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ICGAA's Christmas party saw Karam and Leila Daljit in attendance - Story on Page 11



Imdadul held its holiday dinner on December 16. In attendance were (left to right), Superintendent Mandeep Mann, Ousman Khan, and Police Chief Myron Demkiw - Story on Page 5



Santa visited Uni-TnT's Kids' Christmas Party on December 16 at Tropical Nights - Story on Page 19

Diaspora responds to Guyana's call

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto – The Guyanese diaspora in Toronto has responded with full support to the call that has come out of Guyana in the light of the conflict with Venezuela over the Essequibo region; and moreso, following the deaths of five servicemen who perished in the tragic army helicopter crash on December 6.

The nationalistic, empathic, and empathetic response abroad, particularly here in the GTA, came in the wake of Guyana's President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali declaring December 10 to be a Day of Reflection & Prayers.

Ali made the call for support on December 8, stating, "Our nation is in mourning. The deaths of our five heroic servicemen... have shaken our nation at its core."

He added, "It is in moments like these that we must find strength in unity, solace in each other, and hope in our shared humanism. Now is the time for us to draw strength from one another, to share the burden of sorrow, and to collectively pray for the victims, their grieving families, and for the swift recovery of the survivors of the horrific helicopter crash."

It was a national call out of Guyana that rippled abroad to honour the memories of the five members of the Guyana

Defence Force who died in the line of duty: Brigadier (retired) Gary Beaton, Colonel Michael Shahoud, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Charles, Lieutenant Colonel Sean Welcome, and Staff Sergeant Jason Khan.



Parents of Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali (front row) – father Mohamed Osman Ali and mother, Bibi Shariman Ali. In back row (left to right) are Jerry Karamat – from One Guyana Forum-Canada, and Honorary Consul Mani Singh. They were in attendance at the IMO Interfaith Service that took place in Rexdale on December 17.

Ali's declaration in Guyana was taken up abroad by the Consulate General here in Toronto. Rallying to the call out of Georgetown was Honorary Consul Mani Singh, who immediately organised an Inter-Faith Service between the Guyana Consulate, the Brampton Triveni Mandir, and the International Muslim Organisation.

The Triveni event took place on December 10 at the mandir's location in Brampton, and was well-attended by members of the Guyanese Canadian diaspora, and many others.

Among the guests were Ali's parents, father Mohamed Osman Ali, and mother, Bibi Shariman Ali; leaders of inter-faith religious groups; heads of many diaspora organisations; and the many friends of Guyana here in the GTA.

A release from the Guyana Consulate in Toronto later extended gratitude to all who attended.

"We would like to thank all of the religious leaders, singers and other participants who took the time to come out

See Page 5: Guyana's diaspora

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Dhaman Kissoon (back row, sixth from left) with 23 Division officers and volunteers at the Christmas party

Kids in Etobicoke treated to Christmas party, games

Advocates for Etobicoke Youth and the Brampton Flower City Rotary Club partnered with the Armstrong Group, CDW, the Albert Singh Memorial Foundation, Woodbine Banquet Hall, and 23 Division of the Toronto Police Service to host the 19th Annual Children's Christmas party.

The event was recently held at the Woodbine Banquet Hall in Etobicoke, and saw over 350 students in attendance accompanied by a parent or a guardian.

The children were selected from schools identified for their deserving qualities in the North Etobicoke area. Some of the kids that attended the festive event were also from a local church and a refugee shelter.

Both the student and parent were provided with a full lunch. There were also games, with the Raptors mascot in attendance to entertain the children. There was also dancing to the sweet rhythms of live steelband music.

Of course, no Christmas party is without Santa, whose arrival delighted the children, which was notable in the rush to greet him. As always, Santa was generous, presenting each child with a gift-wrapped toy sorted by age and gender, and posing for photographs.

The many volunteers that made this occasion a success for the children were members of AFEY and the Brampton Flowercity Rotary Club, students from a local high school, and



The children get set for Christmas lunch members of 23 Division Toronto.

Both co-chairs of AFEY, prominent lawyer and philanthropist Dhaman Kissoon, and Toronto Police Superintendent, expressed sincere gratitude to all the supporters and the volunteers. Already the kids are looking forward to next year's event, which will be its 20th anniversary party, and will take place on December 7, 2024.



Nigel Bijulisingh, owner of Tropical Nights in Scarborough by a drop off box at his location

'Dhal and Rice' food drive continues in the GTA

The 'Dhal and Rice Indo-Caribbean Food Drive' initiative by the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association, The Caribbean Network, Building Togetherness, and Divine Designs by Natasha, is collecting donations at food boxes located across the GTA. The effort was established last year out of recognition there is a need at food banks for Indo-Caribbean

families and other individuals to access culturally appropriate foods for their specific cuisine.

All donated foodstuffs are shipped by volunteers to food bank locations that are accessed by Indo-Caribbeans and Caribbean persons.

[Click here to go to map with drop-off locations.](#)



One pick up location saw enough food donations that filled the car trunk of the volunteer driver



Food drive donations collected at the Maha Lakshmi Narayan Mandir in Brampton

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Honorary Consul Mani Singh (centre) was warmly received at the Christmas social organised by the PNC-APNU Toronto Chapter. During his address, among other things, Singh spoke on the Argyle Agreement between Guyana and Venezuela.



The Association of Concerned Guyanese held its Christmas celebration on December 16. At the event were former Consuls General Sattie Sawh, Geoffrey Da Silva, Danny Doobay; also Bejai Jairam, Roger Sawh, Ned Blair, and others.



Guest speakers at the International Muslim Organisation Interfaith Service that took place in Rexdale on December 17



Guests and a section of the gathering that attended the Interfaith Service at Triveni Mandir in Brampton on December 10



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Police Chief Myron Demkiw addresses the Imdadul dinner gathering

Imdadul holds annual holiday dinner

By Sayem Khan

Special to Indo-Caribbean World

Toronto – It was a reunion of warmth, celebration, and good food when members from various walks of life, age groups, and ethnic backgrounds gathered at the Imdadul Islamic Centre for its annual holiday dinner.

The event took place on December 16 at the Imdadul Annex, and saw about 400 members of the mosque in attendance.

The event started with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Ustadh Siddiq Rustam. The young Hafiz Javid Khan, who also led the Taraweeh Prayer at Imdadul mosque during the holy month of Ramadan, also recited a few important verses from the Holy book.

As part of its mandate, Imdadul Centre always engages in significant societal dialogues that address pressing issues impacting on community members and on the wider society.

With the recent and drastic escalation of hate crimes against members of the Muslim community, these Islamophobic incidents continue to cause tremendous anxiety among community members.

In light of such incidents, the Imdadul Islamic Centre's management has been working collaboratively with the Toronto Police Service to restore safety and a peaceful environment.

And as a part of this important community-police liaison, the Toronto Police Service Chief Myron Demkiw graced the event as one of the special guests.

In his speech, Chief Demkiw spoke elo-

quently about the pillars of the Islamic faith, and impressed the audience with his depth of knowledge. His presence was comforting for many members.

Honorary Consul Mani Singh also addressed the gathering. Singh also celebrated Richard Aziz on behalf of the Imdadul management, who was recognised for his informative journalism as founder of the Shabnam Radio.

In addition, Imam Muzammil Ali presented certificates to the successful participants of the five year-long *Sahih Al Bukhari* program, the second most authentic book in Islam after the *Holy Quran*.

On behalf of the students of the program, Sister Bibi Nazmun Khan presented the Imam with a token of appreciation for his scholarly efforts. At the same time, he was also recognised by the Imdadul Board of Directors with a beautiful token of gratitude for his tireless dedication and contribution to the mosque.

In his speech, Imam Muzammil reminded everyone to make an extra effort to seek knowledge, no matter how busy our schedule gets!

Attendees thoroughly enjoyed the outstanding *nasheed* performances of popular Naat singers Sayed Usman, Khalid Javed, and Nazira Baksh.

Brother Osman Khan facilitated the fundraising portion of the event. He also fondly recalled the contribution of all the donors and volunteers, who together this year made the various projects at the Imdad Centre a huge success.

Guyana's diaspora rallies to the call

From Page 1

and attend this very important event, and for their invaluable presentations, tributes, and prayers for our fallen soldiers," a release stated.

Among the leaders were Pt Dr Yudhisthir Dhanrajh, Spiritual Leader of the Brampton Triveni Mandir; The Bishop Juan Edghill, Guyana's Minister of Public Works, who delivered the keynote address and a prayer via video; Imam Raahad Usmanali, Deputy Imam of the Islamic Forum of Canada; Gordon Winter, President of the Guyana Ex-Soldiers Association of Canada; and Jay Jairam, member of Guyana Ex-Soldiers Association of Canada.

Also, John O'Dell, President of the Alliance of Guyanese-Canadian Organisations; Omar Farouk, President of the IMO; Pt Roopnauth Sharma, President of the Hindu Federation of Canada and the Ram Mandir; Gillian Williams, community activist; and Gauri Dhanrajh from Triveni Mandir

The solemn event at Triveni Mandir also centred on the present and existential conflict now facing Guyana in the wake of Venezuela's aggression at its borders.

As the Consulate's release noted, the Triveni event also offered special prayers "for the preservation and safeguarding" of Guyana and its territories.

The Triveni observance was later followed on December 17 with another Interfaith Service, which was facilitated by the IMO, again under the auspices of the Guyana Consulate General.

In what was another solemn session, the event commemorated the five soldiers who lost their lives in the line of duty. Prayers for Guyana's peace and prosperity were also offered by the various religious leaders who attended.

In his tribute at the event, Singh expressed condolences for the five fallen heroes. He also commended Ali and the government in Georgetown for safeguarding Guyana's sovereignty and its territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, earlier this week Singh issued a Christmas greeting from his office to the diaspora and the wider, Canadian community.

In his message, Singh extended best wishes for a festive and joyful holiday season to the Guyanese diaspora, the Caribbean community, and to the rest of Canada.

He also noted, "We are living in a perilous and uncertain time in our world with the challenges of the cost of living, food security, energy security, global warming, wars, and destruction. But [the Caribbean community] must take comfort in the fact, notwithstanding all the challenges and uncertainties, that we have many leaders who are qualified, experienced, and capable."

He added, "These leaders are committed to democracy, human rights, inclusivity, social and economic justice, and peace. And they are exerting their energies and working through multilateral bodies, such as Caricom, Celac, the OAS, and the Commonwealth, to achieve these noble objectives."

He also cited the Argyle Agreement, which was signed on December 13 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines between Guyana and Venezuela, which among other things, agreed to non-violent solutions to the border conflict.

"[Brokered] by Caricom and Celac, [it is] a testament of their commitment to security and peace, and to maintain the Caribbean and Latin America area as a zone of peace," Singh declared.

Guyana's Justice Kissoon passes

Georgetown – An eminent retired Court of Appeal Judge, a humanitarian, and a fatherly figure dedicated to family, Justice Nandram Kissoon passed away on December 9 in Guyana. He was 81 years old.

According to reports out of Georgetown, an ailing Justice Kissoon recently underwent successful surgery abroad, but succumbed while recovering from the operation.

Justice Kissoon was married with one child. He was also a member of a family with extensive ties to the legal fraternity in Guyana and abroad. Lawyerly members in his family in Guyana include State Solicitor at the Attorney General's Chambers, Prithima Kissoon; High Court Judge, Justice Sandil Kissoon; and the renowned Attorney-at-Law, Devindra Kissoon.

Among the lawyerly family scions abroad with successful practices is Toronto's prominent lawyer, associate professor at Queen's University, and humanitarian, Dhaman Kissoon.

In Guyana, Justice Kissoon was born in 1942 at Plantation Clonbrook on the East Coast of Demerara. He grew up at Bee Hive, where he resided until his passing. He was one of 12 children.

He attended the Anns Grove RC School, and completed his General Certificate of Education at the Indian Education Trust (now Richard Ishmael Secondary School). Upon completing school, he worked as a teacher at the Mahaica and Clonbrook schools.

In 1965, Justice Kissoon left Guyana to study law at the Inner Temple in London, England. He returned to Guyana in 1969, where he set out on the path that would flourish into his notable and illustrious career in

the legal fraternity.

Justice Kissoon started his career in Guyana's Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and then moved over a few years later to the Chamber of the Attorney General.

He then left the public service for private practice, representing clients in both criminal and civil courts.

However, Justice Kissoon then returned to the public service after appointment as a Puisne Judge in 1987. Later, he ascended to the Court of Appeal, where he served until retirement.

At the time of his death, retired Justice Kissoon was serving on the Guyana Public Service Appellate Tribunal. He was appointed Chairman of the PSAT in 2017, and was reappointed in November 2020 by Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali.

Described as a "phenomenal humanitarian", Justice Kissoon's depth of humanity, his generosity, and commitment to giving back to Guyana, and to making a better world, were celebrated following his passing.

