You Conference at VM on April 19. See display on Page 8.** In photo, left to right, are son Mitra, Shrimati Latchmin, Dhaman, and VM's leader, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay

King Charles III medal for Shaw

Toronto — Ali Shaw's enduring contribution to the community was formally recognised last month when he was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal by Member of Parliament for Humber River-Black Creek, Judy Sgro. The medal honours individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their communities and to Canada.

For nearly four decades, Ali has quietly made service to others the hallmark of his life in Canada. Originally from Wakenaam, Guyana, Ali has long called Toronto home, dedicating himself not only to his career in the engineering department at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, but more significantly, to the well-being of our community.

Ali's commitment was most notable during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, when, as volunteer director for One Love, he stepped up to support families facing unprecedented hardship. Under his leadership, the organisation mobilised to distribute food hampers, serve hot meals, and deliver essential services to seniors, ensuring that no one was left behind during those difficult and challenging years.

Beyond the pandemic, Ali's efforts have remained steadfast, dedicated, and committed. Through One Love Family Services, he has supported refugees, collaborated with numerous community organisations, and led initiatives aimed at providing aid, comfort, and essential resources to vulnerable groups. His tireless work has touched the lives of many, embodying the true spirit of giving and community service.

Having served for over 30 years at the Metro Toronto



Ali with his Certificate of Appreciation

Convention Centre, he now devotes his time fully to our community as a director at One Love Table, a director at the Canadian Islamic Civic Academy, and a dedicated volunteer with Habitat for Humanity.

Daljeet & Tabuchi DENTISTRY

Dr. Nar Daljeet
Dr. Nikhil Daljeet
Dr. Sudong Ji
Dr. James Liang
Dr. Sara Safar

We Accept

Canadian Dental Care Plan

Book Now
416-492-3077

daljeet@tddental.ca
2942 Finch Ave E., #4
tddental.ca

Canada

- Family Dentistry**
Over 40 years of experience providing caring, gentle dental care for all ages.
- Emergencies**
Contact us anytime - emergencies and last minute appointments always welcome.
- Dental Implants**
See us to replace any of your missing teeth - implants, bridges or dentures!
- Orthodontics**
Our board certified orthodontist specializes in braces and invisalign.

Book Giveaway For Supernatural

Enter for a chance to win one of five copies of "Supernatural - Volume 1" - A compilation of thirty-two tales from the popular newspaper series, "Supernatural". Collect your own personal autographed copy of Volume 1 and be the first to know when Volume 2 will become available. Good Luck!!!

Kam Ali

Please leave your email address at:
www.kamilali.ca/contact

VEDIC BOOKS

- Complete set of the Vedas
- The Upanishads
- Bhagavad Gita
- Ramayan
- Philosophy of Vedas
- Vedic Thoughts
- Vedic Vision - Sanskar Vidhi
- Quest - The Vedic Answers
- Vedic Marriage Ceremony
- Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas
- Life & Teachings of Swami Dayanand
- Light of Truth
- Wisdom of the Rishies
- Gems of Vedic Wisdom
- Anand Gayatri Katha
- Daily Prayer
- Vedic Philosophy
- Whose Wealth?
- Mahabharata
- ... and many more

Call AVM Bookstore
416-805-2685 or 905-824-2685

RB PARALEGAL AND NOTARY SERVICES

Small Claims | Landlord & Tenant Board | Notary Services

Rita Boodram, B.S.W. (Hons), Paralegal, Commissioner of Oaths & Notary Public

BOOK YOUR FREE 15-MINUTE CONSULTATION BY VISITING:
<https://calendly.com/rbparalegalandnotaryservices>
OR CONTACT US AT:
TEL: 647-745-8308
EMAIL: ritaboodram@rbparalegal.com
Visit Our Website at: <https://bit.ly/RB-PARALEGAL-NOTARY-SERVICES>



**AJAX | BRAMPTON
CREMATORIUM**
& VISITATION CENTRE
Compassion | Care | Convenience

**As the experts in funerals we can offer many options
that fit your traditions, wishes & budget**

Lock in funeral costs and protect against inflation and price increases.
Make decisions now and protect your family from the emotional
burdens of planning a funeral.



Ample Parking



State-of-the-art Facilities



Puneet Aujla
Chief Executive Officer

**Burlington Crematorium & Visitation Centre
Coming Soon...**

BRAMPTON
Crematorium & Visitation Centre



905-458-2222

30 Bramwin Court,
Brampton, ON L6T 5G2

AJAX
Crematorium & Visitation Centre



289-372-3300

384 Finley Avenue,
Ajax, ON L1S 2E3

Frequently Asked Questions

66

Why Choose Brampton or Ajax Crematorium & Visitation Centre?

- Serving families since 2012 with expert guidance for all faiths and traditions.
- State-of-the-art facilities, on-site crematoriums, and reception services.
- Assistance with CPP benefits and government paperwork.



66

What If I Travel Frequently?

- A one-time travel protection plan covers all transportation costs if you're 100km or more from home, including for a partner or dependent.



66

Why Pre-Arrange Your Funeral?

- Reduces stress and financial burden on loved ones.
- Locks in today's prices to avoid future inflation.
- Ensures your wishes are honored.

66

Can I Transfer My Pre-Arranged Funeral to You?

- Yes! Contact Brampton (905-458-2222) or Ajax (289-372-3300) for seamless assistance.

66

Do You Offer Repatriation Services?

- To the Caribbean: Full management of permits, flights, and documentation.
- From the Caribbean: Coordination with local authorities and return to Canada.

66

What Sets Us Apart?

- Cultural Understanding: Honoring traditions.
- Comprehensive Facilities: On-site crematoriums and spacious receptions.
- Affordable & Transparent: Flexible options since 2012.
- Community Trust: Compassionate care for over a decade.





Shaykh Musleh, his son, and IMO President Omar Farouk



IMO head Farouk (centre) with worshippers at the Eid Salah

IMO's hall resonates with Eid prayers

Toronto – Close to 6,000 worshippers gathered at the International Muslim Organisation in Rexdale on March 30 for *Eid-ul-Fitr Salah*, where during three congregational prayer sessions they heard a powerful call to carry forward the spiritual lessons of Ramadan.

In a message shared with the *One Guyana Forum*, IMO President Omar Farouk reflected on the significance of the day and the holy month that preceded it.

“The three *Khutbahs* (sermons) delivered after the *Eid Salah* (*Eid* prayer) reflected on the transformative power of Ramadan, reminding the congregation that fasting is not just an abstention from food and drink but a means of spiritual purification,” Farouk wrote.

Farouk elaborated on the essence of Ramadan's teachings, emphasising its enduring impact beyond the month itself.

“It teaches self-restraint, nurtures compassion, and deepens one's connection with God,” he declared.

Worshippers were encouraged to extend the lessons of Ramadan into their daily lives, focusing on “cultivating selflessness, caring for the most vulnerable in society regardless of faith, and embodying righteousness in all aspects of life”.

Quoting from the *Holy Qur'an*, Farouk reinforced a central message of the spiritual perspective: “Indeed, we belong to God, and to Him we shall return”, he wrote, underlining that “life is a journey, and through sincerity in worship and excellence in character, we elevate the human experience”.

The *Eid-ul-Fitr* prayers not only marked the culmination of Ramadan, but fostered a renewed spirit of brotherhood and unity among those gathered.

Farouk observed that as each of the three prayer sessions concluded, “worshippers embraced one another with warmth, transcending differences of race, nationality, and background”.

He added, “The joy of *Eid* was not merely in the celebration but in the shared gratitude for completing a month of fasting, devotion, and striving for nearness to God. A month in which even the *Halal* (permissible) became *Haram* (forbidden) from dawn to dusk, reminding the believers that submission to God's command is the essence of faith.”

Farouk closed his *Eid* message with a heartfelt prayer: “May God accept our fasting, prayers, and good deeds... May God accept [good deeds] from you and us!”



Shaykh Musleh was the second speaker at the Eid Salah



A section of the thousands of worshippers at the IMO on March 30

INDO-CARIBBEAN CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
INDO-CARIBBEAN SINGLE PARENTS MEET AND GREET EVENT
SUGAR AND SPICE
 AN EVENING TO CONNECT AND BUILD A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
 FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2025
 7:00 P.M. ET
 CHOCOLATE AND LOVE CAFE
 5985 RODEO DR UNIT 14, MISSISSAUGA
 RSVP TO CONNECT@INDOCARIBCDN.COM
SPICE
 Single Parents
 Indo-Caribbean Exchange

KISSOON Law Office
NEW LOCATION
 Suite 304 1 Greensboro Drive
 Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 1C8
 (Near 401 & Kipling Avenue)



Dhaman Kisson's
 Areas of Practice:

- CRIMINAL LAW
- IMMIGRATION LAW

Lawyers available for referrals
 Family Law, Real Estate
 Law, Corporate Commercial
 Law, Personal Injury Law,
 Civil Litigation

Tel: 416-234-1446
Fax: 416-234-0154
 Email: dkisson@bellnet.ca
 Website: www.kisson.ca

Editorial

Sam 'Lotus' Persaud

In the great expanse of our diasporic existence, where daily we navigate cross-currents and turbulences pulling us away from our centre, there are few who manage to stand like the Lotus flower, rooted in muddy waters yet blossoming in full grace above.

Samlall Persaud was one such flower, a quiet but radiant force whose passing has left our community with a profound sense of loss, tempered only by the enduring legacy of his service.

To family and friends, Sam's life was an unfolding flower of selfless devotion to family, to faith, and to community. For close to 47 years he was the devoted husband to Bidiawatti 'Ena' Persaud, the steadfast father of Bindia, Ashwini, and Aditya, and an engaging father-in-law.

Yet, as those closest to him have shared, he was also a larger presence: a *karma yogi*, who without seeking recognition, lived his *dharma* to serve others in all ways – through advice, laughter, presence, and unwavering support. His was a life measured not in accolades, but in the lives touched. He offered counsel quietly, and selflessly extended his hand wherever needed.

Sadly, he passed away before learning he had been awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal, national recognition for his volunteerism and community service.

Sam's community work was not confined to boardrooms or public rhetoric; instead, it was woven into the fabric of our daily lives. Whether through reviving The Devi Mandir's Board, anchoring the Hindu Federation, or tending to bereaved families, Sam was the invisible holy thread weaving our mandirs and our community together.

His story is especially stirring not just via the breadth of his contributions, but through the depth of his presence. He was there when mandirs needed his expert, accounting guidance; when young people needed encouragement; when bereavement filled homes with mournful silences.

"He was everywhere," Treveni Mandir's Pandit Dr Yudhishtir Dhanraj reflected, adding, "Anyone who passed away, he would be there for the wake... Without him, a connection has now been broken."

Even in his understated way, Sam understood that the strength of any community rests not in grand gestures, but in the cultivation of trust, continuity, and youth. He was instrumental in revitalising temple boards with young leaders, laying a foundation that now, without him, feels simultaneously sturdy and yet sorrowful.

As chartered accountant and lifelong friend Tamesh Lilmohan noted, Sam had foreseen his real legacy would be those who followed: "What is good was his involvement with young people, who are now taking up his legacy."

But this was no abstract service. It was embodied in his actions, in moments where he chose to follow the path less rewarded.

"Sam was a consummate professional with a conscience and an inherent humanitarianism," Lilmohan stated, while noting he chose not the lure of status and remuneration, but the quiet dignity of *Sewa*, or service.

In his final days, as recalled by family, friends, and colleagues, Sam remained steadfast, exuding the gentle warmth and calm he had always embodied.

His children remember him not just as a father but as the kind of human being who made not only their home safer, lighter, and more compassionate, but also the world.

"When we were stressed, he would say, 'Nah take worries,'" they recalled. It is perhaps the most fitting mantra to carry forward.

The Hindu Federation has announced plans for an award in Sam's honour, ensuring that his values of humility, resilience, and unwavering community spirit will continue to inspire others. Yet, no medal, however regal, and no award, however grand, can fully encapsulate the beauty of a Lotus that blossomed with quiet resilience among us.

As our diaspora gathers, mourns, and remembers Sam in the days ahead, we are also resolving to carry forward the noble qualities that defined such an exemplary life worthy of emulation. It was one that gave service without expectation, displayed leadership without ego, and extended love without measure. Rest in peace, dear Lotus.

Looks like a 2-party federal elections battle ahead

Just over a week into the 2025 general election, the new US administration's looming impacts on the Canadian economy was prevailing as the number one issue.

A recent poll found that 40 percent of voters identified tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump as the most important issue in the election.

The reality is that regardless of the political posturing of parties before Trump's tariff proposals, the shocking assault on the Canadian economy has become a matter of national urgency.

Whoever becomes the next Canadian prime minister will have to manage the Trump administration, and ultimately Canadian voters will need to decide who they believe is best suited to handle the unpredictable president.

On past occasions, relations with the US have become the leading narrative in a Canadian election. In 1988, trade with the US was also topical during the general election.

That election was largely fought on a single issue: the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. The Progressive Conservative Party campaigned in favour of it, and both the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party campaigned against it.

In the end, the pro-trade stance of Progressive Conservative leader, Brian Mulroney, won.

However, in this election, the results are yet to be made clear. This is mostly because it is not simply about the position to take with the US government, but who is the best to lead Canada.

One week into this election, the Conservatives, who were in a double-digit lead against the governing Liberals, have fallen back, with support for the Liberals suddenly surging.

Newly-minted Liberal leader and Prime Minister, Mark Carney, has solidified his message, asking Canadians for a majority mandate to lead a government ready to respond to the Trump administration.

This overnight dynamic has placed the Liberals in a neck-to-neck race with the Conservatives.

Whether we like it or not, the US and its affairs have a direct influence on our election, our politics, and our future government.

And in many ways, the US' electoral system which is based on a two-party system, a choice between red and blue, is also taking formation on our side of the border.

Canada prides itself as a leading democratic nation that operates a multiparty system. More than often, election results provide a stable government that operates for several years.

Responding to the urgent threats by the US administration has developed an extremely polarising choice for Canadians.



Ryan Singh

With the dynamic that emerged of a race between the Liberals and Conservatives, other political parties have been edged out of contention, reshaping this strictly into a two-party race.

Typically, many Canadians are mildly subjected to strategic voting, but within this political climate, more Canadians will have to wisely consider who they will vote for in this election.

Strategic voting in Canada is a practice where voters choose a candidate not necessarily because they are their first choice, but because they have the best chance of preventing an undesirable candidate from winning.

This tactic is particularly relevant in Canada's first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system, where the candidate with the most votes in a riding wins, even if they do not secure more than 50 percent of the vote.

Strategic voting is often motivated by a desire to prevent vote splitting. Multiple political parties with similar platforms may compete for the same voter base.

For example, progressive (left-leaning) voters may have to choose between the Liberals and the NDP. If these votes are divided, it can allow a Conservative candidate to win, even if the majority of voters prefer a progressive candidate. To avoid this, some voters opt for the party they believe has the strongest chance of defeating the Conservative candidate, even if it is not their first choice.

As this election emerges as a fight between the Liberals and the Conservatives, voters who might typically vote NDP or Green will need to consider if they want to support those parties, or put their support between one of the leading contenders.

In Quebec, right-leaning voters may support either the Conservatives or *Bloc Québécois*, depending on which candidate has a better chance of stopping the Liberals. Similarly, some *Bloc Québécois* voters might opt to vote Liberal to prevent a Conservative win.

Throughout the election campaign, Liberal leader, Mark Carney, will continue to present a progressive outlook based on sound economic rationale in an effort to lure more NDP support to his party.

Meanwhile, Conservative leader, Pierre Poilievre, will need to rely on the NDP and *Bloc Québécois* to run strong campaigns to keep support away from the Liberals.

The campaign has only begun, but has proven to be more competitive than originally expected. Beyond the influence of US trade policy emerging as the number one issue, ultimately, the Canadian voters will decide the outcome of the election.

