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# INDO CARIBBEAN WORLD

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Vishnu Mandir & Global Care Outreach are now ramping up to make another run/walk in the 2023 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. It takes place in downtown Toronto on October 15. Last year's effort to increase physical activity in our community & raise funds, saw over \$200,000 acquired for dialysis care in Guyana. See story on Page 10, & information on how to participate in this fun-filled event.



These two adorable young ladies are undoubtedly future Canada women's cricket team material! Both angels were photographed wearing Jamaica's & Trinidad & Tobago's national colours, carrying national flags, & avidly supporting their respective teams at the Diamond Jubilee Cricket Rematch between Jamaica & Trinidad & Tobago last Saturday in Brampton. See story on Page 14. Photos by Ravi & Vanessa Naqvi from High Life Promos

## Singh focused on giving back, supporting diaspora

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

Toronto – Newly-appointed Honorary Consul General at the Guyana Consulate General in Toronto, Mani Singh, has indicated he will continue in his new role to fulfil what has been a lifelong commitment to give back his skills, experience, and professionalism to his homeland.

At the same time, Singh also indicated he plans to keep on applying his energies and passion to ensure that the diaspora continues to flourish in Canada.

Singh spoke with *Indo-Caribbean World* earlier this week, taking time out of an extremely busy schedule, an early indication that as the Honorary Consul General, he is willing to make himself accessible despite a rigorous workload.

At this time, Singh is well-positioned on the learning curve that comes with the new role. And as he indicated, he is in the guiding hands of the capable and knowledgeable Consulate staff, among them the "graceful" Acting Consul General, Grace Joseph.

As he noted, his successful career in real estate, and being involved in the Guyanese diaspora, with significant overlapping into the wider Caribbean community and the Canadian milieu, have adequately prepared him for his new office.

"I have been involved through the real estate business with the Guyanese community for many decades. As well, I have worked closely with Jamaican, Trinidad and Tobago, and other Caribbean nationals in Canada," he said.



Honorary Consul General Mani Singh

However, he also indicated that his extensive, professional Canadian exposure is simultaneously complemented with a similarly strong foundation that was built while he was growing up in Guyana.

As he noted, his early and youthful background of social, ideological, and political experiences were built on a foundation that saw exposure to the movers and shakers in Guyana at the time.

Among these were the influences and writings of the iconic Dr Cheddi Jagan and the historian, Dr

Walter Rodney, Singh revealed.

"I was inspired by Dr Jagan at many levels: his academic writings; his professionalism, and his exemplary honesty and integrity, among many other qualities," Singh stated.

Additionally, his early life's guidance that now endures decades later came from studying the biographical writings of Mahatma Gandhi; the historical writings of Trinidad and Tobago's Dr Eric Williams; reading and being inspired by Dr Jagan's *The West On Trial*; and Dr Rodney's seminal and enduring text, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

"They and their writings were all sources of early inspiration, and which continue to influence me today," Singh stated.

For Singh to be positioned today in the office of the Honorary Consul General means he can deploy the acquired knowledge, experiences, and inspiration from two dynamic worlds for the benefit of the homeland and the diaspora.

"So this is what I bring to Guyana, and to the diaspora: my deep passion for politics and public service, the latter being a sacred duty," he said.

"Also, I have always believed in human rights; more than that, in the right for human beings to live in dignity," Singh said, noting that he grew up in Guyana during the Forbes Burnham dictatorship.

"When I came to Canada [in the early 1980s], I was hungry to be connected to a political force. I wanted to make a difference; to make a contribution," he noted.

Today, Singh said he has been fielding comments

See Page 5: Unity, passion

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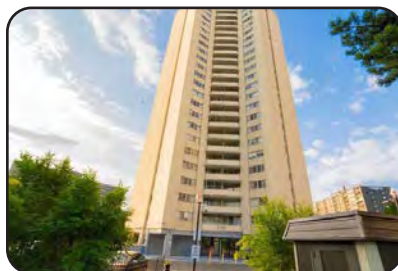
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# Walnut Foundation gets JCA community award

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

The Walnut Foundation is the recipient of the Jamaican Canadian Association's 2023 Community Service Award given to an organisation. It was presented to TWF on August 12, when the JCA marked its 61st anniversary.

In a statement celebrating the achievement, TWF President Anthony Henry thanked the JCA and its nominating committee, adding, "This award is important because it amplifies the work [TWF] does around prostate cancer education and support, and Black Men's Health in general."

Henry added, "In an environment where Black men are 76 percent more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer, and 2.2 times more likely to die from this disease, we cannot afford to be silent as leaders and community organisations. We are, therefore, encouraged that the JCA has chosen to be a part of the conversation and the solution by selecting us as the recipient of this award, and we look forward to our continued engagement as we work to improve health outcomes in our community."

On August 12, the JCA celebrated 61 years as a pillar within the Jamaican-Canadian community while simultaneously marking Jamaica's 61st year of Independence. This year's JCA celebration was themed, *A Journey of Resilience and Perseverance*, and paid tribute to the unwavering spirit of the group, its members, and many supporters.

Also in TWF's release, Henry took the opportunity to extend the reminder that the Prostate Cancer Support group meets on the last Thursday of each month. Also, further information would become available on its monthly meetings on the second Sunday of each month.

Henry also noted that the community should look out for the group's forthcoming educational videos, which are a joint



JCA's community award, which was given to The Walnut Foundation on August 12

collaboration with Taibu Community Health Centre. This will be launched on September 1 as a part of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Also, in collaboration with UHN and Taibu, Henry said TWF is now planning a free mobile PSA testing event, which will take place at the Taibu Community Health Centre on September 30.

Click here to visit [The Walnut Foundation's website](http://TheWalnutFoundation.com); or email [info@thewalnutfoundation.com](mailto:info@thewalnutfoundation.com) for more information.



Sky Jumbie by Jenny Baboolal is now on exhibit at the Trinidad Consulate General in Toronto

# Photo exhibition on at T&T Consulate General

Toronto - The Trinidad and Tobago Consulate General in Toronto has once again offered its facilities for the promotion of arts and culture, this time hosting an exhibit of photographs by Caribbean photographers.

The Toronto Consulate's gesture is led by Acting Consul General, Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette.

"The Consulate is honoured to host the photographic exhibit *Through our Lens*, specially curated for us by the Canadian Caribbean Photographic Arts Collective. It has given a burst of colour and creativity to our space. Our visitors have enjoyed viewing the photographs, each one offering a unique perspective on the Caribbean experience," Ramsubagh-Mannette said.

The exhibition is the work of members of the CCPAC.

On display are works by Ian Grant, David Lewis, and Jenny Baboolal. Together, they have assembled a range of photos from the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival.

CCPAC was founded in 2017 by Anthony Berot and Ian Grant with objectives that include exhibiting the photographic works of the collective, and creating a legacy to highlight the excellent work of Canadian Caribbean photographers.



Ian Grant's Eye Look

Works by the photographers have been exhibited in museums, galleries, and at specialised shows in Ontario and elsewhere.

The exhibition is now on at the Consulate General of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, Toronto, which is located 185 Sheppard Avenue West from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. It ends on September 1.

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# Caricom requests 'loss & damage fund' from COP28

A list of requests that includes a loss and damage fund for vulnerable countries was proposed by Caricom leaders earlier this month and presented to the president-designate for COP28, *Dominica News Online*, *Caribbean News Now*, and other Caribbean media have reported.

The list originated among Caricom leaders, and was presented by Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit to Dr Sultan Al Jaber, president-designate for the 28th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Al Jaber visited the Caribbean earlier this month, and met with Caricom leaders, and Barbados's Prime Minister Mia Mottley on August 11.

COP28 will take place in the United Arab Emirates from November 30 to December 12 later this year.

Skerrit presented the list on behalf of the regional body as Caricom's chairman. In it, he discussed the challenges Caricom continues to face on its 50th anniversary, particularly in regard to the region's biggest task, which is dealing with climate change.

Said Skerrit: "The Caribbean is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world; climate change, for us in the Caribbean, is an existential threat. We are on the frontlines of the climate crisis, suffering from the ravages of climate change that is not our making."

Skerrit said it was crucial for the world to lower emissions by 45 percent by 2030, and attain carbon neutrality by 2050, based on scientific evidence.

"The political leadership required... to deliver at the scale and speed necessary, is lagging. Despite the geopolitical challenges being experienced across the globe, we cannot let



COP28 President-Designate Dr Sultan Al Jaber (second from right) alongside Caricom leaders Dominica's PM Roosevelt Skerrit (third from right), & Barbados' PM Mia Mottley (right). COP28 supplied photo

up on pursuing ambitious climate actions," he stated.

Addressing Al Jaber, Skerrit also noted, "As the COP28 President-designate, we in the Caribbean will count on your leadership to ensure that COP28 is a COP of action. COP28 must deliver actions that are commensurate with ensuring that we keep 1.5 [degrees Celsius] alive. Our lives, and that of our children, and their children, depend on it."

Caricom countries are pushing for creating and funding a Loss and Damage Fund to assist countries vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The financial support should be dispersed through grants, and the group is optimistic that COP28 will produce a solid

strategy to double adaptation funding.

It is also looking to determine the host of the Santiago Network, and establish a fair and inclusive Work Programme for Just Transition that encompasses both mitigation and adaptation for all Small Island Developing States.

Said Skerrit: "These outcomes are critical to [rebuilding] trust in the UNFCCC process. Developed countries must be accountable, keep their promises, and deliver the climate finance required if trust is to be maintained."

He added, "They must deliver on the [US] \$100 billion per year by COP28, and must commit new and additional resources by 2025 as we articulate the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance."

During the meeting with Al Jaber, Skerrit stressed the importance of taking immediate action to prevent a global catastrophe as time is running out. He also highlighted Dominica's experience with such disasters, citing Hurricane Maria, which caused damages equivalent to 226 percent of the island's GDP.

This onslaught occurred just two years after tropical storm Erika hit, and which had previously wiped out 90 percent of Dominica's GDP.

"Other Caricom countries have similar experiences. As bad as this is, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) makes it clear that without steep cuts aligned to a 1.5 [degrees Celsius] pathway, the situation will worsen," Skerrit stated.

He added, "As a result, we have committed in my country to pursue climate resilience across all aspects of our society and economy to avoid such losses in the future and enable more rapid recovery. We, like all our Caricom counterparts, require profound development finance reforms, solutions to the debt crisis, and equitable access to climate finance to make resilience a reality truly."

And as he noted, the World Meteorological Organisation has stated there is a 66 percent probability of temporarily exceeding the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit in the next five years. Additionally, the WMO predicts with 98 percent certainty that the next five years will be the hottest on record.

"We know that with every increment of warming, the frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters will increase ...undermining our sustainable development aspirations," Skerrit said.

Additionally, he noted it is with this urgency that Al Jaber will be taking up the mantle of the COP28 presidency.



MP Sahota (front row, right), Mayor Brown (left, front row), Sesquicentennial Park officials, & Brampton residents following the CCRF announcement

## Sahota announces CCRF investment

**Brampton** - A federal investment of \$750,000 to enhance the Brampton North region under the Federal Canada Community Revitalisation Fund was announced last Friday by Ruby Sahota, Member of Parliament for Brampton North, alongside Patrick Brown, Mayor of the City of Brampton.

With this investment, the City of Brampton will be able to enhance the Sesquicentennial Park, a move that will reinvent the recreational space for children and families in Brampton North, while increasing accessibility to outdoor spaces.

The project will see construction of the Hub, featuring fully accessible, innovative play structures, and recreational elements for all ages and abilities.

It will also support the purchase and installation of recreational elements. Among these are accessible swings, climbers, and wheelchair-friendly gathering areas.

Other recreational elements would include shade shelters, picnic areas, splash pad, accessible fitness equipment, accessible play surfacing, walking trails, and naturalised planting.

"With this investment, families & children

in Brampton North will be able to enjoy a vibrant, safe, and accessible outdoor space to connect within their community, while encouraging mental and physical health for everyone," Sahota said.

She added, "Sesquicentennial Park is an important landmark in Brampton North, and this investment will make a great impact on the families and young people who enjoy [spending] time in the park."

Also speaking at the announcement, Brampton Patrick Brown described the CCRF infusion in Brampton North as a "remarkable investment in our community".

Additionally, he noted that it "will foster increased opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and will contribute to the health and well-being of residents".

"As a City, we are committed to enhancing our parks and recreation amenities in Brampton, through investments like today's," Brown declared.

Additionally, "I would like to thank our federal partners, particularly MP Sahota, for her invaluable support in facilitating these investments for Brampton."



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Last weekend saw the Guyana Consulate General, Toronto, holding numerous diaspora events that included a meet-&-greet for the newly-appointed Honorary Consul General Mani Singh, and an Emancipation Soirée.

The meet-and-greet event took place at the Windies Restaurant in Scarborough on August 18. A day later, on August 19, the Consulate General held the Emancipation event at its offices in Toronto.

In photos are the guests, family, friends, supporters, and many members of the Guyanese and Caribbean diaspora who turned out at both events.



Photos above & at left: Guests attending the meet-&-greet with the newly-appointed Guyana Honorary Consul General, Mani Singh (centre in photo above)



In top two photos, Honorary Consul General Mani Singh with guests & members of the diaspora at the Emancipation Soirée; (bottom photo), Singh (centre) with Vishnu Mandir's Roy Doobay (left), & guests



Honorary Consul General Singh (second from right), with High Commissioner Keith George, CCH (second from left); with active diaspora member, Waheeda Bacchus (left to right); Nutana Singh, Executive Assistant to the Consul General; Acting Consul General Grace Joseph; & at right, Vice Consul Osafo Scott at the meet-&-greet in Scarborough last week

## Unity, passion, & doing one's best

### From Page 1

from friends who are noting that he has just shifted into a higher plane now that he is in the Honorary Consul General's chair. That he is cruising at a higher altitude, but still giving back to Guyana and the diaspora, and still making a difference.

"They are saying to me that I'm doing now what I have been doing for more than 30 years, only that I now have more resources and a title to go with it," Singh said.

Cruising at a higher altitude has also brought with it even more structure and a busier schedule, Singh added.

As he indicated, last weekend saw him attending a number of events in the GTA. Among them was the Diamond Jubilee Cricket Rematch between Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica in Brampton.

Attendance at the game saw Singh meeting

up with new colleagues, Trinidad and Tobago's Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette, and Jamaica's Consul General Lincoln Downer, among other diplomats and dignitaries.

One takeaway from the event was the common currency of camaraderie, unity, and regionalism that pervaded Andrew McCandles Park, Singh said.

Also, as he noted, the glue that was holding it all together as a unified Caribbean diaspora was the regional love for cricket.

Said Singh: "I am a strong advocate for the promotion and advancement of Caribbean unity, and I noted how the cricket match was bringing out that passion in us. It was quite an uplifting experience."

And as he declared, such an inspiring display of unity and passion can only help "me to aspire to do my best".

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**Editorial**

**Annus horribilis**

The *New York Times* noted this week the “hot, dry, and gusty” weather conditions that contributed to wildfires in eastern Canada this year are now at least twice as likely to occur in the region had our world not been warmed up by the burning of fossil fuels.