Recalled for his generosity, his contributions included scholarships to students, and donations to rebuild Hindu temples across Guyana.


Among his hobbies were a love for farming, growing crops, and keeping livestock.

High Court Judge, Justice Sandil Kissoon, described his uncle as a fatherly figure who was present and supportive for each family member.

Stated Justice Sandil Kissoon: "He was there at every juncture, at every hour of the day, whether called upon or not. He volunteered his assistance in every form... The word 'No' does not exist in his vocabulary. [He had] tremendous patience, resilience, and courage... He was simply old-school."




Nandram Kissoon



Season's Greetings and
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Editorial

A better 2024

It has been another *annus horribilis* as a challenging 2023 draws to a close; certainly, we are looking forward with hope to a better 2024, an *annus mirabilis*, an occurrence which in our time has been quite few and far between. We are holding on with anticipation.

This year had many uncertainties and turbulences, notably on the climate change front, where we endured record global temperatures; then there were numerous forest fires; coral reefs continue to diminish across the globe; and too many strong indicators have emerged that our world is warming up faster than scientists have anticipated.

And as we head into 2024, we have significant and simultaneous episodes of warfare occurring in different locations across the globe, which among its many horrific and existential challenges for the nations and the populations involved, pushes daily at our capacity to endure the unmitigated inhumanity in the rising toll of tens of thousands of innocent victims being killed.

Closer to our homelands, Trinidad and Tobago continues to deal with surging crime, and appears to be headed towards yet another 600 homicides for the year.

And in Guyana, the border dispute driven by Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro remains prominent with foreboding.

Now add to the burdensome woes that Guyana is undergoing the shocking deaths of five members of the Guyana Defence Force: Brigadier (retired) Gary Beaton, Colonel Michael Shahoud, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Charles, Lieutenant Colonel Sean Welcome, and Staff Sergeant Jason Khan, who all died in the tragic helicopter crash.

And now as the year comes to a close, there is even more sorrow to bear on already-burdened shoulders with the December 8 deaths of Guyanese and West Indies' cricketers Joe Stanislaus Solomon and Clyde Godfrey Butts.

Solomon's and Butts' departures are just two among the other mournful deaths that have trailed West Indies cricket this year, which itself has endured yet another *annus horribilis*, both on and off the field.

Most notable was the disappointing outcome on the field, a first and perhaps not the last, when West Indies failed to qualify for the 2023 ICC World Cup.

Then there were the earlier departures of West Indies Test cricketers Dominican Irvine Shillingford on January 26; Barbadian Thelston Payne on May 10; Trinidad and Tobago's Raphick Jumadeen on July 27; Barbadians Tony White on August 16, and Peter Lashley on September 4.

A true son of Guyana, Solomon's departure is being keenly felt in the homeland, in the Caribbean, and in the diaspora, particularly in New York where he last resided.

As Cricket West Indies' President Kishore Shallow stated, among other the qualities in his tribute, "Joe Solomon stood among the heroes of West Indies cricket. His iconic play – the pick-up, throw, and run-out of Ian Meckiff in the tied Test – remains an indelible moment in our history."

We seize this opportunity to reify that defining moment of positivity, which Kishore recalls, declaring Solomon's act to be a guiding star as we navigate the turbulences that are swirling around us today.

Solomon's throw was a defining moment, an historic and heroic play that not only elevated West Indies cricket, but at the same time gave the our region a new confidence, and a solid footing in the cricketing firmament.

Speaking with our correspondent Dhanpaul Narine in September 2020, Solomon recalled the remarkable events in Brisbane in 1960 that ended the first Test in a tie.

Wes Hall delivered the game's final ball to Lindsay Kline, who tapped it; then, seizing the moment, Meckiff charged down to the batter's end looking for the winning run.

As Solomon told Narine, "I am side-on and have only one stump to aim at... If I miss they will win. The Test Match rests on my throw. I practiced pelting mangoes in Guyana. I was feeling pretty confident. I grabbed the ball, looked at the stumps, and in one motion I threw down the stumps. Meckiff was run out."

The ball hitting the stumps was heard around the world, and still resonates today. In our turbulent times, Solomon's defining moment in the *annus mirabilis* that was 1960 will always give us hope; perhaps for a better 2024.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of this publication.
 Letters to be published will be edited where necessary.
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Here's why our Caribbean Christmas is the best

Growing up in a Hindu-West Indian household in Canada, I benefited from enjoying colourful and exciting religious and cultural celebrations.

During Diwali and Phagwah (Holi) there were music, food, prayers, and celebrations. These are moments with my family that I will cherish forever.

However, around this time each year, those from outside our community who knew my family and our cultural traditions would commonly ask, "Do you celebrate Christmas?"

I would proudly answer, "Yes."

Simply put, one of the benefits of being West Indian is the openness to share and enjoy the traditions of each other. The diverse composition of the Caribbean (Guyana, specifically in my case) fostered communities that included families from varying cultural backgrounds and religious traditions. Such inclusion cultivated a sense of understanding and appreciation for each other.

This appreciation also paved the way for us to partake in, and enjoy, the festivities that all cultures and religions had to offer.

In my Hindu household, at the start of December, we would promptly ensure our Christmas tree was assembled and decorated. Garlands, wreaths, bells, and berries were placed on doors, arches, and stair railings.

The outdoor lights we had installed in time for Diwali saw continuity past the festival of lights, and continued to be lit every day during December.

Family gatherings were also a central part of our Christmas activities. Our large family get-togethers would be a time that would bring us all together for fun, drinks, and of course, food.

Amidst the array of traditional recipe, such as like baked chicken, pasta, and veggies, would be plenty of West Indian favourites to choose from: dhal puri, rice and dhal, and a variety of curries – chicken, mutton, and fish would also be on the menu. There would be no shortage of food, and enough selection to satisfy every palate.

One of my favourite traditions is the many baked goods that mom would make, especially black cake. Known to some as rum cake, this delectable dish was a staple in our household every Christmas.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention the star feature of a Caribbean Christmas – Pepperpot. It is a savoury dish usually



Ryan Singh

made with pork, beef, or mutton (soya if you are vegetarian) that is stewed, flavoured with cinnamon and cassareep (sauce made from the cassava root). It is a national dish of Guyana and originated from the Guyanese Indigenous people.

The Indigenous People of Guyana discovered the preservative properties of liquid extracts from the poisonous bitter cassava root. Cassareep allowed them to preserve meat without access to refrigeration.

West Indian Christmas is the best because there are no bounds or limits. The cross-cultural influences in Christmas traditions, and that all were invited to participate, truly represented the spirit of the season.

The holidays in a West Indian household do expose the deep complexities of the broader Caribbean. From enjoying a staple dish that was invented by the Indigenous People of the region, to the adaptation of black cake, which is a descendant of a holiday plum (or "figgy") pudding recipes British colonisers brought to the West Indies in the 18th century.

For many of our ancestors, as many were Hindu or Muslim, they would have witnessed Christmas as a Christian observance of the British colonisers and some of the Afro-Caribbean community.

They would use the opportunity to congregate during this period, since Christmas would bring some joy and relief from their daily toil.

At the end of Indentureship, many would view Christmas as a time of celebration, and even if they did not come from traditions that marked the birth of Christ, at the same time they very well understood the significance of the holiday.

Like the stories of the births of Lord Krishna or Lord Rama, many of us recognise the importance of the birth of a Saviour.

Upon reflection, the magnitude with which Christmas is celebrated in the Western world aligns with observances of the arrival of Krishna and Rama across South Asia.

As Christmas approaches, it is an opportunity to reflect on all aspects of the celebration, and how we mark the occasion. It shares details and values of our community, and the beautiful composition of our culture that has been influenced over time.

Christmas in the Caribbean gave us many unique traditions, and regardless of your religious affiliation or cultural background, these festivities were there for all to enjoy.

How early shenanigans set the cement for adulthood

Perhaps I should have known from early o'clock there was no turning my boyhood friend Big C away from the "own-way" path he took later in life.

And now for a refresher for the many among us who may have forgotten what "own-way" meant when we were growing up back home in the old days when we were young, restive, and relentless. For an energised and fast-burn boy to be told by an adult that he was "own-way" – well, it meant he was "harden".

But now that explanation further complicates the definition of "own-way", despite "harden" being almost synonymous in its meaning.

Needless to say, both descriptions framed in the time and location of its delivery in the language of back home meant the adult was dealing with a stubborn, obviously strong-willed, and notably headstrong child.

Now just to push the envelope on the language we used back home in those days, for a young boy like Big C, and obviously my good self, as was pervasively noted by my exasperated grandmother throughout my boyhood days, there was a superlative usage that further refined and concentrated that 'unwholesome' quality of being "own-way" and "harden".

Ma would say, "Child, you over 'own-way'! You and your friend – both of you 'harden too, too bad!'"

My dear grandmother was referencing Big C, my peer and partner-in-crime, he and I both dreading by mango trees in fruition, and unwitting river fish that swam too close to our hooks baited with anticipation.

And then there was the down-the-road neighbour's donkey that we occasionally provoked with annoying cat-calls, cackling at our pejorative word play on the synonyms around its name, and behaving similar to the flies that tormented its flickering ears as we tried in vain to bring out its more mulish tendencies.

Note the unfolding of my grandmother's superlative in her grammatical construction in the overlays of "over" and "too, too" that powered her hyperbole and exasperation, and her darkening half-play on the word "bad"; as in, "Child! You over harden! Too, too bad!"

Now here was a young boy excelling at what he did best! Paired with my partner-in-boyhood-crime, Big C, we were a dynamic duo of unbounded energy, "own-wayness", and "harden-too-too-badness" during our early, untrammelled years.

But then we took different paths early in our young lives. And so it came to pass that I began my life's journey on a dif-

ferent road after moving away from the venous windings of the crushed gravel, dusty tracks that circulated through towering fields of sugar canes that washed our "growing up" landscape with its interminable green.

"Play-time and harden behaviour over and done with!" a prescient neighbour exclaimed to me the morning I left Ma's care behind, my tiny *Jahaji* bundle in hand, for the small town some distance away.

Today I still recall with unmitigated wistfulness the morning after arrival, when I started my long journey down the corridor of learning as I entered the disciplined world of school, and its corollary, militaristic rigours of book-work heavy-lifting in the trenches.

Then it came to be that our paths crossed in our teen-aged years, and Big C and I met again briefly in high school. Educational institutions are like marketplaces; here are similar spaces of confluence that bring the outer points of villages at the rim of a wheel down its spokes to the centre that is the hub.

Like myself then, Big C was also in the formative phase of who he would become later in life. Even then, I understood early o'clock that he had retained being "own-way" and "harden"; and that there was no turning away from his chosen, obstinate path.

It was our Christmas assembly, and our entire school was singing the eternal, and uplifting carol, *Silent Night*. We sang in unison, "All is calm, all is bright". But someone was out of sync.

It was Big C; he did not sing "calm" – instead, he intoned "clam", the dissonance noted by congregation members nearby with widened eyes and quizzical gazes in his direction.

"Big C, the word is not 'clam'; it is 'calm,'" I intoned in *sotto voce*. But he ignored me, and sailed calmly onward into his teen-aged turbulence and defiance.

There are a few among us, who having constructed a universe within, then wholly apply its square peg to the round hole of this world; there is no relenting in the face of overwhelming evidence indicating another path. Such was how Big C decided to fit into the bigger pieces of the construct making up this world.

Of course, Big C had a head start in obstinacy early in life, driven as he was by our boyhood shenanigans, our early incursions into spaces of 'own-waywardness' and 'harden' bad behaviour that had set the cement too early for his later years.

I met him decades afterwards outside a cinema in the capital city. Defiance had become wrinkled with notable cruelty around his eyes. He lifted a forefinger, wagging it to warn me away.

"No time to talk," he said. "On my way to watch a 'flim'."



Romeo Kaseram



Caricom leaders met last week before the Guyana-Venezuela talks

Main focus by Guyana's govt must be on keeping its security interest

Dear Editor,

The most fundamental interest of a country is its security. This is not to say that states do not have other interests – they do, such as prosperity and social well-being. But these fade into insignificance unless a country can protect its physical integrity.

Right now, Guyana's security is threatened by Venezuela, which has been ratcheting up its aggression ever since Exxon struck oil off our shores in 2015.

The facts are well-known – save to note that even with the just-concluded Argyle Declaration, Venezuela continues to openly and notoriously annex two-thirds of our national territory contained in Essequibo.

In 1966 Venezuela annexed our half of Ankoko Island, and to date, we have not attempted to recover it, even as we continue teaching our schoolchildren that Guyana remains the 83,000 square miles we possessed before Ankoko was seized.

The question has to be asked, "Why not?" States usually employ one or more foreign policy instruments such as alliances, arms sales, and dispute resolution. Examples of these are the World Court, foreign aid and cultural soft power, diplomacy, or war, to secure their interests, depending upon their domestic, political, and economic conditions, and so on.