Pepper was hotter before being bottled with a QR code

It is a curious thing, this modern-day business of eating at a fancy restaurant. The plate of food arrives neatly cultivated like a botanical garden, with the waiter, excuse me, the 'culinary curator', identifying the ingredients by its Latin names, gently tapping the garnish, and prodding at the peas and carrots, hopefully not with the forefinger of a down-to-earth horticulturist recently back from a field trip.

And then, somewhere amidst the ostentatious flourish of too much academic information about marrows, which with my knife and fork in hand I understand to be the steamed pumpkin, is hidden a designer pepper sauce, bottled like an expensive French cologne and labelled with hieroglyphics.

The tag hanging from a bow wrapped around the neck announces it to be a fermented Ghost pepper reduction, aged five years in charred oak barrels, and has a recipe that goes further back than when my ancestors stepped onto the deck of an English ship in Calcutta to cross the *kala pani*.

The pepper sauce does not get my attention, notably annoying the 'culinary curator' in mid-presentation. So here we are today, with even pepper sauce monetised and made into Haute Couture, and now at the burnt-out end of its days.

Gone, it seems, are the days when pepper was just pepper. We had no marketing manager visiting tables at a restaurant; no social media influencer, pretty much no pump, no circumstance; no literature to obligingly plough through with the stomach rumbling in complaint.

All it took back then was half-a-teaspoon of pepper sauce, to either sweat and smile, or bawl and cry.

Now a bottle of pepper sauce arrives with an escort carrying glossy literature in a separate tray. On the tray are heat maps similar to paint swatches found at Canadian Tire, and for the generation born with pointed thumbs and smart phone savvy, a QR code for a landing page offering details about *terroir*, pairing suggestions, and vintage.

Meanwhile, hidden beneath the garnish, the marrow, and the kinetically rearranged peas and carrots, the food on the plate is growing cold.

It was not always that food grew cold with distractions. Actually, it was the complete opposite – thermally hot food was made quite warmer, and even flaming hot, with infusions

of readily available peppers, or homemade pepper sauce stored in a re-purposed soft drink bottle, its mouth stoppered with a tightly-rolled wad of brown shop paper.

But that was back in the homeland. Now I recall as a young man back home visiting a friend's house and being invited to stay for dinner. We ate in the verandah, and growing at the side was a flourishing bird pepper tree. Now looking back at the moment, it appears the dinner table had been strategically placed near this prolific tree.

So it was that the patriarch barely missed a beat in the rhythm of spooning soup from bowl to mouth, all the while chatting too curiously about my plans for life, even as he leaned over to pluck peppers from the tree to add heat to his dinner.

Coming to think of it now, this may also explain the growing heat in his line of questioning as he probed my prospects in life, assessing the pleasant young man, who was delicately manoeuvring the cutlery, as a prospective son-in-law.

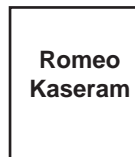
Meanwhile, like our present day culinary distraction, my attention was not on the pepper tree and its bright red gems. Try one of these peppers, my prospective father-in-law insisted, plucking the biggest and juiciest gem off a branch, now having made his assessment, and seeking to run me off the premises.

Years later I was yet again victim to the deprecation of another red hot pepper. A visit to a friend's home introduced me to the savagery of the poisonous Scorpion. Unschooled in the nuances of hot, hotter, and 'Oh-my-goodness-I-should-update-my-will' heat, I soon found myself in a theological class, navigating between both heaven and hell.

Meanwhile, conversation around the table sailed on smooth seas, even while I endured my ascension into chimeric headwinds, as both dragon and young student being tortured for getting his arithmetic sums wrong.

Coming to think of it, after these experiences, I have now come to an age where I diligently avoid pepper.

But how to tell this to the 'culinary curator' at this too-fancy restaurant, who having finally finished off a lengthy spiel, was now presenting shot bottles of pepper sauce with its indecipherable hieroglyphics for sale (except the prices, which were in large print), and which were all housed on a lengthy belt like lethal, large calibre ammunition.



Romeo Kaseram

Views expressed are not necessarily those of this publication. Letters to be published will be edited where necessary. Publisher: Harry Ramkhalawan Editor: Romeo Kaseram Columnists/Writers/Photographers: Vidur Dindayal, Bernard Heydorn, Dwarka Lakhan, Dhanpaul Narine, Ryan Singh, Nalini Mohabir, Ramesh Ramkalawan, Russell Lutchman. Contact Information: Indo Caribbean World Inc. 312 Brownridge Drive, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5X1 (905) 738-5005; indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com Website: www.indocaribbeanworld.com

US backing good, but Guyana needs self reliance

Dear Editor,

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to Guyana last month helped to clarify the Donald Trump administration's position on Venezuela's attempts to seize Essequibo and our territorial waters off its coast. President Trump is known for his skepticism towards committing US forces in foreign military encounters.

However, Rubio's statements suggest that Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro's violation of international norms, and even an International Court of Justice's explicit warning, might have disturbed a tripwire suggesting the US might move beyond verbal support if Maduro's ongoing hybrid war against us takes a kinetic turn.

Rubio reiterated earlier American declarations supporting our position that Venezuela was making "threats based on illegitimate territorial claims". Asked as to what the US would do in the face of a Venezuelan attack, Rubio was quite unequivocal: "It would be a very bad day for the Venezuelan regime if they were to attack Guyana or attack ExxonMobil or anything like it. It would be a very bad day or a very bad week for them, and it would not end well for them."

This was repeated on several other occasions, and removes any ambiguity about the nature of the US' reaction. At one point, he said, "We have a big navy and we have commitments that exist today with Guyana." He suggested these military ties would only strengthen moving forward, stating, "We want to build on those, expand on those."

In turn, Guyana's President Irfaan Ali responded when asked about the nature of his private discussions with Rubio, stating, "I am very pleased at the reassurance of the US in ensuring the safeguard of our territorial integrity and sovereignty. The threats from Venezuela were specifically discussed."

According to the US State Department, Rubio signed a security agreement with Guyana's Foreign Affairs Minister, Hugh Todd, that will enhance intelligence sharing and military-to-military cooperation.

Very significantly, the signing came as the US Navy was conducting exercises with the Guyanese Navy in our Exclusive Economic Zone, which a Venezuelan Navy *corvette* had violated on March 1 to threaten an Exxon FPSO.

There have been valid concerns raised about relying so heavily on the US coming to our rescue, especially at a time when the

Trump administration has adumbrated a totally transactional approach to its foreign policy commitments.

In that vein, we must note Rubio's candid inclusion of Venezuela's threat to "attack ExxonMobil" as much as violating our EEZ being the rationale for invoking the US Navy as part of the response to Venezuelan aggression.

As Trump has declared explicitly in efforts to end the Ukraine War, protecting US companies that are exploiting local resources is a rationale for receiving American military protection. They will be protecting US interests.

On that ground, we would more than qualify since the ExxonMobil consortium exploiting the 11 billion Barrels of Oil Equivalent (and counting) in the Stabroek Block is a sweetheart deal *par excellence*. We also note that back in 1999, when the original contract was signed by Janet Jagan, she had to have swallowed hard to invite companies she had railed against for half a century.

But even with our 11 billion plus BOE reserves, we must consider Venezuela's 300 billion barrels of proven oil, which is the largest reserve in the world by far, and which dwarfs ours. We have to accept that the US wants to control those reserves, since that would give it great leverage in the power struggle with China and other blocs in the coming decades.

There are two ways in which the US can achieve that goal: firstly, by helping to replace the socialist Maduro regime through the application of sanctions and support for the friendly Venezuelan opposition. Up to now, this has not worked.

The other is suggested by the willingness of Maduro to accept the return of US oil major Chevron, which is shipping 240,000 bpd to the US. While Trump ostentatiously cancelled the Biden-reissued license, he extended it to May 27, but applied a 25 percent tariff to other countries that purchase Venezuelan oil.

It is possible that Maduro might agree to the return of other US oil majors through which the US would have "peaceful" control of Venezuelan oil as in pre-Chavez days.

As such, we must heed the *hadith*, or saying: "Trust in God; but tie your camel." We must strengthen our alliance with the US, but simultaneously hasten our efforts to defend Essequibo by intensifying changes in our military doctrine and force structure to wage a successful asymmetrical campaign to give pause to Venezuelan adventurism.

Ravi Dev, Guyana, via email.

US Travel Advisory to TT raises alarming red flag

Dear Editor,

Trinidad and Tobago is now officially on the US State Department's Level 3 Travel Advisory list, placing the nation in the same category as Pakistan, Egypt, and Colombia – countries grappling with terrorism, political unrest, and severe crime.

The message to travellers is clear: reconsider visiting. For a country that depends heavily on tourism and foreign investment, this is an alarming red flag.

The advisory was issued after a State of Emergency (SoE) was declared in late December 2024, extended into April, due to surging violent crime and public safety threats.

While there are no curfews or gathering bans, areas in Port of Spain, such as Laventille, Sea Lots, Beetham, and downtown after dark, are now deemed too dangerous even for US officials.

What is driving this crisis? A toxic mix of gang warfare, illegal firearms, drug trafficking, and kidnappings, some involving foreigners, has overwhelmed law enforcement and shaken national morale.

The result is a growing sense of fear, declining tourist confidence, and a bruised international reputation during the Caribbean's peak season.

What must future government leaders do immediately are deploy strategic, intelligence-led policing to dismantle gangs and intercept criminal networks before they strike; also, invest heavily in police reform, training, and accountability to restore public trust and effectiveness.

It must also launch community-driven anti-crime programmes, especially in high-risk neighbourhoods, to give young people alternatives to violence; boost international collaboration on intelligence sharing, firearms control, and border security; and ensure transparency and oversight during the SoE to protect civil rights while restoring order.

The road ahead is tough, but urgent, decisive leadership is the only way forward. If the Trinidad and Tobago fails to act now, we risk not just losing tourists, but losing the future of our people.

Simon Wright, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



Chartered Professional Accountants

At RR, CPA, Professional Corporation, we bring accuracy, honesty, and years of experience to everything we do. We make sure your financial operations run smoothly and are in line with all tax rules, both locally and internationally.

Partners

1. Christopher Raghunauth, MBA, CPA, LPA, CFE, FCCA (UK), CPA (CO, FL)
2. Richard Raghunath, CPA, LPA
3. Rehanna Raghunauth, B Com, CPA

At RR, CPA, Professional Corporation, we focus on making accounting simple, clear, and reliable for you. As a Chartered Professional Accounting firm, we specialize in providing expert services with an emphasis on audit and US tax matters. Our team is here to offer you the support and guidance you need, including:

1. Audit Services for Not-for-Profit Organizations

We help nonprofits maintain financial transparency, earn donor trust, and stay compliant with regulations.

2. Audit Services for Small & Medium Enterprises

Our audits give SM Es valuable insights into their finances, ensuring they stay compliant and make informed decisions.

3. Bookkeeping & Tax Filing for Corporations and Individuals

We handle your bookkeeping and tax filing, reducing errors and helping you save on taxes.

4. US Tax Expertise

Our team is knowledgeable in US tax laws and can guide you through the complexities of cross-border taxes, making sure you're compliant and well-informed

OFFICE 1 – 5109 Steeles Ave. W., Suite 204, Toronto, ON, M9L 2Y8

OFFICE 2 – 951 Wilson Ave, Suite 16B, Toronto, ON, M3K 2A 7

T: 416-745-5500
 F: 866-588-5501
 E: amisha@rrcpa.ca
 S: www.rrcpa.ca





PRESENTS **THE LAW & YOU:**

THE CONSEQUENCES OF DRINKING & DRIVING

AND LEGAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

OUR SPEAKERS

Justice Amit Ghosh
Judge at the OCJ

Michelle Johal
Criminal Defence Lawyer

Rashmi Kumar
Asst. Crown Attorney

Douglas Strelshik
Formerly Insurance Defence Lawyer
Now Personal Injury Lawyer

SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 2025 | 10 AM - 12 PM
Registration & refreshments from 9:15 AM - 10 AM

INFO SESSION

LEGAL EDUCATION informational session for students seeking to pursue a career in law

MODERATOR

DHAMAN P. KISSOON BA (Econs.) BA (Law) LLB., Barrister and Solicitor, Adjunct Professor (Queen's Faculty Law)

VISHNU MANDIR BANQUET HALL
8640 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, ON L4Z 6Z4

ADMISSION IS FREE

Any donation to the temple will be appreciated

RSVP by emailing laxmisabha@vishnumandir.com, calling the temple at 905-886-1724 or 416-879-8805, or through the QR link

An initiative of the Laxmi Sabha Voice of the Vedas



RSVP HERE

Upcoming general elections starting to see racial divide widening

With general elections due later this year, Guyana's main political parties have commenced ramping up their efforts to garner voter support. As the election fever heats up, the racial divide that apparently narrowed in recent years is once again widening, setting the stage for racially motivated tensions.

Traditionally, elections in Guyana have for the most part been a two-horse race – more recently between A Partnership for National Unity and the Alliance for Change (APNU+AFC) coalition, and the People's Progressive Party/Civic. Elections have been largely dominated by voting along racial lines – Blacks for APNU+AFC and East Indians for the PPP/Civic – in spite of growing calls to vote along the lines of “unity” instead of race.

Over the past five years or so, the PPP/Civic has made significant inroads in bridging the racial divide. However, the racial divide, which typically manifests itself around elections, appears to be widening once again, aggravated by certain politically-motivated individuals who are deliberately stirring the racial pot to suit their own selfish objectives.

One such individual is Dr David Hinds, co-leader of the Working People's Alliance, who according to press reports recently made controversial remarks targeting Afro-Guyanese individuals who do not align with his political views.

In his program *Politics 101*, Hinds referred to these individuals disparagingly and vulgarly, criticising them for supporting political parties other than his own. He also expressed vulgar disdain for Afro-Guyanese endorsing President Dr Irfaan Ali's leadership.

His insulting comments have been widely condemned as divisive and derogatory. Critics argue that Hinds' rhetoric undermines the democratic right of individuals to choose their political affiliations freely.

An editorial in the *Guyana Chronicle* questioned Hinds' contributions to the Afro-Guyanese community, suggesting that his actions have been more harmful than beneficial: “What has Hinds done for people of African Descent here as opposed to cause them harm, and create division and racial strife?”

Furthermore, Hinds had previously made remarks perceived as inciting racial division. In a video circulated on social media, he called for undermining certain businesses and individuals based on their ethnic backgrounds, leading to public outcry and discussions about potential scrutiny by the Ethnic Relations Commission.

These incidents highlight some of the ongoing challenges in Guyana's political discourse, emphasising the need for leaders to promote unity and respect for diverse political perspectives.

In an address to attendees of the Dr Cheddi Jagan memorial event held in late March, PPP General Secretary and Guyana's Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo, said that APNU+AFC coalition is afraid of inroads and progress being made by the PPP/Civic in promoting unity among Guyanese. As a result, it has continued to advance its usual tactics of spreading divisive, racially charged rhetoric to create disunity among Guyanese.

He cautioned: “Now, often it seems that we are fighting against an invisible enemy. You don't see the opposition as prevalent as they were before, but do not be deluded. If you grow arrogant, and if you don't put in the hard work, we can have surprises. They are invisible; they're not doing much, but quietly they continue to spread the racist messages that they have grown accustomed to using in campaigning.”

He added: “They're trying to shame them by calling them names; to keep them away from

us. They're working up to now with the same playbook; it's predictable what they're doing, and [Dr Jagan] condemned racism, because he always fought to bring people together.”

At the same event, Ali, while paying tribute to former presidents Cheddi and Janet Jagan, stressed that racism will not be allowed to succeed in Guyana under his government. He warned that the days of those who push such an agenda are numbered.

He stated, “We will disband, destroy and completely wipe out the weapon of racism that continues to be used against the people of this country. And those who handle the weapon must understand that their

days are numbered; and their days are coming to an end because that weapon is being destroyed globally; and that weapon will be buried here in Guyana.”

Incidentally, spurious allegations of racism against Guyana's ruling PPP/Civic government are undoubtedly grounded in the quest for power by the APNU+AFC coalition party.

