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Jamaica's Consul General in Toronto, Lincoln Downer (back row, left to right), Acting Consul General for T&T, Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette, & an admiring fan with legendary West Indies batter, Brian Lara (front), at the Andrew McCandless Park in Brampton last week. Lara is in Toronto as part of the ongoing GT20 games, while the diplomats were conducting a site visit as part of the upcoming Diamond Jubilee cricket rematch to take place on August 19. See Page 19 display.



Toronto Caribbean Carnival takes off this week & into the weekend with lively costumes & vibrant music at Lamport Stadium, Lake Shore Boulevard, & Malvern. This week's & the weekend's events were preceded by the Junior Carnival Parade, which took place on July 22. Photographers Russell Lutchman & the Carpenters' Regional Council's Raquel Carmago, were in Malvern to capture the kids in action. See Page 8 for more photos from the event.

Body & Soul: Vishnu Mandir opens medical clinic

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Richmond Hill – In what has now grown into a healthy confluence of body and soul, it was divine intervention, inspiration, and a fortunate series of events that led to Vishnu Mandir opening up its Voice of Vedas Medical Centre last year.

It is such that today, even as VM nourishes the souls of devotees with spiritual enlightenment, at the same time it is also extending outreach into healing and wellness of the body.

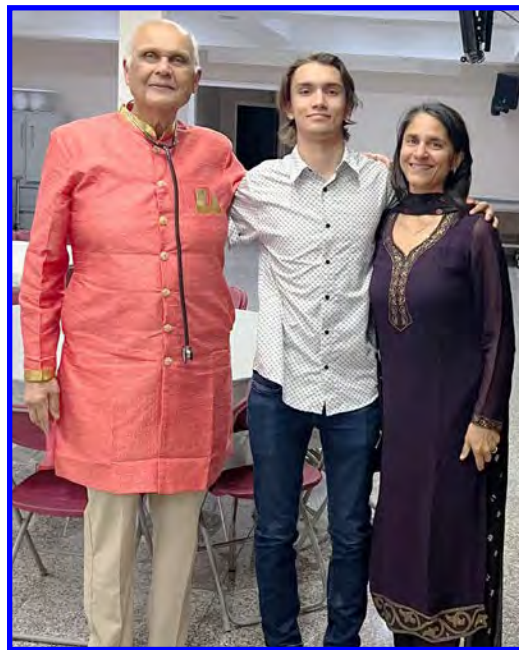
And in so doing, VM's medical clinic has taken patient-care up a notch, with the centre's management in the hands of the eminent heart and vascular surgeon, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay, who is advised and supported by a network of top heart, vascular, pain management specialists, and many other practitioners here in the GTA.

Among them are Dr Sonia Anand, an eminent vascular medicine specialist. She is also internationally recognised for her research and advocacy for women's cardiovascular health among populations of diverse, ancestral origins.

"I am happy to provide advice to Dr Doobay and support the Vishnu Mandir's outreach to the community," Anand said.

She added, "The newly-opened Medical Clinic offers an opportunity for me to give back to the community, bringing my knowledge and experience in vascular medicine, and women's cardiovascular health."

Meanwhile, a step back is required to understand how VM came to open its nurturing doors



Vishnu Mandir leader & head of the VM Medical Clinic Dr Budhendranauth Doobay (left) with Dr Sonia Anand (right), & her son Sachin, at the clinic in Richmond Hill

for a medical centre and walk-in clinic, and for it to be populated with such a vast range of medical expertise.

Or rather, what is needed is a step forward that quickens into a run, since VM's holistic worldview involves not only its spiritual nourishment, and its healing medical centre, but also a commitment by

its devotees to healthy lifestyles through physical activity, which is notable in the mandir's participation at the annual Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

Last October, VM and its Global Outreach arm, along with volunteers and participants, succeeded in seamlessly blending physical activity with fund-raising via the TWM. The effort raised close to \$200,000 for dialysis care in Guyana. It was such a successful event that Global Outreach is already started planning another fund-raising marathon run for October this year.

Meanwhile, it appears that at VM, one success runs into another.

So said Gayatri Persaud, who is coordinating the medical centre's health and wellness thrust. She is process-driven, with a background in enterprise solutions and project management.

As Persaud told *Indo-Caribbean World*, the medical and wellness centre emerged out of the confluence of divine direction, inspiration, and the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time.

As she noted, the medical centre was a logical place to come in for a landing, given the mandir's uplifting and forward thrust on the spirituality of the soul, alongside its commitment to physical activity of the body with participation in the TWM.

As Persaud noted, the medical centre actually grew out of the roots of what was an ayurvedic effort, which had earlier been initiated by the mandir.

"We started off as an ayurvedic centre. Initially, when we thought of ayurvedic, we were thinking

See Page 14: VM Medical Centre

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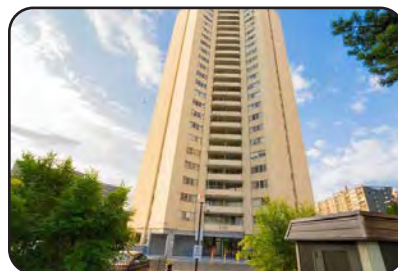
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Vishnu Mandir held its 30th Bhagawat Katha on the temple grounds from July 21 - July 30. The event took place under a canopy in its car park, with its main coordinator, Pandit Bhojnarine Sharma, playing an integral role. Also ably assisting in the katha, along with many volunteers, was the devoted Mrs Tage Sharma. The 18 sessions of the katha were officiated by VM leader, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay. It is patterned after a typical outdoor katha in Guyana, and saw participation by families & groups of families gathering to perform Hawan. Above, in left photo, Dr Doobay leads the children (at right) in prayer during a session of the katha last week; in centre photo, devotees gather under the canopy to the greenery of the Toronto summer outside



MP Chandra visits with Bangladesh's PM the Hon. Sheik Hasina last month

MP Chandra visits New Dehli, Bangladesh

Member of Parliament in Ottawa for Nepean, Ontario Arya Chandra met with India's Foreign Minister Dr S. Jaishankar in New Delhi last month, where they discussed Canada and India relations, and other issues of mutual interest. Following his New Delhi visit, Chandra visited the holy city of Varanasi.

Later, Chandra visited Bangladesh, where he met with Prime Minister, the Hon. Sheikh Hasina. During their discussions, Chandra noted that the stability under her leadership has seen this nation achieve the best economic growth in South Asia.

He added that while the economic growth has lifted millions of people out of poverty, the Covid-19 pandemic, along with geopolitical events, have now resulted in higher costs for fuel

and food grains imports.

Consequently, these events have put a brake on Bangladesh's growth, Chandra said.

He also spoke to the potential that exists for foreign direct investment in Bangladesh's infrastructure projects, which can be realised if there is a formal foreign investment protection agreement.

As Chandra noted, Prime Minister the Hon. Sheik Hasina expressed interest in his statements.

While in Bangladesh, Chandra also visited three temples in Dhaka, and met with many Bangladeshi Hindu community leaders. He also visited Buddhist monasteries, and a Catholic Church, and met with many community leaders.

Rousing Rhythms announces Benny Dayal concert

By Dhevin Indar

Special to Indo-Caribbean World

Toronto – An upcoming live concert featuring Benny Dayal, Funktuation, the Hornflakes, and other artistes will take place at the Canada Event Centre in Whitby on October 7.

Benny Dayal is well-known for his voice in the film industry, and for songs in movies such as *Ghajini* and *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*. An Indian playback singer, he sings in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Gujarati, and Marathi, among others languages. He has sung more than 3,500 songs in over 19 Indian languages.

The live event was announced on July 21 by Rousing Rhythms. At the reception and press conference, CEO and founder Manu Mathew said the upcoming event is expected to attract over 3,000 fans.

Other Rousing Rhythms' events across Canada were well done, and were "superhits", Mathew said.

Also addressing reporters at the reception were Sujith Unnithan, who has over 20 years of professional experience managing skilled entertainment artists. He is currently curating major festivals in India.

Co-founder of Rousing Rhythms, Sethu Vidyasagar also attended the launch and reception. He is a media professional in



At the reception announcing the Benny Dayal concert were Sethu Vidyasagar (left to right), Manu Mathew, Kavitha Menon, & Paul John. Photo by Dhevin Indar the broadcast media business with over two decades of experience. He is also a former senior editor with *Indian Vision Kerala*. For more information on the concert, visit [RousingRhythms](http://RousingRhythms.com), or check it out on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com) or [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com).

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Guterres issues plea for radical climate change action

A plea was made last week for immediate radical action on climate change by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. His call came in the wake of record-shattering July temperatures indicating Earth has passed from a warming phase into an “era of global boiling”.

As the world media is reporting, a blistering heat wave continues with its onslaught on the northern hemisphere, including parts of Europe and the Americas, hitting these regions with sweltering, record-high temperatures. The extreme heat has triggered devastating wildfires in Greece, Italy, and Algeria along the Mediterranean.

As Guterres said with noticeable foreboding last month, “Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning. The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived.”

As the media have reported, according to ERA5 data from the European Union-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service, the first three weeks of July were the warmest three-week period on record. The fears emerging last month among scientists was July would be the the hottest month ever on record.

Complete ERA5 data for July will be available and published on August 8. The previous hottest month on record was July 2019.

Meanwhile, as large swathes of the US faced the record-breaking heat wave, President Joe Biden last month described the soaring climate change temperatures an “existential threat”.

Said Biden, “I don’t think anybody can deny the impact of climate change anymore.”

Biden also noted the extreme heat was now the “number one weather-related killer” in the US, revealing that it was causing 600 deaths annually.

Meanwhile, Guterres noted that the pres-



Antonio Guterres

ent extreme impacts of climate change have been in line with the “predictions and repeated warnings” from scientists.

The “only surprise is the speed of the change”, he stated.

In the face of “tragic” consequences, Guterres repeated his call for swift and far-reaching action, taking aim once again at the fossil fuel sector.

“The air is unbreathable. The heat is unbearable. And the level of fossil fuel profits and climate inaction is unacceptable,” Guterres said.

He added, “Leaders must lead. No more hesitancy. No more excuses. No more waiting for others to move first.”

And ahead of the Climate Ambition Summit,



A fireman fighting a wildfire in Greece last month

which he is set to host in September, Guterres called on developed countries to commit to achieving carbon neutrality as close to 2040 as possible. He also called on emerging economies to meet this commitment as close as possible to 2050.

Guterres continued that the “destruction” unleashed by humanity “must not inspire despair, but action”, even as he warned that to prevent the worst outcomes humanity “must turn a year of burning heat into a year of burning ambition”.

July saw weather-related havoc wrought across the world as temperatures broke records in China, the US and southern Europe. It sparked forest fires, water shortages and a rise

in heat-related illnesses and hospitalisations.

Critical weather-related events and tragic outcomes were seen in Sicily, where two persons were found dead in a home burned by a wildfire. Also, Italian news reports stated that Palermo’s international airport was forced to temporarily shut down operations as a result of wildfires.

There were 34 reported weather-related deaths in Algeria, with thousands evacuated in parts of Europe due to the intense heatwave.

Fires burning on the island of Rhodes forced authorities to carry out the largest evacuation ever undertaken in the country, with more than 20,000 people fleeing homes, along with tourists vacationing at many hotels.



Hon. John McKay

M.P. for Scarborough-Guildwood

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Carpenters Regional Council, EDI mourn Mark Lewis' passing

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Woodbridge – The Carpenters' Regional Council and its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion department are mourning the passing of former General Counsel and Chief of Staff, Mark Lewis. He died on July 24 at the age of 61.

Following his passing, Local 27 Vice President and the EDI Director, Chris Campbell, issued a statement noting that Lewis' career took him "on many stellar roles that included being a lawyer, vice chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, an associate professor, a writer, and trail-blazing a historical path in the labour movement as General Counsel, and as first Chief of Staff with the CRC".

Campbell also declared that Lewis will be missed for his "great knowledge"; for "his dedication to the CRC's inclusive philosophy, and for his willingness to walk among us on our journey for equity, diversity, and inclusion".

"Mark will always be remembered for his devotion to, and for promoting, the EDI team, and for being in the front ranks among us as we marched on the streets of Toronto in the name of equity, diversity, and inclusion," Campbell stated.

Campbell also noted that among the "many memories as we move forward without him now" is the day Lewis marched on Yonge Street with the Carpenters Union during the Pride Parade.

"Mark was at the front carrying the Carpenters Union LGBTQ2 Pride banner," Campbell recalled.

He also stated that Lewis was prominent during celebrations of Black History Month in February.

"[Then] Mark was on stage presenting the cheque from the Carpenters Union for the youth scholarship. What made his presentation even more impressive and poignant was Mark also funded this worthy cause by writing a personal cheque that was a family donation."

Said Campbell: "Mark had a long and fulfilling history in the labour movement. He made a difference in the lives of many in the trades and construction industry, as General Counsel and Chief of Staff, and especially in the CRC's visionary thrust for equity, diversity, and inclusion among our membership. He was always a genuinely respectful, caring individual, and shared our collective vision for a better world."

He ended declaring that the CRC, and its EDI department, "will continue to build on the foundation you helped us start".

In its statement following his death, the CRC noted Lewis' tireless dedication to fairness, and an unwavering advocacy for workers.

Stated the CRC: "Mark was a tireless leader and true advocate for the working class. He fiercely believed in fairness, and spent each day fighting on behalf of workers so that they could enjoy better lives."

It added, "His professional accomplishments over the course of his career were significant, as both a lawyer and a former vice-chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. His ideas and activism have had an immeasurable impact on the labour landscape in Ontario and beyond, and will continue to improve countless lives long into the future."

The CRC also declared that Lewis "will be remembered for his many outstanding qualities, including his intellect, drive, sense of humour, and grace".



Last year Lewis joined Local 27 members in building a deck to assist a Canadian veteran during its annual Renos for Heroes assistance programme

Additionally, "Perhaps the quality he'll be remembered for most of all is his kindness, which knew no bounds and made him such a great mentor, colleague, and friend. He was an exceptional human being, and an irreplaceable light in the lives of all that knew him. He will be sorely missed."

In an online statement, the George Brown College community also extended its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues following Lewis' passing.

The statement noted he was an esteemed friend, donor, and partner of the college, while adding that throughout his career, Lewis demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the trade union movement, and for the rights of working people.

It added, "He promoted careers in the trades to young people, and supported students by funding GBC scholarships and working with the college to support future professionals in various ways."

Said Dr Gervan Fearon, GBC President: "Mark had a vision of outstanding possibilities for others and society, and through his work with the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario, he lived and took the action to make a difference in the lives of others."

The GBC also noted that Lewis advocated for governments to address the critical shortage of skilled trades' workers in Ontario and the GTA.

Also, that he highlighted the need to attract and support young people, women, and new Canadians to this career path.

"Mark was a champion of diversity in the trades," it stated.

In March this year, Lewis was among those who presented a \$100,000 cheque to Fearon to launch an endowment fund for the Chris Campbell Perseverance Award.

As Campbell noted, Mark personally donated to the fund, the GBC statement revealed.

Campbell also spoke to Lewis' incredible legacy, declaring that his "passion for labour rights, the union and its members, and his commitment to increasing diversity in the skilled trades will continue to have a positive influence for many years to come".



Marching in Toronto earlier this year were (l-r) EDI Director & Local 27 Vice President, Chris Campbell; Mark Lewis; CRC Representative Mulisius Joe; Jason Rowe, Carpenters' Canadian District Vice President; & Mike Yorke, CDC President.



Mark Lewis (at right) holding the oversized cheque for GBC; also in photo (left to right) are GBC's Cindy Gouveia, President Dr Gervan Fearon, & Clifton Donegal; Rokhaya Gueye from Local 27; & EDI Director, Chris Campbell.



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Editorial

‘Our common home’

We urge religious and community leaders to take up and amplify the call made by Pope Francis to governments to do more to fight climate change, and to protect the planet, which he has identified as “our common home”.

Pope Francis’ call to action in urging governments to do more about global warming and climate change came last month in the wake of The Vatican dispatching condolences to Greece, where wildfires took a toll on lives, caused millions of dollars in property damage, and further exacerbated a landscape already burdened by growing and deleterious environmental and extreme weather impacts.

Thankfully, Pope Francis remains forthright, and continues to be outspoken on environmental issues. Also, he has been using his holy office to signal to governments to act more purposefully on climate change, and to do so with greater resolve.

