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Vol. 40 • No 15 • April 5, 2023 • Tel: 905-738-5005 • 312 Brownridge Dr. Thornhill, ON L4J 5X1 • indocaribbeanworld.com • indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com



At the acquisition site of essential items for Turkiye (left to right) are Vishnu Mandir's volunteer, Roy Doobay, Mike Mucher, head of World Famous Sales, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay, VM's leader, & Richmond Hill's Mayor, David West

## Vishnu Mandir reaches out to Turkiye

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

**Richmond Hill** – In what was yet another touching narrative of humanitarianism and compassion deployed at the global level, Toronto's Vishnu Mandir recently concluded a successful fund-raiser and an international shipment of emergency supplies to earthquake victims in Turkiye.

Speaking with *Indo-Caribbean World* last week, volunteer for the Richmond Hill temple, Roy Doobay, said following the traumatic earthquake in Turkiye, the mandir's global care arm, the Voice of Vedas Global Care Outreach Program, began raising funds to assist the stricken nation.

Said Roy: "The outreach at VM is multi-faceted. Along with its spiritual nourishment, VM also provides health and medical support for the community through its onsite medical clinic."

It is what Roy describes as the mandir offering spiritual, medical, and humanitarian nourishment at the community, national, and global levels.

And as he further noted, Global Care is focused on support and humanitarian outreach at all levels.

Here in Canada, the group responded to the national emergency when northern Alberta was swept by massive wildfires in 2016. Also, Haiti, India, Pakistan, the Ukraine, Trinidad and Tobago, and other nations, have all been beneficiaries of Global Care's support following destructive national disasters such as earthquakes, flooding, and

warfare.

Global Care is also among the signature fund-raising charity partners that ran for Guyana dialysis in the 2022 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, a premier world class event that attracts over 25,000 runners.

And as our diaspora knows well, the work by Vishnu Mandir's leader, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay and Global Care is well-documented and celebrated for its daily infusions of life-saving assistance at its medical centres in Guyana, where, among other things, dialysis interventions are subsidised, making treatments accessible and affordable to all Guyanese in the homeland.

"So, it was no problem mobilising Global Care to begin fund-raising following the disaster in Turkiye and Syria," Roy stated.

He added, "Dr Doobay spearheaded the drive, sending out the appeal to VM's devotees, which then rippled outwards to families, friends, and beyond. His call for funds saw a remarkable and generous response. In the end, Global Care raised close to \$25,000."

Speaking to the undertaking and its success, last week Dr Doobay said he was pleased with the "positive outcome of [VM's] latest humanitarian outreach" to aid Turkiye.

He added, "[It] is testimony to the care and generosity of our devotees, their families and friends,

**See Page 10: 'We can make a difference'**



Shipment being readied for its trip to Ankara



One Love in the time of Ramadan - in photo above, volunteers Hamza Meer Khan (at right), & Lou Francavilla working to assemble food hampers in preparation for delivery; in photo below (left to right) are volunteers Wilma Alexander, Dr Nazila Isgandarova, & veteran volunteer, Ali Shaw

## Ramadan a time for giving

The holy month of Ramadan is now being observed with Muslim faithful fasting from dawn to dusk, drawing closer together to Allah in worship, and assisting the needy.

While the faithful are immersed deeply in prayers, reading the *Qur'an*, or gathering for celebratory breaking of the fast, many among us are working tirelessly to bring relief to the needy, and to relieve the suffering of the less fortunate.

Each month Toronto's One Love Family Services delivers 600 food hampers throughout the GTA; however, with the observance of Ramadan, it has intensified its efforts, which was evident last weekend when this food bank, its donors, and many volunteers gathered at its North York location to assemble and deliver packages of supplies.

Among the volunteers working with One Love's President, Habeeb Alli, was Dr Nazila Isgandarova. A board member and advisor with the Azerbaijani Women's Support Centre, she was among the volunteer drivers who delivered hampers to international students at Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto. These packages contain staple items such as rice, chickpeas, cooking oil, and pasta.

Also among the volunteers was Wilma Alexander, who delivered food packages to needy families in Scarborough. And there was Ali Shaw, whom Alli said is the glue holding the logistics together at the centre. Volunteers Hamza Meer Khan and Lou Francavilla also contributed their time and effort.

Said Alli: "One of the practices during Ramadan is to give to the less fortunate. We are thankful to help those in need, and I am thankful to our donors, and grateful to our many tireless volunteers."

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Roomy suite with a lovely view! Features an open concept living & dining room, a large balcony, laundry room & underground parking. Close to public transit, amenities, & highways. Great location!



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This home is on about 0.6 acre land. Features a 7-car garage/workshop with high ceilings, gas heating & 220 volts for welding + a 13' door for a truck. Ideal for a home business & a great property for redevelopment. Enjoy this sprawling 4 bedroom home while running your home-based business.



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### Prime Location!

This lovely home is on a premium lot with a private driveway. It features two bedrooms on the main floor & two bedrooms on the upper level. The basement is finished with a rear entrance, kitchen, living room, & bedroom. Can't beat the location – only a 20-minute commute to downtown!



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The Kisson family celebrates at Vishnu Mandir (from left to right) Nan; Krish; Mitra; mom Shrimati Latchmin; Indra; Dhaman; Janie, & Danny. Photo by Ramesh Ramkalawan

## Kisson family continues with community, charitable work

In the midst of Vishnu Mandir's observances of the nine-night long Chaitra Navratri Festival, the Kisson family took the opportunity to celebrate the 86th birth anniversary of its matriarch, Latchmin Kisson. Both events took place at the Vishnu Mandir on March 24.

Also celebrated was the 56th birthday of Mitra, the youngest of the four sons of the Kisson family.

All the Kisson siblings were in attendance at the celebration. They have been honouring their mother on her birthday, year after year, in a devotion-filled atmosphere with *Puja*, *Bhajans*, recitals from the *Shastras*, and providing a sumptuous repast to all attendees.

Many devotees were in attendance that evening at VM for the Navratri observances. Their songs and chants contributed to a heightened mood of solemnity, and filled the air with a rapturous sense of divine peace.

With its artful décor and full complement of deities for all worshippers, VM presented the perfect setting for such a sublime experience.

The Kisson family is well-regarded for its generosity and

charitable disposition. During the event, it was announced by family spokesperson Dhaman Kisson that the upcoming golf tournament was well underway to take place on June 21, with proceeds to be donated to the Doobay Dialysis Centre. This tournament is named after the Kisson matriarch.

Kisson also revealed that a full complement of 144 players has already signed up for the tournament, which meant there were no openings available for new players.

However, he indicated that donations to the Doobay Dialysis Centre can still be made via the [Doobay Medical Centre](#), or at [Vishnu Mandir](#).

Kisson is a prominent Toronto lawyer and an associate lecturer at Queen's University.

He also announced that a conference will take place on the theme, *The Law and You* at VM on April 22. It will discuss the issue of domestic violence prevalent in the community.

He also stated that a section of the conference will be devoted to "Legal Education/Law School", with the aim to assist aspiring students enter the legal profession. It is open to all interested persons.



With its walls completed, Radha Krishna Mandir is starting to show its serenity & presence

## Bhakti Sangeet building up for Radha Krishna Mandir

Cambridge - The new Radha Krishna Mandir and Cultural Centre is taking shape with construction now well underway on the \$5 million building. Construction started last May, with the latest phase seeing the building's serene structure starting to emerge from its foundation.

With the mandir's beautiful aura emerging, devotees are starting to see the early blossoming of what has been their long-time goal, and over two decades of dedication, fund-raising, and hard work. The RKMCC was founded over 22 years ago by Guyanese and Trinidadian families.

Fund-raising remains the key to completion of the new building by the end of this year, RKMCC's President Dwarka Persaud has said.

It is with this goal in mind that the RKMCC is presenting Bhakti Sangeet, a mega concert that will be live in Toronto, and will feature the synergies, dynamism, and uplifting energies of Pt Neil Dev Persad, Pt Narad Gosine, and Pt Hardat Ashwar.

As RKMCC's Outreach member, Yashmita Narine, has noted, "[This] dynamic group will be performing for the first time together on one stage. There will also be special appearances by Pt Rajeev Persaud, Sanjay Matadin, Priya Persaud, Alex

Mohan, Devin Nauth, Nathan Khan, Adesh Sahadeo, Naresh Rishi Lakhan, Anand Seeram, Tamesh Doobay, and others."

Additionally, "All proceeds from Bhakti Sangeet will go towards building the new Radha Krishna Mandir in Cambridge. [It] will serve the South Western Ontario community, and offer several amenities, including Bal Vihar and senior programs, full time Pandits, music and yoga rooms, a greenhouse, and many more. The new mandir construction is currently underway, and your support in this event will aid in the process."

The event takes place at the Sringeri Banquet Hall, which is located at 80 Brydon Drive in Etobicoke. Doors open at 5:00 p.m., with the show starting at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$20 for kids. Sponsorship packages are also available, starting at \$200. To [buy tickets online](#), [find in-person ticket vendors](#), [visit the website](#) for more information. Or call Dwarka Persaud at 519-240-0870.

RKMCC is also accepting online donations for its building fund. You can e-transfer donations to the following address: [donate@radhkrishnamandir.ca](mailto:donate@radhkrishnamandir.ca); or [click here to donate online](#). Income tax receipts are issued for donations over \$20. Or call Persaud at 519-240-0870 for more information.

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# UN's message of hope targets everyone, everywhere, all at once

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

While the choice of metaphor was temperate and germane, at the same time UN Secretary-General António Guterres also targeted his climate change message to the international media and its headline writers when he told the world last month that humanity was on thin ice, and that this ice was melting fast.

At the time, Guterres was speaking via video at the launch of the Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which took place in the Swiss Alpine town of Interlaken on March 20.

And so it was that most of the world media ran with the discomforting but familiar narrative of the inherent vulnerability that accompanies people who are standing on thin ice; which is a known and visceral fear for those who are living in temperate zones, but mostly a learned motif of precarity for the more equatorial-bound.

And if his reference to thin ice fell through, Guterres' sobering rhetoric then fluidly pirouetted into what was trending in global attention back in March, in his oblique reference to the post-modernist, Oscar-winning movie, *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once*.

And so it was that Guterres delivered yet another sobering, but hopeful message on climate change, positioning his text within the framework of a threshold that was ice growing thinner underneath us, even while amplifying the clarion call to action utilising the high-energy, kinetic frenzy of an Academy-award winning movie.

As Guterres stated in his opening remarks, "...humanity is on thin ice - and that ice is melting fast"; and later, "[Our] world needs climate action on all fronts - everything, everywhere, all at once".

He then proceeded, "As today's report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change details, humans are responsible for virtually all global heating over the last 200 years. The rate of temperature rise in the last half century is the highest in 2,000 years. Concentrations of carbon dioxide are at their highest in at least two million years."

And with a wind-up and a lobe, he added, "The climate time-bomb is ticking."

However, he was quick to note, "But today's IPCC report is a how-to guide to defuse the climate time-bomb. It is a survival guide for humanity. As it shows, the 1.5°C limit is achievable. But it will take a quantum leap in climate action."

And as he noted, the report was a "clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe".

Our world needs simultaneous climate change action, with all of its global moving parts functioning in totality on all fronts; put another way, everything, everywhere, all at once.

Guterres then proposed a Climate Solidarity Pack to the G20 nations, calling on big emitters to make extra efforts to cut emissions, and for wealthier nations to mobilise financial and technical resources to support emerging economies. The outcome would be a common effort to keep [the goal of] 1.5 degrees Celsius alive, he said.

He also presented a plan that he said would "super-charge efforts to achieve this Climate Solidarity Pact through an all-hands-on-deck Acceleration Agenda".

Said Guterres: "It starts with parties immediately hitting the fast-forward button on their net-zero deadlines to get to global net-

zero by 2050, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances. Specifically, leaders of developed countries must commit to reaching net-zero as close as possible to 2040, the limit they should all aim to respect. This can be done. Some have already set a target as early as 2035."

Guterres said leaders in emerging economies must commit to reaching net-zero as close as possible to 2050, which was a limit they should all aim to respect, adding that a number have already made the 2050 commitment.

"This is the moment for all G20 members to come together in a joint effort, pooling their resources and scientific capacities as well as their proven and affordable technologies through the public and private sectors to make carbon neutrality a reality by

2050. Every country must be part of the solution. Demanding others move first only ensures humanity comes last," he said.

The Acceleration Agenda calls for a number of actions that includes no new coal, the phasing out of coal by 2030 in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, and 2040 in all other countries. It also calls for the ending of all international public and private funding of coal.

Also, it calls for ensuring net-zero electricity generation by 2035 for all developed countries, and 2040 for the rest of the world. And for ceasing all licensing or funding of new oil and gas - which is consistent with the findings of the International Energy Agency.

And for stopping any expansion of existing oil and gas reserves; shifting subsidies from fossil fuels to a just energy transition; and establishing a global phase down of existing oil and gas production, compatible with the 2050 global net-zero target.

Today our world is only a few tenths of a degree away from the globally accepted goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times, a target adopted as part of the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Meanwhile, earth has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius, with at least three of the IPCC report's co-authors saying that the warm-up to 1.5 degrees is inevitable.

"We are pretty much locked into 1.5 [degrees Celsius]. There's very little way we will be able to avoid crossing 1.5 ... sometime in the 2030s," said one of the report's co-authors, Malte Meinshausen. He is a climate scientist at the University of Melbourne.

However, the scientists are emphasising that the world, civilisation, and humanity would not come to an end if, and when, the 1.5 degrees Celsius target is passed.


As another of the report's co-authors, groundwater, irrigation, agriculture, and energy scientist Aditi Mukherji noted, "We are not on the right track, but it's not too late. Our intention is really a message of hope, and not that of doomsday."

In other words, it is likely Guterres may stick with the allusion to *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once* for now; perhaps in future reports, but hopefully not, we could see him invoking another movie, *Apocalypse Now*.

But for now, hope is lifting on a rising tide that maybe a global sea-change would occur among all nations in a world that is inevitably warming up to 1.5 degrees Celsius; and perhaps more.



António Guterres



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The City of Mississauga is working to decrease its carbon footprint

## Mississauga reaffirms climate action commitment

**Mississauga** – Council members last month endorsed a motion to reaffirm and strengthen the City of Mississauga’s commitment to climate action.