The truth is racial divisions are not necessarily entrenched in Guyanese society. Rather, racism has historically been fuelled by certain politically motivated individuals.

While most individuals recognise the ploy of opposition forces, those who are misinformed tend to overreact, believing that Blacks are indeed suffering at the hands of East Indians in Guyana.

On the contrary, racism against East Indians has deeper roots, originating in their economic success and rise in social status following the abolition of slavery and indentureship. As a result, East Indians have had to bear the brunt of racial discrimination.

In fact, there is an abundance of evidence to show that East Indians have largely been the victims of racism. Yet Blacks vigorously contend that they are subject to systemic racism. The massive exodus of East Indians to foreign shores, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, was largely due to fear of racial discrimination and retribution for their economic success and affiliation with the PPP party.

In the lead-up to the 2025 elections, efforts are underway to address and mitigate racial tensions. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has partnered with the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) to combat hate speech and misinformation, recognising the potential of such factors to exacerbate ethnic divisions during the electoral process.

Additionally, the ERC has engaged in discussions with the European Union Delegation to Guyana and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) to explore collaborative measures aimed at ensuring a fair and peaceful election.

Strategically, the discovery of significant oil reserves has transformed Guyana's economy, leading to unprecedented growth and increased national wealth. This economic boom presents an opportunity to shift political discourse from ethnic allegiances to policy-driven debates.

Ali has announced initiatives such as free college tuition, one-time cash payments to households, reductions in power bills, and increases in the minimum wage, aiming to utilise the country's new-found wealth for broad-based development.

These socio-economic policies have the potential to influence voting behaviour, possibly reducing the emphasis on ethnic identities in political decision-making. Despite these initiatives, the entrenchment of ethnic divisions remains a significant challenge.

Political parties have often leveraged ethnic sentiments to galvanize support, a strategy that risks perpetuating division. Observers have noted that addressing issues such as corruption, governance, and equitable resource distribution could play a pivotal role in uniting the



Dwarka Lakhan



Riot police ready for protesters following Guyana's 2020 elections

populace beyond ethnic lines. The upcoming elections will serve as a critical test of whether socio-economic advancements and concerted efforts by both domestic and international stakeholders can foster a more inclusive and cohesive political environment in Guyana.

Since the discovery of oil, allegations of racism against the PPP/Civic have escalated. The reality is the coalition party lost power at an inopportune time, that is, when the country was poised for rapid growth on the back of its new-found oil wealth.

This has incensed the supporters of APNU, who believe an East Indian-dominated party does not have a right to be in power.

The truth is, race and the quest for power cannot be separated in Guyana. It is doubtful there will be a solution to the current crisis. Conditions for greater collaboration will be dictated by the ruling party. Demands from

the opposition will always be greater than the government will be willing to accede to.

While a collaborative solution will be useful for the sake of racial cohesion, it is hardly likely that the country's political parties can ever come to a viable solution. They simply do not trust each other – and with good reason.

On the other hand, racial tensions will lessen if the opposition would simply cease stirring the pot. But its irrational behaviour is not about race, but moreso about power.

...

Dwarka Lakhan, BA, MBA, FCSI, FICB is a Member of the Canadian Association of Journalists, and an accomplished financial writer. His book, *Winning Ways, Real World Strategies to Help You Reimagine Your Practice*, is available on Amazon and on winningways101.com. He can be reached at dlakhan@rogers.com.

Mani Singh

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

“The King of the Jungle”

Residential & Commercial Real Estate Specialists



Mani Singh

Sales Representative

647-274-4172

Email: manisinghhomes@gmail.com

- ★ It's the Experience that Counts!!
- ★ Members of RE/MAX Hall of Fame!
- ★ Winner of the RE/MAX Lifetime Achievement Award!
- ★ Father & Son Professional Real Estate Team
- ★ When Experience and Professionalism matter to you



www.manisinghhomes.com



Tej Singh

Sales Representative

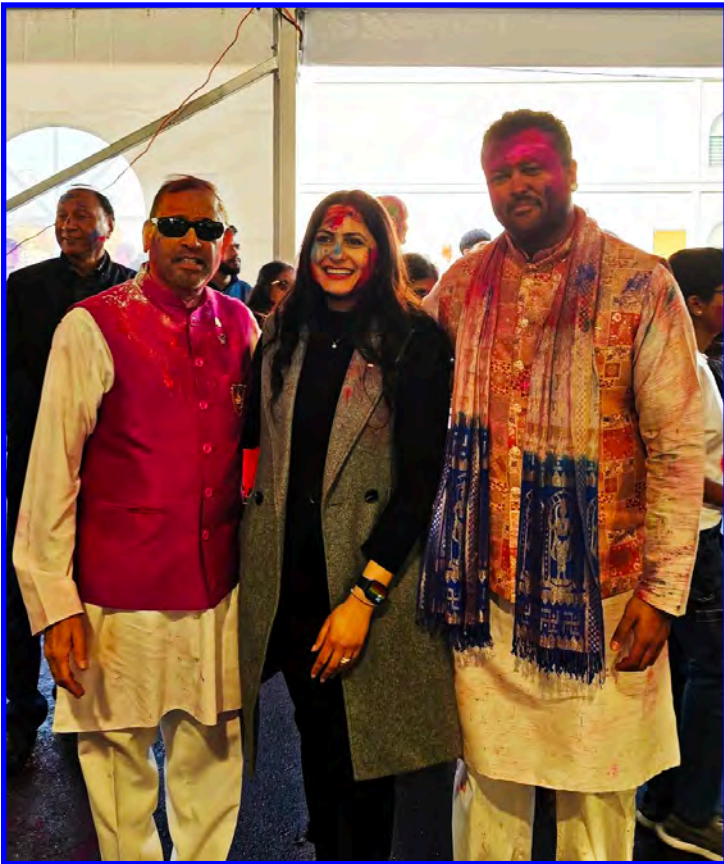


RE/MAX

West Realty Inc., Brokerage

Bus: 416-745-2300 • ReMax West Realty • 96 Rexdale Blvd., Toronto, ON M9W 1N7

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY FOR OVER 35 YEARS!



The beautiful, state-of-the-art Brampton Triveni Mandir was the site of joyous and colourful Holi celebrations last month. Spiritual Leader and President of Triveni Mandir, Pandit Dr Yudhishtir Dhanrajh extended a warm and holy welcome to devotees, dignitaries, and special guests that included the Minister of Health, Kamal Khera, MP for Brampton West; MP Ruby Sahota, Brampton North; MPP Amarjot Sandhu, Brampton West; Acting Consul General Kapidhwaja Pratap Singh from the Consulate General for India in Toronto; and Honorary Consul Mani Singh, along with staff members, from the Consulate General for Guyana in Toronto. The event saw close to 5,000 worshippers, family, friends, and special guests enjoying the celebration with the throwing and smearing of powders to the accompaniment of the energising and celebratory music of Holi.

SHIPPING WEEKLY TO:
 ANTIGUA, ARUBA,
 BARBADOS, DOMINICA,
 GRENADA, GUYANA, JAMAICA,
 ST. LUCIA, ST. VINCENT,
 AND TRINIDAD

R&S Cargo Express Inc.
Air Land Or Sea We Deliver For Less
 2715 Rena Road, Mississauga, Ontario, L4T 3K1



WESTERN UNION
 MONEY TRANSFER

JUMBO BARRELS NOW AVAILABLE!



SPECIALS TO GUYANA
SHIP EARLY FOR EASTER
PLEASE CALL FOR PRICES & SPECIAL RATES

WE SHIP FOR LESS
CHECK THE OTHERS AND COMPARE

**VISITING GUYANA SOON?
 FOR AN ENJOYABLE STAY
 FURNISHED 2-BEDROOM SUITE
 ALL AMENITIES INCLUDED
 LOT 128 NEW ROAD,
 VREED-EN-HOOP WEST COAST
 DEMERARA GUYANA
 CONTACT:
 416-738-8078**



Shipping all personal and household items to your destination in 6 weeks or less!



905-677-6400
rscargoexpress.ca rscargoexpressinc@yahoo.ca





Our community was the beneficiary of a generous donation of boxes of chicken for Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations by Amir Quality Meats. The donation was managed by One Love volunteers, among them Meer Khan (left in photo), and Ali Shaw on March 27 at the Canadian Muslim Islamic Academy in Etobicoke



One Love Family Services held its Ramadan Interfaith Gala on March 22 at the Emerald Banquet Hall in Etobicoke. Special guests at the event were Zenji Nio (Samurai Buddhist), Kerry Lee Crawford, Pandit Vishnu Prashad Mishra, Chaplain Juliane Martin, Chandan Paul, Khadija Omar, and Moulana Imran Yar. The keynote address was delivered by Dr Nazila Isgandarova. The event was blessed with interfaith prayers, and attendees were treated to the singing of gazals, and recitals from the Holy Qu'ran. *Photos by Ramesh Ramkalawan*



Imdadul Islamic Centre held its Eid-ul-Fitr dinner on the evening of March 31. The well-attended event was celebrated with prayers, followed by family, friends, and guests enjoying a sumptuous and delicious meal.





A container ship moored at a port in Barbados

Leaders urge rethink of US ship fees

– Caribbean leaders are warning that a proposed US port fee on Chinese-built vessels could severely impact regional economies, disrupt trade, and increase the prices of goods. Setting diplomacy into motion, Caricom is seeking urgent dialogue with Washington to mitigate potential economic harm to the region

Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves of St Vincent and the Grenadines, President Irfaan Ali of Guyana, and Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados and Chair of Caricom have voiced collective alarm regarding a proposed US policy imposing a (US) \$1 million fee per port call on Chinese-built ships entering US ports.

The leaders have cautioned that such fees would significantly threaten Caribbean economies reliant on maritime trade that is connected to US ports.

Gonsalves addressed the gravity of the situation during his weekly radio programme on NBC radio last month, calling the proposed measure “one of the most severe blows to the economies of the Caribbean”.

Emphasising cautious concern rather than alarmism, he stated, “I don’t want to be hysterical.”

Gonsalves told radio listeners that the issue had been discussed at a recent virtual meeting of Caricom leaders and with the Caricom Private Sector Organisation (CPSO).

The measure emerged from an investigation initiated under former US President Joe Biden’s administration into China’s dominance in shipbuilding, maritime logistics, and transportation.

In January, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) detailed its findings, proposing fees and restrictions on international maritime services related to Chinese ship operators and vessels.

A February 21 statement followed from the USTR indicating the intent “to obtain the elimination of China’s acts, policies, and practices”, and to encourage shipping of US goods on domestically built vessels.

Dr Patrick Antoine, President of the CPSO, expressed stark apprehension over the fee proposal, cautioning the USTR that costs would escalate to “astronomical levels” for Caribbean-bound goods shipped from the US.

Antoine outlined potentially devastating socio-economic impacts, particularly for Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada,

St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname, where over half the vessels serving the region are Chinese-built.

Gonsalves highlighted the punitive nature of the proposed fees, saying Washington aims to deter current and future acquisitions of Chinese vessels, thus privileging US-built ships.

“They are penalising the Chinese operators and the Chinese ships, which already exist. They are penalising the operator who is ordering ships,” he noted.

He further disclosed that under this policy, “If you want to take US goods out, 20 percent must be on a US-flag ship or US-built ship.”

Ali echoed Gonsalves’ concerns, noting potential detrimental effects on trade within Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, especially regarding tankers transporting oil and gas.



Mia Mottley

He underscored the immediate necessity of regional discourse, asserting, “We have to have early conversations to mitigate or minimise the impact.”

Meanwhile, Mottley, in her capacity as Caricom Chair, took diplomatic action, directly addressing US President Donald Trump in a formal letter. She requested shielding the region from these proposed fines, emphasising the severe consequences not only for Caribbean commerce but also for Florida’s economy.



Irfaan Ali

Mottley argued that Florida serves as “the engine of commerce of the Caribbean region”, supplying critical goods and equipment essential for regional sustenance.

Highlighting the interdependence between Florida and the Caribbean, Mottley warned, “To have this disruption purely because of the intervention of a statutory or an executive order that will lead to an increased cost of supplies will hurt not just us on

the receiving end, but will hurt those as well who are making money from the logistics in Florida.”

Expressing cautious optimism, Mottley hoped that Trump’s understanding of the Caribbean’s economic vulnerability would lead to an exemption from these stringent maritime tariffs.

Regional leaders and private sector organisations are also seeking urgent diplomatic engagement with US officials, including meetings with the US Secretary of State and potential discussions with the White House, aimed at averting severe economic repercussions.



Ask Jay...

Please send your questions to
TheBrij@TheBrij.com or call: 416-418-2745

CANADA-US TRADE SQUABBLE: THE HIDDEN ECONOMIC STORM IS BREWING

The ongoing trade spat between the US and Canada has captured the media’s attention. Would Ontario’s Premier Doug Ford cut off electricity to the US? Could US President Donald Trump seriously consider annexing Canada? While these headlines spark entertaining debates, they may also serve as a smokescreen for more profound economic challenges brewing beneath.

This tariff war is a warning: brace yourself for financial turbulence. Rising living costs, inflation spikes, and mounting debt make it increasingly difficult for families to afford necessities. In December and January, inflation surged, prompting temporary relief measures like the HST break, but these band-aid solutions won’t prevent the storm.

A mortgage crisis is unfolding, and it is hitting homeowners hard. Despite recent interest rate cuts, many borrowers have seen their mortgage payments soar. During the pandemic, fixed-payment variable-rate mortgages were popular. However, as borrowing costs climb, some homeowners are experiencing negative amortisation, where their outstanding mortgage balance increases because their monthly payments don’t cover the interest.

Those who locked in low mortgage rates during the pandemic are now forced to renew at significantly higher rates – ones they cannot afford. Selling might seem like an escape, but for those who bought during the housing boom, their mortgage often exceeds their home’s current market value. Selling at a loss means covering the shortfall out of pocket, which many homeowners can’t do. With higher monthly costs and little to no equity, some may walk away, leaving lenders to pick up the pieces.

Meanwhile, the GTA has plenty of newly-constructed condos – many are tiny, overpriced, and failing to attract buyers. An oversupply coupled with weak demand drives down prices, affecting homeowners hoping to sell and ascend the property ladder.

Canada’s national debt is soaring, the dollar is weakening, and the only realistic response is higher taxes for everyone. Cybercrime is rising, insurance costs are climbing, and job prospects are dim. The cost of living isn’t just increasing – it is racing ahead, leaving many Canadians struggling to keep up.

The tariff back-and-forth will persist, and if we get too caught up in the spectacle, we’ll lose track of the bigger picture. But hidden opportunities lie beyond the clouds of uncertainty. It’s time to pick up the financial telescope and start looking ahead.

Interest rates will likely drop further to stimulate the market, making now a prime time to plan. If you’re mortgage-free, consider leveraging your home equity to invest in an income-generating property. You can double your financial worth in ten years. It is a buyer’s market, and you can strike a hard bargain with the seller.

If your mortgage is up for renewal, a variable-rate mortgage might be wise, allowing you to lock in when rates become favourable. If your mortgage matures in a few years, explore negotiating a blended rate – partly at your current lower rate and the remainder at today’s market rate – to ease the transition.

The market suffered from tariff tensions, but savvy investors seized the opportunity to scoop up undervalued stocks. To build financial security, maximise your Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), and First-Time Home Buyer’s Savings Account.

Credit card debt can be a financial nightmare. Consider consolidating it into your mortgage if you own a home and struggle with high-interest debt.

Adding a secondary suite to your home can create a valuable income stream. Not only does this help pay down your mortgage faster, but it also offers an affordable housing option for adult children saving for a home.

Challenging times lie ahead. Inflation is set to rise, and tariffs will serve as the convenient scapegoat. What is the best way to weather the storm? Spend wisely, save diligently, and invest thoughtfully. The rules of the financial landscape are evolving, but you can emerge triumphant with the right mindset and a proactive strategy. Don’t focus on the storm – navigate through it. The future belongs to those who plan.

