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Our Community Is Thriving!



The Canadian Children Foundation held its annual Valentine's Dinner and Dance on February 10. Attendees at the fund-raiser had a good time, enjoyed delicious food, and danced the evening away. A day before, One Love Gala also had similar fare of good food and camaraderie. In the Dwayne Armstrong photo (at left) is a bevy of lovely ladies at the TCCF event; at right, One Love Table's Habeeb Alli (centre, back row) with guests, and Toronto Guyana Consulate's Honorary Consul Mani Singh (seated at left). *More photos on Page 4.*

Govt elevates Black history in schools

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto – With Black History Month celebrations now underway in Canada, the Ontario government announced on February 8 that new mandatory learning will be introduced in history classes for students in Grades 7, 8, and 10 history. The mandatory move will now see students learning about the exceptional contributions and history that Black Canadians have made to help build Canada.

In its release, the Ontario government stated that starting September 2025, Grades 7, 8, and 10 history classes will now include mandatory learning with an emphasis on elevating Black history as Canadian history.

The focus of this additional rubric will highlight the various Black communities that emerged, developed, and contributed to the development of Canada, including pre- and post-Confederation.

As the release noted, students will now be learning about the overwhelming contributions made by Black individuals to Canada in helping to construct its foundation as a young nation, and the obstacles that were faced in the pursuit of building a democratic, inclusive, and prosperous country.

Commenting on the government's declaration, Patrice Barnes, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education, stated, "It's important that all students learn about Black communities in Canada, and their enormous impact on the growth of our country."

She added, "Black people have been a part of the Canadian

story since the 1600s. And that is why we aim to deepen students' understanding of our country's diverse and vibrant heritage by embedding this mandatory learning."

Barnes also noted the move highlights the numerous significant milestones, which she added "will help students develop a greater understanding of our country's rich heritage".

The new learning thrust will see its foundation informed and constructed over the next year via the Ontario education ministry consulting with historians, educators, and the Black community, the release further stated.

Chair of the Black Trustees' Caucus for Ontario Public School Boards' Association Kathy McDonald said the body was "thrilled" with the latest move by the Ontario government.

Said McDonald: "Since its inception, OPSBA's Black Trustees' Caucus has been advocating for this enhancement to Ontario's curriculum, and we are thrilled it has come to fruition."

She added, "The minister has said it before, and BTC strongly affirms, Black history is Canadian history. Learning about the Black experience, both past and present, will help all students gain an appreciation of how this country's rich heritage was formed."

Also, "We are grateful that the ministry will continue to modernise Ontario's curriculum through consultation and engagement with Black communities, as it is vital for a range of voices and perspectives to be honoured and valued in the

See Page 10: Mandatory Black history



Patrice Barnes



Kathy McDonald

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Imdadul congregation at the Isra Wal Miraaj event



Imam Shaykh Abu Noman Tarek

Imdadul Islamic Jamaat holds Isra Wal Miraaj observance

By Sayem Khan
Special to Indo-Caribbean World

Imdadul Islamic Jamaat was pleased to welcome the learned and accomplished Imam Shaykh Abu Noman Tarek to the mosque on February 4 for the observance of the significant Islamic event, *Isra Wal Miraaj*.

The event observes the heavenly ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). During the heavenly ascension, Prophet Muhammad received the commandment of five times prayer from the Almighty Allah, a practice that is a pillar of the Islamic faith.

On February 4, the congregation at Imdadul gathered to hear the accomplished Imam speak about the history and the teachings of *Isra Wal Miraaj*. He is a long-serving Imam at the Brantford Islamic Centre.

The Imam's discourse on the history and teachings of *Isra Wal Miraaj* was part of Imdadul's noble practice of dissemination of knowledge through the esteemed company of learned contemporary scholars. This has always been Imdadul's hallmark, and the event was a profound testament to the mosque's vision and commitment.

The program started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by performances of a few Islamic *nasheeds*. Performance of Islamic *nasheeds* always adds a different flavour to any event. Members of Imdadul Jamaat always enjoy beautiful performances by senior members, among them Brother Aagar.

With the month of Ramadan a few weeks away, it was also a perfect opportunity for members to engage in spiritual reflection, and to start their preparation in anticipation of the forthcoming blessed and holy month.

Participants also engaged in collective recitation of *Salatus Salam*, and prayers for the entire Muslim *ummah*.


Meanwhile, prior to the event, participants were treated to a sumptuous dinner and desserts!

In addition, the mosque was open longer on the night of February 7, which was the 27th night of the Islamic month of *Rajab*, for members to perform their rituals by reciting the *Holy Quran*, or praying extra *rakats* of *salat*.

Imdadul has a series of events planned throughout 2024, including a special program on *Lailtaul Barat* (15th Night of *Shaban*), which is coming up in a couple of weeks. Members are invited to stay tuned for the upcoming programs.




Imam Shaykh Abu Noman Tarek addressing the congregation




Happy Black History Month

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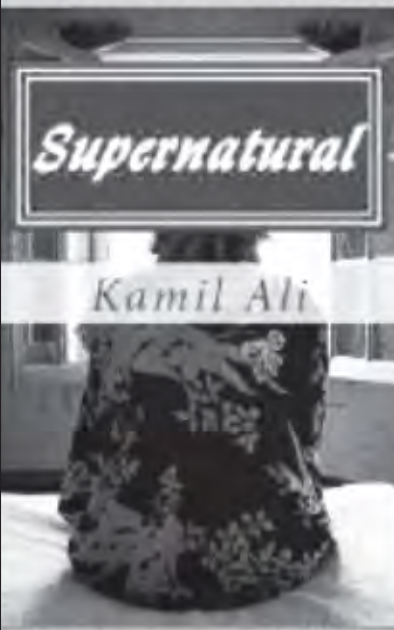
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One Love Gala was held on February 9 at the Jamaican Canadian Association. As One Love Table's leader, chaplain, and community advocate Habeeb Alli said, it was a celebratory time to hear narratives from chaplains, successfully reintegrated former inmates, and about interfaith communities. In photos are attendees at the gala; Alli is in top photo on the left, and in bottom photo, at left, is Honorary Consul at the Guyana Consulate General here in Toronto, Mani Singh, with other guests.



The Caribbean Children Foundation held its annual Valentine's Dinner and Dance on February 10 at the Woodbine Banquet Hall. The well-attended fund-raiser saw an successful evening of Valentine's-themed events, prize-giving, good food, all in the spirit of giving, and in keeping with the evening's goodwill and love. In photos, attendees relax in an ambiance of love and generosity; in photo, above right, TCCF's Jay Brijpaul addresses the gathering. *Photos by Dwayne Armstrong.*



Our Community Is Thriving!

Toronto – Our thriving community is full flight in the coming weeks with upcoming events that are celebrating our growing voices, and our diasporic presence here in the GTA.

•••

On February 24, Devi Mandir of Pickering will hold its grand fund-raising gala in aid of its building renovation fund. The event takes place at the Woodbine Banquet and Convention Centre in Etobicoke.