If they are acting rationally, States generally would weigh the costs versus the benefits before choosing a course of action.

While I have not seen any definitive statement on our inaction on Venezuela's Ankoko seizure, the implicit assumption appeared to have been that the costs would have outweighed the benefits, since our portion of Ankoko was "only" three square miles.

We were definitely no match for the Venezuelan armed forces, which is why the Venezuelans decided to invade; and it would appear we did not even possess the wherewithal to take diplomatic and legal recourse to the international multilateral institutions.

Since 1966, Venezuela has buttressed its foreign policy option to wage war by inexorably increasing its armed might, whether their governments were dictatorships, democratic, or authoritarian – as it presently is under Nicolás Maduro.

This became especially true under Hugo Chávez after he was elected as president in 1998 following his failed *coups d'état* earlier in the decade, and was intensified by Maduro, who succeeded him in 2013.



Hugo Chávez

Starting from ground zero in 2005, Venezuela purchased over \$4 billion worth of military hardware – including 24 Russian-made Sukhoi Su-30 MK2 fighter jets; 53 military helicopters, and 100,000 AK-47's from Russia, which it declared to be an ally versus the US to which Chávez's Bolivarian Revolution was implacably opposed.

Chávez supported FARC guerrillas in Columbia, and launched alternative regional grouping such as ALBA and oil-aid to the Caribbean mini-states with Petrocaribe.

Even Guyana benefitted from the seeming largesse of Petrocaribe, and there were murmurs of finding a common cause against the old "imperialists".

Under Maduro, there has been an additional (US) \$15 billion in arm purchases from Russia.

While with reference to the participants, the Argyle Declaration "reiterated their commitment to Latin America and the Caribbean remaining a Zone of Peace". If Venezuela really believes in peace, then they must be following Carl von Clausewitz's reaffirmation of the venerable Roman dictum, which is "If you want peace prepare for war".

Meaning of course, any potential aggressor will be deterred by a strong response, and peace would most likely ensue.

We can only look at the actions of Venezuela towards us since 2015, and conclude their foreign policy instrument to wage war against us was encouraged by our continued anaemic capabilities in this area. To secure a strong peace, we must be capable of exercising the option of waging a credible war.

Ironically, the very circumstance that stimulated Venezuelan aggression has also given us the wherewithal to explore options other than the judicial route we have chosen up to now because of the Exxon bonus.

As was suggested earlier this month, it is time that we have a fully functional military base in Essequibo to which we can permit the US access, as we strengthen our alliance with that nation beyond our common commitment to democracy.

Our security interest is matched not only by their interest in protecting their corporation, which that has been given notice by Venezuela to leave, but also in their wider interest for the Western Hemisphere, in which it is situated, to be a zone of peace occupied by democratic states.

Ravi Dev, Guyana, via email.

Argyle declaration a welcome move

The following Editorial is reproduced courtesy the *Trinidad Express* newspaper, which was published on December 15

Everyone in the region should welcome the lowered temperature between Guyana and Venezuela after presidents Irfaan Ali and Nicolás Maduro met face to face on December 13 in SVG.

Arising from an initiative spearheaded by SVG's Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves, the mediation has resulted in an agreement title, *The Joint Declaration of Argyle for Dialogue and Peace Between Guyana and Venezuela*.

Among the key points in that document is a commitment that "Guyana and Venezuela, directly or indirectly, will not threaten or use force against one another in any circumstances"; that "any controversies between the two States will be resolved in accordance with international law, including the Geneva Agreement"; and that "both States will refrain, whether by words or deeds, from escalating any conflict or disagreement arising from any controversy between them".

Given his previous heated rhetoric on the Essequibo issue, including issuing official maps that make the region part of Venezuela, Maduro has boiled down like *bhaji*, as we say here. What factors could have forced him into even meeting with Ali, let alone making such concessions?

Although ample credit must be given to Gonsalves for bringing both men to the table, Maduro must have had self-interested motives for acceding to Gonsalves' overtures.

The cynical view is that Maduro's agreeing to the declaration is a strategy to lull Guyana into a false sense of security while Venezuela continues to make preparations to take Essequibo by force. However, this would also out Maduro

as completely untrustworthy, to an extent that would make it almost impossible for his natural allies, Russia, China, and Cuba, to support any such action, even by word alone.

It is more likely that, having read the political currents, Maduro has realised he is better off playing the role of diplomatic leader than Bolivarian conqueror.

Among the factors that would have driven his decision is the US affirming its support for Guyana, Brazil deploying troops to its border with Venezuela, and perhaps most pertinently, the low turnout for the referendum on the Essequibo question.

Gonsalves, whose doctorate is in government, very likely saw that Maduro needed an avenue to back down from his aggressive stance without losing face. The Argyle meeting provided that opportunity, and according to the declaration, Gonsalves will continue to be the main mediator going forward.

All this shows what can be accomplished when leaders take the bull by the horns and apply *realpolitik* (that is, politics based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations).

Gonsalves' initiative contrasts strongly with the hands-off attitude of T&T's PM Dr Keith Rowley. Having declared earlier this month that "our approach has been to follow certain fundamental principles so that we can preserve ourselves as an honest broker", Rowley was clearly left scrambling, forced to charter a CAL flight to SVG so he could be listed among the "Also present" in the declaration.

Only time will however tell how robust the Argyle agreement is. For now, the Dragon gas deal is less imperilled, and skilled nationals can still look to Guyana for jobs in its new energy sector.



Nicolás Maduro

RE/GUYANA 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.

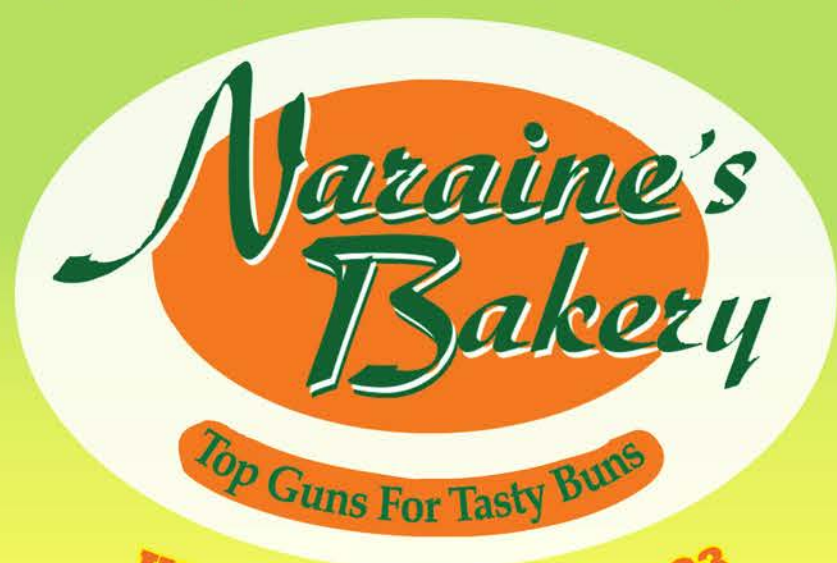
Guyana's Real Estate Association has noted the sharp rise of rentals where the cost of a two bedroom apartment rental is triple the price in 2010. Rates for a modern two bedroom apartment in Georgetown can easily fetch (US) \$2,500 per month with updated detached homes in better neighbourhoods going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



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2023 in review: Guyana's prosperity needs careful management

In spite of continued strong economic growth on the back of increasing oil production, 2023 was marked by substantial anxiety over Guyana's border dispute with Venezuela. High food prices, escalating crime, and simmering political tensions added to the daily challenges of living in an otherwise "economically rich" country.

Tensions over the century-old border dispute escalated after Venezuela laid claim to the resource-rich Essequibo region that comprises two-thirds of Guyana. Following a controversial referendum in December to validate its intentions, Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro ordered the creation of a new state called "Guayana Esequiba".

Maduro also signed a "presidential decree" creating the "High Commission for the Defense of Guayana Esequiba". He announced a number of measures, including the appointment of the state-owned firm PDVSA to immediately create a special department to manage the activities in the region, including the approval of all oil, gas, and mining exploration licences.

He also asked his legislators to draw up a law banning the hiring of any companies that have worked with Guyana in areas of the disputed territory, and gave companies currently in the region three months to leave the area.

As well, he ordered a census among residents of Essequibo in order to facilitate the attribution of Venezuelan nationality to the population of Essequibo.

With the threat of a physical confrontation high, anxiety among Guyanese skyrocketed. However, by mid-December the anxiety subsided following a meeting between Guyana's President Irfaan Ali and Maduro, who agreed that force would not be used to settle the long-simmering dispute between the two countries.

The two neighbours pledged to resolve the dispute in accordance with international law. Guyana remained steadfast in the belief that the decision of the International Court of Justice would prevail on the matter, but Venezuela openly rejected the ICJ's jurisdiction over the issue – which theoretically leaves it unresolved. The two leaders agreed to meet again within three months in Brazil to further discuss the disputed territory.

In the meantime, Guyana's economy continued to boom, with real GDP growth expected to reach 38.4 percent in 2023, compared to 62.3 percent in 2022.

Oil production, which averaged 350,000 barrels per day, is expected to continue to increase with the discovery of new wells, and is forecasted at over 700,000 barrels per day in 2025, and 1,000,000 barrels per day by 2030.

The country's massive [all currency in Guyana currency] \$781.9 billion 2023 budget, which was 41.4 percent larger than last year's, was aptly themed, "Improving lives today; building prosperity for tomorrow." It focused on supporting the traditional, new, and emergent non-oil pillars of the economy, and helping to ensure stronger and more broad-based growth.

The budget was partially financed by Guyana's first carbon sale, which amounted to some \$1.3 billion.

The budget contained no new taxes; raised the income tax threshold; and outlined a number of incentives to alleviate the living standard of the people. The individual income tax threshold was increased to \$85,000 per month, up from \$75,000 last year.

The old age pension was increased to \$33,000 per month, up from \$28,000, while Public Assistance rose to \$16,000 per month from \$14,000 per month.

Parents of school-aged children benefitted from a 40 percent increase in the 'Because We Care Cash Grant', which was hiked to \$35,000, up from \$25,000 per child last year. Children also received an annual uniform allowance of \$5,000.

Adjustments were also made to the salary scales for nurses, healthcare workers, and members of the Joint Services.

To reduce the cost of home ownership, the 14 percent Value Added Tax on residential properties was scrapped, while the low-income ceiling for loans for the housing sector was increased from \$15 million to \$20 million, enhancing the ability to borrow at lower interest costs.

During the year, Guyana made concerted efforts to promote agriculture to counterbalance the dominance of its oil sector. The government recognised that it cannot ignore the development of agriculture, which is not only the country's largest employer, but also provides much needed food security for Guyana as well as the Caribbean.

It was also recognised that oil is a depletable resource, whose price is subject to the vagaries of the world market, whereas agriculture sustains the livelihood of a significant portion of the population, especially the rural poor. It is also a source of foreign income – a potential that has never been fully exploited.

The importance of developing agriculture was stressed at the Agri Investment Forum and Expo held in Georgetown from October 20-22, where Guyana pushed agriculture in coordina-

tion with its Caribbean counterparts to achieve the region's goal of reducing agriculture imports by 25 percent by 2025.

When addressing the expo, Guyana's Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha said "the future of agriculture hinges on the critical importance of investments in the sector, which is the key to unlocking its vast potential". He also emphasised that the "forum represents not just a meeting of minds, but a profound commitment to the future of agriculture in the Caribbean... a future that hinges on the critical importance of investment".



Dwarka Lakhan

Mustapha added that "investments in agriculture are investments in the very bedrock of our nations. They are the seed of growth [and] the fruit for innovation".

Despite the efforts to stimulate agriculture, the performance of the sector has left much to be desired. The country's on-off focus on

non-traditional agriculture for the past four decades has not benefitted from the level of commitment required to support its growth. In spite of sporadic efforts, production in non-traditional crops has on average been declining.

Past experience has shown that there has been weak integration of implementation efforts, resulting in sporadic ventures that have engendered limited success. In fact, over time there have been more failures than successes in a broad spectrum of agribusinesses, ranging from processing facilities to livestock development.

For instance, consistency in the supply or output of the sectors has always been problematic. Crops tend to be affected by the vagaries of weather and diseases, which have led to manufacturing downtime and consequently supply/demand shortfalls. This has had a negative impact on exports, whereby contractual supply arrangements were not fulfilled; as well as resulting in inefficient domestic plant operations, where they exist.

This problem has been compounded by the scale of operations, which has not allowed for sufficient output for exports, or for agro-processing. For example, in the case of agro-processing, plants have not had sufficient



Irfaan Ali

inputs to operate efficiently on a large scale.

It is also necessary to improve coordination of farm-to-factory supply, and establish a formal mechanism to ensure that processes put in place actually work. It is easy to argue that some mechanisms exist, but whether they work effectively remain questionable.