Beyond the tariff drama lies a more profound crisis – rising inflation, a looming mortgage meltdown, and financial uncertainty. Here is how to prepare and seize hidden opportunities.

“The war on protectionism is the tip of the iceberg – rising costs, mounting debt, and a changing market command a new financial manifesto.”

LAW OFFICE

GENERAL PRACTICE

Chet Sharma

B.A., B.S.W. (Hons), LL.B

Barrister, Solicitor & Notary Public

• Immigration Law

• Criminal Law

• Divorce & Family Law

• Notarisations, Affidavits

• Power of Attorney, Wills

OFFICE

416-285-1550

Emergency:

416-284-9191

By Appointment Only

150 Lawson Road, Toronto, ON M1C 2J4





MUNGOL SINGH
BARRISTER SOLICITOR & NOTARY PUBLIC

ROMA S. MUNGOL (SINGH)
LL.B. - LONDON ENGLAND
(SOLICITOR OF THE SUPREME COURT
OF ENGLAND AND WALES)

SPECIALTY: FAMILY LAW
OTHER: CRIMINAL LAW | REAL ESTATE LAW | WILLS & ESTATES LAW

40 WESTMORE DRIVE, SUITE 202
ETOBICOKE, ON M9V 4C2

(416) 745-SING (7464)
FAX: (416) 745-1464
ROMA@MUNGOLSINGH.CA



Play more. Stress less.

Switch your home and auto insurance today to enjoy one-on-one personalized service and coverage uniquely tailored to you.

Get in touch today.



Sherry A. Harrikissoon
Insurance Agency Inc.
Sherry Harrikissoon, Agent
13311 Yonge St Unit 103
Richmond Hill ON
905-773-9782



1920949CN

Desjardins, Desjardins Insurance and related trademarks are trademarks of the Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, used under licence.



Free Estimates

KNK RENOVATIONS

- Kitchen • Bathroom • Basement • Hardwood Floor
- Tiles • Plumbing • Painting....and more

* No Job Too Small * Prompt * Efficient
* Dependable * References Available

ANIL 647-280-8755
anilroopnaraine@hotmail.com
www.knkrenovations.webs.com




LOTUS

Funeral and Cremation Centre Inc.

Seating capacity for 500. Adaptable rooms for smaller funerals. Can accommodate larger gatherings.

121 City View Drive, Toronto, Ontario M9W 5A8

Conveniently located to serve Toronto and areas west of the City including Etobicoke, Brampton, Bramalea and Mississauga. Cremations are done on the premises without leaving the building. Large gatherings can view start of cremations. Media available to broadcast proceedings.

YOUR COMMUNITY FACILITY OWNED AND OPERATED BY KAMAL BHARDWAJ, ONTARIO LICENCED SOUTH ASIAN FUNERAL DIRECTOR. WE ARE PROFESSIONAL, RESPECTFUL AND CARING.

Tel: 647-547-8188

info@lotusfuneralandcremation.com

www.lotusfuneralandcremation.com



Pre-arrangement plans available. Free executor support for Canada Pension Plan and Survivor Benefits. In-home services offered if desired.

Humanitarian Persaud leaves legacy of compassion, selfless service

From Page 1

approved during his hospitalisation following heart surgery. As Pandit Sharma recounted, Persaud could not be notified due to his feeble condition while hospitalised that he was a recipient of the medal. He passed away shortly afterwards, on March 19.

“He was too ill for me to tell him about the award,” a solemn Pandit Sharma stated.

At the funeral viewing on the evening of March 24, in a moving and poignant presentation, Pandit Sharma pinned the medal onto Ena, as son Aditya read the citation, and as Persaud lay at rest in his casket.

Last week Pandit Sharma reflected on Persaud’s legacy, stating: “The impact that Sam had on our community with his passing leaves a vacuum, a void that cannot be filled. He walked the talk; he sang the songs; he wove a tapestry of harmony without declaring he was doing so. He was doing all this for those benefiting, without him realising how they were being touched. We will cherish this for a long time.”

Honouring an extraordinary life and significant contribution to our diaspora, Pandit Sharma revealed that the Hindu Federation plans to establish an award reflecting Persaud’s enduring values, one that will celebrate an individual who has overcome humble beginnings to achieve professional success, and to nurture community harmony.

Pandit Sharma concluded, “Sam was a unique human being. He was a stickler for detail, and he would be missed for that. He cared, he followed up, and made us all grow stronger. He was instrumental in moving the Hindu Federation forward. He was like a brother to me.”

Pandit Dr Yudhishtir Dhanraj, leader of Brampton’s Treveni Mandir, also noted the existence of a communal void, saying “His passing is a big loss to the Hindu community in Canada. Devi Mandir is an anchor in the east end, and two years ago Uncle Sam returned to that Board... he brought them back to health. They were now on the brink to start new projects, and his passing is a big loss for the Pickering community. For someone so connected to the Hindu Federation, he had a big role to play, so at the organisational and institutional level, his passing is a big loss.”

Pandit Yudhishtir warmly recounted Persaud’s compassionate presence, noting, “He was everywhere. Anyone who passed away, he would be there for the wake. Hindus will feel his loss; other temples would feel his loss, for he was the link among the temples. Without him, a connection has now been broken.”

He also recalled fulfilling a dream as a Pandit to read at Devi Mandir, stating it was Persaud who helped to make the sacred moment come to fruition.

“I recall as a small boy, we visited Devi Mandir. The altar was beautifully designed. At my young age I was already reading, and I said one day I would like to read at Devi Mandir. Uncle Sam was at Devi Mandir, and he made it happen,” he recalled.

He also affectionately recalled another of Persaud’s nicknames, “Lotus”, explaining its symbolism: “The beautiful Lotus flower can bloom in the dirtiest water. It is the perfect metaphor for Uncle Sam, who stood strong in the midst of trouble.”

Sam Persaud was defined by his kindness, humility, and thoughtfulness

Tribute by Vishnu Sookar, Board of Trustees at The Devi Mandir, delivered in Ajax on March 24

I am saddened to announce the passing of my dear brother, friend and colleague, Shri Samlall Persaud, Chairman of Devi Mandir in Pickering.

Dear Ena, Adi, Bindia, Ashwani and David: I extend my sincerest sympathies for your loss. May God’s love be the guiding light that comforts you during this difficult time, and may the cherished memories of Sam provide you with strength.

In Hinduism, death is not an end but a transition, a part of the eternal cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Though each person’s grieving journey is unique, Sam’s legacy will be forever celebrated.

For over 12 years, Sam contributed selflessly to Devi Mandir of Pickering as Treasurer, managing our finances and guiding the organisation to overcome significant challenges, including paying debts exceeding \$2 million dollars. His impact went far beyond numbers; he was also a gifted musician and devoted leader. His soulful *Kirtan* lifted our spirits and brought us closer to the divine, reminding us of the profound joy and peace found in faith.

Recently elected as Chairman of Devi Mandir Board of



Dhaman Kissoon



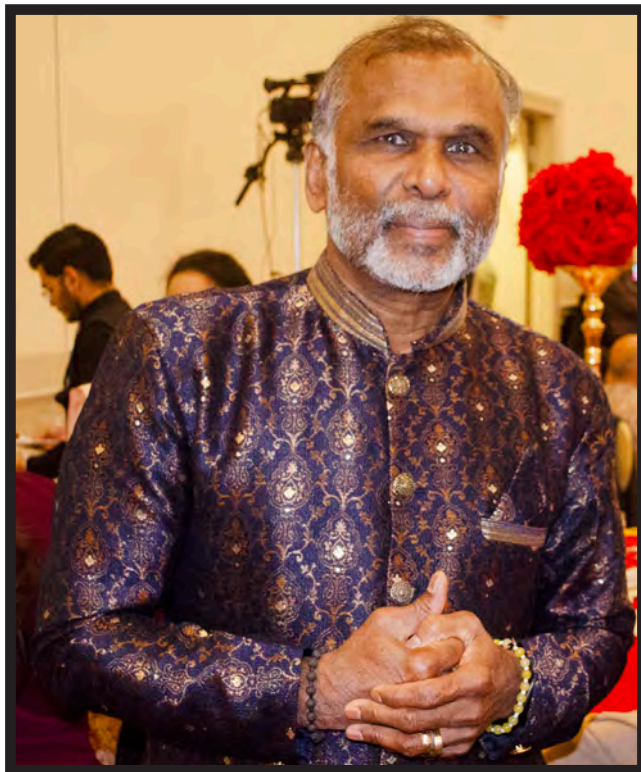
Tamesh Lilmohan



Budhendranauth Doobay



Yudhishtir Dhanraj



Samlall Persaud

Leader at Vishnu Temple, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay, shared on the mandir’s Facebook page a similarly profound reflection on Persaud’s legacy, emphasising his cross-border humanitarian efforts.

“The Hindu community of the Greater Toronto Area deeply mourns the passing of a truly noble soul, Bhai Samlall Persaud. A devoted supporter of temples and religious organisations, he dedicated his life to selfless service and unwavering faith. His generosity extended beyond borders, as he contributed significantly to the Dialysis Centre and the Doobay Medical Clinic in Guyana, visiting the clinic whenever he was there to witness the impact of his kindness firsthand.”

Long-time friend and realtor Shiv Misir echoed similar sentiments on the mandir’s Facebook page, declaring: “A true icon that touched the lives of everyone he came in contact with; his dedication to the upliftment of youth, selfless *Sewa* in serving the Hindu community, and all the mandirs definitely leaves a void that will be difficult to fill.”

Chartered accountant Tamesh Lilmohan, Persaud’s close

Directors, Sam embraced his new role with quiet determination and vision. His leadership was already transforming our Mandir into a beacon of service and spiritual strength, and his future contributions held the promise of even greater impact. It is heartbreaking to know that his journey with us was cut short.

The *Bhagavad Gita* reminds us: “For the soul, there is neither birth nor death at any time. The soul is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and ancient. It is not slain when the body is slain.”

Though Sam’s body has left us, his eternal soul lives on. His spirit, teachings, and music will forever reside in the hearts of those he touched.

What defined Sam most was his kindness and humility. He listened more than he spoke, and when he did share his wisdom, his words were thoughtful and uplifting. He inspired us not through grand gestures, but through genuine care, quiet strength, and steadfast friendship; an embodiment of the wisdom in the *Gita*: “It is better to live your own destiny imperfectly than to live an imitation of somebody else’s life with perfection.”

The *Rig Veda* teaches us: “Let noble thoughts come to us from every side.”

friend of nearly five decades, noted that he left a solid foundation behind.

“What is good was his involvement with young people, who are now taking up his legacy. Sam’s focus was on the youth, and now moving forward, they will take up community leadership.”

He added, “This focus was demonstrated at Devi Mandir, where young people are now on the Board. While his passing will be a big loss, it is fortuitous that Sam laid down a solid foundation in the legacy

he left behind for the youths.”

Lilmohan recalled offering a senior role to Persaud to manage his accounting practice.

“He did not respond. Sam looked at me in his indomitable way. I could see it in his eyes. In that moment I came to the conclusion that Sam had embarked on the journey to sainthood, and was on the path to doing his *dharmic* duty. It turns out I was proven right. When Sam was presented with that opportunity, he did not entertain the thought about earning more money. Instead, he was more concerned with his community work.”

He added, “Sam was a consummate professional with a conscience and an inherent humanitarianism. Following his retirement, he never short-changed the community. He was dedicated full-time to community work, to *Sewa*, or service to the community.”

He concluded, “We went back 50 years. He was both a professional colleague, and a personal friend. He was so close to me, it is like my own family member passing away. I lost a dear friend, and Bhagwan has received a great soul. It is such that now my perspective has changed; that to attain the world is nothing, but to give service is everything.”

Senior lawyer Dhaman Kissoon commemorated Persaud’s profound influence by recalling their shared history of working together for over 25 years.

“The name Sam Persaud should not be erased from the Hindu vocabulary. His contributions were selfless. He was a man of integrity, honesty, and he was a champion for the Hindu community, and for the community at large. At Ram Mandir, I made the comment that he operated at the highest level; his integrity, sincerity, and honesty always prevailed.”

In their touching and poignant eulogy, Persaud’s family concluded by celebrating the warmth, love, and endless encouragement he provided.

“After a lifetime with our Dad, we think of the endless moments he would give to us... His kind laugh. His endless encouragement. When we were stressed he would say, ‘Nah take worries’. When we needed anything, he was always there. He would make us feel valued and help us feel safe. He would do anything for us without a moment of hesitation,” they stated.

And poignantly, they touched on the immense sense of loss felt with Persaud’s passing, the family concluding, “We know many others in this room feel the same. All of us wish we could have just a few more of those moments. But we’ll try and find comfort in all the warm memories he gave to us. To our Dad: We love you, and we’ll miss you endlessly. We’ll do our best to make you proud.”

Samlall embodied this wisdom. He welcomed new ideas, new voices, and always sought to uplift the community with open-mindedness and care.

As we grieve his loss, let us also celebrate his life by carrying forward his vision for The Devi Mandir and our community. Let us honour him not just in words, but in action; in the way we serve, support, and uplift one another.

I am reminded of the timeless words from the *Upanishads*: “From the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality.”

May Samlall’s soul find peace in the eternal light. And may we, inspired by his life and his legacy, continue to build the loving and united community he envisioned.

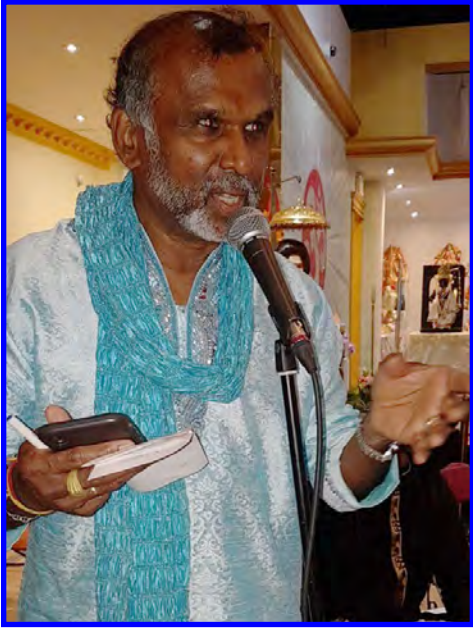
Samlall Persaud’s voice may be silent now, but his spirit will forever resonate in the walls of The Devi Mandir and in the hearts of everyone he touched, and knowing that his life was truly a blessing to us all.

Sam walked his own path with grace and authenticity, leaving an indelible mark on all of us.

May his soul find eternal peace.

Aatma ko Sadgati prapt ho.

With deep respect and heartfelt condolences.



A life's journey marked by dedication to family, community, and spirituality

Samlall Persaud, also known as Sam, Rick, and affectionately as Lotus, embodied warmth, humility, and a profound commitment to service. Born June 22, 1954, in Industry, Guyana, and passing peacefully on March 19, 2025, Sam's journey was marked by extraordinary compassion, resilience, and dedication to family, community, spirituality, and his deep Hindu faith.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Bidiawatti (Ena), their beloved children Bindia, Aditya, Ashwini, son-in-law David, and the family's cherished cats.

From an early age, Sam distinguished himself with a remarkable intellect, humility, and unwavering optimism. As his son Aditya beautifully summarised, "He was extremely smart and yet deeply humble. He was physically strong yet caring and gentle. He was inwardly shy and yet would speak so confidently. He had a tough exterior and yet a tender heart."

Sam's determination was evident early in life. Daughter Bindia shared a defining childhood memory: "As a ten-year-old boy, he got dressed up and was ready to write the Common Entrance exam, but he wasn't allowed in the examination hall because he was too young. Upon hearing this, he went home and complained to his parents that my Uncle Chhad hadn't allowed him to write the exam."

Such a persistent spirit and focus eventually carried him through Queen's College, and then the University of Guyana, leading to a fulfilling six-year stint as a dedicated teacher, where he showed deep care for every student.