An evening of dinner and entertainment, Toronto's finest artistes will also be on stage, among them Harold Boodoo, Shiva Mohabeer, and Vedant Panwar. [Click here for ticket information](#); also, [see display ad on Page 22](#).

•••

Then on March 2 the Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir & Cultural Centre will hold its *Sangeet Ki Kahani 3* at the Vedic Cultural Center in Markham.

This event is in collaboration with the Sangeet Vidyalaya School of Music, and will be helmed by Joe Jaglall, Toronto's best master of ceremonies.

Jaglall's eminent presence will be complemented with performances by Anisa Dhar, Harvinder Shridhar, Pooja Singh, and many other top artistes. Visit [Shiv Sewa Sangh's](#) website here; also, [see the display ad on Page 18](#).

•••

The Guyana Consulate, Toronto, will hold two events to mark Guyana's 54th Anniversary as a Republic. The events will take place on February 23 with a flag-raising ceremony, followed by a reception at North York Civic at 11:30 a.m., and a social the Consulate at 6 p.m. Email nutana.singh@guyanaconsulate.com for more information.

•••

The Walnut Foundation, Roots Community Services, and The Olive Branch of Hope

will hold a From Heritage to Health Virtual Workshop, Hearth Health in African-Caribbean Communities on February 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The focus of the workshop will be on heart health, treatment, hearty healthy nutrition, and Physical Activity and Heart Health month. [Click here to register for the workshop](#).

•••

Also, on March 2, the Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organisations will hold its Mashramani/Republic Ball at the Sts Peter & Paul Banquet Hall, 231 Milner Road, Scarborough.

The event begins at 6:30 p.m. Call John O'Dell at **416-275-5483**; Audrey Nichols at **416-828-9715**; Ingrid King at **416-993-9266**; Yvonne Adams at **416-838-4191**; Cheryl Vogelson at **416-529-6754**; or Joy Simon at **416-566-3734**, for more information about the event.

•••

The Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association will hold its Fete Gala Dinner and Dance on February 24 at the Grand Cinnamon Banquet & Convention Centre, 3895 McNicoll Avenue, Scarborough.

Performing at the event are Terry Gajraj, Emily Moore, Footsteps Dance, and the Ind Dance Team. [Visit ICCN's website for more information](#); also, [see display ad on Page 22](#).

•••

Save the date for Radha Krishna Mandir & Cultural Centre's *Vasant Ki Raat*, which takes place on April 7 at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton.

The fund-raiser is for its new mandir, and will feature a sumptuous dinner and an entertaining concert with Pt Rajin Balgobind and Pt Munelal Maharaj.

[Click here for more information on tickets](#); also, [see the display ad on Page 19](#).



Devotees at Shiv Sewa Sangh enjoy the summer sunshine



Devi Mandir's devotees share a sacred moment of prayer



RKMCC's new building is well underway in Cambridge

RKM new building construction ongoing

Construction of the Radha Krishna Mandir and Cultural Centre continues with the target set for partial occupancy this year. With its goal to fulfil the local community's access to spiritual and cultural resources, the 21,000 square-foot mandir in Cambridge is strategically located, with additional parking, well-equipped classrooms, and many essential amenities.

When fully constructed, RKMCC will not only impact positively on southern Ontario's cultural diversity, at the same time it will also contribute to the region's architectural and historical significance.

The new building is located at 85 Boxwood Drive in Cambridge.

At the top of the year, the steel and decking installation was finished, and inspections were completed. Among the components being worked on in the next phase are installing the steel studs and drywall, the insulation, necessary plumbing, electrical and mechanical work, and the entire roof.

To keep on putting the building blocks in place to enable partial occupancy this year, RKMCC is continuing with its humble appeal

for our community's generous funding support.

Community members can either participate in, or promote, the mandir's upcoming fundraisers, such as its Holi concert, and the upcoming *Vasant Ki Raat* ([See display ad on Page 19](#)), which takes place on April 7. Tickets for the [new mandir's fund-raiser are available online here](#).

Members of the community can also make donations, either in cash, cheques, or via online contributions. [Click here to donate](#); eTransfer: donate@radhakrishnamandir.ca; cheques can also be mailed to the mandir's current location, and tax receipts will be issued.

There is also the option to consider providing a loan/collateral to support the mandir's construction – a Promissory Note for each received loan will be issued.

Also, the community should continue with its good work by being ambassadors through social media and word-of-mouth engagements.

Keep sharing the profound impact this project is having in preserving Hinduism and Dharma for future generations in the Region of Waterloo. Also, keep on encouraging families and friends to support the initiative.

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Editorial

Tobago's oil spill

It is disconcerting that our idyllic island of Tobago, at times idealised by our winter-fatigued diaspora as a pastoral escape for its warm sunshine and dry, white sand underfoot, found itself dealing with not only the stormy seas of a deleterious oil spill, but at the same time was caught in such perilous turbulence without that metaphorical paddle, namely, minus the instruments to quickly and efficiently navigate through an escalating and environmentally destructive oil calamity.

As we are all now aware, earlier this month a capsized tanker began leaking oil off the coast of Tobago's Studley Park, with the tide taking thousands of litres of oil slick to shore, its unwelcome arrival polluting the coast and subsea environment of the southwesterly heel of the island.

Arriving on Tobago's shores, the slick began fouling both fauna and flora, and damaging beaches crucial to Tobago's tourism thrust, thus impacting on the island's economy, while threatening the main port.

In fact, even as the crisis unfolded, the arrival of a cruise ship with 3,000 tourists on February 11 faced possible cancellation. However, the *Costa Fortuna* eventually docked at the Scarborough port to a shipboard view of oil-blackened waters nearby being restrained by containment booms.

Needless to say, it was quite disconcerting for members of our diaspora to read the reports emerging out of Tobago stating that the island was neither ready, nor equipped, to deal with such a disaster. And indeed, it was an existential and escalating calamity, which in its unfolding saw the oil spill drifting 15 kilometres west, with a line of spilt oil that was 12 kilometres long heading into the Scarborough port.

The irony inherent in such unpreparedness is not lost to our diaspora; and it is quite evident as a troubling dissonance to any foreign observer familiar with Trinidad and Tobago's history in the oil industry, which as we know has mainly driven this nation's economy for close to 100 years.

In the light of so many decades of intensive exposure and immersion in the petroleum industry, it is astonishing that this once oil-producing nation was caught asleep at the flywheel, so to speak.

So it was with consternation that our diaspora noted the statement made by Tobago House of Assembly Chief Secretary Farley Augustine, who the media reported last week as saying, "Tobago was never ever ready for this kind of a spill; you're talking about an island that does not have sufficient amount of booms; an island that doesn't have storage, adequate storage capacity for this kind of oil, or for toxic material. We never prepared for this as an eventuality".

It was also disconcerting to note Tobago Emergency Management Agency director Allan Stewart describing the situation as a logistical, escalating nightmare.

Said Stewart: "You have to talk about building capacity on the island, as we see [the oil slick] is even moving towards what can be considered a Tier Three. Tier Three means that there is international involvement".

The depth of unpreparedness, the initial fumble at containment at administrative and political levels, and eventual damage control over the lack of alacrity in an immediate and effective containment response, do little to calm the troubled waters in our diaspora on why Tobago found itself with inadequate means to deal with such an "eventuality".