In addition, Guyanese have had a preference for foreign goods, which ultimately limits the expansion of domestic industries. In as much as foreign imports can force local industries to be competitive, if local industries are not given some form of protection to develop as part of a feasible business strategy, they will not prosper.

One important aspect of the government's strategy that has not been emphasised is the potential to build around established industries – such as rice and sugar, taking into account the availability of inputs.

Evidently, backward and forward linkages between the base and satellite industries can provide a competitive advantage, and offer greater control over the growth of the offshoot of the traditional industries. Such a strategy would also be beneficial because the country would be able to maximise the use of its existing skills in established industries.

The failure of agriculture has partially led to record high food prices, putting a strain on the budgets of the poor and those with a fixed income. At the same, time food imports have been increasing.

During the year, the government embarked on an *ad hoc* spending spree, albeit without adherence to a national development or strategic plan. Confident about its spending in the wake of surging oil revenues, the government allocated billions of dollars to projects that were deemed to be transformational in nature, among them energy expansion and diversification, transportation infrastructure, and sea and river defence.

Although the government has indicated that it has a plan to pursue its development agenda, its approach to development planning has been haphazard, and continued to lead to inefficient allocation of resources and unequal patterns of development across the various regions. This has led to dissatisfaction among varying segments of the population, with some getting too much, some too little, and some mere promises.

That is not to say that the government has not made tremendous strides in leading Guyana to prosperity, but just that a more coordinated path to growth will probably lead to a greater and more measurable path to prosperity, which will in turn lead to greater political satisfaction.

The country remained a haven for foreign investors seeking to take advantage of a wealth of available opportunities. Many have the resources to invest, but a sizeable portion were simply seeking to make noise with the intent of attracting attention. In the

meantime, the government remained nonchalant about prioritising specific areas that need to be developed, especially those that are non-oil and non-technology related.

With an increase in foreign investing, the risk of money laundering rose in spite of the country's efforts to prevent the crime. Weaknesses in the banking system, newer methods to undermine control efforts, a rise in activities at 'laundromats' such as cambios and casinos, and the mere fact that the country still has a cash-based economy, supported continued money laundering.

Efforts to digitise financial transactions continued at a healthy pace, but remained at a developing stage over the year. However, it will require a set of more comprehensive money laundering controls, as digitisation is not a panacea for preventing money laundering, but rather an accelerator.

Plans were also announced to use oil revenues to finance investments in mining, tourism, agriculture, health care, education, and social services.

In the energy sector, the budget announced that Guyana Power and Light will be examining options for boosting its short-term generation needs through the acquisition of an additional 50 megawatts (MW) of firm generating capacity.

Construction of the proposed Natural Gas plant was also expected to begin this year. The government signed a contract for the construction of the integrated natural gas liquids plant, and the 300 MW combined cycle gas turbine power plant at Wales. In 2022, \$24.6 billion was spent to meet start up costs associated with this project, and in 2023, \$43.3 billion was budgeted to facilitate the construction of the plant and associated facilities.

In the area of hydropower, the government announced that it will relaunch a Request for Proposals for the restart of the Amaila Falls Hydropower Project. In addition, works were being initiated for the construction of a 1.5 MW hydropower facility at Kumu, and the rehabilitation and upgrade of the 700 kW Moco-Moco hydropower plant in Region 9.

The budget allocated \$136.1 billion for the construction of a range of roads, bridges, and access roads across the country.

A sum of \$84.9 billion was budgeted to the Health Care sector for 2023. Among construction projects identified were the paediatric and maternal hospital, and six regional hospitals; the construction, retrofit and upgrade of the New Amsterdam and Georgetown hospitals, regional hospitals, and health centres.

The budget also announced a housing policy that extended beyond house lots to include the construction of houses for professionals, moderate income, and low-income earners. Programs identified included a Home Construction Assistance Programme, a Cement and Steel Subsidy Programme, and the Lethem Housing Support Initiative.

Specific communities, particularly those which are not strongholds of the PPP received special incentives during the year, raising the ire of supporters who believe the government has been pandering to non-supporters, much to the detriment of its traditional supporters. This move, it is believed, could backfire on the government come next general elections.

However, optimism about the country's future was clouded by persistent attempts by the country's main Opposition party to incite racial tensions, which has been historically plagued by racial divisions.

Bitter about losing the last general elections, in spite of concerted attempts to rig the results, APNU, supported by selected individuals at its helm, has focused on making unsubstantiated allegations of racial discrimination against the ruling PPP/Civic government. These allegations were meant to taint the government, and disrupt the normal course of governance, as well as garner sympathisers both at home and abroad.

As business activity picked up, allegations of corruption continued to rear their ugly heads. In spite of hundreds of allegations, insinuations, and accusations of corruption, an infinitesimal number of cases have been brought to justice.

In spite of its rising oil revenues, Guyana's external, as well as its domestic public debt, rose during the year. In fact, the country's total public debt is currently at its highest level in the last decade. However, the country's debt as a percentage of its sharply rising GDP – resulting from higher oil revenues – fell, meaning that Guyana now has greater ability to repay its debt.

On the political front, the alliance between APNU and the AFC appeared to have ended, with APNU appearing to be in disarray. And on the social front, crime continued unabated, creating fear among the population – although the government contends that crime is falling.

All in all, Guyana appeared set for a prosperous future which needs careful management. However, the lack of strategic planning could put its future at risk. In addition, sufficient attention has not been paid to the host of social problems – from crime, to drugs, to prostitution, to money laundering – which continued to plague the country.

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.

Guyana, Venezuela and the fine line with borders and power relations

By Nalini Mohabir

I am overwhelmed by border politics these days, but as a geographer I cannot turn away. A border is not a real geography – although real politically – it is not a natural division, but an imagined geography that includes or excludes.

One way to think about the Guyanas might be we are all one: all countries with contiguous borders across the ancient geological formation of the Guiana Shield are part of the Guyanas. An early map (by Ortelius in 1570) portrayed the entire region east of the Orinoco (including present day Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana) as “Caribana”. It was all Carib territory.

Maps can also be subjective. For instance, in 1595, the British explorer Walter Raleigh famously went in search of the mythical city of El Dorado, paved in gold and located along Lake Parima (which did not exist). He called Guiana “a country that hath yet her maidenhead, never sacked, turned, nor wrought” – passively waiting to be mined for riches.

Raleigh’s map of El Dorado included a drawing of the imaginary Lake Parima as a *vagina dentata* (a vagina with teeth), eluding to his own anxiety over place and boundaries. His voyage was soon followed by Spanish, and French explorers also seeking to discover the rumoured richest city in the world – propelled by colonial greed.

Out of the three colonies ceded by the Dutch to the British, Essequibo was the oldest colony, but difficult to control because of its porous border with Venezuela that facilitated a local cross-border trade (especially for Amerindians), and importantly offered an escape route for enslaved Africans (a Spanish decree promised freedom if one converted to Catholicism).

Historian Bram Hoonhout referred to the Essequibo colony as a borderless society. As Guyanese people know (in relation to being deemed unwanted migrants), borders can sometimes constrain freedom.

However, fixing borders was an imperative of British imperialism. The Royal Geographical Society in London funded Richard Schomburgk’s visits to Guiana, soon after the abolition

of slavery in Guiana, and decades after Venezuela gained independence from Spain. His task was to delineate the boundaries of British Guiana.

Schomburgk followed in the footsteps of Raleigh even though as a historical source Raleigh’s work was in large parts fictional. Also, he followed rivers to their sources to “penetrate” the interior and map the British Guiana.

Historian G.G. Burnett noted Schomburgk’s expedition was impossible without the help of Amerindians (whose very nations transcend borders). Burnett amusingly characterised Schomburgk as progressing from “cassava transaction to cassava transaction”.

Also, he used a “traverse survey” that depended on trekking through “*terra incognita*” (such as the rainforest between Guyana and Venezuela), and identifying landmarks to pin locations on a map. Some of these landmarks are beautifully portrayed in the drawings, *Twelve Views in the Interior of Guiana* (1835-1839).

Artist Ann Gollifer (with Indigenous roots in the Baria-Waini region of Guyana, which borders Venezuela), recently re-imagined the drawings in her *Views in the Interior of Guyana*.

Schomburgk’s borderlines define Guyana built on arguments of occupation and cultivation (ideas derived from British philosopher John Locke used to justify settler colonialism). Even if not visible in the beautiful backdrops of places portrayed in *Twelve Views in the Interior of Guyana*, we know what lies behind these colonial ideologies – stolen land and the brutality on the plantation.

Through her portrayal of everyday Guyanese domestic scenes, Gollifer is trying to show a different relationship to place, one that creates community and neighbours. But what does this matter in the face of threats to Guyana’s sovereignty?

In 1896, the American Judge Charles P. Daly implied that the Monroe Doctrine applied to the border dispute between Venezuela and then British Guiana. As we know, the Monroe Doctrine is about the supposed right of the US to violate sovereignty if their interests are threatened anywhere in the West.

Guyanese people know all too well the ramifications of the Monroe Doctrine, as it was American interference that deposed Dr Cheddi Jagan, destabilised the country, and delayed Guyana’s Independence in the 1960s.

Recalling this and other tragedies, Trinidad and Tobago activist and scholar Wayne Kublasingh, writing in the *Trinidad Express*, asks us to think twice before rushing to invite the US to protect Guyana.

Kublasingh suggests that it puts the whole region at risk, stating, “[Sabre-rattling from both sides... is] unhelpful. It impugns the dignity of both the Venezuelan and Guyanese peoples. The controversy is crying for connection. [Guyana’s President Dr Irfaan Ali’s] rush to the Americans for help, to CNN and the BBC, the gossellers of Euro-American hegemony, whilst refusing to talk to Maduro are three tell-tale signs of tragedy.”

But can we criticise Ali? After all, Guyana has a large territory and a small army. His role as Head of State is to protect citizens from invasion. The border represents a line between what is “ours” and what is “theirs” within the geopolitical system of nation-states. A border also represents insiders and outsiders, us and them, familiar or foreign – historically problematic categories shaped by unequal power relations.

We know Maduro is trying to cling to power through war-mongering as a distraction to his people, and to prop up a weak economy by gaining access to new oil reserves. Guyanese are rightfully worried, expressed in calls for increased border security.

But we should also be wary, because colonialism is not always violent. Inviting a superpower to intervene in the affairs of Guyana might also affect the material uses of Guyanese borders, beyond Guyanese control, such as the presence of US troops on the border with Venezuela, which could escalate tensions, and lead to violence and death on both sides of the border, not to mention potential longer term consequences (worst case scenario, US territorial control over Guyana).

I hold out hope that Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and an elder statesman of the Caribbean, will be able to broker a conversation between neighbours that leads to a shared gateway for mutual safety across the Latin America and the Caribbean. The world needs another way.

Nalini Mohabir is an associate professor in the department of Geography, Planning, and Environment at Concordia University.



Ralph Gonsalves



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Photos by Lightfall Portraits

ICGAA sparkles, shines at Christmas celebration

Members of the Indo Caribbean Golden Age Association once again sparkled and shone, revealing why the group is “golden” when it held its annual Christmas celebrations on December 10.

This year the ICGAA was delighted to have the Honorary Consul of Guyana Mani Singh, along with two staff members from the Consulate General in Toronto as its guests.

While the evening was festive and celebratory, in what was a sign of the times, ICGAA members all expressed concern over the disturbing situation Guyana now faces with Venezuela. In response, the association extended prayers for peace and safety of family, friends, and for Guyana.

ICGAA member and volunteer Karan Singh sang the classic song, *Not a Blade of Grass*, with the group accompanying with the chorus. Music for the evening was also provided by musician David Singh, who kept the members on the dance floor throughout the evening.

There was also full member participation in the singing of Christmas carols. A rise in pitch was notable when the group welcomed the arrival of Jolly ‘Not-So-Old’ Santa Claus and his helpful Elves who brought good wishes and glad tidings to all.

Santa and his helpers later presented members with sweets

and other treats, which were provided by members and volunteers.

Members were also treated to photographs with family and friends against a beautiful Christmas background. And to adding a sparkle to the photography, Santa and his Elves joined in for some of the snapshots. It was quite a delight!

A scrumptious dinner and dessert followed, with plenty for everyone. The celebration continued after dinner with live music and dancing.

As usual, throughout the event, members enjoyed each other’s company, catching up, and sharing their stories. A good time was had by all.

It was notable, and quite moving, that when it came to that time to say, “So long until next year”, the love and hugs were warm, and in abundance.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, ICGAA’s sponsors, and our dedicated team of volunteers, we wish each and everyone of you “A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe Holiday Season. May the New Year 2024 bring us all Peace, Good Health, and Prosperity”.

For more information about the ICGAA, call **President Shaw Jaundoo at 905-426-2424**.