Sam's commitment to better opportunities for his family led him first to England in 1981. As Bindia recollected, "The move was a challenging one, since English weather and food take some getting used to, but my father persevered and he was eventually admitted to the Institute of Chartered Accountants."

In 1988, another significant transition occurred when Sam moved his family to Canada, continuing his dedicated service at Deloitte Canada.

It was an exchange of "the cold and rainy climate of England for the cold and snowy climate of Canada," Bindia recalled.

She noted, "Again, this took some getting used to, but the effort paid off, especially for my father. His life in Canada has been rich in professional accomplishment, and more importantly, he... built up personal relationships that have sustained and nurtured him."

Aditya also recognised his father's sacrifices, noting, "I'm sure he experienced culture shock and certain barriers, but he faced these with grace and quiet confidence."

Despite demanding professional obligations, Sam continually found ways to serve others teaching music, organising charity events, and supporting community members through loss, grief, and celebration alike.

As his children emphasised, "He was the most selfless person we've known."

The depth of Sam's impact resonated profoundly through many heartfelt tributes. Among those paying tribute, expressing gratitude, and deep respect and admiration was Vishnu Sookar from the Board of Trustees at Devi Mandir.

As Sookar poignantly noted, "For over 12 years, Sam contributed selflessly to The Devi Mandir of Pickering as Treasurer, managing our finances and guiding the organisation to overcome significant challenges, including paying debts exceeding \$2 million dollars."

He added, "His impact went far beyond numbers; he was also a gifted musician and devoted leader. His soulful *Kirtan* lifted our spirits and brought us closer to the divine, reminding us of the profound joy and peace found in faith."

Sookar further illuminated Sam's quiet yet powerful leadership: "Recently elected as Chairman of The Devi Mandir Board of

Directors, Sam embraced his new role with quiet determination and vision. His leadership was already transforming our mandir into a beacon of service and spiritual strength, and his future contributions held the promise of even greater impact."

In 2021, during celebration of his retirement at Vishnu Mandir, Sam's profound wisdom and kindness were beautifully encapsulated by a close friend, Cecil Ramnauth.

Said Ramnauth: "[As a past treasurer] Sam kept a steady hand on the books and led the charity to the highest accounting and auditable standards. People were drawn to his ethic in a manner that they trusted him and his work, and gave freely to the many maintenance and outreach projects of the organisation. He was driven by core principles of honesty, integrity, transparency, trust, and morality."

Ramnauth continued, emphasising Sam's genuine care and generosity: "He was selfless and we drew on our collective synergies as directors and worked as a team... He gives freely. Once he gets to know you, it is like he is committed to your entire family. He makes time for others more than he makes time for himself. He would take you or an entire group... to support others at their time of grief without even asking to contribute for gas... Everything is on his dime."

Sam's gentleness was evident in his tender interactions with his family and pets, with Ashwini recalling her father's deeply emotional and empathetic nature.

"When we put Shiro in his carrier for the last time, he started to sob. More recently, he told me he would carry Pasha around our basement, showing him Maa Saraswati's picture and telling him she made him smart."

Sam's legacy is rich with community-

building, spiritual leadership, and mentorship. During the 2021 retirement celebration, Vishnu Mandir's iconic Pt Bhoj Sharma encapsulated Sam's driven nature into a personal mantra. It was "learning, earning, returning: the process of educating oneself, using that education to make a living, then giving back to society".

Aditya reinforced this credo, stating, "He wasn't achieving them for his own sake... He spent a lifetime giving his time, attention, and expertise to those around him."

Sam was also admired for an energy level that had no boundaries in his passion for cricket. As his good friend Shiv Misir had noted in 2021, Sam was a very talented cricketer all-rounder, with an energy level that was outstanding, even as he was out standing in the cricket field, outrunning, and running out the other players.

Sam's character shone through vividly in his final days. As Aditya emotionally recounted, "On Sunday March 2, our Dad started showing signs of a heart attack while attending The Devi Mandir. Even in that dark moment he never stopped being himself... his focus was on his community. Before he went into surgery, he told my Uncle, 'After I get out, please tell me the cricket score.' Even in a life and death situation, he wasn't thinking about death; he was thinking about life."

Ashwini offered a moving tribute that captures the essence of the family's collective loss: "We think of those moments. His kind laugh. His sense of humour. His endless encouragement. When we were stressed, he would say, 'Nah take worries.' When we needed anything, he was always there. He would make us feel valued and help us feel safe. He would do anything for us without a moment of hesitation."

She concluded, "We know many others in this room feel the same. All of us wish we could have just a few more of those moments. But we'll try and find comfort in all the warm memories he gave to us. To our Dad: We love you, and we'll miss you endlessly. We'll do our best to make you proud." (RK)



Sam Persaud



Subdued colours, ICE fallout as diaspora marks Phagwah in New York

By Dhanpaul Narine

The Indo-Caribbean community celebrated Phagwah in New York in the form of the 37th annual Parade in the streets of Queens, New York. It was blessed with brilliant sunshine, with the temperature around ten degrees Celsius.

This year was significant in a number of ways. One of the most obvious additions to the numerous floats was the presence of the 'One Guyana' float packed with followers.

The 'One Guyana' float was part of the West Indian Day parade in Brooklyn last year where it attracted a large following and it did not disappoint in Queens. Joe Yusuf and his team worked hard to pull off a wonderful turnout.

It is no secret that this year's parade was held under the shadow of immigration crackdown by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The overall turnout this year was slightly smaller than in previous years, but it did not detract from the merriment on Liberty Avenue, the heart of the Indo-Caribbean community.

This year had a record-breaking 28 floats that showed support for the parade. The history of the Phagwah Parade is interesting. It was founded by two stalwarts Pandit Ramlall and Ramesh D. Kalicharran (Kali), a businessman.

The first parade had a handful of persons, and trucks and vans transported the celebrants. The attendance improved in the ensuing years and with it came professional floats, the ones that were used in the parades in Manhattan.

This writer was a member of the Phagwah Parade Committee for more than 30 years and can attest to some of the wonderful highlights. Basdeo Panday, the former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago looked at the big crowd in Smokey Oval Park and asked Trinidadians present to raise their hands. He did the same for Guyana, and when he saw the response, he turned to event's host and said, "I think we are slightly outnumbered!"

Dr Bhisma Agnihotri, the special envoy of

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, was moved to say that the Phagwah Parade in Queens was a shining example of Indian culture in America. This is consistent with the famous dictum of Jawaharlal Nehru who said 'Where Indians go, they take a piece of India with them.'

The growth of the parade has seen its fair share of politicians who have queued up for attention.

Michael Bloomberg was the first sitting Mayor to visit the parade. It so happened he was running for an unprecedented third term, and he charmed his way with the crowds on Liberty Avenue.

It took a while for another Mayor to visit, and this happened two years ago with Mayor Eric Adams. He appeared on stage and danced with the crowds.

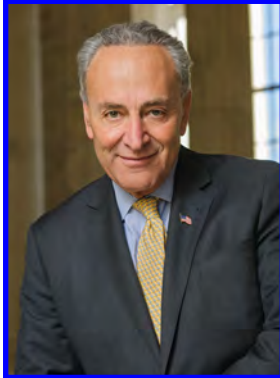
Last year, Senator Chuck Schumer led a group of politicians to the parade, and they were well-received. Some members took the time to remind them that the local community has needs such as traffic regulations, garbage disposal, and noise, among others.

There was always the promise to change things, to involve the community, but as soon as the photo-ops end it was business as usual. You couldn't hear from or get access to the politicians.

The 2025 parade saw a marked departure from previous years. A member of the Committee is running for political office and political advertisements were plastered in many places regarding his campaign. The number of politicians on stage decreased significantly and it probably had to do with the current state of national politics.

The local items were of a high standard but one has to be wary of the 'superstars' from abroad. They were not vetted by the Committee with the result that some of the items were inappropriate.

Overall, the parade hit several positive points and showed why it is regarded as the biggest street festival in Queens, New York.



Chuck Schumer



Participants throw colours at the Phagwa celebrations in Queens



Members of a local dance group performed a Holi dance

**IMDADUL ISLAMIC JAMAAT
EID DINNER**

**VENUE:
IMDADUL ISLAMIC ANNEX**

30 LEPAGE COURT, DOWNSVIEW
(KEELE, S. OF FINCH)

DATE: SATURDAY
April 5th 2025, 4pm-6pm

ADMISSION: \$25.00

CHILDREN UNDER the AGE of 7 YEARS FREE

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE ANNEX

FOR MORE INFO:
416-636-0044 | 416-638-7021
416-452-4437 | 416-910-8954

www.imdadulcentre.org
E-Transfer: imdaduljamat@gmail.com

**RADHA KRISHNA MANDIR
CAMBRIDGE ON
PRESENTS A PANWAR MUSIC AND DANCE PRODUCTION**

Ram Leela
Prince of Ayodhya

Saturday April 19th 2025 at 5pm

**HUMANITIES THEATRE
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO**

LIMITED EARLY BIRD: Adults \$40 - Children \$30 age 3 to 14 (Until March 15th 2025)
REGULAR ADVANCE: Adults \$50 - Children \$35 age 3 to 14

SECURE YOUR SPONSORSHIP TODAY!
DEEPIKA 519 277 3600 VENU 519 572 7844 YOGESH 647 906 7755
MADHUR 226 899 6069 DWARKA 519 240 0870

Ramphal's storytelling spins cricket, heart, and memories in new book

— Ken Ramphal's *Strange Courtship and Wedding* vividly captures village life in Guyana through humorous, nostalgic tales. As reviewer Dr Vicki Bismilla writes, its evocative recall of cricket, heartfelt friendships, memorable characters, and subtle explorations of race, identity, and cultural legacies will resonate powerfully with readers, who will identify with the text's storytelling and its universal experiences of Indenture communities.

By Dr Vicki Bismilla

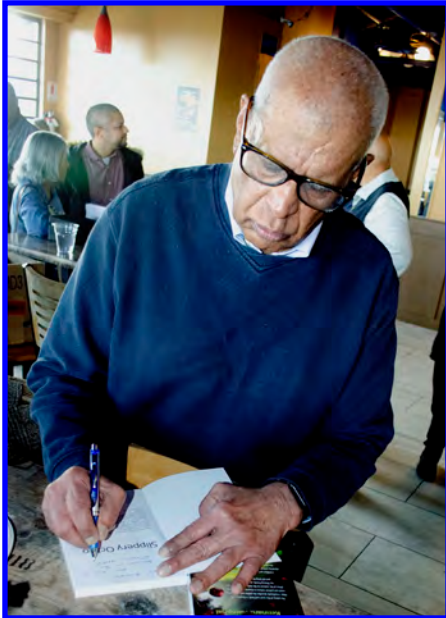
Ken Ramphal's *Strange Courtship and Wedding and Other Stories* is a delightful collection of short stories based in the little village of Canal No. 2 in Guyana where the author Ken Ramphal grew up. In the last story of the book, Ken reminisces about the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, the *alma mater* for both of us, brought back cherished memories.

From the very first story, a sweet gentle rendition about simple, loving family life in a village, reminded me of our own Indenture-built villages in South Africa, and I was hooked.

In stories that follow, we see beautiful childhood friendships and simple games that bring so much joy to children. As a South African Canadian I appreciate the fact that Ken has kept the Guyanese vernacular and accent to a level that people not intimately familiar with the Guyanese dialect can understand and enjoy it. We too had vernaculars in the Indian Indenture villages of South Africa where our Indian Indenture ancestors set up surroundings to echo their beloved villages in India.

The foods that Ken describes are exactly like the foods that our mothers prepared for us so many thousands of miles away – spicy and delicious!

The feisty cricket matches between rival village teams are so reminiscent of our own dusty matches back in the Indenture-made villages of South Africa where we grew up too. Yes, we



Author Ken Ramphal

girls also played, and played well! And yes, we had heard of their heroes, the amazing cricketers Rohan Kanhai, Garry Sobers and Don Bradman thousands of miles away in South Africa.

There are poignant racial moments too that many oppressed people might remember from our pasts, but the author handles these with the lightness of youth. Our love of Shakespeare, in which our British-heavy curricula immersed us, is depicted with clarity and humour in one of Ken's stories.

Ken also satirises the required conversion to Christianity if young people wanted to follow certain prestigious careers like teaching.

And do not we all remember the hilarious nicknames that were given to folks in our villages that stuck life-long for some like Ponds Powder for the over-made-up girl in this Guyanese village!

And who can resist such lovely memories like that of picking coconut from trees, a unique tropical activity that was ours alone and not for northern hemisphere folk. But while playing or joking with friends, the author also deftly weaves important lessons like what we say, however harmless our intent, can have lasting hurtful impact on people.

Hindi words like *peerha* for stool, so intensely brought back memories of my parents speaking Hindi to us when we were children, and reminded me of my disappointment that I never took the time to learn to read and write that beautiful language of my ancestors.

Ken's description of the wedding proposal and ceremony in the titular story brought back memories of weddings back home with the serene *sindhoor* protocol, the revelry, the astonishingly beautiful colours, mouth-watering food, and good times.

The collection of stories has humour threaded throughout, and the reader breaks into automatic smiles as we recognise our own foibles in those of the characters.

I laughed loudly when his brother insisted on "fixing" perfectly good clocks and radios because my little brother did the same!



Henry Swanzy



November 2022 cover of the Caribbean's premiere publication, *The Journal of West Indian Literature*

JWIL gets 2025 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award

— In an historic departure from tradition, organisers announced ahead of the 2025 Bocas Lit Fest the prestigious Bocas Henry Swanzy Award has been awarded to the *Journal of West Indian Literature* in recognition of its decades of collaborative scholarly contributions that have shaped Caribbean literary studies.

The *Journal of West Indian Literature* (JWIL), the premier publication dedicated to Anglophone Caribbean literary scholarship, has been named the recipient of the 2025 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award for Distinguished Service to Caribbean Letters, marking the first time an institution rather than an individual has received this prestigious honor.

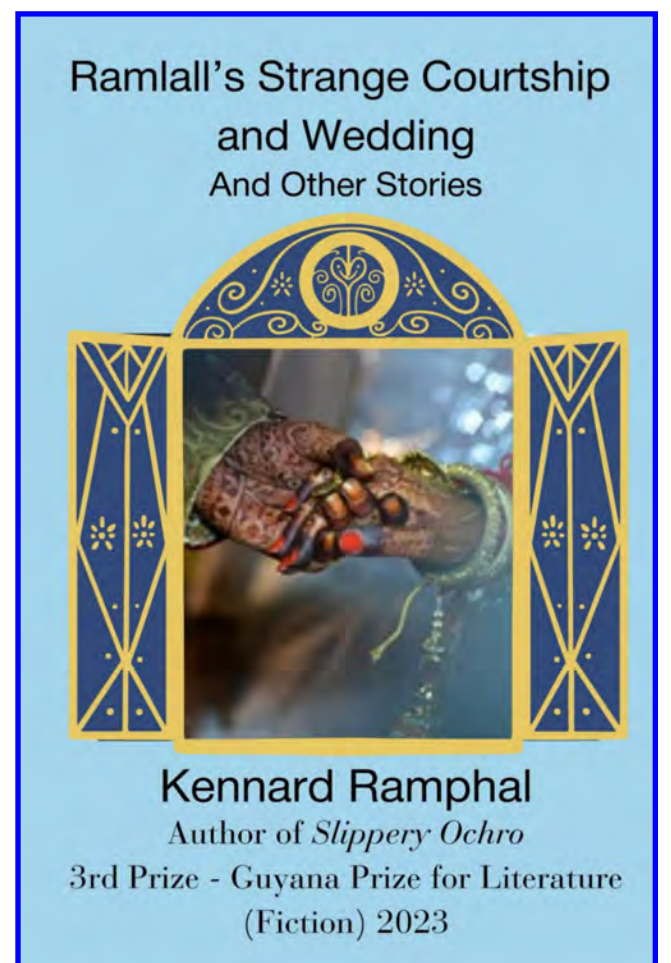
Announced during a media conference in Port-of-Spain on March 26 as part of the official unveiling of the 2025 Bocas Lit Fest programme, the decision signifies an expansion of the award's traditional scope. Since its inception in 2013, the Bocas Henry Swanzy Award has recognised individual contributions in the field of Caribbean literature, honoring editors, publishers, broadcasters, critics, and scholars. The *Journal's* selection represents a pioneering step, acknowledging collective effort in advancing literary scholarship.