In fact, notwithstanding the slick response by Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley, the oil spill disaster has exposed alarming gaps in this nation's coastal protection systems, and its contingency plans to quickly respond to, and deal with exigencies of such a challenging, ruinous, and calamitous nature.

It is not good enough for Rowley to oil the government's spin with relief that the contamination could have been more widespread, but was mitigated by the prevailing weather at the time, and through the fortuitous, geographical location of the capsized tanker.

As he stated, "It could easily have been worse. We have to thank God for small mercies." It is far better to be proactive, prepared, and to respond with purposeful alacrity.

Meanwhile, with its recent and burgeoning oil industry, it is imperative that the Guyana government take note.

Music of the spheres in our syncretised Caribbean

Dreams of paradise evoke the most ideal enchanting setting. Warm temperatures, pristine beaches, lush vegetation, surrounded by crystal-clear waters. Indeed, the Caribbean is a beautiful place. For many, the Caribbean is truly paradise on earth.

And for an outsider, images of the Caribbean invoke a sense of wanderlust. A place that embodies joy, relaxation, and satisfaction.

However, the paradise that many assume the Caribbean to be is much different below the surface.

The Caribbean is a region that was colonised by covetous European empires. And the history since colonisation is anything but paradisiacal.

From displaced Indigenous People, the slavery of Africans, indentureship of South Asians and Chinese, the modern era of the Caribbean remains plagued by an ugly history.

Even as the region emerged from its colonial-dominated period, racial tensions were retained, adding to the depth of complexities that overcast the peoples of the region.

In particular, Afro- and Indo- communities were already divided by race, culture, and religion, which were fostered by colonial nations. The empire benefited and profited from this division, as a unified population would resist domination, and collectively rebel for independence and self-governance.

The Caribbean is a region that has a dark and troublesome legacy. But like a caterpillar that spins itself into a silky cocoon, to then emerge as a gorgeous, vibrant, and colourful butterfly, so did the Caribbean.

Despite the darkness and oppression that led to the modern-day composition of the Caribbean, still a new vibrant region has emerged. And true unity is embedded in the heart of Caribbean culture.

Before multiculturalism was conceptualised in Canada by the late and former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, this was already being practiced in the Caribbean.

Peoples who originated from around the world and Indigenous communities were interacting, living, and integrating. Different races, different cultures, different traditions, and different religions: the composition of the Caribbean was far from homogeneous.

However, as communities continued to grow and establish, a new Caribbean culture emerged. Blending aspects from various



Ryan Singh

cultures that had traveled from thousands of kilometres away, new traditions and customs emerged that were composed of the unique mixture of its population.

Food is the obvious demonstration of this. Curry from South Asia, rice and peas from Africa, chow mein from China, and Pepperpot from the Indigenous People.

Also, there are many deeper integrations of cultures that are embedded in staples of Caribbean culture.

Soca is a genre of music that is synonymous with modern Caribbean culture. The genesis of soca is fully representative of the diverse composition of today's Caribbean culture, and is reflective of the ancestral roots of the two current largest ethnic groups in the region.

Soca stands for "soul of calypso," and it was developed in the 1970s by the late Trinidad and Tobago artiste Garfield Blackman, better known as Lord Shorty. He is remembered for being a prolific musician, composer, and innovator.

Shorty claimed that the "soul of calypso" was as "multicultural as his islands' African and East Indian descendants".

With calypso overtaken in popularity by reggae in the early 1960s, Shorty wanted to revive traditional calypso music. He experimented by fusing calypso with elements of Indo-originated music.

The beginnings and evolution of soca as a standalone musical genre included fusion with calypso, cadence, and Indian musical instruments, in particular the dholak, tabla, and dhantal. This was demonstrated in Lord Shorty's classic compositions *Indrani* and *Shanti Om*.

It was originally spelt "sokah" by Shorty; however, an error in a local newspaper when reporting on the emergent music saw it misspelled as "soca". Recognising the error, Lord Shorty chose to leave it that way to avoid confusion.

The music that defines the Caribbean today is a unifier of the two largest ethnic communities. The beautiful melodies of soca music are symbolic of the beauty that the Caribbean has become today.

Beyond a place that is sometimes only defined as sunshine and beaches, the in-depth and intricate evolution of Caribbean culture surpasses the beauty of its geography.

A true demonstration that cultural communities can co-exist, and that we can create beautiful things together. This is the true beauty of the Caribbean.

Schoolbag lunch items make the grade and trade

Talk at the family dining table recently turned to itemising the peripherals that were carried in my oversized schoolbag when I was attending school back home.

Now apart from the weighty schoolbooks that were required carrying back in my sturdier days, there was the packed lunch. This was usually an unvarying and predictable fare of roti stuffed with slices of plantains, the latter fried each morning until the sizzling made it golden and caramelised.

Packing such an easy lunch did not take much preparation. Plantains were always accessible, since numerous plants were eternal and towering presences in our backyard back home. Now add my grandmother's expert hand at cooking roti to the easy lunch-making formula.

Each of Ma's roti was a work of art, individually inflated so it left the fireside swollen like an exercise ball. Its steam hissed with serpentine malevolence after it was deflated with the tip of a knife, and then quickly wrapped like a new-born in the warm embrace of a cloth, typically discoloured with pot-black, since it was also a pinch-hitter as a *saaphi* pot-holder in a crisis.

All it took to make lunch was to separate the two layers of the roti, and generously stuff it with slices of the savoury fried plantains. A sprinkle of salt, a quick wrap with brown paper, and a flip that was a half-turn action of the wrist and hands to twist both ends into rabbit ears, and *Voilà* - lunch was packed.

And right away, the brown paper turned translucent with oily leakage. The tell-tale translucency happened quickly, sometimes leaving behind a kiss that was a spreading grease stain on a copybook cover or two that was snug inside the tightly-packed school book bag.

This was so since the thick slices of plantains, each like a wedge of sponge, typically absorbed an unhealthy payload of oil from the deep frying that it took to caramelise the starch into sugar, and while unwholesome, still made this cooked banana Oh! so delicious and satisfying; and quite tradeable.

For it was such that each carefully wrapped package of savoury fried plantains and roti was not only a repast for my lunch-time enjoyment during the mid-day school break. In fact, as soon as each wrapped package was deposited into my schoolbag, it became transformed into a tradeable currency.

Right away the package and its delectable contents were monetised, promoted as a desirable commodity for the hectic trading in lunches that took place surreptitiously among the

boys during the morning session of classes.

And in what were secondary learning moments beyond the primary purpose of the formal school rubric, the totally oblivious teacher writing on the chalkboard was blissfully unaware that a thriving system of bartering and horse trading in lunches was taking place behind his back.

That already we were well into economics, finances, and profit-and-loss accounting, a few of us majoring in courses beyond our youthful years.

The culmination of our classroom negotiations saw deals being sealed during the recess break with that certain look in the eye; the gentle tap of bumping fists; or a go-ahead, affirmative shake of an honourable head.