The *NYT* report came following release of the findings by a team of researchers with the World Weather Attribution initiative. Earlier this week, the group provided the first scientific assessment of the role being played by climate change in intensifying the fires that are now burning throughout Canada.

At this time, over 37 million acres have been burnt in almost every province and Territory in Canada, the *NYT* reported; and as other media have reported, the impacted area of land leveled by wildfires is now far more than the total size of Greece, which is around 33 million acres.

Last week, *CBC* reported that this year Canada continues to experience a record number of wildfires. It means that by the end of our summer, and with the arrival of cooler, and hopefully wet weather, the total acreage impacted by wildfires is surely going to be far larger than all of Greece.

So far for 2023, as *CBC* reported, Canada has seen close to 6,000 wildfires burning in 140,000 square kilometres across our nation. And according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, as of last week, there were close to 1,100 wildfires burning in the provinces and in the Territories, with more than half of them out of control.

As of last week, in the Northwest Territories, one of the critical wildfire hot spots so far, just under 300 wildfires had consumed over 21,000 square kilometres of forested and inhabited areas. With the fires burning out of control in Yellowknife last week, officials triggered evacuations that affected almost 20,000 residents. The exodus by this population to Alberta left Yellowknife empty and deserted; and easy prey to the approaching fires.

Similarly, British Columbia, another critical wildfire hot spot province, is battling over 300 wildfires. Last week also saw evacuations of more than 30,000 residents in Kelowna. This week reports in the aftermath of the flames’ progress are indicating that preliminary assessment is discovering inhabited areas, structures, and residences to be significantly impacted as the wildfires swept through many neighbourhoods.

This outcome of inexorable and wanton incineration of land mass and infrastructure bears a few similarities to the disaster that unfolded earlier this month in Maui; except their narrative is one with a horrific outcome in the tragic loss of human lives.

As the reports indicate, the horror story that unfolded in Maui saw scattered, seasonal bush fires fanned by strong winds from the distant Category Four Hurricane Dora, spawned by our climate change triggers, and which was seething hundreds of miles south in the Pacific Ocean.

The horrific result was yet another episode of anthropocene fallout from climate change, with Maui’s seasonal bush fires stoked by the residual, gusty winds traveling outwards from Hurricane Dora. It led to fast-moving deadly infernos that totally consumed touristic and idyllic waterfront communities, historic landmarks, and a significant percentage of residences. So rapid was the inferno’s progress that it left inhabitants with little time to escape.

What emerged in the wake of this inexorable march of hellish flames were leveled houses, and as has since been discovered, many yet-to-be-identified bodies of residents who suffered fiery deaths, even as their houses were consumed by what for the dying victims would have been nothing less than an apocalyptic event.

And this is all an unfolding narrative that is not even yet the worst of times. As the experts are saying, our present *annus horribilis* in Canada, the US, and elsewhere in the world with dry, gusty weather patterns fanning an ineluctable march of wildfires, heated ocean waters threatening Florida’s coral reefs, the shifting colour of our oceans, among others, is merely the tip of the climate change spear.

The world’s governments must intervene now; businesses must become more proactive. Our world has now tilted unfavourably; and even then, it continues to roll.

**Time to participate in party leadership contests**

Achieving the highest levels of political office can be complicated. The path to that level isn’t limited to simply leading a major political party through an election, as there are many steps and hurdles one must cross. One of these steps is being successful in a contested party leadership election to become the leader of that political party.

Both Justin Trudeau and Doug Ford had to seek the leadership of their respective political parties before becoming prime minister and premier respectively.

Trudeau faced five opponents, but won his leadership contest on the first ballot with 78.76 percent of the popular vote. Ford faced a highly-contested race, won that race with 48.26 percent of the popular vote, but achieved 50.62 percent of the required points in the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario’s voting process.

After achieving the leadership of their respective parties, both Trudeau and Ford then had to campaign to win over their respective electorates.

A party’s leadership election isn’t something the average citizen is typically involved in, or even aware. However, it is an important function within our democracy. This is an opportunity for political parties to select who they would like to lead their party, and eventually become the next head of government, either the prime minister or premier.

Political parties are almost like private clubs. They have their own constitutions, a board, general meetings for members, and elections to select a leader. However, although operating in this form, the selection of a party leader is one of the most important functions of a political party, as that person could potentially become the prime minister of Canada, or premier of a province.

It is important to point out that most residents can sign up and participate in these leadership processes. Despite having to be a Canadian citizen and over the age of 18 to vote in a general election, political parties (as private clubs) can set their own rules on who can join, and who can vote to become leader. And this is a huge opportunity for many to become involved with this process.

A current example is the Ontario Liberal Party. After two historically devastating electoral losses (2018 and 2022), the party is currently undergoing a leadership election. The new OLP leader will be announced on December 2, but before that, thousands of Ontarians who register with the party will have the



Ryan Singh

right to vote for its next leader.

The next leader of OLP will contest in the next provincial election, and if successful could be Ontario’s premier. Currently, there are five candidates seeking the leadership of OLP. This includes Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie; federal backbencher Member of Parliament, Nathaniel Erskine-Smith; current Member of Provincial Parliament, Ted Hsu; former Ontario Attorney General and federal Member of Parliament, Yasir Naqvi; and rookie Member of Provincial Parliament, Adil Shamji. One of these hopeful candidates will achieve the leadership of OLP, and then challenge Premier Ford in the Ontario election, which is set for 2026.

If Hsu, Naqvi, or Shamji win that leadership race, then it will be the first time in Ontario history that a person of colour would lead a major political party. If Crombie is successful, she would become the fifth woman in the province’s history to lead a major political party. Beyond these milestones, the next leader will define that party’s future, and become the face and voice of the party into the next election.

This isn’t a plug for the OLP; however, it is a call to the Indo-Caribbean community – here is an opportunity to get involved and engaged with the political process.

Part of the beauty is that all major political parties have a fairly simple membership process. This is a great opportunity to become part of the political movement, influence decisions, and more importantly, have a vote on who will lead that party and potentially serve as the next prime minister or premier.

In the case of the OLP – membership is free. Anyone who is 14 years or older and resident of the province can sign up, and if done before September 11, can vote for that party’s next leader.

If the Liberal Party isn’t your preference, then look into membership in the other options. Leadership contests in all parties are inevitable, and these occur often.

Having a say in who leads a political party is a powerful tool. Beyond a vote in general elections, voting in a party’s leadership provides an opportunity to directly influence who will run to lead a government.

Grassroots involvement with any political party is an eye-opening experience. It further provides context on how decisions are made, and key individuals that are influential on political leaders. And it is an exciting experience to potentially select the leader who may be the next prime minister or premier.

**Unofficial checklist makes school-days bearable**

There was always a secondary, forbidden checklist in my schoolbag when I was attending school back home and completing homework at the end of the day.

Of course this checklist had to be done offstage from the kitchen table, after I had bulldozed through reams of homework under hawk-eyed maternal supervision, with my mother wielding a lethal rolling pin as she slapped, clapped, and manhandled *paratha* roti. Of course, her adept rolling pin action was an additional veneer of foreboding that lay just beyond the edge of my scholarly concentration.

In the unofficial checklist were a few ‘essential’ non-school items that were surreptitiously concealed in the schoolbag’s side pocket, which insouciantly presented a scholastic outwardness in the silver and gold clips from the many fountain pens.

Of course, there were the prerequisite thick volumes of text books within. And there were the fountain pens, with its array of metallic tops stacked like ammunition, a few of them backups in case my one preferred and favourite pen spluttered and ran dry during a critical end-of-day penmanship exercise.

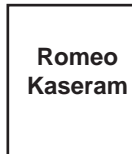
I recall that favourite fountain pen being the one with a piston, which we called “push-and-pull”. It was a breeze to fill this pen with ink, dipping it inside the wide-mouth ink pot ensconced in a drilled hole on the top of the wooden desk.

And it was quite lethal during an “ink fight”, where its piston was sharply deployed to fire a powerful spray of ink that indelibly splattered the vulnerable torso of a uniformed, white-shirted, and tragically dismayed opponent.

The other pens were made with the less expensive bladders, and were cheaply available among the stalls in the open-air market that specialised in Made In China items that included thousands of tick-tock noisemakers stamped out from tin. Then there were long, rectangular boxes like miniature coffins, wherein slept silver-sided and metallic-sounding harmonicas.

And of course, there were the ubiquitous “gun-and-sacks” that came with accompanying rolls of red-paper, explosive caps, which were part of the typical, genderised Christmas gifts we received as young boys from our parents back then.

Of course, the girls received doll houses with tiny stoves and made-up miniature beds; and countless “dollies”, the majority pigmented pink, with curved plastic eyelashes on levered eyelids that closed to simulate sleep when the doll was tilted.



Romeo Kaseram

I also recall that these bladder fountain pens readily and maliciously stained the fingertips as if we had voted that day, and which had to be repeatedly squeezed inside the inkpot until its reservoir filled up with a mix of ink and mostly bubbles.

It goes without saying that these pens, with their flaccid bladders, were as ineffective during an ink duel as milking a dried-up cow. There were days when ink duels were quite numerous, and came after the ceremonial gauntlet of a copy book was contemptuously tossed at the feet of an antagonist. The challenge was followed by a flourish with one arm crooked on the waist, and the other pointed forward and brandishing the weaponised pen.

It was thus that my favourite fountain pen was the “push-and-pull”, which was always primed with blue ink the night before, its safety in the off position, and ready to fire with the final ring of the large bell that heralded the start back then to what were lengthy days of rigorous schooling in the homeland.

The ringing school bell, promptly at 8:30 a.m., was itself a Pavlovian trigger, with the entire class sitting on the edge of the desks, our backs arched and tense like so many athletes in their starting blocks, the fountain pen gripped in sweaty fingers, waiting for the Headmaster to end the flourish of the bell with a final, two-handed, and breathless, upward heave.

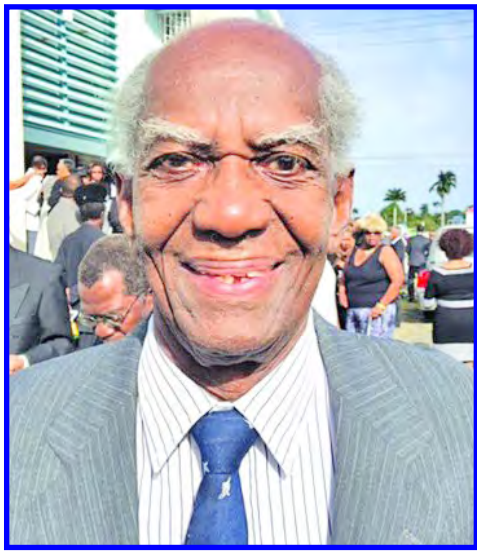
Then we were off, even as the receding Doppler of the last peal from the solid iron rang out. For a few of my classmates, the fading ringing from the distant Headmaster’s office was like the death knell that occasionally sounded from the church in the middle of our village announcing the passing of a parishioner.

For it was then when Teacher would begin to solemnly enunciate the words for our morning Vocabulary test, which was as inevitable as today’s medications taken at the breakfast table.

Teacher would lengthen out the sibilance of each word with a serpentine hiss, the solemn tonality that of a funeral director, each convolution of syllables a Gordian knot of letters bound and inextricable from the alphabet that we had been taught to recite by rote to a sing-song rhythm that still echoes in my head.

But then there was respite at recess. It was then that the unofficial checklist and its contents were removed from the schoolbag: salt, check; hot peppers, check. Soon we were off to a neighbouring tree, there to purloin a mango or two. We then forgot about school, feasting on the acidic, forbidden fruit.

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Ashton Chase



Roger Luncheon

## Guyana loses 'sons of the soil'

Dear Editor,

Guyana recently lost three sons of the soil: Ashton Chase, Dr Roger Luncheon, and Justice James Patterson.

Each scholarly gentleman was distinguished for different commendations, and would be remembered for various reasons and challenging issues. The three men contributed significantly to Guyana's history.

Senior Counsel Ashton Chase will be recalled in politics, law, and labour, having identified himself with the PPP, the court house, and the National Association of Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial Employees.

In his tribute, President Dr Irfaan Ali said, "[Chase's] death represents an incalculable loss to our nation. His name and contributions will forever be etched in our country's political, labour, and legal history. He made an exceptional contribution to Guyana's nationalist struggle and political history, and was the last surviving member of the Political Affairs Committee established in 1946. He was among our finest legal minds, and was a pillar of our country's early trade union activism, authoring the most authoritative work on our trade union history."

Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo added: "Our country owes an eternal debt of gratitude

to this outstanding son of the soil. Guyana has lost an amazing human being."

Dr Roger Luncheon's prominence prevailed in the fields of medicine and politics, having served as a medical doctor, as Head of the Presidential Secretariat for the PPP/Civic government, and Cabinet Secretary for five of Guyana's Presidents.

Said Ali following Luncheon's death: "It is a painful and deep-wounded loss for the government and Party. He offered me unflinching support throughout my political career, both within the PPP and in public life. This man has shaped me in many ways, and placed tremendous trust and confidence in me. Onward fearless warrior and pure nationalist. Your work is done, but the product of your labour will live on forever."

Jagdeo noted of Luncheon, "A true son of the soil who helped to shape the lives of many. Dr Luncheon left a rich legacy of true commitment to service, patriotism, and a deep sense of national pride and hard work for the people of Guyana."

More recently, Justice (Retired) James Patterson served the courts of Guyana and Grenada, and was a former Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission.

Jai Lall, Guyana, via email.

## T&T govt must deal with crime

Dear Editor,

Solving the problem of crime was a major election platform promise made by the various political parties that have since occupied the corridors of power in Trinidad and Tobago.

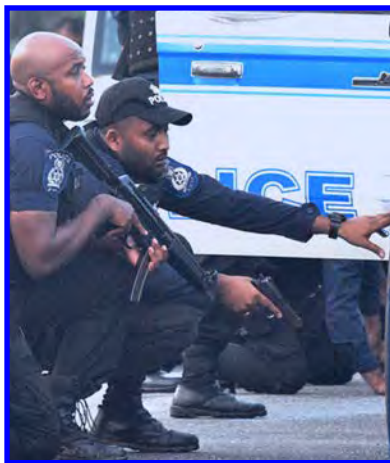
However, in spite of the best efforts of the present administration, citizens are still living in fear.

The question to be asked now is how much is being done with the tangible resources provided to arrest the fears of law-abiding citizens when so many of the crimes committed go unresolved?

The low rate of detection exists because the perpetrators of heinous crimes are always one step ahead of the police.

As such, any gains claimed to have been made by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service quickly dissipate in the minds of the general public, and the police are left wanting, giving the impression that nobody in authority seems to really care about the daily bloodshed.

Moreover, while the remedy for such an unacceptable situation also lies in legislative reform as per the Police Service Act and the Special Reserve Police Act, this is easier said than done, since such sweeping legislative reform will certainly need the support of the parliamentary Opposition.



T&T police at a crime scene

Therefore, unless the Opposition joins ranks with the government, and lends its support to crucial pieces of legislation that could help reduce, in particular, gang-related homicides, the TTPS will be fighting a losing battle.

