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Our Community Is Thriving!

Community groups ramp up season's outreach

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto – Our community is thriving! With the festive season well underway, three charitable groups in the GTA are getting ready to make a difference with outreach and support for the diaspora.

Save these dates for the month of December: from December 4 to December 22, Ryan Singh and the **Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association's 'Dhal and Rice Indo-Caribbean Food Drive'** gets underway.

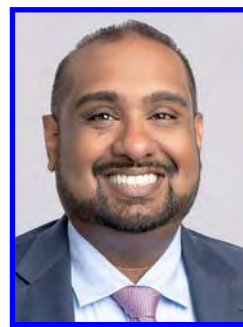
Next is **Habeeb Alli's One Love Table's 'Pepper Pot Fest'**, which takes place on December 8; and then there is a **party for the kiddies ages one to nine**, which is being put on by the charitable group, UNI-TnT. This event is endorsed by the Consulate General of Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto.



Tony Chankar



Ramsubagh-Mannette



Ryan Singh



Habeeb Alli

Last week, Acting Consul General at the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate General, Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette, recognised UNI-TnT as “one of our most dynamic diaspora organisations, and we at the Consulate greatly appreciate the very necessary work that they undertake to respond to critical needs among the most vulnerable in our community”.

Ramsubagh-Mannette also stated that UNI-TnT’s “fundraising activities are always fun and

well-orchestrated, which explains the growing popularity of their signature events”, and noted that the group’s upcoming seventh annual ‘Parang Lime’ on December 9 “is testament to the fact that ‘having a good time’ and ‘doing good’ do not have to be mutually exclusive.”

Ramsubagh-Mannette added, “I am personally looking forward to the event, as well as the Christmas Kids Party that will follow on December 16th!”

Earlier this week, one of the founders of UNI-TnT, Tony Chankar, extended the invitation to parents in the Caribbean community to bring their kids between ages one to nine to the group’s first annual children’s Christmas party. The event will take place at Tropical Nights Restaurant & Lounge,

See Page 18: Community groups



A show of solidarity for Guyana in Toronto



Guyana's Golden Arrowhead flies in Providence

‘We roam, but Guyana is our home’

Toronto – It was rally round the Windies Restaurant and Sports Bar on December 3 when the diaspora in Toronto gathered in a show of patriotism and solidarity for Guyana, and to replicate abroad the surging nationalism among Guyanese for its border, boundaries, and territorial integrity.

Last Sunday, the government of Venezuela held a consultative referendum to determine whether its nationals were in support of incorporating the Essequibo region into Venezuela.

The results of referendum have now come under international scrutiny in the wake of a disconnect between an apparent low voter turnout and the burgeoning number of votes.

Meanwhile, here in Toronto, Sunday’s assembly and its large turnout in a show of nationalist support for Guyana was in response to an initiative of unity by the One Guyana Forum (Canada). Working in collaboration with the OGF was the Consulate General in Toronto.

The Toronto gathering was held in tandem with many simultaneous events of nationalism and countrywide support that were occurring that day in Guyana. Among them was the memorable and moving Evening of Patriotic Reflection at the National Stadium in Providence, Guyana.

Here in Toronto, in addressing the gathering of Guyanese patriots and friends of Guyana on Sunday evening, Honorary Consul at the Consulate General in Toronto, Mani Singh, spoke to the cohesiveness and unity constituting the inseparable umbilical that eternally connects nationals and their homeland together.

At the time, Singh was speaking to a room brimming with the positive emotion of love for the homeland, when he said: “It matters not where we roam; there is no place like home.”

As he declared, while there are internal differences among Guyanese, they are well-known for putting divisiveness

See Page 5: Guyanese defend

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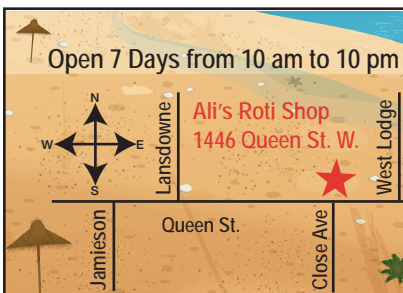
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In photo (l-r) are Dhaman Kissoon; Dwaine Dyke; Dominic Lumia; Brendan Ennis; Sophia Rossi; Jordan Harding; Rizwan Mohamed; Robin Ramsammy, and Devon Sheriff – Brendan, Sophia, and Jordan are from Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation, while the others in the photo are members of the Brampton Flowercity Rotary Club. Photo by Ramesh Ramkalawan

Brampton Flowercity Rotary Club holds 'Making Spirits Bright'

Brampton Flowercity Rotary Club recently hosted its *Making Spirits Bright* event at the Woodbine Banquet Hall. It was well-attended with over 300 guests.

President Dhaman Kissoon outlined the club's activities thus far for this year. The club gave four scholarships to deserving high school students headed to college or university. Also, a \$5,000 donation was made to the Trillium Health Foundation as part of a \$25,000 commitment.

A further commitment of \$25,000 was made to Princess

Margaret's new initiative 'Cricket to Conquer Cancer'; a \$3,000 pledge was made to the Drug Treatment court in Brampton; and a further \$3,000 pledge was made to Victim Services of Peel. Both \$3,000 pledges will be presented at the club's Spring Fling event in April, 2024.

In addition, 45 hospital beds were recently shipped to Guyana, part of the Rotary Club's international commitment. The beds will be received by the Rotary Club of Georgetown, and will be distributed by Guyana's Ministry of Health.



Ken Singh (3rd from right) with family members following the UG ceremony; left to right are Mrs Jessie Singh; the couple's daughter-in-law, Sherry; son Carlton; relative Lloyd; and sister Savi Maraj

Atlas Cargo's head Ken Singh receives UG's honorary doctorate

Toronto – Guyanese-Canadian entrepreneur and humanitarian Kanhai Ken Singh was recently conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Guyana for his exceptional contributions to society.

Singh is the president and owner of Atlas Cargo, Canadian Customs Brokers Inc., and Central Global Cargo North America.

The anecdotal narrative of Singh's journey to entrepreneurial success, humanitarianism, and ongoing recognition is replete with many milestones dotting the path he took in his life's journey from Guyana to Canada.

His story began in the rural village of Strangroen in Guyana, where as a young boy he attended De Hoop Canadian Mission School. However, from a youthful age, Singh understood that industriousness, dedication, and application were among the requisites for success. He applied these qualities to helping his family take care of their cows, and the vegetables that they grew in their garden.

However, Singh aspired for greater heights from his humble start in life, and understood early that higher education was the path to be taken to long-term betterment.

An opportunity opened up 1970s, when his parents sent him to Tutorial High School in Georgetown. This window then opened up wider vistas for progress to even further education, where attendance at the University of Guyana saw him acquiring a degree in Sociology and Psychology in 1976.

Singh arrived in Canada a year later still driven by his desire to acquire education. He then earned his BA in Sociology at York University in Toronto; and later, a BA in Business Administration.

Yet again Singh pushed at the envelope to acquire even more education, embarking on further professional studies that saw him graduating in 1982 from the Canadian Institute of

Traffic and Transportation. He also studied cargo insurance in Scotland; claims and legal liability in New York; project management; negotiation techniques; sales and marketing management, and many more training courses in Canada and overseas.

In bestowing its honorary doctorate late last month, the University of Guyana noted that it considered Singh to be "of the highest calibre of human and an exemplar in the field of international business and innovation", the Office of Vice-Chancellor stated.

And in delivering the citation about Singh at the ceremony, Al Creighton of the Faculty of Education and Humanities noted: "We are in the presence of a gentleman of talent, honour and nobility, who is frightfully successful in international business but retains a gentle humility tutored by the circumscribed conditions of his growing up in rural British Guiana."

Also, Creighton noted that Singh was "[a] well-trained, learned professional who places a very high value on education, and who is universalist with the experience of working around the globe."


In accepting the honour, Singh expressed appreciation to UG for the recognition. He also spoke to the more than 3,500 graduates, telling them to be "the best at what you're doing".

He added, "Do not take on the whole world. Look at the area that you want to specialise in; for me, it is transportation, and I can assure you I can answer most of the questions and solve them in that area."

Singh has received many awards during his lifetime of achievement and success. Among them are the 2005 Businessman of the Year Award in Ottawa; a Service Award from Singapore for chairman 1996-2000; a Service Award from CICA; and a Service Award from CPPS Mission Projects, Tanzania. He also received a Seal to the State of Florida. (With files by Janet Naidu.)

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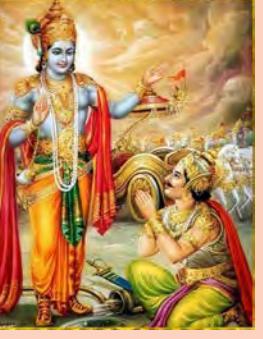
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Peel gets \$7M federal support for asylum claimants, additional shelter

Brampton – Ottawa announced late last month it will provide the Region of Peel with \$7 million to open a new reception centre that will offer more streamlined services and supports to asylum claimants, as well as additional shelter.

The announcement was made by Kamal Khera, Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, on behalf of the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

The centre will serve as both a reception centre and a temporary shelter, and will be operated in partnership with community organisations that possess the experience, skills and capacity needed to serve this population.

Said Khera, “As winter approaches, and with a global migration crisis, it is even more important to ensure people are kept safe. This new reception centre will save lives and alleviate pressure on the Region of Peel.”

She added, “There is no simple answer, but we are confident that with full engagement from all levels of government, we can implement real long-term, sustainable and compassionate measures to ensure that the most vulnerable newcomers to Canada have a roof over their heads.”

And as Miller stated, “We understand the significant challenges that provinces and municipalities like the Peel Region are facing with the rise in asylum claims, and we are going to continue to work closely with them to find solutions.”

He added, “Everyone deserves the basic right to a safe place to stay and this funding is going to significantly help alleviate the pressures in this region. We are confident that with full engagement from all levels of government, we can develop longer term options for interim housing outside of the current situation.”

In a statement announcing the move, the government noted that today’s world is facing unprecedented global displacement levels, and like many countries, Canada too is experiencing a rise in asylum claims.

“This has placed immense pressure on Canada’s shelter systems and as winter approaches, the need becomes more urgent. All levels of government must work together to address these challenges and develop solutions,” the statement noted.

Responding to the needs of asylum claimants requires collaboration and engagement from all levels of government, and the government of Canada remains committed to working together on solutions, it added.

Canada leads donor fund

Dubai, UAE – Climate change is a global crisis that affects the entire world, with its devastating effects not shared equally among countries, a release from the government of Canada stated at the start of COP28 last week.

The release added, “Developing countries, which contribute the least to the pollution that causes climate change, are the most vulnerable to some of its harshest consequences, like intense storms, catastrophic flooding, and rising sea levels. Canada is committed to helping developing countries address climate-related loss and damage.”

With this in mind, the government of Canada kicked off COP28 with a \$16 million contribution to the start-up cost of a global fund to address loss and damage.

The announcement was made by Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

“We must unite behind this effort to launch this important fund early, as an opportunity to strengthen global solidarity toward those who are facing the worst impacts of climate change. We must not leave climate-vulnerable developing countries to face these consequences alone. The creation of this fund is historic, and Canada is honoured to be among the first donors to this fund at COP28,” said Guilbeault.

The contribution was made in partnership between Guilbeault and Ahmed Hussen, Minister of International Development, and makes Canada one of the first contributors to the fund.

This seed contribution will support the fund as it starts to provide vulnerable countries and communities with the resources they need to respond to the worst impacts of climate change.

Canada was an early advocate for the need to make progress on the issue of loss and damage at COP27 in 2022. Over the last year, Canada has been a progressive voice in brokering the historic agreement working with both developed and developing countries in bringing forward recommendations on the operationalisation of the fund that were adopted at COP28.



Marc Miller



Kamal Khera



Patrick Brown

Chair, Peel Region, declared that Peel Region remains proud of its diversity and openness to people from all walks of life.

Additionally, “While the affordable housing crisis has put a major strain on our ability to offer shelter to our residents and asylum claimants fleeing dangerous circumstances, [the] announcement is encouraging. I want to extend my gratitude to... Miller and the government of Canada for supporting a new reception centre for asylum claimants. This reception centre is vital for asylum claimants and will help ease the capacity burdens of Peel’s emergency shelters.”

Brampton’s Mayor Patrick Brown also responded to Ottawa’s move following the announcement, thanking both the government of Canada and local MPs “for providing the necessary funds to combat this crisis”.

Said Brown: “This is a great partnership with the Region of Peel that will prevent a pending humanitarian crisis. Make no mistake about it. This agreement will save lives. I want to

thank... Miller for his hands-on approach to the asylum claimant crisis.”

Acting Mayor for the City of Mississauga, Chris Fonseca, also extended thanks to the federal government, thanking Ottawa for “responding to our calls by partnering to develop a long-term solution to ensure asylum seekers have the supports they need to find success as soon as they arrive in their new home”.

Fonseca added, “With temperatures dropping, [the] announcement comes at a critical time and will ensure those in need have a safe and warm roof over their heads as we enter the winter months.”

Through the Interim Housing Assistance Program, the federal government has provided almost \$700 million to provinces and municipalities to address extraordinary housing pressures related to the increased volumes of asylum claimants since 2017.

Earlier this year, IRCC announced an extension of IHAP with additional funding of \$212 million.

The federal government has also procured temporary accommodations for short-term housing to alleviate the pressure on local shelters. The locations procured have been adjusted based on local needs and growing demands.

The federal government currently has nearly 3,800 temporary rooms across Canada that are providing housing for over 7,000 asylum claimants.

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CCAC holds its 2023 Bursary Presentation

Toronto – In keeping with one of its mandates to uplift the next generation by investing in education, the Council of Caribbean Associations Canada held its 2023 Virtual Bursary Presentation on December 3.

The event saw a promising and achieving student receiving a Seneca scholarship, with other deserving recipients awarded bursaries.

Host of the event was Kadesha James, with welcome and opening remarks delivered by the CCAC's President, Gideon Exeter.

Remarks were also delivered by the Executive Director, Advancement and Alumni at Seneca Polytechnic, Dean Hughes.

The feature address for the evening was delivered by guest speaker, Afiya Hypolite.

The 2023 Scholarship Recipient was sponsored by Seneca Polytechnic, and was awarded to Lenron Doyle, who is currently attending Seneca, and is pursuing an advanced diploma in business management. Following his diploma studies, Doyle plans to pursue a degree in business management.

Born and raised in St Vincent, Doyle's upbringing instilled in him the values of hard work and gratitude, the event's brochure noted.

Additionally, it was noted that from a young age, he displayed an extraordinary level of care and compassion, touching the lives of those around him with kindness.

This year bursaries were sponsored by Grace, Pine Ridge Memorial Gardens by Arbor Memorial, the CCAC, and Bedessee.

CCAC committee member, D. Antoinette Kirwan did the presentation of bursaries to recipients Amanda Sullivan; Kezia Harley; Azalee

Lambert; Savanna Green; Gabrielle Forbes-Cultess; Noah Fergusson; Davisha Joseph; Sydney Telfer; and Kenya James.

The evening also saw the CCAC receiving greetings from the Chair of the Caribbean Consular Corps, Henry Mangal. Acknowledgements and closing remarks were delivered by Eric Delfish, PRO and board member. For more info on the good work being done by the CCAC, [visit its website here](#).



Gideon Exeter

Guyanese defend the homeland

From Page 1

aside, and working together as one to defend the homeland.

"We are a resolute people, and the Venezuelans must understand that all of Guyana belongs to Guyanese. We stand in solidarity with our brothers back home. We will defend our country in a very peaceful way," Singh declared.

Also addressing the gathering was Toronto lawyer and community activist, Selwyn Pieters.

As he stated, "Venezuela accepted and honoured the border determined by the 1899 Arbitral Award for more than half a century."

However, now in the light of its heightened aggression, the Guyanese people must remain "woke and... engaged".

Additionally, "This is the time for all Guyanese to support our government in its fight against this existential threat from Venezuela and its President Nicolás Maduro."

A number of Guyanese-Canadian diaspora organisations were also in attendance at the OGF gathering. Among them were The Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organisations; The Guyana Ex-Soldiers Association; The Guyana Ex-Police Association; The Guyana Independence Festival Committee; The Association of Concerned Guyanese; and Guyanese Canadians For Unity.

The evening also saw a heightening of positive emotion via prayers, which were delivered by representatives of Guyana's three major religions.

Brother John O'Dell delivered the Christian prayer, while Pandit Jag Gossai said the Hindu

prayer, and Imam Sheikh Faisal spoke on behalf of the Muslim faith.