A wonderful time was had by all when the ICGAA held its annual Christmas celebration on December 10

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Barbados' PM Mia Mottley addresses COP28 earlier this month

Barbados welcomes COP28 agreement

Bridgetown – The government of Barbados last week welcomed the agreement reached at the end of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, stating that “the world has taken a major step in the fight against the climate crisis”, the Caribbean Media Corporation reported.

COP28 closed on December 13 with an agreement that signals the “beginning of the end” of the fossil fuel era by laying the ground for a swift, just, and equitable transition, underpinned by deep emissions cuts and scaled-up finance.

In a demonstration of global solidarity, negotiators from nearly 200 parties came together in Dubai with a decision on the world’s first “global stocktake” to ratchet up climate action before the end of the decade, with the overarching aim to keep the global temperature limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach.

“Whilst we didn’t turn the page on the fossil fuel era in Dubai, this outcome is the beginning of the end,” said UN Climate Change executive secretary Simon Stiell in his closing speech.

“Now all governments and businesses need to turn these pledges into real-economy outcomes, without delay.”

The global stocktake is considered the central outcome of COP28. It contains every element that was under negotiation, and can now be used by countries to develop stronger climate action plans, which are due by 2025.

The stocktake recognises the science that indicates global greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut 43 percent by 2030, compared to 2019 levels, to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

However, at the same time it notes parties are off track when it comes to meeting their Paris Agreement goals.

“[We] are one step closer to securing a better future for the generations to come,” Barbados’ Prime Minister Mia Mottley said following the conference.

Mottley was speaking to the agreement that

Regional forecast cites lower humidity

Bridgetown – With the Caribbean region now in its cool season, the Barbados-based Caribbean Climate Outlook has indicated the possible occurrence of more comfortable temperatures, lower humidity levels, and for some areas, an early dry season with the potential for drought conditions.

CariCOF is based out of Barbados, and has provided insights into what the next three months may have in store for the region.

Its report was cited by Caribbean media outlets, including the *Caribbean National Weekly*.

As CariCOF noted, from December to February, Caribbean islands and Belize will experience more comfortable temperatures and lower humidity levels. However, with

was reached at the conference to commit to transitioning away from a reliance on fossil fuels to provide or satisfy energy needs.

She added, “In this historic moment, I commend COP28 president His Excellency Sultan al-Jaber for both leading this summit and reaching this important outcome,” she said.

Additionally, “[As] we celebrate this milestone of global commitment, I believe it is equally important that our focus sharpens on the challenges that lie beyond this commitment”.

Mottley said the world finds itself at a critical juncture in time, where issues of access to finance, technology, and the timely and affordable supply of equipment emerge as linchpins in determining the fate of millions of people in smaller countries like Barbados.

As she noted, “The reality is, in smaller economies, these challenges loom larger, underscoring the urgent need for collective action and solidarity. Quite literally, the lives and livelihoods of our people and the future of our countries rests on our ability to navigate these hurdles.”

Also, “If we fail to address these critical issues, it will without doubt lead us down a perilous path. As the climate crisis continues to disproportionately impact our vulnerable nations, they risk becoming both un-investable and uninsurable, as we have started to see happen in several instances. These are entirely unavoidable, yet dire consequences.”

Mottley also declared that she was applauding and supporting the direction COP28 took with respect to the transition away from fossil fuels.

“It is undeniably a positive one. But we cannot be lulled into a sense of complacency. We are going in the right direction, but we cannot take our eyes off the destination – a destination where financial barriers do not impede progress, where technology can be the catalyst for sustainability, and the ability to affordably access essential equipment is not a stumbling block, but a stepping stone toward a resilient future,” Mottley stated.

this period marking the early dry season for these areas, there are potential implications for drought conditions, it stated.

CariCOF also noted that the cool season will bring with it a reduction in wet days and fewer spells of heavy showers, especially by February.

It also expressed a concern for moderate drought in regions that are currently experiencing rainfall deficits, with northwest Belize expected to see more frequent dry spells.

CariCOF also noted that even though the potential for flooding and cascading hazards is anticipated to be moderate throughout December, mountainous areas in the Caribbean region remain at a higher risk.



Ask Jay...

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

NAVIGATING THE SLIPPERY SLOPES FOR NEW HOME BUYERS

Hold onto your hat for this rollercoaster! Remember when everyone was snagging new homes at the pandemic’s start because interest rates were dirt cheap, and home prices were soaring? Fast forward to now, and bam! Interest rates shot up by around five percent, giving the housing market a severe shake.

Now, here’s the kicker: if you were planning to sell your current place to fund that dreamy new home, things just got tricky. With higher interest rates, getting a fat mortgage is tougher. And guess what? The value of the homes selling took a dip.

But wait, there’s more! Lenders say those shiny new homes aren’t worth what you paid, so get ready to drop a hefty down payment. Cue the drama – buyers are waving goodbye to deposits, and in some cases, kissing hundreds of thousands of dollars goodbye. Wild, right?

Picture this: When the pandemic hit, interest rates dropped to almost nothing, making it super affordable to borrow money. That led to a big jump in home prices. But here’s the scoop – I don’t see interest rates going way down in the coming year. So, if you’re eyeing those fabulous pre-construction homes, you better have a backup plan in case things get bumpy when it’s time to close the deal!

Ready for some action? If your closing day is on the horizon, and you plan to sell your current pad to fund the new digs, buckle up! A market drop of five or ten percent could mess with your down payment dreams.

Some savvy homeowners are making moves early, selling up and crashing in short-term spots to dodge closing day drama. Are you eyeing a new build? Get ahead by locking in that mortgage early and getting the property appraised pronto. Lenders do not lend for fancy upgrades, so if your dream home is still in the works, cut back on those extras to save some cash. Time to make those plans rock-solid!

Hold on to your excitement, folks! Exiting a contract for a brand-new home isn’t a walk in the park – it’s a serious commitment between you and the builder. The builder’s got their bases covered if you want to bail.

Are you feeling the pressure at closing time? Ask the builder for an extension, but beware, it might cost you. Now, here’s a bold move: if you’ve got a solid financial game and a current home, consider tapping into its equity to seal the deal on that new dream home. Turn your current spot into a rental for some extra cash flow. The market will heat up, and both properties will skyrocket. But here’s the secret sauce – don’t over-extend yourself financially.

If the price of your dream home skyrockets after you’ve bought it, here’s a thrilling option: consider an assignment sale. It’s like passing the torch to another eager buyer by assigning your contract to them. But, hold up – check your contract first to ensure you’ve got the green light for this play, and watch out for any assignment fees.

Now, here’s the trick: sell it below what the builder is currently asking. The catch? Builders usually frown on shouting about assignment sales from the rooftops. If your purchase price exceeds the current value, drop your asking price to reflect that.

It’s a bold move, but it’s better to sell at a discount, and salvage some of your deposit than risk losing it all on closing day. And get this – if you’ve got savvy family members or adult kids ready to move, you can hand off the property to them at your original purchase price. You’re off the hook, and they get the sweet rewards. How’s that for an exciting twist?

Time for a bold move! If everything else seems to hit a roadblock, have a heart-to-heart with the builder. If the market goes through the roof, and the builder sells homes at a premium, they might be open to scrapping the deal, and tossing that deposit back your way. But hold your horses – if prices take a nosedive, and the builders get a surplus of homes to unload, they might not be as cooperative.

Now, here’s a nugget of wisdom: walking away from the deposit doesn’t magically erase the contract. Brace yourself – the builder could hit you with a lawsuit for any losses.

If your closing is a few years later, hang in there. Real estate in Ontario is like a fine wine – it gets better with time, especially with a wave of young immigrants flooding in.

Please take a good look at your situation, and remember, sometimes it’s wiser to take a couple of steps back and find solid ground, than to sprint forward and risk a cliff dive.

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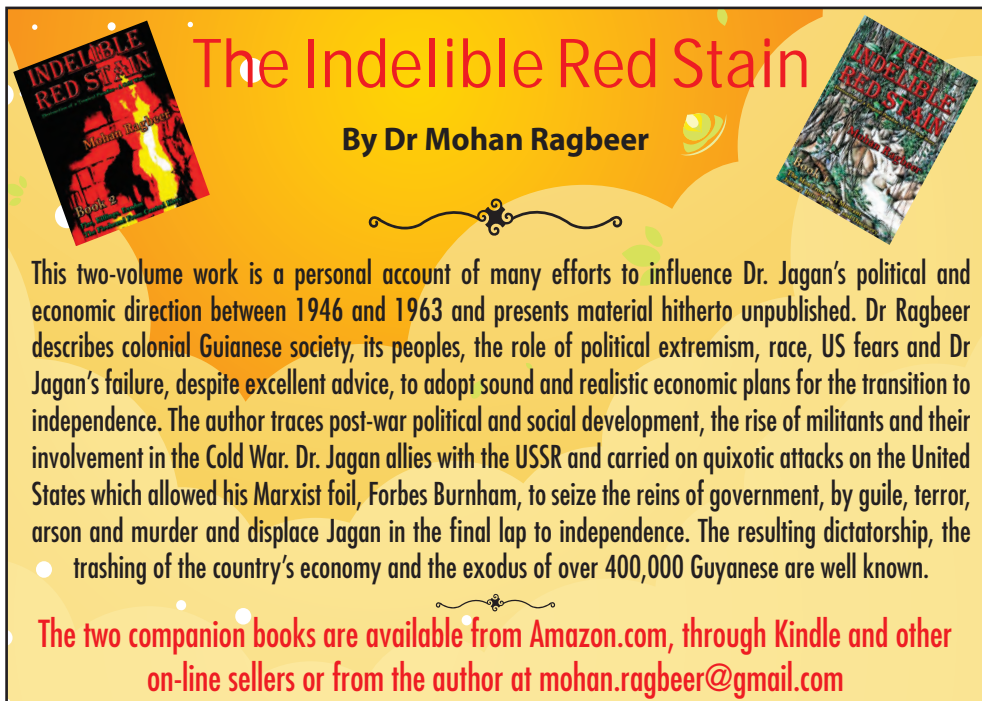


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The two companion books are available from Amazon.com, through Kindle and other on-line sellers or from the author at mohan.ragbeer@gmail.com



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No ordinary Joe, his star now resides in the cricketing firmament

Joe Solomon

August 26, 1930 – December 8, 2023

[The following article is re-published from *Indo-Caribbean World's* October 5, 2022 edition, in tribute to the late cricketer, Joe Solomon. As its author, Dhanpaul Narine reports, its publication made Joe very happy.]

By Dhanpaul Narine

Oliver Solomon is the grandson of Joe Solomon. Oliver ran into a stranger in Manhattan. The man was from Australia and the talk turned to cricket. Oliver explained that he was the grandson of Joe Solomon. The stranger was pleasantly surprised.

“There is a big photograph of your grandfather in Brisbane,” he said.

Joe Solomon is a legend. He has spent his life promoting the sport that he loves. Cricket for him is life. It gave him fame and the stability that he needed to find his way.

This son of Port Mourant in Berbice, Guyana, is known around the world for his reliability at the wicket, and a dependable bowler. Joe’s mentor is Sir Frank Worrell, a trailblazer that saw cricket as a force for Caribbean integration.

Joe recalls that Sir Frank loved to bat with him, saying, “When we were at the wicket, Frank said he could relax and take a break. He knew I would hold up the other end.”

A number of his admirers met recently to honour Joe and to talk about the old days. That was the time when cricket was cricket! It was when people lined up at four in the morning to get into the grounds, when we were glued to the radio, and woke up all night to listen to the commentaries from Australia. It was when Ram and Val beat them at Lords, and Sobers and Kanhai, and Hall and Griffith, kept us talking for days as to who can really play!

Joe Solomon is of that ilk. His career spanned three phases. The first was his contribution to Port Mourant cricket in which he excelled. This led him to the second phase that was at the inter-territorial level. He made three centuries for Guyana in his first three appearances that remains a record for the country. He was also a reliable spinner.

Joe captained Guyana and distinguished himself as a shrewd tactician. His achievements propelled him into the West Indies team in which he would have a date with destiny. This occurred in the Brisbane Test in December 1960.

Australia required 233 runs to win the



Cricket icon Joe Solomon holds up the iconic Ron Lovitt photograph taken moments after the stumps were broken to run out Meckiff in the historical tied Test in Brisbane in 1960. Dhanpaul Narine photos

Test. They were going good until the drama of the last over unfolded. Conrad Hunte threw a perfect return from the boundary to run out Wally Grout. It was then left to Solomon to add to the excitement. The scores were tied as Hall ran in to bowl the final delivery. Kline touched the ball and ran. Solomon swooped from square leg, like an eagle, and ran out Meckiff, with only one stump to aim at. It resulted in cricket’s first Tied Test, and a million fans bidding the team goodbye at the end of the series.

Solomon has been immortalised in the annals of the game. But spare a thought for photographer Ron Lovitt, who captured the final ball for posterity with

one exposure left in his camera.