The City will examine new interim 2030 targets to help reach net zero by or before 2050. These ambitious new targets, along with identified actions, will help limit the effects of climate change in Mississauga, and aims to keep global warming within the global 1.5 degrees Celsius goal.

“Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our generation. We are continuing to see its effects throughout Mississauga and the world with extreme storms, warmer temperatures and increased flooding – which impacts our wildlife, infrastructure and livelihoods,” said Mayor Bonnie Crombie.

She added, “We must hold ourselves accountable. However, we cannot do it alone. We must continue to work with other levels of government to advocate for funding as we look to fast-track our goal of achieving net zero to ensure our community and our city remain resilient for future generations to come.”

In 2019, City Council declared a climate emergency and

adopted the Climate Change Action Plan. The plan aims to decrease the City’s carbon footprint and prepare for the effects of a changing climate. It includes 89 actions, of which more than 70 percent have been completed or are currently underway.

“It was great to have members of Future Majority at Council this week to hear their position on mandating green development standards – updating these standards are another way for the City to ensure that new private developments will be lower carbon,” said Jodi Robillos, Commissioner, Community Services.

Robillos added, “The science is clear and the City is committed to accelerating our targets and action pathways by leveraging new technologies and innovative solutions. This year, we’re continuing to electrify our corporate fleet, install additional electric vehicle charging stations, build net-zero facilities like Fire Station 125, and design a home energy retrofit program for residents.”

Click [here to learn more about Mississauga’s Climate Change Action Plan](#) and its progress.

## Markham geese test positive

**Markham** – Geese with suspected avian flu were discovered in Markham last month, with the City revealing 140 deceased birds were found and removed. Also, that four areas with geese tested positive. As the City of Markham noted, it is monitoring these areas, and is working with York Region.

Also, signage is now up advising residents that cases have been found, and what to do when visiting these areas. While the risk to humans and pets is very low, the City has advised residents to be diligent.

It has also recommended that residents stay away from all birds, whether dead or ill; to not attempt to assist sick animals; and to keep pets on leash and away from birds and bird droppings. Also, report dead or ill birds to the City by calling 905-415-7531. [Additional information is available here.](#)

In another release, Markham last month indicated that the Markham Fire & Emergency Services improved responsiveness with an average decrease in “call to customer” time of 60 seconds. [The full release is available here.](#)

## Celebrate Eid in Brampton

**Brampton** – The City of Brampton has extended the invitation to the community to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr. On April 23, members of the community are invited to Gage Park, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan, and to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr.

This free city-wide Eid-ul-Fitr celebration includes an entertaining stage program, fun-filled family activities, free giveaways, and more. Halal food trucks and market vendors will be on site.

Said Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton: “As we welcome the holy month of Ramadan, we wish the Muslim community a spiritual and rewarding month of fasting, abstinence, worship, and prayer. The Muslim community is especially charitable during this month, and so we celebrate the prosperity and strength of our community and City because of the contributions of the Muslim community. Brampton is such a rich mosaic of a City, and I look forward to gathering with all after Ramadan to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr at Gage Park.”

Eid-ul-Fitr is a time to gather and celebrate with family, friends, and community. To continue the spirit of giving back, attendees are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item, or a new unwrapped toy in support of the local food bank and women’s shelter. [Click here for more information.](#)

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**Editorials**

**Climate change**

**A**s our dear readers have noted, a new section was started in *Indo Caribbean World* in January with the focus on climate change. The *raison d'être* behind this move is our ongoing commitment to keep our wider readership, and our GTA community, up-to-date, engaged, and informed on the significant and unfolding narrative that is global climate change.

As we all know, climate change is impacting on our daily lives in Canada, whether it is through erratic weather patterns, air quality from extensive forest fires, and importantly, on our economic lives; and of course, many of us have witnessed first-hand the deleterious repercussions that global warming is imposing on our vulnerable small-island Caribbean homelands, including Guyana, notable through episodes of severe weather that are causing landslides, flooding, and destructive hurricanes.

We draw attention to our latest climate change coverage in this edition, where we report on the evenly-weighted text from UN Secretary-General António Guterres, which he delivered last month in Switzerland.

Speaking at the launch of the Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Guterres presented a sobering rhetoric of optimism, positivity, along with some spin, in a message that invoked the image of humanity standing on thin ice; and as he added, "that ice is melting fast".

However, it is notable that a close reading of Guterres' easy-going rhetoric quickly detects an undercurrent in the language that is somewhat foreboding. The metaphors that run beneath the surface in his text, such as ice growing thinner underfoot, and later, as he declares, "The climate time-bomb is ticking", are perhaps more apropos to the present-day precarity that our world now faces, *sans* the sugar-coating.

As it is, our world has already warmed up 1.1 degrees Celsius, and is likely on the way to passing the 1.5 degrees Celsius target that was adopted as part of the 2015 Paris climate agreement. But as the IPCC report's scientists noted, hitting this target does not mean it will be the end of the world.

And as one of the report's co-authors, Aditi Mukherji noted, "We are not on the right track, but it's not too late. Our intention is really a message of hope, and not that of doomsday."

Put another way, a close reading of the IPCC report, Guterres' delivery, and the scientists' positive language, is likely that the UN is telling us there is good news, and there is bad news. But first, the good news; this is what we heard last month in Switzerland.

**Celebrating generosity**

**W**e extend greetings to members in our community celebrating the happy occasion of Easter this weekend. At the same time, we also recognise members in our community who are observing the holy month of Ramadan.

And we acknowledge that even as we mark our religious observances here in the GTA, across Canada, and in our Caribbean homelands, at the same time we are cognisant that we now live in challenging times; and notably, for others in different parts of the world, very perilous times.

In our celebrations of heightened religious practice, we think of the scale of human suffering now being endured in parts of the world that are being torn apart by war. And we do not forget the suffering being endured by victims across the globe who have experienced severe natural disasters.

As we celebrate the renewal of life, faith, and hope in the positivity of the Easter message, and as our Muslim community undergoes the self-discipline of fasting, prayerfulness, and family unity, let us ensure that we also reach out with kindness and generosity to those in dire need.

We do not have to look far for exemplars of selfless giving and volunteerism. Groups in the GTA as Vishnu Mandir aiding earthquake victims in Turkiye, and One Love Family Services distributing 600 hampers monthly across in the GTA, are models of the kindness, generosity, and care that make our troubled world a better place.

**Indo-Caribbean excellence via mentorship**

**W**ithout a doubt, there are tremendous talent and achievement deep within Canada's Indo-Caribbean community. Unfortunately, the success of the community is relatively unheard of, kept hidden, and completely untold within the mainstream. The lack of attention to the achievements of our community is linked to the general lack of awareness of who Indo-Caribbean people are, and our footprint in Canada.

Canada's Indo-Caribbean community is fairly young compared to many other ethno-cultural groups. The earliest, largest movement of a diaspora began in the mid-1980s. Ever since, the community has grown and thrived. However, if you delve deep into the community, you will find exemplary Canadians contributing to society and finding new heights of success in several sectors. The list is actually quite extensive, but it is important to identify leaders from within to not only celebrate their achievements, but to also use that as a foundation to further inspire the next generation.

The development and future of Canada's Indo-Caribbean community are built on the pioneers who have become established professionals, artists, creators, and entrepreneurs. Leadership from within any community matters. It is not only a demonstration of the success of that diasporic community in Canada. Beyond a demonstration of respect and amplifying the success within Canada's Indo-Caribbean community, there is a further underlying purpose, and that is mentorship.

When we see people who look like us, sound like us, and share cultural commonalities, it truly inspires others to achieve similar or greater success. Many Indo-Caribbean children receive early mentorship from their parents, most are new to Canada or have only been settled for a few years. Children are quickly exposed to hard work and determination, qualities that are instilled in many of us at a young age.

When we are further exposed to professionals who share our culture and background it can truly foster a place to grow, learn further, and even surpass success in a field. I have personally experienced this.

Being interested in politics at a young age, I rarely ever saw the Indo-Caribbean (and even South Asian) community represented. That has changed immensely for the direct South Asian diaspora, but not for the Indo-Caribbean community.

During my formative years working in politics, I was fortunate



**Ryan Singh**

to connect with a person who unintentionally became a mentor; reflecting upon it, he provided significant perspective on what it was like to be a person of colour working in politics.

Bas Balkissoon was first elected as a municipal councillor in Scarborough from 1988 to 1997, and a Toronto city councillor from 1998 to 2005. He would become the first Indo-Caribbean person elected to the Ontario Legislative Assembly in 2005. Being mentored by Bas instilled in me the confidence that someone with a similar background to my family could achieve success in this field, and could make a positive impact on the community where we live.

In 2011 and 2014, I worked with Bas serving as campaign manager on his re-election campaigns in Scarborough. In many ways, this firsthand mentorship and trust from him grew my skills and talents. I was not only learning from someone successful, but also from someone who understood my roots and my background and culture.

I didn't appreciate it at the time, in fact, I simply was unaware of the profound impact and influence this would have on my personal growth. I was unaware of the importance of mentorship with people who are from the same community as my own.

While this isn't a necessary requirement for mentorship, it does inspire confidence and connectivity for those of us who come from under-represented communities. And for this simple reason, the **Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association** established the **Star Bhai**, a mentorship program for boys and young men within Canada's Indo-Caribbean diaspora.

Our goal is to do for them what Bas did for me. Outside of our parents, we need more strong mentors who understand our journey, connect with our values, and offer trust. Linking young people in our community to these leaders is important.

**Star Bhai** provides an opportunity for young men to connect with others who can share first-hand advice, while providing insight and direction. More importantly, we have the ability to increase the visibility of success in our community. Despite the stereotypes, we can demonstrate that we are much more than that, and we can achieve even more than generations before us ever dreamed.

It is time to amplify the achievements of our community today, and it is time to use that as the foundation to go even further. It is time for Indo-Caribbean excellence.

**When the transistor radio entered our brave new world**

**I**t came about recently that I began wondering what would my dear grandmother think and say were she still here today, and I told her that the Silicon Valley pioneer and philanthropist Gordon Moore had passed away.

For the one or two among us who follow such developments, the well-regarded and eminent Moore passed away last month at age 94 in Hawaii. He was a co-founder of the Intel Corporation, and famously predicted that computer processing powers would double every year. It was later revised to every two years. His insight is now known as Moore's Law.

As was reported, Moore's Law was foundational for the computer processor industry; it went on to greatly influence the personal computer revolution, where decades later, it sees me composing this narrative at home, with a comfortable blanket draped across my knees, and a third cup of Earl Grey tea (two creams, one coconut sugar) residing a safe distance away from my second ergonomic keyboard.

Moore was ahead of his time and quite a visionary. In a paper that he wrote at least 20 years before the computer revolution, he declared that integrated circuits would lead to the emergence of home computers, automatic controls for vehicles, and instruments for communication that were portable.

Following Moore's "predictions", technological improvements began to see more and more efficient memory chips being manufactured at less expensive cost, and at rates that can only be described as "exponential".

Indeed, my initial starting point for this narrative began this way, "We live in exponential times", before pivoting to incarnating my dear grandmother's quizzical, raised eyebrows, whenever I approached her for input on the growing instrumentation and technological advances that were emerging, even then during my youthful days growing up back home.

I recall Ma was brought into the room after I was introduced to my first transistor radio. I was a young boy then, and had been tremendously fascinated with this tiny box out of which was emerging a polyphony of global voices.

For the few among us who recall what were hand-helds at the time, back then a transistor radio was quite a bulky affair, and light years behind today's slim and light-weight cell phone.

In fact, comparing the transistor radio back then to today's hand-held cell phone is having the evidence already in hand, so to speak, of what Moore had envisioned back in the 1960s.

Now coming to think of it, a transistor radio back in my

youthful days could be as large as today's one litre juice box, similarly weighty, but not as fluid, since back then the technology was called solid state.

Circular dials for volume and tuning were recessed into slots at the sides, with its front as perforated as a food-processing grater, behind which sat the tiny mono speaker, out of which issued voices that brought with it the swaying sounds of the ocean, particularly during the news segment for the colonies issued by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

I recall that these transistor radios were powered by many batteries, which themselves were as numerous as the ammunition that a modern-day assault rifle spits out in less than a second. It also packed a retractable antenna, which when deployed, telescoped out to what could have been over six-feet in length, and which was as flexible as a slim, delicate, and all-silver fishing rod.

That this transistor radio with its voices rising out of faraway oceans was fascinating to a young boy inevitably drew out what up to then was a yet to be evidenced covetousness. I refused to return the instrument into the demanding hands of my young uncle, who had the good fortune to borrow it from a visitor next door that had come from the capital city.

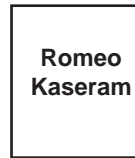
A pout, shake of the head in the negative, and fleet-footed withdrawal with an uncle anxious the fragile box of voices would be dropped during my escape sent him into frenzied pursuit. It was done to the accompaniment of wailing that drowned out the monotone voices swimming to us from across the seas.

The fracas brought my grandmother into the room. Even today, one of her early warnings to me during episodes of bad behaviour still resonates, namely, "Mister man, careful you step on that lower lip and trip and fall down!"

Perhaps she had envisioned cups of Earl Grey, a warm blanket, and hours of solitary composition at a keyboard for her grandson, who was kicking at the world of underprivilege and deprivation with angry legs as he was lifted away after reluctantly surrendering that sea-changing box of transistors.

"Not to worry, *beta*. One day you will have your own radio," was my dear grandmother's consolation. What would she say today to a hand-held wherein resides a radio, camera, phone, flashlight, and thousands of apps, many useless, with one pleasantly chiming, warning me that the self-same uncle with the transistor radio just uploaded 10,000 photos to Facebook?

Ma would stand in her *chappals* and wonder.



**Romeo Kaseram**

Views expressed are not necessarily those of this publication. Letters to be published will be edited where necessary. Publisher: Harry Ramkhelawan Editor: Romeo Kaseram Columnists/Writers: Frank Birbalsingh, Vidur Dindayal, Bernard Heydorn, Adit Kumar, Dwarka Laxhan, Dhanpaul Narine, Harry Persaud, Arti Panday, Mohan Ragbeer, William Doyle-Marshall. Contact Information: Indo Caribbean World Inc. 312 Brownridge Drive, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5X1 (905) 738-5005; indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com Website: www.indocaribbeanworld.com



## Researcher seeking artifacts, anecdotes about Prashad Nagar in Guyana

Dear Editor,

I am conducting research on Guyana, to be published later this year, on the history of the village of Prashad Nagar, and Hari Prashad, the pioneer after whom the village is named.