Also notable on the evening's agenda was the union of many voices that was raised in song.

Among the songs were the Canadian and Guyanese national anthems, and many Guyanese songs of patriotism, among them *Born in the Land of the Mighty Roraima*, and *My Guyana El Dorado*.

Presentations were also made by Claire Carew, who did the Land Acknowledgment. There were also presentations by Gordon Winter from the Ex-Soldiers Association; Pam Joseph, who spoke on behalf of the Ex-Police Association; and from the IMO's president, Brother Omar Farouk.

Special thanks were also given to the management of Windies Restaurant & Sports Bar for generously providing the venue and dinner, free of charge.

Norman Sue Bakery was also recognised for providing the appetisers and snacks free of charge. Also thanked was Pastor Donnie Persaud from the ESP Worship Centre in Scarborough.

Meanwhile, the support for Guyana continues abroad with the Brampton Triveni Mandir, under the auspices of the Consulate General in Toronto, holding an interfaith 'Day of Unity and Patriotic Reflection'.

The event will celebrate Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and will take place at the Triveni Mandir, 20 Daviselm Drive in Brampton on December 10 from 4:00 p.m. to 8 p.m. Call Triveni Mandir 905-450-3451 for more information.

(By Romeo Kaseram, LJI Reporter)



Mani Singh

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Editorial

Stand together

Guyanese nationals at home and abroad must stand together more and more now in the face of the growing existential threats emerging out of Venezuela following the consultative referendum that was held there last Sunday.

The rallying of Guyanese nationals here in Toronto in an event organised by the One Guyana Forum, a collaborative effort with the Consulate General in Toronto, and which took place on Sunday, is a first reassuring and positive indicator of the resilience and stamina needed to support the government in overcoming these dire threats.

Out of that rally on Sunday emerged a reassuring level of the patriotic energy now required for nationalistic bonds to hold all Guyanese firmly together across the globe in response to the threat to Guyana's borders, its sovereignty, and its territorial boundaries.

The threat is now quite real. Following the results of Sunday's referendum, on Tuesday evening Venezuela's Head of State, Nicolás Maduro revealed a redrawn map of Venezuela claiming the disputed area, and announced the appointment of a governor of Guyana's Essequibo Region, Major General Alexis Rodríguez Cabello.

And as was reported in the international media, Maduro also directed Venezuela's State-owned companies to immediately begin exploring and exploiting the oil, gas, and mines in Guyana's Essequibo region.

Maduro also declared he would immediately proceed "to grant operating licenses for the exploration and exploitation of oil, gas, and mines in the entire area of our Essequibo".

And he ordered the creation of local subsidiaries of Venezuelan public companies, including oil giant PDVSA, and mining conglomerate Corporación Venezolana de Guayana.

What is yet to be understood is how the Maduro administration would implement exercising jurisdiction over the territory after it is officially declared part of Venezuela. The declaration is certain to come via a law that is to be soon discussed by Venezuela's National Assembly. Maduro's ruling party controls the National Assembly.

In addition to the announcement regarding the exploitation of resources in Essequibo, Maduro also indicated that a new Comprehensive Defense Operational Zone had been created. This is a move that follows a pattern similar to the special military commands that conduct operations in different regions of Venezuela.

Notably, Georgetown's response to Maduro's announcements was reassuring as much as it was calming to Guyanese at home and abroad.

In his live address from State House on Tuesday night, Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali told the nation and the diaspora that his government had informed the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres of Maduro's recent declarations on Guyana's Essequibo region.

He also indicated that the international community was being engaged, and that the Guyana Defence Force was on "full alert" and engaging its foreign military counterparts, including the US Southern Command.

Speaking to Maduro's announcement and his redrawing of the boundary between Guyana and Venezuela, Ali said Guyana viewed these moves as an "imminent threat" to territorial integrity.

He also noted that none of these actions will be accepted by the international community, and gave Guyanese at home and abroad the assurance that his government will do all it can to protect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The UN Security Council will also be updated on the latest developments out of Venezuela, Ali stated.

"To my fellow Guyanese, we are here to ensure the safety of this country, the territory of this country, the sovereignty of this country, and to protect every citizen," he declared.

As this challenging and existential situation continues to unfold between Georgetown and Caracas, what Guyana also needs from its people are patriotism, surging nationalism, and their love for the homeland – all evidenced on Sunday; and notably, there is a lot more of this to come.

'Dhal and Rice' initiative now on front burner

Food is one of the most popular features of Indo-Caribbean culture. From staples such as curry, dhal, chow mein, a variety of rotis, to many tasty snacks like doubles, aloo ball, pholourie, and salara, the number of items on the list of savoury Indo-Caribbean recipes is unlimited.

As the holidays arrive, many of us will gather with family and friends and indulge ourselves with delectable and elaborate meals. And customary to many Indo-Caribbean gatherings, many of us will depart in the evening with bowls and containers packed with leftovers.



Ryan Singh

Food is a central unifier that not only brings people together, but when we are together it provides warmth, comfort, and a sense of home. No matter where we are in the world, the taste of home-cooked Caribbean food brings us internal joy and a sense of peace.

Unfortunately, as important as food is, not everyone has access to share this joy. Access to food has become challenging for many. With the pressures of inflation and increases in grocery prices, essential food items have become unattainable for many individuals and families across the country.

In October, Food Banks Canada, a national charitable organisation, released its HungerCount 2023 study that revealed food bank usage in Canada has achieved an all-time high. Furthermore, one-third of food bank clients are children.

The 2023 HungerCount report stated that 1,935,911 Canadians accessed food banks during their report period. This was an increase of 32 percent compared with the same period in 2022, and 78.5 per cent compared with March 2019.

As long lineups emerge outside food banks across the country, food insecurity impacts a variety of people. The report noted that 17 percent of food bank clients had jobs; however, they did not earn enough to make ends meet.

Notably, food insecurity impacts people of colour. While racialised people account for approximately 30 percent of Canada's population, we account for nearly 40 percent of the food banks' client base, up from 32 percent the year before.

The impacts of food insecurity are rapid, and people of colour feel the brunt of that. And while accessing the services of food banks, selection is limited. Culturally appropriate foods are rarely found, and many are restricted to food items with which they might be unfamiliar.

No matter if someone is a client of a food bank, they should not be restricted from enjoying culturally appropriate foods.

In December 2022, the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association partnered with The Caribbean Network, Building Togetherness, and small business Divine Designs by Natasha to launch the 'Dhal and Rice: Indo-Caribbean Food Drive'.

The 'Dhal and Rice' initiative was established on the premise that Indo-Caribbean families and individuals should be able to access culturally appropriate foods, even if they are clients of food banks.

Over the month, the collective of groups operated drop-off boxes at 23 locations across the Greater Toronto Area. From Caribbean restaurants and grocery stores to mandirs, and a variety of small businesses, boxes were available to the community to give back and ensure we supply culturally appropriate foods to local food banks.

Several drop-offs were conducted at four food banks in Toronto.

Based on the success of the initial program, we launched five permanent drop-off locations in November 2023: Jas Supermarket in Brampton; Shri Krishna Sudama Mandir in Etobicoke; Vikash's Canadian Superstore; Om Deepam Puja Centre; and Shereen's Guyanese Bakery in Scarborough. These locations now have collection bins year-round.

Patrons can make contributions during regular hours of operation, and that will ensure our volunteers can make deliveries to food banks year-round. Ensuring that those in need in our community can access ingredients that are unique to our cooking fueled the initiative to operate year-round.

On December 5 an additional 20 pop-up locations will operate during the month for the holidays. We hope that the additional locations will galvanise the community to think generously, and ensure that others can also enjoy our amazing foods during the holidays and throughout the year.

As we gather to celebrate the holidays and mark the beginning of a new year, we will surely enjoy wonderful-tasting home-cooked meals of a variety of traditional Caribbean dishes.

However, it is important for us to pause, reflect, and then act: we must do our part to ensure that others can also enjoy that same sense of comfort.

Bus pass opens up a dream-world to another place

(I have recently been combing through my entire body of writing that are hundreds of these columns written across quite a few decades. Of course, starting a project like this is similar to encountering an old photograph album – before you know it, hours have passed and you have barely turned three pages of photographs. I thought I would share a few of these snapshots as part of my reclamation project; meanwhile, I am yet to locate its publishing date.)



Romeo Kaseram

It came to pass that as students we received a free school bus pass, a windfall for a young student growing up back home and eager to explore beyond the tall fields of sugar canes that dominated the landscape in whatever direction the head turned.

Coming to think of it, taking public transport for the first time was an eye-opener, since the three of four tall stairs it took to climb up into bus put me above the top of the sugar cane fields. It was then from this elevated view where I began to appreciate how far away the sea of green fields reached.

These long stalks of sugar canes were as solid as a tabletop, which since I was a boy I had always looked up to from its fibrous roots to the tallest tips of the silky feathers of its cane arrows that arrived at the end of the year.

But now, for the first time, I began to appreciate the unending continuity of these fields, how deep and wide it all was, cultivated from its start at the feet of the undulating hills, then outwards to the distant shore, where another sea of green, its waves tipped with white crests, flowed away and outwards to the sharp and distant line of the watery horizon.

I recall watching both oceans unfolding before me, one of sugar canes, the other of the Caribbean Sea, out of the clattering windows of the rickety bus as it bumped and trundled along the rutted roads. Despite the bone-racking bumps that dislodged the lower back vertebrae with each dip of the unforgiving coloured plastic seats insecurely anchored to the floor, these buses took me away at least once a week from the confines of village life and into the thriving city.

It deposited me at the bus terminal, where right away I was assailed by car horns, each if honked on its own and in a connected sequence would have been a symphony to an ear accustomed to a morning alarm of crowing roosters, the mooing of cows communicating readiness for milking, and the bleating of high-maintenance goats stamping impatiently off to the pasture.

Instead, the cars all seemed impatient with each other, driving up closely as if to examine the thickness of their paint, the

cacophony of honking seemingly directed by the annoyed gesticulations of drivers and an array of impatient fingers.

Most of the times the gesticulations were for vendors pushing carts filled with precariously balanced vegetables, or others carelessly crossing the roadway holding aloft tall sticks from which dangled any number of items ranging from dolls' dresses to razor blades to ball point pens, totally oblivious to the oncoming traffic.

To go down to the pier was to be assailed by the smells of rot that proliferated in discarded vegetables, in numerous dead fish floating in iridescent patches of oil, and other flotsam washed down from the city streets, which now gently lapped against the side of large and overfed ocean liners sitting heavy in the port, their foreign names painted on each side with type that was ten feet tall, and which could be easily read from a kilometre away.

To stare at these ships was to bring to mind those endless nights of reading ancient sea stories by lamp light to an underfoot symphony of mosquitoes ignoring all the written rules about rests in music, and where an occasional moth would slam into the lamp shade with suicidal, kamikaze fanaticism.

To look at the ship's gangplank leading down to the dock was to dream of ascending to the deck, then turning around and looking out at the tops of the buildings of the city; and perhaps, in the distance, to see for the final time the wide green carpet of sugar canes before sailing away into the horizon.

Perhaps this was what it did, these school bus passes, in opening up the world to a young man. It was more than just a free bus ride to the city. What it did as well was offer insights into new places, and glimpses into new and distant worlds.

It took me out of my village world to the big city. There I saw large ships moored to barnacle-encrusted posts driven deep into the soft mud, awaiting orders to make long and distant journeys to far, far away foreign shores.

I began to dream of journeying out of this world during these trips. I began putting real experiences to the words I was reading about big cities and sailing ships after I flashed that government-issued school bus pass, stepped inside the bus, and lifted my imagination above the endless fields of sugar canes.

So it was I began dreaming of a similar universal pass, perhaps for a ship, or maybe a plane ticket, that I could use to board a craft or aircraft, and trundle away on a bumpy seat to places where honking car horns were not quickly absorbed by endless and impenetrable fields of sugar canes.

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

Guyanese are standing as one in face of foreign aggression

Dear Editor,

There comes a time in every nation's history when all the people raise their heads high into the heavens, anticipating, knowing, that something definitive is happening.

We are in such a moment now in the face of foreign aggression. And so, as of December 3, 2023, from the enchanting vistas of Mabaruma and spectacular table mountains of the Essequibo, all the way down to the quaint and soulful Konashen in the sprawling, wild expanse of the Rupununi Savannahs, we stand as one, united.

And from Corriverton where the sun rises over these 83,000 square miles, to Kaikan and Arau where the sun sets in breathtaking, blazing crimson mosaics, this land is our land.

On November 23, late in the afternoon, two choppers landed on Mount Arau. Guyana's President Irfaan Ali walked briskly to the flagpole planted by the Guyana Defense Force on top that magnificent mountain. And in a moment never to be forgotten, the Golden Arrowhead was raised



Ali with a national last week in Region Two

2,200 feet into the Essequibo sky. It was a brilliant admixture of courage and resolve. Once hoisted, the 22 persons who accompanied the president joined him in a solemn, but robust recitation of the national pledge.

Earlier in the day we landed at Mabaruma, that iconic expression of Guyanese fortitude and destiny. The people came out and pledged themselves to the defense of this nation. The president, accompanied by Chief of Staff Brigadier General Omar Khan, National Security Adviser Gerry Gouveia, and the entourage, made their way to Camp Everard.

President Ali and Brigadier Khan served breakfast to the troops, and then listened to their concerns. It was a face-to-face meeting of the leaders and their troops on the front lines.

The same interactions with troops took place at Port Kaituma, Eteringbang, and Kaikan. Lunch at Eteringbang; dinner at Kaikan. The Commander-in-Chief and the Chief of Staff reviewed the issues at hand, and it must be reported that the troops displayed the greatest military poise, and affirmed their unshakable commitment to the defense of Guyana. They are all rock-solid, just like Mount Arau that

now boasts the Golden Arrowhead!

I joined a massive rally at Enterprise, ECD. Several hundred patriotic souls, with flags in hand, and music by the likes of Dave Martins, Poonam Singh, Adrian Dutchin, and Mystic, marched all the way to Buxton, where they joined villagers in a mighty display of national unity.

Local leadership by Suresh Singh, and dozens of volunteers crept out at dawn like the Jaguar, to rally the forces.

Given the historic conjuncture we are in, and out of respect for those who were on

this journey of commitment and resolve, it might be useful to list the names of those who were on Mount Arau: President Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Chief of Staff of the GDF; Brigadier-General Omar Khan; Capt. Gerry Gouveia (National Security Adviser); Col. Michael Shahoud; Col. S. Howell; Lt. Col. Earle Edghill; Ravindrada Budhram (Asst. Commissioner of Police, Operations), Major Marvin Simpson, James Singh (Head of CANU); Dr A. Rahman (Chief of Staff, Office of the President); and Raul Rodney (Warrant Officer Class I).

Also, O. McPherson (Assistant Superintendent of Police); Lt. Col. Anson Weeks (Pilot); Major Jaslyn Assanah (Co-Pilot); Cpl. Dwayne Jackson (Flight Engineer); Lt. Col. Michael Charles (Pilot); Capt. Dwight Bonus (Co-Pilot); Jason Farley (Flight Engineer); Eddie Layne (Director DPI); Vishani Rago-beer (Journalist, News Room); J. Cheddie (Presidential Photographer); Ruel Johnson (writer); and Dr Randy Persaud (Adviser, Office of the President).

Venezuela has become a predator state. It has violated international law, international norms, and most of all, it is violating the expectations consistent with regional peace and security. Nicolás Maduro has betrayed the Bolivarian Revolution and everything Simon Bolivar or even Hugo Chávez stood for. This conduct will not go unheeded. The international community will not tolerate it. Our partners and friends will stand by our side.

And let it be known that the Jaguar has risen!

Dr Randy Persaud, Guyana, via email.

Let us find the silver lining in T&T

Dear Editor,

In the midst of what can sometimes feel like we are spinning a top in mud in Trinidad and Tobago, I find myself questioning whether it is merely a matter of overlooking the silver lining.

The constant barrage of unsettling events accessible through social media often requires a deliberate effort to seek out positivity. Without consciously looking for that silver lining, we might find ourselves in a relentless pursuit of therapy.

I acknowledge the challenges. As the young folks would say, it is undeniably "sticky" out there. Yet, amidst the chaos there is an abundance of goodness that does not bask in the daylight of social media.

It is admirable that some choose to work silently, embracing the principle of not letting your right hand know what your left hand is doing. However, there is merit in occasionally letting the public witness these acts of

kindness.

Kindness is intricately woven into the fabric of our society, hidden from the constant gaze of social media.