Joe Solomon sat with charming humility as the testimonials and proclamations were read to him. He nodded and smiled when the names rolled off the citations. They were Frank Worrell, Garry Sobers, Rohan Kanhai, Clive Lloyd, Wes Hall, Peter Lashley, Gerry Alexander, Sonny Ramadhin, Allan Davidson,

Richie Benaud, Sunil Gavaskar, Hanif Mohamed, and Brian Lara; and Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Alvin Kallicharran whom Solomon mentored.

There were messages from Kris Persaud owner of the Jamaica Tallawahs, Ramnaresh Sarwan, and Joe’s brother, Maurice, who recalled the happy times in Guyana.

Guyana’s Consul-General to New York, Michael Brotherson, was represented by Vice-Consul, Nacifa Watson and Dabi Sukhmandan.

Watson spoke glowingly of the contributions by Joe, and wished him well. The Solomon family was in attendance and included Oliver, Alex, Nalini, Nirmala, Anil, Vinoo, Jean and Nila, and helpers Bibi and Nadira. The family is grateful to the Mayor of New York City, Eric Adams, for recognising the contributions of Joe with a Citation, as well as Queens Borough President, Donovan Richards, and the Councilwoman for District 27, Nantasha Williams, and her Constituent Liaison Rasha Kadir, for the Proclamations.

The City Council Citation notes that Joe is one of cricket’s finest gentlemen. He has many admirers, “that include Dhanpaul Narine, Ashook Ramsaran, Ralph Tamesh, Clem Seecharan, Ian McDonald, Maurice Sukhoo, Mohamed Hack from the office of Queens Borough President, and many others”.

Professor Clem Seecharan and Ian McDonald teamed up to produce a book on Joe Solomon that will be launched in London in October, and in Guyana in November 2022.

Joe is advanced in years. He has many memories of the glorious game. At the end of the splendid function, he said the recognition was one of the happiest days of his life. Cricketers do not die, nor do they fade. They sit in a special place and cast a beam of light on humanity that extends far beyond the picket fences of the pavilions.

Joe smiles. He remembers the mangoes he pelted in Port Mourant in Berbice, Guyana. He closes his eyes and he is in Brisbane. He has only one stump to aim at. He releases the ball with unerring accuracy. The bail is dislodged and the last batsman is out. The Test is tied. History is made and Joe walks off into cricket immortality.



Joe with his NY citation



Joe and family members with his NY citations

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Bringing nations closer together, fostering peace with dance

Profile of the Year
By Dhanpaul Narine

In 2018, Rudra Jayanta Bhagawati was returning to India with warm memories. He was sent by the government of India to teach classical dance to Guyanese.

Jayanta was based at the Indian Cultural Centre in Georgetown, but he traveled around Guyana to meet with the people, and to get them interested in dance. The ICC happens to be the oldest outpost of India's Mission abroad. It is more than 40 years old, and has produced many wonderful Guyanese talents. The classes are free, and are open to all Guyanese. Jayanta is proud of its achievements.

The ICC has produced talents such as Malini Shah, formerly Marilyn Bose, Philip McClintock, Mathadaya Persaud, Indranie and Nadira Shaw, Muntaz Ali, Devika Singh, Mark Westford, Donna Mendonca, and Andre Sobrian, among others.

The dance teachers at that time were Pratap Pawar and Durga Lal.

Another great student that studied in India



Jayanta with a student who completed a Bharatnatyam workshop

was Gora Singh, who mesmerised audiences. Malini Shah went on to teach at the prestigious Modern School in Delhi. She was part of India's Deputy Prime Minister Shankar Dyal Sharma's team when he visited Guyana for the 150th anniversary of East Indian migration to Guyana.

Jayanta Bhagawati is a long list of teachers that have made a wonderful contribution to bring India closer to Guyana. He was born in Mazuli in Assam, and its greenery reminds him of Guyana.



Rudra Jayanta Bhagawati, Director of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center

He says that the people of Assam are interested in the arts and culture, and the State has a 70 percent Hindu population.

Mazuli is a river island on the Brahmaputra, and its classical dance is known as Sateriya, which is derived from the Satra temple.

Jayanta said that the music is pure, and that he was dancing since he was a child.

He did the Sateriya dance, and he did well. His guru Krishna Goswami saw Jayanta's talents, and said that the young man had a great future.

Jayanta describes Goswami as "a perfect dancer who has the temperament and who was made for dancing".

Their relationship began in 1986, and it lasted for two years. During that time Jayanta mastered the 'Shiva Tandab', a dance made famous by his guru.

In 1988, Jayanta moved to Lucknow to further his studies. He went to Bhatkhande College of Hindustani Music for nine years to perfect his skills. He graduated with his Master's Degree in Dance, and was awarded the Nritya Visharad and Nritya Nipun in Kathak Dance. This is the highest award from the college.

Jayanta was recognised as a Master of Dance Teacher. In November 2014, Jayanta was posted to Guyana.

How did he feel? He said he was excited and apprehensive.

"I didn't know anything at that time about Guyana. I had to look at a map to find it. It was in South America. I traveled there on my own. I was impressed with the country. It looked just like Assam. It was like a homecoming," he says.

He found Indian culture to be alive and well in Guyana. He has taught hundreds of students, and has found that some of them have perfected the skills as classical dancers.

Jayanta spent three years and three months in Guyana. He was sad to leave when his assignment ended in 2018.

But Divine Providence intervened. Since his departure, the ICC has been renamed the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, and is one of the oldest in the world to be established by India.

In 2023, Jayanta was appointed as Director of the Centre in Guyana. He was thrilled! It was his second homecoming. The Centre conducts classes in yoga, harmonium, tabla and dholak, vocals, and classical dance.

There are outreach classes to other parts of Guyana, and the expanded curriculum now includes Hindi clubs, Sanskrit class, cooking, and sari draping demonstration, among others.

Jayanta wants to strengthen cultural relations between Guyana and India. He is grateful to his father Ghana Kanta Bhagawati for his inspiration.

He also thanks his wife Pranaame Bhagawati and their daughter Wamiel Pranaame Kashyap for their love and support.

In his spare time, he loves to cook, play games, and compose music.

There is no doubt that under the leadership of Director Rudra Jayanta Bhagawati, the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre will continue to bring India closer to Guyanese, and to foster peace through arts.

We are proud to name Rudra Jayanta Bhagawati as our Profile of the Year 2023. We wish him and his family all the best in the future.



One Love Family Services held its second Pepper Pot festival and fund-raiser on December 8. Led by Habeeb Alli, the well-attended event drew people together to help others, while enjoying the delicious Guyanese Christmas staple Pepper Pot. Also at the event were performers Vicadi Singh, with guest judge Bombay Lemonade, Lakeram Rampersad, and DJ Vick.

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Pakaraima Writers Association honours past president Janet Naidu

Toronto – Formation of the Pakaraima Writers Association in 2005 filled the need for a group of writers to get together and support each other, its founder Janet Naidu said last week.

Naidu was honoured with the 2023 Pakaraima Literary Award at the group's Christmas dinner, which was held on December 10 in Toronto. The award was given in recognition of her poetry and other writings, and for founding the writers' group.

Back in 2005, Naidu reached out to like-minded Guyanese here in the GTA, and quickly received support to start the group. Today Pakaraima is well-known for its literary events that feature the reading of poetry, stories, and extracts from novels by its writers.

Naidu served for 12 years as Pakaraima's president from its 2005 start. Also at the helm was Habeeb Ali, a poet, humanitarian, philanthropist, and a community leader, who served as the group's leader for five years. Shirley Najhram, an author of children's books, is currently Pakaraima's acting president.

"It is important to keep up the work in the creative space, and Pakaraima serves as a space for writers and poets," Naidu said.

Naidu is Guyanese-born, and grew up in Covent Garden, EBD. As she noted, her early writing began via international correspondence with pen pals around the world. Among the topics discussed were growing up in Covent Garden, and about Guyana.

Writing poetry had its start in the 1970s with the late Rajkumari Singh, the renowned dramatist, poet, short story writer, activist, and an iconic figure in Guyana's cultural history, Naidu revealed.

As she noted, Singh created a cultural space for young artists. Naidu was encouraged to be part of Singh's Messenger Group, which was founded to nurture young writers, poets, and artists. Singh was an inspiration to members of the group that included



Pakaraima Writers Association at its award ceremony on December 10

Rooplall Monar, Mahadai Das, Henry Mootoo, Guska, Gora Singh, among others, Naidu recalled.

She arrived in Canada with that early nurturing and inspiration from Singh's legacy. Here in Canada she continued to write poetry, and has since published four collections.

Her first collection, *Winged Heart* (Greenheart, 1999), was shortlisted for the Guyana Prize for Literature, Poetry category, in 2000. Her other collections include *Rainwater* (Greenheart, 2005), second edition (Greenheart Press, 2023); *Sacred Silence* (Hansib, 2009); and *River Crossing* (Greenheart Press, 2023).

She has also published essays, short stories, and other forms of writing, including a short biography of her late mother, Chelema Naidu.

Her poetry has also been published in anthologies such as *A Bouquet of Flowers*, *Sudden Thunder*, and *Scaling New Heights*, and has appeared in books, journals, in online publications, and in blogs.

Pakaraima's kind gesture in recognising her writings, and honouring for the group's formation was "highly appreciated", Naidu said.

Her recognition is the fourth that the group has awarded. Previous recipients were Ian McDonald, Guyanese poet; Ramabai Espinet, Trinidadian professor and writer; and Peter Jailall, Guyanese poet and educator.



Mani Singh (left), Janet Naidu, and Shirley Najhram

The latest literary event and its award ceremony were generously hosted by local realtor, Rudy Lochan, wife Shanta, and family. Attendees enjoyed a meal together, and of course, an evening of literary reading of poetry, and the singing of Christmas carols.

Also present was the Consulate General of Guyana's Honorary Consul, Mani Singh. In his address to the group, Singh gave an update in the ongoing Guyana-Venezuela controversy. Time was also dedicated to prayers and remembering the five soldiers that tragically lost their lives in Guyana in the line of duty.

When Naidu is not writing, she volunteers as a mentor to young professionals in the human resource profession. Her career path includes several years working in the field of human rights and conflict resolution, with expertise in workplace investigations into allegations of workplace harassment and discrimination.

Naidu is also a trainer, and delivers presentations in workplace equity, diversity, and inclusion. She has a BA in Political Science and Caribbean Studies from the University of Toronto, and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of London in the UK.

While having completed her legal education later in life, she is not a practising lawyer. Instead, she utilises her legal education to teach legal courses in the subject areas of hospitality and tourism at George Brown College in Toronto.

The old hooded man with a long white beard and mustache sat with his feet crossed on the sidewalk beside the entrance to the hospital.

The hospital's Chief Cardiologist and university lecturer, Dr Leslie Gorfus, who had never seen the old man before, had just lost another patient on the operating table after 13 hours of exhausting surgery.

Tired and hungry, his shoulders drooped, with eyes staring at the ground in front of him as he walked, told the tale of the burden he carried. He planned to call the university in the morning to take the day off.

"She is your daughter." The old man's deep voice made him jump. It sounded like a loud whisper in his ear.

"I beg your pardon?" He stopped and gave the man a puzzled stare. Had he read his mind?

"David Generic the Fourth, Leslie, but please call me David." His smile revealed wrinkles at the side of his eyes and missing front teeth. The aged gentleman addressed him as though he were a family member. He did not extend his hand for a shake.

"Who are you?" Gorfus' heart thumped in his chest. Generic was the name of his mother's ancestors from the old country who had the same accent as David Generic the Fourth. How did an unknown person from another country, whom he had never met before, know so much about him? He wondered if he was being stalked by the stranger in front of him.

"I have a life lesson no medical school will ever teach you." David's grin widened. "Indulge me a while." David pointed to a spot on the ground beside him. Curiosity and mystery pushed the tiredness and hunger out of Leslie's biological system. His appetite shifted to the craving for answers.

"Sure." He sat beside the old man at a safe distance to avoid his odour and any lice or fleas that lived in his tattered clothing.

"Christina lost her soul in her 20s when she attended medical school." David reassured his guest of his genuineness. "Cancer is a dreaded disease but it is one of the tools used by the universe to pry the spirit from the body." His smile never left his face.

"Are you a mystic, David?" Leslie was curious to find out if David knew about the second person in the photo in his wallet that he stared at several times a day.

"Accident is another device that the universe uses." David's

The Supernatural Play it Forward



words stopped Leslie's heart. Nancy had never recovered from the loss of their only child. In her grief, she had driven too fast around a sharp bend on the highway. The car crashed through the barrier and fell onto the rocks 40 feet below. "To answer the burden of doubt that you have always carried, it was not suicide. She was distracted by emotions and blinded by tears." He took a deep breath. "To lose the two people closest to your heart within two weeks of each other devastated you but still you found the will to go on. Do you know why?"

"Why?" Leslie searched David's eyes.