The trading itself occurred in the marketplace of sorts during lunchtime. We gathered in small groups in the shade under the canopy of a spreading samaan tree at the periphery of the playground. Here the cricket field was being so baked by the hot, mid-day sun that the cracks on the hardened pitch flared outwards like so many tributaries of veins and arteries.

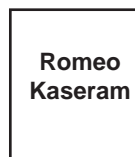
Now the wrapped fried plantains and roti pieces were always a bullish commodity in our little bourse beneath the samaan tree. Here schoolmates with lesser denominations of lunches, such as small plastic containers packed with too-peppery rice and peas, or roti with curried beans that were turning red in the humidity, typically traded upwards to get to the rarified and delectable fried plantains and roti.

To trade upwards meant a two-to-one differential to move up the ladder from gourmand bread with rancid cheese, to the more gourmet fare of fried plantains and roti.

On afternoons when the fried plantains and roti trading was bullish, classmates with lunches that were more challenging to the palate faced bearish and unrelenting headwinds.

It meant they had to dip into pockets for spare change to sweeten the pot, which in my day saw emergence of less valued currencies, among them marbles, spinning tops, and on one occasion, a rejected, weather-beaten leather cricket ball with its red exterior mostly faded, and a few of its stitches undone.

Now to accompany a repast of fried plantains and roti meant taking cold, hydrating sips from an 'Icy-Hot', its name brand, Thermos, hardly ever used. My introduction of the hot-cold oxymoron raised even more amused eyebrows at our dining table, and is the subject of our next exploration about corollary items that weighed down my already-burdened school bag.



Romeo Kaseram

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

Celebrating a musician par excellence

Dear Editor,

When we contemplate on the effort that Indo-Guyana have made over the years to preserve and foster their culture under trying circumstances, we would appreciate the significant role of Mohan Nandu, one of Guyana's greatest musicians and cultural leaders.

Nandu was a household name in every Indo-Guyanese community for at least three decades from the 1960s to the 1990s. He was the lead singer at Radio Demerara, performed at the community fairs, sang *bhajans* at mandirs across the country, lent his voice at concerts in Trinidad and Tobago and the US, and won the Diwali singing competition on several occasions.

The award of the Medal of Service by the government of Guyana is little compensation for Nandu's enormous contribution to Indian art, culture, and religion.

He nurtured young talents, inspired thousands of singers, mesmerised music lovers, soothed the souls of devotees, and yet remained simple and humble in offering his services free of charge.

It is remarkable that Nandu, who laboured in the sugarcane fields, and did not benefit from specialised musical training to become an accomplished artiste, surprised even greats like Hemant Kumar and Manna Dey when they heard him singing on their tours to Guyana.

It was by dint of his love for Indian music, his religious upbringing, and the encouragement from the community that gave him the impetus to work diligently, practicing his *Riyaz* to culture his voice.

He lent his mellifluous voice to a wide genre of Indian music including *bhajans*, folk, *Qawalis*, filmy *geets*, and classicals, the latter for which he became quite famous.

Difficult classical tunes like *Laaga* and *Phool*

Gaindava, which even accomplished singers avoided, he sang with ease and assurance, thrilling audiences across the country.

His deftness in playing a harmonium aided the range and repertoire of musical notes to which his voice harmonised, making him such a versatile singer.

In recognition of his spectacular contribution to Indian music, the Nirvana Humanitarian Foundation paid special tribute to Nandu at a function held in July 2010 at the Saraswati Vidya Niketan.

Balgobin Kawal and Aunty Ruby Sukhu were also honoured at the time, and generous monetary rewards were offered to all three by NHF as tokens of our appreciation for their sterling role as cultural ambassadors of Guyana.

Over the last decade Nandu suffered from prolonged ill-health, but fortunately Saraswati Vidya Niketan and Swami Aksharananda came to his rescue. Although he regained some mobility in his final days, he was stricken with cardiac arrest before passing away on February 9.

Nandu's golden voice will haunt lovers of Indian music in the Caribbean for years. Fortunately, some of his live performances are on *YouTube*.

Guyana has produced some wonderful musicians who have kept Indian music alive for 185 years. Nandu stands out as one of the best, and will be remembered not only for his singing talent, but as a loving, generous human being who made friends easily, and who was approachable to anyone in the community.

Members of The Nirvana Humanitarian Foundation wish to express our deepest sympathies at the passing of a great son of Guyana. His passing leaves a huge void in the Indian community.

Pt Ramdular Singh, Guyana, via email.



Mohan Nandu



Mohan Nandu. Photos courtesy Jyoti Satsangh TV, New York



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RE/GUYANA
GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

Prescriptive Title Explained

By Kal Juman-Yassin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What can TT, Somalia do to effect positive change to their corruption index?

Dear Editor,

According to the 2020-2023 Corruption Perception Index, Denmark is the least corrupt country in the world, and Somalia is the most corrupt. Trinidad and Tobago falls under the 50-percentile midpoint with a score of 43 (100 means little or no corruption and 0 for the most). Somalia scored 11, the lowest of the 180 countries on the index.

Somalia's low score is caused by graft. As understood in American English, graft is a form of political corruption defined as the evil use of a politician's authority for personal gain: "Political graft occurs when funds intended for public projects are intentionally misdirected to maximise the benefits to private interests."

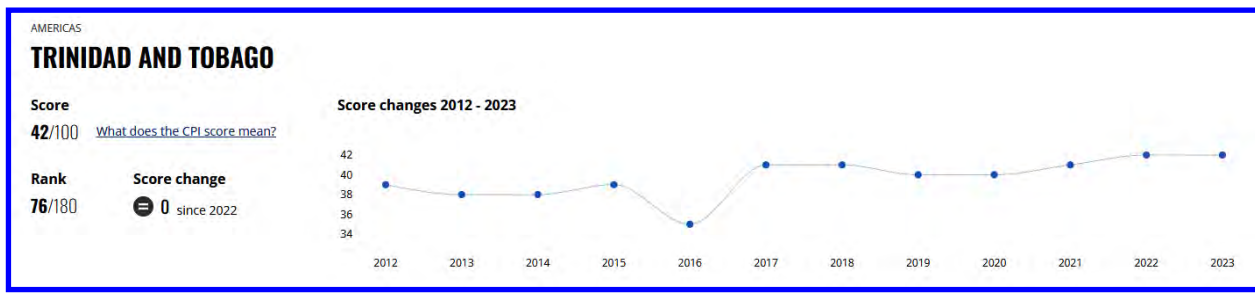
Beginning in 2012, the government of Somalia undertook a series of reforms to eliminate corruption. It established the Federal Government of Somalia, and formed a joint financial management board.

"In 2013, the Somali federal government announced that it had launched a new Public Finance Management Policy to render more transparent, accurate, and timely its public sector financial system, and to strengthen the delivery capacity of the government's financial sector.

According to *Wikipedia*, "A parliamentary finance committee was also established in 2014 to oversee all withdrawal transactions from the Central Bank. Additionally, a Public Procurement, Concessions and Disposal Act was passed, and the Office of the Auditor General was established to audit all government institutions. The government also began utilising a free asset recovery system supported by the UNODC and World Bank, and it concurrently launched an anti-graft public awareness campaign."