It is evident in a young boy aiding a blind, elderly man; a woman generously contributing her last \$5 to another mother trying to make ends meet at the grocery cashier; or a devoted teacher patiently assisting a struggling student.

Also, in shopkeepers who extend credit to single mothers trying to make ends meet; the wise elder of the community guiding the younger generation; and in many other ways.

To these unsung heroes across various walks of life, who diligently carry out their duties with humility and perseverance, we express our heartfelt gratitude. Their collective efforts serve as a beacon of hope, and a reminder that goodness persists, even in the face of adversity.


S. Benois-Selman, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



The Golden Arrowhead was hoisted on top the Pakaraima Mountain on November 23. It is located near the Guyana/Venezuela border. In photo are President Ali, members of the GDF, and others who attended the historic hoisting of the flag



Kumaka residents with President Ali and the GDF in a show of support last week



GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

Property Values Rising in Guyana

By Kal Juman-Yassin

Overseas property owners are taking a renewed interest in the Guyana property market. Their real estate assets are likely worth more today and could be excellent long term investment assets, providing income and equity growth. The question is whether to invest and modernise, or whether to cash out at today's record high values.

The growing demand for land and the shortage of residential housing supply have pushed property values to record levels. Agricultural lands are being rezoned into housing with some landowners reaping significant windfalls. The economic hyper-growth is challenging the current infrastructure which is barely adequate as is. Construction is already on the way for new highways on the east coast, east bank, and west coast, which will open up many new areas for development.

Guyana's Real Estate Association has noted the sharp rise of rentals where the cost of a two bedroom apartment rental is triple the price in 2010. Rates for a modern two bedroom apartment in Georgetown can easily fetch (US) \$2,500 per month with updated detached homes in better neighbourhoods going for more than (US) \$4,000 per month.

The sharp rise in building materials costs, coupled with a shortage of skilled workers, have pushed construction costs higher. Inflation has seen aggregate costs rise from (US) \$40 to (US) \$55 per ton, and average building costs up from (US) \$60 per square foot to over (US) \$125 per square foot or more. Building in Guyana to North American standards will likely cost 10-20 percent more, since the majority of materials are imported.

Georgetown properties now range from (US) \$250,000 to (US) \$1M-plus depending on location, size of the lot, and condition of the building. Property values may be rising, and owners need to have realistic expectations. Estimating a property's potential value requires understanding several factors including the current condition of the building and the dynamics of the surrounding neighbourhood.

For investors interested in the Guyanese property market, there are many opportunities with higher yields than available in the US or Canadian market.

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.](#)



Venezuela's capital city, Caracas

Greed, power driving Venezuela's Essequibo claim

Dear Editor,

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's claim to Guyana's Essequibo on a matter settled over a century and two decades plus amounts to bare greed and downright wickedness.

The unfounded claim to the Essequibo centres on the fact that the region is rich in natural resources, including our oil finds, which adds economic significance to Guyana as a developing nation. Control over the territory would potentially give Venezuela access to such valuable resources.

There is a particular ungodly spirit at play here. When you struggle to become, there is a tendency to go unnoticed. On the other hand, when you begin to prosper due to grit and strategic planning, everything hidden in the woodwork crawls out to get a claw on what you have, or are building.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is not without wealth. The Republic consists of several small islands and a continental landmass. It has an area of about 353,841 square miles, with water making up 3.2 percent of the total area. As is the case with other countries around the world, the economy is also driven by the natural resources located in the nation.

It is argued that Venezuela's oil reserves easily trump the combined deposits of the US, Mexico, and Canada. Since 2010, the country has had the world's largest oil deposits, estimated at 300 billion barrels. Natural resources include natural gas,

land for agriculture, water for electricity production, and other resources.

According to estimates, the country's natural resources total about \$14.3 trillion. The country also produces iron, copper, bauxite, coal, zinc, gold, and the like. Venezuela also has great tourism potential. In the past, visitors were known to have been attracted to great tropical weather, wildlife, varied landscapes, and other things.

So, what is their problem in claiming Essequibo? Simple, a desire for power, and greed. The leaders must ask themselves what they have done wrong, or are doing wrong to find themselves in their current economic predicament.

Cognisance should be taken of the fact that when the human body does not receive the nutrients it needs, it begins consuming its fat reserves, if any. If no fat reserves remain, the body starts to break down muscle tissue in a process called "catabolism". As a last resort, the body consumes its muscle mass. It could be said that this phenomenon also occurs in economics.

The leadership of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela needs to examine its ways, and strategically address the aforementioned, instead of employing scare tactics and attempting to bully a smaller neighbour, that has become the envy of progress. Guyana will prevail. Essequibo is ours.

Dr Marcel Raymond Hutson, Guyana, via email.

Call for West Indies selectors to resign

Dear Editor,

I call for the immediate resignation or dismissal of the West Indies Cricket Board's selection panel. And while the recent controversy has been brought about due to Darren Bravo's non-selection issue, not that *per se*, is the reason for my call, but for their general dereliction of duty.

These selectors are selected to choose the best possible team for the West Indian public, not for themselves or the country they happen to be born in. They are aided in this process by regional competitions.

These selectors are not like football administrators who can scout around and find players who they believe can perform in the structure available. No – there is a structure that gives rise to West Indies cricket team selection.

A dereliction of duty occurs in any company when the structures and processes of the company, which are put in place to aid in its overall success, are violated by the employees. In some cases, after thorough investigations, one of the actions against the guilty party is dismissal.

Bravo's non-selection is a gross dereliction of duty, and should lead to resignations or dismissals. His average in ODIs is better than everyone on the West Indies team who has played more than 25 matches, save for Shai Hope; and only two in the group that were selected have a better average than Bravo.

In 2021, in the Super50 tournament, Bravo's average was the best at 65; in 2022 he was second in the runs scored at an average of 48; and in this year's competition, where he not only captained the team, but also led Trinidad and Tobago to the trophy, he topped both runs scored and the batting average, better than every single member of the team selected.



Darren Bravo



Desmond Haynes



Virat Kohli



Rohit Sharma

Therefore, the only plausible argument I can fathom for his non-selection is some kind of bias; or, as I am suggesting, a clear dereliction of duty by the selectors.

In his defence, the head of selectors Desmond Haynes, himself a retired WI great, has said it was Bravo's age that led to him not being selected. What Haynes was also saying is that Bravo will not be allowed to ply his trade in West Indies colours again, and that his earnings would be cut. This is a young man, who is back at the top of his game, and who reached there through sheer dint of hard work and diligence, yet who is being retired because of a policy conceptualised by an insular selection committee.

In any job, anywhere in the world, performance would beat "old talk", and more or less will help in keeping one's job. Bravo's performance didn't help his cause, since those in authority have said he is too old at 34.

At present some of the world's best batsmen are over 34, and this list includes Virat Kohli, India's skipper Rohit Sharma, David Warner, Steve Smith, among others.

Chief selector Haynes is among those batsmen whose batting average improved when they passed 34; others include Clive Lloyd, Inzamam ul Haq, Don Bradman, and Graham Gooch.

It is interesting to note that, according to *Wikipedia*, it is this very same Desmond Haynes who has pulled the plug on Bravo's career on the basis of age, who played his first ODI for the WI in 1978 at the age of 22, with his last ODI game being in 1994 – 16 years later – at the age of, wait for it, 38 years!

He and the rest of the selectors should resign now, or be fired immediately for a dereliction of duty.

Terrance Browne, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



Dear Editor,

Kindly publish my poem on the Venezuelan claim for Guyana's Essequibo region, which was written in February 1981 during the Burnham era, when the claim was made.

Durga Ramsukh, Toronto, via email.

Poem of Resistance

To whom does this Heritage belong?

Why do you venture to rob me of this, my sacred land that yields me my bowl of rice; Of the wood that renders me protection from the natural enemies, of the oil that lights my lamp To put to flight the poverty created by greed in a world of sorrow and darkness; And even of the nuptial ring that my finger wears in this sacred Heritage of mine?

Why do you want to erase our forefathers' footprints embedded on the ancient rocks of our domain; Their names carved on the barks of our giant trees and ply through the air In which their voices still intermingle?

Why do you want to annex your empire with the womb that brought me forth on my Heritage where tranquility lies? Gone are the days of emperors!

Why have you increased your appetite for wealth? Appease your hunger with the grain that sprouts from your own soil by your own sweat, And quench your thirst with water from your own river as I do.

Why do you want to trample on the soil beneath which lie the hard bones of my Ancestors And to provoke their resting souls; souls that were housed in flesh that knew neither peace nor leisure, But endured only days of wrath?

The leaves on the trees will fall into the sea of liquidation but offer you shelter From the torrid sun and tropical torrentials. Even our birds will close their musical instruments, and the flowers will unopen their petals.

To whom does this Heritage belong? Is it not I whose mighty Ancestors, subjugated under white plantocracy, had from dawn to sunset, Shed their tears, sweat and blood to build it, to make it rise?

Yes, it belongs to me: a token from my Ancestors!

Of this Heritage, a true Patriot we be, to rise up and forever guard thee!

Increasing food production at odds with price affordability

Guyana has been continuously highlighting sharp increases in food production and its ability to become the food bowl of the Caribbean. Yet, inspite of increasing food production most of its own people cannot afford to buy food for their very survival.

The poor, who accounts for almost half of the population, pensioners, those on a fixed income, and large families suffer the most, and are forced to eat what they can afford, instead of healthy meals.

Indeed, it is a sad story in one of the world's fastest growing economies, which grew by 59.5 percent in the first half of 2023. The non-oil sector, which includes agriculture, grew by 12.3 percent.

According to the Bank of Guyana, the agriculture sector, which makes up 7.8 percent of Gross Domestic Product, increased by 7.6 percent in 2022, as all major sectors experienced growth when compared to one year earlier.

The Other crops sub-sector, which represented 60.3 percent of the agriculture sector in 2022, experienced an increase of 9.4 percent. Traditional crops such as rice, increased by 3.2 percent, and sugar by 30.1 percent, as well as fishing and raising of livestock by 9.9 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively.

Higher production was recorded for all categories within the other crops sector. Coconut

production increased by 77.3 percent; root crops production also increased by 14.4 percent, mainly on account of increased production of eddoes by 67.2 percent.

Other root crops production such as sweet potatoes, cassava, and bitter cassava experienced increases by 2.9 percent, 2.2 percent, and 1.6 percent, respectively.

Production of fruits increased by 5.4 percent, due to higher produce of passion fruit, soursop, and papaw by 27.2 percent, 13.3 percent, and 11.6 percent, respectively.

However, production of mango, guava, and lemon recorded the greatest decline among fruits by 23.2 percent, 19.3 percent, and 14.2 percent, respectively.

Further, production of vegetables also increased by 4.6 percent.

In particular, significant increases in production were recorded for lettuce, pakchoi, and bora, by 66.2 percent, 12.6 percent, and 9.0 percent, respectively. Production of spices and cole crops (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and so on), also increased by 3.0 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively.

Inspite of increases in production, food prices have risen steadily – far faster than all other prices.

Based on Bank of Guyana data, between December 2018 and September 2023, the All-Items Urban Consumer Price Index rose by

17.9 percent, from 117.08 to 138.05, while food prices increased by 42.86 percent, from 138.48 to 197.63. (See chart, *Food Prices Rising Faster Than Other Prices.*)

In fact, basic items such as vegetables and fruits saw the highest increase in prices. Most recently in September, the Bureau of Statistics noted that the food category was the main driver of the monthly increase in all items, with an overall increase of 0.8 percent at the end of September 2023, when compared to the previous month.

The rise in prices for food was accounted for by increased prices in sub-categories Vegetables and Vegetables Products (3.4 percent), Fruits and Fruits Products (2.4 percent), Condiments and Spices (1.0 percent), Meat, Fish and Eggs (0.2 percent), Non-Alcoholic Beverages (0.2 percent), and Cereals & Cereal Products (0.1 percent). (See *Chart Month-on-Month Changes in CPI.*)

While official statistics show modest increases in food prices, consumers report exorbitant increases, ranging from 300 to 500 percent in recent years. In fact, it is observed that the prices of certain foods, especially vegetables, are far cheaper in North America than in Guyana, which grows these foods.

While food prices have risen globally since the Covid-19 pandemic, they have largely been falling in most countries, but not in Guyana. Several reasons can be attributed to the continued rise in food prices, including higher energy and transportation costs, and the rising cost of inputs.

In his 2022 budget speech, Finance Minister Ashni Singh stated: "The upward price move-

ment at the marketplace is not reflected in similar price movement at the farm gate. Indeed, market prices have increased much more steeply than farm gate prices. This, of course, reflects a number of factors, including transportation cost and multiple layers of handling and reselling from farm to final retail."

While Guyana produces a significant percentage of its own food, imports have also been rising, which have contributed to the overall increase in prices. Between 2020 and 2022, imports of food for consumption have risen by 26.48 percent, from (US) \$187.3 million to (US) \$236.9 million. (See *Chart Rising Food Imports.*)

To alleviate the cost of food, the government has reduced taxes on imports and shipping, and provided subsidies on inputs to farmers. However, prices have still remained high, much to the detriment of the population.

Typically, an increase in supply should result in a decrease in price, but that does not seem to be the case, as demand for food has not apparently declined. And there is not much more that the government can do other than to put measures in place to improve the distribution process, which appears to be a big contributor to the cost.

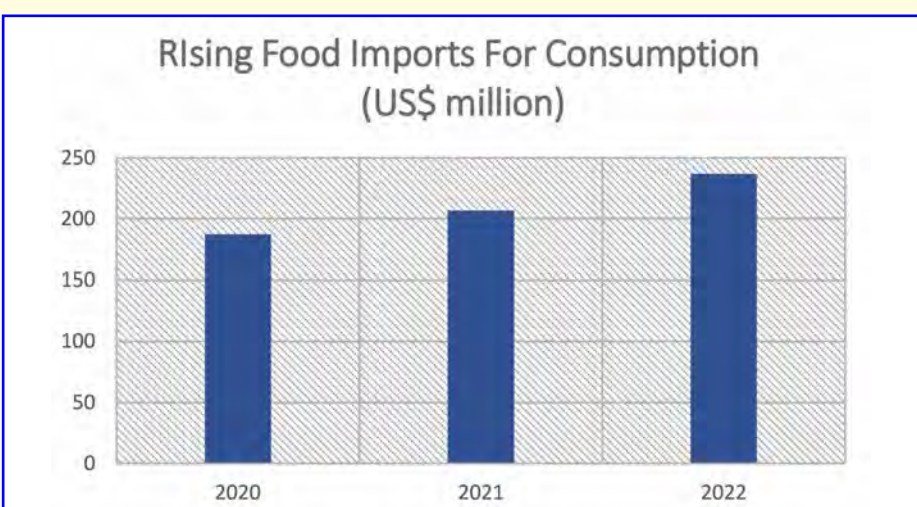
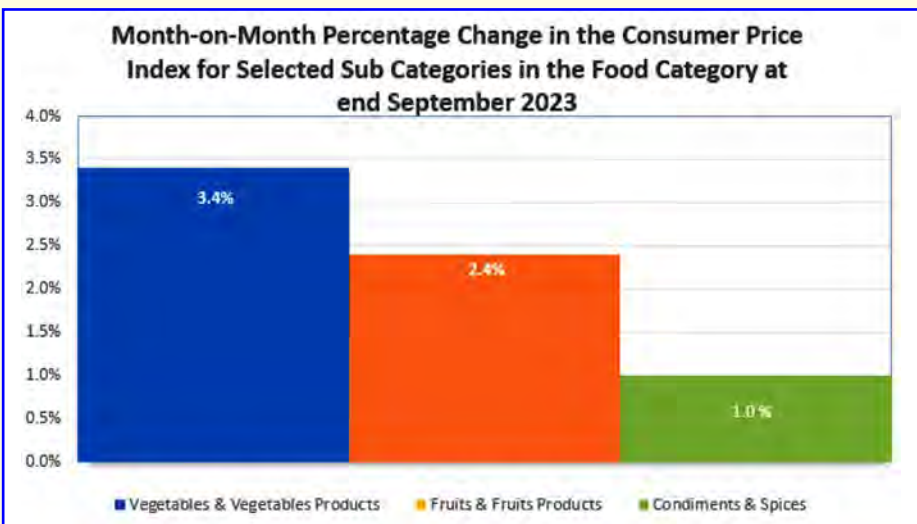
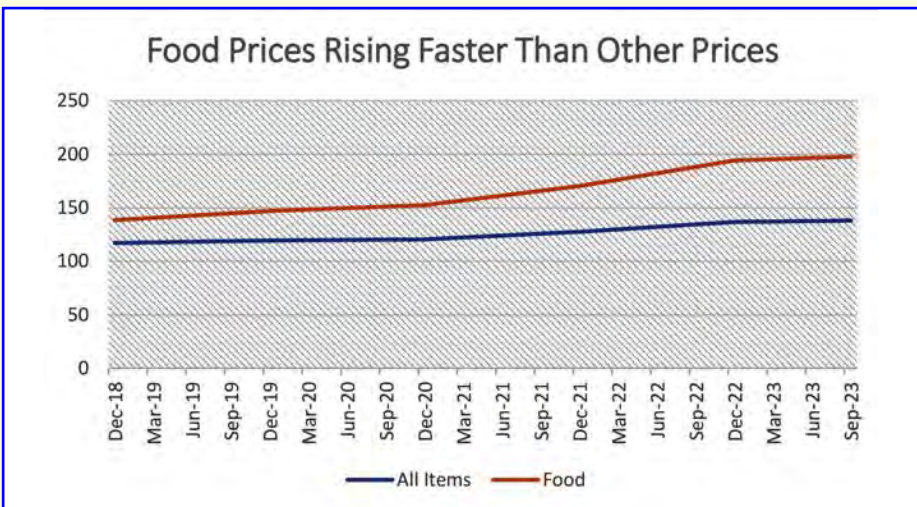
Dwarka Lakhan, BA, MBA, FCSI, FICB is a Member of the Canadian Association of Journalists, and an accomplished financial writer. His recently published book, *Winning Ways, Real World Strategies to Help You Reimagine Your Practice*, is available on Amazon and on winningways101.com. He can be reached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



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'A fearless, formidable bastion protecting the survival of ancestral beliefs'

Veda Nath Mohabir

August 19, 1942 – November 25, 2023

By Adit Kumar

Veda Nath Mohabir passed away on November 25, 2023 after complications arising from a fall he suffered at home a couple of days earlier.