Hari's father, Santram Maraj (his actual name was Santram Luchmon, as per his Emigration Certificate of 1886), was indentured to Plantation Lusignan, but Hari grew up in Mahaica Village.

Hari made his living as a woodcutter who sold firewood, operated several water launches, prospected and explored for gold and diamonds in Guyana's interior, and was a cattle rancher, long before becoming a real estate magnate.

His pride and joy, of course, was overseeing the building and management of Prashad Nagar in the early 1960s, which was no doubt

influenced by his experience in India when he uprooted his entire family (wife and six children) to permanently reside in Allahabad (now called Prayagraj), India, in 1952.

He returned to Guyana in 1953 and set his eyes on the biggest prize – building a village in the country's capital city that now carries his name.

Guyanese would be familiar with the names of Hari's family members, including Rishi Persaud, and retired Justice Prem Bishaul Persaud, the son of Pandit and Mrs Nanhu Persaud of Triumph Village, East Coast Demerara, who was married to Hari's first child, Chandra, in 1957.

Hari Prashad, born in poverty like most

Guyanese, was a visionary. Guided by his faith and religious beliefs, he became one of Guyana's most accomplished entrepreneurs par excellence.

His accomplishments were not very different from other Indian pioneers with an advanced visionary foresight to establish a modern village system, including the founders of the well-known village of McDoom, or the lesser known Bee Hive village.

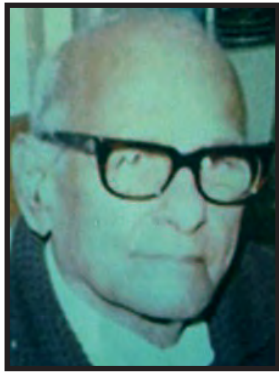
The enclave of Prashad Nagar is a remarkable story of dedication and entrepreneurial spirit revealed through the historical escapades of an individual whose rise to success was premised upon a determined penchant for

risk-taking ventures, overcoming insurmountable challenges, and appealing to the kindness and generosity of fellow Guyanese.

The story of Prashad Nagar needs to be properly recorded for posterity, lest it becomes permanently buried in the historical archives, or attached to our fading memory.

In our contemporary world, history literally comes to life when people attach their personal experiences to major occurrences in our country.

Anyone reading this request who might be inclined to share their experiences, artifacts, documents, or, more importantly, anecdotal stories about Hari Prashad or Prashad Nagar, in order to make this a wholesome human-interest story, can contact me. My email is [bramharack@aol.com](mailto:bramharack@aol.com). Thank you kindly!  
Baytoram Ramharack, New York, via email.



Hari Prashad

## Asked by a new head nurse to sweep the kitchen floor, Sir Harry did not bristle...

Dear Editor,

After reading the article by Dr Dhanpaul Narine on the life of Sir Harry Annamunthodo in the March 15 edition of *Indo-Caribbean World*, I recall a cute anecdote about Sir Harry's humility.

Apparently, he was then a big name in the Faculty of Medicine in Jamaica. He had no need to impress anyone, neither with his position, nor his credentials.

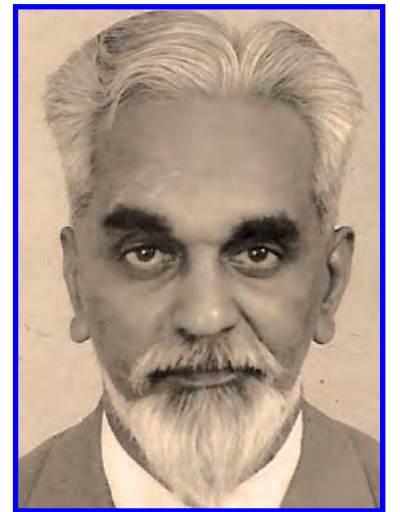
As a result, he dressed quite casually. One day he appeared on the ward for rounds. The new head nurse, on seeing this elderly Indian man in sandals without socks, and wearing rumpled pants, thought he was the janitor whom she had requested.

She sternly admonished Sir Harry for being late, and handed him a broom with instructions to sweep the kitchen floor.

Sir Harry understood she didn't know who he was, and humbly, and without contempt, dutifully swept the floor and left.

The nurse was aghast when asked by a medical student, "Do you know who he was?"

Dr Franklin S. Mohan, via email.



Sir Harry in photo at right; & being knighted by Queen Elizabeth II at left

## T&T needs divine intervention - really?

Dear Editor,

Oh Lord, we are in deep trouble now, as an unknown evil has spread over the land and our only way to stop the murder rate from rising is by turning to the Lord our God.

Police Commissioner Erla Harewood-Christopher is seeking divine intervention to reduce the murder rate in the country.

She is not depending on tried and true old-fashioned policing; we need the Lord's hand. She is not depending on planned systems and stepping up police activities throughout the country, on investigations and forensic evidence.

No, she is depending on God to put a hand and miraculously save Trinidad and Tobago.

Recently it seems like the top cop and Minister of National Security Fitzgerald Hinds have been trying all types of schemes to attack crime and the murder rate. In fact, they probably cannot face the reality, as in recent times the newspapers have been filled with many depressing stories about crime. They seem to be disconnected from reality.

They constantly find ways to blame others for the problems, and deflect attention from the exploding crime epidemic, and their inability to have a proper plan to fix the country. We have given up when we have to turn to the Lord for answers.

Every minute of the day we seem to be faced with stupid statements by our leaders that make no sense, and they seem to be weighed down by heavy questions. Like what plans do they have to deal with the escalating murder rate, or how will they tackle the gangs to stop the violence?

Citizens are concerned about the escalating murder rate, so we are hoping that Harewood-Christopher is really up for the job. But following the statements she made recently at her first public appearance, we are left to wonder if she is up for the job.

We understand some of what she is dealing with. A police force that is full of bureaucracy

and corruption. The porous borders that allow drugs and guns to pass freely into the country. And, of course, a National Security Minister who doesn't understand that his job is to ensure the safety of all citizens.

Why can't we face the issues head-on, such as stopping the funding of gangs via CEPEP and URP projects, and stepping up police activities in the hot spots.

Many citizens are also concerned about the state of the economy. We see no end to the hardships this year, and no amount of reassurances from the Prime Minister that Finance Minister Colm Imbert is doing all he can and better days are coming can put our mind at ease.

These false promises cannot put bread on our tables, provide job security, or tackle the shortage of foreign exchange. We continue to deal with low energy prices, with the government spinning the facts and saying everything is going well in the energy sector.

However, this clearly is not the case. The writing is on the wall, with the state of our energy sector plain for all to see. We are witnessing a continuous downward trend in the local energy sector, which may result in more retrenchment of workers.

We have already seen Atlantic LNG recently stating it will be sending home workers and offering voluntary separation of employment packages.

So it is not hard to come to the conclusion that the government is demonstrating incompetence and inadequacy every day. So the CoP has taken a pattern from that and thrown her hands in the air, and is hoping for God's intervention in suppressing the murder rate.

I think we will find that when the history books are written by the current administration, they will say that Dr Keith Rowley was one of the best prime ministers Trinidad and Tobago has ever had. Not!

Dr Neil Gosine, Trinidad and Tobago via email.

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# Ironies notable in UG's inclusivity, diversity, & equity move

Dear Editor,

Given the pre-occupation of a segment of the Guyana population with allegations of racism and discrimination, the University of Guyana, as the leading educational institution in the country, thought it appropriate to launch on November 3, 2021, the "Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity Policy" Unit to provide leadership on this area.

In theory, educational institutions at all levels are well-positioned to play a key role in mitigating harsh racial attitudes, promoting tolerance and understanding.

Civil discourses, views, and evidence of racism and discrimination must be ventilated, and in cases where injury has been inflicted and established, appropriate remedies must be instituted.

We must move beyond words onto deeds.

It is noted that the formation of any organisation or unit to enhance inclusivity, diversity, and equality of access to opportunity must be set on the right platform. This has not necessarily been the case with the launch of the University of Guyana's IDEP Unit.

Social commentator Fatimah Mohammed believes that it was not well-grounded, as the Unit itself lacks inclusivity and diversity.

Notes Mohammed: "The Unit is composed of ten people, and only one is an Indo-Guyanese. The Unit's executive comprises mainly ethnic Africans, with only one token Indo-Guyanese. There was a total disregard, by the University of Guyana and the Unit, for the diversity of the Guyanese society, which is proportioned 40 percent East Indians; 30 percent Africans; 20 percent Mixed; and ten percent Amerindian descent." (*Pride*: 12/1/2021).

To show how the composition of the Unit reflects a broader pattern, she says that 80 percent of the staff at UG are Afro-Guyanese.



UG grads at a convocation ceremony

While I have been unable to verify this proportion, a content analysis conducted by a colleague shows that 70 percent of the statutory and academic support staff are Afro-Guyanese.

For the teaching and support staff (in the Faculties of Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Medical, Education and Humanities) Afro-Guyanese accounts for 57.3 percent.

There is some evidence of gender diversity at UG, as females occupy 56.2 percent of the staff positions in the four Faculties.

However, the main point that Mohammed is making is that while there have been frequent allegations of racism and discrimination in other sectors of the economy, such as in the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Housing and Water in the award of large contracts, little attention has been

given to the practice of fairness and diversity at the country's premier educational institution, where one ethnic group that occupies statutory, administrative, and teaching positions does not reflect the inclusivity and diversity that the University purports to embrace.

Critics are quick to point out perceptions of inequality and bias in a few areas such as contract awards, but they also overlook the diversity and fairness that exists in the housing, education, and other sectors.

Both the Prime Minister, Hon Brig (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, and the Minister within the Ministry of Housing, Hon Susan Rodrigues, for example, have stated that 50 percent of the 20,800 house lots allocated have gone to Afro-Guyanese.

Furthermore, upholding gender diversity

as a top policy priority, Minister Rodrigues reports that 8,000 of those house lots were allocated to single women.

With respect to the first 6,000 GOAL scholarships, Aaron Pires' analysis shows that 39 percent were awarded to Afro-Guyanese students, and 41 percent to Indo-Guyanese, while Mixed and Amerindians accounted for 20 percent.

Obviously there has been no discrimination against Afro-Guyanese in house lot allocations and scholarship awards. Their grants and awards were higher than their proportion in the general population, which is 29 percent (based on 2012 census).

How would UG's IDEP Unit achieve inclusivity, diversity, and fairness is a massive challenge. To be credible, they should consider overhauling the staff composition of the IDEP Unit to reflect the diversity of the country.

I know that they fully understand that images could be even more powerful than messages. As the country's foremost educational institution UG must send out the right signals.

While I believe in diversity, inclusivity, and fairness, I also recognise how Guyanese society has evolved, and no one can easily dismiss the social stratification that conditioned occupational gravitation in specific pathways.

Afro-Guyanese, for example, had gravitated mainly from plantation society to government jobs, while Indo-Guyanese gravitated mainly towards business and farming.

Not to unsettle and to respect this historical pattern of occupational stratification, it is reasonable to posit that for now and the future, inclusivity, fairness, and equality of access to opportunity must be accorded priority for all Guyanese.

Dr Tara Singh, via email.

**HAPPY**  
*Easter*



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Member of Parliament - Brampton West

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# Weaponisation of race divisive, causes tension in Guyana

Fuelled by a few individuals associated with the country's Opposition parties, racial tensions are once again on the rise in Guyana. In fact, these individuals are using race as a weapon to deliberately attack the ruling PPP/Civic government for a variety of unfounded reasons.

In doing so, they are attempting to garner the support of both domestic and international audiences about the plight of Blacks in Guyana – in an effort to tarnish the image of the government.

The truth is, allegations of the suffering of Blacks in Guyana are in reality baseless, and are deliberately aimed at creating ethnic strife. While most individuals recognise the ploy of the Opposition's supporters, those who are misinformed tend to overreact, believing that Blacks are indeed suffering at the hands of Indians in Guyana.

The increase in allegations of racism stems from the loss of power by the APNU+AFC Coalition at the 2020 elections. It so happens that the PPP/Civic emerged victorious at a time when the country was on the verge of economic prosperity, largely due to its new-found oil wealth. The coalition was relishing the thought of remaining in power, which was limited to only one five-year term.

Its blatant attempts to rig the elections to remain in power created chaos that lasted for more than five months, and was only resolved following an intense court process, a recount of votes, and the intervention of several foreign governments that were adamant about the preservation of the democratic electoral process in Guyana.

That the APNU+AFC Coalition lost power at a crucial time in the country's history, combined with its failure to rig yet another general election, hurt its supporters who believe that APNU+AFC has a right to be in power.

This belief stems from the fact that PNC (now APNU+AFC) illegitimately remained in power for almost a quarter of a century through rigged elections during the 1968-1992 period, while the world turned a blind eye on its actions. It is also widely believed that the 2015 elections were rigged to enable the APNU+AFC Coalition to return to power after 23 years in the wilderness. However, in 2020, the world was watching more intently.

Once PNC supporters recognised that the party had lost its imagined "inalienable right" to power, allegations of racism commenced with a fury, supported by mass protests. To create an aura of credibility, the PNC has successfully used the American, in particular, and the Caribbean media to a lesser extent, to draw attention to its manufactured plight.

Last month, an Opposition activist took racial strife to a new level by openly contemplating a violent overthrow of the Indian-dominated government.

At a public meeting in Buxton, organised by the Working People's Alliance, he reportedly said: "The Afro-Guyanese-dominated police and soldiers... would stand with Afro-Guyanese in resisting the mainly Indo-Guyanese-supported PPP/C.... we come to tell you that we will ensure that our brothers and sisters in uniform do the right thing and this thing will be over quickly."

In response, Chairman of the Joint Services, Brigadier Godfrey Bess, urged social and political activists and commentators to refrain from making remarks that would incite racial ten-

sions, and deviate from the promotion of peace and security, which the armed forces are mandated to maintain.

Bess stated that irrespective of its ethnic composition, the Joint Services of Guyana will continue to uphold the noble position of service to Guyana. It is guided by the Constitution, which mandates it to stand firm in protection of the law, and in the execution of its duties in keeping with its constitutional responsibilities, and not by any partisan values and interests.

In response, Guyana's Attorney General, Anil Nandlall, who is also Secretary of the Defence Board stated, "I feel compelled to condemn in the strongest possible terms the exhortations by Tacuma Ogunseye to the Armed Forces of Guyana to join a mass uprising against the lawful and democratically-elected government of Guyana, referencing the Forces 'ready access to weapons' for them to be 'battle ready', and preying [on] the dominant Afro-Guyanese composition of the said Forces."