Nicholas Laughlin, festival and programme director, elaborated on the decision, noting, "Much pioneering work in the creative field, as in scholarship, is the product of collective and collaborative effort," he said.

Laughlin emphasised the significance of this shift, adding, "As we mark the 15th year of the Festival, it is an appropriate moment to expand the scope of the Swanzy Award in this way, and set a new precedent."

JWIL, first published in 1986, emerged as a collaborative venture among campuses of The University of the West Indies. It built upon earlier initiatives aimed at establishing and affirming West Indian literature as a rigorous academic discipline. Transitioning from a print publication to an entirely online journal in 2015, JWIL has continually adapted to evolving scholarly needs while retaining its foundational commitment to excellence.

Over nearly four decades, JWIL has published approximately 1,000 scholarly articles, critical reviews, interviews, and occasional creative works. Its contributors range from internationally recognised senior scholars, often regarded as foundational figures in Caribbean literary studies, to emerging researchers



Ken is a gifted writer of short stories weaving great humour as well as important lessons like the issues around alcohol, racism, and illiteracy into his enjoyable stories. His parents are painted in the most loving manner; their simple quirks in their quest to over-protect their children are reminiscent of Indenture descendants in many villages around the world.

A truly enjoyable collection!

Dr Vicki Bismilla is a retired Superintendent of Education at the York District School Board, and a retired Vice-President of Centennial College.



Una Marson

whose careers have been significantly advanced by publishing peer-reviewed work in JWIL.

Named in memory of BBC World Service radio producer Henry Swanzy (1915-2004), the award celebrates Swanzy's transformative role as editor and producer of *Caribbean Voices*, the influential 1940s and 1950s radio programme originally founded by Jamaican writer Una Marson.

Caribbean Voices significantly amplified Caribbean literary talent, broadcasting poetry, fiction, essays, and criticism to regional and global audiences.

Current JWIL co-editors in chief Michael Bucknor and Lisa Outar will formally accept the 2025 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award on behalf of the journal during a prize ceremony on May 3. This will be followed by a dedicated panel discussion on May 4, exploring JWIL's extensive history, scholarly mission, and continued evolution in Caribbean literary discourse.



Pandita Geeta Vahini, president of the Hindu Prachar Kendra, throws bougainvillea petals during Ranga Barse, which culminated the Phagwa celebrations in Trinidad and Tobago last month

Hindu Prachar Kendra holds Phagwa celebrations

— A vibrant celebration blending tradition and innovation marked the Hindu Prachar Kendra's Phagwa Festival in Enterprise, Trinidad. From lively renditions of Chowtaals and meaningful Pichakaaree songs, to the immersive drama of Prahalad Leela, attendees delighted in a unique spectacle highlighted by colourful powders and blossoms of bougainvillea.

Port-of-Spain – At Trinidad and Tobago's Hindu Prachar Kendra's recent Phagwa (Holi) Festival, crowds filled the Kendra Grounds on Raghunanan Road, Enterprise, for a vibrant celebration of tradition and renewal. The festival drew enthusiastic participation, with attendees joyously embracing the playful Gulaal, which is the symbolic throwing of coloured powders.

Setting an energetic tone, the *Sangeet Milan Group* opened festivities with spirited performances of *Chowtaals*, traditional folk songs integral to Holi celebrations.

Their lively renditions infused the atmosphere with rhythm, setting the stage for the meaningful melodies of the Pichakaaree singers, whose compositions reflected Hindu values and life lessons deeply embedded in the Phagwa tradition.

An interactive *Prahalad Leela* captivated the audience next, vividly portraying the narrative of divine intervention and

moral courage. Performers enacted the dramatic saga of the tyrannical King Hiranyakashipu, his sister Holika, young hero Prahalad, and the divine form of God as Narsingh, drawing enthusiastic audience engagement and reinforcing the festival's message that righteousness ultimately prevails.

Yet, two highlights notably elevated the event's emotional resonance: Holika Dahan and Ranga Barse. The visually spectacular burning of the Holika effigy symbolised the triumph of good over evil, commemorating the divine protection granted to young Prahalad against Holika's treachery.

This symbolic victory was joyfully expressed by the assembled devotees through exuberant showers of coloured powder, a ritual representing the sacred ashes from Holika's pyre.

Reflecting the festival's innovative spirit, organisers introduced an enchanting twist to the traditional celebration. Bougainvillea blossoms, which are abundant during Trinidad and Tobago's Phagwa season, were collected and prepared by community members, then lavishly showered upon attendees during the climactic Ranga Barse.

This creative, immersive, and colourfully organic adaptation added a magical dimension to the festival, beautifully capturing the essence of spring renewal that is central to Holi celebrations.



Brought to the Caribbean by our Indentured ancestors in the 19th century, Phagwa has metamorphosed in Trinidad and Tobago into a celebration of identity and resilience, transcending religion and uniting all in joyful colour. Across temple grounds and open spaces, friends and strangers toss coloured powders and spray beer. Children dart through crowds, dousing elders, who respond with handfuls of coloured powder. Caste, age, and status blur in this vibrant melee, uniting all in love and togetherness. In photo above, schoolchildren at the Tunapuna Hindu School reflect this spirit of faith, fun, and freedom, connecting past struggles with their vibrant present. Their playfulness echoes Krishna's and Radha's mischief, immortalised in *Bhakti* texts. Krishna, the divine prankster, smears Radha and the Gopis with colour, his laughter weaving bonds of joy. In Trinidad and Tobago, that spirit lives on, its colour and celebration a nod to divine delight.

Business leaders call on govt to deal with foreign exchange crisis

— Trinidad and Tobago's business leaders are calling for urgent, transparent solutions to the nation's worsening foreign exchange crisis, echoing warnings from former energy minister Kevin Ramnarine that the country's economic struggles will intensify without decisive action.

Port-of-Spain – Business groups in Trinidad and Tobago are urging the government to provide clear, structured guidelines on foreign exchange (forex) distribution amid growing economic pressures, aligning with former energy minister Kevin Ramnarine's warnings of a deepening forex drought fueled by declining energy sector output.

Greater Chaguanas Chamber of Commerce President Baldath Maharaj emphasised the need for transparency and fairness, stating businesses require "a clear and structured guideline outlining which businesses qualify for forex allocations and the criteria used for distribution".

Maharaj argued that banks currently apply arbitrary criteria, potentially monetising forex allocations to boost their profitability at the expense of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Prime Minister Stuart Young, speaking at a post-Cabinet briefing on March 27, acknowledged ongoing discussions with stakeholders, including the Central Bank, Bankers Association, and commercial banks, aimed at addressing the forex issue. These meetings, involving Dhanpaul have been described as "productive", with a follow-up scheduled for April 9.

Highlighting the gravity of the forex challenge, Maharaj said, "Businesses continue to struggle with limited access, which directly impacts operations, imports, and overall economic activity."



Kevin Ramnarine

He insisted that government transparency on strategies to boost US dollar inflows is essential, emphasising the urgency for sustainable long-term solutions to protect economic stability and competitiveness.

Former People's Partnership energy minister Kevin Ramnarine echoed these concerns during a recent UNC economic consultation, stating bluntly, "The shortage of US dollars will not improve over 2025-2026, but will get worse."

Ramnarine linked the forex shortage directly to a 31 percent decline in energy production since 2015, driven by substantial drops in natural gas and oil output. He underscored the profound economic contraction experienced under the Rowley-Young administration, noting Trinidad and Tobago's economy shrank by over 17 percent, severely affecting investor confidence.

Ramnarine highlighted alarming employment trends in the energy sector, where jobs fell from 20,500 in 2015 to approximately 12,500 in 2024. LNG exports also drastically declined, dropping from 231 cargoes to just 131 over the same period.

"If you want to know what caused the forex drought, look no further," he stated.

Critically, Ramnarine cautioned against relying heavily on uncertain Venezuelan gas supplies through the Dragon deal, which the current government had significantly promoted.

"This country cannot plan its economic future on the hopes of getting Venezuelan gas," he warned, advocating instead for swift action to exploit local deepwater hydrocarbon resources, unlocked during the Persad-Bissessar administration, which was in government between the years 2010-2015.

"We need to wake up the energy sector and the economy," Ramnarine urged, recommending the rapid utilisation of idle assets, including closed refinery and oil-bearing acreage held by Heritage Petroleum.

He also advised reducing non-energy sector taxation, improving ease of doing business, and aligning strategically with expanding economies like Guyana and Suriname.

Meanwhile, the private sector, represented by Maharaj, signaled readiness to collaborate with the government and financial institutions, provided there is a clear commitment to implement structured and equitable policies.

"The business sector needs stability, predictability, and fair access to foreign exchange to drive economic growth and protect jobs," Maharaj concluded.

He added, "We stand ready to collaborate on structured policies that ensure fair access for all businesses, not just a select few."



Babunath as a rider on a horse; looking on is Sinanan (right) and Indian High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago Dr Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit (sitting, left)



In one of his thrilling performances, Babunath balances a wheel on his head while accompanied by the similarly versatile Bhawai

Rajasthan folk dancers thrill Trinidad crowd

Port-of-Spain – A vibrant folk dance troupe from Rajasthan, India, captivated audiences and garnered enthusiastic standing ovations during their recent performance at the Laxmi Narayan Temple in central Trinidad.

Among those in attendance was Works and Transport Minister Rohan Sinanan, who expressed his admiration for the performances.

Led by Rajkumari Rathore, the troupe dazzled attendees with mesmerising renditions of traditional Rajasthani dances, including the *Bhavai*, *Chakri*, and *Kachchi Ghodi*. These intricate performances require immense dedication and years of disciplined practice by the accomplished artists.

Two standout performers, Bhawai and Babunath, enchanted the audience with five spectacular routines, each receiving multiple standing ovations.

Babunath showcased his impressive dexterity by expertly manoeuvring a bicycle wheel, balancing it gracefully on different parts of his body. Adding humour and interactive charm, he delighted the crowd with a comedic portrayal of a horseback rider, parading playfully through the audience.

However, his act reached a thrilling crescendo when he performed a captivating flame-blowing routine using kerosene, leaving spectators enthralled.

Equally stunning was Bhawai, who demonstrated extraordinary skill and poise by dancing energetically, while effortlessly balancing 22 steel bowls atop her head, an act that left the crowd in awe of her talent and grace.



A novel act – a fine balance by Bhawai



The Government of Guyana
in collaboration with the Private Sector invites you
to be part of the transformation in Guyana



Open to the **Public!**

TORONTO DIASPORA JOB FAIR

- Learn of exciting job opportunities in the public and private sectors
- Network with industry leaders and other stakeholders
- Get information on resettling in Guyana, training opportunities, and government housing programmes
- Engage officials from NIS, Passport Office and GRO among others

FOR MORE INFO:

Contact the Guyana Consulate
on 416-494-6040/6059/2679

**OPENING PROGRAMME
STARTS AT 11:00AM PROMPTLY**



**Saturday,
5th April 2025
11am to 4pm**



**Toronto Don Valley Hotel and Suites
175 Wynford Drive, Toronto
Ontario, M3C 1J3 Canada**

Always in our hearts, *Kabhi Kabhie* echoes across borders, generations

— Our eternal song *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* began as a quietly burning flame, an Urdu poem penned by Sahir Ludhianvi in the 1940s, long before Bollywood had even dreamed of Kashmir's snow or Mukesh's trembling baritone. Then set to Khayyam's haunting composition and released in Yash Chopra's 1976 romantic epic *Kabhi Kabhie*, its flame slowly brightened into an enduring love ballad, its light cast further into a meditation on destiny, memory, and a love imagined rather than lived. Today, the song is an eternal flame, one of Bollywood's most enduring anthems of longing, with its lyrics resonating into generations, its metaphors timeless and warmly evocative.

An Ongoing Series For The Caribbean Diaspora

A Local Journalism Initiative

Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein (Sometimes, in my heart...)

is the title song from Yash Chopra's 1976 Hindi film *Kabhi Kabhie*. The music was composed by

Mohammed Zahur Khayyam, and the lyrics penned by poet Sahir Ludhianvi. It was originally performed as a duet by playback legends Mukesh and Lata Mangeshkar.

Mukesh's soulful rendition became one of his last and most celebrated songs, and he won the Filmfare Best Male Playback Singer award for it posthumously in 1977. Lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi also won the Filmfare Award for Best Lyricist for this song, and Khayyam won Best Music Director for the film's soundtrack.

The song has an interesting genesis. Sahir had originally written it as an Urdu poem in the 1940s, published in his collection *Talkhiyan* (Bitterness). The poem's lofty Urdu diction was slightly simplified for the film version without losing its romantic essence. Decades before *Kabhi Kabhie*, Khayyam had composed a tune for this poem for an unreleased 1950 film by Chetan Anand, and a version was even recorded by singers Geeta Dutt and Sudha Malhotra, though that early rendition never saw the light of day.

This melody lay dormant until Yash Chopra's film brought it to life in 1976, with Amitabh Bachchan and Raakhee on-screen and Mukesh-Lata on the soundtrack. The song was recorded at the famous Mehboob Studios in Mumbai, and is often regarded as "one of the finest creations" of both Khayyam and Sahir Ludhianvi.

In *Kabhi Kabhie* the song serves as a recurring poetic motif that charts the passage of time and love in the story. Amit (played by Amitabh Bachchan) is a young poet in love with Pooja (Raakhee). He first recites *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* as a poem during their courtship in Kashmir, reflecting their romantic dreams.

However, Pooja's parents arrange her marriage to Vijay (Shashi Kapoor), and she must part from Amit. On her wedding night with Vijay, the song surfaces again in a powerful way: Pooja's new husband, who happens to be a fan of Amit's poetry, unknowingly recites Amit's verses to her from a book of poems that Amit had gifted to her. As he does so, the film transitions into the song sequence. This wedding-night version is pictured as a duet (Mukesh's voice representing Amit's soulful memory and Lata's voice representing Pooja) playing over visuals of Pooja and Vijay together.

Thus, within the film, *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* links the two generations and two love stories: it begins as Amit and Pooja's youthful love theme and later haunts the present as a memory on Pooja's wedding night, underscoring the lingering emotions between the characters. The song also appears in an early scene where an older Amit, now a famous poet being interviewed on TV years later, recites the opening lines, triggering a flashback to the happier times in college.

Yash Chopra uses the song repeatedly to echo the idea of lost love and nostalgia, making it an emotional centerpiece of the film's narrative.

Upon its release in 1976, *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* became enormously popular across India. It topped the *Binaca Geetmala* year-end list for 1976, ranked as the No. 1 song of the year on *Radio Ceylon's* famous hit countdown.

The song's immediate reception was so strong that it turned the *Kabhi Kabhie* soundtrack into a blockbuster album. Later, the film's soundtrack was ranked among the greatest Bollywood soundtracks of all time largely due to the enduring appeal of this title track and others.