News of his death was greeted with shock and disbelief, as days earlier he was very active physically and mentally. He was also active online, reaching out to his wide, international following, and sharing his views on matters close to his heart, among them defending Hinduism, and India, the country of his ancestry.

Veda was born to indentured parents Mohabir and Parbati Rose. He said his father maintained one name only, as he refused to adopt the name of the Estate to which he was bound.

Veda spent his early years in Enmore, East Coast Demerara, where his father worked at the Enmore Sugar Estate. He had two sisters and three brothers. He had said that he was largely influenced by his father, who was an Arya Samaj Pandit and Hindi teacher, and who was actively involved in trade union activities championing the cause of sugar workers.

Veda spent a significant portion of his time doing research, and gathering information to offer counter arguments defending his beliefs. He wrote extensively, and every piece that he wrote included a wide range of reference material that he presented to support his views.

As his name suggests (Veda comes from the Sanskrit root, Vid, which means knowledge, or seeker of knowledge), Veda was keen on pursuing higher education, and attended Guyana Oriental College in Georgetown. It was on his daily train ride to school where he built many lasting friendships, among them one with his girlfriend, Doris, to whom he was later married.

Their union bore two daughters, Nadine and Sasha; he was also the proud grandfather of Jonathan Veda, Joshua Kiran, Selena Shanti, and Kaleb Samuel.

His children and grandchildren all paid glowing tributes to him at the funeral, citing his unconditional love and dedication to their well-being.

In her eulogy Nadine stated, "He raised two daughters, instilling in us the values of resilience, perseverance, and

understanding where we came from, and teaching us to appreciate our roots and the struggles of our ancestors".

She also pointed out that her father practised meditation until his passing, and often told them how it benefited and helped him cope with his challenges.

Nadine added, "If you were to ask dad, he would say he is most proud of his four grandchildren, and how they have blossomed into advocates for social justice."

After high school, Veda was employed at the Department of Treasury in Georgetown. Also, he loved the dramatic arts, and in his spare time connected with the Theatre Guild, where he led several productions, including Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He also acted in many plays that were produced by the Guild.

Veda wrote many times that during his tenure at the Treasury Department he was targeted and discriminated against for questioning many financial transactions. Seeking greener pastures, he migrated to Canada, where he continued his studies, and graduated in accounting.

He had planned to return to his home country to contribute to its development, but chose to remain in Canada due to the instability at the time in Guyana. In Canada he worked at the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, and later at the Ministry of Health in Ontario, where he remained until retirement.

Veda was a valued member of Toronto Arya Samaj, and was an active participant in many of the events hosted by the organisation.

He was a core member of the Vedic Cultural Centre South Asian Heritage Committee, and wrote many articles in the annual magazine published by the Centre.

Veda's last rites were conducted according to Vedic tradition by Pandit Vidyarthi Sriram, a senior priest of Toronto Arya Samaj. Pandit Sriram sought to explain the intricacies and significances of the last rites, and won accolades from the multicultural audience.

Deeply troubled by the writings of Professor Keane Gibson, who attacked Hinduism and the *Bhagwad Gita*, Veda wrote a

book, *Under Attack: The Caribbean Indian*, in which he systematically analysed her assertions and found them "woefully deficient in adequate research, understanding of Hinduism and logic", and full of "guesstimates in lieu of Census statistics". In the book he analysed more than 20 of her assertions and rebutted them.

In his second book, *A Mauling of Indians*, Veda challenged what he described as "Professor Clem Seecharan's noxious revisionist falsehoods on Indo Guyanese History".

Both books received favourable critiques from the Indo-Caribbean and wider Indian diaspora.

As Nadine recalled, one of his proudest moments was when an excerpt from the first book was presented to the United Nations to plead for the protection, and to inform the group about the injustices occurring against Hindus in the Caribbean.

In the words of Cliff Rajkumar, another champion of the Indo-Caribbean community, "Veda Bhai was, no doubt among all of us the most indomitable warrior who was

vigorous in his relentless efforts to defend and condemn the distorted and false propaganda narratives by malicious self-serving miscreants, who shamelessly propagated their false and demeaning Hinduphobic narratives."

Cliff added, "Veda stood as a fearless and formidable bastion to protect the survival of his ancestral traditions and beliefs... We should all pause for a moment and honour this remarkable soul who stood as a resilient thread to keep the fabric of our ancient traditions and beliefs alive."

Following his passing, the Coalition of Hindus of North America has since indicated it is looking to archive Veda's videos and writings to make it more accessible to the wider community.

Among Veda's many colleagues, friends, and acquaintances who sent condolences after his passing were Dr Baytoram Ramharack, Swami Aksharananda, Ravi Dev, Pandita Indrani Rampersad, Dr Vishnu Bisram, and many others. A tribute was also aired on *Jyoti Satsangh TV* in New York last Saturday.



Veda Nath Mohabir

Children are the lamps that light our lives –
Let us kindle the flame in them



Like so many activities over the past 3 years, Covid-19 disrupted the very vibrant & focused classes that were conducted at the Pranav Ashram in the areas of singing, music, Hindi language, Havan, Sandhya, & other Hindu scriptural teachings. The Ashram is now inviting registration for children ages 6-12 years to continue these vital activities in the interest of preserving & furthering our Dharma – all are invited without any distinction.



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Persaud helped preserve an enduring legacy in Prashad Nagar

By Baytoram Ramharack

Much eulogising has been done, all well-meaning, about the dearly departed Justice Prem Persaud. I wish to add to that line-up.

In an interview with him on July 19, he related his role in preserving the legacy of Prashad Nagar. This was a post-World War II private housing scheme, built on land previously owned by the Bookers conglomerate in a geographical location referred to as "area H".

It was a built-up environment developed primarily from rice land, a virtual mud field. The builder of the scheme, Hari Prashad, Prem's father-in-law, had the foresight and "animal spirit" (to borrow a phrase from Lord Keynes) to embark on a risky venture that eventually proved to be successful.

The plot of land Hari purchased comprised almost 77 acres, which would eventually be converted into 404 house lots of varying sizes. Residents, past, and present of Prashad Nagar include David Chanderballi, Justice Rishi Persaud, Justice Clifford Baburam, Vincent Teekah, Dr George Walcott, Reepu Daman Persaud, Dr Vindhya Vasini Persaud, Pat Dial, Feroze Mohammed, and Justice Prem Persaud. Hari owned lots nine and ten on Delhi Street, opposite those of his son-in-law, Justice Prem Persaud, who owned lots 11 and 12.

As Prem Persaud observed, Prashad Nagar is one of, if not "the best housing scheme" within the Greater Georgetown area. Being a proud Indian, following its construction, Hari named all the streets in Prashad Nagar after members of his immediate family and friends.

He included the following names of the streets in his village: Delhi Street, Shantinikatan Street, Amla Avenue East, Amla Avenue West, Rohintal Street, Bombay Terrace, Damanbir Terrace, Jasmatbina Terrace, Sachibazaar Street, Kaka Street, Bissessar Avenue, Purshottam Street, Santram Street, Deobirana Street, Agra Street, Munipur Street, Cheddi Street, Shribasant Street, Chandranagar Street, Premniranjan Place, Rampersaud Street, Puna Street, Ganges Street, and Amla Avenue.

Between 1970 and 1971, when John Meredith Ford (1923-1995) was the Mayor of Georgetown in a country firmly in the grips of the PNC, he "hosted Independence celebrations in the nation's capital", and "renamed streets to celebrate the country's freedom" from British rule.



Prem Persaud

As Mayor of Georgetown, Ford had collaborated with the City Council to change the name of part of High Street, which leads from Church Street to the Parliament Building, to its new name, "Avenue of the Republic".

During the ceremonial event, performed on February 21, 1970 (merely hours before Forbes Burnham declared Guyana a "Cooperative Republic"), Ford explained that the renaming of some of the streets in Guyana was "a necessary exercise" to preserve historically significant occasions "such as Independence and the birth of the Republic". He initiated a campaign to have the name of Prashad Nagar removed from the suburb. It was an act wholly dismissive of the fact that the evolution of Prashad Nagar captured in some ways the historical contributions of Indian Guyanese. By the time the issue of the name change regarding Prashad Nagar came to light, Hari Prashad had already left Guyana, and he entrusted Prem Persaud as caretaker regarding all matters relating to Prashad Nagar.

Prem Persaud, deeply concerned about the Mayor's decision to change the name of Prashad Nagar, paid a visit to Prime Minister Burnham's office to lodge his complaint. He reminded

Burnham that Prashad Nagar was a privately owned developed housing estate, insisting that no public official had the authority to dictate the name of the housing scheme, and the Mayor of Georgetown and the City Council possessed no authority to do so.

According to Prem Persaud, in his presence, Burnham immediately made a phone call to Mayor Ford, and issued a clear directive: "They got a place named Prashad Nagar. I would like to know that during my lifetime, I have left instructions that not a single piece of that land should be changed or renamed. Let those lands remain as they are."

Prem Persaud had saved the day.

He also remembered, later, a conversation with another resident of Prashad Nagar, Mohamed Shahabuddeen (who became a member of the International Court of Justice and judicial tribunal of the International Criminal Court).

Shahabuddeen had informed him that a plan was underway to change the name of "Ganges Street" to "Eastern Highway". However, with confidence, Prem Persaud assured his erstwhile colleague that he had in his possession the original plans of the housing scheme, and that he [Shahabuddeen] could rest assured that such a name change would not happen.

Prem Persaud took on additional responsibilities for any unfinished business regarding Prashad Nagar. Not all roads and drainage trenches were completed in the housing scheme when Hari migrated to London in 1968. Prem Persaud had to contend with the fact that there were a number of individuals who owned land in Prashad Nagar, but they were not living up to their end of the contractual agreement.

According to Prem Persaud, "People occupied the land, and some still owed a substantial amount for the purchase of the land when the transport was passed. The people who could not pay the full cost, as well as the maintenance to upkeep the property, were mostly the poor farmers... We could not put them off the land because they had no place to go. So, we worked out a deal and allowed them to pay a reduced cost. That is what Hari would have done. I took care of all the necessary paperwork."

The owners of Prashad Nagar eventually lost control of the administration of Prashad Nagar when the Municipal and District Council Act of 1970 vested control of the scheme in the Georgetown City Council.

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Former PAHO director Dr Carissa Etienne passed away on December 1

Region loses trailblazer Etienne

The Caribbean and the Pan American Health Organisation is in mourning following the passing of Dr Carissa Etienne. Born in Dominica, she was PAHO's former director. She died at 71.

"It is with great sorrow that [PAHO] informs of the passing of Director Emeritus Dr Carissa F. Etienne," the Organisation said.

The notification was released in a statement, and first reported in the region by the *Caribbean Media Corporation*.

PAHO said Etienne served as Director of PAHO and Regional Director of the World Health Organisation for the Americas from February 2013 to January 2023.

"Carissa was a dear friend and colleague, and under her steadfast leadership and guidance, PAHO achieved significant milestones for the region of the Americas while facing one of our greatest public health challenges with Covid-19," said its Director Dr Jarbas Barbosa.

Also, "I am very saddened by her passing, and my thoughts are with her family, friends and all of us at PAHO who cared deeply for her."

The release stated that during Etienne's tenure, PAHO led the response to the unprecedented

Covid-19 pandemic in the region of the Americas, as well as efforts to control Zika and chikungunya epidemics, and cholera and yellow fever outbreaks in Haiti and Brazil, while significantly improving PAHO's response to emergencies and disasters within 48 hours.

It added that under her leadership, the Americas eliminated the endemic transmission of measles, rubella, and congenital rubella syndrome, and made considerable strides in the prevention and control of chronic non-communicable diseases.

Also, legislative and regulatory mechanisms gained traction, as countries enacted legislation on the labelling of food products and introduced taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages.

PAHO added that advances were also made in strengthening national health systems and in progress toward universal health.

"In the last five years of Etienne's mandate, deliveries by skilled birth attendants increased from 95 percent to nearly 100 percent, and for the first time, the Region of the Americas reached the recommended target of 25 physicians and nurses per 10,000 people," PAHO said in its release.

In a reaction to her death, Sir Ronald Sanders, President of the Permanent Council of the OAS and Ambassador of Antigua and

Barbuda in the Caribbean, said Etienne's passing was "an occasion for deep sadness".

Said Sanders: "If ever there was a person to whom every person in the Caribbean owed an enduring debt of gratitude, it was her. As Director of PAHO, she steered all of the countries of the Western Hemisphere through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic. She worked tirelessly to secure vaccines for all Caribbean nations, and she toiled relentlessly to ensure the region got necessary medical facilities."

He recalled writing about Etienne's work in June 2021, where he stated, "The Caribbean and Latin America owe much to the dedication and resourcefulness of PAHO – and particularly to the Black, Caribbean woman at the centre of its operations – Dr Carissa F. Etienne."

He stated her death was a sad loss to everyone in the Caribbean, adding that Etienne represented "everything that is good about us".

Also, "We should all mourn her: we have lost a caring and strong champion who always answered a call for help, and who advanced the region's health diligently and forcefully. She was a respected leader who reached the height of command in [PAHO], overcoming many obstacles as a woman and a Black woman. In many ways she was phenomenal."

Sanders concluded by stating, "We must be thankful for her life and her care."

In a statement following her passing, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States said Etienne's legacy, and her illustrious career as a highly-respected leader in the field of public health, will continue to inspire the region.

"Her contributions to strengthening health systems, promoting infectious disease control, and addressing health inequities have left an indelible mark on the region," it stated.

Also, "Her passion for improving the lives of others was evident in her dedication to serving the most vulnerable populations, having also made significant strides in addressing [NCDs], and mental health in the Americas."

In 2022 Etienne received the Honorary Freedom of Barbados award from Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley.

Following the news, Mottley said she was "shocked and deeply saddened".

Said Mottley, "Whether at midnight or mid-day, she was one of the few people who was most there for our country and our people when we most needed it," Mottley wrote on X.

"It was for this reason that the government awarded her the Honorary Freedom of Barbados in 2022," she declared.



Etienne received the Honorary Freedom of Barbados award in 2022



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BRILLIANT IDEAS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A PRECONSTRUCTED HOME

Have you got your sights set on a future dream home? Buckle up, because we're about to talk upgrades – the secret sauce that turns a house into your masterpiece. Picture this: two upgrade gangs, one tweaking the guts (structural) and the other adding the bling (cosmetic). Let's uncover the glam, dodge the glitz, and turn that extra moolah into something mind-blowing for your new digs!