As he declared late last month, “[I hope] that the risks to our common home, exacerbated by the present climate crisis, will spur all people to renew their efforts to care for the gift of creation, for the sake of future generations.”

His words came in the wake of the hellish desolation in July that saw waves of heat, and strong gusts of wind fueling wildfires in Europe’s Mediterranean region.

In Greece alone, fires consumed with apparent pre-apocalyptic ferocity hundreds of square kilometres of land outside Athens, tore through the island of Rhodes that forced mass evacuations, and caused similar human dislocation and immense losses in many other besieged regions.

Even as Pope Francis lifted up his voice to the earthly powers-that-be, last month another plea arrived for similar and immediate radical action on climate change, this time coming from United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

In language layered with growing anxiety, foreboding, and alarm, Guterres said the record-shattering July temperatures were an indication that Earth had passed from a warming phase into an “era of global boiling”.

Guterres’ rhetoric of alarm could be stated in an even more draconian way: that “our common home” had made the transition from the frying pan and into the fire.

It was such, as Guterres was well aware of when he was sounding the alarm, that the blistering heat waves in the northern hemisphere, including parts of Europe and the Americas, were the triggers for the devastating wildfires in Greece, Italy, and Algeria along the Mediterranean.

“Climate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning. The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived,” Guterres solemnly declared.

The emerging rhetoric of alarm, and the metaphors of precarity and apocalyptic foretaste, are not without substance and empirical data.

As reported last month, according to ERA5 data from the European Union-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service, the first three weeks of July were the warmest 21-day period on record. And while the hard data that may prove this assertion will be available on August 8, it may be, as the scientists are saying, that July was indeed the hottest month ever recorded.

And as Copernicus also reported last month, average global temperature topped 17 degrees Celsius for the first time, hitting 17.08 degrees on July 6. Also, “our common home” experienced its hottest day ever recorded in July, breaking the global average temperature record set in 2016.

So far for this summer, we have seen four climate records broken: the hottest day on record; the hottest June on record globally; extreme marine heat waves; and record-low Antarctic sea ice.

As Guterres noted, the present extreme impacts of climate change are well in line with the “predictions and repeated warnings” that are being made by scientists. The “only surprise is the speed of the change”, he grimly noted.

Along with Pope Francis, Guterres also implored the global powers-that-be, saying, “Leaders must lead. No more hesitancy. No more excuses. No more waiting for others to move first.” Burning heat must be turned into “burning ambition”, he declared.

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

Cabinet shuffle reflects diversity of our voices

Most Canadians probably didn’t realise there was a massive cabinet shuffle this week. Actually, many probably don’t even know what that meant.

The Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association’s VOICE (Voter Organization for Indo-Caribbean Engagement) program did an unofficial survey, and most respondents have never heard of a “cabinet shuffle” before.

Working in government and managing political campaigns for almost two decades, I’ve witnessed firsthand how detached people are from the government. And even when a significant event like a cabinet shuffle occurs, many are simply not aware, but most just don’t care.



Ryan Singh

To level set, a “cabinet shuffle” is when a head of government, the Prime Minister in this case, rearranges members of his or her cabinet – the executive council of government.

In the modern political context in Canada, members of a government’s Cabinet are elected officials who sit in the Government Caucus (grouping of members of the same political party). The Prime Minister selects who he or she prefers to lead departments of the government.

The composition of the Cabinet is strictly at the discretion of the Prime Minister. And there are many factors that a Prime Minister may take into account when building his or her Cabinet.

Regional representation is important, ensuring that each part of this large country has a seat at the table. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has also delivered on his commitment to a “gender-balanced” cabinet, with 50/50 men and women around the table.

The recent Cabinet shuffle by Trudeau was significant, as it was probably one of the largest shuffles by a sitting government in recent times. However, there was a distinct feature that is quite noticeable, which is the increased diversity of the updated Cabinet.

Since 2015, there has been a significant focus on diversity in Trudeau’s cabinet. However, as the government tenure continued, the growth of a diverse Caucus has provided Trudeau with the gift to select Cabinet Ministers from a large pool of experienced and talented Members of Parliament, many of whom also come from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

However, this emphasis on diversity is also strategic on Trudeau’s part.

In recent months, the Conservatives under the leadership of Pierre Poilievre, have launched an aggressive push to courting visible minority Canadians. And with many battlegrounds electoral districts composed of diverse populations, the key to forming the government is with winning over voters in these ridings.

Traditionally, the Liberal Party has been reliant on a strong base of support from visible minority Canadians, but that is quickly eroding. And the Liberals must compete to hold on to

that support.

Cabinet Ministers from diverse cultural backgrounds attempt to draw a variety of community groups closer to the governing party, but also provide a direct linkage for those groups around Canada’s most powerful political table.

Trudeau’s rebooted cabinet added Scarborough MP Gary Anandasangaree, rookie MP Rechie Valdez from Mississauga, Montreal-area MP Soraya Martinez Ferrada, north Toronto MP Ya’ara Saks, and MP Arif Virani from downtown Toronto.

Anandasangaree is Tamil Canadian, Valdez is Filipino Canadian, Ferrada is Chilean-Canadian, Saks is Jewish Canadian, and Virani is an Ismaili Muslim Canadian

This was no doubt a significant increase in the diversity around the Cabinet table.

This was on top of existing members of Cabinet. Minister Anita Anand became the Treasury Board president, Minister Harjit Sajjan moves to lead emergency preparedness, and Minister Kamal Khera is now Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities. Anand is Hindu. Sajjan and Khera are Sikh-Canadians.

Further, Minister Mary Ng, who is Chinese-Canadian, and Minister Marci Ien, and Minister Ahmed Hussen, who are Black Canadians, and Minister Pablo Rodriguez, Argentinian-Canadian, all also remained in Cabinet.

Notably, Minister Ien, who was born in Toronto, is of Trinidadian descent, and the only Cabinet Minister with roots in the Caribbean.

Overall, 11 of 39 members of the Cabinet represent newcomer communities, which make up just over a quarter (28 percent). This aligns with the fact that approximately 9.6 million Canadians (26 percent of the population) identify as a member of a visible minority group.

And in a country as diverse as Canada and growing, that representation is vital. For the Cabinet to truly serve Canadians it must not only look like the diverse country in which it represents, but it must come from that diversity, and truly respond to the needs of diverse communities.

As the Trudeau government begins this next and new chapter, it has added several bright and talented Canadians to the top decision-making body in the country. And with many of the new talented MPs from diverse backgrounds, the voices that make up Canada’s many multicultural groups will be increasingly represented, heard, and incorporated into the decision-making process.

For Canada to succeed, its government must be truly inclusive of the variety of people that compose its population. This is absolutely the way forward, as Canada’s strength will be its diversity.

No longer boxed-in by having to take long walks

Now to make my way in the world during my early childhood meant taking long walks. Getting from Point A to Point B, whatever the distance between our villages back then, meant doing it solely on foot.

Unless, of course, one built a box cart, as a neighbour did when I was growing up back home.

By whatever the means, likely purloined, this neighbour had put his kleptomaniac, sticky hands on two large ball bearings. Whatever the source, the ball bearings were quickly used to build a box cart the very same evening of its arrival.



Romeo Kaseram

The ball bearings and the box cart were the talk of the village that evening. This neighbour had a few visits, of course, by other villagers who were too curious to peep over the tall, thick, and privacy-guaranteed hibiscus fence. During the visit, they marveled at the smoothness of the circles of stainless steel as it turned on the array of embedded ball bearings.

“It is like this thing spinning quiet, quiet. Like it sitting inside a pound of truck grease. It not going to rust at all, at all,” one visitor said with wonderment, while ceaselessly spinning the outer, stainless steel rim near an attentive ear.

Others picked it up, hefted for weight, peered down, sideways, and top-down, and then pronounced the ball bearings to be of lasting quality. His children rolled it along the pounded earth floor, making accompanying sounds of a motor humming at high speed.

Then there was that one envious neighbour, who resentful of the good fortune that had come to a fellow villager, could not help but express his malice to my nonchalant uncles afterwards.

“He steal those two ball bearings from a big motor in the sugar factory. I’m sure it is the motor that grinds the sugar cane. I won’t be surprised if the factory shut-down now. Next thing is the estate police come here and carry him down to the station. I will be the first to take the witness stand,” the neighbour told my uncles.

My grandmother, always on the lookout for bad villagers negatively influencing her one piece of grandson, quickly and forcibly guided me by shoving my reluctant shoulders out of the room.

“Don’t listen to him,” Ma hissed in a focused whisper. “He is jealous he didn’t thief the ball bearings and bring them home for himself.”

Pushed out of the house and abandoned in the front yard, I looked across the plains, and above and beyond the swaying fields of sugar canes. In the distance the two chimney stacks of the sugar factory continued its eternal belching of thick plumes, the contrails of black soot lifting upwards and pointing outwards to the nearby ocean.

There were no warning horn blasts coming from the sugar-factory. Even from my distance, the grinding, hissing, and the eternal thrumming of motors and machinery continued in its manufacture of hundreds of tons of sugar.

There was no possibility that the neighbour’s purloining of the two ball bearings, from whatever and however critical the equipment, had caused the sugar factory to grind to a halt.

The ball bearings soon found a new home on a wooden axle nailed to the bottom-centre of a hastily-constructed three-by-four-foot box. Using irregular pieces of wood for the box, the axle with the ball bearings was solidly attached underneath, with two lengths of boards extending outwards as arms.

Right away the quality of life improved for the neighbour. No longer did he go to the village well with one container. Instead, fewer trips were made, and more water brought back in less time using the box cart as a means of mass container conveyance.

Also, the neighbour’s brood of children went along for the ride, noisily goading their father to push the box cart faster along the bumpy, graveled roadway.

Once, in a gesture of generosity, the neighbour offered me a ride, the experience making me vow to own a box cart one day.

Guyanese should beware what is wished for with US model

Dear Editor,

The Guyanese people's fascination with the US is limitless. America is a dreamland of limitless possibilities. And yes, there are grounds for looking up to the US. There are too many good things to enumerate here.

At the same time, the US is a deeply troubled country, and those who want the new Guyana to become like America had better beware. It is best to begin with some simple facts on income, health, and education.

Real median household income in the US in 2021 was (all currency USD) \$70,784, among the highest in the world.

Yet, 37 percent of Americans (in 2023) do not have enough cash if they had an unexpected expense of \$400, and 18 percent do not have even \$100 in cash for an emergency expense. In 2022, 44 percent of Americans spent more than they earned, and 65 percent reported not having enough retirement savings (Will Daniel, May 23, 2023).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 2022 and April 2023, real average wages dropped.

According to a recent study by Dr Amy Glasmeier and colleagues of MIT, a living wage in the US should be \$45 an hour. The Federal Minimum Wage, however, is \$7.25 an hour. Many states and counties have mandated a \$15 minimum wage, but there are numerous modifications that prevent universal enforcement.

Note also that a large illegal or otherwise vulnerable labour force translates into wages being paid even below the Federal Minimum of \$7.25. Most of the vulnerable workers have zero benefits, and no protection under labour law.

If you take other key indicators of well-being (human development), things do not look so good for Americans. Let us start with health. No less than 28 million Americans have no healthcare insurance of any kind. Medicare and Medicaid are not automatic. Those with insurance pay through their teeth.

"If you are buying an Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) plan as non-subsidised health insurance for a family of four, you can expect to pay about \$25,000 for the year in premiums and deductibles. That breaks down to an average of \$17,244 in annual premium cost for health insurance for families of four, and \$7,767 in deductible expenses" (Davalon, October 28, 2022).

This does not include prescriptions. Note that medications in the US are among the highest priced in the world. Research by Rand Corporation found that Americans pay more than 150 percent higher prices for medication than in 32 countries.

"US patients are even paying triple the price for Rx drugs as Koreans, Portuguese, and Australians, and 3.5 times as much as Slovaks, Greeks and residents of some of the Baltic countries" (K. Buchholz, August 9, 2022).

In the US 650,000 people go bankrupt every year due to medical bills. You should note that this is not restricted to "surprise billing, which is a particularly pernicious form of extortion in the world of medical billing.

The No Surprises Act (NSA) effective from January 2022 has helped, but has not prevented medical billing.

What Guyanese should know is that even though Americans pay huge premiums for health insurance, they must still cough up

something called "co-pay". This is an additional fee you pay every time you have an appointment.

Shall we turn to education please? Students in the US owe more than \$1 trillion in debt. The average college student who took out a loan owes \$20,000 for 20 years after they graduate. The tuition for most top-notch universities in the US is more than \$55,000. Many have reached \$75,000 per annum.

Note that this is not for professional training in medicine, law, engineering, or business. This is just for the Bachelor's degree!

Two further points here: firstly, the figures above do not include living expenses - housing, food, books, transportation, and everyday living.

Secondly, while scholarships are widely available, only a small percentage of students get a 'full ride'. The scholarships, while impressive in dollar amounts, usually cover only about one third of tuition, and nothing towards housing, books, and other fees.

You should also note that there is extraordinarily little funding for the Master's degree. Currently, 43 million students have outstanding loans.

The average debt to the Federal Government is \$37,000, while private debts stand at \$54,921 (M. Hansen).

There are also huge racial disparities in student debt.

"Four years after graduating, nearly half of Black graduates owe more on their loans than their initial balance, compared with just 17 percent of White graduates" (E. Schirmer, *New Yorker*, July 27, 2022).

Many older Americans are still paying off student loans. There are 2.8 million in their sixties who are still clearing their student debts.

The education system is rife with inequalities. A great deal depends on race, class, and Zip codes. Since these variables are highly intersected, the K-12 education system is one of staggering inequalities.

A good indicator of these inequalities can be garnered from the data on "Free or Reduced Lunch" (F&R) programs. These programs provide free lunch to students based on family income.

Right now, [53 million American kids are on F&R](#). When that figure is disaggregated by county, and then by Zip code, the picture of structural inequality becomes even more stark.

Maryland is one of the richest states in the US, but even here, the Baltimore City Public School district has an F&R rate of 88.24 percent.

This means that 88.24 percent of families in this school district do not earn enough to purchase, or make lunch for their children. There are millions of families that suffer from the same poverty.

C.L.R. James once stated that the US is a great and interesting country. I agree. However, what makes it interesting might give pause to the narrative of a land of milk and honey.

Guyanese who have not lived in the US cannot know the hardships, sacrifices, and multiple challenges that Americans are faced with daily.

And do note, we have not even touched mass shootings, xenophobia, racism, or political divisiveness that can, and have troubled the democratic tradition of that great nation. All things considered, therefore, should the US be a role model for Guyana?

Dr Randolph B. Persaud, via email.



Randolph Persaud



Call extended to stand up & serve

Dear Editor,

What does it say about us as Trinidad and Tobago that the only opposition to the PNM are parties and personalities that are riddled with persons of questionable character?

From those charged and out on bail, to those who are under current police investigation for fraud, to those who are fighting extradition and running from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to those accused of defrauding charitable foundations, to those alleged by their own colleagues to be the masterminds of human trafficking rings, to those before the courts accused of rampant corruption while they were in government.

What does it say about us as a society that we still vote for these people, or support their parties separately, or in whatever configuration

they come up with for every election?

And what does it say about them that the only rallying cry is that the PNM is the enemy, and we have to get rid of them? If the PNM is the enemy of that, then shouldn't we be happy?

This is not a letter of support for the PNM; they are not without their faults and mistakes.

This is a call for all of us to reject persons and parties who should never be held up to be the best of us.

This is a call for those in society who are truly concerned with the future of this nation to stand up and serve, if only to provide proper oversight of the government and an Opposition that young people can see, and of which they can be proud.

Daniel P. William, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.

RE/GUYANA GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

Prescriptive Title Explained

By Kal Juman-Yassin

Guyanese laws allow a person residing in or in possession of a property to claim ownership after 12 years if they can prove the paper owner has abandoned it. The law originated to allow Guyanese to claim ownership of land historically owned by overseas colonial entities, and has allowed for both the legitimate and fraudulent transfer of property ownership to occur.

In some cases, overseas Guyanese property owners have deliberately allowed their relatives to claim ownership with their consent. Property owners who intend to retain and pass on assets to their heirs need to actively engage in the administration of their properties to avoid losing it to an unchallenged prescriptive rights claim.