According to the Attorney General, this "racist incendiary call for public disorder, positioned as an alternative to the democratic process of Local Government Elections lawfully due, is capable of amounting to several criminal offences, including, but not limited to, sedition, seditious libel and order within the State of Guyana, if not treason".

Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali, for his part, has made it abundantly clear that nothing would stand in his way in the realisation of his One Guyana initiative.

The One Guyana vision, according to the President, is not an option, but a national imperative, one that is about promoting greater inclusion at the legislative, political, and social levels.

While paying tribute to former presidents Dr Cheddi and Janet Jagan at Babu Jaan in Berbice on March 27, Ali stressed that racism will not be allowed to succeed in Guyana under his government. Also, he warned that the days are numbered for those who push such an agenda.

Said Ali: "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, the Tacuma Ogunseye incident is not the first attempt in recent times to stir the racism pot in Guyana.

Last year, a mass protest in New York, organised by Guyanese Organisations Against Racism, made a strenuous attempt to highlight cases of racism against Blacks in Guyana – from the firing of public servants to difficulties in gaining Covid-19 grants and flood relief following massive floods earlier this year. Most of the claims were largely groundless. A year earlier, a similar protest was also held in New York.

In response to allegations made by GOAR, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, then classified the ramblings of the organisation as "misinformation and race-baiting".

Said Teixeira: "The PNC-dominated APNU+AFC Coalition is in tatters. Race is the last desperate thing that they have in opposition to hold on to. This, they have used to divide the nation and increase ethnic insecurity,



Dwarka Lakhan



Anil Nandlall



A bus burns in Berbice in the aftermath of Guyana's March 2020 General Elections when protesters turned violent, blocked roadways, & destroyed property

ties at each stage of Guyana's history for the last 29 years whenever there is a chance, an opportunity for the country and the people to move forward and thrive."

She added that "their history of destruction, obstruction, anti-nationalism, and division has not changed".

Teixeira also accused the Opposition of peddling "untruths on a daily basis with the objectives of causing division and strife and to destabilise the government's 'Plan for Prosperity', which is rapidly unfolding before our people's eyes".

She also accused the former David Granger-led Coalition government of having carried out the "most blatant racist policy experienced since the Burnham era" of the 1970s and 1980s.

Incidentally, racial tensions only seem to rise when the PPP/Civic is in power. This is not because the PPP/Civic creates such conditions,

but because the PNC (now the APNU+AFC Coalition) chooses to use race as a weapon to deliberately attack the PPP/Civic for a variety of unfounded reasons.

For instance, when the PPP acquired power in 1992 through the country's first free and fair elections in almost a quarter of a century, it had to endure conditions similar to those today.

Then, the late former PNC leader Desmond Hoyte threatened to make the country ungovernable if the PPP government did not accede to his demands.

His primary weapon was civil disobedience, and he took his party's grievances and concerns to the street, resulting in violence, the spread of racial strife, and an increase in crime.

Incidentally, the quest for power by APNU will always be the root cause of racist behaviour in a country deeply divided along racial lines.

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# 'We can each make a difference - individually & collectively': Mayor David West

From Page 1

and our wider community working together to render assistance at the global level. I extend my sincerest gratitude for the generous response to the fund-raising drive that was undertaken by our VoV Global Care Outreach Program, and to the many volunteers whose diligence, commitment, and hard work saw us shipping much-needed supplies that have since arrived safely in Ankara."

Dr Doobay also noted, "Sending emergency supplies to Turkiye is yet another success story among Global Care's many humanitarian efforts over the years."

As Roy noted, VM's best practices of accountability and responsible expenditure kicked in following acquisition of the donated funds.

"VM and Dr Doobay are very responsible with the expenditure of gathered funds. We wanted to ensure that it was spent responsibly, and that it all went directly to victims in the earthquake zones in Turkiye who needed it most," Roy stated.

Additionally, "Dr Doobay's desire and drive were to send the items directly to victims of the earthquake. When he asks for donations, he ensures that it goes 100 percent into the hands of those who need it most. Even if it means him taking the supplies there and delivering it himself!"

It meant VM getting directly in touch with the Turkiye Consulate General, Roy stated. Coordinating their outreach with its Deputy Consul General Meşure Taşkin ensured the confluence of necessity with their need for critical items. What followed was a local supplier was sourced, and essential items procured that included sleeping cots, blankets, portable toilets, and sleeping bags.

Over 700 items were provided by the Vaughn company, World Famous Sales.

Last week its president, Mike Mucher, extended thanks to Dr Doobay, Global Care, volunteers, the many donors, and Turkish officials for facilitating the opportunity for World Famous to assist with supplying critically-needed items.

As Mucher noted, following procurement of the essential items, World Famous then trucked the packages, weighing around 5,000 pounds, to Turkish Airline Cargo Toronto for

onward shipment to Turkiye.

Within a couple of days the supplies had landed in Ankara, and were then forwarded to the affected earthquake zones, Mucher stated.

Last week Toronto's Turkish Airline Regional Cargo Manager Cihan Ömür conveyed gratitude to all participants who delivered "solution-based outcomes to support the victims of the Turkiye earthquake".

As Ömür stated, "the generous donations were efficiently transported by our Turkish Airlines flights" with the coordination of the Turkish Consulate in Toronto. The items were later distributed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs department of Interior Disaster and Emergency to where it was needed most.

Said Ömür: "I'm really appreciative on behalf of my hometown."

VM's humanitarian effort also did not go unnoticed by top officials in the City of Richmond Hill. Commending Global Care for its latest effort, Richmond Hill Mayor David West said its latest outreach was evidence of Richmond Hill residents demonstrating "their care and compassion over and over again".

Said West: "[Global Care] has shown their generosity in the past, and I am honoured to stand with them as they continue their legacy of charitable acts. The funds raised have provided much-needed essential items that will make all the difference... Watching a grassroots organisation such as this mount a relief effort is a reminder that we can each make a difference - individually, and collectively."

West added, "It is a privilege to live alongside such globally-minded, philanthropic people, who are committed not only to the betterment of our City, but to society at large. Thank you to the many Richmond Hill residents who volunteered and contributed to this initiative."

Positive feedback for the effort also came from the Turkish Consulate, with Consul General Sinen Mingan stating, "We express our sincere thanks for [Global Care's] collaboration with our Consulate General during this period to send humanitarian aid supplies to Turkiye, in compliance with the urgent needs in the earthquake zones listed by the relevant Turkish authorities. Your solidarity is greatly appreciated."



Mike Mucher (left) & Roy Doobay with essential items that were shipped to Turkiye



Items ready to be loaded onto the aircraft



Wrapped & ready in Vaughan for the tractor trailer



Items prepped at World Famous Sales' warehouse



Shipment being loaded onto Turkish Airlines

## Love storytelling? Then why not volunteer for Story?

Opportunities are now available for volunteers to join the emerging narrative that is *Story*, an online publication put out by the [Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association](#).

As the organisation notes, persons are welcome to join the team if you identify as Indo-Caribbean, and/or are interested in Indo-Caribbean culture and heritage.

The group is recruiting team members who can provide distinct skills and abilities to support its mandate and future growth. ICCA's mandate is to ensure that Indo-Caribbean culture and heritage are understood and known, including its footprint in Canada.

It also seeks to engage with the Indo-Caribbean Canadian community on a number of topical issues through specialised publications and events.

At this time, ICCA is looking for passionate volunteers to join *Story*.

As ICCA notes, "*Story* aims to meet readers at the intersections of culture and history, art and entertainment, and so much more."

As it states, "Are you interested in highlighting Indo-Caribbean talent, while also building a portfolio of creative work in the media industry? *Story* will equip you with a great deal of transferable skills through the creation of versatile bodies of work that cross over multiple categories and verticals."

The team at *Story* is seeking out volunteer writers to join its growing community of contributors. As it states, a freelance writer at *Story* will have the opportunity to show off compelling storytelling skills through a variety of outlets.

However, if there is no experience as a writer, but have a story to share, reach out all the same to explore ways to share these experiences with ICCA.

Among the compelling stories, but not limited to, are those on identity, history, family dynamics, culture, love, music, beauty, fashion, and more.

ICCA is also looking for a volunteer, rising SEO specialist to take *Story* to the next level of digital success.

And it is seeking an Associate Editor, a publishing professional who is passionate about creating a digital space for Indo-Caribbean talent, while expanding the personal portfolio.

All interested candidates who would like to join the growing team should submit a letter of interest, and CV via the email address below.

Note too that volunteer hours are available for high school students; that all roles are volunteer only, with no financial compensation provided; and that volunteers are asked to participate in monthly planning and organisation meetings, which are conducted virtually.

Visit ICCA's [call for volunteers' website](#) here; or email the organisation at [indocaribcdn@gmail.com](mailto:indocaribcdn@gmail.com).



ICCA volunteer members, among others, who participated in the Books for Back Home project (front row) Ryan S & Cindy; back row, Nerissa, Arita, & Ryan R; over 2,000 books were shipped to children & youths in Guyana & Trinidad & Tobago





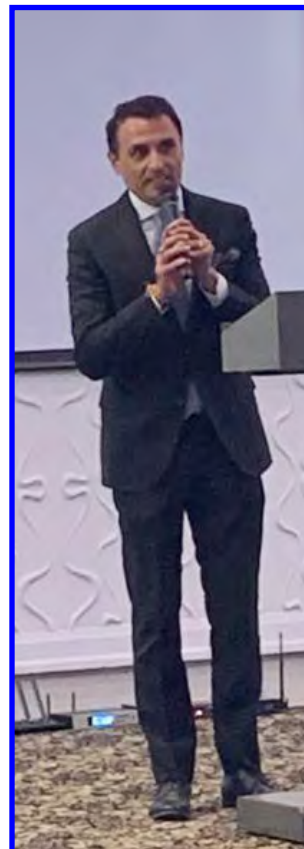
Mississauga-Malton's MP Iqwinder Gaheer



Hindu Federation head Pt Roopnauth Sharma



MP Arya (centre, back row) with young guests after a tasty repast at the appreciation event



Lotus Funeral's Kamal Bhardwaj



Jeewan Niwas' Sandeep Dhupar

## Hindu Federation holds appreciation event highlighting achievements, sponsors

The Hindu Federation hosted its first ever Appreciation Event recently that saw the organisation outlining the various projects undertaken in the past few years while extending gratitude to its many associated sponsors and donors.

The event saw approximately 125 guests in attendance, among them The Honourable Chandra Arya, Liberal MP for Nepean; The Honourable Iqwinder Gaheer, Liberal MP for Mississauga-Malton; Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown; and Shaheen Butt, Acting Mayor for Pickering.

Guest speaker for the event was Dr Rahul Chanchlani, Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, at McMaster Children's Hospital.

As Sam Persaud, Treasurer of the Hindu Federation noted, the prominent projects undertaken, and the organisation's sponsors and donors, were the Canada India Foundation; Mississauga Ram Mandir; Jeewan Niwas Retirement Village; Lotus Funeral and Cremation Centre Inc; Brampton and Ajax Visitation and Cremation Centre Inc; Lakeridge Collision Centre; and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

He also recognised the City of Pickering; the City of Brampton; the City of Mississauga; the City of Toronto; the Town of Ajax; Data Solutions Consulting Inc; A&E Granite; and Guycan Aluminum.

Appreciation was also expressed to the many volunteers who

assisted the group in delivering on its mandate.

Pandit Roopnauth Sharma outlined the Hindu Federation's activities, which included annual events, among these being Ganesh Visarjan; Hindu Recognition Gala; Hindu Heritage Month celebrations, Youth and Women's Forums; and other ongoing activities. He also highlighted the value of a united Hindu voice, and the financial and community strength that exists based on the membership of 23 organisations.

Dr Chanchlani delivered a message on 'Improving Health Among South Asians in Canada: A Call to Action', during which he requested increased participation from South Asian communities in research activities across Canada.

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Tourism recovering in the Caribbean post-Covid-19 says the CHTA

## Regional tourism recovering but cautious

While the Caribbean tourism industry continues to lead the region's economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic, at the same time it still faces formidable challenges, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association stated last week.

As the *Caribbean Media Corporation* reported, in a release of the results of its annual tourism industry performance and outlook survey, CHTA president Nicola Madden-Greig stated that the pace of the tourism industry recovery may be threatened by rising operating costs, labour shortages, increasing airfares, global competition, economic uncertainty, and pressures from some governments to increase taxes.

"Despite these challenges, the industry remains bullish about the future of tourism in



Nicola Madden-Greig

the Caribbean," Madden-Greig said.

At the same time, Madden-Greig underscored the importance of public-private sector collaboration to address challenges like stimulating greater intra-regional travel.

Said Madden-Greig: "While we've turned the pandemic corner, we're not out of the woods yet. Many businesses are still climbing out of massive debts, and facing global competitive pressures on price increases."

She added, "Now is not the time to increase taxes as we are hearing from several countries."

Madden-Greig also stressed that "addressing our looming labour shortages, climate change, and strengthening linkages between tourism and other areas of our economies are critically important"

## LSE renames building after Sir Arthur

The London School of Economics last month renamed its Economics building after St Lucian Nobel Laureate, Sir William Arthur Lewis. He was the LSE's first Black academic, and the UK's first Black professor, the *Caribbean Media Corporation* reported.

A statement issued by the St Lucian High Commission in London said that in recognition of Sir Arthur's many achievements, "LSE Council renamed 32 Lincoln's Inn Fields, which houses the Department of Economics and associated research centres, in his honour".

Sir Arthur won a government scholarship to study in Britain in 1933, and gained a First Class Bachelor of Commerce degree at LSE. He subsequently obtained a scholarship to continue his studies at LSE with a PhD in Industrial Economics.

Sir Arthur was a faculty member of LSE from 1938 to 1948, and became a School Reader in Colonial Economics in 1947. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1979 for "pioneering research into economic development research with particular consideration of the problems of developing countries".

St Lucia's High Commissioner to the UK, Anthony Severin, who was present at the unveiling, congratulated the LSE for its decision to name the building after Sir Arthur, whom he called "a treasured son of the St Lucian soil".

He also expressed gratitude to the LSE on

behalf of the people of St Lucia, for taking what he referred to as "the tangible step toward preserving the memory and legacy of Sir Arthur Lewis, and for bringing honour to his family and to the land of his birth".