Your home's location is like a tattoo – permanent! So, it's worth splurging a bit for a primo spot. Think more oversized lots, quiet streets, or even a rad ravine with a sweet slope. Why? 'Cause a savvy builder can turn that slope into a cool walk-out basement. Here's the deal: snagging a killer location might cost less at first, but as the supply shrinks, so does your chance of scoring a deal. So, get in early and watch that premium lot become the hottest ticket in town!

Let's talk about upgrades that amp up your home game! First, swap out that bare ½ inch drywall for the fire-rated 5/8 inch – it's like a superhero for soundproofing, insulation, and overall toughness – and here's a pro tip: go for the 2x6 studs instead of the usual 2x4. That extra inch means better insulation and lower utility bills.

Now, let's aim high – literally. If you can swing it, boost that ceiling height. Toss in some taller windows, and suddenly, your home's rocking a spacious and sun-soaked vibe. Want more value? Go big with basement windows, a nine-foot basement ceiling, and a slick separate entrance. Oh, and don't forget to rough in a bathroom and kitchen in the basement – it is way cheaper for the builder to do it before pouring cement.

Let's dive into another excellent upgrade: adding extra rooms! Here's the scoop – instead of going for a towering 20-foot ceiling in the living room, why not pop another room right on top? Or, if you've got a garage, consider expanding upward with a bonus room. It's not just about more space: it's about boosting your home's square footage, and, you guessed it, cranking up that home value!

Let's talk landscaping upgrades – bit of a mixed bag. Builders often throw in the basics like sod, but going all out with trees and fancy walkways can hit your wallet hard. The good news? You can tackle landscaping later, maybe even DIY, or get a local landscaper for a sweet deal.

Now, about those appliances – they might not be your dream quality. Ask the builder for credit instead; boom, you've got cash for upgrades that matter to you. If they're not game, no worries – sell the appliances and pocket some extra dough to splurge on top-notch replacements. It's all about getting what you want!

Let's discuss kitchen upgrades – where elegance meets budget strategy! While the standard kitchen does the job, sprucing it adds serious home value. Invest in cabinets reaching the ceiling, soft-closing drawers, a modern exhaust fan, and quartz or granite countertops with a sleek backsplash. For a wallet-friendly approach, temporarily endure the builder's kitchen and hire a cabinetry contractor later. Consider tall cabinets and premium countertops for that extra flair. And don't sweat the small changes – bringing in a contractor for faucet upgrades and a chic backsplash won't break the bank!

How about sprucing up your bathroom with some fancy cabinetry and high-quality tiles? For now, you can hold off on the big splurges like luxurious shower heads and fancy mirrors. If you're up for a more significant change, think about moving the furnace to a better spot in the basement. It might mean some extra duct work, but the improved layout is worth it. And hey, if you're feeling adventurous, you could squeeze in an additional garage space – maybe go for that tandem garage vibe!

Don't bother with the builder's paint upgrade – it's usually not the best quality. Hire a painter instead and pick your top-notch paint. Builders often subcontract their work to cut costs, so going with your painter ensures a better result. The same goes for light fixtures; skip the builder's pricey options and opt for standard ones, replacing them later if needed. If you're into spotlights on the main floor, ask the builder to rough them in while the ceiling is still exposed – it's a more cost-effective move.

Buying a pre-construction home is a thrill, especially when ogling the model home. Just remember, it's a model for a reason – the showpiece. When you're splurging on upgrades, focus on the structural stuff. Stick with builders known for their credibility; their standard finishes usually hit the sweet spot. After all, your home's look is a reflection of their craft.

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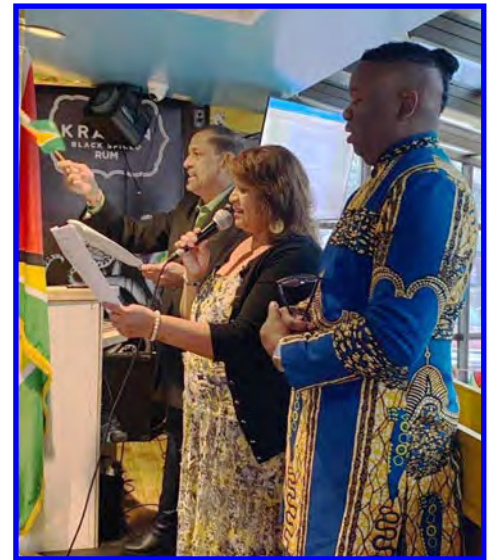
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A unity and patriotic rally was held on December 3 at the Windies Restaurant & Lounge in support of Guyana's sovereignty, boundaries, and territorial integrity. It was put on by the One Guyana Forum - Canada, in collaboration with the Guyana Consulate General in Toronto. Well-attended by many members of the diaspora and friends of Guyana, it featured inter-faith prayer, the singing of the Canadian and Guyanese national anthems, and many moving Guyanese patriotic songs.

The rally also saw representation by Guyanese-Canadian diasporic organisations, among them the Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organisations, the Association of Concerned Guyanese, the Guyana Independence Festival Committee, and the Guyana Ex-Soldiers Association. Among those in attendance were Honorary Consul Mani Singh, Pandit Jag Gossai, Imam Sheik Faisal, Pam Joseph, Selwyn Pieters, Gordon Winter, and the IMO's Brother Omar Farouk.



Performers take the audience down memory lane with 'wedding house' songs during the dialysis fund-raiser; at centre, Dr Doobay addresses the gathering

Shiva Mandir, Toronto Arya Samaj, Swaranjali Orchestra hold dialysis fund-raiser

By Adit Kumar

Markham – Shiva Mandir in conjunction with Toronto Arya Samaj and Swaranjali Orchestra hosted a mammoth fund-raising concert on December 2 at the Vedic Cultural Centre in Markham. Called the Gift of Life, it was an evening of dinner and entertainment in support of the Guyana Dialysis Clinic. Well over 400 persons were in attendance.

Addressing the gathering, Darshan Prashad, leader of the Swaranjali Orchestra, said he and a few others had visited the Dialysis Clinic in Lusignan, Guyana, earlier this year, where they saw many persons benefiting from the services.

They were particularly moved to see a young mother taking her young son for treatment, Prashad said.

As Prashad stated, this mother's love, commitment, and dedication to her son prompted them to commit to a fund-raising event to support the clinic, which they started planning after returning to Canada.

Vishnu Temple's leader, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay, who is responsible for setting up the clinics in Guyana, and the mandir's Pt Bhoj Sharma, were present at the event.

Also in attendance were Honorary Consul Mani Singh, and many other prominent members of the diaspora here in Toronto.

In his address to the gathering, Dr Doobay said the high demand for dialysis in Guyana has seen establishment of yet another clinic in New Amsterdam. There are also plans for a location for Upper Corentyne.

As Dr Doobay noted, while the Guyana government provides funding to the patients, some patients arrive at the clinics without money, but are never turned away as the services are offered free of cost.

Through partnership with McMaster University, medications required for the procedure are offered at reduced prices, Dr Doobay said.

He also expressed appreciation to Prashad and the organisers who made the evening a success. Their hard work was sincerely appreciated, he declared.

The theme of the evening's show was 'Taking you down memory lane at the wedding house.'

To this end, the performing artists sang many popular oldies, which were played at wedding houses, and which brought back fond

memories to many in the audience.

Among the singers were the father/daughter duo, Neel and Mala Khedoo; Roshini Ramnarayan; the Fab Five singers; Rama Devi Arora; and Suresh Persaud.

Avinash Narine and Alex Mohan were among the drummers and percussionists. Dances were performed by Jennifer, Vanessa, and Anjuli.

The event was also supported by a wide cross section of GTA businesses.

The evening ended on a high note of laughter with a comedic skit that was performed by members of the Shiva Mandir.

For more information contact Pt Lakeram Tiwari, 416-751-7716, or Darshan Prashad at 416-716-6445.



A reception was held on November 24 to welcome Jamaica's newly-appointed High Commissioner, Her Excellency Marsha Coore Lobban, and newly-



appointed Consul General, Kurt David. Attending were Caribbean Consuls General and their representatives, members of the Jamaican diaspora, and many friends,



among them officials from Carpenters' Local 27. The event took place at the Jamaican Community Centre in Toronto. Photos by Joel Kitaka.



The Consulate General of Barbados held its Independence celebrations on November 30 with a flag-raising at Mel Lastman Square, and later held



a New Barbadian Citizen Recognition Ceremony and Reception. This was Barbados' 57th celebration after gaining Independence on November 30, 1966.



At the Toronto events were representatives of the diplomatic community from Africa and the Caribbean, members of Barbados' diaspora, and many friends.

At Ground Zero in Dublin: What does one do when trapped?

By Dhanpaul Narine

The remote control lay idly on the bed. We were about to leave the room when we decided to put on the television. A man was reporting something about a demonstration. We had little time for it and switched off after about 30 seconds. Little did we know that one of us would be interviewed by that same man an hour later.

It was so peaceful when we landed in Dublin late last month. And then something unexpected happened. It was like a scene from a movie. Two doors away from us, in Parnell Street East, a drama was played out that would send shockwaves and horror in the city and in all of Ireland. A man went berserk and stabbed three children, including a five-year-old. He attacked two other persons who intervened to stop him.

In New York, one is accustomed to this kind of incident. It creates a stir and then fades away, to be replaced by something more sensational. But for Dublin this was extraordinary and devastating. It is a city that prides itself on being quiet, peaceful, and tolerant.

The Gardaí swarmed the area as the locals helped. One might think that the perpetrator would be arrested, the injured would be treated, and life would go on as normal. But the incident was a tinderbox that exploded in fury.

In the space of a few minutes, cars were smashed and set on fire, the streets were engulfed in thick smoke as rioters unleashed their anger.

Our hotel stood in the middle of the mayhem. But it took a while for us to run for our lives. There was a jovial holiday atmosphere in the hotel that saw reunions, first time introductions, fun, and merriment. Someone burst the bubble of comfort by reporting that hundreds of Gardaí were outside, and smoke was in the air. We heard the sirens and decided to look.

The police stood in columns outside O'Donnell Street as the screaming, shouting, and smoke bombs filled the air. Dublin had never seen anything like it, and the police appeared to be uncertain as to how they should act. Do they use force against the protestors or should they use restraint? The police advanced slowly and cautiously as the fires and smoke took over the streets.

Some customers tried to leave the hotel but were stopped by the security. We gathered at the first floor and waited. Then the unthinkable happened. The rioters began to break into the hotel. First, the wood pillars fell, accompanied by broken glass. The alarm went off and so did panic and pandemonium. The



In photo above, the Irish police officer, a member of the Gardaí, with the author; in photo at top right, the City Centre is ablaze as a result of the riots; and in photo at right, debris is strewn in Dublin in the aftermath of the riots

natural reaction was to run upstairs, but the alarm meant everyone should be down. I found myself screaming for people to walk rather than take the elevator. Hundreds of us were now in the foyer, waiting. The sounds of breaking glass had stopped. Maybe, the rioters were turned away by the police. The panic turned to relief. And then management said one of the rioters was in the building.

It began to sink in that this was a desperate situation. The faces of the guests told of worry, uncertainty, and helplessness. But worse of all, it told of people that were trapped and at the mercy of the streets.

What does one do when one is trapped? The heart beats faster, you become scared, and you look for any way to get out. We inched toward the doorway when the police arrived and told us to run, but to stay in groups.

In a matter of seconds, we were running into the night and the cold. We ran several blocks up the street without any specific place in mind.

All manner of persons were in the street, the middle-aged panting for breath, young people trying to get there faster, and one man with a thin vest and no shoes who limped along.

We found a group of police officers and stood next to them. We could see thick smoke and the fires, and hear the shouts and screams



used with utmost abandon.

The extremists, it was said, had a field day as they took their hate into the streets, and online.

It became clear that the riots in Dublin have to be seen in a wider political context. Ireland has a population of over five million persons. It has arguably one of the most liberal immigration policies in the European Union.

In 2022, it admitted more than 120,000 immigrants, many of them from the Ukraine. This has put a strain on social services, and has worsened an already housing shortage.

There is the feeling that refugees are given preferential treatment in housing.

In addition, each refugee qualifies for around €240 a week, which is high by Irish standards.

Locals say that most of this money is sent abroad, when it could be spent in Ireland to help boost the local economy.

There was an anti-immigrant feeling in Ireland, even before the latest stabbing incident. The fact that the attacker was reportedly of Algerian descent had not helped matters. But immigrants point out that they are a crucial cog in the economics of Ireland. They do jobs that no one else wants. They are to be found in restaurants, hospitals, stores, supermarkets, and airports, among others.

The riots have led to fear in the immigrant community.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar is the son of an Indian doctor. He is familiar with the immigrant experience. He promised to tackle extremism. He said that Ireland was a country of immigrants, and that "our public service wouldn't operate without migration".

Meanwhile, the local cabbie in Dublin says that this government is unpopular. The elections are next year. He will vote for the Opposition.

In the aftermath of the riots, the media seemed to have forgotten that it was a Brazilian immigrant who jumped off his bike and helped to restrain the attacker.

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Singh 'a liberated woman who challenged 1930s' European hegemony'

Dr Baytoram Ramharack

*A Powerful Indian Voice – Alice Bhagwandai Singh:
Reflections On Her Work In Guyana*

A review by Harry Hergash

In February of this year, Guyanese-born author and advocate for stable democracy in Guyana, Dr Baytoram Ramharack published his book titled, *A Powerful Indian Voice – Alice Bhagwandai Singh: Reflections On Her Work In Guyana*.

Ramharack is a lecturer in history and political science at the Nassau Community College in New York.



Harry Hergash

Berbec Educational Institute”.

He continues, “My original intention was to include Alice’s story as part of the research on Jung Bahadur (Alice’s husband who was the subject of his previous book)... But such an inclusion would have merely relegated Alice to little more than a historical footnote... In the broader scheme of things, Alice was a liberated woman who challenged the European hegemony in the 1930s by negotiating a cultural space to provide a voice for

In explaining the rationale and origin of the book, Ramharack writes, “Alice was a writer and an iconic social and cultural activist in British Guiana during the early 1900s. Yet I could not recall ever seeing her name, even in passing, in any of the history books I had read as a young high school student at the



Dr Baytoram Ramharack

Indians.”

This is a well-researched, scholarly work that is presented like a doctoral dissertation, with excellent analyses of the life, time, and accomplishments of Alice Bhagwandai Singh.

It consists of 491 pages, of which 69 are dedicated to 12 appendices of source documents, and 25 dedicated to a Bibliography of around 270 publications.

According to the author, he sought to explore who is Alice Singh, her role in helping to create an Indian voice in the national cultural space, and the impact of her work on Guyanese

society, particularly for Indians.

Alice was born in Parimaribo, Suriname (then Dutch Guiana) in 1892 to a Hindu Brahmin father, who was brought to the then colony as a child by his Indian Indentured mother, and an Indo-Suriname, Christian mother.

At the time, the family lived in a cottage owned by a wealthy Afro-Surinamese with whom they had a close relationship, and who became an important part of Alice’s life.

She attended convent school, and was a good student who was well liked by the nuns. At the convent she was immersed in European culture.

At home she was greatly influenced by her father, a Europeanised Indian in dress and values, but a staunch Hindu culturally.

At the age of 15, Alice entered the working world as a clerk in her father’s office in the Immigration Department, where by then he was the Head Translator of Indian languages.

At 18 years old, she married Jung Bahadur Singh of Guyana (then British Guiana), a compounder on immigrant ships, the result of an arrangement made by her father and his uncle.

Befitting a person of such cosmopolitan background, the marriage was a three-part affair.

In Alice’s words, “I had my civil marriage, so this complied with the law of the land, (and) my church (Christian) blessing for Ma. But the real thing was in the evening my Hindu marriage.”

After the wedding, the couple lived in Guyana for a while,

See page 17: Ramharack explores



Alberta Whittle: *We Remain With You*, 2022. Courtesy AGO and Alberta Whittle and Nicola Vassell Gallery © Alberta Whittle. Photo by Adam Reich Photography

'Life Between Islands' exhibition on at AGO

Making the trip across the Atlantic to Canada, the AGO’s latest exhibition from Tate Britain, *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art, 1950s – Now* examines the relationship between the Caribbean and Britain, and reconsiders British art history in the 20th and 21st centuries from a Caribbean perspective.

It features more than 40 artists, among them Frank Bowling, Aubrey Williams, Donald Locke, Horace Ové, Sonia Boyce, Claudette Johnson, Peter Doig, Hurvin Anderson, Barbara Walker, and Alberta Whittle.

Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art, 1950s – Now spans a range of media, from paintings to documentary photography, film, and sculpture.