Despite all the safeguards against corruption over the last ten years, Somalia remains the most corrupt nation on earth, primarily because of the government's inability, ineptness, or unwillingness to control where the money goes.

Moreover, because billions of dollars donated from international sources to assist Somalians remain accounted for, is it any



Trinidad and Tobago's CPI 2023 score. *Graphic: Website, Transparency International*

Trinidad and Tobago was from 35 in 2016 to 41 in 2017.

Although Trinidad and Tobago has tried to eliminate corruption over the years with the reformation of the public sector in 2012, and existential anti-corruption strategies like the Integrity in Public Life Act, the Integrity Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Police

Complaints Authority, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Anti-Corruption Investigations Bureau, the Fraud Squad, and the Director of Public Prosecutions, nothing done has moved our CPI score in a meaningful way.

What can a nation with a low CPI score do to change its rating positively, when all the anti-corruption systems fail, as evidenced in Somalia and Trinidad and Tobago?

Will a change of government make a difference? Will we also have to eliminate these inept institutions? Or, at the very least, their boards?

Since Trinidad and Tobago became an Independent nation, all governments have put their people in critical positions. Changing the government in the next general election could mean saving billions of dollars annually, and a paradigm shift if we employ professionals in state organisations, instead of friends and cronies. Since nothing else has had any impact, what do we have to lose?

Rex Chookolingo, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



A dealer at an open foreign exchange bureau sits behind stacks of Somalian shillings in Mogadishu

wonder that the wealthiest person in Somalia is the CEO billionaire of Dahabshiil, an international funds transfer company?

It is significant to note that the CPI score is not based on citizens' experience, tax fraud, illicit financial flows, enablers of corruption such as lawyers and accountants, money laundering, or private sector corruption.

While the administration may shrug off the CPI rating as being a "perception" and not scientifically accurate, as Transparency International notes, "Each country's score is a combination of at least three data sources drawn from 13 different corruption surveys and assessments. These data sources are collected by a variety of reputable institutions, including the World Bank and the World Economic Forum."

Moreover, the score may vary from administration to administration as governments change. Therefore, a single-digit CPI score change from year to year is insignificant overall.

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Is the Venezuelan threat real, or it is a distraction ploy by Maduro?

As Venezuela expands its military bases near its border with Guyana, hopes for a diplomatic solution to the border dispute between both countries appear to be water under the bridge. The underlying question is whether Venezuela's threat to annex Guyana's Essequibo region is real, or whether it is a ploy to provide a distraction from the country's domestic troubles.

Although the two countries agreed to a peaceful resolution of the dispute last December 14, satellite images posted by the US Center for Strategic and International Studies



Dwarka Lakhan

showed that Venezuela is extending its base on Ankoko Island, half of which Venezuela seized from Guyana in the mid-1960s, and nearby Punta Barima, less than 50 miles from the Guyana border.

The images, according to the CSIS, showed significant infrastructure improvement of roads and other facilities near the two areas.

Incidentally, in an effort to prevent escalation of the long-standing border dispute, Brazil, Caricom, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States arranged a meeting between Guyana's President Irfaan Ali and Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro on December 14 in St Vincent and the Grenadines.



Nicolás Maduro

The meeting resulted in the signing of the Argyle Declaration that contemplated a peaceful resolution of the dispute, followed by Maduro and Ali issuing a joint declaration pledging to "not threaten or use force against one another in any circumstances".

This declaration was reinforced following a January 25, 2024 meeting between the Venezuelan and Guyanese Foreign Ministers, Yván Gil and Hugh Hilton Todd, which concluded with a statement indicating that negotiations would continue.

In a joint statement, the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to the Argyle Declaration and the principles of peace. The two ministers presented proposals for the work of the Joint Commission, which will be discussed at the next meeting in Brazil that is scheduled to take place in April. The Venezuelan minister said the meeting "was a step forward in diplomatic talks".

Ironically, according to a statement in the press attributed to Christopher Hernandez-Roy, Deputy Director of CSIS's Americas programme, the same day that the Venezuelan foreign minister was meeting with Guyanese diplomats, the Venezuelan military was conducting tank drills just a stone's throw from Guyana.

"All of this tells us Maduro is pursuing a duplicitous policy," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Guyanese officials have claimed that the Venezuelan administration is breaching the peace agreement signed in St Vincent. They condemned Venezuela for not abiding with it, stating: "We are not surprised at the bad faith of Venezuela. We are disappointed, not surprised. Guyana has a history of entering bilateral discussions in good faith. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same thing about our neighbour to the west."

The Venezuelan defense ministry, in response, has accused Guyana of threatening the St Vincent agreement by irresponsible actions and media deception, maintaining that the "Essequibo is ours".

Maduro has also accused Guyana's government of subservience to ExxonMobil, which he says is colluding with the Pentagon to foment a "military conflict" with Venezuela.

Venezuela has also claimed that US oil giant

ExxonMobil, which is producing 645,000 barrels of offshore oil daily from Guyana, is collaborating with the government and the US military to exploit oil and gas resources in waters claimed by Venezuela. It accused Guyana of granting illegal oil exploration concessions in territory the two nations are disputing, and said it would reserve the right to take any diplomatic actions necessary.

Regardless, ExxonMobil has insisted that it will continue to explore for oil in the bitterly contested region, despite the dangers that the move is likely to escalate tensions between the two South American neighbours.

The escalation in tensions following the agreement of a peaceful solution also stems from the arrival of a British warship in Guyana's waters. Last year on December 28, Venezuela ordered its armed forces to hold military drills after the UK sent *HMS Trent*, a warship, to Guyana.

The ship had initially been deployed to search for drug smugglers in the Caribbean, but the UK confirmed that it would take part in joint exercises with Guyana amidst the ongoing dispute over the oil-rich Essequibo region of Guyana.

In a television address on December 28, Maduro referred to the exercises being launched "in response to the provocation and threat of the UK against peace and the sovereignty of our country".

He claimed the move was "practically a military threat from London", breaking the "spirit" of recent agreements not to use force.

Amidst the tensions, several top American administration and military officials have visited Guyana in a show of support. The US also supplied military overflights monitoring Venezuelan troops and other activities at the height of tensions in December.

In addition, the US agreed to bolster Guyana's defence with new aircraft, helicopters, military drones, and radar technology.

In the meantime, Guyana is also spending money on its military. It has allocated (US) \$201 million to update its military equipment, including helicopters, maritime surveillance vessels, and at least one drone.

President Ali said the government would focus on technology items for the Guyana Defense Force, and on cooperation with allied countries; he also noted that Guyana was "not in an arms war" with Venezuela.

In a show of support, US Presidential Advisor Jon Finer, who was in Guyana earlier this year, said that the US was cooperating with Guyana to assist with preserving its borders. In addition to the US, France, and the UK have also increased their defense cooperation with Guyana.

Brazil has also deployed more troops to its border with Guyana and Venezuela amid the growing regional tensions.

Analysts see Maduro's sabre-rattling as a means to build support ahead of elections expected this year, but have suggested it could also be an attempt to pressure Guyana into sharing revenue from recent oil discoveries.