Sir Arthur was a scholar, and served as an economic adviser to many international commissions and to several African, Asian and Caribbean governments.



Sir Arthur Lewis

He published in 1954 what was to be his most influential development economics article, *Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour*, introducing what came to be called the *Two-Tier Dual Sector* model, or the *Lewis Model*.

Sir Arthur served as an economic advisor to numerous African and Caribbean governments including Nigeria, Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados. He also served as Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, and as the Chancellor of the University of Guyana from 1966 to 1973.

He was knighted by the British government for his achievements, and for his contributions to economics in 1963.

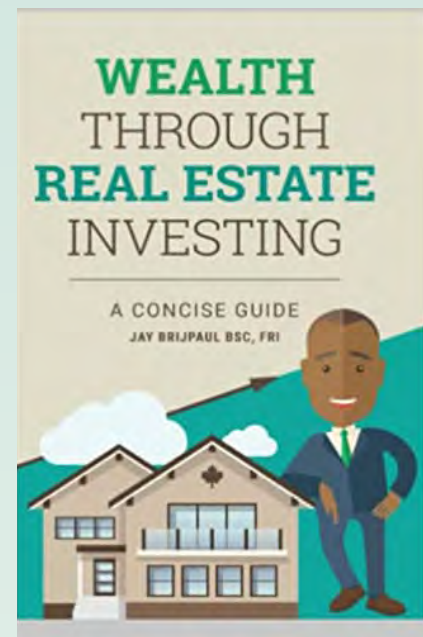
He was also appointed Professor of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, and he was the first Black instructor to be given a full professorship at that institution.

He received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1979, sharing it with the American economist Theodore Schultz.

Sir Arthur died on June 15, 1991, at 76 years of age, in Bridgetown, Barbados.

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"Jay Brijpaul has tapped his vast experience and expertise in the Real Estate industry and written *Wealth Through Real Estate Investing*." — Ken Puddicombe, CPA (retired Controller, Finance), author of *Racing With The Rain, Junta, and Down Independence Boulevard and Other Stories*.

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# Celebration of Phagwah in NY - the day belonged to the community

By Dhanpaul Narine

The Saturday was wet, windy, and chilly. But nature smiled and gave us a balmy 14.5 degrees Celsius on Sunday, and with a cloudless sky. The weather was set fair for a parade.

It was the 35th annual Phagwah Parade on Liberty Avenue, in New York. It was also the first celebration after the Covid-19 lockdown. The community could not wait to take to the streets to usher in Spring, and the renewal of hopes and aspirations for a better year. The New York Police Department Desi Group, the Mounted Police, and the marching band took to the streets.

The Phagwah Parade started 35 years ago by a group of selfless persons who wanted to bring Indo-Caribbeans together. The immigrant population at that time was only a handful. It was said in 1985 that for every ten blocks in Liberty Avenue there was only one Indian. Today, in one block there are over 100 Indians.

This heavy in-migration led to significant changes in the community. They were evident in the business and cultural fields. West Indian stores sprung up, first in Manhattan, and then in Queens. This was followed by the founding of mandirs, mosques, and churches. By 2000, home ownership increased, and remittances flowed into Guyana, and other countries.

The Phagwah Parade started a decade earlier through the vision of Pandit Ramlall and Ramesh D. Kalicharran, and others. The first Parade had a total of 44 persons, but the numbers kept increasing, and by 2010 it was described as the largest street festival in Queens, New York, and the biggest Holi celebrations in North America. The turnout was estimated to be around 100,000 persons.

This is remarkable for an immigrant community, and it received a seal of approval when Mayor Michael Bloomberg visited in 2010. Former Councilman Eric Ulrich, with the help of Latchman Budhai, and others, instituted "Chowtal at City Hall" that was a staple for years.

The growing youth population has energised Richmond Hill and the adjoining areas. Young professionals are to be found in many areas of employment, and are keen to be identified with the land of their parents. This was evident with the co-naming of Liberty Avenue in New York as "Little Guyana Avenue". More than half of those that turned up for the occasion were young people. The same could be said for other public events such as

the Diwali Motorcade and Ramayana in the Park. The local churches and mosques also report a growing youth population.

The Phagwah Parade on March 26 experienced the usual excitement with an increase in the number of floats and dignitaries. The Grand Marshals were Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar and Vedo Basdeo.

Rajkumar is the only Hindu to hold elected office in New York, while Basdeo has selflessly served the Hindu community for years. Rajkumar rode in an open top car and sparkled as she wowed the hundreds on Liberty Avenue with her charm.

There were groups that represented a wide range of interests, including law enforcement, education, LGBTQ rights, education, and women empowerment and justice, among others.

In this way the Parade has been inclusive. But there needs to be a revisit to the rules of the parade that asks for no alcohol, or the playing of music, other than Holi songs on the day.

There can be no denying that the day belonged to the community. They came out in thousands to witness magnificent floats, spectacular dances, chowtal, and songs that reflect the Holi celebration. As is usual, the elected officials had their say too, from a Senator to members of the Assembly. The most prominent of them was New York Senator Chuck Schumer, who praised the Guyanese, Trinidadian, Surinamese, and Indian communities for their contribution, and for making America rich in its diversity.

The icing on the cake occurred late in the day when Mayor Eric Adams visited. He was decked in Indian attire, and was escorted to the stage by Rajkumar.

Mayor Adams played Phagwah with the audience, and

thanked the community for keeping its culture alive. The vagaries of New York's weather were felt when the skies opened up, rains fell, and the chill took over.

But this was on Monday, the day after the Parade!



Cross-section of the thousands during NY's 2023 Phagwah Parade



Young dancers from the Saraswati Dance Group thrilled the audience



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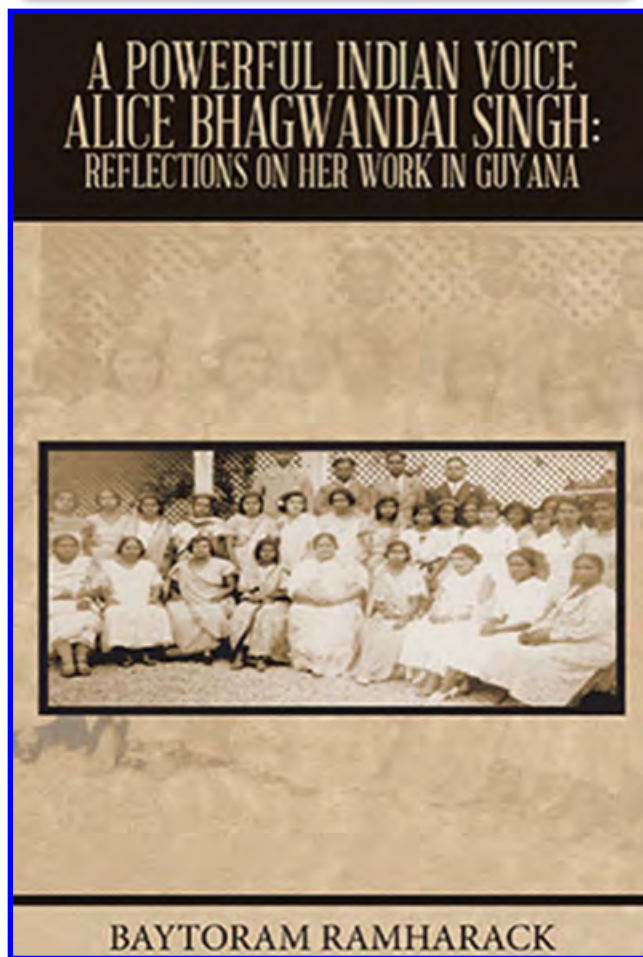
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## Diaspora Must-Read



## New book from Ramharack

Baytoram Ramharack latest book, *A Powerful Indian Voice Alice Bhagwandai Singh: Reflections on her Work in Guyana*, is now available [online at Xlibris](#).

Ramharack was born in Berbice, Guyana, and now teaches history and political science at Nassau Community College, NY.

Alice Bhagwandai Singh (1892-1970) was born in Suriname, and was an agent of social and cultural change. Her immersion into Guyanese society was through her marriage to Jung Bahadur Singh, another Guyanese pioneer.

She was the founding member of many organisations in Guyana, one being the British Guiana Dramatic Society. While Bhagwandai Singh challenged European hegemony in negotiating a cultural space for Indians, at the same time she also successfully provided a voice for Indian women in a time when women's voices were silenced in early post-Indentured BG.

Ramharack's other publications include *Against the Grain: Balram Singh Rai and the Politics of Guyana* (2005); and *Jung Bahadur Singh of Guyana (1886-1956): Politician, ship doctor, labor leader and protector of Indians* (2019). At this time, he is working on another text that examines Dr Cheddi Jagan's relationship with Indians in Guyana.

## Democracy versus dictatorships - time for us to make a stand

The flood of refugees around the world is turning into a tidal wave. Democracy is under attack in east and west, north and south. Together with climate change, these are the greatest threats in decades. Freedom of speech, fair elections, freedom of the press, the rights of minorities, women's rights, and the rule of law are being threatened and overturned.

Over 70 countries have reportedly declined in political rights in the recent past, and only 35 made gains. The US, a country once considered a leading light in democracy, is now declining to the state of "a banana republic"; or worse. Threats, guns and lies, propaganda, double talk, the judiciary under attack, lawlessness; and the "gospel" of Trumpism have taken root and spread.

The 'Freedom Convoy' of truckers who occupied Ottawa, the capital city of Canada, in the summer, is an example of the spread of the evils of Trumpism across borders.

Totalitarianism has raised its ugly head just recently in Israel, where many citizens have taken to the streets to defend their democracy, fighting for their rights and principles.

Upholders of the law, judges and lawful legislators, are being threatened and personally attacked in many places. Powerful, corrupt politicians, like former US President Donald Trump, are being protected by lawless, highly paid lawyers, keeping them from being charged and brought to justice.

The military has got into the act, as in Myanmar, taking advantage of the disruption to seize power and do some ethnic cleansing along the way.

Venezuela in the backyard of Guyana, has turned into a

## Caribbean mourns poet &amp; author Rahim

Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the Caribbean region are now mourning the loss of Dr Jennifer Rahim, who passed away suddenly on March 13. Rahim was a poet, author, and a university lecturer.

She was also a Caribbean literary scholar, and consequently, her loss is being keenly felt by The University of the West Indies St Augustine Department of Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies, and the entire university community throughout the region.

As the department said following her death, Rahim joined the university as a lecturer in the Department of Liberal Arts in 1997, and was later promoted to senior lecturer. She held a BA (1987) and PhD (1993) in Literatures in English, and completed an MA in theology (2016).

She taught a wide range of courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, among them creative writing (poetry and prose), literary criticism, and feminist theory.

Rahim's works were published by *Peepal Tree Press* out of the UK. Following her death, founder of the publishing house, Jeremy Poynting, described Rahim as "one of the region's very best writers" in a blogpost on the company's website.

Lamenting her "too-soon" death at 60, Poynting said Rahim had achieved much, and still had more to give.

"We published her first book in 2007, and I knew of her work long before that through the late Anson Gonzalez and her poetry in *The New Voices*, beginning in the early 1980s. The e-mails that arrived included the first sight of new poems, many still unpublished, followed by sequences of revisions; ideas about novels for the future; and the editorial to-and-fro with Jennifer over the past three or four years concerning revisions and rewrites of her novel, *Goodbye Bay* (due for release in July 2023)."

Poynting said it was a privilege for *Peepal Tree Press* to be a repository for her works-in-progress, as well as a sounding board.

"I have long thought that Jennifer was one of the region's very best writers, but of all the writers we have worked with, no one was more self-critical, less confident, on the surface at least, of the value of what they did. Underneath, though, I think she had a determined hope that her writing could make a difference," Poynting wrote.

In his tribute to Rahim, Emeritus Professor of Literatures in English Funso Aiyejina noted that psychological trauma was a major motif in her poetry and fiction.

Said Funso Aiyejina: "Rahim was not a banner-waving poet-activist, but she felt the pains and problems of her society deep

in her soul, and transformed them into sharply etched metaphors in poetry and fiction that dazzle with their innate glow and passion."

He added, "Her writing highlights the tensions engendered in a life trapped between the spiritual and the mundane, between nature and nurture, between the self and the group, and between innocence and experience. The big quest in her writing, and in her intellectually penetrating critical essays is how to find the routes to salvation out of the traumatic experiences of colonialism, child abuse, gender-based violence, and contemporary socio-political shenanigans."

Aiyejina also expressed sorrow following Rahim's death.

"[Your] departure has come as a shock to all of us. We will forever cherish and remember you through your impressive body of work. Travel safe to your place and your time of stillness."

NGC Bocas Lit Fest programme director Nicholas Laughlin also declared that Rahim's death was a major loss for Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean readers and writers, the UWI community, her colleagues, and her former students.

"We believed we would have the chance to have Jennifer in the festival many more times in the future. When we lose a writer like this, it's a cliché but it's also true to say we can look for consolation in the work they left behind," he said.

Additionally, "The best way to pay tribute to her memory and her work is to read it, to go and look for her books, read what she had to say, and what she still has to say to us. We can still hear the voice of Jennifer in her books, in her words, and we will certainly continue to read her and celebrate her at the festival."

Rahim's books of fiction included *Curfew Chronicles: A Fiction* (2017), which won the 2018 overall OCM Bocas prize for Caribbean Literature, and *Songster and Other Stories* (2007).

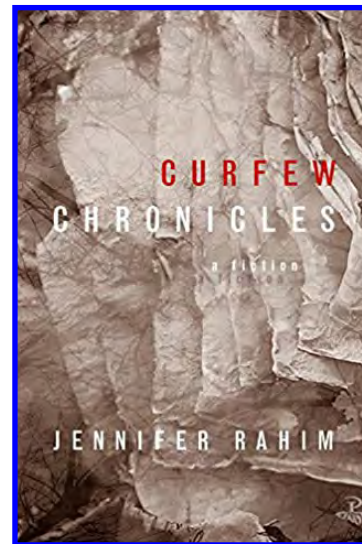
She wrote several poetry collections. *Approaching Sabbaths* (2009) was awarded a Casa de las Américas Prize in 2010. *Redemption Rain: Poems* was published in 2011, and *Ground Level: Poems* in 2014. *Sanctuaries of Invention* (2021) was her last poetry collection.

Her articles on Caribbean literature appeared in *MaComere*, *The Journal of West Indian Literature*, *Small Axe*, *Anthurium*, the *TT Review* and *The Woman, the Writer and Caribbean Society*.