It addresses timely and relevant themes such as the role of culture in decolonisation, the meaning of home, the reclaiming of ancestral traditions, the nature of Caribbean and diasporic identity, as well as racial discrimination and sociopolitical conflict.

The artworks and themes presented in the exhibition reflect decades of Caribbean culture and thought, and celebrate the vibrancy, solidarity, and creativity behind this artistic legacy.

Organised by the AGO and originated by Tate Britain, the exhibition starts today, and continues until April 1, 2024. It is located on Level 5 of the AGO.

It is co-curated by David A. Bailey, Director, International Curators Forum, and Alex Farquharson, Director, Tate Britain. The AGO presentation is overseen by Julie Crooks, Curator, Arts of Global Africa and the Diaspora.

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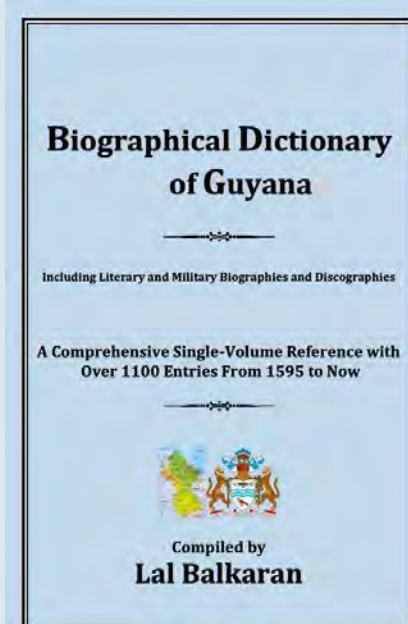
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.....

Lal Balkaran’s Biographical Dictionary of Guyana is an admirable work of devoted scholarship and a signal achievement in nation building... – Dr. Ian McDonald - Literary Icon



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Ramharack explores 'powerful Indian voice' of Alice Singh

From page 16

then moved to Scotland where her husband attended University and qualified as a medical doctor.

Upon return to Guyana, Singh established a medical practice, and became involved in social and cultural activities, serving as a member and then president on a number of occasions of the British Guiana East Indian Association, and founder and President of the British Guiana Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha from around 1935 to 1955.

On her part, Alice became an incredible social and cultural activist in her own right. For a while she headed British Guiana Lakshmi Sabha, the female arm of the BGS DMS. Also, she was involved in the Commonwealth Heart and Chest Association, the Girl Guides, the Red Cross, the St John's Ambulance Brigade, the Tuberculosis Society, the Women's League of Social Services, and the YWCA.

She was a Board member of the Dharm Shala, an organisation that housed and fed the homeless and destitute, and founded the Balak Sahaita Mandalee in 1936, an organisation that served poor Indian women and their children.

As well, she was appointed by the Governor as a Board member of the Poor Law Commission to review and approve applications for welfare recipients, and to the Prison Service Commission, where she helped to ensure inmates were treated humanely.

In 1950 she was awarded the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her charitable and social work.

Apart from the above and raising seven children as a homemaker, two of her most highly acclaimed accomplishments are:

(a) her founding, leadership, and guidance of the British Guiana Dramatic Society; and,

(b) her autobiography, which is possibly the first such documentation by a female descendant of a *girmitiya* (labourer who signed the Indenture contract).

These are analysed in relation to their significance and contribution to the cultural historiography of the global diaspora of *girmitiyas* and their descendants.

During and in the immediate post Indentureship years, European culture was the norm in Guyana, Suriname, and the Caribbean islands.

The arriving Indians were not only poor, but were seen also as uncultured. Even educated, middle-class Indians were considered "coolies... not really our sort", as noted by prominent Guyanese-born novelist Edgar Mittelholzer in his 1963 autobiography, *A Swarthy Boy*, regarding their middle-class Indian neighbours in New Amsterdam.

In March 1937 following the successful staging in Georgetown of *Savitri*, a love drama from the epics of India, by Alice with involvement of the rising middle class of young Indians – Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, she launched the BGDS at her home in Georgetown.

This organisation, like the BGEIA, brought together Indians of all religious backgrounds to promote Indian culture and

A POWERFUL FEMALE VOICE ALICE BHAGWANDAI SINGH: REFLECTIONS ON HER WORK IN GUYANA



BAYTORAM RAMHARACK

advancement in the society. It functioned until around 1950, and during those years successfully staged many plays by foremost Indian playwrights of international acclaim such as Rabindranath Tagore and others, thereby serving to enhance the perception of Indian culture and gaining respect for Indians.

According to Ramharack, "Alice Singh's decision to establish the BGDS represents the first time a concerted attempt was made to secure a central voice for Indians in British Guiana."

And writing in the 1944 Christmas edition of *Dramag*, the magazine of the BGDS, Alice poses a few pertinent questions which are still relevant: "Now we are all trying to be good Guyanese, but even so, would it be right for us to forget our wonderful heritage? Should we just discard and throw away all that is good and wonderful, which a mighty nation has preserved and handed down to us...?"

current conflicts in the Middle East, Europe, and beyond.

President Carter received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. He said, "God gave us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace." During his presidency, he brought about the Camp David Agreement between Egypt and Israel. We also now have a world destroying itself with climate change.

He helped to eradicate Guinea worm in Liberia, Cameroon, Chad and other countries. He shone his light into the darkness, practicing honesty, love and peace. His wife Rosalyn stood beside him every step of the way.

President Carter was "a citizen of the world". His commitment to the welfare of humanity goes beyond ethnic, religious and racial differences. As a Christian, he lived the message of the Gospels.

The Christmas of 2023 will soon be here. We, the elderly, know that time is not on our side. Let us celebrate Christmas, not by the excesses of eating, drinking, and spending. Let us bow our heads to the good works among us. The Carters are among the best that God has given to humanity for Christmas and for the ages. My wife Vivienne and I wish you the best for Christmas and always.

We will probably take a quiet walk in the snowy woods, as Robert Frost, the poet, wrote about many moons ago. If the creeks don't rise and the sun still shines, I'll be talking to you.

In his 1962 book *British Guiana*, renowned anthropologist, Professor Raymond Smith, who conducted extensive studies in British Guiana wrote, "The position is, then, that the Indian's emphasis upon the value and worth-whileness of 'our Indian culture' is really a mode of expression of his desire to be treated on terms of equality within a Guianese universe. It is most emphatically not an expression of separatist tendencies."

Her autobiography is an exceptional work, which was written in three sittings over a span of 20 years, the last being a year before her passing in 1970.

In order to provide context and assess the significance of this work, Ramharack presents an extensive review of the literature on *girmitiya* historiography.

He writes, "The coolitude narrative has advanced from emphasising the imaginary to utilise available documents to piece together the Indian indenture experience", and notes, "The autobiography of Alice Singh represents a valuable narrative that should easily find a comfortable place in the *coolitude* tradition... It is a primary source document which details the experience of the *girmitiyas* in Dutch Guiana, one of only two such documents discovered."

Dr Ramharack concludes his book with a report on the cultural activism of Rajkumari Singh, daughter of Alice, and someone he considers as part of Alice's legacy.

Rajkumari was an Indian culturist poet and playwright who in 1973 brought together a number of emerging young, Indo-Guyanese writers and performers in what became known as the Messenger Group.

Poets such as Mahadai Das and Janet Naidu, and novelist Rooplall Monar, gained fame and recognition for their works.

Rajkumari went on to become the Cultural Co-ordinator of the newly created Guyana government program, National Service, which was opposed by the Opposition People's Progressive party and the majority of Indo-Guyanese.

A few years later, amidst widespread rumours of rape of young Indian women, including a member of the Messenger Group, Rajkumari resigned her position, explaining that her resignation was due to the sidelining of Indian culture and promoting of the Africanisation of Guyanese culture at National Service.

In my view, Ramharack's analysis of Rajkumari's role with the National Service could have benefited from opinions of critics of the program. Also, since the matter of her resignation was not pursued by the author, who had access to members of the former Messenger Group that participated in National Service, one is left to wonder: Did Rajkumari know of rapes that were rumoured to have occurred, and did that influence her decision to quit?

However, these in no way detract from the importance and usefulness of Ramharack's pioneering work, which is a valuable addition to *girmitiyas'* historiography.

World needs more peacekeepers like Rosalyn and Jimmy Carter

As Christmas 2023 rolls around, the birth of Jesus comes to light. The recent death of Rosalyn Carter, wife of President Carter, illustrates the fact that the good that folks do is often hidden, known only to God, the downtrodden and the suffering. The fact is that many writers like myself, too often shine a light on the evil folks that dominate the news. It casts a shadow on humanity.

The time from President Jimmy Carter's presidency, 1977-1981, to the time of Donald Trump, shows the degradation in America and its populace. The Carters, husband and wife, performed universally good work, including taking Guyana out of a dictatorship and keeping it safe.

President Carter promoted democracy worldwide. Carter saw wrong and did the right thing like the Good Samaritan in the Bible. He restored the democratic rule in Guyana in 1992, with its first free and fair elections, post-Independence.

The Carter family, husband and wife, worked for many decades to improve the quality of life for people at home in the US, and around the globe. The spectrum of help was wide-ranging including advocating for mental health, conflict resolution, humanitarian, Habitat for Humanity, (putting a roof over your head, as my father used to say), and peace building.

They fought diseases and worked in peacemaking worldwide. They served in electoral observations in the aftermath of violent and protracted conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. The world, more than ever, is in need of peacekeepers, as we see in

Bernard Heydorn



Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter

Editor's Note: In our November 8 edition the article by our esteemed columnist Bernard Heydorn inadvertently reproduced a headline from an earlier column. Instead, Bernard's lamentation on the ubiquity and perpetual presence of war in our eternally turbulent world should have been headlined, 'Everywhere is war - time to give peace a chance'. The oversight is regretted.



Canada's United Trinbago West Indian Association (UNI-TnT) continued with its good work and its pan-Caribbean and Canadian outreach when it recently made donations to two groups in Trinidad and Tobago. In photo above, UNI-TnT's Tony Chankar (left) hands over a (TT) \$7,500 cheque to officials at the Suchit Trace Hindu SDMS, a contribution to help with the installation of air condition units at the primary school. And in photo below, a UNI-TnT donation of (TT) \$20,000 is made to the Rapidfire Kidz Foundation to assist with the purchase of treats for the group's 2023 children's Christmas party. At right is Reverend Joy Abdul-Mohan from the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago. This is the fourth year that UNI-TnT has contributed to helping Rapidfire Kidz Foundation.



Community groups reach out

From Page 1

1154 Morningside Avenue, Scarborough.

Speaking to the drive within the group for outreach and support to the community, Chankar said the children's Christmas party was a move by UNI-TnT to draw families out to have fun, and to give back to the kids.

"No kid should be without a toy. There is no better feeling than getting a wrapped toy," he said. Chankar also advised parents to register at [Ticket Gateway's website](#).

"This is to ensure we have the right gifts for the children. Do register so we can prepare, and personalise the gifts. By registering we can also plan for all the kids we are expecting," Chankar said.

UNI-TnT's generosity in Christmases past has seen it donate hundreds of toys to the Toy Mountain and the Salvation Army. It has also contributed thousands of dollars to charities.

As Chankar noted, UNI-TnT has now acquired charitable status with the CRA, which brings more responsibility and accountability.

"It also means that we can do even more to help," he stated.

And in another sphere of outreach, the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association has issued a call to the community to support its ongoing food drive via donations to food boxes strategically located across the GTA. (See [locations in display ad on Page 19](#).)

ICCA's initiative, appropriately named the 'Dhal and Rice Indo-Caribbean Food Drive', was launched last year with The Caribbean Network, Building Togetherness, and Divine Designs by Natasha, said ICCA's president, Ryan Singh.

It grew out of the recognition that food is a central unifier, and is one of the most popular features of Indo-Caribbean culture.

However, what the ICCA, and its collaborators noted were statistics are indicating that in these uncertain and turbulent times, not everyone has access to foods to enjoy good cooking and the familial sharing of traditional meals.

"With the pressures of inflation and increases in grocery prices, essential food items have become unattainable for many individuals and families across the country," Singh noted.

The 'Dhal and Rice' initiative was established out of recognition that there is a need at food banks for Indo-Caribbean families and other individuals to access culturally appropriate foods for their specific cuisine.

Singh called on the community to support ICCA's drive, noting that the donated foodstuffs are later shipped to food bank locations that are accessed by Indo-Caribbeans and Caribbean persons.

And in yet another initiative of outreach and generosity, One Love Table will hold its second Pepper Pot festival and fund-raiser on December 8.

The second annual event grew out of last year's success, said organiser Habeeb Alli.

"The Pepper Pot Festival was well-attended last year. This is the kind of festival we need in this city: one that draws people together to help others, while enjoying the Guyanese Christmas staple that is Pepper Pot," he declared.

Alli also indicated that a top performer, Vicadi Singh, has signed up for Friday's event. He was also thankful to Amir Meats for its support sponsorship of One Love Table's events.

Judge rejects Khan's diya request

Port-of-Spain – A request to place an unlit diya placed on a podium in the High Court while Senior Counsel Israel Khan made his closing address to the High Court in the matter involving six police officers accused of murder was late last month rejected by the presiding judge.

The outcome of the murder trial on November 24 saw the 12-member jury delivering not-guilty verdicts for six police officers. On trial were Sgt Khemraj Sahadeo and PCs Renaldo Riveiro, Glenn Singh, Roger Nicholas, Safraz Juman, and Antonio Ramadin.

They were charged with murdering Alana Duncan, 28, Abigail Johnson, 23, and Kerron "Fingers" Eccles, 26, on the night of July 22, 2011 at Rochard Douglas Road, Barrackpore.

However, prior to his closing address, Khan's instructing attorney, Arissa Maharaj, wrote to Justice Carla Brown-Antoine requesting permission for the diya to be placed on the podium.

The letter stated that Khan "wishes to place a small yellow, unlit deya on his podium in full view of the jury during the closing address to the jury as a symbol which metaphorically depicts the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness."

It added, "[He] intends to allude to the jury that accused (number one's) cultural heritage as part of his good character embraces a legitimate expectation that while our criminal justice system is not infallible, it strives to be fair and that trial by judge and jury more likely

than not ensures that the guilty accused is convicted and the innocent accused acquitted. This note is solely to seek permission from the learned trial judge to place in Her Ladyship's Court a small unlit yellow diya on... Khan's podium during his closing address to the jury."

According to the court transcripts, the judge addressed the request on November 15, and warned that the court must guard against inflaming the passions or unconscious prejudices of the jury.

"[A] diya is a symbol of a particular religion. It appears to me, having observed this jury, that this jury – there is a mixture of persons – ethnicities, and there is more than likely a mixture of religious beliefs. And, therefore, I fear that by putting a diya there, there may be people who have strong – as we know in this

society, the diya is a symbol of one religious persuasion – and there may be people who have strong opinions about that particular religion," the judge said.

She added, "And so there may be – if you go into too much about symbolism about religion and so, you may end up inflaming the passions or unconscious prejudices of the jury. That's my fear. And it is for that reason that I – and I don't think it assists – the diya cannot assist the jury to understand any bit of evidence that has been led in this case.

Also, "It is not a tool to assist them to understand the law. I can't see how it assists them to understand your case. So on that basis, I am not going to permit you to have the diya on the podium when you are addressing."



Israel Khan

Warners' procedural bid rejected by TT's Court of Appeal

Port-of-Spain – A legal bid to have Maureen Warner, wife of Jack Warner, and two companies owned by the couple removed from a lawsuit over the ownership of the Dr Joao Havelange Centre of Excellence in Macoya was last week rejected by the Trinidad and Tobago Court of Appeal.

Warner is the former president of Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football, and served as its president between 1990 and 2011.

In December last year High Court Judge Robin Mohammed dismissed an application by Mrs Warner, Renraw Investments Limited, and CCAM and Company Limited to remove



Justice James Aboud

them from the (US) \$37.8 million lawsuit that was brought against herself and the companies, Warner, Warner's accountant Kenny Rampersad, and Rampersad's accounting firm.

In a written decision delivered last week, Appellate Judges Allan Mendonca and James Aboud dismissed a procedural appeal challenging their colleague's ruling.

"This was a proper exercise of his function and case-management discretion. The appellants have failed to demonstrate that the exercise of the trial judge's case management discretion was erroneous or plainly wrong," Justice Aboud said.

The outcome of the appeal means that Mrs Warner and the two companies will have to face trial in the lawsuit, along with the other parties unless they are able to overturn the decision in a final appeal before the UK-based Privy Council.

In the application, Mrs Warner and the companies claimed that the case, filed by

Concacaf in 2016, was statute-barred as it concerned conduct which took place between 1995 and 2011.