Coupled with the fact that police officers themselves are being charged with committing crimes, citizens feel hopeless and disenchanted. As it stands now, a culture of death is pervading our society, and the Opposition must get its act together and help the government in the crime fight.

Furthermore, since crime is everybody's business, there is a dire need for citizens themselves to rediscover the values of honesty and brotherhood, otherwise Trinidad and Tobago will continue to live in despair.

Parents must resolve to take the first step in saving Trinidad and Tobago, because at the end of the day, the family will determine the extent to which the culture of life is achieved.

For far too long, and at our own peril, the teachings and practices of our forefathers have been ignored, resulting in the breakdown of moral and spiritual values in the home, schools, workplace, and, by extension, the national community.

Rishi Lakkan, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.

## All eyes on our Amazon Warriors

Dear Editor,

The first two matches the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League 2023 tournament were a revelation. It is clear the batsmen were enjoying themselves on the slow pitches and benefiting from poor fielding.

In the first match, captain of the Jamaica Tallawahs Brandon King benefitted from dropped catches and poor fielding to score a half century, enabling his team to win their first match against the host team St Lucia Kings.

Jamaica Tallawahs were able to score a challenging 187 off their allotted 20 overs, while the host team wobbled at the beginning of their chase, and were quickly reduced to 104-5. The Kings were able to put up a useful resistance, as Chase hammered a surprising half century. Eventually, St Lucia Kings lost the match by 11 runs.

In the second match, St Lucia Kings took first strike, and enjoyed a quick and solid half-century start. Their foreign players Faf du Plessis and Sean Williams, with respective scores of 46 and 47, enabled the Kings to reach a winning total of 201 runs.

Chasing a frightening total of more than 200 runs, the Tallawahs were in serious trouble in the very first over, when they lost two wickets. The defending champions' poor batting was worrying, as they were reeling on 89-8. However, a useful piece of hitting by Nyeem Young enabled them to reach 147.

Rahkeem Cornwall was a total disaster in the Barbados team. The movement of defend-

ing captain Rovman Powell from the Jamaica Tallawahs to the Barbados Royals is intriguing. The Royals team includes experienced players such as Jason Holder and Kyle Mayers, who are former captains of the team. The quality of cricket is far below standard.

The CPL must produce young players, and provide the West Indies with players who must be vying for selection at the highest level. The fitness of the players is most distressing. Some of them are not only overweight, but they cannot move between the wickets, and their movement on the field is allowing easy second runs.

All eyes will be on our team, Guyana Amazon Warriors. Skipper Imran Tahir is a friendly person. However, all eyes will be on the master batsman and electrifying fielder Shimron Hetmyer. His role in the team will be manifold. This genuine cricketer must lead by example. He is capable of scoring runs and playing winning innings. However, he must be consistent.


The Guyana team will also be looking at Shai Hope to get runs consistently. The genuine all-rounders in the team are match winners with the bat. The bowling looks very good on paper. Dwaine Pretorius will be our strike bowler. Odean Smith, Romario Shepherd, Keemo Paul must all bowl a good line and length, while Gudakesh Motie and the skipper can receive support from Kevin Sinclair.

The Guyanese crowd is overly anxious and waiting to rally behind the Warriors.

Neil Kumar, Guyana, via email.



Shimron Hetmyer



### GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

#### Does paying the Land Tax guarantee possession of your Property... Perhaps not!

By Maj Khan

It has been generally understood that one of the best ways to protect your property anywhere in the world is to pay the land taxes. The fact is land taxes must be paid, and in Guyana there is an annual filing requirement with a two percent penalty for failure to do so. The government arm responsible for land taxes is the Guyana Regulatory Authority.

The optics are quite straightforward; however there is *caveat* with far-reaching consequences, of which owners should be aware. Those who are familiar with land disputes strongly advise that taxes must be paid in person. Why? The receipts for paying land taxes are often handwritten on a carbon-copy book.

In fact, property transactions in Guyana including title, valuation, mortgage, and tax compliance receipts are all done on paper. In the age of the Internet, those living abroad are well-versed with the digital world, where access to home ownership is at their fingertips. In Guyana, the government has just implemented an e-service platform that will take time to develop. In the meantime, most land records are written or typed and housed in local offices. It means that remote property owners have to invest a great deal of time and funds to ensure their paperwork is in order.

Currently, most owners living abroad have a 'trusted' family member they rely on to ensure the daily upkeep of their property, including paying the land tax. If that receipt is written in the name of anyone else other than the registered owner, it can create conditions that are favourable for that individual whose name is on the receipt. Translation: that individual is in a position to file for possession of that property. This is especially viable if the owner has not visited the property for years.

Unfortunately, today property disputes are common, with siblings pitted against each other, parents against children, and families at war with each other. The stakes are high, and the price paid heavy – often with a bitter experience fraught with a gamut of emotions, with substantial time and monies invested over decades. And the question is always asked, "What could they have done differently to ensure none of this would come to bear in the first place?"

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 visit RE/Guyana's website.](#)

# Regional, diasporic integration thriving; Caricom still meaningful

Dear Editor,

Over the five decades of Caricom's existence, our leaders have signed successive agreements committing our region to ever stronger cooperation, all the while implementing policies that are more and more divergent.

In theory, Caricom has gone from a free trade area to a common market, to a single market space, and now to a single economy, implying commonality of financial and commercial regulation, and common rules and procedures.

The reality is that each member country has its own internal systems, and the laws, rules and procedures governing the movement of goods, people, and finance among members are the same as for the US, UK, Canada, or any other non-Caricom country.

Although The University of the West Indies predated Caricom, it has come to be seen as a symbol of regional unity. However, I contrast my own experience as an economics graduate from UWI in 1967 with that of the typical UWI graduate today.

I graduated with a lived experience of my Caribbean identity, understanding Jamaican Creole, partying to the music of the *Skatellites and the Supersonics*, going on the annual economic retreat at the University house in the Blue Mountains with Guyanese, Antiguan, Kittitians, Trinidadians, and Belizeans, rooming with a Dominican, and learning how steelbands are tuned from Trinidadian pan tuners.

After the five years I lived, studied, and worked in Jamaica, I came away with many personal memories, experiences, and life-long friendships.

In contrast, today's Antiguan, Barbadian, or Jamaican graduate has no personal experience of the Caribbean as a whole, and no greater personal appreciation of a Caribbean identity than any non-graduate of a supposedly regional institution.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, newly-Independent Caribbean countries actively collaborated in designing economic policies with the participation and advice of renowned scholars associated with The UWI and the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute, then known as the Institute for Social and Economic Research.

When the UK devalued the pound sterling against the US dollar on November 18, 1968, Caribbean countries approached The UWI to advise as to whether they should follow suit.

The ISER arranged for studies to be prepared, and a con-



Regional diaspora participating in the recently concluded summer celebration, Toronto Caribbean Carnival 2023. Russell Lutchman photo

ference was held at which the pros and cons were discussed. Encouraged by the insights which the exercise yielded, the region's Central Banks and The UWI set up a permanent programme for regional economic policy research.

That Programme evolved into the Caribbean Centre for Money and Finance, which I headed for a brief period a decade and a half ago. The Centre has since been dissolved, its services no longer needed now that there is no longer any interest in regional policy coordination.

The economic thinkers whose work influenced the formation of the Caribbean Community saw economic integration as a tool to promote the diversification of the region's exports beyond sugar, bananas, oil, and bauxite.

The classic 1967 *The Dynamics of West Indian Economic Integration*, written by Professors Clive Y. Thomas and the

recently-deceased Havelock Brewster, was an in-depth study of manufacturing activities that might be supported for regional production, with a view to building a large enough capacity to export these products to the world at competitive prices.

Other studies published around this time explored how the Caribbean might combine resources of members to add value to the raw materials the region exported, for example by using Trinidad and Tobago's energy resources to process bauxite from Jamaica and Guyana into aluminum for export. None of these strategies ever materialised.

The Caribbean is unquestionably more integrated today than it was 50 years ago. Since that time Trinidad's style of Carnival has spread into the diaspora, and across the region.

Also, Jamaican music has become a world phenomenon, with variants springing up everywhere, including in the Caribbean; also, Caribbean literature attracts readership across the English-speaking world and in the region; and thanks to many decades of emigration, and the presence of large communities of Caribbean people in major cities in North America and the UK, almost everyone has personal links of family and friendship across the region.

This is not the pattern of regional integration which the Caribbean leadership has in mind, but it has developed organically to the benefit of the region's people, providing rich and dynamic cultural experiences for us to enjoy and celebrate, and enriching livelihoods for cultural practitioners, regional economies, and everyone who benefits from remittances, pensions, and other income from abroad.

Ironically, it is often in Miami, New York, or Toronto that we feel most Caribbean.

There is no need to abandon Caricom; it is a useful forum for leaders to meet regularly to exchange views on the issues of the day, and the performance of their economies.

However, it is surely naïve to expect that the decisions made at these meetings will have some impact in the future that is any more notable than has been the case in the last 50 years.

The one major change that would deepen Caribbean regional integration significantly would be the use of US dollars for all local business in place of the national currency; no Caricom decision is needed for any country to reap that benefit.

DeLisle Worrell, via email.

# Time to forge closer, resilient ties with India & its extensive diaspora

Dear Editor,

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has scored another triumph by chairing and hosting the G-20 meeting in New Delhi, which takes place from September 9-10.

This is an achievement following India's celebration of its 76th anniversary of Independence on August 15.

India continues to astound in a world of political acrobatics. Modi will speak on behalf of several countries that have no voice, particularly Caricom and Africa.

Doing so is an honour, as decades earlier India was deemed to be a depressed society. Today India stands tall; in fact, even taller than several developed societies.

In the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago achieved Independence from Britain on August 31, 1962, while India did so on August 15, 1947, some 15 years apart. Both nations remained members of the Commonwealth of Nations. However, shortly after Independence, India opted to become a republic.

Later, in September 1976, Trinidad and Tobago adopted a republican system of government. Both nations have maintained very cordial relationships over the years, notably through prime ministerial visits across the years.

Trinidad and Tobago's first Prime Minister, Dr Eric Williams, in a tribute marking India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's 75th birth anniversary, cited his enthusiasm in a community development initiative. This was launched on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's birthday celebration on October 2, 1952, covering 25,000 villages with a population of 16 million people.

Said Williams: "I was able to see one of these village projects during my visit to India in 1961, and in Nehru's words, it was a sustained effort to eradicate poverty".

Williams also recalled meeting Nehru for the first time in 1946. At the time, Nehru was lecturing to Oxford undergraduates in an Oxford tea room, and Williams was contemplating switching his studies to West Indian history.

It was "an opportunity to meet in flesh the then foremost



Narendra Modi

champion of colonial Independence", Williams recalled.

Williams added, "It was not until July 1961 that I met Nehru, although I had been in communication with him on the Chaguaramas issue in 1958. His special attraction for me at that time was his personal interest in national economic planning, and his extensive historical writings, which I had been reading. We met again in 1962 at the Prime Ministers' Conference on the European Common Market, when I was able to discuss the question of British Guiana with him."

Also, as William's dissertation indicates, despite a serious issue on Indentureship, India and Trinidad and Tobago continued to maintain good relations.

This is what is needed today – there is an urgent need to rekindle these initiatives in the year 2023 and beyond.

There is still time to dust off the several MOUs in the offices

of both governments and to begin working towards an improved, sustained, and benevolent relationship between both nations.

One resource that I call to mind is from the High Level Committee, which was headed by the diplomat Dr. L.M. Singhri, who visited the diaspora in several nations, among them Trinidad and Tobago, where I made a presentation.

Another direction would be to set up and maintain an annual Distinguished Lecture Series among India and countries where its diaspora resides. These lectures should highlight the culture, history, economics, and philosophy linking these countries, a move that would refresh these linkages among the diaspora.

The recent television and radio programs that were hosted by the International Council for Cultural Relations with the diaspora in approximately 107 countries was an extremely positive undertaking. It appears this thrust was the brainchild of former High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago, Ambassador Virendra Gupta.

It is hoped that fruitful and meaningful actions will emerge out of this venture, and which could grow to become a reference and a resource project.

Today, relations between India and Trinidad and Tobago have shifted from cultural and religious exchange into business, banking, economics, trade, steel, petroleum, and insurance, among others. It marks a new thrust in economic diplomacy.

The opening of the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Cultural Cooperation, even if it took over 50 years to come into fruition, stands as an instrument for further deepening the relationship between both nations.

Former Indian Prime Minister Atal Biharee Vajpayee told the Fourth Diaspora Conference there were various forces of history prompting our people to settle abroad. He added this international movement will only accelerate in the future.

It appears the sun will never set on the Indian diaspora.

Paras Ramoutar, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



# Questions arise on whether Guyana's gold production is falling

Plagued by a myriad of problems, gold production in Guyana has been steadily declining in recent years. According to an August 2023 statement by the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association, gold declarations from small and medium scale miners have been falling for several reasons – among them, a shortage of labour, bad weather, illegal mining, and poor enforcement.

Incidentally, Artisanal, Small, and Medium scale mining currently accounts for approximately 80 percent of total gold production in Guyana.

Although large scale mining commenced making inroads over the past decade, ASMs are expected to remain the major source of gold production for years to come.

The GGDMA contends that the drop in production is partially due to a shift of workers from mining to construction and Oil & Gas, the depletion of reserves near access roads; and the illegal raiding of lands, which has been made worse by poor enforcement.

“Workers have been opting out of the sector to work on the coastland where competitive salaries mitigate the risk of interior work,” stated the GGDMA.

This has resulted in a serious labour shortage in the mining sector, with several mining outfits operating at below 50 percent capacity, while being burdened by significant increases in operational costs for services and supplies such as trucking, groceries, among others.

In addition, above normal rainfall and flooding in mining areas have also contributed to a fall in production.

Production, which averaged 303,000 ounces annually between 2013 and 2022, fell to 267,000 ounces at the end of 2022.

As the Chart *Falling Gold Production* shows, this represents a steady decline from a peak of 391,100 ounces in 2016.

As a result, gold's contribution to the country's non-oil GDP has also been falling, from a peak of 14.68 percent in 2016 to 8.25 percent in 2022. See Chart, *Gold's Contribution to Non-oil GDP*.

The contribution of gold to the Guyanese economy is probably much greater. The sector is a major source of employment.

It is estimated that the sector directly and indirectly employs more than 100,000 Guyanese, or over one quarter of the adult workforce, accentuating its relative importance to the economy.

The sector also indirectly induces other ancillary economic activities, such as food production, trade, and local transport to supply to miners; trade (especially food and beverages); as well as local transport between the mine site and neighbouring communities.

It also supports economic activities in mineral exploration, mining equipment and supplies, surveying, drilling, trading, jewelry manufacturing, and other retail activities.

Beyond the variables such as weather and labour shortages, gold smuggling and illegal mining are perhaps the main factors that have led to a decline in gold declarations.

In fact, gold smuggling has been ranked as one of the highest money laundering risks in Guyana, but has been largely ignored.

Smuggled gold is not reported through official channels, which translates in lower official production, and consequently, lower declarations.