Incidentally, Venezuela's economy has collapsed in the last decade despite having some of the largest deposits in the world.

Evidently, a military lunge for the Essequibo would be high risk for Maduro. According to the CSIS, "this escalatory behaviour on the part of Venezuela creates opportunities for miscalculation and loss of control over events on the ground".

However, any violation of Guyana's sovereignty by Venezuela would result in a blanket



The disputed area (in red) between Guyana and Venezuela

diplomatic isolation, and the re-imposition of Western sanctions against Caracas that were eased after Maduro and Opposition leaders reached the Barbados accord in October.

Although most analysts reject the possibility of a military invasion of the entire Essequibo area, some estimates suggest that Caracas could launch a limited-range invasion.

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

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Stephen Lecce (fourth from left, middle row) with Patrice Barnes (fifth from left) following the announcement of mandatory learning of Black history in Grades 7, 8, and 10. Photo: X (Twitter) @sflece

Mandatory Black history learning in schools in 2025

From Page 1

creation of this new curriculum.”

Erika Alexander, granddaughter of the Honourable Lincoln Alexander was also happy with the move.

“I am thrilled to see the Ontario curriculum incorporating the legacies, stories, and histories of Black Canadians. It is vital that students learn about the contributions and struggles of Black Canadians, as they are a fundamental part of Canadian history. I hope this leads to a more inclusive and inspiring education system for all,” she said.

Commenting on his government’s educational move during BHM, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism Michael Ford said, “Black Canadians have long played a critical role in shaping our province and our country. The introduction of mandatory learning on the experiences, history, culture, and contributions of Black Canadians will ensure the Black leaders, both past and present, who have been essential to the success of our country and province are reflected, and that the next generation of students develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for them and their contributions.”

And speaking to his government’s latest educational initiative, Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, stated, “Black history is Canadian history. By mandating learning on the contributions Black individuals made to our country’s founding and success, the next generation of Canadians will better appreciate the sacrifice, patriotic commitment, and long-lasting contributions Black Canadians have made to Canada.”

He added, “As the economy and technology continue to change, we will continue to modernise curriculum, with an emphasis on STEM education, so students have the skills and confidence to graduate into good-paying jobs.”

Lecce was also commenting on his government futuring its input into Ontario’s education system towards modernising and making up-to-date the curriculum to ensure students graduate with the real-life job skills and knowledge required to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

He also noted that with the expedited growth in technological advancement, and the rise in entrepreneurship, the province is introducing updated curriculum starting in the next school year that prepares students for the jobs of tomorrow.

Govt gives BYAP \$16.5M boost

Toronto – The Ontario government is investing an additional \$16.5 million in the Black Youth Action Plan to continue supporting more than 20 community-based and culturally focused organisations with a proven track record of empowering Black children and families.

Through BYAP’s Economic Empowerment stream, the funding will help Black youth and young professionals develop skills to aid in launching their careers in high-demand sectors such as the skilled trades, information technology, automotive, health, film, and the arts.

“We have seen the difference community organisations make in helping Black youth and young professionals find meaningful employment, develop critical skills and unlock a brighter future for themselves and their communities,” said Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Ford also noted that the investment was part of our government’s ongoing work to empower communities, and build a stronger, more inclusive workforce where everyone can succeed.

Building on the more than 5,000 Black youth and young professionals helped through the Economic Empowerment stream since 2020, the investment will enhance support for community and Black-led organisations across Ontario that are delivering impactful programs empowering the next generation of Black leaders.

To date, the Black Youth Action Plan’s Economic Empowerment stream has supported programs in a variety of fields. Among these are Accelerate Auto, a Mississauga-based not-for-profit that has helped create a more diverse workforce in Ontario’s automotive sector by advancing career and networking opportunities for Black youth and young professionals.

There is also the Delta Family Resource Centre, a West Toronto organisation providing youth, aged 17 to 30, with skills’ training in the information technology sector, along with work-relevant education, business linkages, and culturally relevant supports.

The Durham Region Association of Black Professionals and Entrepreneurs also provides mentorship and career guidance to Black youth in Durham with a focus on STEM and entrepreneurship.

In this program, participants are provided with the resources to further their education at the post-secondary level, or pursue work opportunities by making them job ready with the hard and soft skills needed in the workplace.

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Breaking through the shell - TWF building awareness on prostate cancer

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Among the critical take-aways from a November 2022 population-based study on prostate cancer was recognition there is a need to raise awareness about the condition, not only with men, but also to include their families in the conversation, our wider communities, and to take the dialogue further afield into the healthcare community in Canada.

This was among the conclusions from the research that was conducted in 2022 by Dr Aisha Lofters, a Women's College Hospital family physician, scientist, and Chair in Implementation Science at the Peter Gilgan Centre for Women's Cancers.

Working with The Walnut Foundation's Ken Noel, Lofters' research found that men who immigrated from West Africa and the Caribbean to Canada had a significantly higher incidence of prostate cancer than other immigrants and long-term residents in Ontario.

TWF is a men's health interest and prostate support group that is working with the Black community in identifying the needs of Black men in the areas of health and related issues.

As its website notes, TWF seeks to make a difference in men's health and wellness, while simultaneously providing a forum for discussion in a comfortable, safe, and supportive environment.

Speaking to WCH about her research on the differences in prostate cancer risk among immigrants, and on its focus, findings, and the implications, Lofters stated the study had set out to "understand if there were certain immigrant groups who were at higher risk of developing prostate cancer than others".

Said Lofters: "Prostate cancer is common worldwide, but its patterns are different in different countries and parts of the world. What we found was that men who had immigrated from West Africa and from the Caribbean had a notably higher incidence of prostate cancer than other men. We also found that men from South Asia tended to have a lower incidence than other men."

She added, "This question, as far as we could tell, has not been studied much in the Canadian literature before. There is still a lot to be learned about prostate cancer and what causes it, but this does highlight groups who should be aware of prostate cancer, and groups who clinicians should remember may be at higher risk of prostate cancer."

Lofters also indicated they were not surprised at the results that emerged from the study, since literature exists from other countries that show men of West African ancestry are at a higher prostate cancer risk.

She also indicated that many Caribbean men are of West African ancestry due to the historical trajectory of travel to the region that is linked to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

However, what Lofters noted was a surprising emergence that "there has not been much research in this area in Canada"; also, that Canada "cannot just rely on US findings for our population".

A response to this recognised gap was the need to raise awareness among men, Lofters told WCH. Also, that this awareness should ripple outwards into and among families, into communities in general, and even further afield into the healthcare community.

She added, "All these players can help spread the word and empower men with information."

Lofters' focus on awareness as a response to address the lacunae, that gap in awareness on the troublesome, high incidence of prostate cancer among Black men in Canada, particularly among West African and Caribbean men, is the *raison d'être* driving one significant player here in Toronto that is spreading the word,



Sean Blake



Anthony Henry



Ivan Dawns



In an interview with *Yahoo Canada* in 2022, Dr Danny Vesprini, a radiation oncologist at Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, and a friend of TWF, noted that the prostate is a gland that produces enzymes and proteins in the body; and it is also part of the reproductive system.