They also submitted that while Concacaf could claim that Warner had a fiduciary duty to it based on his long stint at the helm of the organisation, they had no such connection.

Issues with the ownership of the lucrative property, which features a swimming complex, restaurants, a 44-room hotel, conference facilities, a gym and the Marvin Lee Stadium, arose shortly after Jack Warner's successor at Concacaf, Jeffery Webb instituted an integrity investigation against him and fellow former president Chuck Blazer.

The investigation came three years before Jack Warner and Blazer and other FIFA officials were implicated in a US Department of Justice investigation into corruption in the operations of world football's governing body. Jack Warner is still currently fighting his proposed extradition to the US to face the charges.

In the claim, Concacaf is contending that Warner, Mrs Warner, and the companies were involved in a conspiracy to misappropriate Concacaf funds, which were allocated to construct the facility by misrepresenting that it (the facility) was actually owned by Concacaf.

Concacaf also listed Rampersad and his company as parties to the claim, as it contended that he had a conflict of interest by serving as the accountant for both Concacaf and the companies.

In defence of the claim, Jack Warner claimed that he could not recall facts surrounding the deal due to Concacaf's delay in bringing the claim. He also denied that he and his wife had a



Maureen Warner (right) with husband Jack

controlling interest in the companies, and that he misappropriated funds.

Mrs Warner has also contended that she was never involved in the financing of the project.

Rampersad also denied any wrongdoing, as he said that he provided secretarial services to the companies. He has also claimed he did not owe Concacaf any fiduciary duty, as he merely served as an auditor.

In 2019, US District Court Judge William Kuntz granted Concacaf a default judgment in

a separate (US) \$79 million case against Jack Warner, in which it alleged that he embezzled tens of millions of dollars.

The outcome of that case was based on Warner's failure to defend it.

Mrs Warner was represented by Rishi Dass, SC, and Marina Narinesingh, while the companies were represented by Fyard Hosein, SC, Sasha Bridgemohansingh, Aadam Hosein, and Anil Maraj. Concacaf was represented by Jonathan Walker and Cherie Gopie.



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The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

Many prestigious awards for an outstanding Bharatnatyam dancer

By Vidur Dindayal

Vijayanthimala. I believe she was the first classical trained Bharatnatyam dancer in Indian movies. Others were Hema Malini, Waheeda Rehman, and Asha Parekh. Vijayanthimala was a foremost actress, dancer, Carnatic singer, and later, a politician.

Born in August 1933, she had her screen debut, age 16, in the Tamil movie *Vaazhkkhai* in 1949. Her breakthrough into Hindi movies was in *Bahar* in 1951.

It starred Pradeep Kumar. I remember well her song and dance in *Bahar*: happy, and free-flowing.

I did not know much about Vijayanthimala at that time, but her dancing was entertaining, and a promise of things to come.

She was the star in the great movie *Nagin* of 1954. Her co-star was also Pradeep Kumar. The song *Man Dole Mera* was a big hit. She danced beautifully.

Her classical training brought into the dance little postures and gestures that made the song a dream. The song started with Vijayanthimala singing and dancing in front of cobras, which seemed in a trance – listening to her song.

Indeed all her songs in the movie are as enjoyable today, as they were then in the 1950s.

She has made a great success of *Nagin*. Right after *Nagin* came Dilip Kumar's celebrated movie *Devdas*. Here she stole the show with her dance as a courtesan. Dilip Kumar was unhappy losing the one he loved. His friend Motilal took him to see this courtesan dancing. That was Vijayanthimala. The dance was out of this world. Vijayanthimala, won the Best Supporting Actress Award for her role.

Since *Devdas*, Vijayanthimala's all-round talent dominated the Indian movie scene year after year.

In 1956 came her success in New Delhi. In 1957 came *Naya Daur* – classic as a story, and for its songs. That, with Dilip in the horse carriage singing *Mang Ke Saath Tumhara*.

Then there was the comedy *Aasha* in 1957; *Sadhana* in 1958; and the paranormal movie *Madhumati*. I was a student in Delhi then and saw the movie in the newly-built Golcha cinema in Daryaganj, Delhi.

Vijayanthimala was nominated for the Best Actress award for her role in *Madhumati*.

In 1961 *Gunga Jumna*, a colour movie, was another award winner, with Vijayanthimala and Dilip Kumar. Vijayanthimala, whose language is originally Tamil, early in her career was determined to speak Hindi in her own voice where dubbing was needed.

In *Gunga Jumna* the language was Bhojpuri, and commentators praised how expertly she spoke it for the movie.

Her successes continued with *Amrapali* and *Suraj*, and in 1967 in *Jewel Thief* with co-star Dev Anand.



Bharatnatyam dancer and mega-star Vijayanthimala

But the most memorable is *Sangam* in 1964, the Raj Kapoor movie remarkable for its story, and all its songs – Raj Kapoor teasing her while playing the flute sitting in a tree, as she is bathing in the river below. Her song as a stage girl while in Europe, and the most popular of all was, *Ye Mera Prem Patra Padh Kar*.

In 1968, Vijayanthimala was awarded the Padma Shri by the government of India, the country's fourth-highest civilian honour.

After a starring role in the film *Ganwaar* (1970), Vijayanthimala retired from the acting industry. She has since gained popularity for her dancing, particularly for her work in Bharatnatyam. She was later given the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the highest Indian recognition awarded to practicing artists.

Vijayanthimala entered politics in 1984, when she contested in the Tamil Nadu general election for the South Chennai constituency. Subsequently, she was elected to the Lok Sabha of the Parliament of India by the end of January 1985, along with Amitabh Bachchan.

She was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament of India for a six-year term.

Vijayanthimala turned 90 years old in August 2023. In a brief account of her birthday celebration, we see the graceful journey of Vijayanthimala, the Bharatnatyam expert and former film icon.

Known as the Lady Superstar of India, she has been a symbol of strength for women. We see her celebrating her 90th birthday with friends, family, and her beloved students.

Members of the Association of Bharatnatyam Artists of India hosted a private event in her honour. Among the guests were senior dancers.

The occasion was blessed with a happy concert by Sruti Sagar and Guru Bharadwaj. Finally, on request, Vijayanthimala danced to a Thiruppavai song.

Vijayanthimala has won numerous awards for her rich

contributions to film, dancing, and public service. These include the Filmfare Awards presented annually. She has won four awards from five nominations, including a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Vijayanthimala is the fifth most-frequent winner of the Best Actress award. She also holds the record for winning the award in any category for each year that she was nominated.

For her outstanding prowess in classical dance, she received many prestigious awards among many including:

1973 – Arasavai Natya Kalaingnar from Government of Tamil Nadu for excellence in Bharatanatyam;

1982 – Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Lifetime achievement in Bharatanatyam;

2002 – Nrithya Rathnakara Award by Bhairavi Fine Arts Society during Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana at Cleveland, Ohio, in the US.

2005 – Lifetime Achievement Award from The Rotary Club of Chennai, Kilpauk, Chennai;

2010 – E. Krishna Iyer Medal from Sruti Foundation for her outstanding contributions to Bharatanatyam in a distinguished career spread over seven decades;

2011 – Vocational Service Awards Lifetime Achievement for Bharatanatyam from Rotary Club of Chennai Towers;

2012 – Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore Ratna as a part of the ongoing commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore for her significant contribution in the field of performing arts.

She received National & International honors including the following:

1968 – Padma Shri Award from the government of India;

1979 – Tamil Nadu State Artist Award from the government of Tamil Nadu by M. G. Ramachandran;

1995 – Honorary doctorate from Annamalai University;

2001 – The Federation of Indo-American Associations of North California invited her to be Grand Marshal for auspices of the Indian Independence Day on August 12 and 13 of 2001;

2001 – Lifetime achievement from The Federation of Indo-American Associations of North California at Silicon Valley;

2004 – Legend of Indian Cinema Award at Atlantic City, US;

2005 – Bangalore Gayana Samaja Centenary Award by the government of Karnataka;

2007 – Ambassador for Peace Award from Universal Peace Federation;

2008 – Honoured by Mayor of St Louis for her contribution to art;

2011 – Honoured by the government of France, during the filming of *Sangam*.

2011 – Padma Bhushan.



Vijayanthimala dances to a Thiruppavai song on her 90th birthday

Vijayanthimala stuns social media with dance on her 90th birthday

Vijayanthimala, the veteran actress of Bollywood turned 90 years a few months ago, but her timeless charm and devotion to the art of classical dance remains commendable, *DNA India* reported last August.

A video of the *Sangam* actress surfaced online follow her birthday celebration that left social media stunned, the publication reported.

In the video recorded on her 90th birthday on August 13 at her Chennai home, Vijayanthimala was captured performing Bharatnatyam to perfection.

The original video was first shared by Stree Creatives, and then it was shared by Telugu Film Producers Council.

The original video was liked by R. Madhavan and several others, *DNA India* reported.

It was later posted on *Reddit* to the amazement of social media users, tagged, 'Legendary Bollywood actress Vyajanthimala dancing on her 90th birth anniversary'.

As soon as the video was shared, Internet users lauded the veteran actress' beauty, fitness, and dedication to the art.

One *Reddit* user wrote, "Bro, her skin!! Her finesse!! My grey hair and wrinkles crying in the corner. The digestive system in shambles, volini and carbo veg are my best friends!"

Another wrote, "Damn that's impressive! I have to admit that I'm not familiar with a lot of her work, but I loved her perfor-

mance in *Gunga Jumna*, her and Dilip Kumar made such a great pairing."

Another *Reddit* user noted, "Her dance battle in *Amrapali* is one for the ages. Just like some dancing statue in a South Indian temple has been carved out."

While another exclaimed, "Wow she looks cute"; with another social media user stating, "How elegant and graceful!"

Vijayanthimala's popular movies include *Devdas*, *Madhumati*, *Naya Daur*, *Sadhna*, *Gunga Jumna*, *Sangam*, *Leader*, and *Amrapali*. She had a glorious career of 21 years, and was also regarded as the first female superstar and megastar of Indian cinema.

Growing deepfake videos, photos concern Bollywood celebs

Recently the target of a deepfake video, Indian actress Rashmika Mandanna last week urged social media users to not share such destructive material. She particularly urged young women to speak up if they were being bullied with such online posts.

Mandanna shared the message weeks after a deepfake video about her went viral on social media. In that video, her face was morphed onto an Instagram video posted by a British-Indian woman.

Mandanna described the incident as "extremely scary".

Last week she stated that the support from her film industry colleagues made her realise that sharing these videos should not be normalised.

"[The support] made me feel safe and secure," she said.

"So I want to tell all girls out there that this is not normal. When something is affecting you, you don't have to keep quiet."

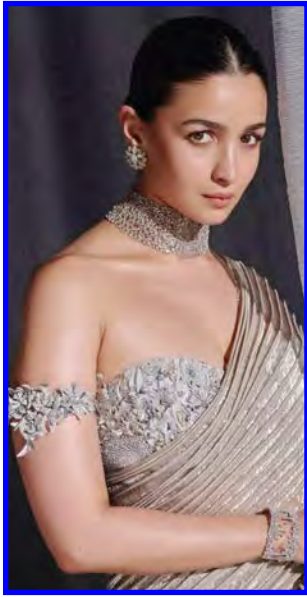
In a statement on X (formerly Twitter) soon after the traumatising deepfake went viral, Mandanna wrote, "If this happened to me when I was in school or college, I genuinely can't imagine how could I ever tackle this."

At the time, Mandanna said she was grateful for the support of her family and friends, and called for the issue to be addressed with urgency "before more of us are affected by such identity theft".

India's Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has since called such deepfake videos a "new threat to democracy".

Late last month Vaishnaw chaired a meeting with social media platforms and AI companies, where he said the federal government would soon come up with a "clear, actionable plan" to tackle deepfakes.

Deepfake techniques utilise AI to generate fabricated images



Alia Bhatt



Katrina Kaif



Kajol



Rashmika Mandanna

for her performance in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. She was last seen in Karan Johar's *Rocky Aur Rani ki Prem Kahaani*, and in her Hollywood debut *Heart of Stone*. She has Vasan Bala's *Jigra* in the pipeline.

Bhatt's disturbing video was released shortly after a photo of Katrina Kaif from her upcoming movie *Tiger 3* was altered digitally. The original photo featured Kaif in a scene with a towel-clad stuntwoman. However, instead of the towel, Kaif was shown in the altered version sporting a low-cut white top and matching bottom.

and videos, seamlessly blending individuals into content in which they did not participate. The realism of deepfakes has since raised significant apprehensions about the ethical implications, and potential misuse of this advanced technology.

Following the Mandanna event, Amitabh Bachchan and Mrunal Thakur voiced support for her call for urgent community action against identity theft facilitated by these technologies.

Mandanna has worked in several languages, including Hindi, Telugu and Kannada, and has also won a number of awards for her roles. Her latest appearance is with actor Ranbir Kapoor in the Bollywood film *Animal*, which was released on December 1.

Meanwhile, the sinister side of artificial intelligence continues to surface in India, with more and more altered photos and deepfake videos targeting Bollywood celebrities.

Among them is Alia Bhatt, who was a recent target in a disturbing video that went viral. In this deepfake, a female is dressed in a blue flowery outfit, and looking similar to Bhatt, is seen making lewd gestures towards the camera.

Bhatt won Best Actor in the Web Original Film category at the recently held Filmfare OTT Awards with her web debut, *Darlings*. She recently also won the National Award

Bollywood veteran Kajol was also targeted by the deepfake threat in a video that surfaced showing her face superimposed on a woman changing clothes in front of the camera.

Researchers into the deepfake discovered the video originally showed an English social media influencer taking part in the TikTok 'Get Ready With Me' movement.

Writing on the emerging issue of deepfakes, the *Indian Express* has noted "it could lead to severe consequences if goes unchecked".

The publication adds, "While [deepfakes] are seemingly easy for everyone to spot the difference, such videos can wreak havoc on the reputation and goodwill of individuals and businesses. Even though there are telltale signs, there are millions of unsuspecting Internet users who would be incapable of telling the difference between real and fiction."

Noting a growth in the uploading to deepfake content, the *Indian Express* stated, "The issue of deepfakes has once again brought to the fore privacy and security concerns for millions of social media users. Ever since the emergence of such AI-manipulated videos, all those who share short-form video content are advised to exercise caution."



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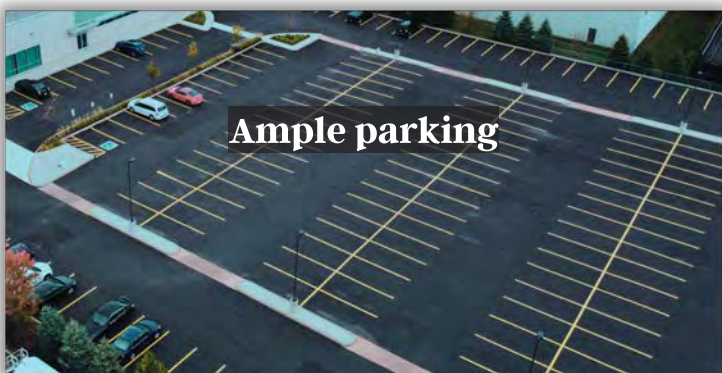


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Shallow in the deep end over ageism move in Bravo omission

There is no policy in West Indies cricket that makes a player ineligible to represent the West Indies because of age, Cricket West Indies President Dr Kishore Shallow said last week.

Shallow's comments were made in the wake of West Indies chief selector Desmond Haynes saying that Red Force captain Darren Bravo did not make the team for the upcoming ODI series vs England due to his age, which selectors took into consideration in preparing the regional team for the 2027 World Cup.

At 34 years now, Bravo would be 38 when the tournament bowls off in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia in four years.

Following Hayne's disturbing revelation, Shallow addressed the issue with the media during the Queen's Park Cricket Club annual awards, which was held in Port-of-Spain last month.

"Any of the players who were involved in the tournament, once they have not announced their retirement from international cricket, they are still eligible."

He also stated that discriminating against players based on age was not part of the selectors' mandate.

"There is absolutely no policy on age in Cricket West Indies when it comes to selection," Shallow declared.

He also acknowledged that better communication is needed within the operations of CWI.

"Communication is something we must improve on throughout the entire organisation, whether with stakeholders or how selectors communicate with the players. It is extremely important and it is a work in progress. We have improved, but still have a long way to go," he stated.