Critics and audiences alike praised the song's lyrical depth



Lata Mangeshkar



Mukesh

Song: *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein*
Film: *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976)

Lyrics: Sahir Ludhianvi; Music: Khayyam;
Singers: Mukesh & Lata Mangeshkar

Kabhi kabhie mere dil mein khayaal aata hai

Sometimes, a thought arises in my heart

Ke jaise tujhko banaya gaya hai mere liye

As if you were created just for me

Tu ab se pehle sitaron mein bas rahi thi kahin

That before now, you lived among the stars somewhere

Tujhe zameen pe bulaya gaya hai mere liye

And you were summoned down to Earth just for me

Kabhi kabhie mere dil mein khayaal aata hai

Sometimes, a thought arises in my heart

Ke ye badan, ye nigahen meri amaanat hain

That this body, these eyes, are entrusted to me

Ye gesoon ki ghani chhaon hai meri khaatir

This thick shade of your hair exists for my comfort

Ye honth aur ye baahen meri amaanat hain

These lips and these arms are a trust left in my care

Kabhi kabhie mere dil mein khayaal aata hai

Sometimes, a thought arises in my heart

Ke jaise bajti hain shehnaaiyan si raahon mein

As if wedding shehnaai (flutes) are echoing along the path

Suhaag raat hai, ghoonghat utha raha hoon main

It's our wedding night; I am lifting your bridal veil

Simat rahi hai tu sharmaa kar meri baahon mein

You are drawing close, blushing, into my arms

Kabhi kabhie mere dil mein khayaal aata hai

Sometimes, a thought arises in my heart

Ke jaise tu mujhe chahegi umr bhar yunhi

That perhaps you will love me like this all your life

Utthegi meri taraf pyaar ki nazar yunhi

That your gaze of love will always rise toward me this way

Main jaanta hoon ke tu gair hai, magar yunhi

I know you are no longer mine, yet still...

Kabhi kabhie mere dil mein khayaal aata hai

Sometimes, a thought arises in my heart

and soothing melody. For example, *PlanetBollywood's* reviewer gave the album a near-perfect rating, and noted "*Kabhi Kabhie* will remain an ode to brilliant melody".

Over the years, the song has attained cult status as an evergreen romantic classic. It is frequently counted among Bollywood's most iconic love songs, and is a staple at wedding functions and Valentine's Day playlists.

Even decades later, its legacy endures: in 2006, an article in the *Indian Express* referred to *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* as Sahir Ludhianvi's masterpiece, and the song is often cited as one of his most celebrated works.

The title itself, *Kabhi Kabhie* has entered the pop-culture lexicon as synonymous with poetic, old-school romance. And on the sad side, the song's success also had a bittersweet aspect.

Mukesh's heartfelt performance won him the Best Playback Singer award, but sadly, he had passed away a few months after recording it; he died on August 27, 1976. Today, millions of fans consider it Mukesh's swan song, a final gift to us that ended his career on a high note.

For Khayyam, a veteran composer, the song's success brought his first Filmfare Award, and renewed acclaim in the twi-

light of his career. And for Amitabh Bachchan, who until then was known largely as the "angry young man" of action films, reciting *Kabhi Kabhie's* tender verse on-screen helped establish a new romantic persona, now with the resonance of his baritone voicing poetry.

Even today, almost five decades later, the song's legacy lives on. It remains a fixture on radio and TV retrospectives of Bollywood music. In 2024, a video of an elderly fan strumming a guitar and singing the song on a European street went viral, prompting Amitabh Bachchan himself to marvel at how "amazing" it was to hear this song being loved "in Europe!!"

Such anecdotes underscore how the song continues to transcend generations and borders, a testament to its timeless appeal.

The song and the film's music earned several major awards and honours. In the 24th Filmfare Awards in 1977, *Kabhi Kabhie* swept the music

categories, with Khayyam winning Best Music Director, Sahir Ludhianvi winning Best Lyricist (for *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein*), and Mukesh winning Best Male Playback Singer for this song. However, Mukesh's award was given posthumously, as he had passed away in August, 1976.

It was also *Binaca Geetmala* No. 1 Song of 1976, with the duet version with Mukesh and Lata the top-ranked song of 1976 on *Binaca Geetmala*, which was India's leading radio countdown show of that era.

There were also accolades for Sahir Ludhianvi's lyrical craft in this song, which contributed to his lasting reputation. He not only won the Filmfare award, but a few years later in 1980, he was posthumously honoured with the *Padma Shri*. *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* is often cited among his most famous creations.

The influence of *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* on Bollywood music and culture is significant. Its success reaffirmed the value of high-quality Urdu poetry in film songs during the mid-1970s, a time when simpler lyrics were becoming common. The song showed that audiences still cherished elegant, literary lyrics when combined with beautiful melodies.

This paved the way for later filmmakers to include soulful, poetic numbers in mainstream movies. Within Bollywood, the song has been referenced and paid tribute to multiple times. Its famous opening line is often quoted in dialogues or parodies whenever a romantic or nostalgic mood is invoked.

The film's title itself set a template for movie names, such as Karan Johar's *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* in 2001, which echoed the phrasing. In fact, the *Kabhi Kabhie* soundtrack album as a whole became a benchmark for Bollywood romance. According to a 2011 poll by *PlanetBollywood*, it was listed among the Top ten Greatest Bollywood Soundtracks ever, largely owing to this song's contribution.

In popular culture, the song has transcended its film, and is played regularly on radio stations specialising in retro music, featured in countless Top Romantic Song countdowns on television, and is a go-to number in live *ghazal* concerts or singing reality shows when contestants want to evoke classic romance.

The song's gentle *shehnaai* (flute) motif and the verse about "*suhaag raat*" (wedding night) have made it especially popular at Indian weddings, and is often played as bridal entrance music or couple dances.

In our diaspora back home, and as well as here in the GTA and elsewhere, it became something of a community anthem. For instance, the chorus *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* can be heard at crowded nostalgia-themed events at the many banquet halls in Scarborough, Toronto, Brampton, and Mississauga.

Perhaps the most telling indicator of the song's cultural impact is its endurance across languages and borders. A 1985 Indonesian song, *Khayalan Masa Lalu* (*Imaginations of the Past*), famously took inspiration from the song's melody, proof of how far across borders the song has traveled.

More recently, as mentioned, even people with little knowledge of Hindi (like the European fan in 2024) continue to upload notable performances to social media platforms such as YouTube, an indicator that its emotional resonance has crossed many boundaries, underlining the song's status as a timeless and universal gem of popular culture.

Over the years, *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* has been revisited and reinvented by many artists. Among the notable covers

See next page: **Ballad beyond borders**



Amitabh Bachchan and Rakhee Gulzar in *Kabhi Kabhie*

When Aja sang like Mukesh under Caribbean stars

By Romeo Kaseram
An LJI Diaspora Project

Singing *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* in our homelands in the Caribbean, notably Indo-Caribbean communities in Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname, carries deep emotional and cultural significance. It is more than a love song; instead, it resonates with lamentation and longing, echoing our diaspora's complex relationship with an ancestral homeland we have never fully known, but which we continue to imagine and idealise.

In our communities descended from East Indian Indentured labourers, Bollywood songs like *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* serve as emotional bridges to India. As the Trinidad and Tobago scholar, Primnath Gooptar outlines in his article, *Bollywood Internationalism and the Borderless Kingdom*, cinema in the Caribbean created a "borderless kingdom", an imagined space where diasporic identities could emotionally reconnect to India despite geographical and generational distance.

Kabhi Kabhie fits perfectly into this emotional terrain, articulating the very sentiments of displacement, idealised love, and metaphysical belonging that defines our diasporic psyche.

The song is frequently performed live at weddings, cultural programmes, and religious celebrations in Indo-Caribbean communities. Trinidadian and Guyanese musicians often rehearsed and covered Mukesh's version with harmonium and tabla accompaniment, the lead singer's imitative voice of Mukesh's baritone holding together both memory and myth.

Such performances were not merely nostalgic entertainment; they were cultural acts of preservation, resisting the loss of language and tradition through the medium of song.

Though sung in Hindi/Urdu, many Caribbean listeners did not fully understand the lyrics. Instead, they felt them, singing along after memorising the entire song.

In this context of memory, the lyrics "*Ke jaise tujhko banaya gaya hai mere liye*" ("*As if you were made for me*"), took on collective meaning. Singing the song was not just romantic love, but became elevated to an imagined India, the language, the rituals; it was as if India had been made for us, and was then lost.

So it was that *Kabhi Kabhie* became a mirror of diasporic melancholy, encapsulating the enduring ache of cultural separation and colonial erasure.

Meanwhile, today *Kabhi Kabhie* is still sung by Indo-Caribbean elders at mandirs, at diaspora events in Toronto, and in Queens, New York, and passed down through cover versions and karaoke nights. For younger generations, it represents a link to their grandparents' dreams, a vestige of the emotional architecture that held diasporic families together through music.

Put another way, when *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* is sung in the Caribbean, its rendition becomes more than just a love song, and is elevated to an echo of ancestry borne across the *Kala Pani*, a poetic breath crossing generations, and a heartbeat for a homeland simultaneously imagined, inherited, and lost.

In *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein*, we find not just a song, but a diasporic philosophy in the cohabitation of grief and beauty, of distance, and intimacy.

Gooptar's essay offers us a critical foundation. He writes of diasporic spectatorship in Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname, where Indian cinema became not just an imported entertainment product but a spiritual architecture. It was a realm without borders where diasporic subjects could emotionally inhabit the India of their dreams.

In his framing, Bollywood becomes a form of cultural sovereignty, imagined and inhabited by those whose bodies remained rooted in the Caribbean cane fields, but whose eyes gazed east-

ward through the silver screen.

Kabhi Kabhie, in this context, becomes a soundtrack for diasporic dreaming. It is not accidental that the lyrics, "*As if you were made for me*", could be read not merely as a lover's sentiment, but as the diaspora's whispered devotion to a mythic *Bharat Mata*, an India stitched together, not of geography, but of memory and cinematic fragments. Gooptar's "borderless kingdom" is where this devotion is acted out.

Then we have Benedict Anderson's theory of imagined communities to overlay Gooptar's borderless space. Anderson's insight that nations are not born solely of borders and maps, but out of shared rituals and mediated imagination applies with startling clarity to our diaspora. In the absence of our distancing from *Bharat Mata*, cinema became the temple, and songs like *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* became hymns of continuity, connectivity, and longing.

When Mukesh's voice crackled through old cassette players at weddings in Tunapuna, Trinidad, Wakenaam in Guyana, Queens in New York, or at a banquet hall in Toronto, it conjured a collective that has never physically gathered, yet remains emotionally and psychically tethered. Our community is formed not out of proximity, but from a shared longing, from a collective act of remembering what was never ours to remember, but was always ours to feel; and we feel with deep nostalgia and longing.

To fortify our architecture even further, we invoke Homi Bhabha's concept of the *Third Space*, which provides the metaphysical scaffolding. Our Indo-Caribbean diaspora in the Caribbean and its global extensions exist in an interstitial zone, neither fully Indian nor entirely Caribbean. Here, hybridity is not dilution, it is creation. *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* finds renewed life in this third space, where Hindi is sometimes sung with Creole intonation, where Bollywood melodies weave through tassa drums and harmonium strains, and where the pain of dislocation meets the joy of cultural reinvention.

Our beloved song resides in this third space. Here, *Kabhi Kabhie* is no longer about Amitabh and Raakhee. It is about Aja who came from Uttar Pradesh, Ajie who learned Hindi phonetically, and today, a great grandson growing up in Scarborough who sings with a Canadian accent, and who iterates the ache.

In our diasporic lives, *Kabhi Kabhie* is now a literary artifact of our longing. The line "*Ke jaise tujhko banaya gaya hai mere liye*" is not simply about a created person anymore; now elevated, it means a place, a history, a language. The India imagined by the diaspora is not the postcolonial state, but a poetic India, one that is romantic, eternal, and just beyond reach.

The metaphorical "you" is motherland, lover, memory. The *shehnai* (flute) in the song's instrumentation evokes the wedding that never happened, the union between diaspora and ancestral homeland forever deferred.

And in that deferral lies the ache, which Bhabha describes in hybridity's in-betweenness; the ache Anderson locates in collective nationalist imagination; and the ache that Gooptar, also a child of the diaspora, captures in cinema as a diasporic ritual.

In Toronto *Kabhi Kabhie* is sung at cultural programmes and mandir fundraisers. In New York's Richmond Hill, elders hum it in puja rooms in their homes. Such diasporic dispersion only amplifies the longing, echoing across borders and generations.

And yet, the song is not just about mourning and loss. When uplifted into another realm, it celebrates survival; the survival of beauty in exile, the refusal to let memory be erased. Even as languages shift and attrition claims older generations, *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein* anchors a deeper truth: that sometimes, in our hearts, we remember ourselves into being.



Joe Jaglall

Kabhi Kabhie an 'anthem'

At mandir fundraisers across the Greater Toronto Area, Joe Jaglall, community leader, humanitarian, and master of the stage, has become synonymous with magnetic energy and cultural upliftment. Known for keeping his audiences on the edge of their seats, Jaglall brings not just showmanship but a deep sense of purpose to every performance. A memorable moment at one event saw his stirring rendition of *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein*, which he affectionately calls "Guyana's Indian anthem". At one fundraiser, a request to donate \$100 for the song set off a chain reaction of generosity. As Jaglall's singing mesmerised listeners, that modest pledge soared into a \$12,000 wave of community support, revealing the song's uplifting power. As an attendee marveled, "From one person wanting to donate \$100 for Jaglall to sing... to him then engaging the audience that saw that \$100 grow into \$12,000... was quite a magnificent feat!"

Ballad beyond borders, boundaries

From previous page

and remixes are Dal Hothi's English-Punjabi Remake. In the early 1990s, the UK-based singer created a popular remix/cover titled *Always Always*, which blended English lyrics with the original tune of *Kabhi Kabhie*. This version, often dubbed the wedding anthem of the 1990s, reimagined the classic for Bhangra and wedding party audiences.

There was the Bally Sagoo & Amitabh Bachchan Remix in 1996. Twenty years after the film, noted producer Sagoo gave the song a modern twist in the album *Aby Baby* (1996). This remix version incorporated Amitabh Bachchan's own spoken-word recitation of the verses with contemporary beats.

Despite the updated sound, *Kabhi Kabhie* retained its popularity in this new form, introducing the classic to younger listeners in the 1990s. The music video for this remix even featured Bachchan, and it received considerable airplay on Indian music channels in the late 1990s.

There was also Sahir Ludhianvi's *Own Recitation*. As a treat for poetry lovers, an audio of Sahir Ludhianvi himself reciting his original poem surfaced years later, and is now archived on *YouTube*. Hearing the lyricist's deep voice delivering the lines gives a unique, goosebump-inducing perspective on the piece, and it underscores the literary merit of the lyrics independent of the film's melody.

There are also live covers and reality shows that utilise the song's melody and emotion, making it a favourite for many singers. Artists like Atif Aslam (known for his soulful voice) have performed the song in concerts, adding individualistic improvisations to the classic.

On Indian television, it is frequently covered by contestants on shows such as *Indian Idol* or *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, often to critical praise. These live interpretations continue to keep the song alive in contemporary pop culture (for example, a 2022 reality show performance of the song trended on social media, showing young singers tackling Mukesh's classic notes).

Even Amitabh Bachchan joined the fun on one occasion, when in 2019 he sang a few lines on KBC quiz show in response to a contestant's request, delighting the audience.

There have also been many international versions. The song's tune has found echoes in many locations abroad, with instrumental and orchestral versions played by wedding string quartets; it is also not uncommon to find a Spanish guitar or an Arabic *oud* performing a cover of the melody on *YouTube*, evidence of the tune's cross-cultural resonance.

Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein endures not just in its original form but through a multitude of reinterpretations. Each new cover or remix, whether it is an officially produced version or a fan tribute, serves to introduce this Bollywood gem to new audiences. The song's core, which is its heartfelt melody and poetic soul, shines through every time, reinforcing why it remains an immortal classic in the annals of Indian film music.



M.S Dhoni

Dhoni's legacy, presence resurges

— At 43 years old M.S. Dhoni continues to defy time, convention, and expectations. Commanding the limelight in IPL 2025, he is both a symbol of Indian cricket's past glory and an enduring force in the present.

In a league brimming with emerging talent and star power, it is M.S. Dhoni, now approaching his 44th birthday, who continues to cast the longest shadow. The Chennai Super Kings stalwart, now in his 18th straight Indian Premier League (IPL) season, remains a phenomenon. Though absent from international cricket since 2020, Dhoni's legacy and presence are not merely intact – they appear to be resurgent.