Residing below the bladder, the most common problem most men experience is that it continues to grow, which can lead to issues with incontinence, and difficulties with urination as men grow older. While not being serious medical issues, these can impact on a man's confidence and quality of life, Vespirini noted.

Also, in addition to common urinary problems, prostatitis or Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) are more serious conditions that can develop. Prostatitis is inflammation of the prostate gland that can cause symptoms such as painful urination and general discomfort in the area, which can be quite uncomfortable and disruptive.

BPH usually affects men over the age of 40. As it grows, the prostate can block the flow of urine, and cause bladder, urinary tract, or kidney problems.

Graphic source: Website, The Walnut Foundation

educating, and empowering men with such vital health information.

It is TWF. Visit the group's website, and what is quickly apparent are the quite troubling statistical data: as Black men, 76 percent are more likely to develop prostate cancer; are 2.2 times more likely to die from it; if detected late, then the survival rate drops to 30 percent at five years; however, if detected early, then the ten year survival rate is almost 100 percent.

The data are stark, salient, and profoundly and societally significant for our diaspora community when held up against the bigger picture of prostate cancer among men in Canada. As TWF's website notes, the statistics show one in nine men in Canada will develop prostate cancer, and one in 29 will die from the disease.

What is notable, and of significant concern in this bigger, national picture, is that these rates are higher in men of West African and Caribbean descent who live in Canada.

This issue matters; and it can be prevented, TWF's website declares. It is from this unequivocal declaration where we see the main driver emerging that is impelling TWF forward.

Speaking with *Indo-Caribbean World* last week, TWF's president, Anthony Henry, revealed that his close involvement with the group, and his commitment to raising awareness about the condition, came from his household taking a direct hit: his father succumbed to the illness at 68 years old.

Sadly, his father's diagnosis came when the cancer was at a late stage. Later, the family discovered his father had not been given Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) tests, which could have aided with early detection.

As Henry told *Indo-Caribbean World*, and also the *Canadian Cancer Society*, out of his father's passing came the sea-change that led to the taking of responsibility for one's health.

His father's ill-health, and subsequent death, had entered undetected through the front door. It then hit so close to home that the untimely passing was galvanising, as were the repercussions tectonic on the surviving males in their

household, and on their extended family.

"After my father's passing, my brother and I started getting checked," Henry revealed.

Henry's path on the road to structured health practices in checkups and personal health surveillance following his awakening, his proactive self-education and ongoing acquisition of knowledge, and his diligence with regular testing, were investments that later paid dividends when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He was 54 years old at the time.

Today, Henry is a financial advisor for close to three decades; he is married, and a father of two children.

Henry's encounter with the illness later saw both his brother and uncle being similarly diagnosed with prostate cancer. Here was an indicator that the affliction was woven into the family's medical history, he noted.

Now aware that his family's medical history contained a possible hereditary affinity for prostate disease, Henry began to understand this knowledge could be made to resonate beyond their front door.

His own diagnosis, along with the untimely loss of his father, and the rippling of the affliction among other family members, saw him joining TWF. It was such that Henry had come to the understanding that awareness, structured lifestyle practices, and ongoing dialogue, when extended into our community, could save the lives of men, and households from the trauma of losing family members.

As he noted, his encounter with prostate cancer enabled self-awareness, along with the knowledge that there were wide gaps in knowledge, education, and healthy practices within families, and outside into our community.

That there was a notable gap in knowledge among men in our community, many of whom were unaware of their family's medical history, and who were living in precarity not knowing that the incipient cancer signals could grow into critical mass with an untreatable outcome.

And, of course, along with these absences, there were also the secrecy, and the accompa-

nying stigma associated with prostate cancer to overcome.

Said Henry: "The issue of prostate cancer touches on core areas of masculinity and sexuality. It touches on areas of incontinence, erectile dysfunction... men do not talk about it."

This is where traction hits the road in what drives TWF onwards on the journey it has undertaken.

Said Henry: "TWF encourages dialogue. The idea behind TWF is to talk - to share experiences; to find credible information sources; and to seek out credible sources."

And speaking to the group's name, and its invocation of the walnut as its symbol, Henry revealed the move was based on capturing the image of a known, common, and easily identifiable optic.

As he noted, "The prostate is about the size of a walnut in a young man at 20 years. However, over time with age, it grows to the size of a plum, or perhaps an orange..."

Thus the universal image of a walnut's fixed, universal dimension offers a comparative to its later morphing as men grow older and the gland changes shape, Henry said.

And as he stated, "It is important to understand what happens over time - that the prostate getting bigger does not necessarily mean cancer. Issues with it can be treated with medication; and not all issues are cancerous."

And yet again, Henry loops to the mantra of man and his world of prostate disease: where preparation, futuring, and knowledge acquisition are tools to help construct a lifestyle proximity between self-care and good health.

"Men should begin screening at age 50," he states. However, at the same time, he also notes the play of self-awareness alongside hereditary propensity, where age could have no fixed starting point for the arrival of the pathology; that younger men can also become afflicted.

As he noted, "Prostate cancer has no respect for the person"; it has no respect for boundaries - neither ethnicity, nor age.

Driven by these inexorable realities, TWF has taken to the road, and is utilising different vehicles to disseminate its message.

Stated Henry: "The idea behind TWF is that we talk; we share experiences; we find credible information sources, and focus on what is proven. We go out to the churches; conversations take place at the dining room table; at schools; during soccer matches."

In tandem with this ubiquity, another emphasis in the messaging is early detection; and that prostate cancer is generally treatable.

Said Henry, "It is important to catch it soon; it can be treated via radiation, or via a combination of treatments. Half the time the cancer can be slow growing. The challenges come when the cancer gets out from the prostate. This is why it is important to catch it early."

Also, "It is important to engage, and so educate yourself. Know what questions to ask. It is important to have the right medical team."

Another TWF's messaging vehicle literally hits the road. As Henry noted, 2024 is the tenth anniversary of TWF's fund-raising Walkathon. This year its goal is to raise \$100,000.

And as part of the impact from TWF's wider outreach, two union leaders from the trades are now on board as co-chairs. Joining the journey are Ivan Dawns from the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades; and Sean Blake from the Carpenters Union - Local 27.

As Henry noted, TWF has welcomed the constructive energy Dawns and Blake have infused into the group, and into the Walkathon.

With no history of prostate issues, the intervention by Dawns and Blake are not only galvanising their male colleagues in the trades, but simultaneously inculcating that much-needed awareness across ethnicities, Henry stated.

Said Henry: "For TWF, this is quite gratifying. Our message is getting out."



Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis

Bahamas media urged to keep crime reports off front pages

Nassau – Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis has urged the local media to keep crime off the front pages amid concerns over the impact it is having on this nation's tourism thrust.

As the *Caribbean Media Corporation* reported earlier this month, the tourist sector is the lifeblood of the chain of islands that could be severely affected by media coverage of crime.

On January 24, the US Embassy in Nassau issued a security alert for US citizens to be aware that 18 murders had occurred in Nassau since the beginning of 2024.