It is estimated that as much as 60 percent of all gold production goes unreported. A significant portion of such production is believed to be illegally funnelled through the country's porous borders, and supports a range of illegal activities, including money laundering, tax evasion, and the drug trade.

According to the country's *Second Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing National*

*Risk Assessment (NRA)* report, the estimated value of the proceeds generated from smuggling, including gold smuggling is (US) \$2.2 billion.

Incidentally, gold smuggling in Guyana has attracted attention both nationally and internationally for several years, with little action to implement measures to control the problem.

Gold smuggling is closely linked to illegal mining, the proceeds of which go unreported.

The GGDMA claims that it has appealed to the government to take firm steps to crack down on illegal mining, which appeared to be a big concern for the organised mining sector.

The association apparently stopped short of accusing GGMC's Core of Warden officers of not taking decisive action against illegalities.

It stated that “some GGMC's Core of Warden officers often frustrate the process; after reports are made, they act slowly, taking more steps to nitpick at infractions by the legitimate tenure holders while not taking the condign steps to stop the illegal operations. In many cases, the illegal operators, despite being given multiple cease work and removal orders do not comply and no enforcement activities are undertaken to remove such repeat offenders”.

The association noted that it is the illegal operators who rob the state of revenue, and have an overall negative impact on gold declarations.

The association said licensed traders and dealers are required to follow strict guidelines, which includes requiring documentation that show the origin and ownership of the gold, including the details about the concession from which the mineral was sourced.

In contrast, the GGDMA said illegal buyers and smugglers do not require documentation, and have become the obvious outlet for raiders, who steal and sell minerals, and have no documentation or legal obligation to prove ownership.

The truth is gold smuggling has been an age-old problem. For instance, way back in January 2016, former Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman stated in the local press that some 15,000 ounces of raw gold were being transported out of Guyana weekly.

Trotman added that some of the gold came directly from Guyana, while some of it was sourced from other South American nations. The former Minister indicated that the gold leaves via several ports, making its way to the US, Brazil, Suriname, and Europe. It was also reported that Guyana's gold finds its way to the Middle East and China.

In addition, *Demerara Waves Online News* reported in 2015 that more than (G) \$40 billion worth of the precious metal had been smuggled to the US as “scrap gold” between late 2014 and early 2015.

In 2020, allegations that one of Guyana's largest gold exporters, El Dorado Trading was involved in filtering Venezuelan gold into the local market saw the Royal Canadian Mint suspending purchases of gold from the company.

More recently in July 2023, US government officials repeatedly warned Exxon Mobil to avoid doing business with two mining magnates in Guyana, who face a US investigation on suspicions of money laundering, drug trafficking, and gold smuggling, according to a *Reuters* report.

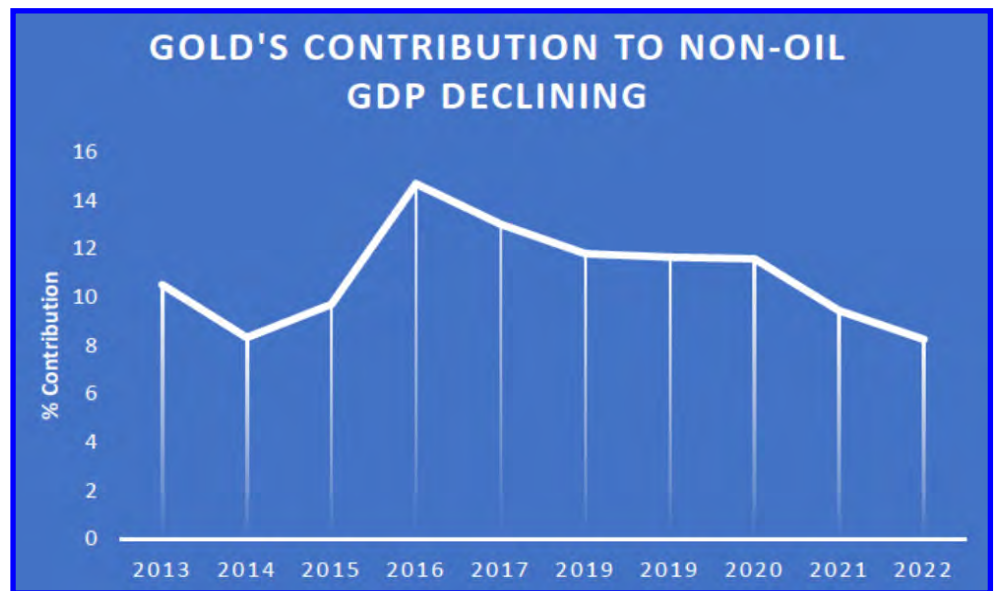
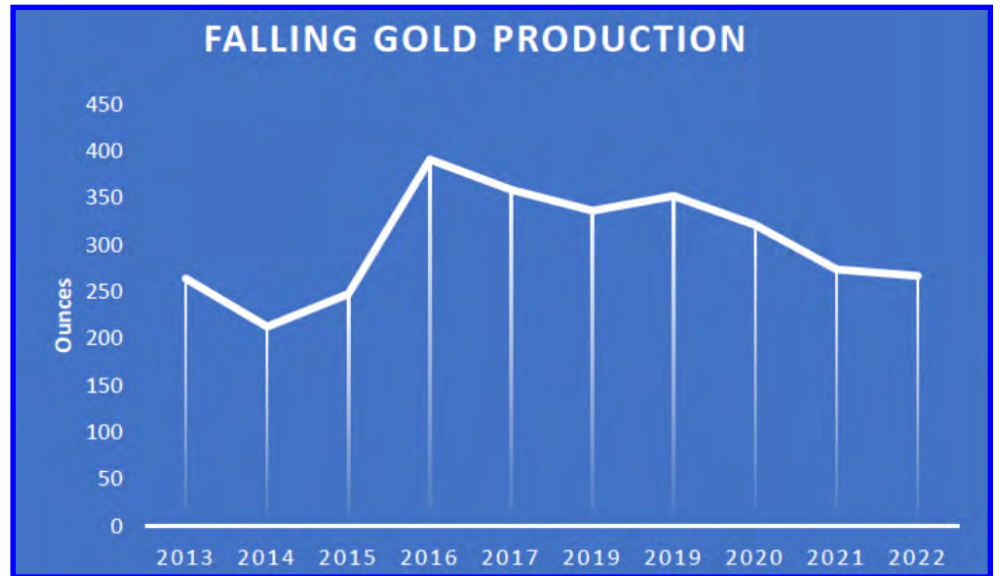
Arguably, there are measures in place to identify legitimate sources of gold, but whether they are diligently implemented remains questionable.

Incidentally, official monitoring and supervision of production activities remain challenging.

Questions, therefore, arise as to whether statistics of gold production and declarations are real.



**Dwarka Lakhan**



Dwarka Lakhan, 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.

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# Get ready to join a 're-run' of VM's Toronto marathon

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

Toronto – Call it the sequel to last year's TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon as **Vishnu Mandir and Global Care Outreach ramp up registration and fund-raising** for the upcoming downtown October 15 event.

Or it is more likely that VM's and Global Care Outreach's organisers would describe their 2023 marathon reincarnation as a "re-run", delivering the delightful play-on-words with a straight face.

Whether it is a "sequel or a "re-run", this year's marathon redux is aiming to be just as eventful and successful as it was in 2022, its organisers are saying.

In the big picture, as the TWM's website notes, the marathon is Canada's premier running event, as well as the grand finale of the Canada Running Series.

"Since 2017, the race has served as the Athletics Canada National Marathon Championships and has doubled as the Olympic Trials," TWM says.

It also notes, "With innovation and organisation as our guiding principles, we stage great experiences for runners of all levels, from Canadian Olympians to recreational and charity runners. Our mission is 'building community through the sport of running', and we are committed to making sport part of sustainable communities and the city-building process."

And significantly, TWM notes that during "the 2022 hybrid event, participants raised \$2.75 million for 150 charities through the TCS Charity Challenge".

Last year VM and Global Care Outreach took up the TWM's vision for physical activity and fund-raising, and, well, they "ran" with it. In so doing, the mandir successfully energised its devotees, and many others in our community and beyond in the diaspora, by raising their physical activity levels.

And as a corollary to participation in the marathon, whether it was downtown for either the run or walk, or online for the virtual event, the effort also saw both runners and walkers raising over \$200,000 to assist Global Care Outreach's program for



Dr Doobay (centre) ready to lead VM's team at last year's marathon

dialysis care in Guyana.

"It was a fun event last year for all our participants," one of the event's organisers, Roy Doobay, told *Indo-Caribbean World* last week. He added, "Some of our participants did the run for the 21-kilometre event; others walked for the five-kilometre event. Also, there was music along the route, and I suspect a few of our participants performed a few dance steps to help the momentum along!"

Additionally, "So there you are! This year we're looking at participants having a great time again. You can raise your physical activity level, raise funds for a philanthropic cause to help dialysis patients in Guyana, and even brush up on your dance steps along the way!"

And in what is yet another sequel to the storyline, VM's leader, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay will be making another cameo appearance downtown for the five-kilometre event.

In what is his progressive and historical narrative of outreach to devotees in spirituality, physical fitness, and medical care, Dr Doobay continues to insist that he be at the front, and that he takes the first step forward.

Recalling his words in 2022, Dr Doobay reiterated that a year later, he remains motivated, energised, and is still unable to "sit quietly and enjoy my old age". So once again, and a year later, he will be making the in-person five-kilometre walk.

It is also another birthday celebration for Dr Doobay at VM, with the stalwart octogenarian marking his 83rd on August

26. Join the celebration at 4:30 p.m. at VM Peace Park. This year he is requesting that well-wishers donate to his marathon fund-raising effort in lieu of birthday presents. [Click here to visit his TWM donation site](#), or register to walk, run, (or dance!) a combination of the five-kilometre event with him.

Meanwhile, interest in the event, and the momentum as last year's participants return, are keeping the organising team going at a brisk pace, Roy Doobay says.

Said Doobay: "Such momentum is encouraging, and in itself energising. We are also seeing new sign-ups working diligently at their fund-raising. It is quite motivating, and tells us we are doing something right."

And in yet another return, this year the staff at the Guyana Consulate General in Toronto is going to be among the participants on October 15. It is also reaching out to the diaspora.

Also joining the event for the first time is the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate General in Toronto. Among its participants will be the energetic and motivating Acting Consul General for Trinidad and Tobago, Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette.

As it was last year, once again the TWM is offering three events for participants: the in-person full marathon – either running or walking the 42 kilometres; an in-person half-marathon of 21 kilometres, again running or walking; and an event that is five kilometres.

The virtual option is also available for full, half, or five kilometre participation. This can be done from any location in the world. Participants register online, and then log daily activity that accumulates as an ascending total of kilometres. It can either be done as steps while walking or running during a daily routine. Posting the steps online eventually totals up the required kilometre goal.

Both the in-person and virtual registration enables a fund-raising page, which can then be sent out as links to potential sponsors. Funds raised from a participant's sponsors are collected by the TWM, and then sent to Global Care Outreach.

[Click here to go to the registration page for the in-person and virtual options](#). See display below for contact information.

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## RKMCC holds annual golf tournament



**R**adha Krishna Mandir & Cultural Centre in Cambridge held its annual golf tournament on August 9 at the Granite Ridge Golf Course in Milton. The event was a tremendous success that saw close to 120 golfers and sponsors in attendance. Comments at the end of a glorious day of golf and camaraderie were the event was well-organised and well-coordinated.

Many of the participants have already indicated they will return next year.

Funds raised are going into the RKMCC Building Fund. Tax deductible donations are

welcome. [Click here to donate](#); eTransfers can be made to [donate@radhakrishnamandir.ca](mailto:donate@radhakrishnamandir.ca).

As President of the RKMCC, Dwarka Persaud indicated last week, construction of the temple is progressing with the steel almost done. He also indicated that the RKMCC will soon be awarding a contract for the roof, studing, and outside bricks. The hope is to enclose the building before the arrival of winter 2023.

Donations and loans will determine the completion date, Persaud added.

For more information, call Persaud at 519-240-0870.



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Hurricane Irma, which was spawned in September 2017, hit the Leeward Islands at Category 5. NOAA photo

## NOAA issues new season prediction

In a new prediction, storms and hurricanes for the rest of 2023 are likely to be between “near normal” to “above normal”, according to the United States National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration.

The latest NOAA prediction was reported by the *Caribbean Media Corporation* earlier this month.

The agency’s prediction now includes a 70 percent chance of 14 to 21 named storms, of which six to 11 could become hurricanes, and two to five could become major hurricanes.

Also, NOAA said it had heightened the outlook projection due to current ocean and atmospheric conditions, such as record-warm sea surface temperatures.

The updated outlook raises the likelihood of an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season to 60 percent, increased from the outlook issued in May, which predicted a 30 percent chance.

The agency also explained that a below-normal wind shear forecast, slightly below-normal Atlantic trade winds and a near- or above-normal West African Monsoon were also key factors in the decision to update the seasonal forecast.

The Atlantic basin experienced an active start to the hurricane season with five storms

that have reached at least tropical storm strength, including one hurricane.

Matthew Rosencrans, lead hurricane season forecaster with NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center, is urging people living in the hurricane belt to prepare for the continuing season.

“The main climate factors expected to influence the 2023 Atlantic hurricane activity are the ongoing El Niño and the warm phase of the Atlantic Multi-Decadal Oscillation, including record-warm Atlantic sea surface temperatures,” Rosencrans said.

NOAA also stressed that its hurricane outlooks are forecasts of overall season activity, not landfalls.

It also urged residents in vulnerable areas to have a well-thought-out hurricane plan, and to stay informed through official channels as the season progresses.

Though the Caribbean region is currently experiencing El Niño conditions, which helps to lessen tropical activity during the Atlantic hurricane season, climate scientists say those limiting conditions have been slow to develop, and “are forecasting that the associated impacts that tend to limit tropical cyclone activity may not be in place for much of the remaining hurricane season.”

## Jamaica hits low employment record

**Kingston** – Jamaica is close to full employment, with the country hitting a record low unemployment level of 4.5 percent, Prime Minister Andrew Holness said last week.

In a statement made last Wednesday, and reported by *The Gleaner* and the *Caribbean Media Corporation*, Holness described as “welcomed news” the report by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica that the finding, based on the April 2023 Labour Force Survey, was 1.5 percentage points lower than the figure for the corresponding period in 2022.

Holness is also the Minister of Economic Growth and Job Creation.

“We are now close to full employment... [and] that our economy continues to expand,” Holness said. It was such that more Jamaicans now have an income, he declared.

“It means that more Jamaican families can do much better than they were doing before. This is the best news that our economy can have ... we are building

Jamaica,” he said.

Speaking at Statin’s quarterly briefing early last week, Director General Carol Coy, said



Andrew Holness



Carol Coy

that the number of unemployed people in April this year fell by 19,700, or 24.3 percent, to 61,300, compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

She noted that the number of unemployed males fell by 8,900, or 26.3 percent, to 24,900, while the corresponding findings indicated females dropped from 47,200 last year to 36 400 in April.