The process would include filing an application with an updated survey, interviewing and obtaining statements from witnesses, preparing an Affidavit, and serving a Petition to the neighbouring occupiers of the land in support of the Claim.

The applicant would then be required to file an advertisement of the Petition in the *Official Gazette*, and a daily newspaper for three consecutive Saturdays. After these steps, the applicant would then appear in court and obtain the grant where there is no opposition, and then files to become the owner of the property by Transport, Certificate, or Title of a Lease.

Any person can file an opposition to the grant of a Petition by filing and serving an Opposition, which would trigger a court trial to determine whether the Opposition should be upheld or dismissed.

Challenging the court's ruling years after can be difficult unless proof of fraud can be adequately demonstrated. If the property has subsequently been sold to another party, then the property is likely irretrievably lost.

The lesson for every overseas owner of Guyanese property is to ensure that the property is effectively administered and managed. Owners should ensure they pay the rates and taxes, have an up-to-date rental agreement with their tenants, and visit the property at least once per year. Don't assume everything is fine; check up on your property today.

RE/Guyana is a property services company dedicated to making it easier for overseas property owners to administer, divest, acquire, and develop their real estate assets in Guyana.

[Click here to go to our free online property risk assessment.](#)



Photo by Russell Lutchman



Photo by Russell Lutchman



Photo by Russell Lutchman



Photo by Russell Lutchman

Toronto Caribbean Carnival takes over

Toronto – The weekend will be humming with music, the pounding of feet on pavements, and spectacular displays of costumes when Toronto Caribbean Carnival hits the road, with the main events taking place from August 3 to August 6.

Among the upcoming attractions is the **King and Queen Showcase**, which will take place tomorrow starting 5:00 p.m. to midnight at Lamport Stadium. The event will feature Mas Bands, and the grand showcase of the King and Queen costumes.

Pan Live Panorama takes place the next day, August 4, once again at Lamport Stadium. It runs from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. The event will showcase Toronto's steel pan performers.

And on August 5, the **Grand Parade** returns to Lakeshore Boulevard and Exhibition Place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. This spectacular event will feature thousands of masqueraders parading on Lake Shore Boulevard, along with Toronto's top DJs playing pulsating Soca music. The parade can be taken in for free along Lakeshore Boulevard.

The party then returns on August 6 to Malvern Park/ Malvern Recreation Centre, with **Pan in D'Park**, from 2:00 p.m. to 9 p.m., and will feature Toronto's top steel bands and steel pan performers.

This is a family event that will include Old Mas characters, DJs, Calypso/Soca artists, other entertainment, a marketplace, and an amusement area.

Meanwhile, Toronto Caribbean Carnival's **Junior Carnival Parade** took place on July 22 on the streets of Malvern. Among those attending the event were Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and newly-elected Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow.

The day of fun saw young masqueraders taking to the streets of Malvern dressed in costumes and parading to the thrilling sounds of Soca music.

Winner of the event was Carnival Nationz' Lil Nationz's. The band both defended its title, and then took it back, once again copping the Toronto Caribbean Carnival Junior Band of the Year 2023. This year the band portrayed *Let's Go Around the World*. Second place was won by Jamaal Magloire's *Showtime*, with *Once Upon A Time* placing third.

The Junior Carnival Parade also saw participation by families and children from Carpenters' Local 27.

The accompanying photos by Russell Lutchman & Carpenters' Regional Council's Raquel Camargo capture the day's energy.



CRC's Raquel Camargo photo



CRC's Raquel Camargo photo



Photo by Russell Lutchman



Photo by Russell Lutchman



Carpenters' Regional Council's Raquel Camargo photo



Photo by Russell Lutchman

Praise for Local 1946's volunteerism in London chapel move

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

London, Ontario – Acknowledgement for their community spirit, volunteerism, and for contributing to the equity, diversity, and inclusion movement was made last week to carpenters at the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America Local 1946 in London, Ontario.

The commendation to Local 1946 came from Carpenters' Regional Council's Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Director, Chris Campbell, following the union's contribution to the successful renovation, preservation, and relocation of London's Fugitive Slave Chapel to its new home in Fanshawe Pioneer Village.

Campbell made the acknowledgement following attendance at the July 20 ribbon cutting and opening of the chapel at its new location. Also attending the event with Campbell was CRC Representative, Mulisius Joe.

Speaking with *Indo-Caribbean World* last week, Campbell indicated the pews that are now part of the chapel's renovation and restoration were constructed by carpenters and donated by the London Carpenters' Union Local 1946.

"Thank you to Local 1946 for supplying the pews for this historic chapel," Campbell said.

Campbell added, "I am proud we are not concealing the past, but are learning from it. Generations to come will see how we continue to stand united for freedom, liberty, justice, and respect for all."

The chapel was built in 1848 by the African Methodist Episcopal Church on Thames Street, and served as a gathering and worship space for London's Black community until 1869. It was also a place of worship for former slaves who had fled from

slavery in the US via the Underground Railroad, and who later settled in Southwestern Ontario.

Now a heritage building, it was re-purposed a few times throughout the decades following its religious and historic role as a chapel and refuge for fleeing slaves. Among its iterations were conversion to a residence, and later as an office for a taxi service.

It then fell into desuetude, becoming a derelict building, until it resurfaced in the news in 2013, when an application was made to City Hall by the taxi company to have it demolished.

However, a community-led intervention, supported by London's politicians, succeeded in having the entire building moved by truck to Grey Street in November, 2014.

The move placed the building next door to the AMEC that had replaced it nearly a century and a half earlier.

Then last year its owners, the AMEC, began seeking a permanent solution to have the building gifted, restored, and moved to a permanent location.

A successful fund-raiser that was started earlier set out to raise \$300,000, and which culminated

with the building being moved again by truck, this time to be set up at its present location at Pioneer Village.

The fund-raising campaign saw several generous major contributors, among them the Diocese of London, Ironstone Building Company, Drewlo Holdings, and City Hall.

Later, the fund-raising goal was surpassed when the federal government donated \$150,000 through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund.

Christina Lord, a member of London's Black History Coordinating Committee, and who also sits on the FPV's Board of Governors, told *Global News* last month the project's suc-



CRC's Chris Campbell (left) & Mulisius Joe on a pew at the chapel relocation ceremony

cess was the result of "a lot of hard work by a lot of wonderful people".

She added, "We certainly are very... grateful to our community... we had some amazing contributions. We've received a lot of support in terms of folks on the ground helping, making some real big decisions. Many of the historians in London who have contributed, as well as outside of London, some of the other Black organisations outside of London, have also contributed."

And as Campbell noted, among the members of the London community that contributed was Carpenters' Local 1946, with its team pulling together to build the pews that are now installed inside the renovated church.

As *Global News* noted, officials from Pioneer Village said museum are now working with members of London's Black community to develop a narrative moving forward that "will include the history of the building and London's involvement in the Underground Railroad". Also among the plans is a way forward that will commemorate the area's diverse Black histories.

Said Lord: "Not only will it be that space that was used originally as it was as a chapel for the enslaved people who had escaped from the US – it will [also] inform a lot of the other programming to help us understand the history of the Black communities in and around the London area over the years."

Lord also declared that the evolving narrative will open up opportunities for young people to learn more about their historical and genealogical family roots.



Section of attendees at the chapel dedication



Official ribbon cutting at the opening ceremony



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Despite Guyana's growth, many in the diaspora may not return

Guyanese fled their homeland in droves for much of the past five decades. So much so that Guyanese now account for the largest diaspora population in the world. It is estimated that between 35 percent and 50 percent of native born Guyanese are currently living abroad.

Now that the country is growing rapidly due to its new-found oil wealth, the government is actively courting Guyanese to return home to participate in the country's massive development initiatives.

Over the past two years it has been engaged in a conscientious diaspora outreach program to highlight the opportunities in Guyana; and to encourage Guyanese to return home to take advantage of them.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation has set up a Diaspora Unit to co-ordinate its engagement efforts. According to Foreign Secretary Robert

Persaud, the government sees the diaspora as an asset and has made it a priority to engage it on capital, human resources, network, and expertise in the evolving sectors in Guyana.

From a more strategic standpoint, President Irfaan Ali stated, "We are also keen on transforming the brain-drain into brain gain. The technology now exists to also tap into our highly-skilled diaspora."

He added, "[The] diaspora possesses the skills and expertise that are needed for the modernisation of our economy. We hope to be able to use ICT to be able to make greater use of the

wealth of skills available within the diaspora, including in providing educational and health services."

As well, Ali further noted: "We look to our diaspora to project our external interests, including to protect our democracy, and to defend our territorial integrity and sovereignty, particularly from external threats. We look to

our diaspora to champion the international causes which are germane to our national interests, including arresting climate change. Indeed, we also look to our diaspora to wield its influence in attracting and in unlocking markets for our products."

However, it is not likely that Guyanese will return in droves, although a few will – much to the disappointment of the government, whose expectations are high that Guyanese will be enamoured by the country's economic transformation.

Don't get me wrong, the majority of Guyanese are longing to return home – not to stay but just for a visit.

Truth is, for most, uprooting themselves from their foreign abode is far more challenging compared to fleeing Guyana in the first place. Most are now settled in their new homes; have built careers; and have kids and grandkids who have grown up in what is their new home.

The few who are willing to go back are either professionals who are either retired; have secured jobs in Guyana; are willing to take the risk of setting up a business; or have grown tired of living in a foreign country.

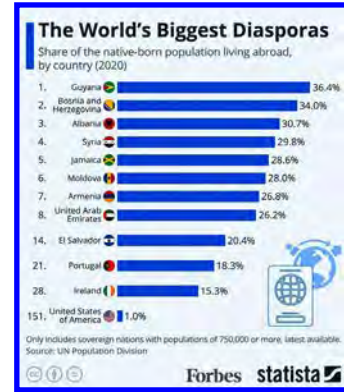
The latter are excited about living in a country whose culture they already know or simply want to spend their last days at home in Guyana. Or like the message from the song of the sitcom Cheers goes, "I want to go where everybody knows my name."

Yet, some believe they would have more respect in Guyana. A story told to me by Michael Granger, the now deceased brother of former President David Granger way back in the early 1980s is a good illustration of this: "I came back home because I am respected here. In America I am nobody, I am just an ordinary person, no one cares that I am a professor."

Granger, a former colleague at the Ministry of Agriculture, was responding to my question on why he would leave his job at Purdue and return to Guyana.

Then I was a naïve individual, who like most Guyanese at that time believed living in North America would be a dream come through.

The truth is, many Guyanese feel this way. Some of those who migrated abroad have had their expectations of "streets paved with gold" shattered, especially in North American countries. They have had to struggle to achieve respectability. At the same time, many Guyanese living abroad have attained the peak of excellence in their



respective fields.

While the prospects of returning home might sound appealing, it is necessary to understand why Guyanese fled their homeland in the first place.

For some it was in search of a better life. For most, they were running away from a country which was characterised by racial discrimination, nepotism, bribery, and corruption.

But that is not all. Fear was one of the most important factors, driven by high levels of crime and violence. The truth is, although the country is progressing economically, much has not really changed. Therefore, returning home to conditions they fled from is not a viable option.

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

Managing diaspora expectations

By G.H.K. Lall

In the comment made last month by Guyana's Public Works Minister Bishop Juan Edghill on diaspora expectations, and that these need to be better managed. It appears there is a considerable gap between what overseas Guyanese expect from a burgeoning oil economy, versus Guyana's realities. I lump this under the broad band of "incentive".

In doing so there is recognition that incentive is a package with many embedded components including land, labour, cash, concessions, and more, with cash equivalents as king throughout.

I pondered why Edghill would be ensnared in the insoluble conflict surrounding diaspora ideas, and Guyana's pockets. "Ask not what your country..." The appreciation came swiftly that with all those roads and other projects (including that Chinese-Guyanese cash cow, also known as the airport expansion black hole) prompt an urgent need for drafters, planners, builders, counters, and checkers, among an army of others with special skills.

By my uneducated guess, there should be thousands of Guyanese in the far-flung diaspora who dream of returning here, and hitting it big. It is a fair position, given that oil is the biggest thing by far to touch this country.

Foreign locals should be first in line to sample the sweetness of the sweet crude that is theirs (mine too). The big trouble is that the big ideas and big dreams of Guyanese diaspora members collide with a bigger problem. This is with a bow to rich oil returns sloshing around domestically in torrents. It involves one word only: money.

Of course, everyone could respond with, "Tell the nation something that it does not know". Be careful with what is asked for; it is often unpleasant.

Any engineer of any kind (civil, mechanical, systems and, of course, petroleum), any accountant or auditor, any computer man or woman of skill, any scientific or academic mind, considering here, has to be thinking of an annual pay package (pay only) of (US) \$150,000 at the very minimum.

I squeeze in that number is on the lowest of the low end, and dirt cheap. Because if any of those professions I identified has some respectable skills, with credentials and track record to complement, then \$150,000 a year is nothing but chicken feed in the compensation pen.

After a rough conversion from American to

Guyanese dollars, this translates to a monthly paycheck of (G) \$2.5 million for a diaspora member worth his or her salt.

Considering that alone, the local wage and salary bank was just busted wide open. All local scales would be bent silly, tumbled around in disarray.

To ensure full appreciation, the (G) \$2.5 million a month would not cover any one-time signing bonus, ongoing health and retirement costs, and the total expenditures for possibly housing, and many other sweeteners (incentives).

Edghill had it right when he spoke of managing expectations, due to the havoc that would be wreaked here.

But there is the other side of the same three-headed coin, which is the mystery and challenge of how to obtain the direly needed skills and capacity for this ballooning oil country.

If there is one instance in which the man of scripture spoke gospel, it was on this occasion. The jarring reality is that there is Guyana's reality, and there is that of the diaspora. I do not foresee droves of Guyanese diaspora cousins, with the requisite resumé, abandoning Uncle Sam to join hands with the Guyana government for peanuts.

It was Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, Guyana's oil commissar, who said that more money to the people could trigger inflationary pressures. Hence, imagine thousands of returning Guyanese doing their patriotic (and self-enhancing) bit, but at what would be super salaries in the local arena.

What would be basic, as in ground level, for those Guyanese would be super-rich, as in astronomical, for the people here.

This is the third side of the coin I had mentioned before. To accommodate overseas Guyanese returning to give back (more like get out), a whole new class of Guyanese could be in the making, with the locals left back, and the new arrivals at the top of the food chain.

As a practical matter, the foreign oil companies, and their supporting networks, have to be paying their people of calibre at rates commensurate with their conditions, and within touching distance to what I lay on the table.

Thus, in ways direct and indirect, there is some of what Guyanese in the diaspora expect already at work here. Clearly, the PPP/Civic government has its hands tied in this disconnect between where the diaspora stands and what it expects, versus where Guyana is, and what the territory here can hold.



Dwarka Lakhani



Juan Edghill

Mani Singh

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Beloved Hajin celebrated for her dedication to success of Imdadul mosque

By Sayem Khan

Special to Indo-Caribbean World

Toronto – “Life does not come with a manual; life comes with a mother”, a wise proverb states. Mothers are the most treasured persons in our lives. Their sacrifices, dedication, and industry keep our communities running and prosperous. Hajin Shareefun Khan is such a mother, and is the main driving force behind the years of success of the Imdadul Islamic Centre, one of the largest mosques in Toronto.

Many community members have received various levels of assistance from this mosque, whether it is employment-related, family-related, or any other aspect of life. Imdadul is home to many people from all over the world.

Hajin is the beloved mother of the membership at Imdadul, and on July 29, hundreds of family members across North America, community partners, beneficiaries of the mosque’s various community projects, and elected officials, came together at the Imdadul Annex to celebrate her 92nd birthday.

This was truly a celebration of life, dedication, and her years of sacrifice in establishing Imdadul as a community hub, and as an open space for all.

The event started with welcoming remarks by Imdadul’s President, Mushtaq Rustam. A widely-respected Ustad and a long-serving member, Rustam recited the first eight verses from the *Surah Hadid* (57th *Surah*). His beautiful recitation set the tone for the overall program.

Shaykh Nayeem Khan, a young scholar and one of the grandchildren of Hajin, followed by providing an eloquent *Tafseer* of the verses recited. In his *Tafseer*, Khan made connections among the profound teachings of the verses, Hajin’s character, and her values.

Eldest daughter, Sister Saiyada Sattaur then spoke to Hajin’s strong moral values, her beautiful character, especially her devotion to various forms of daily *ibadah* and good deeds.