With a record five IPL titles and an unmatched aura of calm in pressure moments, Dhoni has transformed from captain to cult figure. Despite giving up the captaincy three seasons ago and making limited appearances in 2024, he was retained as an uncapped player for 2025, five years after leaving international duty. For Chennai Super Kings, retaining Dhoni was strategic, not sentimental.

Now the oldest player in the tournament, Dhoni is closing in on the records of Brad Hogg and Pravin Tambe, who played IPL matches beyond 44. But Dhoni's value lies not only in his age-defying longevity. His numbers speak volumes: 5,243 runs, sixth on the all-time list behind only giants like Virat Kohli, with a career average of 39.12, which is higher than both Kohli and Rohit Sharma. Among batters with more than 5,000 IPL runs, only David Warner and A.B. de Villiers have acquired better averages.

In strike rate (137.53), Dhoni trails only de Villiers (151.68) and Warner (139.77) among that elite group. His 252 sixes rank him fourth in league history, yet another marker of a career built on finishing flair.

But batting is only one chapter. As a wicketkeeper, Dhoni has 180 dismissals, with 141 catches and 39 stumpings, itself an unmatched IPL record. Known as the "pickpocket" by former coach Ravi Shastri for his lightning-quick glovework, he still dazzles behind the stumps.

Then there is his lofty "helicopter shot", that wristy flick over mid-wicket, which is now Dhoni's signature, with fans waiting for it like worshippers at a shrine. But Dhoni's true genius lies in how he constructed his innings: measured, composed, always taking the match deep and forcing errors from the opposition. And he runs between the wickets with bursts of speed similar to a pursued hare.

While time has reduced this physical explosiveness, his match sense remains unparalleled. Last season, he moved away from the finisher role, instead offering brief but decisive cameos. In the 2025 format, with the impact player rule allowing greater tactical flexibility, Dhoni fits in perfectly as a part-time player, or a full-time leader.

Dhoni holds the record for most matches as IPL captain (210) and most wins (123). CSK's five IPL titles and two Champions League crowns owe much to his leadership, both formal and informal.

As a former national captain, he also led India to three ICC titles: the 2007 T20 World Cup, 2011 ODI World Cup, and 2013 Champions Trophy. In Tests, he took India to the No 1 ICC ranking before retiring mid-series in 2014-2015.

Then there are the voices suggesting that Dhoni's presence on the team may limit opportunities for young Indian or overseas players, which Shastri has countered, saying, "The league operates on free-market dynamics. Franchise owners aren't sentimental; they know what's best for them, on and off the field."

Robin Uthappa, a former India and CSK teammate, is even more prescient, declaring "Write off Dhoni at your own risk. We could still see some old magic."

Today, Dhoni's impact is more than tactical; instead, it has been elevated into the symbolic. His continued presence offers mentorship, stability, and commercial power.

"An IPL without Dhoni is unthinkable," CSK said in a recent media release. For the franchise, it seems he is now more than a player, and has instead become the brand.

Step up to the crease to conquer cancer

Cricket is more than a game for our Caribbean community; it is a shared legacy, a scorecard passed down from generation to generation. Come May 31, cricket will take on a new and urgent purpose at Mississauga's Celebration Square in *Cricket to Conquer Cancer*, a tournament where every run scored drives the scoreboard forward with hope, and with every wicket taken bringing us closer to a cure.

Organised by The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation (PMCF), this inaugural street cricket fundraiser will assemble over 100 teams in a fast-paced T5 format. Its ambition is to raise \$1 million to support the PMCF's transformative work, one of the world's top five cancer research hospitals.

Cricket to Conquer Cancer is a call to action for not only to our love for the game, but to all who believe in hope, healing, and progress.

International cricket star Carlos Brathwaite has already stepped forward, encouraging teams to register and join the cause. Miyo Yamashita, President and CEO of PMCF, alongside Honourary Chairs Sara Mazhar, Mehran Shahrari, Reetu Gupta, and Bobby Sahni, has declared that this event is about far more than just cricket: it is about transforming cancer outcomes for patients and families.

The T5 format, with five-over innings and teams of six to eight players, mirrors the intensity and urgency of the cause itself. Quick-thinking, decisive play will be essential, but the tournament's true challenge will unfold off the field, where fundraising for cancer research will take centre stage.

Each team begins its mission the moment it registers, with an ambitious target of \$6,000 to raise before match day. The most successful fundraisers will earn the opportunity to bolster their teams with celebrity cricket talent, bringing additional excitement and reward to their efforts. From the first ball to the final run, every moment will echo with meaning, driving forward to the fundraiser boundary the cause of conquering cancer.

The stakes have never been higher. Cancer, humanity's most persistent adversary, is on an alarming rise. By 2050, cancer cases globally are expected to increase by 77 percent, with younger generations facing the sharpest uptick. Today, more than one million people under 50 die from cancer annually, and this figure is projected to rise by 21 percent by 2030.

While Canada's five-year cancer survival rate has risen from 50 percent in the early 1980s to 63 percent today, the need for continued breakthroughs is pressing. Early-onset cancers among those under 50 have climbed by nearly 80 percent since the early 1990s.

But thanks to PMCF, progress continues. From the discovery of stem cells to innovations in immunotherapy and liquid biopsy testing, the centre has been behind some of the world's most impactful advancements in cancer research.

At the heart of this initiative is the Foundation's new rallying cry: *Carry The Fire*. This brand embodies the determination, resilience, and hope that has long driven PMCF and its supporters. The flame symbolises the courage of patients and families, the brilliance of world-class researchers, and the strength of communities rallying together.

For the Caribbean diaspora and cricket-loving communities across Canada, cricket has always been more than a pastime. It is a bridge connecting generations, cultures, and nations. From the dusty streets of Port-of-Spain, Kingston, and Georgetown to the vibrant parks and playing fields of Canadian cities, cricket has been a teacher of resilience, patience, and unity.

Now, cricket is a tool for transformation. *Cricket to Conquer Cancer* is a chance to bring our best game to the cause, driving us inexorably to the boundary, fielding for hope, and batting for life itself.

Already teams are preparing to bat for something greater than lifting the trophy as victors. *Cricket to Conquer Cancer* needs our community as players, sponsors, and supporters to bring our Caribbean's passion for cricket to this remarkable, humanitarian event.

For our Caribbean community, this is more than an event. It is an opportunity to honour our cricket heritage while standing up to one of the toughest opponents we have ever faced. Like a good innings built over time, every contribution brings us closer to victory.

It is time to take our guard, step up to the crease, and rally for *Cricket to Conquer Cancer*. Every run scored and every dollar raised will help *Carry The Fire* and deliver life-changing support to cancer patients and their families.

[Click here to register, donate, or learn more.](#)



THE PRINCESS MARGARET
CRICKET
TO CONQUER CANCER



THE PRINCESS MARGARET
CRICKET
TO CONQUER CANCER

Play in
Canada's
First-Ever
Street Cricket
Fundraiser

May 31, 2025

Learn More at Cricket2Conquer.ca





Heather Knight and Jon Lewis

England reset as Knight falls, Lewis dismissed

— England Women's cricket faces upheaval following the unprecedented 16-0 Ashes whitewash in Australia, resulting in the dismissal of head coach Jon Lewis, and the removal of long-serving captain Heather Knight after a turbulent and challenging winter.

The repercussions of England Women's humiliating 16-0 Ashes loss to Australia continues to reverberate with the dismissals of head coach Jon Lewis and captain Heather Knight, marking the start of a significant overhaul ahead of a crucial home summer.

Jon Lewis, appointed in November 2022, exits after little more than two years in charge. Despite winning 52 of 73 matches for a 71 percent win rate, and a commendable 83 percent success rate in 2024 alone, the failures in high-stakes tournaments proved decisive in his dismissal.

Lewis tenure peaked with the victorious 2023 Ashes white-ball series, but ultimately faltered during critical moments, notably a six-wicket loss to the West Indies at the 2024 T20 World Cup, and a calamitous innings defeat at the MCG, which was exacerbated by glaring fielding errors.

Speaking after that decisive loss in Australia, Lewis had confidently insisted he remained "the right guy" for England's future. However, ECB managing director Clare Connor's promise of a "thorough and honest" post-series review ultimately signaled his exit.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as England Women's head coach," Lewis stated upon his departure, adding, "Unfortunately, I won't be able to finish this incredibly challenging but enjoyable job of developing this young team, whilst winning and growing the women's game in this country."

Lewis also highlighted the growth under his watch, citing "unprecedented bumper crowds in 2023 and 2024", and expressing determination to continue contributing positively to women's cricket in the future.

Former England captain Charlotte Edwards, fresh off her second Women's Premier League title with Mumbai Indians, emerges as a leading candidate.

Edwards publicly declared her interest earlier this year, stating, "It is an ambition of mine to coach England... I'd love to do that."

Meanwhile, Knight's departure as captain brings a significant chapter of English cricket to a close. Knight, 34, assumed leadership in 2016, steering the team through eight Tests, 94 one-day internationals, and 96 T20 matches, amassing 134 wins from her 199 games at the



Clare Connor

helm. Her crowning achievement was the unforgettable ICC Women's World Cup triumph at Lord's in 2017. Yet Knight's inability to reclaim the Ashes across five attempts that culminated with its latest historic whitewash was decisive.

"I have loved being England captain, and it has been the most rewarding period of my career," Knight reflected.

She added, "But for now, I'm excited to focus on my batting and supporting the team and the new captain in the best way I can."

Knight's continued presence as a senior player will offer crucial continuity amid a leadership transition. Connor described her as an "outstanding leader and role model", underscoring her legacy despite recent setbacks.

World Cup-winning spinner Alex Hartley supported the ECB's decision, stating, "I absolutely think it is the right decision. It is time for a fresh start for this England team," Hartley told *BBC Radio 5 Live*, highlighting Knight's potential to elevate her batting further without captaincy pressures.

England's upcoming home season, starting with a white-ball series against West Indies in May, followed by India in June and

July, represents an immediate opportunity for renewal. Potential captaincy successors include Nat Sciver-Brunt and Amy Jones, both experienced deputies, alongside promising spinner Charlie Dean.

Knight's dismissal mirrors her own entry to the captaincy in 2016, succeeding Charlotte Edwards after a transitional period. Now, as England again face generational shifts, fresh leadership will guide younger talents from an increasingly professionalised domestic structure.

Off-field controversies during the Australia tour, among them spinner Sophie Ecclestone's refusal to conduct a television interview with commentator Alex Hartley, an incident Connor described as "unfortunate", also underline broader issues facing the squad's new regime.

Such internal challenges, combined with criticisms of fitness and team discipline by Hartley and other observers, must now be addressed decisively by England's incoming leaders.

Lewis and Knight's departures are the first tangible outcomes of the ECB's promised in-depth review, the findings of which are yet to be publicly disclosed.

Nevertheless, these bold moves demonstrate a firm commitment to reinvigorating English women's cricket after a period of unparalleled disappointment.

Squad confirmed for crucial qualifier

— Cricket West Indies have put together a resilient 15-player women's squad for the high-stakes battle at the upcoming ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifiers in Lahore, Pakistan, in the drive for redemption and a ticket to World Cup 2025 in India.

Cricket West Indies have confirmed the West Indies Women's squad for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifiers set to unfold from April 9 to April 19 in Lahore, Pakistan. The team will be fiercely pursuing one of the final two spots in the 2025 World Cup, which is scheduled to be played in India later this year.

With a lineup blending veteran expertise and emerging talent, the West Indies women enter the qualifiers following intensive preparation, including a rigorous pre-tournament training camp that was held late last month in the UAE.

The upcoming round-robin event pits them against Pakistan, Ireland, Bangladesh, Scotland, and Thailand. The top two finishers will earn

passage to join already-qualified teams Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and hosts India in the coveted main event, which will take place in September-October this year.

West Indies secured their spot in the qualifiers after finishing eighth in the 2023-2025 ICC Women's Championship standings, narrowly missing direct qualification. They face formidable competition from teams like Bangladesh and Ireland, who similarly missed automatic qualification, and Scotland and Thailand, who secured their qualifier positions based on ICC Women's ODI rankings.

Expressing confidence in the squad's readiness, CWI Director of Cricket, Miles Bascombe, highlighted the meticulous preparation and recent form as significant factors.

"Our women have been training intensively and are fully prepared for the challenges ahead," Bascombe stated.

He underscored the importance of recent performances, referencing strong outings during January's home series against Bangladesh, and impressive displays at the CG United Women's Super50 Cup in St Kitts.

"The qualifiers represent a crucial opportunity for us to secure our place in the World Cup," Bascombe added, asserting faith in the

current squad dynamic.

He added, "Particularly encouraging is the blend of experience and youth in our ranks. The senior players have embraced their mentorship roles, while our emerging talents have shown countless times they can perform on the international stage. This dynamic will create a resilient team that can thrive under pressure."

West Indies Head Coach Shane Deitz echoed similar optimism while acknowledging the challenging path ahead.

"It's going to be a tough tournament with some really good teams, but we are right up for the challenge," Deitz noted, while adding, "We've prepared well and played some good cricket in the last series against Bangladesh. We have to be at our best in every game, prepare well off the field, trust our skills, play our best cricket, and the result will take care of itself."

Meanwhile, West Indies' captain Hayley Matthews emphasised the team's unity and shared determination.

"As we head into the World Cup Qualifiers,

we know we've prepared well for this moment. The team environment feels like a family, and we've all been enjoying ourselves out on the park. We trust our skills and each other and are staying focused on playing our best cricket without any distractions," Matthews said.

She added, "Winning this is a big goal for us as a team, and we're confident in our chances to perform at a high level."

There have been significant changes from January's ODI squad that reflect both the recovery of key players and the emergence of fresh talent.

Veteran all-rounder Stafanie Taylor and Chinelle Henry return from injury absences, bolstering experience and depth, while wicketkeeper-batter Rashada Williams earns her selection following standout performances in domestic competitions. The players replace Nerissa Crafton, Djenaba Joseph, and Deandra Dottin, who have all been sidelined due to injuries.

All 15 matches in the qualifier round-robin will be hosted across Lahore's renowned cricketing venues, notably the Gaddafi Stadium and Lahore City Cricket Association Stadium.

The West Indies Women's campaign bowls off against Scotland on April 9, followed by critical matchups against Ireland, hosts Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Thailand.



Hayley Matthews





WI COMING!

WI Sports CA

needs Leather ball cricket players

for the Mississauga Premier League (MCPL)

T20 Summer 2025.

(16 games minimum from early May 2025)

Email wisportsca@gmail.com or message 1(905)802-6219 to register.

SPRING INTO SAVINGS!!!



Reg.: \$499
Now: **\$249**

Wooden Coffee Table



Reg.: \$3299 Now: **\$1499**

3 Pcs Recliner Sofa Set



QUEEN SIZE MATTRESSES STARTING FROM: \$199

Accessories & Rugs

Up to 50% OFF




Reg.: \$6299 Now: **\$1999**

7 Pcs Glass Dining Set



Reg.: \$6999 Now: **\$2899**

7 Pcs Italian Dining Set



Reg.: \$4399 Now: **\$2199**

KING SIZE
Available in 2 Colours

6 Pcs Modern Bedroom Set



Reg.: \$1499 Now: **\$699**

3 Pcs Sofa Set



Reg.: \$4699 Now: **\$2299**

King or Queen

Includes: Bed, Dresser + Mirror, Chest, 1 Night Stand

7 Pcs Bedroom Set



Reg.: \$5299 Now: **\$2999**

KING SIZE

7 Pcs Italian Bedroom Set

Accessories & Rugs

Up to 50% OFF




Reg.: \$1099 Now: **\$499**

Available in King Size

Tufted Fabric Queen Bed



Reg.: \$1199 Now: **\$699**

5 Pcs Glass Dining Set

Financing Available • 12 months • No Interest • No Payment

While Supplies Last



**2575 STEELES AVE E, UNIT #14-17
BRAMPTON ON L6T 5T1**

TEL: 905-790-0560 • FAX: 905-790-3702

customerservicestephensfurniture@hotmail.com • www.stephensfurnitureltd.com