The number of unemployed youth, aged 14 to 24, was 24,600, a decrease of 6,800, or 21.7 percent.

It also found the number of employed people increased by 43,300 to 1,312,600.

“Females accounted for over two-thirds of this increase. Employed females grew by 5.1 percent or 29,700, while employed males increased

by two percent or 13,600,” Coy said.

Statin also advised that there was increased employment in all age groups.



# Ask Jay...

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## How To PROTECT YOUR BASEMENT FROM FLOODING

**W**hen 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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# Cricket, lovely cricket

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

**Toronto** – It was the best of summer times in what turned out to be an uplifting day of camaraderie fueled by the energising Caribbean flamboyance for a festive party, and the region’s enduring love for a good game of cricket.

So said George Maharaj when he summed up a glorious day of cricket in the almost-tropical sun in Brampton, when Trinidad and Tobago met Jamaica for the Diamond Jubilee Cricket Rematch. The game took place at the Andrew McCandles Park last Saturday.

Maharaj said the cricket event was a result of the good work being done in Toronto by the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate General, which is led by Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette, and Consul General Lincoln Downer at Jamaica’s Consulate General.

The second cricket event in a row, it marked Trinidad and Tobago’s upcoming national celebration back home of this nation’s 61st anniversary of Independence. Maharaj was the coordinator of the event.

“We estimate around 2,000 people attended,” Maharaj said, noting the attendance was a growing sign of the popularity of the Consulates’ objective to draw the diaspora together.

The 20-overs game saw Trinidad and Tobago winning the toss and choosing to bat. At the end of 20-overs, the team had four wickets to spare, with 135 runs on the scoreboard. In what turned into a thrilling finish, Jamaica responded with the bat to take the win, scoring 136 runs in the final over.

Following the thrilling outcome, Ramsubagh-Mannette told *Indo-Caribbean World*: “Though it might not have been the outcome we wanted on the scoreboard, it never stopped the lime and good vibes.”

She added, “On the pitch, our boys played with a lot of dedication and won our hearts. Off the pitch, all the families and friends gathered were cooking and sharing with others, dancing, cheering, participating in giveaways; and of course, giving ‘picong’ to our Jamaican neighbours. It was an amazing day full of community spirit and patriotism!”

Echoing Ramsubagh-Mannette’s celebration of neighbourliness, community spirit, and patriotism, Maharaj similarly noted, “It was not all about the cricket!”

Even as he ensured the operation behind-the-scenes was running smoothly, at the same time he observed the Andrew McCandles Park was awash with the national colours of both nations; that there was a prolific showing of the national flags of both Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica; and that the scent of cooking was unmistakable for its penetrating, highly-seasoned, and wholesome Caribbean flavours.

“It was an excellent time all-round. There was sharing and camaraderie in a show of Caribbean unity and regionalism. We had DJ Bad Lad filling up the ground with great music. The Ground Shakers Tassa band did exactly that... shaking up the cricket ground. We had folks in the crowd seeking out the best dressed in Jamaica’s and Trinidad and Tobago’s national colours,” Maharaj recalled.

He added, “And what was quite touching was I saw Trinis and Jamaicans eating from the same bowl, sharing what we call ‘chow’ back home.”

‘Chow’ is a highly-seasoned, spicy, and savoury snack typically made with slices of green mango, or whatever fruits are in season; or are available in whichever continent nationals of Trinidad and Tobago are domiciled.

Maharaj added, “You know what? I was really happy to see such spirit of togetherness taking place at the Diamond Jubilee Cricket Rematch. Cricket really brings us together! It was a good feeling to see the unity among the people.”

Also, “My thanks to the Consulates General that made this happen, especially to [Acting Consul General Ramsubagh-Mannette and Consul General Downer] and to their governments for all the support. Also, to the many hard-working volunteers in our community, and to all the folks who turned up and had such a good time. And to our community: stay tuned – let’s see what we will come up with next year!”

Photos by Russell Lutchman & High Life Promos’ Ravi & Vanessa Naqvi (R&V)



# Queens Book Fair holds successful NY poetry reading program

By Dhanpaul Narine

Who would have thought that a holiday weekend in July would see a record crowd in the library for the reading of poetry?

This is precisely what happened as parents and children filled the library to capacity. They listened to poems and literary works from a number of writers, some famous, and others new to the genre.

The Queens Book Fair and Literary Festival Inc was founded five years ago with the objective to promote literacy in the community. Since then, it has hosted several ground-breaking programs, and its audiences have increased with each of them.

To date in 2023 QBF has held programs to observe Black History Month, Phenomenal Women, and Indo-Caribbean Heritage.

The latest offering was the Poetry Recital, and there are two more programs planned for the rest of the year. This works out at one program every two months, which is healthy for a community-based organisation.

The programs have not been only about reciting and lauding the esoteric. It has also led to practical demonstrations that effect change.

Indeed, it was during one of these meetings that eminent physician and philanthropist Dr Mirjah Ijaz Rahman met with officials at Richmond Hill High School. He offered two scholarships to students of Guyanese origin. These were done in the names of the QBF, The International Center for Democracy, and the Guyana Diaspora Charity.

Rahman has many good ideas that are aimed to help Guyana, and they will be unfolded in the coming weeks.

The *Poetry is Life* series saw contributions from a diverse audience, and from students of all ages. Consultant to the QBF, Ashook Ramsaran, welcomed all to the proceedings. He said that the recital was on the eve of celebration of America's Independence.

Also, Ramsaran remarked that the US "is a global beacon of hope, freedom, and refuge for the persecuted and the downtrodden."

Additionally, he noted that the poetry reading was most welcomed, in view of the attempts to muzzle Amanda Gorman, who impressed all with her poem *The Hill we Climb* at the inauguration of US President Joe Biden.

The event's moderator, Anil Bedasie, introduced the participants. Their presentations were varied, relevant, and captivating.

Ariana Narine's poem, *The Middle Passage*, spoke about the horrors of slavery, and the pain of settlement and adjustment.

This was followed by nine-year old Ethan Misir who read a poem called *Dreams*. Akira Ramnarain wowed the audience with her poem *A Child of Guyana*. She is seven years old.

Samantha Tappin and Jelacia Blair read beautifully, with their poems *She* and *Some People* leaving the audience spellbound.

Two regulars to the QBF are sisters Veena and Shreya Bedasie. Veena read one of her own poems, *Graduation*. Shreya read *My High School Wake-up Call* that relates to the problems faced by students in the school system.

One of the highlights of the session was the readings of poems by members of the same family. Karter James read a poem about the greatness of his mom. His mother Gina replied with a poem titled, *We Go Together Like Mother and Son*.

One of the impressive entries was from Victor Fuhrman. He saw the advertisement for the recital and responded, not knowing what to expect. He read his own composition, *Circles and Rings*, which was well-received.

Fuhrman was full of praise for the QBF event, and remarked that the readings were of a high quality.

Daina Bramble and Kametric Butter are educators with the New York City Department of Education. Daina read *Happiness*, while Kametric read, *I Am A Very Simple Girl*, which



QBF members at the poetry reading



Dr Dhanpaul Narine (right) with the Lamarre family

were all appreciated by the audience.

Lionel Narine chose *The Rose that Grew from Concrete* by Tupac Shakur that showed the versatility of the rapper, actor, and poet.

Noah Lamarre and his family took to the podium and read three beautiful poems that dealt with life and its challenges. The poem by Kahlil Gibran dealt with the power of love, which we all need at this moment.

This writer read one of his poems, *The Arranged Marriage*, that described the conditions in the Indian marriage.

The poem is set in India, with the main character being a young lady that had her heart broken when her husband passed away. She never lost faith, and had to deal with many challenges before finding happiness.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the presentation by Tanuja Raghoo of *Caribbean Spotlight*. Many readers will be familiar with her television programs, but Tanuja is a poet in her own right.

She is also a humanitarian, along with her husband Vishu. Tanuja's dad is the late Eshri Singh, the legendary broadcaster, known as the *Voice of Guyana*.

She read one of her dad's poems *Love America*, in which he professed his love and admiration for the US.

This was followed by a reading of her own poem, titled *My Life's Been Touched*, which was inspirational.

There were poems from Arun Whyte, who spoke about his beautiful mother Nandy Persaud, while Shivaaya Diya Ramdial dedicated her poem to her miracle mother Seema. Marlene Sharma read the classic, *The Road Not Taken* by the American poet, Robert Frost.

Karissa Jagbeer, a bright student and regular performer at the QBF, read *Backtrack*, which is composed by this writer.

Daniel Alvarez reminded all about the relevance of Maya Angelou when he read her poem *Life Doesn't Frighten Me*.

Mohini and her sister Riya Shibsahai read beautifully about Helen Keller, while Anand Kishore selected Rabindranath Tagore's ever-popular, *Where the Mind is Without Fear* from *Gitanjali*.

A number of speakers at the event looked at contemporary issues. Ralph Tamesh, president

of the Indo-Caribbean Federation, read a poem from Guyanese Martin Carter.

Tamesh also informed the meeting about



Tanuja Raghoo read from her dad's poetry, & one of her own poems

the mission and achievements of the ICF.

Rusat Ramgopal, now running for a City Council seat in District 28 in Queens New York, emphasised the need for political representation in the community.

Faiuze Ali and his team runs a weekly food pantry in Liberty Avenue that brings relief to many families. This is altruism in action. The effort, and similar others, should be commended.

The next program of the Queens Book Fair and Literary Festival will take place on October 7 at 1:00 p.m. Acharya Arun Gossai will speak on *What is Vedanta?*

For further information, please contact [doclse007@aol.com](mailto:doclse007@aol.com).

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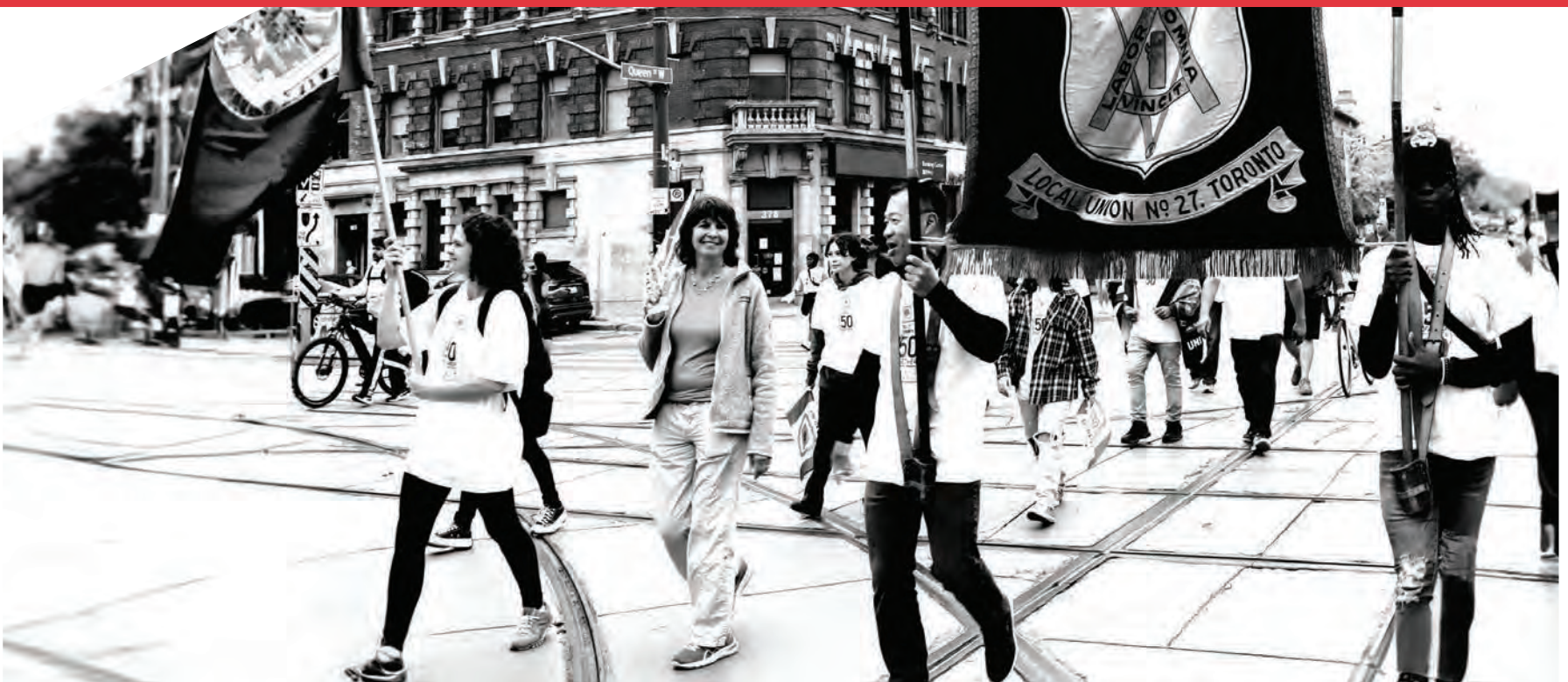
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# Mawenzi House presents Muslims in Canada: 1850s to today



**S**heniz Janmohamed is the author of several volumes of poetry. She is a firm believer in fostering community through collaboration, compassion, and creativity. Sheniz has performed her work in venues across the world, including the Jaipur Literature Festival, Alliance Française de Nairobi, and the Aga Khan Museum.

Text & photos courtesy Mawenzi House



**L**aila Re (novelist) escaped Kabul as a toddler with her family to Islamabad, Pakistan, before immigrating two years later to Canada in 1992, when she was five. Drawing from that experience, her most recent novel, *Nila the Bleeding Garden*, depicts the experiences of an Afghan family.

**J**oin Mawenzi House on September 10 at the Aga Khan Museum's Nanji Family Foundation Auditorium for a workshop, reading, and discussion. Six Muslim authors will discuss the Muslim presence in Canada, from the early days of arrival from Lebanon/Syria to present times with new immigrants arriving from around the world, and young Muslims born in Canada.

Moderator of the event is Zarina Rajwani. A member of Storytelling Toronto, Rajwani has an MBA from the University of Ottawa, and a BSc from the University of Toronto. She has a keen interest in Ismaili and Muslim history.

The event will also see two artists displaying their sculpture installation inspired by the folk stories of Sindh. There is limited capacity for the event, and tickets are required for entry. [Click here to reserve a spot.](#) Nanji Family Foundation Auditorium is located in the Aga Khan Museum at a 77 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1K1.



**M**onia Mazigh was born and raised in Tunisia, and immigrated to Canada in 1991.

Monia was catapulted onto the public stage in 2002 when her husband, Maher Arar, was deported to Syria, where he was tortured and held without charge for over a year, and was exonerated. She has campaigned vigorously for the rights of Muslims. Her recent book, *Gendered Islamophobia: My Journey with a Scar(f)*, details her experiences. She is also the author of two novels, *Mirrors and Mirages*, and *Hope Has Two Daughters*.