Then on behalf of Hajin’s eight grandchildren, the eldest grandchild, Schehezada Sattaur, performed a tribute, and fondly recalled interactions with her grandmother.

Close family members also shared fond memories of Hajin. Rafee and Shafee talked about their beloved Aunt (Chachi). Shafee spoke to Hajin’s valuable effort to establish a strong



Mom Hajin Shareefun Khan (second, left) with daughters (left to right) Shamshun Neehar Khan, Saiyada Sattaur, Hafeeza Khan, & son Osman Khan



Family & friends with Hajin (centre) at the ceremony celebrating her 92nd birthday. Photos by Ramesh Ramkalawan.

women’s network, and a Sunday Women’s program.

Family members also came from the US for the event, among them Naz and Larry from California, and Hafeez and Nadia from Florida.

An instrumental member of Imdadul, Sister Naz, spoke on behalf of the Hajin’s five daughters-in-law, and expressed sincere gratitude.

One of the sweetest parts of the event were speeches shared by three of Hajin’s great grandchildren: Noah, Layla, and Jameel. Stealing the show, they called their grandmother (Nani) the greatest person in this universe.

Learned scholars also attended the event. Among them were Maulana Shamsul Arefin, and GTA Muslim community leaders, such as founding President of the Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana, who all shared tributes. Dr Farouk Ghany also spoke

about his fond memories of the Hajin.

Anthony Perruzza, City Councillor for Humber River, Black Creek, and a great friend of the mosque, presented a special recognition to Hajin on behalf of the members of the City Council. He also expressed his sincere gratitude for years of friendship to Imdadul’s membership.

He also recalled memories of his first meeting with Osman Khan, Secretary of Imdadul Islamic Centre. He described Khan as someone with “definite dreams”. Additionally, he thanked Khan for his tireless efforts in turning these community-oriented dreams into reality.

MPP Tom Rakocevic was also in attendance with his mother for Hajin’s celebration. He presented a special gift to Hajin as a sign of appreciation for her years of leadership on behalf of the members of the Ontario Provincial Parliament.

Rabbi Rampersaud added a special flavour with a magnificent performance of a famous song *Ma Ki Mohabbat*, which translates to ‘Mother Love’. An audience favourite, Nazira Baksh performed a beautiful *nasheed* that delighted the gathering.

The dedicated volunteers of the Imdad Centre, under the leadership of Haji Zafrullah Khan, prepared a sumptuous dinner that included a variety of mouth-watering dishes and desserts.

The closing prayer was performed by Imam Haji Yusuf. One of Hajin’s beloved daughters, Hafeeza Khan, expressed her sincere gratitude to participants that attended and supported the event. She also talked about many charitable projects performed by the young members of the Khan family, including building much-needed wells in Kenya.

The effort that goes into establishing a community that works for everyone is enormous, and is a shared responsibility. The growth and success of Imdadul have been possible due to the founding members such as Hajin Shareefun Khan. Today Imdadul is deeply respected by stakeholders, and serves as a beacon of hope.

The 92nd birthday celebration for Hajin, and all the accolades and honours that the Almighty has bestowed upon her, is a profound testament that if an individual, or an organisation, puts the community first and makes it a priority to serve people, then success in this world and the hereafter is inevitable.

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Demand for reparations renewed by Caribbean & African entities

Bridgetown – A demand was made last week for reparations for slavery and its legacy in the contemporary world by representatives from various African and Caribbean entities.

The demand came as a joint call following an historic session that took place in Bridgetown, Barbados, *Reuters* and the Caribbean media reported.

The University of the West Indies, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union, Barbados’ government, grant-making network Open Society Foundations, and the Caribbean Pan African Network teamed up to “call for reparations for historical crimes”.

The meeting included strategy sessions and plenaries, and marked the beginning of an “inter-continental campaign”, The UWI said in a statement.

The meeting was also described as “ground-breaking”.

Attendees included ambassadors and representatives from AU member states and Caricom.

Following the session, Sir Hilary Beckles, head of the Caricom reparations commission, told a news conference that the session’s declaration was an “historic moment”.

He added, “[Humanity] cannot go forward with all the toxic interferences of colonisation. We have to clean up this mess to allow humanity to function.”

The commission was set up to seek reparations from former colonial powers such as the UK, France, and Portugal.

In its ten-point reparation plan, the com-

mission declared that it “sees the persistent racial victimisation of the descendants of slavery and genocide as the root cause of their suffering today”.

Outcomes of the meeting included a proposal for a roadmap for cooperation between the AU and Caricom, the UWI statement said.

“It is crucial to recognise how slavery, colonialism, and racism intersect and impact the lives of Black people around the world,” said AU official Youssouf Mandoha.

From the 15th to the 19th century, at least 12.5 million Africans were kidnapped and forcibly transported by European ships and merchants and sold into slavery. Those who survived the brutal voyage ended up toiling on plantations

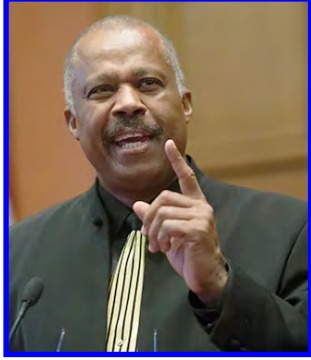
under inhumane conditions in the Americas, mostly in Brazil and the Caribbean, while the colonial powers and its representatives profited from their labour.

Barbados alone received 600,000 enslaved Africans between 1627 and 1833, who were put to work in sugar plantations, earning fortunes for the UK’s colonial owners.

In 2021 Barbados removed Britain’s late Queen Elizabeth as head of state, and renewed its campaign for reparations.

The idea of paying reparations or making other amends for slavery has a long history. Lately the movement has started to build worldwide momentum.

Earlier last month the EU said Europe’s slave-trading past inflicted “untold suffering” on millions of people, and hinted at the need for reparations for what it described as a “crime against humanity”.



Sir Hilary Beckles



Prime Minister of St Kitts & Nevis, Dr Terrance Drew (centre), government officials, & airline representatives, at the airport ceremony welcoming CAL

PM Drew welcomes CAL’s inaugural flight

Basseterre – The inaugural flight by Caribbean Airlines arrived last month in St Kitts and Nevis to a welcome ceremony at the airport, with this nation’s Prime Minister Dr Terrance Drew declaring the event as a “significant milestone” that further strengthened the country’s connectivity to the rest of the region and the world.

“It also symbolises our continued progress in boosting airlift and its countless benefits to our nation,” Drew added.

CAL is now operating a total of five weekly flights that provide travel options among Port-of-Spain, Barbados, Antigua, and St Kitts.

Drew also stated that CAL’s arrival signified a new era of opportunities and possibilities.

“We recognise the immense potential within our tourism industry, and have spared no effort in ensuring that our beautiful twin islands are easily accessible to visitors from around the globe, and more importantly, the Caribbean

region,” he said.

He also spoke to Covid-19, noting it showed “how dependent we are on tourism”.

“But even greater of a lesson is the need for us to begin bridging the gap between the region’s islands. Intra-regional travel is key to the sustainable development of our nation. As Caribbean brothers and sisters, we cannot, and must not be solely dependent on our international visitors... I want to encourage us... to travel within the region as well and help to build our own economies,” he stated.

Drew also commented on his administration’s promise to establish strategic partnerships to improve connectivity.

“...[We] have collaborated with regional and international airlines, including Caribbean Airlines, to develop new routes and increase flight frequencies, making St Kitts and Nevis more accessible and competitive for both business and leisure travel,” he said.



Ask Jay...

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How To PROTECT YOUR BASEMENT FROM FLOODING

When it rains, it pours, and basements can flood. Heavy rainfall in 2000, 2005, and 2013 flooded the GTA. With climate change, extreme rainfall will occur often. Homeowners have alarms and insurance for fire, but few have any protection against flooding. How can homeowners prepare themselves?

Disconnect the downspout from the sewer system. It is now mandatory to disconnect downspouts attached to the storm or sanitary sewer system because water from rooftops flows directly into the sewers, causing the system to reach its capacity, and as a result, water and raw sewage back up into homes. An overtaxed sewer will affect all the houses in the area, not only those with downspouts connected directly to the sewer. Another major problem is that rainwater from the roof is polluted with roof shingle granules, which contribute to sludge buildup, reducing the sewer’s capacity and contaminating our water source. The soil acts as a natural filter if the downspouts discharge onto a lawn or garden.

Install and maintain a good gutter system. Homes without gutters or those with rotten or clogged eavestroughs will cause the rainwater to stay around the foundation, eventually damaging the foundation and entering the basement. To avoid leaves from clogging the eavestroughs, install leaf guards which can fit over the existing channels and allow rainwater to filter through. Add extension pieces on any downspouts at least five feet from the foundation and into green space. Plant shrubs and other flora native to your area around the home because these will help to prevent the soil from eroding, and the roots act as a natural vacuum for water.

Installing a sump pump is worth the trouble. Sump pumps are installed in a hole below the basement floor and have a float that raises when the water level increases, activating a pump that pumps water out before it reaches the basement floor. When installing a sump pump, homeowners should obtain a building permit and hire a licensed contractor. Install a battery-operated backup power supply in case there is a power failure. Test the sump pump often by filling the hole with water. For homes with existing sump pumps, connecting the sump to the sewer system to allow excess water to flow into the sewer drain is illegal.

Check for any cracks in your home foundation wall. Small cracks in the foundation wall will store water which will freeze in the winter and expand the gap. Use a water sealant to seal the cracks. Replace old weather stripping and re-caulk around windows and doors. Poor lot grading can result in basement floods. Add more soil around the foundation to create a gradient sloping away from the foundation. Roots from trees and shrubs close to the foundation can crack basement walls. Avoid planting trees close to the foundation. Small ornamental plants can add beauty and prevent erosion. If the home has a window well, add a transparent cover and keep it debris-free.

Refrain from storing important papers or expensive items in the basement. Imagine a sewer backup during a rainstorm, and your basement has a brew of raw sewage. Then, most of your items in the basement would get damaged. Many homeowners store important papers in cardboard boxes on the basement floor. Put important things in water sealed containers on top of a table or, better yet, keep them on the upper level.

Install a backwater valve. A backwater valve closes the sewer line during a flood. A building permit is needed. A licensed plumber can do the job, and once completed, must pass city inspection. When the backup valve is closed, you should not use plumbing fixtures such as showers, sinks, toilets, dishwashers, or washing machines because water cannot drain and will go back into the basement.

Install water detectors. Water detectors are battery-operated, and you can place them on the basement floor in various locations, such as near windows, sinks, furnace rooms, and washrooms. If any water is detected, the alarm will go off like a smoke detector.

Check for Subsidy/Grant programs. The federal government has various grants and subsidies to protect your home from flooding. In addition, Ontario and different cities have their subsidy program. Check with your local City Hall to see how you can access these grants and subsidies.

A wet basement, especially with sewage, will cause mold infestation. In most cases, a homeowner must gut the entire basement and leave it to dry out. This venture is expensive, and I suggest checking with your insurance company to see if you have flood protection.

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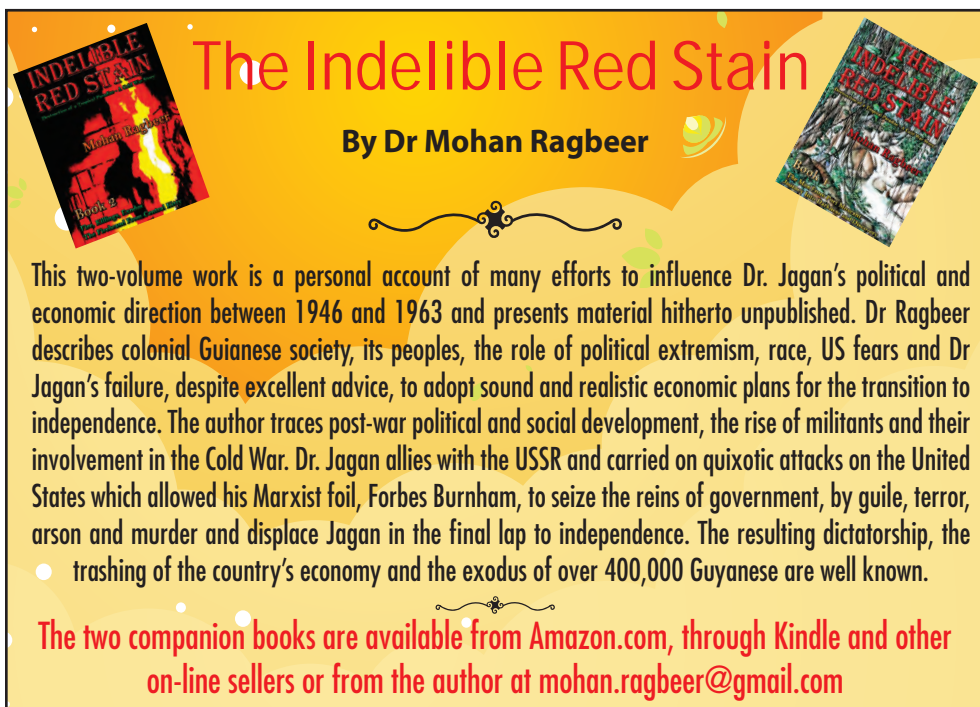
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The Indelible Red Stain
By Dr Mohan Ragbeer

This two-volume work is a personal account of many efforts to influence Dr. Jagan's political and economic direction between 1946 and 1963 and presents material hitherto unpublished. Dr Ragbeer describes colonial Guianese society, its peoples, the role of political extremism, race, US fears and Dr Jagan's failure, despite excellent advice, to adopt sound and realistic economic plans for the transition to independence. The author traces post-war political and social development, the rise of militants and their involvement in the Cold War. Dr. Jagan allies with the USSR and carried on quixotic attacks on the United States which allowed his Marxist foil, Forbes Burnham, to seize the reins of government, by guile, terror, arson and murder and displace Jagan in the final lap to independence. The resulting dictatorship, the trashing of the country's economy and the exodus of over 400,000 Guyanese are well known.

The two companion books are available from Amazon.com, through Kindle and other on-line sellers or from the author at mohan.ragbeer@gmail.com



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VM Medical Centre: 'Our focus is on quality, not speed'

From Page 1

of getting back to the roots. We were looking at traditional medicine serving its purpose, and wanted to take a complementary path with the ayurvedic programme," Persaud said.

VM's ayurvedic programme is being guided by the capable hands of the renowned practitioner, Dr Harish Verma.

But then the confluence of events occurred that lifted the ayurvedic thrust into the stratosphere.

On October 16 last year, following Global Outreach's successful TWM run, its participants and volunteers returned to its muster point at the mandir. It was also on that day that VM was launching its mental health programme.

As Persaud recalled, Ontario's Minister of Health was in attendance at the launch.

"Also on that day, we were looking to the Ministry of Health for a grant to do some research on the impact of ayurvedic medicine," Persaud recalled, adding, "The moment was right to speak to the visiting minister."

It was on that day, October 16, following the successful completion of the marathon, and its concomitant fund-raising infusion for dialysis care in Guyana, that there came an awakening confluence.

In attendance with the Health Minister were Dr Doobay, other temple leaders, along with devotees, and the TWM volunteers and participants who remained energised from the success of the run.

"The moment came when it was realised that the mandir's ayurvedic thrust could go in the direction of a medical centre. It was a significant moment in the genesis of the centre. It was an awakening, and an auspicious confluence," Persaud said.

She added, "We had the ear of the health minister, and it all came together."

However, there is an anecdotal back story to the awakening that also contributed to the blossoming of VM's medical centre.

As Persaud stated, while Dr Doobay is regarded for his spiritual guidance, at the same time he is also constantly deploying his skill sets as a medical practitioner via one-on-one counseling. So, while he has his medical corner during worship at the mandir on Sunday, he is also constantly giving medical advice to devotees, and fields calls daily from many others seeking help with their medical conditions.

As Persaud noted, in the light of his dual spiritual and medical counseling roles, there came a moment of divine realisation, an epiphanic one, when Dr Doobay exclaimed, "Why don't we open up a medical clinic?!"

That moment of awakening revealed there was a real and evolving need for a medical clinic on the Vishnu Mandir's grounds; a clinic that was committed to meeting all needs of its patients, while at the same time leveraging Dr Doobay's vast experience and knowledge, and his extensive network of practitioners in all the different medical fields.