She also edited, with Barbara Lalla, a collection of cultural studies essays entitled *Beyond Borders: Cross Culturalism and the Caribbean Canon*.



Jennifer Rahim



Rahim's Curfew Chronicles

to take over its peaceful, democratic neighbour.

The war is not going to Putin's satisfaction, so he has moved into neighbouring Belarus, perhaps thinking it would be a good consolation prize for him if he loses the Ukraine war outright.

The daily atrocities there continue to shock the world. I recently met two refugees from Ukraine, a mother and daughter, trying to make a new life for themselves in Portugal. They have quite a horror story to tell.

Right wing politicians have gained votes in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria. China and North Korea are flexing their muscles along the Axis of Evil, hoping perhaps for a world take-over!

Many young people stand bewildered by the changes around them. As the saying goes, some folks watch things happen, some make things happen, and some wonder what happened! This has led to an increasing apathy in the next generation.

The leaders of dictatorships have spread their terrors in Africa and around the world. Unfortunately, Adolf Hitler and Putin will not be the last of the dictators.

The Middle East continues to be a war-torn area with dictatorships and would-be dictators, Syria being a prime example. The flood of refugees is everywhere, on the high seas, in deserts, on land... Many die in sunken ships, in forests, in hunger and starvation, seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

Let us remember that "no man is an island". At present the geopolitical situation seems to be favouring the dictator. Democracy is however making a stand. Let us support what is right and just. History repeats itself.

If the creeks don't rise and the sun still shines I'll be talking to you.

Bernard Heydorn



full dictatorial republic. Its refugees can be found in Guyana, through South and Central America, Mexico, the US and into Canada! They are seeking solace and safety, a basic human desire.

Many Guyanese did the same as they fled the country during the dictatorship of Forbes Burnham after Independence in 1966. It is said that more Guyanese live outside the country than live in it. Many relocated to Canada, as did my own family.

Under the democratic leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canada has become one of the most progressive and favoured

countries of the world to live in. We are blessed among nations.

The government has offered a helping humanitarian hand to a number of refugees, but not without criticism from the radicalised right wing extremists in our midst, some of whom have embedded themselves in the official Opposition Party, together with other extremist groups.

Guyana's neighbour Brazil, in South America has also been threatened with dictatorship, and like Trump, its former president Jair Bolsonaro is claiming rigged election results in their recent, fair elections. Bolsonaro is reportedly returning to Brazil to turn it into a dictatorship. Many died in that country during the Covid-19 pandemic following the propaganda of Trumpism and lack of vaccination. I recently met some of these Brazilian refugees in Portugal, carrying a few bags of their belongings.

In Europe, Turkiye and Hungary are sliding into dictatorships. Russia is the main player with its President Vladimir Putin's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine, which is an attempt



# Maharaj urges politicians to become better role models

**Port-of-Spain** – It is a lack of proper leadership and national role models, and not an absence of religion that is the cause of the decline in Trinidad and Tobago’s society, Secretary General of the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha Vijay Maharaj told the media last week.

Maharaj also declared that it was religion which is being used as a “scapegoat”, and urged politicians to examine how their own behaviour has contributed to society’s moral deterioration.

His comments came in the wake of Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley calling earlier last week for religious leaders to do more to influence parents, children, and society.

At the time, he was delivering an address in Port-of-Spain at the official handing over of the refurbished Hayes Court to Anglican Bishop Claude Berkley.

In his statements, Rowley lamented that society’s behaviour had been rapidly deteriorating. He attributed the deterioration to the influence of religion not being as strong as it used to be.

While acknowledging the significant role played by religious bodies in the education of the nation’s children, and in guiding positive values in society, he also thanked them for their contribution.

However, he added, “[You] have more to do”.

Said Rowley: “This is a time when, in the absence of proper schooling and parenting, we are losing a significant portion of our young people. Many of our young people are being raised in homes where the parents do not pay any attention to the upbringing of those children... And when those children come out into the national community, you see the deficiency. It is also a time in the history of the human race where religion plays a lesser and lesser role.”

Rowley said while he was not a religious zealot, he recognised that the teachings of religious bodies would have contributed to the “old-time days, where the kind of behaviour that we see now in our population was not the behaviour that we have been accustomed to”.

He added, “And if that is the only reason why we encourage religion in our national community, then that is a good enough reason.”

According to Rowley, “Many young people today are suffering from the existence of a vacuum where what religion was doing – engendering in young people an understanding that there is good and there is evil, that there is truth and there is falsehood, that there is ambition and there is lack of ambition, that there is respect and disrespect, and encouraging them to differentiate between both sides and to take a side – in the absence of that, the behaviour in the national community is deteriorating, and deteriorating rapidly because nothing useful is filling the vacuum that is left by the recognition of those comparisons.”

At the same time, Rowley also indicated that his comments were not meant to denigrate anyone, or place blame on any particular sector of the national community.

Responding to Rowley’s statements, Maharaj said he felt like religion was being used as a “scapegoat”.

He called on Rowley to examine his own contribution to the decline in society, saying the leaders of the country have not been setting a proper example for the youth.

“In the Parliament... they are always bickering and fighting with one another. And the children are seeing this behaviour on television. They are like a fish market fighting among themselves, and they are supposed to be our leaders? They are supposed to be the mentors for the children of tomorrow,” he said.

Additionally, “The Prime Minister himself has gone on certain platforms and made derogatory comments about females in the Opposition. The Opposition leader does the same thing. And the children listen and learn from this crass language and vitriol. It cannot escape our young people. Politicians are the ones to blame more than religion...”

Maharaj said religious teaching is an integral part of all denominational schools, but he questioned to what degree is religious education taught in government schools.

In years past government schools would partner with religious bodies to have pastors, Imams, pundits, and representatives of various religions come into the schools to instruct religious education classes at least once per week, he recalled.

However, this practice no longer exists in many schools.

Additionally, Maharaj said religious institutions are not sufficiently supported with funding. He said he had applied for funding through the Ministry of Culture to host Diwali and Phagwa activities, and had received “not one black cent”.

He added, “But yet you have (TT) \$147 million for Carnival? So you are promoting wine, jam, and alcohol? Churches and

religious bodies have gone out of their way to help this country, and continue with it. But they need a scapegoat, and as far as I am concerned, religion is the scapegoat. You are making the religious board and religious schools and churches the scapegoats

for what is taking place in this country, and I want the leaders and the politicians to look in the mirror. They must do better for our children.”

Presbyterian Secondary Schools Board of Education chairman Ashford Tamby also commented on the issue, saying the Presbyterian Board ensures that religious teachings are present

in all its schools.

“Our religious education programme fosters a one of peace, love and harmony in our schools, and the worship reflects our religious beliefs,” Tamby stated.

In addition, other religious leaders called for greater collaboration from State agencies following Rowley’s statements.

Pastor Gladstone Cuffie from the Restoration Centre in Princes Town said the Pentecostal churches cannot do this alone, and there must be collaboration for holistic development.

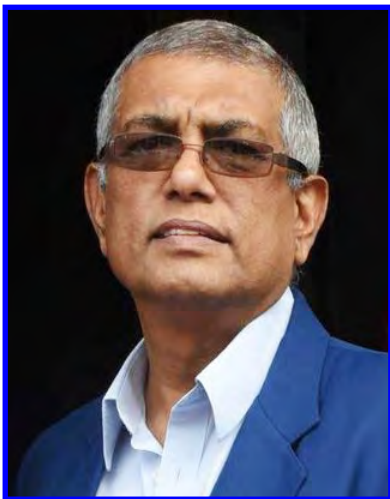
“I would love to partner with anybody, any agency that would help us to reach the youths,” he said.

He added, “In terms of my strategy as a ministry, and as a worker in trying to reach people, [it] is to blend the message of the gospel with real life, to be involved in real activities, non-religious activities, sporting, recreational... and show the youths the relevance of the gospel to their everyday lives.”

Cuffie said the role was not just about “fire and brimstone and preaching about sin and repentance”. It was also about “connecting young people with real issues, real life, real everyday issues”, he said.

President General of the Anjuman Sunnat ul Jamaat Association Haji Zainool Sarafat said the mosques need to partner with sporting clubs in the communities, which are under the State’s umbrella.

Said Sarafat: “We can use the sports clubs in the various communities to organise family days, sports ventures, cricket clubs so we can have cricket matches... probably family get-togethers as well, so that youths will be able to develop a connection with family and the importance of family and family life.”



**Vijay Maharaj**



**Keith Rowley**

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# T&T-born historian leads research into UK Guardian's slavery roots

**Port-of-Spain** – A two-year investigation led by Trinidadian historian Dr Cassandra Gooptar has revealed that the founder of the UK *Guardian* and nine of his 11 backers were linked to the cotton trade and the transatlantic slave trade.

Gooptar is a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Hull's Wilberforce Institute.

The *Guardian* published the findings of the investigation last week, and issued an apology "for their roles in this crime against humanity".

In 2020 the Scott Trust, which owns the *Guardian*, commissioned an academic review into the founding of the publication in 1821 by John Edward Taylor and his financial backers.

Gooptar was the lead researcher. The investigation was done in the Caribbean, the US, and Brazil, and performed in three stages from 2020-2022.

According to the *Guardian*, the extensive academic research makes clear that Taylor and most of his backers who helped fund the *Manchester Guardian*, which was later renamed

the *Guardian*, had links to transatlantic slavery.

"For me personally, I feel relieved that the findings have finally been made public. Knowing that the *Guardian* published the findings in its entirety, and seeing the restorative justice part of it – that they're committing over ten years to helping descendant communities in Jamaica and the US, make me feel more aligned to my research when I see it having a real world impact," Gooptar told the media in Trinidad last week.

She added, "I feel more encouraged to continue this type of research."

Gooptar migrated to the UK from Trinidad and Tobago in 2019. She believes the findings of the report can act as a springboard for other institutions to examine their history, and possible connections to the transatlantic slave trade.

"The *Guardian* is the first newspaper, and one of the first private institutions in the UK, to do something like this" she stated.

She also stated: "A lot of universities are already looking at their links to slavery – the University of Glasgow was one of the first



**Cassandra Gooptar**

universities in the UK to do so, and they had a massive reparative justice project."

Additionally, "But private institutions such as media organisations, insurance, and banking

institutions are now beginning to look at their links to the slave trade. How public they choose to make their findings varies from budget to budget, so the *Guardian* is one of the first in the UK to do this on this scale."

Gooptar further noted: "We hope this acts as a springboard for other institutions. It is not about vilifying anyone, or labelling people as good or bad, but about finding out the whole narrative, the side of the story that has been hidden or whitewashed."

Along with the findings of the report, The *Guardian* also published an apology which in part reads: "As the owners of the *Guardian*, the Scott Trust apologises to the affected communities identified in the research and surviving descendants of the enslaved for the part the *Guardian* and its founders had in this crime against humanity, perpetrated against their ancestors... our goal in responding to these facts should be to strive to do all we can in the present day to atone for these historical injustices and to support those who still live with the legacy of this brutal and dehumanising era."

# Devaluation or flotation harmful to T&T's economy says Imbert

**Port-of-Spain** – A devaluation or a *de facto* flotation of Trinidad and Tobago's dollar would do "tremendous damage" to the local economy, throwing hundreds of thousands of people into poverty, and causing hyperinflation, Finance Minister, Colm Imbert stated last week.

Imbert made the statement during a virtual news conference that was called to discuss the concluding statement of the International Monetary Fund team.

In that time he addressed each of the 20 points made in the IMF's concluding statement, which was issued the day after the mission's two-week Article IV consultation.

In point 12, the IMF mission said a more efficient foreign exchange infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago would help eliminate foreign exchange shortfalls that have been experienced in the country since 2013.

"IMF staff encourages the authorities to remove all restrictions on current international transactions, while providing sufficient foreign exchange to meet demand for all current international transactions," it said.

However, in his reply, Imbert said Trinidad and Tobago is not in an IMF programme, and has not been in one since 1991. Additionally, "...it is unlikely that we will ever get into an IMF programme, at least not under this government".

Imbert stated with the country not in an IMF programme at this time meant, "[We] don't have to agree with anything that the IMF advises us to do, and we don't agree with [removing all restrictions on current international transactions]."

"For seven years, this government has resisted any calls from any sector to devalue or float the Trinidad and Tobago dollar, because we believe that is going to send hundreds of thousands of people into poverty. We believe it would cause hyperinflation, and we believe that it will do tremendous damage," Imbert said.

He added, "So, when the IMF says that they encourage the authorities to remove all restrictions on current international transactions, we are not doing that."

In rejecting the IMF's advice on removing all restrictions on current international transactions, Imbert said: "We shall not be pumping US dollars into the system for people to buy townhouses in Miami, which is the end result of this."

He said: "So, when the IMF says they encourage 'the authorities to remove all restrictions on current international transactions', we are not doing that."

He noted that the government's resistance to the IMF's encouragement on the foreign exchange issue explains why the current

administration came up with its Exim Bank facilities. Through those facilities, the Exim Bank sells foreign exchange to importers of essential foods and pharmaceuticals, as well as manufacturers who export a substantial percentage of their output.

The government will continue to expand the Exim Bank facilities to other categories of imports that are in the public interest, he said.

"We will put more money into the Exim Bank, so that our foreign exchange is focused on creating jobs and on boosting exports, and also dealing with the import of essential items," Imbert said.

Both Imbert and Prime Minister Keith Rowley were members of the 1991 to 1995 Cabinet headed by then Prime Minister Patrick Manning.

Imbert recalled that the flotation of the Trinidad and Tobago dollar back in April 1993 resulted in skyrocketing inflation and recession. However, as he stated, the economic scenario was different 30 years ago.

"We are now in 2023. I can't look at what went on 30 years ago and construct a hypothetical scenario... if we were to devalue the dollar to (TT) \$10 to (US) \$1, for example, which would be a 50 percent or 40 devalua-



**Colm Imbert**

tion, we would have an immediate increase in the cost of imported goods, and we would have immediate demands from the labour unions, which would be very difficult to challenge, for increased wages. That would have a cyclical effect and a domino effect on inflation," he said.

Imbert said he did not think the question about the flotation of the Trinidad and Tobago

dollar was a serious one.

"I don't think you need to be a rocket scientist to figure out that if you devalue the dollar significantly – because we have such a high import bill, and because so many manufactured goods and food come from abroad – I don't think we need to belabour this point," he said.