Meanwhile, following Shallow's reassurance age was not a selection criterion, Bravo made the announcement he was temporarily walking away from national cricket. The left-hander has been one of the leading scorers in regional cricket in the past few years in the four-day and



Kishore Shallow



Darren Bravo

After Bravo was omitted, Cricket West Indies' chief selector Desmond Haynes said the West Indies' forward planning for the 2027 ICC Cricket World Cup resulted in the veteran left-hander cricketer not being selected for the three-match series now being played against England, the *Caribbean Media Corporation* reported.

Bravo was the leading scorer in the just concluded Super50 Cup in Trinidad, where he piled up 416 runs at an average of 83 while captaining the Red Force team to its 14th domestic 50-over title.

"I think it was a very tough decision for us to make as a panel," Haynes told a virtual media conference last month after announcing the squad for the series now underway.

He added, "Darren has proven not only this year but last year in the Super50 tournament to be somebody who performs well at this level. But we have invested in players like Alick Athanaze and Keacy Carty, and we just figured that in selecting this team, we also had to take into consideration that the World Cup 2027 is something that we've got in mind."

Also, Haynes noted, "And we believe we've invested in these players and believe we should give them the opportunity of playing against a very strong England side."



Desmond Haynes

limited-overs formats.

Issuing his decision on *Instagram*, he said: "I've taken some time to ponder and wonder what's my next step moving forward as a cricketer. At this point in my career it's not easy, or should

In the 2023 Regional Four-Day competition, he finished with 446 runs at an average of 55.75, scoring two centuries and one half-century.

Powell disagrees with selectors omitting Bravo

Fallout continued last week for Cricket West Indies and its selectors following the decision to omit Darren Bravo from the West Indies One-Day International squad now facing England.

Last week West Indies batter Kieran Powell added his voice to the growing criticism following the revelation by lead selector, Desmond Haynes, that age was among the criteria used to deny Bravo a place on the team.

It was a decision that "makes no sense," Powell stated. And despite CWI head, Kishore Shallow stating age was no factor in decision-making on who made the team or not, Powell issued a call for further clarity on the West Indies selection policy.

He is 33 years old, and last played for the regional team in 2021. At the time, he was speaking with the *Mason and Guest* cricket radio show in Barbados early last week.

Said Powell, "There needs to be some sort of selection criteria put out into the public so everybody, all the stakeholders, all the shareholders can know."

Among the selectors are its lead, Desmond Haynes; Roland Butcher; and white-ball coach Daren Sammy.

Powell said he was "not surprised" the selection panel omitted the 34-year-old Bravo.

"This is actually a discussion I've had with the selection panel myself before the start of the four-day season last year. I asked [Haynes] if there is a reason why I have not been considered for selection for some time because over the past two four-day seasons combined, I've scored the most runs in the Caribbean; but as Darren alluded to, there's no communication unless you as a player instigate communication from the selection panel, which is absolutely ridiculous," Powell said.

In his statement on *Instagram* following the omission, Bravo indicated there was no communication between himself and

the selectors.

Powell also noted that Bravo's omission because of his age went contrary to recent statements by the selectors.

"Even during the Super50 just concluded, there was a seminar put on by the West Indies cricket board where Andre Fletcher posed the question to the selection panel, 'Is there something against players over a certain age'. The answer that was provided to us is that once you're playing you're eligible; and once you perform, you meet the criteria for selection. [Bravo]

played, he performed, and it has been back-to-back years he has performed across formats. So, I don't see why he shouldn't be selected," Powell declared.

Also reference his own experiences as a young player, Powell pointed to the irony within Bravo's ODI inclusion over his age.

"When I made my debut, they had guys like Shiv Chanderpaul, the Chris Gayles, the Marlon Samuels, Dwayne Bravos, and so on, who would take you under their wings. You can't say because you've invested in two young players [Keacy Carty and Alick Athanaze] that you can't pick another senior player. You didn't pick two players - you picked a squad of 15 players, so that doesn't sit well with me, and it doesn't really make much sense," Powell stated.

Former WI opening batter Philo Wallace also disagreed with the selectors' decision to exclude Bravo.

"You cannot rebuild alone with young people, you got to rebuild with some experience, and I think that Bravo is at the right stage of his career now, where he can stabilise that middle," Wallace said.

Additionally, "When you look at Bravo, who has now come back into his own, and he is an attractive player, I think that he can lend support that the middle order needs... I feel Bravo's hurt."



Kieran Powell



Rahul Dravid

BCCI keeps Dravid

The Board of Control for Cricket in India last week extended the tenure of Rahul Dravid as the head coach of the India men's team following his acceptance of its offer. The renewal was reported by the international sports media, among them the *British Broadcasting Corporation*, and the cricket websites *ESPNcricinfo* and *Cricbuzz*.

"The BCCI engaged in productive discussions with Rahul Dravid after the term of his contract ended following the recently concluded ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 and unanimously agreed to further the tenure," it said in a statement released last week.

Dravid had been appointed India head coach in November 2021 for a two-year term that ended with the recently-concluded home World Cup where India lost the final to Australia in Ahmedabad.

While details about the tenure of Dravid's renewed stint has not been revealed by BCCI yet, the former India captain is expected to continue at least until the upcoming Men's T20 World Cup, which is scheduled for June 2024 in the Caribbean and USA.

"The last two years with Team India have been thoroughly memorable" Dravid was quoted by the India media as saying.



Namibia celebrate following the victory over Tanzania

Victorious Namibia head to T20 World Cup 2024

Namibia sealed their spot at the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup last week, Zimbabwe was knocked out of contention, and Uganda qualified for the 2024 men's T20 World Cup after beating Rwanda in the last round of matches in the Africa leg of the qualifiers.

Namibia's Eagles qualified for a spot after securing a 58-run over Tanzania in Windhoek. The team made the cut after five wins from five after victories against Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya.

Next year's 20-team tournament in the US and the West Indies will be Namibia's third consecutive appearance at the T20 World Cup.

"We're very proud of the boys, of Pierre de Bruyn and his coaching team, and also Gerhard Erasmus, the captain of the team," Rudie van Vuuren, president of Cricket Namibia, told *BBC Sport Africa*. Namibia's qualification was also reported by the world media, including *The Guardian*, and the online cricket websites *ESPNcricinfo* and *Cricbuzz*.

Van Vuuren added, "The boys played professional cricket throughout, really a high standard of cricket. And you can see the fact that we have a professional set-up eventually makes the difference in this kind of tournament."

It was an important win for Namibia, since the country will co-host the Cricket World Cup in 2027 alongside South Africa and Zimbabwe.

"It is exciting times for Namibia," said Van Vuuren.

He added, "We have a strong pipeline developing. We look



Brian Masaba

forward to the T20 World Cup, and then, building on that, the Under-19 World Cup in 2026 and obviously the 50-over World Cup in 2027."

Namibia reached the Super 12 stage as first-time qualifiers in the UAE in 2021, but then suffered a first round group-stage exit in Australia last year. Its ascension this year left Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Uganda to battle it out for the remaining second spot in the table.

As the cricket website *Cricbuzz* reported, it was cricket history for Uganda with the team qualifying for the T20 World Cup after brushing aside Rwanda in their final game. Taking the win means Zimbabwe was denied a spot.

Going into the final round of fixtures last Thursday, Uganda were favourites to get the job done playing against the winless Rwanda. For Zimbabwe to usurp Uganda in the points table, they had to defeat Kenya, and hope for Uganda to slip against Rwanda, *Cricbuzz* reported.

Uganda have reached the tournament for the first time after a nine-wicket victory over Rwanda.

"We're still trying to process all the emotions," team captain Brian Masaba told *BBC Sports*.

Additionally, "This is a big boy, the World Cup! And to be on this platform is something that only happened in our wildest dreams, and for us to finally get there is a dream come true for a lot of the guys."

It has been a long process, a long journey, Masaba noted, adding, "This is the culmination of a lot of sweat, blood, and tears. As a team it was a very, very special moment for us."

Key players back in India Test format after injuries

India's Test squad was last week fortified with comebacks by K.L. Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, and Jasprit Bumrah, who were selected for the two-match series in South Africa.

Bumrah last played a Test more than 17 months ago, against England in Birmingham. Since returning from a back injury that kept him out for over a year, he has slowly built up his workload across white-ball formats.

He returned to action this August on the tour of Ireland, and spearheaded India's pace attack at the 2023 World Cup, where he was the tournament's fourth highest wicket-taker.

Rahul and Iyer are also returning to the Test format following long injury layoffs, after last playing the format during the Border-Gavaskar series at home in February-March.

Other moves by the Board of Control for Cricket in India saw Ajinkya Rahane dropped, while Virat Kohli, who opted out of the white-ball leg of the tour, is part of the squad that is being led by Rohit Sharma.

Also back on the team is Mohammed Shami, who was rested for India's last Test series in the West Indies in July.

However, his inclusion is subject to fitness, according to the BCCI release that announced the squad. As it noted, Shami is now "currently undergoing medical treatment".

The series will also mark Rahul Dravid's first Test assignment in his second stint as India's head coach following the extension



Jasprit Bumrah

of his contract last week.

With Rahul included as a wicket-keeping option, there was no place in the squad for K.S. Bharat. He was one of two keepers in the West Indies, but slipped behind Ishan Kishan in the line-up.

Until the West Indies tour, India had preferred Bharat over Kishan, both for the home series against Australia and the World Test Championship final at The Oval.

Also left out from the squad that toured West Indies are fast bowlers Jaydev Unadkat and Navdeep Saini. Meanwhile, fellow quick Mukesh Kumar, who made his debut during that series, was retained by the selectors.

Iyer's return left no place for Rahane, who was India's Test vice-captain on the tour of the Caribbean in July. It was an elevation that followed from an excellent outing in the WTC final against Australia at The Oval.

However, Rahane's two subsequent innings in the Caribbean yielded meagre scores of 3 and 8.

Yashasvi Jaiswal, a breakout star with a hundred on Test debut in the West Indies, is expected to open alongside Rohit, with Shubman Gill continuing to bat at number three.

The selectors also picked Delhi fast-bowling all-rounder Harshit Rana, Karnataka seamer Vidwath Kaverappa, and Rajasthan left-arm spinner, Manav Suthar, for the four-dayers, based on their promising domestic performances.

Cricket Schedule

(Matches ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday December 6, 2023

Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024
 PMs XI vs Pakistan, 4-day Warm-up match, Day 1, Manuka Oval, Canberra, 10:30 AM
 England tour of West Indies, 2023
 WI vs England, 2nd ODI, Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, North Sound, Antigua, 10:00 AM
 New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
 Bangladesh vs NZ, 2nd Test, Day 1, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 9:30 AM

Thursday December 7, 2023

Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024
 PMs XI vs Pakistan, 4-day Warm-up match, Day 2, Manuka Oval, Canberra, 10:30 AM
 Ireland tour of Zimbabwe, 2023
 Zimbabwe vs Ireland, 1st T20I, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 6:00 PM
 New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
 Bangladesh vs New Zealand, 2nd Test, Day 2, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 9:30 AM

Friday December 8, 2023

Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024
 PMs XI vs Pakistan, 4-day Warm-up match, Day 3, Manuka Oval, Canberra, 10:30 AM
 New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
 Bangladesh vs NZ, 2nd Test, Day 3, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 9:30 AM

Saturday December 9, 2023

Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024
 PMs XI vs Pakistan, 4-day Warm-up match, Day 4, Manuka Oval, Canberra, 10:30 AM
 Ireland tour of Zimbabwe, 2023
 Zimbabwe vs Ireland, 2nd T20I, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 1:00 PM

England tour of West Indies, 2023

West Indies vs England, 3rd ODI, Kensington Oval, Bridgetown, Barbados, 10:00 AM
 New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
 Bangladesh vs NZ, 2nd Test, Day 4, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 9:30 AM

Sunday December 10, 2023

Ireland tour of Zimbabwe, 2023
 Zimbabwe vs Ireland, 3rd T20I, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 1:00 PM
 India tour of South Africa, 2023-2024
 South Africa vs India, 1st T20I, Kingsmead, Durban, 6:00 PM

New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
 Bangladesh vs NZ, 2nd Test, Day 5, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 9:30 AM

Tuesday December 12, 2023

India tour of South Africa, 2023-2024
 South Africa vs India, 2nd T20I, St George's Park, Gqeberha, 6:00 PM
 Ireland tour of Zimbabwe, 2023
 Zimbabwe vs Ireland, 1st ODI, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 9:15 AM

England tour of West Indies, 2023

West Indies vs England, 1st T20I, Kensington Oval, Bridgetown, Barbados, 4:00 PM
 Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024
 Australia vs Pakistan, 1st Test, Day 1, Perth Stadium, Perth, 10:20 AM

India tour of South Africa, 2023-2024

South Africa vs India, 3rd T20I, New Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg, 6:00 PM
 England tour of West Indies, 2023
 WI vs England, 2nd T20I, National Cricket Stadium, St George's, Grenada, 4:00 PM

Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024

Australia vs Pakistan, 1st Test, Day 2, Perth Stadium, Perth, 10:20 AM
 Ireland tour of Zimbabwe, 2023
 Zimbabwe vs Ireland, 2nd ODI, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 9:15 AM

WI vs England, 2nd T20I, National Cricket Stadium, St George's, Grenada, 4:00 PM

Saturday December 16, 2023

Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024
 Australia vs Pakistan, 1st Test, Day 3, Perth Stadium, Perth, 10:20 AM.



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Angus For Sale \$1,688,062

Premium lot with lots of upgrades on a cul-de-sac, 4 bedrooms, open-concept, 3-car garage, g/foyer, parlour/formal dining areas, white kitchen with quartz countertops & island, dining area with walkout to deck, stainless steel appliances, butler pantry, wood beam accents & barn door, living room with built-in gas fireplace, high ceilings, mudroom with garage access, California shutters, primary bedroom with gas fireplace, shiplap, his/her walk-in closets, & a 5-piece ensuite. Second bedroom with 3-piece ensuite & walkout to balcony. Third & 4th bedrooms with Jack & Jill bath, basement with separate entrance with lots of potential. Fenced yard with beautiful trees in backyard. Plus More!



Beeton For Sale \$1,149,000

Location! Location! Location! Welcome to this lovely 4 bedroom, full brick home. This premium lot boasts a beautiful walk-out with patio, brand new glass façade deck above, both outdoor spaces providing an unobstructed view of the Beeton Creek. Hardwood throughout, freshly upgraded oak stairs with iron pickets, new light fixtures, open-concept kitchen with custom backsplash, quartz counters & breakfast bar, rough-in for central vac as well as three piece basement rough-in & an extended driveway.



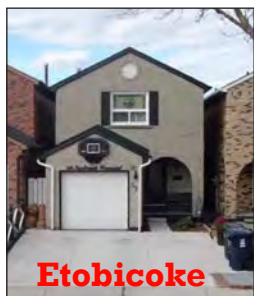
Port Dover For Sale \$699,990/For Rent \$2,550

Location! Location! Location! Welcome to this rare & highly-sought-after townhouse bungalow in Port Dover! This home boasts over 1,800 sq ft featuring 3 bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms, convenient main floor living with primary bedroom, ensuite shower, & walk-in closet. Living room features 23-foot high vaulted ceilings. Modern custom kitchen featuring granite countertops & huge eat-in island. Dining & kitchen space perfect for entertainment & family gatherings. Second floor features loft-style family room along with 2 bedrooms & full bathroom. Watch gorgeous sunsets from every bedroom. Close proximity to beaches, trails, vineyards, breweries & fresh farm food. Gorgeous location for nature lovers with close proximity to downtown restaurants & shops.



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Family Friendly Neighbourhood, Walking Distance To Schools & Parks. **SOLD \$350,100 OVER ASKING PRICE**



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Oshawa For Sale \$719,990

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



Richmond & Jarvis Downtown Toronto Condo For Sale \$598,990

Location! Location! Location! Bright & spacious 1 bed 1 bath corner suite located in the rarely available prestigious French quarters. The residence features a functional open concept layout boasting 9' ceilings. The spacious living room seamlessly transitions to a breathtaking private balcony overlooking quiet courtyard. Building features world class amenities; spectacular roof top garden with BBQ, gym, party room, lounge/library suites. Steps from the St Lawrence Market, distillery, and financial district.



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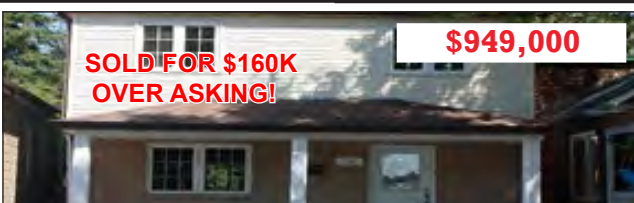
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Essa For Lease \$2,995

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



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

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