As Dr Doobay told *Indo-Caribbean World*, "Devotees, good friends, and many others were benefiting from my medical knowledge. I thought, 'Why not open up a medical centre so many, many more patients could benefit from my decades of experience and knowledge, and the skills from other experts and specialists?'"

As Persaud noted, among Dr Doobay's key philosophies is to wake up each morning, and to make a difference in the life of at least one individual by the end of the day. It was this



Dr Sonia Anand (left) with sister, the federal government's Treasury Board President in Ottawa, Anita Anand, during a recent visit to Vishnu Mandir

inner drive that fueled formation of the medical centre after the need was divinely revealed and crystallised.

"There is no stopping Dr Doobay when he sets his mind to accomplishing a task," Persaud said of his determination and drive.

It was an auspicious day on December 3 last year when VM Medical Centre saw its first patient. The start-up day was well-chosen by an insistent Dr Doobay – it was *Makar Sankranti*, which Persaud noted is sacred and revered by Hindus for its blessings and positivity when setting out on a new venture.

There are other inspiring, back stories to the moment before Persaud put up the "Open" sign on the Medical Centre's front door on the morning of December 3.

Persaud noted the good work done by Chetram Singh's family in helping to set up the centre. Singh is a former Guyana hospital administrator, and former Ontario Ministry of Health official.

Singh's son, Mahendra, gave generously of his industry, experience, and know-how, along with mother Jean. The family has a history of successfully establishing medical clinics throughout the GTA.

"Dr Doobay was able to get their help to set up VM's medical clinic," Persaud recalled.

Another inspiring back story is in the favourable responses that came after Dr Doobay reached out to his extensive medical cohort, informing them about the mandir's plans for the centre, and to take its care up a notch with their interventions to deliver top-notch service.

Dr Doobay's colleagues responded in the affirmative, Persaud said.

One of the first specialists to come onboard was cardiologist Dr Anup Gupta, Director of the Cardiac Cath Lab at Michael Garron Hospital in Toronto.

"When we brought in Dr Gupta's cardiology clinic, we had requests for over 30 referrals, which we had to scale down to 20," Persaud recalled.

With Dr Doobay's intervention, each patient is assessed, and then quickly triaged to an area of speciality for the best care, Persaud stated.

"Here at the clinic, we recognise the intervention of care early and divert patients immediately to a specialist," she noted.

Persaud added, "We are about care and compassion. Dr Doobay is more concerned about quality and care for his patients. In him I see someone who is truly dedicated to healing, and who is attracting experts to the centre with a similar passion."

Additionally, "You get better care here. You're not an OHIP number. We are different because of our level of care, our responsive-



A friendly & welcoming Gayatri Persaud at the VM Medical Centre's front office ness, and Dr Doobay leveraging his extensive network for the patient's benefit."

Persaud noted that right away the medical centre started gaining traction for its commitment to thoroughness, and its focused, individualised level of care.

"When Dr Gupta came and saw the 20 patients, we quickly intercepted potential disasters with five of them," she revealed.

Since then, more and more specialists have come on board. A large clinic session was held recently by Dr Trevor Seaton, one of Dr Doobay's good friends and colleague. Dr Seaton is a gastroenterology specialist.

Clinic sessions have also been held by paediatricians, respirologists, a female doctor looking after women's health and wellness, and

young internists willing to donate their time and expertise to the mandir.

Persaud also revealed that Dr Alister Ingram, a retired nephrologist, and Professor Emeritus at McMaster University, has since re-registered to practice medicine, and now dispenses both his skills and love for philanthropy at VM's Medical Centre.

"Each patient receives quality time from these experts," Persaud noted.

Additionally, "It is not about speed, quantity, and turnover. Our focus is on quality, not speed. And the specialists and practitioners are all turning their billing back to the clinic. They tell us it is their way of giving back to the community; that their outreach is an act of philanthropy."


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Welcome to planet of the apps: Are we smarter with technology?

By Dhanpaul Narine

The revolution is digitised. Are we a nation that has become dumb on smart gadgets? Are we 'Facebookers' that sit for hours staring at a screen where Facetime, Inbox, Outbox, Dropbox, and miles of sockets and docket, have immersed us in a new vocabulary?

There are those that believe we are hooked up, addicted and uneducated, and standing in corners glued to smart screens, as we invite Internet apnea.

Jonathan Haidt is a social psychologist at New York University. In the publication *The Atlantic*, he uses the story of Babel to argue that we live in a fractured society. Babel is a fragmentation of America, he says.

According to Haidt, "[Something] went terribly wrong, very suddenly. We are disoriented, unable to speak the same language or recognise the same truth. We are cut off from one another and from the past."

Social media have created dislocation in which we have lost "social capital, with high levels of trust, strong institutions, and shared stories. Social media have weakened all three," he argues.

There can be no doubt that social media have resulted in disorientation, and a reluctance to explore the treasure-trove of literacy. But is this "very suddenly" as Haidt says?

The signs of anti-intellectualism have long manifested themselves in American education. In 1963, Professor Richard Hofstadter provided the theoretical basis for anti-intellectualism. He argued that: "The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that my ignorance is as good as your knowledge."

In 1982, Daniel Moynihan bemoaned the fact that video tapes were knocking books off the shelves, and a year later, a publication sent shockwaves across America.

The document, *A Nation at Risk* was published under the administration of then US President Ronald Reagan. It found that the students were not equipped to meet the demands of science and technology.

Welcome debut novel from Narine

Dhanpaul Narine, *Shitty People*, AuthorHouse, 2023

A review by Tanuja Raghoo

Dhanpaul Narine's debut novel, *Shitty People*, is a captivating literary work that takes readers on an emotional journey through the lives of a poor family in the countryside of Guyana. From the very first page, Narine's powerful words of expression draw you into the heart of the story, making it difficult to put the book down.

Set in a community where wealth disparity looms large, the novel masterfully reveals the stark contrast between the haves and the have-nots. The wealthy neighbours' lack of respect for the struggling, impoverished people of the area becomes a central theme in the narrative, shining a spotlight on the harsh realities of social inequality.

At the heart of the story is the unwavering love of a man for his pet dog, a bond that provides a source of solace and hope amidst the hardships faced by the family. This poignant thread weaves its way through the novel, highlighting the importance of companionship and compassion even in the most challenging circumstances.

One of the book's standout strengths lies in its portrayal of the struggles faced by the poor. Despite their difficult circumstances, the family in focus demonstrates resilience and determination in pursuing a better life through

education. This emphasis on education as a means of empowerment underscores the value of knowledge and learning in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Moreover, *Shitty People* beautifully explores the significance of good morals and ethics, even when surrounded by injustice and indifference. The characters' unwavering commitment to upholding their values serves as a poignant reminder of the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

Throughout the novel, Narine skillfully paints a vivid picture of the Guyanese countryside, immersing readers in the sights, sounds, and culture of the region. This attention to detail adds depth and authenticity to the narrative, making it all the more engaging.

Lastly, as a friend and an amazing author, Narine demonstrates a profound understanding of the human condition and brings it to life through his prose. His love for his homeland, Guyana, shines through in every word, making *Shitty People* not just a novel, but a heartfelt tribute to the spirit and resilience of the people of his country.

In conclusion, *Shitty People* is a compelling and thought-provoking novel that tackles profound themes of poverty, social inequality, love, and the pursuit of education. Narine's talent as an author shines brightly, and his debut novel is a testament to his storytelling prowess.

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In conclusion, *Shitty People* is a compelling and thought-provoking novel that tackles profound themes of poverty, social inequality, love, and the pursuit of education. Narine's talent as an author shines brightly, and his debut novel is a testament to his storytelling prowess.

Montana".

The point from these examples is that the seeds of dumbing-down were sown in the 1970s. They slowly worked their way into the classrooms through government's control of the school system, and the lack of choice that brings competition.

In 2006, it was reported that American students were behind other countries in the basic subjects. For example, America was placed 18th in reading, 22nd in science, and 28th in math, behind countries such as Poland, Australia, and South Korea.

In the 2009 *Journal of Science*, it was found that Chinese students outperformed their American counterparts in science, based on test scores in four American universities, and three Chinese universities.

The Americans averaged 50 percent, while the Chinese scored 90 percent. What has been the role of the Internet on college students? Information shapes one's thought process, but as Nicholas Carr argues, "The 'Net seems to be chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation."

The surfeit of information, at a click, is not without its drawbacks. We browse and skip rather than bury our minds into the beauty of the prose. We hop and skim, and read abstracts, rather than decipher the essence of the long passages.

The malleable mind wanders and cognitive development becomes obscure. Enter Sergey Brin, from Google, who wants our brains to be replaced by artificial intelligence, which is

a scary thought.

As far as college students are concerned, a report in *Applied Cognitive Psychology* found they spent five hours a day on their smart phones, which has created a cascade of sub-standard performances. The conclusion was that more phone use led to poorer solving problem skills.

Where do we go from here? Social media have given a voice to many, to the minorities that clamour for change, and who have been able to organise, and effect revolutions. The Arab Spring is one such example.

The search engines have presented a world library, at the fingertips, and have given us information to transform societies.

But social media are uncontrolled and unregulated. It has lumped people into categories of right and left, conservative and liberals, and centrists; progressives and patriots, racists and traitors.

Social media have also allowed a few to drive and dictate the agenda, and almost everyone to be an authority and a critic.

A child is cyber-bullied every 15 minutes, and little is done to stop it. There are those that predict social media will get worse, as viral piles on viral, the planet of the apps increases, and people do not know what to believe anymore.

Institutions, known for their credibility, are damaged. The leak in the US Supreme Court and Roe vs Wade, have added to the confusion.

Haidt argues that the answer lies in the creation of voluntary associations to "fix local problems". But this is not enough. Power lies in education. It lies in the schools, and colleges, where sound curricula can accommodate the digital embrace to reflect and enhance learning. As the social media engines grind away, the simple stories continue to hold the truth.



Jonathan Haidt



Dhanpaul Narine

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Equal to Mystery: Harold Sonny Ladoo

Christopher Laird, *Equal to Mystery: In Search of Harold Sonny Ladoo*, Peepal Tree Press, 2023

Equal to Mystery has been described as “a splendid book” that rises to a difficult challenge and delivers an informative, even-handed, yet passionate portrait of “an extremely complex man”, Harold Sonny Ladoo.

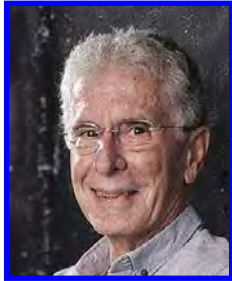
The commendation for Laird’s remarkable text comes from Canadian writer, Dennis Lee, who knew and supported Ladoo during his life in Canada, in that time when the young Trinidadian writer was attempting to make his way in the world.

Equal to Mystery was published last month by Peepal Tree Press. Laird is from Trinidad and Tobago, and is a film-maker and producer who has produced 300 documentaries, dramas, and other video productions with *Banyan Ltd* over four decades. For this rich body of work, Laird has received many national, regional, and international awards. He received an honorary doctorate from The UWI in 2009.

Ladoo’s work first came across Laird’s desk when he was editor of a Trinidadian literary journal in the early 1970s in Trinidad. As *Peepal Tree* notes, those were “radical” years in Trinidad and Tobago, marked by revolutionary social turmoil.

Then Laird had received Ladoo’s, *No Pain Like This Body* (1973) for review. As *Peepal Tree* states, right away he knew “he was looking at something revolutionary in Caribbean fiction”.

However, the next news Laird heard about Ladoo was the author had returned to Trinidad from Canada, and was discov-



Christopher Laird

ered dead, likely murdered, in the cane fields outside his family’s central Trinidad village home in McBean.

“For Laird, it became an obsession to try to discover the writer behind these novels, and what had brought about his untimely end,” *Peepal Tree* notes. The result of his pursuit is *Equal to Mystery*, words that were written by Ladoo himself.

During this pursuit, Laird discovered, among other things, that Ladoo’s public version of his biography bore only a tangential relationship to the truth; that his inventiveness as a writer extended to the management of his persona, *Peepal Tree* states.

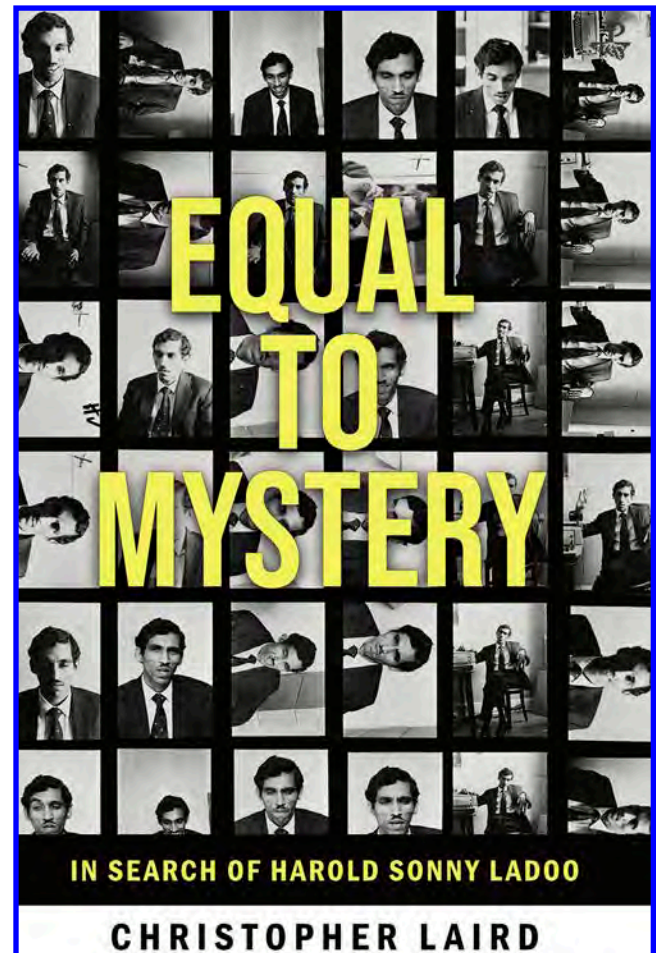
And while *Equal to Mystery* cannot solve the mystery of Ladoo’s death, it has much to say about the context and motivations for his return to Trinidad.

States *Peepal Tree*: “Laird follows in the path of Ladoo to Canada, where he went to make a name for himself as a writer, and tracks him as a student and young married man through conversations with his widow and other family members.”

Also, Laird looks in detail at Ladoo’s relationships with two Canadian writers, Dennis Lee and Peter Such, who supported his writing, and in Lee’s case, published his work.

Laird also had access to Ladoo’s unpublished material – short stories and fragments from his work-in-progress fiction. Consequently, *Equal to Mystery* contains a generous selection from Ladoo’s unpublished work.

Equal to Mystery is available at [Peepal Tree Press](#), and on [Amazon](#); the Kindle version will be available later this month.



Mattress Makers

poetry



SASENARINE PERSAUD

Sasenarine Persaud, *Mattress Makers*, Mawenzi House Publishers, 2023

As Mawenzi House notes on its website, Sasenarine Persaud’s new collection of poetry, *Mattress Makers*, celebrates the music in the seemingly mundane.

“Imbued with a deeply philosophical consciousness, and the questioning spirit of the ancients, it engages in the pleasures of technology, while ever cognisant of its drawbacks in its assault on the personal,” Mawenzi’s note states.

It adds, “As always, with this poet, there is an Upanishadic, yogic, and quantum search for truth and the essence of reality – the ancient Indian concepts of multiplicity, multi-presence, and simultaneous existences finding support in cutting-edge quantum physics.”

Consequently, “The poems therefore flip on themselves, move in a blink from place to place, from time to time, from existence to existence. They delve into ancestries and the movement and intertwining of peoples, cultures, plants,



Sasenarine Persaud

animals, cuisines, languages, loves and the passing of eras. Love and the exuberance in the world around – centred in the Florida land-(and sea-)scape – permeates this work.”

Persaud’s text has also been recognised by the Bocas Book Bulletin in Trinidad and Tobago.

Writing in the *Trinidad Express*, the Bocas Book Bulletin notes that, “[Persaud] recognises the literary achievements of late Caribbean writers such as V.S. Naipaul and Sam Selvon, consequently seeking to offer tribute to them in verse. Many of these poems are concerned with commemorations to honourable ancestors and their traditions, notably the rituals preserved by immigrant labourers to the [Caribbean].