The concluding statement by the IMF mission also said Trinidad and Tobago's Central Bank should "seriously consider" increasing the repo rate to contain inflationary pressures, and to narrow the interest rate differentials between Trinidad and Tobago and US three-month treasury bills.

Imbert said that unlike the US Federal Reserve, which has a legal mandate to use interest rates to contain inflation, the local central bank has no such mandate.

"Our Central Bank looks at all sorts of things – economic growth, credit to businesses, the rate of unemployment, among other things – and makes a very careful decision on the repo rate, in terms of maintaining it at 3.5 percent. That is because the Central Bank does not want to crash the economy," said Imbert.

He added, "I want to commend the Central Bank, and I agree with its policy."

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**BRAMPTON**



## The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

# Pankaj Mullick: Singer extraordinaire

By Vidur Dindayal  
(First of 2 parts)

I like to listen to Pankaj Mullick's songs; his rich voice and style of singing are deeply soulful, and even devotional. The very first song I learnt to sing in the 1940s, apart from bhajans was his *Soja Rajkumari*. This had been my favourite song ever since. Years later, I learnt it was sung by K.L. Saigal and that Pankaj had composed the music.

Pankaj tops the list for me as a singer of Indian songs. For years I knew his famous songs – *Ai Bahar, Piya Milan ko jaana, Chale pawan ke chaal, Mad bhari, Duniya Rang Rangeelee*. They were played regularly on All India Radio.

I also learnt a couple more: *Ye kown aaj aaya savere savere*, and *Sundar Naari, preetam, pyaari*. Around 1956, I heard on the radio *Tere Mandir ka hoo dipak jal raha*.

I fell in love with this song. It was richly devotional. After *Soja Rajkumari* comes this song *Tere Mandir* in my list of favourite songs.

It is my good fortune that I came upon Pankaj's singing. I came to know only recently how accomplished and talented a musician and singer he was, and that he was a pioneer in many ways of popular Indian music, for which he has received many awards.

In 1972 he was awarded the prestigious *Dada Saheb Phalke Puraskar*, the highest honour conferred upon a film personality by the Government of India.

His citation included the words, "For his pioneering contributions to the field of Indian film music." These words encapsulated the role Pankaj played in the context of Indian movies over a period of nearly four decades, which saw him display his multi-faceted genius as a singer, composer, and an actor.

I am grateful for this information on Pankaj on *YouTube, In Tune with Pankaj Mullick*, which is produced by the Pankaj Mullick Music and Art Foundation. The Direction was by grandson Rajib Gupta.

Pankaj was born on May 10, 1905, four years younger than – and I feel with similar attributes as – my revered father.

Young Pankaj was never encouraged to take up music seriously, as public performances of songs other than devotional ones were considered a taboo for those born into respectable families in those days.

However Durgadas Bandyopadhyayan, eminent vocalist of those times, was invited to a devotional soiree at the Mullick residence where in passing he happened to hear the young Pankaj singing. He immediately recognised the talent of the prodigy that Pankaj was, and insisted on taking him under his tutelage. Thus began the epic musical odyssey of the boy who the world would over time come to know as Pankaj Kumar Mullick.

One day in 1922, when Pankaj was in his late teens, he went for his music lessons. His teacher was not at home. While waiting Pankaj chanced upon a book of poems by Rabindranath Tagore. He liked a particular poem and for some unknown reason he started setting it into tune, and began humming it as well.

His excitement at having made a song out of the poem drove him to the nearby premises of a renowned culture club, where he pounced upon the organ and started to sing. A member of the culture club touched him on the shoulder and said his singing was good, but it was different in a few places.

Pankaj was amazed and stunned at how someone knew of the tune he had composed only a few minutes back. This was a time when songs written by Tagore were not heard by the general population, and Pankaj was no exception. The poem he had set the tune for had been set by Rabindranath Tagore himself, and uncannily enough both his tune and Tagore's were

alike, but only different in some places. It was a momentous occasion for Pankaj.

A great picture dawned on him, that of the greatness of Tagore's composition, and that of his innate ability to identify with them.

From that time onwards Pankaj became obsessed with Tagore's compositions, and he sought every means to learn more about them. His desperation was rewarded with meeting Dinendranath Tagore, Tagore's grand nephew. Dinendranath recognised the immense talent of the young Pankaj, and agreed to teach him not only Tagore's songs, but the true style of Rabindranath songs, and also the philosophy behind each composition.

Blessed with innate talent and what he learnt about Tagore's poems and music, he became a radio artist. It was fascinating how this came about. Pankaj was the sole bread-winner of his family as a jute broker.

Sheltering from a tremendous downpour in the portico of a nearby dispensary, the unrelenting storm evoked the song *Emono Dine Taare Bolo* in his mind, and he started humming the tune, oblivious of his surroundings.

The dispensary's doctor who was listening to his singing, made an incredible offer. The doctor invited Pankaj to sing on radio.

Pankaj's dream of making a career out of music became a reality and on September 26, 1927, he joined the Indian Broadcasting Company only a month after its inception in Kolkata.

On his first day, at the Radio Station, he sang two Rabindra Sangeet songs. One of the two songs was *Emono Dine Taare Bolo Jay*. Radio was at that time the only medium of entertainment in the country, and Pankaj quickly became a household name.

This prompted him in 1929 to initiate a pioneering live music class called *Sangeet Shikshar Ashar* each Sunday morning. This soon had the whole country captivated. He

conducted these classes for over four decades, from 1929 to 1975.

A major contribution of this programme was its impetus in popularising Rabindra Sangeet. In the 47 years that Pankaj conducted the programme, he taught the entire repertoire of Tagore's compositions.

A prominent part of the show was encouraging women from conservative families to learn singing. Earlier that was wrapped up with social taboo. People from all across the nation as well as from abroad tuned in to hear Pankaj sing and teach.

The programme was also a teaching ground of songs not only of Rabindra Sangeet, but also of other celebrated writers, including folk songs, patriotic songs, bhajans by Tulsidas, Surdas, Mirabai and others, as well as Vedic hymns, *Stotras* from *Upanishads* and Sanskrit songs.

Pankaj is the first person who popularised Rabindra Sangeet and spread it among the masses. The first Rabindra Sangeet recorded by him was in 1932. It took the audience by storm and thrust Tagore's compositions from elitist circles into the realms of popular adoration. He is regarded as *The First Man of Rabindra Sangeet*.

He had a lifelong passion for Rabindra Sangeet. Tagore himself grew fond of the young Pankaj, who became recognised as one of the finest exponents of Tagore's songs.

Pankaj was the first person to use the tabla as an accompaniment in these songs. He made his first recording at the age of 18, and the first of his numerous commercial recordings was made in 1926. Pankaj's rendition of many a Rabindra Sangeet is extremely popular even today.

(To be continued)



Pankaj Mullick



Pankaj Mullick with Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in 1955



Rani Mukerji

## Rani Mukerji returns to the big screen, speaks on motherhood

Rani Mukerji returned to the big screen with the legal drama *Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway*, which is inspired by real-life story. The film, which was released on March 17, has garnered critical acclaim for Rani's stupendous performance.

The Ashima Chibber directorial was released in 120 cities in India and 43 countries overseas. While the actress has been taking up limited projects at once, she has also been focusing on motherhood. She is a doting mother to a daughter, Adira Chopra. In a recent interview, Rani spoke about her daughter, and how the birth of Adira changed her as a person.

Rani stated during an interview with Kareena Kapoor Khan on *Mirchi Plus*, "I try to spend more time with her and she is like, 'Yeah mama now it's my me time', which my husband (Aditya Chopra) has taught her, this word 'me time'. So she is like, very sweetly, she will not ask me to leave the room, so she will be like, 'How do I tell mum', in a very nice way. So she is saying, 'Mama it's my me time.'" Rani said that she is not a 'me time' person and added, "I am like, all my time is for you my child."

Further talking about motherhood, she said, "I think what happens to women when they become mothers is that there is something in us that changes immediately. The minute you see the baby out of your system and you look at that baby's face, you suddenly realise that you're not important anymore. There's somebody else more important than you. It's the first time in our lives that we realise we love somebody more than ourselves. When that moment happened in my life, for me, there was nothing more important than my child."

Rani Mukerji tied knot with Aditya Chopra in 2014 in an intimate Bengali ceremony in Italy. The couple embraced parenthood, and welcomed their daughter Adira Chopra in 2015.

She has dented the narrative that content films are only for Over-the-Top with the positive start that *Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway* has taken. Post the release of the film, the actress had commented on the overwhelming response. On the same note, Mukerji recently confessed that she will stick to theatres and will never be seen on OTT.

Speaking on the clear difference between watching a film on OTT, and experiencing it on the big screen, Rani asserted, "When you're watching a film like this in a theatre, you'll connect more. When you're watching a film at home, people can see your face. In the darkness of a cinema hall, when you cry for her, there's catharsis. No one's watching you there, unlike watching a film at home, where everyone can see you, your face, your reaction."

The 45-year-old actress further added, "Cinema halls just transport you to another world. I'd always, always do things for the big screen because I'm a cinema actor. That's an experience I can't trade for anything in the world. When you watch a film in a cinema hall, you make plans, specifically. You make an effort there and do not like to come home after a long day of work and say, 'Let's scroll through what there is to watch.' What's the meaning of that? We work so hard, not for people to just decide if we should click this button or not."

She concluded saying, "At least we want that kind of respect that they're making a plan for us. That's what drives us."

Back to *Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway*: the film is inspired by the real-life story of Sagarika Chakraborty, and adapted from her book, *The Journey of a Mother*.



# Rich culture & cinematic heritage to be featured at NY Indian Film Festival

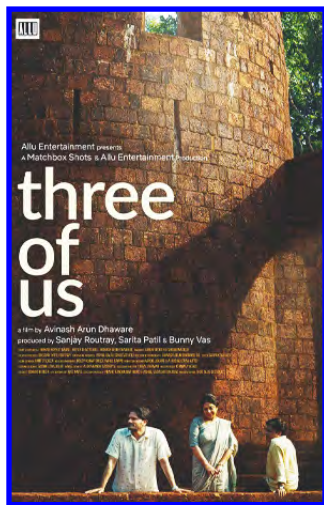
The Indo American Arts Council announced the roster of films and the stars who will be making appearances at the New York Indian Film Festival from May 11-14. Considered the longest running festival of its kind in

the US, the highly anticipated event will be headlined by, among others, Shefali Shah and Kalki Koechlin, known for their critically acclaimed performances that will also be seen on the big screen – Shefali Shah as the lead in the opening film *Three of Us*, and Kalki Koechlin as the lead for the closing film *Goldfish*.

More than 20 features, documentaries, and shorts will be screened at the festival.

Opening night will be held on May 11 at Village East by Angelika. Closing Night will be held on May 14 at SVA Theatre, and will include the NYIFF AWARDS.

“As we celebrate the 23rd year of the New York Indian Film Festival, we are thrilled to witness the global recognition of Indian cinema with not just one, but three Indian films being acknowledged at the Oscars. This milestone highlights the incredible talent and diversity of Indian cinema, and we are honoured to showcase some of the best works of Indian filmmakers to our audience,” IAAC Executive Director



year of celebrating the rich culture and cinematic heritage of India.”

Vice Chairman, IAAC Rakesh Kaul said, “At IAAC, we value our classical arts that are rooted deeply in our civilisation, and we believe in nurturing and celebrating them joyfully. Through the New York Indian Film Festival, we strive to showcase not only the latest trends in Indian cinema, but also the timeless traditions that have enriched our culture for centuries.”

Chairman of IAAC Nirmal

Mattoo said the organisation is committed to its mission of promoting Indian art and culture through a variety of initiatives and programs.

“We are proud to serve as a platform for artists, scholars,

and practitioners to share their talents and insights with audiences across the [US] and beyond. We are excited to continue expanding our reach and impact in the years to come,” Mattoo said.



Director of the NYIFF Aseem Chhabra said, “After a hiatus of three years, we are thrilled to be back with a physical film festival.”

Chhabra added, “Once again our audience will interact with the filmmakers, discuss and celebrate new Indian cinema. The mission of NYIFF has, and will always be to elevate the very best filmmakers and storytellers featuring India and its culture.”

Apart from the opening and closing films, NYIFF will also hold a special New York screening of Rahul Chittella’s critically acclaimed film *Gulmohar* on May 12 at 6:30 p.m.

In attendance will be actors Sharmila Tagore and Manoj Bajpayee, and director Chittella.

The rest of the NYIFF line-up will be announced in a few weeks, and more details including the link to buy tickets, after parties and panel discussions will be [available on the website](#), the organisers said in its press release.

# Naatu Naatu building a legacy that sees foreign embassy staff in India dancing

The hit Oscar-winning Indian song *Naatu Naatu* has new fans in the German embassy staff. Last month German ambassador to India and Bhutan, Dr Philipp Ackermann, tweeted a video of himself and others from the embassy dancing to the fast-paced number from the Telugu language film *RRR*.

Ackermann tweeted the following: “Germans can’t dance? Me & my Indo-German team celebrated #NaatuNaatu’s victory at #Oscar95 in Old Delhi. Ok, far from perfect. But fun! Thanks @rokEmbIndia for inspiring us. Congratulations & welcome back @alwaysRamCharan & @RRRMovie team! #embassychallenge is open. Who’s next?”

The video was shot in the old part of capital Delhi, renowned for the Jama mosque, Mughal-era architecture,

narrow by-lanes, and street food.

In the video, Ackermann is wearing ethnic Indian clothes.

The German Embassy’s dance number came on the heels of a similar video posted by its South Korean counterpart in February, in which employees were seen grooving to the multiple award-winning song.

South Korean ambassador Chang Jae-bok and other employees danced to the song in a video shared by the embassy’s Twitter page with the caption: “Do you know Naatu? We are happy to share with you the Korean Ambassador Chang Jae-bok along with the embassy staff *Naatu Naatu*!!”

The breakout hit won the Academy Award for best original song at the Oscars ceremony on March 12. The song has spawned a TikTok challenge, and has millions of views on

YouTube.

Indians had won Oscars previously, but no Indian film had won an Academy Award. *RRR* and *The Elephant Whisperers*, which won the best documentary short film award, gave India two Oscar-winning films in one night.

Television showed images of people dancing to the song in the streets, minutes after the award was announced, even as #NaatuNaatu was a top trend on Twitter.