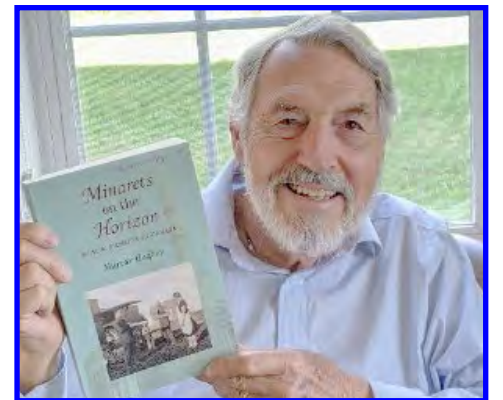
**M**ariam Pirbhai (novelist) is the author of the short story collection *Outside People and Other Stories*, winner of the 2018 IPPY Gold Medal for Multicultural Fiction and the 2019 American BookFest Award for the Short Story.

It also ranked among CBC's top ten "must read" books of 2017. *Isolated Incident* is her first novel.

Mariam is a Professor of English at Wilfrid Laurier University.



**F**areh Malik (poet), from Hamilton, Ontario, is the winner of the 2022 RBC/PEN Canada New Voices Award, Hamilton Art's Shirley Elford Prize, and Muslim Hands Canada's 2020 Poetry Contest. In 2023, *Streams that Lead Somewhere* was longlisted for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award. Fareh tells the stories of his struggle, and of the community around him, in the hope that others can find inspiration and companionship in it.



**M**urray Hogben (historian) was born in Toronto in 1935 and grew up in Ottawa. Working for the CBC in Toronto, he became secretary in 1960 of the new Muslim Society of Toronto. He is the author of the ground-breaking *Minarets on the Horizon*, the first history of Muslim presence in Canada.

"Okay, let's start at the top again." The sergeant stared at the pajama-clad couple seated in front of him. He wrote the time and date on the top of a notepad and waited with his pen poised.

"We were awakened in the middle of the night by three intruders." Lennie Marsh held his wife's hand. "They kicked open the bedroom door and jabbed us with guns and knives while they tied us up." The police officer wrote as Lennie revisited the scene that left Stacie trembling and too stunned to speak.

"Did you know that the last owners left in a hurry because of strange occurrences in that house?" The sergeant stared them in their eyes.

"No." Lennie shook his head. "But the real estate agent did disclose that the farm was haunted when we asked why it was being sold far below market value." He glanced at Stacie. "We accepted this condition when we bought the acreage."

City born and bred, Lennie and Stacie had chuckled at the superstitions of country folks. A fast cash-sale gave them the chance to own it immediately. As nature lovers, they both had the same dream of using the equity from the sale of their home in the city to pay for a quiet life on the farm with its existing fruit

and vegetable crops which already had a current market. After buying the farm, they used the leftover cash on hand to stock it with poultry and animals to raise for meat and milk, while they used the sale of the crops for daily living until their livestock started producing an income.

"And... last night?" Sergeant Strohm dropped his pen and leaned back in his chair.

"It sounded like mayhem outside our locked bedroom door." Lennie told the sergeant that they heard screams like people being tortured and a deep thunderous voice booming words in the local dialect. "The farmhouse shook, and dishes rattled. Bodies slammed against the walls with such force, that the pictures fell off their hooks and smashed on the floor."



## The Supernatural

### The Move

"What do you think happened?" The sergeant reclined in his chair with his fingers intertwined behind his bald head. He flipped glances at both Lennie and Stacie.

"Whoever they were running from had caught up with them and took some type of revenge." Goosebumps covered Lennie. "We huddled together and stared at the bedroom door, expecting it to be ripped open at any moment." He glanced at the pen and paper on the desk, but the sergeant did not make any attempts to write.

"Go on." Sergeant Strohm rocked back and forth on his office chair.

"Complete silence followed." Lennie took a deep breath. "After an eternity, we freed each other with slow noiseless movements in case they were still in the house." He glanced at Stacie before he continued. "What we witnessed when we tiptoed to the bedroom door and opened it a crack was right out of a horror movie." Lennie felt Stacie shiver. He put

his arms around her shoulders, and she leaned her head on his chest. Tears seeped out of her closed eyelids and dripped onto his night shirt.

"We closed the bedroom door without making a sound and escaped through the window." He skipped the gory details of the stomach-churning living room scene that threatened to send them into a deep dark hole of mind twisting insanity. "The truck's keys were hung by the front door, so we had to walk into town. He pointed to their gravel damaged black and blue feet. "I had to carry my wife on my back for most of the way." He gestured to the limp Stacie leaning against him.

"Billy Bob Granton." The sergeant grinned and shook his head. He got up and ambled over to a filing cabinet in the

corner of the office where he extracted two folders from the top drawer and dropped them on his desk. He sat down and opened the first one. The sounds flipped Stacie's eyes open. She cringed and Lennie rocked back when they glanced at an enlarged photo of a similar carnage to the one they had witnessed in their living room. He pulled out another photo from under the papers. "Convenience store security camera of the two men who robbed and killed his wife ten years ago." As the only tow-truck operator in town, the six-foot seven 300 pounds muscular giant with a voice to match, picked it up on his CB radio.

"I'm also a tow-truck operator." Lennie's heart skipped a beat.

"That's good. You will find his two tow-trucks and equipment in the abandoned barn at the edge of the property. The town will welcome your services." Sergeant Strohm chuckled. "Anyhow, the legend of a man, who lifted many cars to rescue people trapped under them, was really a farmer who owned your property on the only road leading into and out of town." The sergeant ignored the ringing phone. "That would be my wife. Probably just woke up and heard the news." He paused to pick up from where he had left off. "Anyhow, Billy Bob waited for the men who killed his wife." He tapped the two photos.

Sergeant Strohm opened the second folder and pointed to two photos. "His father was the sheriff, gunned down in a shootout with drug dealers five years ago. They also begged Billy Bob to kill them to end their suffering at his hands." He took a deep breath. "Billy Bob was tried for the second murders and confessed to the first. He had tortured and murdered them all in your home." The sergeant closed the folders.

"He had an estranged daughter, but asked for the death penalty and was hanged for the revenge killings." Sergeant Strohm picked up a photo from the fax machine and dropped it on his desk in front of them. "Security image of the three bank robbers who killed his granddaughter yesterday." He scoffed. "Billy Bob got them."

Kamil Ali



# Rowley's currency comment irks Guyana's VP Bharrat Jagdeo

**Port-of-Spain** – A comment made by Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley about Guyana's currency appears to have irked this nation's Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo.

As reported by the *Trinidad Express*, last week Jagdeo took issue with Rowley, who appeared to devalue the claim made by the National Transformation Alliance that it had acquired 30,000 votes in the recent Local Government Elections.

The NTA is led by former Commissioner of Police, Gary Griffith. The claim to the quantity of votes was made about the Diego Martin Regional Corporation.

When informed about the number of votes the NTA had acquired, Rowley quipped it must be in "Guyanese dollars".

Following Rowley's apparently pejorative comparative, Jagdeo defended the Guyanese currency while further responding that businesses from Trinidad and Tobago with links to Georgetown were using Guyana's foreign currency to purchase goods.

At this time there is a shortage of foreign currency in Trinidad and Tobago.

As the *Trinidad Express* reported, last Monday during an interview with Rowley, television reporter Urvashi Tewari Roopnarine revealed the NTA had received some 30,000 votes in the Diego Martin Corporation.

Rowley's astonishment, and his insinuation that those votes were low in value, thus compa-



**Bharrat Jagdeo**

nable to "Guyanese dollars", provoked laughter from his supporters.

The *Trinidad Express* also published a transcript of the exchange between Roopnarine and Rowley:

**Roopnarine:** *In Corporations like Diego Martin, the NTA would have amassed some, over 30,000 votes.*

**Rowley:** *Really? Where you got that from? Where you got that from?*

**Roopnarine:** *That is our information.*

**Rowley:** *The NTA got 30,000 votes? That is*



**Keith Rowley**

*Guyanese dollars!*

In Guyana, Jagdeo commented on the exchange at a news conference, saying a video clip of Rowley's remarks had been forwarded to his attention.

Jagdeo added he did not want to engage in any controversy, alluding to a statement that he made last year.

Said Jagdeo: "I hate this thing when people trying to run down [Guyana] ...I don't want to get into any controversy with Rowley, because one time I said we [were] determined to ensure we don't utilise oil and gas resources the same way as [Trinidad and Tobago] did, and it got into a big, heated controversy there."

In March 2022 at a political campaign meeting, Jagdeo said that Trinidad and Tobago's economy was falling apart because of a lack of diversification away from its oil and gas sector.

"Trinidad is falling apart, and that's putting it mildly – falling apart! No jobs, sustained periods of negative growth, and can't see the light of day for the near future," Jagdeo had stated.

The comment touched a nerve in Port-of-Spain. Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Amery Browne later issued a statement refuting it, but Jagdeo stood his ground.

In commenting on Rowley's remark, Jagdeo spoke about the strong value of the Japanese currency. He also pointed to the ongoing foreign exchange shortage in Trinidad and Tobago that is affecting businesses.

Said Jagdeo: "...[They] always use Guyana as an example... I saw [the video clip] about... local government elections... Rowley said something about, 'Oh that's like the Guyana dollars' and laugh. Like meaning, basically, our currency is weak."

He added, "Japan was the third-largest economy in the world. The yen to dollar is over 100 to one. It doesn't mean Japan's economy is weak. So let them live in this fantasy... The fact remains that today a lot of Trinidadian companies... because of intense foreign currency shortage in Trinidad... they have exchange controls, which we don't have because we have an open market. They have a managed market because of shortages, for months and months people can't get foreign currency in that country."

Jagdeo revealed what he described as a "trend", where "some Trinidadian companies are procuring large quantities of goods for their business in Guyana and in Trinidad, and paying from here, making payments from here to their suppliers, so they are utilising our foreign currency to make those payments. So, I hope Rowley looks at that, too."



**Stranded doubles vendor. Shivan Steven Rampersad FB photo**

## Vendor doubles down in T&T

**Port-of-Spain** – It was a picture of steadfastness and determination when a lone doubles vendor held the high ground last week while rising floodwaters swirled at his feet.

The photograph of such grit in the face of escalating inclement weather was posted to Facebook by Shivan Steven Rampersad. It was taken during a torrential deluge that isolated an unnamed doubles vendor at his corner stall on Antilles Road, San Francique, in south Trinidad.

The photo of the forlorn doubles vendor stranded amidst in the rising water drew a torrent of respect from hundreds of online FB viewers.

Among the current of comments were those who lauded the doubles vendor for his fortitude and dedication. Others hailed him as a hero who was devoted to his job.

The back story to this tale of fortitude in the wake of the mishap to the day's sales was south Trinidad being drenched by torrential rains last week, yet more emerging evidence of the fallout from climate change.

As one FB commentor noted, "Only the ones in the business will know the extent of time, effort, sacrifice, work and discipline that it takes to prepare and be ready to set up at

5:30 a.m., to then stand and sell. Then to face a situation like this... it takes a different type of belly to get up at 12:30 a.m. and face the next day. Love, gratitude, appreciation. and respect of the highest."

Another declared, "God bless you and all the others fighting it day by day. [People] don't know the struggles to make it in life. You are a perfect example. Don't let no one tell you differently."

Continuing with the encouragement, another stated, "Our sad reality is that it's extremely difficult out here. Rain or shine, some people have to get up and go earn their honest dollar. I hope their sales increase tenfold."

The *Trinidad Express* later determined the doubles stand is owned by 52-year-old Beharry Partap, a former electrician. The enterprise is a franchise, which was started in 1987. The beleaguered San Francique site in Rampersad's photo is one of five, with the others in La Romaine, Golconda, Penal, and Fyzabad.

With the floodwaters continuing to rise that day, the stranded employee in the photo was eventually evacuated by truck.

Partap also told the *Express* that the day's sales, along with the savoury contents of the doubles box, were a total write-off.



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# T&T in 'near-panic' with crime & violence says DOMA

**Port-of-Spain** – Trinidad and Tobago is in a state of near-panic, the Downtown Owners and Merchants Association said last week.

Led by business person Gregory Aboud, DOMA's statement came in the wake of an acceleration in violence and uncontrollable lawlessness currently underway in Trinidad and Tobago.

DOMA's statement received headline coverage last week by the media in Trinidad and Tobago, among them the *Trinidad Guardian* and the *Trinidad Express*.

In a media release, DOMA revealed it had been "inundated" with communications from the business community and the public "in tones of near-panic" following the growing violence and rampant



**Gregory Aboud**

lawlessness.

The group's statement noted, "This state of near-panic is a direct result, in our view, of a

sense of hopelessness that has been growing consistently. The constant, stark images of persons dead and dying are overpowering our natural buoyancy, and creating a demoralised population of citizens living in greater and greater distress."

It added, "In contrast, criminals are living in an encouraging landscape of zero consequence. The overall result of hopelessness and potential panic is destroying community life, visiting pain and suffering on the families and friends of victims, and permeating the national economy by not only stagnating investment decisions, but also

by destroying consumer confidence."

DOMA's release also noted there was "little or no job creation, and existing jobs are at risk by shrinking levels of confidence".

As a result, every sector of the national economy was under strain. Too, there was growing concern that Trinidad and Tobago is passing the point of no return.

"The porous borders which are being talked about so often, and in which fingers are being pointed have seen no improvement in the passage of guns because no courage exists to discuss the real heart of that danger," DOMA lamented.

It added, "This country is filled with administrative aptitude in many categories of the

private sector – those capable of managerial analysis and problem-solving have been kept outside of strategic decision-making in crucial matters for every wrong reason."

DOMA called for changes to be made to the management approach of law an order, border protection, and a "return to basic parameters of public safety" in Trinidad and Tobago.

"We stand ready to join with the many business leaders who are devoting hundreds of hours of their time to many other issues in the interest of building a better Trinidad and Tobago. Silence and withdrawal are not an option – collaboration will assist to restore some sense of hope, and quell the rising tide of panic," the release stated.

DOMA's expression of near-alarm and lamentation came in the wake of the tragic murder of an estate police officer in the line of duty last week.

Hasely Augustine worked for Telecom Security Services Ltd, and was part of a four-member team replenishing cash at an ATM in Cunupia, central Trinidad, when the group was confronted by five armed men.

According to the media reports, a struggle ensued between Augustine and one of the bandits, resulting in the officer being shot a number of times. A firearm was taken from one of the officers before the thieves fled.

Augustine succumbed to his wounds at the site of the robbery, even as bystanders rendered assistance. His quick passing left many in tears.

Following Augustine's death, RBC said it was "shocked and deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life".

In a statement, the bank said, "Our thoughts and sympathies are with the family and loved ones of those involved. RBC takes the safety and well-being of our employees, clients, and communities seriously. We are concerned and troubled about the escalating level of violence in the communities we serve."

The statement added RBC was working with the Bankers' Association of Trinidad and Tobago, and other stakeholders to promote safety and security precautions for the public.



**Officer Hasely Augustine died in the line of duty**

## AC suspends November YYZ-PoS service start

**Port-of-Spain** – Air Canada last week announced it had suspended direct flights from Toronto to Trinidad.

In a statement to the Trinidad and Tobago media last week, the airline said, "Air Canada has currently suspended service between Toronto and Port-of-Spain for 2023. At this point in time, we have no plans for the resumption of this route."