It adds, “Using explorative and experimental devices, *Mattress Makers* journeys through time in non-linear fashion to document the psychological conditions of all those who seek an ultimate truth or enlightenment.”

Mattress Makers is available at [Mawenzi House](#), [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), and other online eBook locations.

Visit to the big city puts country living into peaceful perspective

As I make a rare visit, out of the village where I live, to the city of Toronto, I realise how much the city has changed. No more, “Toronto the good”, but a mass of traffic, new towering buildings, urban spread, fast growing population, and more. My nerves are strained by the long drive – almost four hours with no rest for my cramped legs.

My visit is to see friends and family. Their numbers are reducing. The aging process is taking its toll.

Those that are still living, for the most part, are not quite what they used to be. The wrinkled hands and faces, the stooped shoulders, the faint smile, the forgotten memories. It is perhaps the combination of changes that is the most telling. Health issues take over the conversation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

The realisation that we are on the same journey is difficult to stomach. There is “no exit”, as the existential philosophers say.

I stop for lunch at my favourite “roti restaurant” in Scarborough. I have been a customer for over 40 years. The curried goat is good, the calypso music is spicy, the service is prompt, and I am feeling fine.

The bill comes along and I realise how much inflation has hit the city and country. I manage to find a credit card to take care of the bill.

I head to a supermarket to buy some groceries with my wife. The shop is huge and not surprisingly, I get lost – country man come to town!

My wife has wandered away from me. The merchandise, the variety, the space; you can buy, besides food, almost anything from a needle to an anchor. I hear a bang and get nervous. I have

seen the TV news of crime in city life. It turns out to be a crate dropped to the ground. I look for my wife and find her parked in the checkout line.

I head for our destination in neighbouring York/Durham region. I get lost again. My GPS is not updated, and I am going around in circles. There are new roads, new neighbourhoods, a new and diverse growing population, spilling out of the suburbs.

I reach our relative and family, and settle in for a visit. I tick off my official visit list ...close relatives, distant relatives, friends, and relatives in retirement homes. Some items to purchase, not easy to obtain where we live, and a visit to Orillia to the burial place of Gordon Lightfoot, the recently deceased Canadian folk and pop singer.

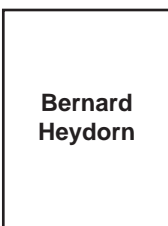
Everyone in the aging community seems to be quite busy, doing nothing. The visits are fleeting, as fleeting as time seems to be. Hearing or lack of it seems to be a common ailment. I find myself almost shouting to be understood. It is easy to step on toes... The golden rule – no politics, no religion, no money... Discretion is necessary.

Memory is also a diminishing commodity. With hearing and memory suspect, you retreat to a state of smiling through good and bad to pass the time. Hospitality is there, but the golden rule is not to overstay your welcome.

I quickly realise how the last 20 years of life in the country, on the shores of Lake Erie, have changed me. The city lights and passing traffic at night now keep me awake.

Compare that to at home where I, like others, look forward to the school bus passing on our street, twice a day. I can hear my neighbours conversation down the street where I live.

The rhythm of the rain on our steel roof is a reminder of



Bernard Heydorn





Residents cross a temporary bridge at the Brazil Arena Road



Repairs underway at the site of the extensive roadway slippage

Rowley cites 'priorities', apologises for poor roadways plaguing T&T

Port-of-Spain – An impassioned appeal by Los Bajos resident Pamela Mitchell for a better road network last week saw Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley apologising for the sub-par roads across Trinidad and Tobago.

Mitchell raised the issue during itinerant session talks with the Prime Minister, "Conversations with Dr Rowley". The events are part of the PNM's Local Government Elections campaign.

Mitchell took the government to task for the state of the country's roads, particularly in south Trinidad.

"The oil and its revenue that they get to run the country is from the South. They pull it up from under our house. The Pitch Lake is in the South, yet we have the worst roads," she lamented.

She also jested with Rowley, recommending that the government hand her a contract to fix the problem. It was a solution that needed a common-sense approach, she claimed.

Said Mitchell: "Give me the contract and it wouldn't cost (TT) \$5 million, and there

wouldn't be no bribe and kickback. Common sense! Common sense!"

Rowley smiled throughout her lamentation.

He responded, "As Prime Minister, it falls to me to apologise for the state of many of our roads, and the reason is this – priority."

Rowley spoke last week even as major landslips were being reported throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Last month part of the Brazil Arena Road collapsed, rendering the roadway impassable and stranding many residents living in the area.

Recalling the land slippage, a resident in the area told the media that the damaged roadway had existed for a few years.

"[It] existed for a few years, but they wait until the rain start to fall and then come and do this (repair work). So when the rain fall now and they come to fix the road the water start to run and that is what happened. The whole thing slide," the resident complained.

A supervisor at a nearby supermarket said the collapsed road meant that distributors could not deliver, since the alternate routes

themselves were also in poor condition.

Similar poor roads conditions throughout the country continue to plague areas, among them the Manzanilla Main Road, which was severely damaged by floods in November last year.

Work on a permanent road commenced last week, and the new roadway is expected to be completed in five months.

Rowley said the road network deteriorated due to Trinidad and Tobago undergoing an almost 30 percent loss of revenue in 2015, which was then compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It was a sudden and dramatic and significant loss of revenue, so the first priority was not to maintain a road paving programme," Rowley said.

Additionally, "Not that we deliberately didn't maintain the roads, but on the list of priorities – we maintained the main arteries through the Ministry of Works, hundreds of millions of dollars – but the secondary road programme suffered. That, I have to admit. That I have to apologise for; and that is the reason for it."

Rowley also gave the assurance that the government has re-engaged in a secondary road programme to address these concerns.

Said Rowley: "2015 to 2022 were about the most difficult period in the history of independent Trinidad and Tobago, and if out of that comes some roads that are substandard, as they are, we have hope, we have faith, we have a commitment that we are going to get to your road, and we're going to bring them to a standard that will be acceptable."

Govt spends \$15M on Paria CoE

Port-of-Spain – The sole survivor from the Paria diving tragedy and relatives of the deceased divers last week expressed pain and disappointment that (TT) \$15 million have been spent so far on the Commission of Enquiry, even as they struggle to survive without any government help.

Last month the media in Trinidad and Tobago reported that (TT) \$15 million had been spent so by the Office of the Prime Minister on the CoE looking into the tragic deaths of the four divers.

On February 25, 2022, the five divers: Kazim Ali Jnr, 36; Fyzal Kurban, 57; Yusuf Henry, 31, Rishi Nagassar, 48; and Christopher Boodram, 38, were conducting under-sea maintenance works on a pipeline owned by Paria Fuel



Christopher Boodram

Trading Co Ltd in Pointe-a-Pierre when they were sucked into the pipeline. Four of the divers died, with Boodram surviving.

According to media reports last month, following a Freedom of Information request, the OPM stated that a total of \$14,538,511.40 in bills have so far been accumulated for the CoE.

Out of that figure, over \$10 million in legal fees were accrued, with the majority of the money going to CoE chairman Jerome Lynch, KC, (\$3.4 million), Senior Counsel Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj (\$3.2 million), and junior counsel (\$2.2 million). The CoE report is yet to be delivered.

Last week Boodram and a relative of Henry told the media there continues to be silence

from Paria in rendering any help.

Boodram said he cannot return to diving work following the incident and the trauma. He also revealed his wife is now working to support the family, which includes three children ages 15, 11, and 5.

Said Boodram, "No one will understand our trauma, pain, and suffering... Up to now, no one from the government has bothered to extend a helping hand while I struggle to take care of my family in these hard times. If my wife wasn't working, I don't know how we would have survived."

He added, "We thought that [the CoE] would somehow bring closure, and help us heal and move on. Instead, to find out that the government spent over \$15 million on the enquiry adds insult to injury. When I asked for some financial assistance so I could have legal representation, I was told that I should go to legal aid."

Afeisha Henry, sister of one of the deceased divers Yusuf Henry, said her brother was the father of four children, ages 12, 11, 8, and 3. It been a challenge for them to cope with their loss, she declared.

"The cost of sending them to school is not easy for the mothers to bear. Yet to date, instead of helping the families, the government has chosen to help their legal friends. This is a classic case of the grass growing high for some to feed, while the victims are meant to watch on and starve," she stated.

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Rowley, Warner exchange broadsides as LGE heat up

Port-of-Spain – Campaigning in upcoming Local Government Elections in Trinidad and Tobago took on its predictable *ad hominem* rhetoric last week when Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley tore into Jack Warner, who has now returned to the political front again under the aegis of the UNC.

In response to Rowley's broadside, Warner lobbed similar campaign rhetoric, an indication that the LGE was well underway.

Following the UNC announcement that Warner had once again joined its fold, Rowley came out swinging during an interview with Marlan Hopkinson on TV6's *Morning Edition*.

In responding to Warner returning to the political landscape, Rowley cautioned nationals about the "lionisation" of criminals as "heroes".

In his previous political life, Warner held the portfolio for Works and National Security in what was then the former government led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

Warner is a former FIFA vice-president. He resigned from the Persad-Bissessar-led government in 2013 after CONCACAF released a report alleging he and a former secretary-

general had enriched themselves through fraud during their tenure.

Rowley appeared clearly unimpressed with Warner's return to local politics.

"What is happening in this country, if we're not careful, is a normalisation of criminal conduct, and a lionisation of criminals as heroes. That's what this country is facing. And we better wake up and understand that," Rowley cautioned.

He added, "It's not only those with the gun in their hand who are threatening our peace and security. [It is] the others, the facilitators and the participants and the beneficiaries of criminal conduct. And when that gets into the political arena, and is defended and supported in the Parliament. May God help Trinidad and Tobago."

Rowley said he warned years ago about Warner bringing embarrassment to Trinidad and Tobago. He also recalled the allegations being faced by Warner.

"It played out in full public view after he was a minister of government, and an acting Prime Minister in this country, where he is



Persad-Bissessar (right) welcomes Warner back into the UNC fold

now known as what somebody described as an international crook," he declared.

Additionally, "Jack Warner has been charged with serious criminal conduct – money laundering, racketeering, fraud. Charged! He has been accused of being dishonest with FIFA's assets and money. A judge has ruled ...in a court where he's been [ordered to pay] I think it is \$75 million."

Rowley also recalled that Warner is now fighting extradition to the US, stating: "...[He] has been avoiding his day in court as a person who is fighting an extradition by a serious country, which has laid the charges, and he is fighting using the avenues of law, of course. But that being so, how does that become a beacon for this country, and a saviour to us?"

Additionally, "And when Jack Warner gets up and says that he has come into the political arena because the country is going over a precipice, the closest we ever came to a precipice here is where he took us."

In response to Rowley's broadsides, Warner described him as being "a lost cause".

"[Rowley] has realised that he is useless; that he is the worst Prime Minister this country has ever seen, and the quicker we get rid of him the better," Warner said.

He also responded to Rowley's statements that alleged criminal activity.

"I know there is a saying in law that you are considered innocent until proven guilty, so if he has found me guilty, then so be it. But I know fully well as night follows day, justice shall prevail in my name. So I am not worried. If Dr Rowley is worried, I am not," Warner said.

After leaving the UNC in 2013, Warner went on to form his own Independent Liberal Party. The ILP has since been disbanded, with Warner urging its members to join the UNC.



Warner on the campaign trail in east Trinidad last week, where he was enthusiastically greeted by UNC supporters

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The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

When Dilip Kumar & Kamini Kaushal took over the limelight

By Vidur Dindyal

Two new, young faces made a blast unto the Tee-a-taa [Theatre] screens of Guyana that gave the audiences everywhere much more to feast their eyes on. The 'new' Indian movie stars were Dilip Kumar and Kamini Kaushal. The 'pitcha' was *Shaheed*. These bright new stars and the 'sell-out' success of *Shaheed* signalled a new era in 'Tee-a-taa' going in Guyana.

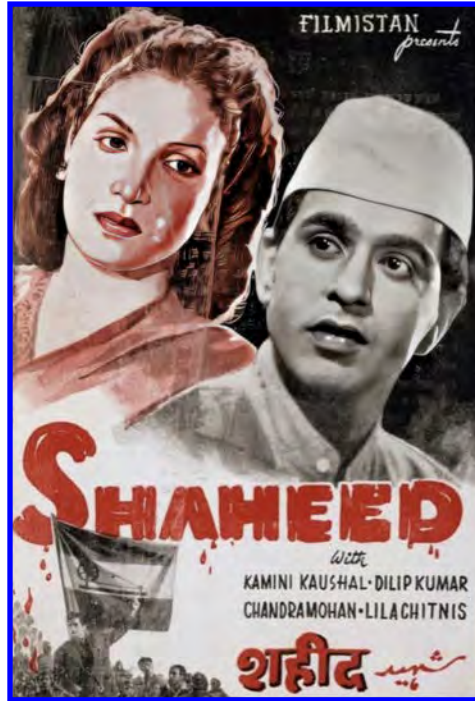
It was just after the war. Everyone knew the names of Indian film stars Ashok Kumar and Leela Chitnis. Now we had brand new names – Dilip Kumar and Kamini Kaushal. We had to get used to them.

One of the exciting new films after the war was *Safar*. Everyone in all Guyana knew the song *Kabhi yaad karke*, and the story. My father had a guttersmith who was known as 'Kabhi Yaar'. He came from Berbice, but he worked everywhere, and everyone knew him as 'Kabhi Yaar'. He got that name because he would sing the song *Kabhi Yaar* while doing his work.

I saw *Safar* at the Palladium cinema in Skeldon. My brother and I were on holiday at Number 63 Village, at topside Corentyne. His son, who was senior to my brother at High School, hired a car to take us to Skeldon to see *Safar*. The 'Tee-a-taa' was full, and we could only get seats in the balcony. It was a memorable treat to see that film.

Soon after a new name Dilip Kumar burst onto the screens. I was used to Ashok Kumar. Now there is a new one. He and co-star Kamini Kaushal took over the limelight. Everyone in Guyana was talking about the new stars Dilip Kumar and Kamini Kaushal. They were young and new and brought a brand new audience to the cinema with their blockbuster movie *Shaheed* (1948). Everyone talked about the movie and the songs. It was a superhit.

The story of *Shaheed* was about a young freedom fighter for Indian Independence, his love for his childhood sweetheart, and his rival for her affection from a police officer who is looking to arrest him. A wonderful film, with songs like *Watan Ki Raah Mein* with Dilip Kumar standing on a moving jeep, singing to hundreds of volunteer soldiers, and *Bachpan*



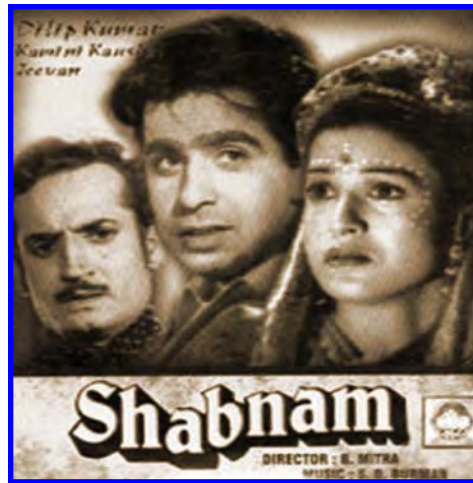
Ki Yaad with Kamini Kaushal on the piano, singing about their childhood memories. Plus when Dilip insisted on going away to fight and she would not know where and how he was, the song *Hum Kahan Aur Tum*.

In the same year as *Shaheed*, the movie *Nadiya Ke Paar* followed. In tandem with these new stars there were several others – household names Raj Kapoor, Nargis, and Dev Anand.

Nadiya Ke Paar was produced and directed by Kishore Sahu, a brilliant star in his own right, and one of the greats of the Indian film world, with films like *Kali Ghata* and *Mayur Pankh* in which a British lady falls for an Indian Royal, Ranjit, who showed her his imposing palace. The film in colour was screened in the 1954 Cannes Film Festival.

The romantic story is about Kumar (Dilip Kumar) the young brother of a zamindar who met Phulwa (Kamini Kaushal), and they fell in love. Phulwa is the daughter of a fisherman. A young fisherman in the village who liked Phulwa reported this relationship to her father who was an enemy of Kumar's brother.