“The popularity of *Naatu Naatu* is global. It will be a song that will be remembered for years to come,” Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on Twitter in congratulating the team behind the song.

*RRR* is directed by S.S. Rajamouli, with leads played by Ram Charan and N.T. Rama Rao Jr..



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# Talks continue as 2023 Asia Cup likely to be played in two countries

It is likely that the 2023 Asia Cup could be played in Pakistan, with another overseas venue to host the India games, *ESPNcricinfo* reported last week.

According to the cricket website, both Board of Control for Cricket in India, and the Pakistan Cricket Board, after an initial stand-off, are now moving swiftly towards brokering a resolution that could have both teams playing their tournament matches against each other outside Pakistan.

While the overseas venue is not confirmed, it is believed that the UAE, Oman, Sri Lanka and even England are potential contenders to host five matches, including at least two India-Pakistan contests.

India and Pakistan have been grouped together, along with a qualifier in the six-nation Asia Cup, which is scheduled to be held in the first half of September this year in a 50-over format.

Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan are part of the other group. A total of 13 matches will be played across 13 days including the final.

As per the format for the 2022 Asia Cup, the top two teams from each group advance to the Super 4s, and the top two teams then contest the final. The possibility remains that India and Pakistan may play three times.

As it stands, a small working group has been formed with the brief of creating a schedule and travel plan agreeable to all participating



Sri Lanka celebrate after winning the 2022 Asia Cup

countries, as well as the broadcaster before a final call is taken.

Also, the weather is likely to play a key role in determining the second venue outside of Pakistan, though there will be keenness among the Asian venues to host high-profile India-Pakistan games. Temperatures in early September in the UAE usually hover around the 40-degree Centigrade mark, though that has not prevented cricket from being played.

There was the 2021 IPL, which was held in late September, but Pakistan have played international matches in early September.

In Muscat, Oman's capital, temperatures remain lower, and it hosted the first round of the 2021 T20 World Cup.

The option for England remains an ambitious one, though the prospect of big crowds in a city like London is likely to be an attractive one.

The option of staging part of the Asia Cup outside Pakistan was agreed in principle as the most favourable by all members of the Asian Cricket Council when they met late last month in Dubai, on the sidelines of the ICC's quarterly board meetings.

Having failed to reach a resolution mid-March in Bahrain at the ACC meet, members converged for two further rounds of informal discussions in Dubai.

The PCB, which has the hosting rights for the 2023 edition of Asia Cup, was represented

by its chair Najam Sethi, while the BCCI team comprised its secretary Jay Shah and Arun Dhimal, the IPL governing council chairman.

Last October, the PCB was caught off guard by Shah, who said that the 2023 Asia Cup would be held in a "neutral" venue.

The PCB, then under Ramiz Raja – Sethi's predecessor – immediately responded that Pakistan would pull out of the tournament altogether if it was taken out of the country. Sethi reiterated that stance both in the Bahrain and Dubai rounds of discussions. Shah said he had made the statement in his capacity as the ACC president.

During the Bahrain meeting, the BCCI pointed out that as hosts, it had successfully conducted the 2018 edition of Asia Cup at a neutral venue – in the UAE – after it became clear Pakistan could not travel to India due to the strained political ties between the two neighbouring countries.

Relations continuing as they are, Shah had told the ACC that India would not be able to travel to Pakistan for the Asia Cup.

As discussions began in Dubai, he reiterated the position.

The PCB did the same, saying that if the entire tournament was taken out of Pakistan, they would pull out of the event altogether. At one point Sri Lanka Cricket had offered to swap the hosting rights with the PCB, willing to stage the entire tournament, but that was rejected by the PCB.

With a stalemate all too apparent, a second option of splitting the tournament across two countries including Pakistan emerged over the course of informal discussions, and was eventually presented and discussed at the formal ACC meeting.

It is understood both PCB and BCCI were open to such a plan, subject to details and logistics being worked out that satisfied everyone. The plan will also be taken to their individual governments before a formal schedule is worked out.

## New President Shallow seeking to deepen ties with CWI board

A unified board of directors is among his priorities as new Cricket West Indies president Kishore Shallow begins his two-term tenure.

No sooner than he was elected unopposed on March 25 at CWI's Annual General Meeting in Antigua, came news that the Guyana Cricket Board had withdrawn its support for Azim Bassarath as CWI vice-president.

Bassarath is president of the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Board. He was also elected on March 25, with CWI's Chief Executive Officer Johnny Grave since confirming that Bassarath is now vice-president.

In a letter dated on the day of the elections, the GCB stated that it had withdrawn its nomination of Bassarath as vice-president. In a letter signed by president Bissoondyal Singh, the GCB wrote to out-going president Ricky Skerritt stating that, "pursuant to Article 92 of the Articles of Association of Cricket West Indies, the Guyana Cricket Board wholly withdraws, forthwith... its nomination of Mr Azim Bassarath, dated 27th January as nominee for the post of vice-president of Cricket West Indies".

Nominations for president and vice-president closed in February, with a CWI source telling the Trinidad and Tobago media that nominations could not be changed after the nomination date.

Days later, speaking on the *Mason and Guest* cricket radio show in Barbados, Shallow acknowledged that, "elections are never straightforward".

He added: "The focus is to unite the region, unite the board, ensure that we all on the same wavelength, and I think once we can ...speak to that unity of purpose that is included in the manifesto. I think that is the key thing. And if we could establish that very early in this tenure,

we could be on our way to a successful couple years."

Shallow said he already "had couple meetings," with Bassarath. He added, "... I think [Bassarath] is prepared for the job ahead."

Asked if he was surprised by GCB's letter, Shallow said: "Not totally. I'm someone who looks carefully at all the different possibilities, and I'm always open, so I'm hardly ever caught off guard."

However, Shallow stressed that, "at this point, I really want to put my effort and energies with going forward as opposed to the past few weeks or so".

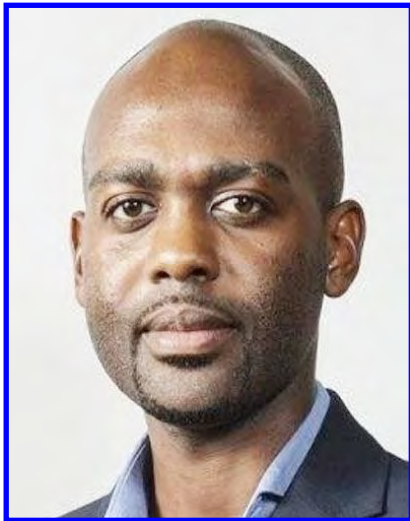
Asked also if there could still be legal action taken by the GCB, Shallow said that following the conclusion of the election, "I had discussions with the different

directors and they all just want to get on with cricket administration, and I suspect that is going to be the focus. I'm hoping that is the focus, and whatever influence I have to ensure that is the focus, then rest assured that is going to be the case."

Shallow also touched briefly on the matter of governance restructuring. His predecessor, Skerritt left office with the latest governance report produced by a team led by Jamaican businessman Don Wehby in 2020, which remains under consideration.

However, Shallow said some form of restructuring is "something we have to prioritise".

He added, "This is not to say we have a poor governance structure. I do not believe that. But we have to be committed to evolving, improving, and however way we can align ourselves with modern-day best practices, then it must be our priority as a board, as directors, as stakeholders of Cricket West Indies. That has to be our objective, so I'm fully committed to that."



Kishore Shallow

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Afghanistan's women's cricket team

## Afghan women remain beyond a boundary

While the Afghanistan Cricket Board's budget received a significant infusion last month from the International Cricket Council, at the same time no update was provided on this nation's women's team.

According to the ACB, it will be receiving "technical assistance" and "capacity-building opportunities" from the ICC.

However, the BBC also reported last week that the women's team indicated there has been no contact from the ICC since they fled to Australia after the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, ACB chair Mirwais Ashraf described the ICC interaction as a "good meeting for Afghanistan".

He added, "We will receive a significantly greater budget compared to today."

It was also revealed that a new course to develop Afghan coaches will be started, while the ACB said the ICC will work with its staff to help it become "technically self-sufficient".

Earlier last month, the Afghanistan women's cricket team said they were hopeful the board meeting would result in a positive

decision on their future.

The ICC was expected to discuss the international status of Afghanistan, who should have a women's set up in place as a full member nation.

After taking power, the Taliban banned women from universities, parks, sports, and raided the homes of female athletes.

The Afghanistan women's team want the ICC to take action to enable them to represent their country from Australia, and wrote to the global governing body in December.

However, the ICC responded saying the issue was in the hands of the ACB.

Speaking to the BBC Stumped Podcast late last month, Afghanistan player Firooza Afghan said: "For the first time it's possible they will make a fair decision for us because it's our right to play for our country. It doesn't matter where we live: the important thing is that we are still fighting to have a team here."

Afghan added, "Cricket is very important to me. I grew up with it and I hope one day I can play for Afghanistan."

## Window opens for Aussie Litchfield's Test debut

Teen sensation Phoebe Litchfield is in line for a potential Test debut after being named in Australia's squad for the women's Ashes, the *British Broadcasting Corporation* reported last week.

Litchfield is the only newcomer brought into the 15-woman squad for the multi-format series, with selectors retaining all players from the successful Twenty20 World Cup.

At 19 years old, Litchfield's call-up comes after a stellar home summer, during which she was dismissed only once in her first three ODIs against Pakistan with a total of 154 runs.

Regarded as one of the country's best young talents, Litchfield also averaged 49.87 for New South Wales in One Day cricket, and registered her maiden Women's National Cricket League century.

"Phoebe Litchfield has taken her game to the next level in the past 12 months," chief selector Shawn Flegler said.

Additionally, "We view her as a long-term player for Australia, and it's pleasing to reward her progress with selection in an Ashes squad."

Litchfield's chances of cracking into the Test team on June 22 at Trent Bridge are helped by Rachael Haynes' retirement following Australia's last four-day match in 2022, leaving a gap at the top of the order.

The left-hander would be considered as having a genuine chance of taking that spot, unless Australia open with Beth Mooney, and play an extra bowler than in their last Test.

Kim Garth and Grace Harris are the other two players in the squad without Test experience.

English conditions would be expected to suit Garth and her ability to move the ball, after moving from Ireland and becoming one of Australia's front-line bowlers.

Harris previously toured England for the 2015 Ashes, but is

seen as more of a white-ball player for the three T20s and ODIs that follow the Test match.

Leg spinner Amanda-Jade Wellington is again the unlucky player, picked instead for the Australia A tour, with fellow leg spinners Alana King and Georgia Wareham preferred for the main squad.

Tayla Vlaeminck has also been named to make her comeback in the A side, after a lengthy lay-off from foot fractures suffered in January 2022.

"She is progressing in her rehabilitation and is working back towards full bowling fitness," Flegler said, adding, "She is a highly regarded talent and is certainly part of our plans moving forward."

Australia will keep their options open of moving players out of the A squad and into the top team, with their three ODIs and T20s scheduled around the senior side.

Notable absentees from that squad include Elyse Villani, with the door now seemingly shut at age 33 after topping the run-scoring charts in the WNCL for two of the past three summers.

Tasmania teammate Nicola Carey was also left out of both squads, after being dropped from Australia's main group in January.

### Squad for the Ashes

Meg Lanning (captain), Darcie Brown, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Grace Harris, Alyssa Healy, Jess Jonassen, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Tahlia McGrath, Beth Mooney, Elyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, and Georgia Wareham.

### A Squad

Maitlan Brown, Lauren Cheatle, Maddy Darke, Heather Graham, Nicole Faltum, Tess Flintoff, Charli Knott, Kate Peterson, Courtney Sippel, Tayla Vlaeminck, Courtney Webb, Amanda-Jade Wellington, and Tahlia Wilson.



Phoebe Litchfield



Kim Garth

## Cricket Schedule

(ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday April 5, 2023

ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier Play-off 2023  
Jersey vs United Arab Emirates, 14th Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM  
Canada vs PNG, 15th Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM  
Sri Lanka tour New Zealand, 2023  
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka, 2nd T20I, University Oval, Dunedin, 1:00 PM

Ireland tour of Bangladesh, 2023

Bangladesh vs Ireland, Only Test, Day 2, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 10:00 AM

Thursday April 6, 2023

Ireland tour of Bangladesh, 2023  
Bangladesh vs Ireland, Only Test, Day 3, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 10:00 AM

Friday April 7, 2023

Ireland tour of Bangladesh, 2023  
Bangladesh vs Ireland, Only Test, Day 4, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 10:00 AM

Saturday April 8, 2023

Sri Lanka tour New Zealand, 2023  
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka, 3rd T20I, John Davies Oval, Queenstown, 1:00 PM  
Ireland tour of Bangladesh, 2023  
Bangladesh vs Ireland, Only Test, Day 5, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 10:00 AM

Saturday April 15, 2023

New Zealand tour of Pakistan, 2023  
Pakistan vs New Zealand, 2nd T20I, National Stadium, Karachi, 7:30 PM

Sunday April 16, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 1st Test, Day 1, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Monday April 17, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 1st Test, Day 2, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Tuesday April 18, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 1st Test, Day 3, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Wednesday April 19, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 1st Test, Day 4, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Thursday April 20, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 1st Test, Day 5, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Monday April 24, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 2nd Test, Day 1, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Tuesday April 25, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 2nd Test, Day 2, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Wednesday April 26, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 2nd Test, Day 3, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

New Zealand tour of Pakistan, 2023

Pakistan vs New Zealand, 1st ODI, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, 2:30 PM

Thursday April 27, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 2nd Test, Day 4, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Friday April 28, 2023

Ireland tour of Sri Lanka, 2023  
Sri Lanka vs Ireland, 2nd Test, Day 5, Galle International Stadium, Galle, 10:00 AM

Sunday May 7, 2023

New Zealand tour of Pakistan, 2023  
Pakistan vs New Zealand, 5th ODI, Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi, 2:30 PM

Tuesday May 9, 2023

Ireland vs Bangladesh in England, 2023  
Ireland vs Bangladesh, 1st ODI, County Ground, Chelmsford, 10:00 AM

Friday May 12, 2023

Ireland vs Bangladesh in England, 2023  
Ireland vs Bangladesh, 2nd ODI, County Ground, Chelmsford, 10:00 AM.





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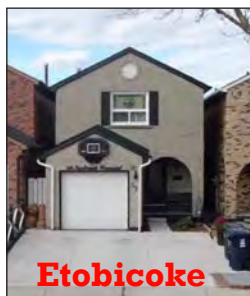
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