As reported, passengers with existing tickets have been contacted and offered to either change their ticketed destination, or were offered refunds.

On May 25 Air Canada announced it would resume flying to Piarco International Airport using its Airbus A220-300 fleet.

However, it appears that ongoing industrial relations challenges within Air Canada were a reason for the airline's decision.

Earlier this year, Tourism Trinidad Ltd also announced that Air Canada's service to Trinidad would resume starting November 1.

The schedule would see three weekly flights arriving at Piarco International Airport starting November 1 to December 3, with another flight added later to make it four per week, starting December 3 to March 9, 2024.



The resumption of Air Canada flying to Trinidad saw Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts Randall Mitchell, expressing enthusiasm over the news. Last week he confirmed cancellation of the route.

"Air Canada appears to be having industrial relations challenges presently with ongoing pilot negotiations and/or industrial action, as well as the availability of pilots to operate its equipment and the shortage of equipment," Mitchell told the media in Trinidad.

"It is indeed unfortunate that as a consequence, the anticipated recommencement of the Toronto-POS route for this Winter sched-

ule, which had already been registered with local authorities and flights sold, now had to be cancelled," he said.

However, Mitchell revealed that majority-State owned Caribbean Airlines, which added more flights from Port-of-Spain to Toronto for the July/August vacation, "may likely augment their flight schedule for the Christmas season".

He added, "Further, Caribbean Airlines expects to receive three additional Max 8 Jets by fourth quarter 2024 to further increase their fleet. This will allow for additional flights and an expanded route network, which we expect to reduce fare costs generally."

## Hire security for bank withdrawals

**Port-of-Spain** – Trinidad and Tobago nationals visiting the bank have been advised by police to retain a reliable private security service when withdrawing large sums of money.

Last week the force's Public Relations Officer Joanne Archie told the newspaper, *Newsday*, that involving security personnel was among the options for safety when at the bank.

"I advise people in going to make a large deposit to probably secure the service of a reputable security company. You could also secure the assistance of the police," Archie told *Newsday*.

Archie's advice followed an attack and robbery by bandits last week on the wife of NIB chairman Patrick Ferreira.

According to media reports, Carla Fierreira was physically attacked and robbed of \$3 shortly after leaving an RBC Royal Bank branch and returning to her house in Westmoorings. The assailants followed her home, and attacked her after she entered the driveway.

Earlier, on August 12, a businessman was robbed of [US] \$9,000 and [TT] \$2,000 by two masked bandits in Arima.

According to media reports, the businessman withdrew the cash from a bank and headed to a supermarket. He was attacked and the cash stolen in the supermarket's parking lot by two men, one armed with a gun.

Another bank withdrawal of \$150,000 in cash was stolen from a man in San Juan in July.

As the victim reported, he was followed from the bank by five armed men to his house in Santa Cruz, where the cash, credit, and debit cards were stolen.

Archie advised bank customers to avoid being "soft" targets. Clients visiting the bank must be observant and vigilant, she stated.

"You go into the bank and you withdraw large sums of cash, and you are just walking around or going to your vehicle, you have to be aware of your surroundings. Increasing your personal awareness is the most effective form of self-defence," she said.

Business persons were also advised to do thorough background checks on their staff.

"They can watch your movements... you have to look at your employees too. Do thorough background checks if possible," she said.



**Joanne Archie**

## The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

# India's Independence year saw release of many eternal movies

By Vidur Dindayal

The Indian film industry was busy churning out films since inception through the 1930s and the war years. In March 1931 the first Hindi talkie was released. It was the movie *Alam Ara*. It starred Master Vithal, Zubeida, Prithviraj Kapoor, and Wazir Mohammed Khan. *Alam Ara* had the first song to be sung in films. It was *De Khuda Ke Naam Par*, sung by Wazir Mohammed Khan.

Prithviraj Kapoor, one of the founding figures of Hindi cinema, established a travelling theatre company *Prithvi Theatres* in 1944. I was a student in Delhi in 1957 when the theatre company had a show at the Regal cinema. Son Shammji Kapoor was then one of the actors in the theatre company. Prithviraj is the patriarch of four generations of Kapoors in Hindi cinema.

Soon after *Alam Ara*, in 1931, the movie *Shirin Farhad* was released. It was the second talkie of Indian films. Even more successful than *Alam Ara*, it starred Nissar and Jehanara Kajjan. It had many songs.

Jahanara Kajjan, or Miss Kajjan, was an Indian singer and actress active during the 1920s and 1930s. Referred to as the Nightingale of Bengal, she was a trained classical singer, a fashion icon, and a trendsetter. She was known as the Lark of Hindi Cinema.

Along with Master Nissar, they were then the most sought-after singing pair of the stage and film. This is all well before my time.

*Indrasabha*, a movie released in 1932, had 72 songs. It was a film with the most songs, a record, till today.

*Devdas*, in 1936, starred K.L. Saigal. His song *Baalam Aaye Baso More* is well-known. *Street Singer*, the 1938 movie, again starring K.L. Saigal, is considered an "all time classic", and ranked as one of Saigal's greatest hits.

His song *Babul Mora Naihar Chhooto Jaye*, considered a classic showing him as singer and actor, is thought to be the first superstar of Hindi films, centred in Calcutta (Kolkata) during his time.

*Dharti Mata*, in 1938, a Hindi social film, starred K.L. Saigal, Uma Shashi, and singer K.C. Dey, uncle of Manna Dey.

The music was by Pankaj Mullick. *Dharti Mata* had the classic song, *Duniya Rang Rangili Baba*. I sing this song as a bhajan.

I knew since childhood the songs of two 1940 movies, *Zindagi* and *Nartaki*, with music by Pankaj Mullick. The song *So Ja Rajkumari So Ja* in *Zindagi* is one of the first songs I learnt. Another is *Main Kya Janu Kya Jadoo Hai*.

Other notable songs of *Nartaki* are *Yeh Kaun Aaj Aaya Savere Savere* and *Madabhari Rut Jawan Hai*.

*Pukar* (1939), stars Sohrab Modi and Naseem Banu. Sohrab Modi is a highly respected stage and film actor, director, and producer. His films include *Khoon Ka Khoon* (1935), a version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

## Dharmendra shares photo capturing essence of camaraderie with Dev Anand

In a touching display of nostalgia, veteran actor Dharmendra has unveiled a rare photograph featuring himself and the late legendary actor Dev Anand.

The photo shows Dharmendra affectionately kissing Dev Anand's cheek, serves as evidence of his transition from being Dev Anand's fan to his co-star. The two iconic actors had the opportunity to collaborate in the 1996 film, *Return of Jewel Thief*.

The shared image captured the essence of their camaraderie, and Dharmendra's admiration for the late actor. The visible display of warmth through Dharmendra's kiss on Dev Anand's cheek speaks of a connection that was not only on-screen, but also off-screen, transcending the boundaries of time.

Taking a trip down memory lane, Dharmendra took to his *Instagram* account to share this precious memory.

Alongside the photograph, the actor penned a heartfelt caption, shedding light on his earlier days when he would stand in lengthy queues outside cinema halls, eagerly awaiting his turn to procure a ticket for Dev Anand's films.

Dharmendra's caption read, "Friends, Dev sahab ki film dekhne ke liye ....cinema hall ke baahir ....lambi line mein ticket ke liye ghanton intzaar karta tha main." (I used to stand in long lines for hours outside the cinema hall to buy a ticket to



1947 hit movies (above & below right) in India's Independence year



Alam Ara was the first Hindi talkie



Naseem Banu known as the Beauty Queen and the first female superstar of Indian cinema, started her acting career in the mid-1930s and continued till mid-1950s.

In *Pukar* she acted as Empress Nur Jahan. She is the mother of actress Saira Banu, who was married to the late Dilip Kumar.

Naseem was born into a community of entertainers. Her mother Chamiyan Bai was a famous singer in her day. Naseem's father was head of a wealthy, aristocratic family, descended from royalty. He was Nawab Abdul Waheed Khan of Hasanpur.

Top three of the highest-grossing films of 1943 were *Kismet*, *Tansen* and *Ram Rajya*. Two top movies of 1944 were *Rattan* and *Chal Re Naujawan*.

In *Chal Re Naujawan*, three of the songs were sung by the

stars themselves – Ashok Kumar and Naseem.

The stars of *Rattan* were Karan Dewan and Swarnlata. This is a happy movie. I am bowled over by the song *Rimjhim Barse Badarwa Piya Ghar Aja*.

The scene is enjoyment on swings tied to tree branches above, and Gauri happily singing about her loved one coming. The loved one, the boy, is coming in a horse carriage. The bossy boy's mother tells his father to go and stop their son seeing Gauri because she is not right for him to marry.

I like the way the old people were speaking and the sweet attachment between the boy and Gauri.

The biggest hit song of all, on radio many times a day and every day, was *Sawan Ke Baadalo Unn Se Yeh Jaa Kaho*, sung by Zohrabai Ambalewali and Karan Dewan. The movie is notable as the film, which made Naushad one of the top music directors in Indian films.

*Anmol Ghadi* was the biggest hit of 1946. It starred Noor Jeehan, Suraiya, and Surendra.

The year 1947, India's year of Independence, saw many high grossing movies including: *Jugnu* with Dilip Kumar & Noor Jeehan;

*Do Bhai* starring Ulhas & Kamini Kaushal; *Dard* with Suraiya and Shyam; *Mirza Shahiban* with Noor Jeehan and Trilok Kapoor; *Shehnai* starring Nasir Khan and Rehana; and *Neel Kamal*, with Raj Kapoor and Madhubala.

In *Do Bhai*, Ulhas played a powerful role in the movie. He acted in *Nastik* and a few other movies.

Geeta Dutt, who had no formal training in music, sang two lines in a 1946 film. Hearing her voice, Music Director S.D. Burman talked her father into letting her sing in *Do Bhai*. She sang six of the nine songs of the

film. *Mera Sundar Sapna Beet Gaya* became an everlasting hit. In *Neel Kamal*, very young Madhubala was the leading lady, and Raj Kapoor played his first lead role.

India Independence in 1947, brought celebrations everywhere. *Shehnai*, which is the double reed wind instrument with its powerful sound, and which is played at marriages, is iconic with celebrations.

In *Shehnai* the movie, starring Nasir Khan, Rehana, and Kishore Kumar, music maestro C. Ramchandra had western style music in the song *Meri Jaan, Meri Jaan, Sunday Ki Sunday*, saying, as in the West that it is Sunday, a day for relaxation and enjoyment. Starboy Nasir Khan is the younger brother of Dilip Kumar. I always remember him in a later film singing the C.H. Atma's song *Roon Main Sagar Ke Kinare*.



Dharmendra plants a kiss on Dev Anand's cheek watch his film.)

Dharmendra's words resonated with countless fans who

could relate to his experience, attesting to the profound influence Dev Anand held over cinema enthusiasts of that era.

Fans of the two superstars loved the picture. One fan reacted, saying, "The time when you used to stand in a line must be very beautiful for you. That was a different time. Today we stand in a line for your films".

Mentioning how fans are now lining up for Dharmendra's son Sunny Deol's film *Gadar 2*, another fan wrote, "And we stand in line for you and currently people are standing in line for hours to buy tickets of Sunny Deol's film). I love Deol family..."

Another fan's account read: "There are many actors in Hindi cinema like Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand, etc, who won our hearts with their acting, voice and simplicity. In my view, you had all these qualities just like these actors and that's why you are my favourite actor".

On the film front, Dharmendra continues to enthral audiences with his acting prowess. Notably, he was recently seen gracing the big screen in Karan Johar's directorial venture, *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* alongside Shabana Azmi, Jaya Bachchan, Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt. He also featured as Sheikh Salim Chisti in the web series, *Taj: Divided By Blood* and *Taj: Reign of Revenge*.

# Student documentary on India's silver jewelry wins NY film award

By Pooja Biraia Jaiswal

A documentary by a 17-year old economics student from India was recently awarded the New York International Film Award, in the best student film category.

Rhea Bakshi is a class 12 economics student at Shri Ram School in Delhi. Her film, *India's Treasures*, was the only one from India to be awarded with the finalist laurel.

As she stated, the documentary is a result of her growing curiosity and interest in India's burgeoning silver jewelry industry, which now stands at a whopping 34 percent Compound Annual Growth Rate.

The retailers for her film were identified through a collective called *Dastkar*, a society for crafts and craftspeople.

*Dastkar* in turn connected Bakshi to various other organisations. The young girl also approached microcredit

facilities, and spoke to their beneficiaries in Jaipur and Ghaziabad to learn more about the impact this form of credit made on their lives.

"The first reason for choosing this topic is that my family is from Rajasthan, and the impact that Rajasthan and silver jewelry created in my life as a kid just grew over the years.



Rhea Bakshi at left

Secondly, the documentary mainly focused on 'inclusive and economic growth', wherein everyone has access to fair and equal opportunities," Bakshi said.

Additionally, she found that although silver is not as popular as gold, it is much more beneficial for artisans to work on this metal.

"Since the artisan groups are made up of low-income people, they have better access to silver than gold, given the cost difference between the two metals," she said.

Bakshi also spoke about she described as her "biggest

experience", which was entering someone "else's workspace... to record their challenges and everyday lives".

Said Bakshi: "The biggest part was to make them comfortable and to get them to share on camera. Those informal exchanges we had off-camera helped me to get them to open up in front of the camera. It was a very big learning experience for me. Because as a filmmaker I cannot underplay the significance of establishing a comfort level with those whose lives I wish to portray, and whose stories I wish to narrate."

And speaking to the award, Bakshi said the recognition did not solely belong to her.

"[It] is Indian craftsmanship that has won the award – those lesser known, but highly talented worksmen who are portrayed in the film – they are the real winners," she said.

Her parents motivated her to apply for the award right after the documentary was completed.

It was a result of Bakshi's interest and passion, and not as a school project. She does not study Film Studies as a subject in school. In fact, all the equipment was her own, among them the DSLRs (Canon 2 Mark D2), and editing down the five-hour-long footage to a crisp 19 minutes and 25 seconds.

# Singer & composer Papon: Music a journey of discovery, not about numbers

It is a rarity to find musicians today who are creating fresh tunes only for the love of it, when most others are chasing views and numbers.

Singer-composer Papon says he is an exception and stresses that he is not a part of any race.

"If I only wanted to make money and become popular, I would have done ten other things," he says.

The Assam-born musician explains: "When I pick any track to sing, I look at its soul, and not the commercial aspects. May be that is why people often tell me that whenever we hear your music, we know that it is a Papon song. There is a uniqueness to it."

Despite not too many Bollywood songs to his credit as compared to his contemporaries, Papon has a vast discography that he is proud of. However, he confesses it has been a tough journey to maintain his

individuality and not surrender to people in power.

"I come from the times when the person calling shots (director/producer of a film) was not really well-versed in music. So, to find middle grounds, I would go to them and understand their needs and requirements for the song. And then I would tell them, 'Okay, I've got it. Now, let me do my part, which is my expertise. And I'll give you whatever you want, because you aren't a musician, I am. That has happened quite a few times," Papon states.