Her father forbade the meeting of Kumar



and Phulwa. Kumar's brother, the zamindar, did not approve also. He confronted Phulwa's father and got him to agree to getting the girl married quickly. Phulwa's father arranged a boat race and vowed to get his daughter married to the winner.

Of course Kumar in disguise won the race and married Phulwa. On the night after the wedding, the father discovered Kumar had married his daughter, and got his village to go after Kumar.

He escaped in a boat with Phulwa. Kumar's rival shot at him with an arrow. It was fatal. Their boat was moving quickly into an eddy in the river. Phulwa held on to Kumar as he was dying. The boat was now in the eddy and Phulwa held on to him saying she will be with him in this life, in the next, and forever.

The song *More Raja Ho* is worth more than my ticket to the show. Kamini Kaushal as the village girl Phulwa looks sweet with her hair adorned with feathers.

Shabnam came soon after in 1949. It was a super hit produced by Filmistan. The music was by S.D. Burman. After his first major breakthrough in *Do Bhai* (1947), came *Shabnam* (1949), his biggest hit yet with Filmistan. Its multi-lingual hit song *Yeh Duniya Roop ki Chor* became a rage then.

The stars were Dilip Kumar, Kamini Kaushal, Jeevan, and Shyama. A boy aged 12-13 saw the movie and he was so impressed with Dilip Kumar's name 'Manoj Kumar' in the movie that he decided then to change his own name to Manoj Kumar if he should ever become a film actor, which, as we know, he did.

The romantic story is about Shanti (Kamini Kaushal) and her father who were left behind on a road by people leaving their home after partition. She was disguised as a boy. They were hungry and thirsty. Manoj (Dilip Kumar) came their way with water and food. Manoj and Shanti fell for each other. En route he joined up with Paro in a dancing troupe.

Jeevan, the local king, saw them with Shanti. He captured her and wanted to marry her as she looked like a princess he knew earlier. Shanti lost her memory and Jeevan brought Paro to dance and sing an old song of Shanti's to help her regain her memory.

The dance was out of this world. The dancers were dressed in flowing gowns and head gear of white fluffy feathers. The song was *Mera Dil Tadpa Kar Kahaan Chala*. Kamini Kaushal looked really beautiful when she was singing.

In another of the ten hit songs, *Pyaar Mein Tumne Dhokha Seekha*, Paro and her girls were dancing on a turntable. Manoj fought with Jeevan. He won and got back Shanti.

Friends, family, & India's PM Modi celebrate Mukesh's birth centenary

If there is a song that best describes legendary singer Mukesh, it is his own track *Kisi Ki Muskurahaton Pe Ho Nisar*, says his son Nitin Mukesh, remembering the music of his father on the latter's birth centenary.

Born in Delhi on July 22, 1923, as Mukesh Chand Mathur, the artist was part of the famous triumvirate of singers alongside Mohammad Rafi and Kishore Kumar, who ruled the Hindi cinema playback scene for decades.

Known for evergreen hits such as *Mera Joota Hai Japani*, *Jeena Yahan Marna Yahaan*, *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein*, and *Kai Baar Yuhi Dekha Hai*, Mukesh was "down to earth", and that never changed, said his son Nitin Mukesh.

"One thing that stays most in my memory is his humility and down-to-earth nature, despite being such a famous man and a legend. It was not an act he was putting on. It came naturally to him," Nitin Mukesh told PTI. He was a simple man and that reflected even in his birthday celebrations, which were always a private affair, he added.

"His birthdays used to be a very private affair... And like always we distributed food to the needy. That's what we did. It made us feel so nice," he said.

The family celebrated the birth centenary with the music icon's fans at *Mukesh Chowk*, an intersection named in his memory in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

The event was attended by Nitin Mukesh, his wife Nishi Mukesh, their sons Neil Nitin Mukesh, and Naman Nitin Mukesh, as well as daughter-in-law Rukmini Sahay and granddaughter Nurvi Neil Mukesh.

Nitin Mukesh said the only grand birthday celebration that he remembers was in 1976, a month after which his father passed away in Michigan, US, due to heart attack at the age of 53.

"He loved celebrating with family. But, at the time, we were all grown up and convinced him to celebrate (on a grand scale).



Mukesh Chand Mathur

Four days later, we were to leave for the US and from there he never returned... So, that birthday is etched as a very special memory."

Back then, the party was attended by the Who's Who of Hindi cinema, including Mukesh's close friend Raj Kapoor and his wife Krishna Raj Kapoor.

"It was providence that he could call his dearest friends, Raj uncle, Krishna aunty. We had a grand party. God must have known that this is his last birthday, so for whatever reason, we celebrated it in a loving manner," he added.

Mukesh and Kapoor were frequent collaborators, and emerged as one of the most successful singer-actor duos in

Hindi cinema, known for hit songs such as *Awaara Hoon*, *Dost Dost Na Raha*, *Sab Kuch Seekha Humne*, *Sajan Re Jhooth Mat Bolo*, *Ramayi Vastavaiya* and *Bol Radha Bol*.

After Mukesh's sudden demise, Kapoor said in the singer's death, he had lost his "soul".

"There was Mukesh – my soul, my voice, I was a mere body. It was he who sang to the hearts of the people all over the world, not me. Raj Kapoor was an image, just a carcass of flesh and bones. When he [Mukesh] died, I felt there goes my breath, there goes my soul. I know what went away from me. There was a void... but you get over it and move on," Kapoor said, as mentioned in his daughter Ritu Nanda's book *Raj Kapoor Speaks*.

Nitin Mukesh, 73, said it feels great to see that all these songs still resonate with the listeners.

"His repertoire was great. His songs are 47 or 50 years old or more. But all the songs are fresh in people's minds even today. A song, which describes him the best, is *Kisi ki muskurahaton pe ho nisar, kisi ka dard mil sake to le udhaar, kisi ke waaste ho tere dil mein pyaar, jeena isi ka naam hai* from *Anari*," he added.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi led tributes to Mukesh as he remembered "the maestro of melody" on his 100th birth anniversary.

"His timeless songs evoke a wide range of emotions, and have left an indelible mark on Indian music. His golden voice and soul-stirring renditions will continue to enchant generations," Modi wrote on *Twitter*.

Neil Nitin Mukesh responded to the Modi's post and thanked him for his kind words. "Prime Minister Sri @narendramodi ji. Truly humbled & honoured by your magnanimity sir. This is indeed a proud moment for the entire Mukesh family. My father joins me in thanking you. This kind gesture of yours, on this special day, will be etched in our hearts forever," the actor wrote.

In a tweet, cinema veteran Dharmendra said: "Mukesh sahab will always be remembered with great love and respect."

Out of dark rooms & into the light: Shah celebrates movie projectionists

They have spent their entire life in a dark room working to entertain, and need to be applauded, actor Naseeruddin Shah said at an event to honour three projectionists. At the same time, he also pointed to the “bitter truth” of an industry that often does not recognise those who work behind the scenes.

It is disheartening that people who play a pivotal role in a film’s success are not recognised in the film industry for their contribution, Shah said last month at an event organised by the Film Heritage Foundation.

The veteran actor, who was the chief guest at the evening where audiences also watched a rerun of filmmaker Kamal Amrohi’s 1949 movie *Mahal*, lauded the not-for-profit organisation for recognising the work of film projectionists.

The FHF awarded projectionist Lakhan Lal Yadav from Raipur, P.A. Salam from Pune’s National Film Archives of India, and Mohammed Aslam Fakhri of Regal Cinema, Mumbai, with the lifetime achievement awards and Rs 50,000 each.

“They have spent their entire life in a dark room for all of us, to entertain us, we should applaud them,” Shah said.

He added, “I am thankful to Shivendra Dungarpur (FHF founder) and his team for recognising these people. I am here as an audience, I am grateful to have met and interacted with them,” he added.

The screen icon said the movie industry neglects the hard work and contribution of technicians and other important people.

“The bitter truth of the film industry is that those who work hard a lot during the making of the film, like light men and others, their income is not much. This is the nature of the beast. The issue is this thing remains the same even post the release of the movie. For instance, if a film is successful, then distributors and exhibitors take the major share of the profit. Those who help achieve this (success), no one cares about them. They are not even awarded,” Shah said.

The event was followed by a special screening of *Mahal*, starring Ashok Kumar and Madhubala.

The film revolved around an aristocrat (Kumar) who moves into an ancient mansion, where he gets visions of a mysterious lady (Madhubala) claiming to be his lover in their previous lives.

Among those who attended were Amrohi’s son Tajdar Amrohi, filmmaker Ashim Ahluwalia, veteran actor Amol Palekar, late Shashi Kapoor’s son Kunal Kapoor, and Neila Devi, wife of late Shammi Kapoor.

Mahal was screened by Fakhri on the 35 mm vintage print to celebrate the analogue-era legacy of cinema at Regal Cinema.

Tajdar Amrohi narrated an anecdote about what went behind the making of *Mahal*.

“This is an honourable moment for me to be here. *Mahal* was the first suspense film. When Savak (Vacha, the producer) heard the script of *Mahal*, he was keen to make it, but Kamal Sahab had one condition. He said, ‘I will only direct it.’ Savak asked, ‘Did you assist anyone?’ Kamal Sahab said, ‘No.’”

“He was a little surprised that Kamal Amrohi would not give his script if he was not given the opportunity to direct the movie. He called Ashok Kumar, who suggested offer him more money and he might give away the script. But Kamal Amrohi said he would rather take a pay cut. This was Kamal Amrohi’s debut film and first suspense film,” he added.

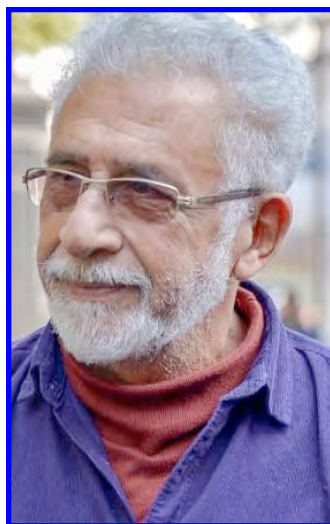
Kunal Kapoor said he enjoyed watching *Mahal* on the big screen for the first time.

“I had not seen *Mahal*, so I came here. Besides, I believe strongly in the preservation of such films. It’s good to see how so many people have turned up, especially the younger ones to watch it,” Kapoor told *PTI*.

An elderly couple from South Mumbai’s Kalbadevi area said it was good to revisit one of their favourite films in a theatre.

“We thought the theatre would be relatively empty, but it isn’t. We enjoyed watching this film back in the day, and when we learnt that it was getting screened we decided to watch it again.”

They added, “The rains didn’t prevent us from watching one of the finest movies of Kamal Amrohi.”



Naseeruddin Shah

Huma Qureshi opposes ageism

On the occasion of her 37th birthday on July 28, actress Huma Qureshi called for a shift in the movie industry’s attitude towards age, particularly in relation to female artists. Opposing ageism, she encourages industry insiders to regard women beyond a predefined “shelf life”, treating age as just a numerical factor.

“I feel like actresses more so than men have this ageism thing thrown at them. People should realise that women are not commodities or something that have a considerable shelf life. It is an extremely sexist way of looking at women because I think as artists with each passing year, we become better and we grow, transforming into a better version of ourselves. And that’s how it should be seen,” she said.

On her special day, Qureshi, last seen in the movie *Tarla*, opted for a relaxed and reflective mood, concentrating on her personal development.

“As I grow older, and hopefully wiser, the most significant lesson that I have learnt is just to be patient and to trust that sometimes life has something better in store for you than what you have in mind. So, to just relax, chill and try to do better each day than what you think you can,” she said.

Additionally, “I sure have changed, because I think every few years I change as a person. I change as a human being, including my ideas and everything... it all changes. I just hope it always changes for the better.”

Qureshi also noted that she has tried to become “more fearless as a performer” over the years.

“I’ve tried to be a kinder and more patient person. I try to not be reactive, or operate out of anger to avoid having a knee jerk reaction. So yes, I’ve become gentler with myself, and with the world around me throughout the past few years,” she said.

Recognized for her roles in works like *Gangs of Wasseypur*, *Monica O My Darling*, and *Double XL*, Qureshi said she keeps a “good work-life balance”, approaching her acting career as a regular nine-to-five job.



Huma Qureshi



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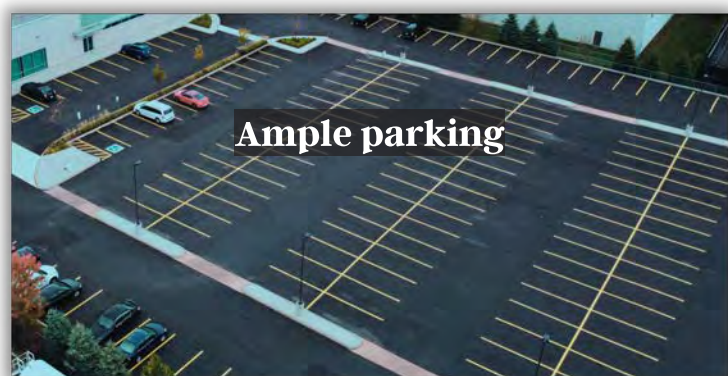


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Bumrah back in action as T20I captain

Jasprit Bumrah is back in action with the fast bowler named captain for India's upcoming T20I series against Ireland. The series runs from August 18 to August 23.

Bumrah's return was highly anticipated last month, with *ESPNcricinfo* citing a medical update from the Board of Control for Cricket in India that indicated a fast recovery pace.

Bumrah's last competitive cricket was in September 2022. Since then he has been undergoing rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. He underwent back surgery in New Zealand in March this year.

According to the BCCI, Bumrah and Prasidh Krishna – another fast bowler recuperating from a stress fracture – were both bowling at full intensity.

"The duo will now play some practice games, which the NCA will organise. The BCCI Medical Team is pleased with their progress, and will make a final decision after assessing them following the practice games," the release stated.

As *ESPNcricinfo* reported, the NCA is mindful of Bumrah's workload, and has organised practice games so he can play under a physio's supervision. With this supervision, the plan was that Bumrah would not play in the 50-overs inter-zonal Deodhar Trophy.

However, the plan moving forward was if he did well in the



Jasprit Bumrah

practice games, then he would lead the three-match T20I series in Ireland.

After the Ireland tour, India will next be in action at the Asia Cup, from August 30 to September 17. In late September, the team will host Australia for three ODIs, just before the ODI World Cup gets underway on October 5.

Batters K.L. Rahul (thigh) and Shreyas Iyer (lower back) are also making progress as they recuperate from their respective injuries, *ESPNcricinfo* reported.

As the BCCI release stated, "They have resumed batting in the nets and are currently undergoing strength and fitness drills. The BCCI Medical Team is satisfied with their progress, and will increase their intensity in terms of both skills and strength and conditioning in the coming days."

Rishabh Pant is also making "significant progress", *ESPNcricinfo* reported. He underwent knee ligament surgery after surviving a serious car crash last

December, and has now resumed batting, as well as keeping wicket in the nets.

According to the BCCI, "He is currently following a fitness programme designed for him, which includes strength, flexibility, and running."

ECB hands Yorkshire stiff racism penalties

Yorkshire have received points deductions in two formats, and have been fined £400,000 over the racism scandal linked to their former player Azeem Rafiq, the Guardian reported last week.

Also, a Cricket Discipline Commission panel said £300,000 of the fine imposed has been suspended for a period of two years.

The club have also immediately been docked 48 points from their County Championship total, and a further four from their tally in the T20 Blast.

The club have since released a statement confirming acceptance of the sanctions.

Yorkshire admitted four charges following the conclusion of an England and Wales Cricket Board investigation.

The first charge against Yorkshire related to how they mishandled an independent investigation into the allegations of racism and bullying made by Rafiq, who played for the county between 2008 and 2014, and again between 2016 and 2018.

The second concerned a mass deletion of emails and documents, by persons unknown, which was discovered in November 2021.

The third concerned a failure to take adequate action over complaints of racism, which were raised to the club in 2017 and 2018, and the fourth related to a failure to address the systemic use of racist and/or discriminatory language at Yorkshire over a prolonged period.

The Yorkshire statement read,

"We accept the sanctions against Yorkshire County Cricket Club imposed by the Cricket Discipline Commission. Following representations by the Board at [the June] hearing, the CDC and ECB have today acknowledged the vast amount of work done by YCCC to overcome the cultural issues that existed within the Club, which allowed racist and discriminatory behaviour to go unchallenged. We are accountable for these issues, and we accepted four amended charges as part of a continued commitment to ensure we are able to move forward."