"The universe was not ready for you yet." David spread his fingers. "The five times suicide crossed your mind were canceled by your desire to make them proud of you to carry on your life-saving work, and educational training of future doctors in their honour. It's the way of the universe. It manipulates your thoughts. Some people call the positive outcomes the work of your guardian angel, and the negative consequences the devil's handiwork."

"You are correct." Leslie accepted the truth. Everyone knew

the torment he had gone through, but no one knew of his suicidal thoughts. "That's how I feel right now." Tears burned his eyes. "Those pleading eyes that stared into mine a few minutes ago..." Leslie took a deep breath to compose himself. "I swear that they were Christina's..."

"And they were." David confirmed what Leslie felt in his heart. "She had returned as Norma Peters, the young black girl from the ghetto whose heart was hit by a stray bullet from a driveby shooting." David erased another uncertainty in Leslie's mind. Christina, like Leslie and Nancy, was Caucasian.

"I am confused." Leslie did not hide his bewilderment. "Christina died almost ten years ago but this child was only eight."

"Last night you slept for your usual six hours before you went for your run and got dressed for work." David seemed to sway off-topic, which made Leslie wonder where he was going with the conversation. "Yesterday at lunch in between lectures, you had a power nap."

"True." Leslie had come to accept that closed doors and private thoughts did not keep David out.

"Death is the same." David drew an imaginary line in the air. "Your soul can linger a while longer before it returns, or it can transition immediately, depending on need and opportunity." He drew a longer line in the air. "Christina's soul remained dormant for two years before she found a home in Norma's body to complete her assignment. She never remembered the before or the waiting. Her conscious mind awoke as a baby and continued her journey without awareness of a rebirth. In her mind, it was a new birth of consciousness."

"Will she come back?" Leslie longed to have his daughter again in his arms. "How about Nancy?"

"Unfortunately, I cannot predict the future." I am fortunate to be one in a billion who can remember my past lives and connect them to the current." He took a deep breath. "I am Nancy from many lives ago. I am about to transition into a new human life where I will forget everything from the past, including you and Christina. Suicide will plunge you into an eternity of blackness from which your soul will never escape. This is a dream. When you wake up I will be gone. Suicide is not the cure for your malady. Patience is."

Kamil Ali



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HOLIDAYS
AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR!**



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Festivity, partying with UNI-TnT

The United West Indian Trinbago Association (UNI-TnT) held its seventh annual Parang lime on December 9 in an event that saw the venue, Twilight Family Restaurant, resonating to the sweet sounds of Toronto's top parang band Los Amigos, the music of Dubble Impack, and other top entertainers. Fans of the traditional Trinidad and Tobago Christmas parang music were treated to an evening of pulsating music, wonderful company, and delicious Trini cooking.

A week later, on December 16, UNI-TnT held its first annual Kids' Christmas Party for one to nine year old children. The event was under the patronage of the Consulate General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Toronto.

Venue for this thrilling event for the youngsters was through the kind courtesy and support of Nigel Bijulisingh, owner of Tropical Nights Restaurant & Lounge in Scarborough.

The event saw a visiting Santa taking to the dance floor, with many of the young guests teaching him the more intricate steps required for today's high-energy style of aerobic, high-impact dancing.

With Santa's bag filled with gifts of toys for the children, with lots of food available, and

music for dancing, Tropical Nights soon filled up with the sounds of joy and contentment; and later, with Santa looking forward to a well-deserved rest before undertaking his hectic December 24 global toy run.

As one of UNI-TnT's founders, Tony Chankar told *Indo-Caribbean World* earlier, the children's Christmas party was planned by UNI-TnT to draw families out to have fun, and to especially give back to the kids.

"No kid should be without a toy. There is no better feeling than getting a wrapped toy," Chankar said.

UNI-TnT is a growing charitable group here in the GTA, and is well-regarded for its gift-giving in Christmases past, and for reaching out generously to the Caribbean community during critical and urgent developments, notably during the pandemic when migrant farm workers were stranded in Ontario.

Also, the group has contributed thousands of dollars to charities here in Canada, and in the Caribbean.

With UNI-TnT recently acquiring charitable status with the CRA, Chankar noted that concomitant with this achievement is the group's further commitment to responsibility, accountability, and doing "even more to help".



Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette (second from left, front row) and staff members at the Consulate General in Toronto get into the festive spirit

Thank you for keeping the traditions!

A Christmas message from Acting Consul General at the Consulate General for Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto, Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette:

There's nothing quite like a Trini Christmas. After all, Trinbagonians have mastered the art of celebrating. But as fate would have it, this time around it is not possible for me to head home for Christmas.

However, all is certainly not lost, as I have found that Canada is just about the best alternative that a Trini who is homesick at Christmas time could hope to find.

And that is because our diaspora here has done a fantastic job in infusing the best elements of a Trini Christmas into their lives at this time of year.

For example, I have been fortunate enough

to attend several community events featuring live parang bands, and also had the opportunity to partake in seasonal foods and drinks like pastelles, black cake, sorrel and *ponche de crème*.

Within our homes, I know many of you are keeping up the tradition of putting up new curtains, painting, and making preparations to spend precious time liming with friends and family.

But in the final assessment, what has really brought out my Christmas spirit most of all is the warmth and giving nature of our people. Thank you for keeping the true meaning of a Trini Christmas alive in your adopted homeland.

I wish everyone a holy, happy, loving Christmas, and a healthy, peaceful, and productive 2024!



Parang Lime and Kids's Christmas photos by Russell Lutchman

The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

Baiju Bawra pushes envelope with classical music to become superhit

By Vidur Dindayal

Baiju Bawra was a musical megahit. It ran for 100 weeks in the theatres. The director's decision to make a film based on classical music was an overwhelming success.

Naushad was the music director. The soundtrack was based on classical ragas, with the Bhajan *Man Tadpat Hari Darshan Ko Aaj* becoming very popular.

The film starred Bharat Bhushan as Baiju, with Meena Kumari as his love interest Gauri. Surendra portrayed Tansen in Emperor Akbar's court.

This hit movie made the lead actors big stars. Meena Kumari became the first-ever Filmfare Best Actress Award winner in 1954. Music director, Naushad, received the first Filmfare Best Music Director Award for the song *Tu Ganga Ki Mauj*.

Baiju Bawra was ranked Number 13 in the list of 20 greatest Indian films in 2002.

The story is about Baiju seeking revenge against Tansen for his father's death.

Baiju seeks Swami Haridas's guidance. Haridas tells Baiju that he must rid himself of

hatred in his heart. Baiju starts his musical training, his vengeful feelings never leaving him. When he learns that Haridas was seriously ill, Baiju sings a song that so thrills Haridas that he gets out of his bed and starts to walk.

Meanwhile, Gauri is distraught over Baiju's departure. She tries to convince him to return to the village. Baiju refuses as he still wants to take revenge against Tansen. He sings a heart-wrenching song that even the idol of Lord Shiva sheds tears at Baiju's grief.

Baiju reaches Tansen's city. A musical duel with Tansen was his only option. Emperor Akbar presided over the competition.

Akbar suggests that whoever could melt a marble slab with his singing would win the duel. Baiju manages to do so and wins the competition. Tansen accepts defeat.

Meanwhile, Gauri's father decided to have her marry the village moneylender. After winning the music duel, Baiju leaves the court. Akbar, unhappy to see him go, asks Tansen to sing to produce a storm and floods to make him stay. Tansen sings raga *Megh* and the river Yamuna floods. But Baiju now wants to get back to Gauri.

Baiju is stranded on banks of the turbulent Yamuna River. He starts singing and Gauri hears. She runs towards the bank. Baiju is in the river. Gauri jumps into the water to rescue Baiju. He urges her to leave him. Gauri replies that they had promised to be together in life and in death, and she would be content to die with him.

Aan was the first Indian picture produced in colour. *Aan*, or 'Pride', was released as *The Savage Princess* in the UK and the US. It was India's first Technicolor film. Dilip Kumar, Nimmi,



Baiju Bawra



Daag



Aan

musicians was even played on the *BBC Radio*.

The film had a lavish London premiere. They met many Western film personalities, including Errol Flynn. When Flynn attempted to kiss Nimmi's hand, she pulled it away, exclaiming, "I am an Indian girl. You cannot do that!"

The incident made the headlines, and the press raved about Nimmi as the "unkissed girl of India".

The premiere was also attended by the British Prime Minister Lord Atlee.

Nimmi further revealed that she received four serious offers from Hollywood, including one from Cecil B. DeMille. He was so impressed by the film that he wrote a letter to Mehboob praising the film and the performances of Nimmi, Dilip Kumar, and Nadira.

The 1952 romantic drama *Daag* starred Dilip Kumar and Nimmi. The film's music is composed by Shankar-Jaikishan.

Dilip Kumar won the first ever Filmfare Award in the Best Actor category for his performance in this film.

Shankar (Dilip Kumar) and his mother live in poverty. Being the lone breadwinner, he is unable to make ends meet. His debt rises

steadily, and he gets addicted to alcohol. He is attracted to Parvati (Nimmi), a poor neighbour.

Shankar leaves for the city, manages to give up drinking, and earns a lot of money to return home and pay off his mortgage.

He proposes to Parvati, but is then told that her marriage has been arranged elsewhere. Broken, he starts drinking again, and his mother also dies.

However, in a turn of events, Parvati's stepbrother Jagat Narayan agrees to Parvati marrying him. Shankar quits drinking and the story finishes with a

and Premnath were quickly signed on for starring roles. The second female lead was a newcomer, Nadira.

Aan was the first Indian film to have a worldwide release in many countries. It was subtitled in 17 languages and released in 28 countries, the UK, the US, France, and Japan. It was the first Indian film to ever release in Japan. The film received critical acclaim in the British press.

The plot centres around an Indian royal family, the Maharaja (Murad), his brother Shamsheer Singh (Premnath) and sister Rajshree (Nadira).

A young local man named Jai Tilak (Dilip Kumar) enters a contest to tame Princess Rajshree's horse.

Shamsheer then sets his eyes on Mangala (Nimmi), who is a village girl and a childhood friend of Jai. She is kidnapped by Shamsheer Singh. Mangala commits suicide. Jai tries to kill Shamsheer to avenge Mangala's death. Jai manages to kidnap Rajshree to teach her a lesson to live as a peasant in his village. Rajshree then begins to admire Jai.

Naushad's music played a key role in the success of this film. He used a 100-piece orchestra. The symphony with the 100

happy ending.

I like two songs in the movie sung by Talat Mahmood: *Koi Nahin Mera*, and the popular *Ae Mere Dil Kahin Aur Chal*.

Anhonee is a drama starring Raj Kapoor and Nargis. She played a double role. It was the first occasion where an actor was cast in a dual role in a Hindi film.

The story is about two sisters, one legitimate, the other illegitimate – Mohini and Roop, with both roles played by Nargis. Raj Kapoor falls in love with one, and eventually married the other. The song *Main Dil Hoon Ek*, by Talat Mahmood, played by Raj Kapoor on the piano, is my favourite.

Raja Harishchandra, the 1952 version, is a movie of the great king of Ayodhya, follower of Satya Dharma, who is destined to lose his kingdom and everything. Prem Adib, the star in the religious epics *Bharat Milap* and *Ram Rajya*, acted as Raja Harishchandra.

The 1913 silent film *Raja Harishchandra* was produced and directed by Dadasaheb Phalke. The government of India recognises *Raja Harishchandra* as the first Indian feature film. The prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award is named after him.

Naushad brings classical ragas to Hindi film songs

Baiju Bawra's music director was Naushad. According to *Wikipedia*, at the time he was already popular for folk-based music in films as *Rattan*, *Anmol Ghadi*, *Shahjehan* (1946), and *Deedar* (1951).

However, in *Baiju Bawra* he introduced a classical component in Hindi film songs, with its sound-track based on classical ragas such as Puriya Dhanashree, Todi, Malkauns, Darbari, and Desi.

The movie's lyricist was Shakeel Badayuni, a Naushad discovery.

For *Baiju Bawra*, Badayuni had to forgo Urdu, and write lyrics in pure Hindi. His originality led to the Bhajan *Man Tadpat Hari Darshan Ko Aaj* becoming quite popular.

Wikipedia continues that Naushad's use of classical music in *Baiju Bawra* helped it to become one of the top ten films of the 1950s.

The bandish in raga Desi between Amir Khan and D.V. Paluskar, and Khan's *Tori Jai Jai Kar* in raga Puriya Dhanashree are among the main highlights of the film.

At the same time, the solos by Mohammed Rafi *Man Tadpat Hari Darshan Ko Aaj* in raga Malkauns, *O Duniya Ke Rakhwale* in raga Darbari, *Tu Ganga Ki Mauj* in raga Bhairavi, and *Insaan Bano* in raga Todi are also evergreen.

Director Vijay Bhatt brought in Naushad to give music for *Baiju Bawra* because of his expertise in classical music. The two worked together, along with Bhatt's older brother Shankar, for close to six months.