Papon

The singer asserts there is no harm in taking advice from someone who knows about art and music, because doing so helps the entire project.

While the 47-year-old admits being picky about songs, there is a lot of regional work to his credit.

Asked if that is because the kind of music Hindi film industry creates does not interest him much, he says, "I'm

a little choosy, but there is another way I see this whole situation. It is not just me choosing what I want to do, but the universe also deciding what all songs I can sing. And that is why, whatever I do is fortunately liked by people. Having said that, yes, it is a conscious decision (to create music in regional languages) because my father was a very renowned folk musician. He was called the Bihu king. So, it is my effort to stay connected to my roots by working on regional music every now and then."

In fact, Papon also expresses his desire to break the monotony by constantly creating music that is experimental.

He says, "I enjoy doing different genres, and different styles of music. That is why I keep digging out new stuff. I have to find another good song, and it does not matter where it comes from. That is the reason my songs are spread across different styles, genres, and categories. Every song I make, I ensure it is different from the last one. Music for me is a journey of discovery."



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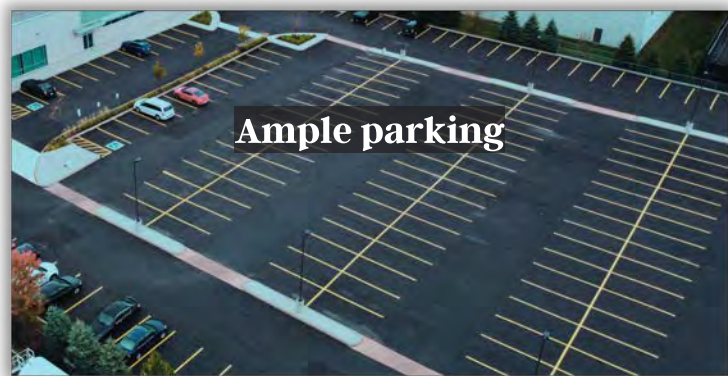


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# Bumrah bowling normally, & happy to return to the game

Happy to be back in the game following a back injury, and once again at the tip of the spear for India as its captain, Jasprit Bumrah last week told the media he was now bowling “normally”, and that he was not “holding back”.

The positive words and his readiness to hit the field as India’s captain for the T20I series, which is now underway in Ireland, came last week when Bumrah spoke to the media, among them the crick-eting websites *ESPNcricinfo* and *Cricbuzz*.

Bumrah returned from a back injury that sidelined him for a year. Fielding questions from the media, he spoke about the work put in post-surgery so he could return to the game.

“I was bowling normally. It’s not like I’m holding back. I’m enjoying it. I’ve done a lot of net sessions. When my rehab finished and I went home [to Ahmedabad], I practised with Gujarat [his state team] as well,” he told *ESPNcricinfo* last week.

Additionally, “I’ve had a lot of sessions and practice matches. It’s not like there are any restrictions, or I’m holding back. Obviously, when you come with the Indian team – and the weather [in Dublin] is great – you enjoy bowling that much more. I’m not holding back. The body feels good...”

In the last month or so, he slowly worked his way back at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru into carrying a bowler’s workload. It included exhaustive match simulations, and a number of practice games to test his match readiness, he said.

He also shrugged off media concerns over the bowling demands of a 50-over game, which is likely on the horizon at



Bumrah speaks with the media last week about his return to the game

the Asia Cup and World Cup. Such a workload could be more demanding for someone returning from rehabilitation when compared to the lighter demands in a T20I series.

“We were mindful that there is not a lot of Test cricket in this cycle until the World Cup ends [in November]. So, even in my rehab, we were never preparing for a T20 game, I was preparing to bowl ten overs for the World Cup,” Bumrah said.

He added, “I have been bowling ten, 12, even 15 overs. I have bowled more overs, so it becomes easier when you bowl [less] than what is required.”

Bumrah’s back injury has seen him off the field since

September 2022. He missed the ODI series against Sri Lanka during recovery, and Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma warned against fast-tracking him back into the game during the IPL season, which he also missed.

Then in March this year he underwent surgery in New Zealand, and began recovery afterwards. Following recuperation and rehabilitation at India’s National Cricket Academy, he was declared fit for the Ireland series, and was consequently named skipper.

Last week he told *Cricbuzz* he had to respect the time his body needed to recuperate.

“I was obviously looking forward to coming back. Sometimes some things are not in your hands. The body needs time for recovery, and you need to respect that. Then when you come back, there is a lot of hunger because when you play cricket continuously, you don’t even know what an off-season is like,” he said.

He added, “So in this phase, when my physical restrictions were done, I was only looking to work on my bowling, and work on the strength of my body. I was doing that, and also following how India’s cricket was going on.”

It was “all good”, *Cricbuzz* reported. Additionally, that he was “happy to be back”.

“It has been a long road, but everything is good. My body feels good, and I’m looking forward to playing some cricket. Feels nice to be back. I want game-time, and it will be great to play again. I am looking forward to it.”

## Cautious optimism as Sammy takes WI lead

The T20 International series victory over India by West Indies earlier this month saw subdued and cautious optimism from coach Darren Sammy, who told the Caribbean media the win was an indicator that the wind of change was now blowing in Caribbean cricket. Sammy’s interview was also reported in Trinidad and Tobago by the *Trinidad Express*.

Led by captain Rovman Powell, West Indies successfully took a 3-2 series win over the world’s number one ranked India in an eight-wicket victory during the fifth and deciding T20I. The match was played in Lauderhill, Florida, in the US.

West Indies triumphing in this game came after India delivered a punishing performance in the preceding match, the thumping meted out to the Caribbean hosts leveling the series 2-2.

Following West Indies taking the series, Sammy told the media: “[It is] important for morale to understand that the little... we are doing with this group, if we get success doing it, then we could build a platform from there... If we tick off certain boxes every time, then we would get there.”

The T20I series concluded India’s all-format tour of the Caribbean. It saw the visitors winning the two-match Test series 1-0, and the One-Day International rubber 2-1.

However, Sammy noted a lot of work remained to be done, saying, “[Andre Coley and I] just got to the job... We’ve had meetings with [Cricket West Indies president Dr Kishore Shallow], the new [Director of Cricket Miles Bascombe], and CEO [Johnny Grave] on how we can impact change, not only with the players, but the system in general: having better facilities for the guys to train; the preparation; the attitude towards fitness...”

Also, that “a cultural shift” is needed “in order for us to have a standard, and consistently work on getting to that point”.

Sammy’s first major assignment as coach was the ICC World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe in June-July, where West Indies failed to make it into the 50-over World Cup finals for the first time ever.

Sammy described the episode and its disappointing consequence as “down time”. However, he was quick to add that moving forward, “the general picture is trying to change the culture, the work culture, and it involves everyone”.

Said Sammy: “I know the new president in Kishore, the conversations we have had... things are going to change. Obviously, I ask for patience, because it won’t just shift overnight; but we are putting measures in place so we could effect change.”



Darren Sammy



Wahab Riaz

## Riaz changes pace, opting for franchise cricket

Pakistan fast bowler Wahab Riaz last week announced his retirement from international cricket, his decision officially ending a 15-year career on the Pakistan team, *ESPNcricinfo* reported.

However, Riaz’s announcement came as a formality, since he has not played in an international match for Pakistan for over two years.

His last international appearance was during a couple of white-ball games in late 2020. Meanwhile, he indicated he will continue to play franchise cricket.

“I have been speaking about my retirement plans past two years, that 2023 is my target to retire from international cricket, and I feel comfortable now more than ever that I have served my country and national team to the best I could have,” he indicated in a press statement.

He added, “It has been an honour and a privilege to represent Pakistan on the international stage. As I bid farewell to this chapter, I am thrilled to embark on a new adventure in franchise cricket, where I hope to entertain and inspire audiences, while competing against some of the best talents in the world.”

In January this year Riaz’s career took an unexpected turn when he was named the caretaker Sports Minister of Pakistan’s Punjab province.

His entry into politics brought to an end a promising career, which some experts say never quite hit the sustained heights that had been expected of his play.

It was such that the expectations from Riaz were high following his Test debut in 2010, in which he played a starring role in Pakistan’s four-wicket triumph at The Oval against England,

despite it being an ill-fated tour.

Riaz’s pace, bounce, and angle away produced a five-wicket acquisition in his first innings that included dismissals of England’s top order with Andrew Strauss, Jonathan Trott, and Kevin Pietersen returning to the pavilion.

However, it appears that this ill-fated Pakistan tour produced unexpected ripples for Riaz, which less than a month later saw him questioned by Scotland Yard around spot-fixing allegations.

Fallout from that investigation saw three of Riaz’s team-mates receiving long bans, along with serving time in prison.

Riaz was never accused of any wrongdoing, or charged with any indiscretion.

His career also saw highs during his productive period. Notably, there was a five-wicket haul, despite it being a losing cause, against India in Mohali in the 2011 World Cup semi-final.

His international career saw other highlights, among them a second Test five-for in Sharjah, and a four-wicket haul in Brisbane.

Another highlight was against Sri Lanka in Dubai, in what is described as his penultimate Test, where he took four wickets in nine overs to help take out Sri Lanka for 96, his effort putting Pakistan back into the game.

Since exiting international pitches, Riaz has forged a solid T20 career, most notably with Peshawar Zalmi in the PSL.

He has now moved on after completing 27 Tests, 91 ODIs, and 36 T20Is for Pakistan. His wicket hauls are 83 Test wickets at an average of 34.50; 120 in ODIs at 34.30; and 34 T20I wickets at 28.55.



Meg Lanning

## Healy looks to Meg Lanning's comeback

Women's cricket captain for Australia Alyssa Healy last week indicated she is hopeful that Meg Lanning will make a comeback to the game in time for the home series against the West Indies, which gets underway in October. Also, Healy has indicated she is ready to relinquish the captain's cap should Lanning return. The news was reported by *ESPNcricinfo*, *Cricbuzz*, and the international sports media.

Lanning left the game last May, taking indefinite leave for medical reasons. In so doing, she missed the women's Ashes tour of England, which was followed by the 50-over series against Ireland.

Her move into hiatus came shortly after returning in January from a four-month mental-health break. It then cast fresh doubt over her future participation in cricket.

However, in recent weeks Lanning has been making public appearances at cricketing events. Among the notable ones were her spending time with AFL side Collingwood, and recommending sponsorship appearances for Cricket Australia.

Lanning's team-mates had previously been reluctant to speak in detail about her absence. But then last week, Healy gave the strongest indication yet that Lanning could return to play in the

coming months.

Healy said it was her hope that Lanning's comeback could come in time for Australia's white-ball series against West Indies, which will feature three T20Is and three ODIs on the east coast in October. Returning for that series could also position Lanning to play for Melbourne Stars in the WBBL, which begins later that month.



Alyssa Healy

"I've spoken to her in bits and pieces, but I left her alone during the Ashes because it would have been tough for her to watch," Healy said.

She added, "I haven't seen her just yet, but from all reports, she is going really well. I look forward to hopefully seeing her back in Aussie colours in October against the Windies. I'm always hopeful [of her return], and I think the whole country is hopeful of that, but that is a decision not for me.

Hopefully she is playing some cricket really soon. From all reports, she is progressing really well for the summer."

Vice-captain since last October, Healy was named skipper for the Ashes following Lanning's sudden exit, but said at the time it was "bittersweet" to earn the captaincy under such circumstances. Healy also noted that she would gladly step aside if Lanning wanted to reclaim the captaincy should she return.



Tammy Beaumont strikes the ball square

## Beaumont's 118 puts her in the record books

A new record for the highest individual score in The Hundred was set last week when Tammy Beaumont hit 118 runs off 61 balls, her feat surpassing Will Smeed's unbeaten 108, *SkySports* and the *British Broadcasting Corporation* reported last week. Beaumont captains the Welsh Fire.

While it appeared Beaumont was indeed on fire against the Trent Rockets, her top score came with a dropped catch at 32, and an overturned decision after being adjudged lbw on 75, the *BBC* noted. She accumulated the record innings after hitting 20 fours and two sixes. It was also the first century in the women's competition.

The new record added to her other achievement as the first female double centurion in the Ashes. Also, Beaumont has now scored two centuries in four different formats, *SkySports* stated.

"I don't know what has just happened, to be honest! I just had

an absolute day out and it is great to put on a show for the fans," Beaumont told *SkySports*.

"It's amazing. Again, like I've said all summer, I'm not necessarily thinking about records when I'm out there. I'm thinking about doing my best for the team," she declared.

Commenting on her hopes on the England T20 selectors eyeing her favourably, Beaumont spoke to her hard work, dedication, and determination.

"I'm someone, who, if I feel like I can keep learning and keep improving, I don't give up. It's a captain's headache having Sophia Dunkley and Hayley Matthews as well. I could be batting three next game, because we have three very good openers. It's nice to perform, but at the same time, England have got some amazing batters in T20 cricket, and if I'm counted as one of them, then that is pretty special," she said.

## Cricket Schedule

(ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday August 23, 2023

India tour of Ireland, 2023  
Ireland vs India, 3rd T20I,  
The Village, Dublin, 3:00 PM

Thursday August 24, 2023

Afghanistan v Pakistan in Sri Lanka, 2023  
Afgan. vs Pak., 2nd ODI, Mahinda Rajapaksa  
International Stadium, Hambantota, 01:30 PM

Saturday August 26, 2023

Afghanistan v Pakistan in Sri Lanka, 2023  
Afghanistan vs Pakistan, 3rd ODI, R.  
Premadasa Stadium, Colombo, 01:30 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

Tuesday September 5, 2023

New Zealand tour of England, 2023  
England vs New Zealand, 4th T20I, Trent Bridge,  
Nottingham, 06:00 PM  
Asia Cup, 2023

Afghanistan vs Sri Lanka, 6th Match, Group B,  
Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, 03:00 PM

Wednesday September 6, 2023

Asia Cup, 2023A1 vs B2, Super Fours, 1st  
Match, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, 03:00 PM

Thursday September 7, 2023

Australia tour of South Africa, 2023  
South Africa vs Australia, 1st ODI, Mangaung  
Oval, Bloemfontein, 01:00 PM

Friday September 8, 2023

New Zealand tour of England, 2023  
England vs New Zealand, 1st ODI, Sophia  
Gardens, Cardiff, 12:30 PM

Saturday September 9, 2023

Australia tour of South Africa, 2023  
South Africa vs Australia, 2nd ODI, Mangaung  
Oval, Bloemfontein, 1:00 PM  
Asia Cup, 2023

B1 vs B2, Super Fours, 2nd Match, R.

Premadasa Stadium, Colombo, 2:00 PM

Sunday September 10, 2023

New Zealand tour of England, 2023  
England vs New Zealand, 2nd ODI, The Rose  
Bowl, Southampton, 11:00 AM  
Asia Cup, 2023

A1 vs A2, Super Fours, 3rd Match, R.

Premadasa Stadium, Colombo, 02:00 PM.



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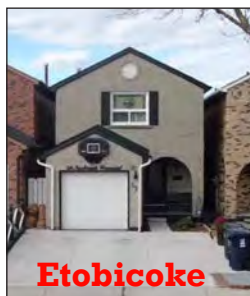
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