It added, "We are disappointed to receive the points deductions, which affects players and staff at the Club, who were not responsible for the situation. They have worked tirelessly on and off the field to rebuild Yorkshire into an inclusive and welcoming Club that reflects the communities it serves. Greater clarity over our situation will allow us all now to look ahead."

Also, "There remains much to do, but we have made significant investments to put in place best practice processes and procedures, as well as driving equity, diversity, and inclu-



Azeem Rafiq

sion through a new framework and taking important steps to improve the matchday experience to encourage greater inclusivity and tackle discrimination. This is in addition to the real progress we have seen on our Performance Pathway, ensuring young cricketers from all backgrounds can take part regardless of their economic circumstances."

Yorkshire also declared, "We look forward to continued dialogue with the ECB to ensure the financial penalty does not hinder our ongoing commitment to build on the strong foundations that have been laid.

We remain focused on efforts to secure YCCC's sustainability, ensuring the stability required to create a brighter future for all associated with Yorkshire Cricket."

ECB chief executive Richard Gould added: "These were serious charges relating to racism over a prolonged period. There can be no place for racism in our game, and the penalties announced by the Cricket Discipline Commission mark the end of a thorough disciplinary process."

Gould added, "No one should have to experience what Azeem Rafiq went through in cricket, and we once again thank him for his courage in speaking out. Since this hearing took place, the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket has published its report which demonstrates just how much there still is for our game to do in order to stamp out discrimination and become the inclusive sport we all want to be.

We must work together as a game to learn from the events that led to this case, and to respond thoroughly to that report."

Gould also noted that the ECB recognises "that Yorkshire County Cricket Club has made significant progress since Azeem came forward, first under Lord Patel's leadership and since then under its current management, and is committed to becoming an inclusive club".

He added, "They have set the club on a path to a much brighter and more inclusive future, and we will continue to support the new leadership at Yorkshire to build on the progress made so far."

Six individuals with Yorkshire connections were sanctioned by the CDC earlier this year after admitting, or being found to have used racist and/or discriminatory language.

A seventh, former England captain Michael Vaughan, was cleared of using racist and/or discriminatory language to a group of Yorkshire players of Asian ethnicity before a 20-over match in 2009.



Raphick Jumadeen

Jumadeen's 'invaluable' role recognised by CWI

A tribute was paid to cricketer Raphick Jumadeen by Cricket West Indies last week. Jumadeen is a former West Indies and Trinidad and Tobago spin bowler. He died in Port-of-Spain on July 25. He was 75 years old.

As a left-arm spinner, Jumadeen played 12 Test matches between 1972 and 1979. He took 29 wickets with best figures of 4 for 72 against Australia at Sabina Park, Jamaica in 1978.

He was also one of the leading bowlers for Trinidad and Tobago, and played 99 first class matches where he took 347 wickets at an average of 27.9 runs per wicket.

Following retirement from the game, he became a coach and selector in Trinidad, and was a member of the West Indies senior men's selection panel.

President of CWI Dr Kishore Shallow said, "Raphick Jumadeen was an outstanding servant of the game and gave his all on and off the field. He was a stand-out performer for Trinidad and Tobago in the Shell Shield, and was one of the most successful wicket-takers at the regional level."

Shallow added, "He returned to serve West Indies cricket as a senior selector. Raphick made an invaluable contribution to the game as a coach in his country, where he played a hand in the development of many young players. He has left behind a legacy of service, commitment, and giving back to the game he loved. CWI extends our condolences to his wife and other family members, loved ones, and the cricket family in Trinidad and Tobago."

The West Indies team paid respect to Jumadeen by wearing black armbands during the first match of the CG United One Day International series last week.

'Logistical' changes coming to ODI World Cup schedule

Logistical issues faced by a number of countries have triggered changes in the schedule for the 2023 ODI World Cup, Board of Control for Cricket in India Secretary Jay Shah said last week.

As *ESPNcricinfo* further reported, the revised version of the scheduled should be finalised in consultation with the ICC by this week.

Shah's statement came after it emerged that the BCCI was looking at moving the India versus Pakistan fixture in Ahmedabad to October 14 from October 15.

While Shah did not reveal whether the India-Pakistan date was one of the changes, he said the boards of several other countries had written to the BCCI pointing out logistical challenges their teams would face, thus requesting changes. No teams requesting the changes were named.

"There is a possibility there could be few changes in the schedule. Several Full Member countries have written in requesting to change two or three dates in the schedule," Shah said.

As was reported, the primary reason for the BCCI considering bringing forward the India-Pakistan fixture by a day was because local police had raised concerns over providing adequate security on October 15, which is also the first day of Navratri, a nine-day Hindu festival.

However Shah dismissed that as the reason, saying, "If security was an issue then why would the match go [to Ahmedabad]. [October 14-15] is not the problem. Two or three boards have written in, asking to change based on the logistical challenges. There are some matches where there is only a two-day gap, so it will be difficult to play and then travel next day [and then play again]."



Harmanpreet Kaur

Hit stumps gets Harmanpreet suspension

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur is now under suspension for two matches following two breaches of the ICC code of conduct.

The suspension came after she hit her own stumps with her bat after being dismissed, and criticised the umpires after the tied third ODI against Bangladesh.

She pleaded guilty to both breaches, and was fined a cumulative total of 75 percent of her match fee.

Harmanpreet is the first women player to receive a Level 2 sanction since the ICC started listing code of conduct breaches publicly in 2016.

"We controlled the game very well, but some pathetic umpiring was done, and we are really disappointed about some decisions given by the umpires," Harmanpreet said following the ODI.

Those comments cost her 25 percent of her match fee, along with a demerit point.

She received a further three demerit points, and lost 50 percent of her fee for smashing her stumps. Such an action is a breach of article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, relating to "showing dissent at an umpire's decision".

The controversy happened during the deciding match of the ODI series between India and Bangladesh after Harmanpreet was given out LBW in the 34th over of the Indian innings following a sweep against spinner Nahida Akter.

It appeared Harmanpreet failed to connect her sweep, with the ball hitting her pads and heading towards slip. The ball was

caught at slip, but even before the catch was taken, Akter confidently appealed for a leg-before.

The umpire confidently raised the finger in the affirmative.

Harmanpreet was furious with the decision, and hit her stumps with her bat, perhaps signalling there was a piece of the bat involved.

She continued arguing with the umpire decision as she walked back to the pavilion.

Harmanpreet also continued her tirade during a post-match interview, saying "... [Some] pathetic umpiring was done, and we are really disappointed about some decisions given by the umpires."

As *ESPNcricinfo* reported, Kaur later said, "bring the umpires too" for the post-match photograph, perhaps suggesting they were part of Bangladesh's win.

Harmanpreet's comments were not taken well by Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana, who prompted her team to get up and leave.

"It is totally her problem. I have nothing to do with it," Nigar said when asked about the incident.

"As a player, she could have shown better manners. I can't tell you what happened, but it didn't feel right to be there [for the photograph] with my team. It wasn't the right environment. That is why we went back. Cricket is a game of discipline and respect," she said.

The penalty will see Harmanpreet missing the start of India's Asian Games campaign, which takes place between September 23 and October 8 in Hangzhou in China.

Naseem retires from international cricket

Pakistan batter Ayesha Naseem has retired from international cricket, *ESPNcricinfo* reported last week. Consequently, she has been left out of the squad for the women's cricket competition at the upcoming Asian Games. The games are to be played in China's Hangzhou from September 23 to October 8.

Naseem's retirement decision given was for "personal reasons", and was confirmed by the Pakistan Cricket Board in its squad announcement.

"We wish the best of luck to Ayesha Naseem in her future endeavours as the PCB understands and respects her decision to quit the game for personal reasons," said Tania Mallick, PCB's head of women's cricket in an official board statement.

Naseem is now 18 years old. She played four ODIs and 30 T20Is, including the T20 World Cups in 2020 and 2023, after making her debut against Thailand in March 2020.

Naseem had the media's attention for her power-hitting skills down the order. She finished her career with a strike rate of 128.12, the best for a Pakistan batter in T20Is. Her total of 18 T20I sixes is also only behind Nida Dar's 27 for Pakistan, despite Naseem playing for only three years compared to Dar's decade-long career.

Meanwhile, the Asian Games will be Dar's first as full-time captain after Bismah Maroof stepped down from the role following Pakistan's group-stage exit in the T20 World Cup earlier this year.

Maroof missed out on the event because of regulations that would not allow her to take her baby daughter along.

Dar is the second-highest wicket-taker in women's T20Is. She

captained the team for the first time in Pakistan's last game of the T20 World Cup in South Africa.

The squad has reaped the benefits of Pakistan's participation in the Under-19 T20 World Cup earlier this year.

Left-arm spinner Anosha Nasir and batter Shawaal Zulfiqar, both part of that inaugural Under-19 women's team, were rewarded with maiden national call-ups.

Both players were also in the women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup in June, where Anosha picked up three wickets. Shawaal opened the batting and scored 39 runs in two innings. The captain of the Under-19 side, the legspin-bowling allrounder Syeda Aroob Shah, also returned to the senior side after three years.

Diana Baig returned to the squad to pair up with the impressive Fatima Sana with the new ball. Baig missed the T20 World Cup because of a finger injury.

All-rounder Natalia Pervaiz also made the team after last playing internationals in 2018.

Javeria Khan, Sadia Iqbal, Tuba Hassan, Aiman Answer, and Sidra Nawaz, all part of the T20 World Cup squad, missed out in the selection.

"Our squad for the Asian Games represents the future of women's cricket in Pakistan," Saleem Jaffer, PCB women's chief selector, said.

She added, "With a mix of emerging talent and seasoned campaigners, I expect the players to do well in the event."

Pakistan won the gold medal at the Asian Games in 2010 and 2014, the last two times cricket was a part of the competition. This will also be Mark Coles' first assignment in his second stint as the head coach of the team.



Ayesha Naseem

Cricket Schedule

(ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Thursday August 3, 2023

India tour of West Indies, 2023
West Indies vs India, 1st T20I, Brian Lara Stadium, Tarouba, Trinidad, 10:30 AM

Sunday August 6, 2023

India tour of West Indies, 2023
West Indies vs India, 2nd T20I, Providence Stadium, Guyana, 10:30 AM

Tuesday August 8, 2023

India tour of West Indies, 2023
West Indies vs India, 3rd T20I, Providence Stadium, Guyana, 10:30 AM

Saturday August 12, 2023

India tour of West Indies, 2023
West Indies vs India, 4th T20I, Central Broward Regional Park Stadium Turf Ground, Lauderdale, Florida, 10:30 AM

Sunday August 13, 2023

India tour of West Indies, 2023
West Indies vs India, 5th T20I, Central Broward Regional Park Stadium Turf Ground, Lauderdale, Florida, 10:30 AM

Thursday August 17, 2023

New Zealand tour of UAE, 2023
UAE vs New Zealand, 1st T20I, Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Dubai, 6:00 PM

Friday August 18, 2023

India tour of Ireland, 2023

Ireland vs India, 1st T20I,

The Village, Dublin, 3:00 PM

Saturday August 19, 2023

New Zealand tour of UAE, 2023

UAE vs New Zealand, 2nd T20I, Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Dubai, 6:00 PM

Sunday August 20, 2023

New Zealand tour of UAE, 2023

UAE vs New Zealand, 3rd T20I, Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Dubai, 6:00 PM

India tour of Ireland, 2023

Ireland vs India, 2nd T20I,

The Village, Dublin, 3:00 PM

Wednesday August 23, 2023

India tour of Ireland, 2023

Ireland vs India, 3rd T20I,

The Village, Dublin, 3:00 PM

Wednesday August 30, 2023

Australia tour of South Africa, 2023

South Africa vs Australia, 1st T20I,

Kingsmead, Durban, 6:00 PM

New Zealand tour of England, 2023

England vs New Zealand, 1st T20I, Riverside Ground, Chester-le-Street, 6:00 PM

Asia Cup, 2023

Pakistan vs Nepal, 1st Match, Group A, Multan Cricket Stadium, Multan, 3:00 PM

Thursday August 31, 2023

Asia Cup, 2023

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Match, Group B, Pallekele Int. Cric. Stad., Pallekele, 1:00 PM

Friday September 1, 2023

Australia tour of South Africa, 2023

South Africa vs Australia, 2nd T20I,

Kingsmead, Durban, 6:00 PM

New Zealand tour of England, 2023

England vs New Zealand, 2nd T20I, Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester, 6:00 PM

Saturday September 2, 2023

Asia Cup, 2023

Pakistan vs India, 3rd Match, Group A, Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, Pallekele, Pallekele, 1:00 PM

Sunday September 3, 2023

Australia tour of South Africa, 2023

South Africa vs Australia, 3rd T20I,

Kingsmead, Durban, 2:00 PM

New Zealand tour of England, 2023

England vs New Zealand, 3rd T20I, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 2:30 PM

Asia Cup, 2023

Bangladesh vs Afghanistan, 4th Match, Group B, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, 1:00 PM

Monday September 4, 2023

Asia Cup, 2023

India vs Nepal, 5th Match, Group A, Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, Pallekele, 1:00 PM



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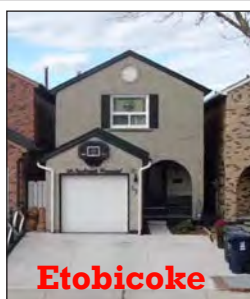
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Oshawa For Sale \$719,990

Location! Location! Location! Beautiful raised semi in a highly sought after neighbourhood in Oshawa. The main floor features a large living combined w/ dining, 2 large bedrooms & 1 fully upgraded washroom. The kitchen features a large island with quartz countertops throughout. The lower floor features; the laundry room, a large recreation room, 1 full fully upgraded washroom & primary bedroom with lots of light! The washrooms features quartz countertops & upgraded fixtures! Huge driveway able to fit up to 3 cars. Close to all amenities, 401/412/407, shopping, places of worship, walking trails, parks & much more...



Belmont Newcastle Starting @ \$800,000s

Belmont is a new townhouse & single family home development by Treasure Hill Homes currently in preconstruction at Given Road, Newcastle. Belmont has a total of 288 units. Belmont in Newcastle combines the best of luxury living & country charm. An expertly designed & spacious collection of town & single homes will be coming soon to a fantastic rural location just moments from the city. Newcastle is in the municipality of Clarington in Durham Region. Acclaimed as one of the most attractive small towns in the area, the community continues to develop while preserving its long-rooted history. This master-planned community is comprised of traditional & transitional designs. Experience a quaint village setting with homes constructed with lavish accents & fine details. With Treasure Hill's reputation for building quality homes, there is no other place to be besides right here. Contact us for More Info!!!



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Abdool Saheed
Financial Advisor
Cell: 416-731-7527

CityPointe Heights starting @ High 400s

Located at The Gore Road and Queen St E., CityPointe Heights is a new condominium community connected to three of the GTA's most beloved cities. Your favourite - and soon-to-be favourite - Brampton, Toronto, and Vaughan locations are very close to home. Discover two of the fastest growing cities in the Greater Toronto Area, and why with each passing year, they have more to offer.



Essa For Lease \$2,995

Beautiful 4 bedrooms, 4 washrooms, 2 storey home located in the quiet neighbourhood of Angus. Minutes to Barrie. Open concept main floor w/ walkout to fenced backyard. Finished basement with rec room, full washroom & laundry area. Large driveway w/ 4 parking spots. Walking distance to trails & parks. Stainless steel apps, recently upgraded w/ pot-lights & led lighting & much more. All light fixtures, fridge, stove, dishwasher, washer & dryer, central air-conditioning, hot water tank, furnace, & garage door opener.



A Beautiful Open Concept Renovation - 3 bedroom, 4 washrooms, Detached Home in York. Huge Backyard. Conveniently Located Within Walking Distance To amenities and schools. Extremely Close Proximity to Public Transit! A Great Place to Call Home.

Narrative Condos

STARTING FROM LOW \$300s



It all begins at 7437 Kingston Road - a unique project set against the backdrop of both nature and the city. Located on Kingston Road, adjacent to Rouge and Port Union, The Narrative offers the perfect balance of nearby green space, a diverse and welcoming community, nearby amenities, and easy access to the heart of Toronto via the 401.



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