According to *Wikipedia*, Shankar was opposed to the idea of a Hindi film filled with ragas, fearing it would drive the audiences away.

However, Naushad and Bhatt were adamant to change public tastes in film music. Naushad's later said that "it worked".



Naushad

Ekta Kapoor, Vir Das win prestigious Emmy awards in NY

Producer Ekta Kapoor was last month honoured with the prestigious International Directorate Award at the 51st International Emmy Awards ceremony, which was held in New York. She is the first Indian woman filmmaker to receive this award.

Also among the awards was Vir Das, who won the International Emmy for Comedy.

Kapoor's award was presented by Deepak Chopra, renowned author and new age leader.

Said Kapoor following the presentation, "I'm delighted to receive the prestigious Emmy's Directorate Award! It brings me immense joy and happiness to be honoured at a global scale, such as this. I've always wanted to tell stories because they give me a chance to be heard, seen, and represented. I am grateful for the audience's love that has opened doors for me, allowing me to transition from television to the world of films and OTT [Over-the-Top streaming]."

She added, "Each story that I told became a bridge to connect with audiences on many levels. The unexpected turns this journey took are a testament to the power of love showered by the people of India and beyond. My heart is filled with gratitude, and a stronger resolve to make a positive impact through my work for audiences."



Ekta Kapoor

Kapoor has been behind some of the most popular Indian TV shows including genre defining *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhie Bahu Thi*, *Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii*, *Kkusum*, *Pavitra Rishta*, and *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*, among many others, under the aegis of Balaji telefilms.

As Bruce L. Paisner, President & CEO of the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences noted, "...Kapoor has built Balaji into one of India's foremost entertainment players with market leadership in the television content industry reaching mass audiences across India and South Asia with their long running series and OTT platform. We look forward to honouring her remarkable career and influence on the television industry, with our Directorate Award."

Kapoor has also made forays into producing Bollywood films with 2001's *Kyo Kii... Main Jhuth Nahin Bolta*. Her other films include *Kyaa Kool Hai Hum*, *Shootout at Lokhandwala*, *Mission Istanbul*, *Love Sex aur Dhokha*, *Once Upon a Time in Mumbaai*, and *Shor in the City*. Her latest release was



Vir Das

Ayushmann Khurrana's Dream Girl 2.

Das' win was announced on International Emmy Awards official X handle with the tweet, "We have a tie! The International Emmy for Comedy goes to *Vir Das: Landing*, produced by Weirdass Comedy/Rotten Science/Netflix."

The other nominees included *El Encargado* from Argentina, and the French show *Le Flambeau Season Two*.

Vir expressed his excitement and joy, stating, "This moment is truly surreal – an incredible honour that feels like a dream. Winning an Emmy for *Vir Das: Landing* in the Comedy Category is not just a milestone for me but for Indian comedy as a whole. It's heartening to see *Vir Das: Landing* resonate globally, thanks to Netflix, Akash Sharma, and Reg Tiggerman, who made it special."

He added, "My journey from crafting local stories to receiving a global accolade has been both challenging and rewarding, and Netflix has been instrumental in that growth. I'm excited about the continued exploration of diverse narratives, from Noida to the International Emmys – India gets you there."

He also wrote on X, "For India. For Indian Comedy. Every breath, every word. Thank you to the @iemmys for this incredible honour."

Shreyas Talpade survives cardiac arrest, recovering from angioplasty

Well-known star in Hindi and Marathi cinema Shreyas Talpade suffered apparent cardiac arrest on December 14, 2023, with reports indicating his heart stopped for ten minutes before he was revived.

The crisis occurred after Talpade returned to his residence from a shoot of *Welcome To The Jungle*.

According to a media source, Talpade "shot through the day, was absolutely fine and joking around with everyone on the set. He even shot sequences that had a bit of action."

However, "After finishing the shoot, he went back home and told his wife that he was feeling uneasy. She rushed him to the hospital, but he collapsed on the way."

Talpade was urgently rushed to the hospital, where angioplasty was performed, media reports further stated.

And according to the latest reports, he has since responded well to the surgery, and is recovering.

In an *Instagram* post late last week, Talpade's wife, Deepiti Shreyas stated, "Dear Friends & Media. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the overwhelming concern and well wishes following the recent health scare my husband experienced. I'm relieved to update everyone that he is now in stable condition and will be discharged in a few days."

She added, "The medical team's exceptional care and timely response have been instrumental during this time, and we are grateful for their expertise. We kindly request respect for our privacy as he continues his recovery. Your unwavering support has been a tremendous source of strength for both of us."

Talpade has appeared in several critically and commer-

cially successful films. He is better known for his role as Shah Rukh Khan's friend Pappu Master in *Om Shanti Om*, the grand reincarnation melodrama of Farah Khan.

His latest project is *Welcome To The Jungle*, which is being directed by Ahmed Khan, and produced by Jio Studios and Sajid Nadiadwala under his banner Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment.



Shreyas Talpade



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CWI extends condolences after passing of Solomon, Butts

Cricket West Indies last week expressed condolences following the passing of “two esteemed former Guyana and West Indies cricketers”, Joe Stanislaus Solomon and Clyde Godfrey Butts.

Solomon was renowned for his exceptional batting prowess in the 1950s and 1960s. He passed away at 93 on December 8.

Clyde Godfrey Butts, the former off-spinner and Guyana captain in the 1980s, passed away at the age of 66, also on December 8.

CWI President Dr Kishore Shallow paid tribute to both players, noting that their “remarkable contributions.... will be remembered not only by those in their native Guyana, but also by many across the West Indies”.

Said Shallow: “Joe Solomon stood among the heroes of West Indies cricket. His iconic play – the pick-up, throw, and run-out of Ian Meckiff in the tied Test – remains an indelible moment in our history. His dedication to the game was evident in mentoring numerous players, showing his commitment to the sport’s development. He was a true servant of the game.”

Kishore also noted that, “Clyde Butts, a stalwart figure in West Indies’ first-class history, displayed extraordinary adeptness as an off-spinner and captain for Guyana. His legacy



Joe Solomon

extended beyond the field, earning him recognition as a statesman and ambassador for the game in Guyana and the region.”

He added, “In retirement, his unwavering commitment to coaching reflected his dedication. He tirelessly invested hours, nurturing young talent and passionately fostering their development within the sport.”



Clyde Butts

Shallow further stated that Butts “served with distinction as Team Manager for the West Indies Under-19 team”.

Also, that “His exceptional leadership as Chairman of Selectors notably resulted in forming the triumphant team that won the 2012 ICC T20 World Cup, a victory that brought immense pride and glory to the people of the West Indies.”

Solomon played 27 Test matches from 1958 to 1965. His debut in 1958 against India in Kanpur showcased impressive scores of 45 and 86, including a partnership of 163 with Garfield Sobers.

Solomon then went down in cricketing history for his run-out of the last Australian batsman, Meckiff, which led to the famous tied Test in December 1960 at the Gabba in Brisbane.

Butts made his Test debut in 1987 at Bourda Oval, and played seven Tests during West Indies’ dominant era. He stood among the leading bowlers in the West Indies first-class championship in the 1980s, concluding his career with 348 first-class wickets.

After retirement, Butts served as an administrator, chairing the West Indies Men’s senior selection panel during the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup win in 2012 in Sri Lanka under Darren Sammy’s leadership.

Pant set to return to the game in 2024 India Premier League

Rishabh Pant is set to make his return to cricket in the 2024 Indian Premier League after over a year out of the game, the *British Broadcasting Corporation* reported last week.

Pant is India’s wicketkeeper, and was seriously hurt in a car crash in December 2022. According to reports out of India, he suffered injuries to his head, back, and leg.

He is captain of his IPL franchise Delhi Capitals. As was reported last week, he could play solely as a batter in next year’s tournament if not cleared to keep behind the wicket.

“If he is not keeping, he will definitely be on the field, and will lead the side,” a Capitals official told *Cricbuzz*, and which was reported by the BBC.

Delhi finished ninth in the table in Pant’s absence in the 2023 tournament, which was won by Chennai Super Kings.

Pant’s last outing came in India’s Test against Bangladesh between December 22-25, days before the car crash. Prior to the crash, he had been one of the mainstays in the Indian team across all formats of the game. He had also led India during the side’s T20I series against South Africa in June last year, and was named in ICC Men’s Test team of the year for 2021.

He has played 33 Tests, 30 ODIs, and 66 T20s for India. Before the IPL, India play three T20s against Afghanistan, two Tests against South Africa and five Tests against England between January and March.

The IPL usually takes place between March and May.



Rishabh Pant



Hon. Kamal Khera
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Alyssa Healy

Healy gets nod as Aussie captain across formats

Wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy has been appointed as Australia's permanent women's captain across all three formats of the game.

Healy succeeded Meg Lanning in the role, having led the team on an interim basis at various stages over the past 12 months.

Lanning retired from international cricket last month, declaring she had "nothing left to achieve".

All-rounder Tahlia McGrath was named Australia's vice-captain.

Healy has played seven Tests, 101 ODIs, and 147 T20 internationals for Australia.

"I am honoured to accept the role of captain, and am grateful for the opportunity to lead our team," she said.

She added, "I've really enjoyed the support of the players over the past few months, and their encouragement to continue to be who I am and lead the group like I normally would from within."

Healy's first assignment will be Australia's one-off Test against India in Mumbai from December 21-24. The Test will be followed by three ODIs and three T20s against India.

Speaking to her appointment, McGrath said it was "a privilege to have been offered the vice-captaincy".

She added, "I'm excited to support Alyssa as she takes on the

captaincy. Alyssa and I have played together for a long time, we know our respective leadership styles well, and I look forward to helping her lead our group."

Australia's women are one of the world's most successful sporting teams, and are the current holders of the Women's 50-over and T20 World Cups.

They also won the gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, and retained the 2023 Ashes. For the Ashes, Healy was stand-in skipper after Lanning missed the series for medical reasons.

Healy also stated that she planned to remain consistent with her approach, and "what it has been previously".

However, "I'll make my own mark on the role, and be sure that I'm doing the best I possibly can for this group to maintain the success that we've had. It's an exciting time to be involved with this team, we're seeing the emergence of incredible young talent, and are challenging ourselves to continually evolve as a group."

Healy has also skippered New South Wales in domestic one-day cricket since 2018, and was Sydney Sixers vice-captain for the first seven Women's Big Bash League seasons. She is the niece of former Australia men's wicketkeeper Ian Healy.

Cricket Schedule

(Matches ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday December 20, 2023

Bangladesh tour of New Zealand, 2023
NZ vs Bangladesh, 2nd ODI, Saxton Oval, Nelson, 11:00 AM

England tour of West Indies, 2023
West Indies vs England, 4th T20I, Brian Lara Stadium, Tarouba, Trinidad, 4:00 PM

Thursday December 21, 2023

India tour of South Africa, 2023-2024
SA vs India, 3rd ODI, Boland P., Paarl, 1:00 PM

Friday December 22, 2023

England tour of West Indies, 2023
West Indies vs England, 5th T20I, Brian Lara Stadium, Tarouba, Trinidad, 4:00 PM

Philippines tour of Indonesia

T20I Series 2023-2024

Indonesia vs Philippines, 1st T20I, Udayana Cricket Ground, Bali, 1:00 PM

Saturday December 23, 2023

Bangladesh tour of New Zealand, 2023
New Zealand vs Bangladesh, 3rd ODI, McLean Park, Napier, 11:00 AM

Philippines tour of Indonesia

T20I Series 2023-2024

Indonesia vs Philippines, 2nd T20I, Udayana Cricket Ground, Bali, 8:30 AM

Indonesia vs Philippines, 3rd T20I, Udayana Cricket Ground, Bali, 1:00 PM

Sunday December 24, 2023

Philippines tour of Indonesia

T20I Series 2023-2024

Indonesia vs Philippines, 4th T20I, Udayana Cricket Ground, Bali, 8:30 AM

Indonesia vs Philippines, 5th T20I, Udayana Cricket Ground, Bali, 1:00 PM

Tuesday December 26, 2023

Pakistan tour of Australia, 2023-2024
Australia vs Pakistan, 2nd Test, Day 1, MCG, Melbourne, 10:30 AM.

Wishing you a
HAPPY HOLIDAY
SEASON
FROM MY FAMILY TO YOURS

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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!

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.



Beeton For Sale \$1,149,000

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...



Oshawa For Sale \$719,990

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.



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

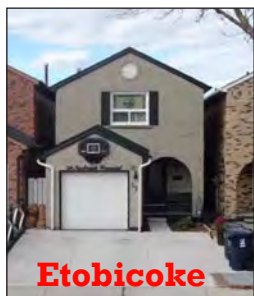
Location! Location! Location! Bright & spacious 1 bed 1 bath corner suite located in the rarely available prestigious French quarters. The residence features a functional open concept layout boasting 9' ceilings. The spacious living room seamlessly transitions to a breathtaking private balcony overlooking 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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