It added, "Murders have occurred at all hours including in broad daylight on the streets. Retaliatory gang violence has been the primary motive in 2024 murders."

Subsequent to the US advisory on crime in The Bahamas, international media reporting had also been highlighting the escalating crime situation, *CMC* noted.

Speaking to the issue last week, Davis indicated that a plan of action was underway, with the government preparing to launch an aggressive campaign to promote and protect the country's reputation.

Among the action to be taken by the government is its long-promised anti-gang legislation, *CMC* reported.

"You see the advisory that went out the other day, how that has taken legs? We are now hearing some concerns about the fall-off in tourism," Davis told religious leaders during a discussion about his administration's plans to deal with the crime situation.

He added, "Right now, the hotels are seeing

some fall-off, but more importantly, those who are in the hotels today, they are not coming out into the community. They are not going to the restaurants, for example. They are not going sightseeing as they used to. Of course, the hotel owners don't mind because as long as they are staying in the hotels ... they're spending it all there. So here again, we are shooting ourselves in our foot by allowing this to get out of hand."

Davis also noted The Bahamas was not the only country experiencing woes with crime.

"What is happening in this country is not only happening here. If you go to Jamaica, they had over 70 murders in less than three and half weeks. Trinidad over 100 ... The Bahamas has recorded 25 murders so far this year, with police saying many of the murders are gang related," he stated.

He then urged the media to understand their role in maintaining the country's reputation. Also, he noted that media in other countries give less prominence to certain crimes than what was taking place in The Bahamas.

"I want to call upon the press to be sensitive. I think they should see their role as trying to help the country. I'm not saying not to report, but where you report, it may make a difference. And all I ask them to do is check: check to see where their crime report is. Check Trinidad, check the US, just check and see where it is. It's never on the front page," he said.

He further declared, "But every bullet that is fired appears to be front page news on all of our daily news. And what happens – [the *Associated Press*] picks it up, *Reuters* picks it up, and what happens, and it's continuing."

Kensington gets ready for T20 WC

Bridgetown – Construction work at Kensington Oval is going smoothly, with the venue set to be ready on time to host its first fixture in the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup on June 2 when Namibia take on Oman.

Word on progress at the site came from chairman of Kensington Oval Inc., Damien Gaskin, during a press briefing held in Barbados last week.

"We are preparing to host a World Cup which is going to be the biggest in the world to this point – 20 teams for the first time, but the changes should have a long-lasting impact due to these upgrades around the facility," Gaskin told the Caribbean media.

As the *Nation News* reported out of Bridgetown, work started on the ground back in November with Phase 1 consisting of infrastructural work being done on the Hewitt & Inniss and Greenidge & Haynes stands. Phase 2 is focusing on the other stands and on the players' pavilion.

According to Gaskin, Phase 1 is around approximately 80 or 90 percent done. The

installation of Wi-Fi, auditory devices, and setting up Internet Protocol Television around the terrace are yet to be done as part of the upgrades.

The lighting system and the screen will also be changed, Gaskin said.

"The bases around the light towers are being reinforced. We are increasing the amount of LEDs to a minimum light standard, and as a result, we have to increase the bases," he stated.

And as he noted, by the middle of April four light towers with LEDs will be installed and functioning.

"What used to be the big screen has been taken down, and we've ordered a new high definition screen which is on its way – that should be here and installed by the first week of April," Gaskin revealed.

He also indicated that a secondary replay screen will be put between the Three W's Stand and the Players Pavilion.

The third and final phase will mostly be post-World Cup modifications to make the Oval into a world class facility, Gaskin said.



Ask Jay...

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

SMART ESTATE PLANNING STRATEGIES

Own real estate requires careful planning to ensure your loved ones inherit the assets without hefty probate fees. Upon death, the entire estate is considered disposed of, triggering taxation. In the GTA, where real estate is expensive, probate fees can be significant. Luckily, strategic planning can help avoid or reduce these fees.

One of the best ways to avoid probate is to hold assets jointly where the estate goes to the survivor. Take the principal residence, for example. You can add the children's names on the title as joint tenants, and since their names are on the title and not on a will, there is no probate fee.

When you hold an asset jointly, all parties become owners of the entire estate. There are no shares in joint ownership. If you have many children and leave the estate jointly for all of them, there can be disagreements among the siblings. Discussing your plans with the entire family before venturing into joint ownership is best.

Adding a child as a joint tenant to an investment property can save on probate fees, but it involves disposing of half the property, subjecting it to capital gains tax. For instance, you bought a property for \$200,000, now valued at \$1,000,000, and add a child as a joint tenant, the capital gains amounts to \$800,000. Half of this, \$400,000, or \$200,000, is taxable income.

Remember that when your loved ones eventually sell the property, tax authorities will consider their purchase at \$400,000 instead of \$800,000; since the range would be more significant, they will pay more taxes. Despite this, it is a more favourable option for your children. If you have several investment properties, consider spreading this process over a few years to ease the financial impact with capital gains tax.

Having a limited partnership company is another way to protect your investment. One significant advantage of a limited partnership is that it shields the partners from any debts or liabilities of the partnership company that are above their capital investment. You can remain as the general partner and make all the decisions while the children do not have to worry about the day-to-day operation.

Unlike a corporation, a limited partnership allows pass-through taxation because the partnership is not taxed, and any capital gains or taxes go directly to each partner. When transferring real estate other than your principal residence to a limited company, you are disposing of the property, and, in so doing, must pay capital gains tax. A limited partnership protects the business owners from liability, which is essential to preserve the family's wealth from spousal disputes.

Some families sell their investment property directly to their children at fair market value, and use the proceeds as a seller's take-back mortgage. The advantage is that you spread the capital gains tax over five years, instead of paying the entire amount upfront.

If there is a current mortgage on the rental property, then the remaining equity might not be enough to cover the mortgage. If that is the case, consider cashing in the GIC to cover the shortfall.

When selling a property to loved ones, it is vital to avoid undervaluing it, as the Canadian Revenue Agency closely scrutinises such transactions. If, for example, you sell a property worth \$400,000 to your loved ones for \$200,000, the CRA may assess the transaction based on the actual market value. In this case, they might consider the profit \$300,000, with 50 percent or \$150,000 added to your taxable income. Doing this could lead to double taxation issues for your loved ones when they sell the property in the future, as the CRA may use the lower reported sale price of \$200,000. It is better to sell properties to related parties at fair market value and seek advice from a tax professional for guidance on Canadian tax laws.

You can save on probate fees by having two wills; one is the primary will that holds the estate's asset for probate, and the other is a secondary one that deals with smaller items such as the family car, furniture, jewelry, and so on. With this system, the value of the entire estate drops, so there is a reduction in probate fees.

Death and taxes are certainties in life. Utilising tax saving strategies during your lifetime can help your children manage assets more smoothly in the future. Consider settling tax issues now, ensuring a lighter load for your loved ones when you are no longer around.

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How our Guyanese diaspora, Mayor Al revitalised upstate Schenectady

By Dhanpaul Narine

It was 2002 on a cold morning in Schenectady. The Mayor of the City was friendly, calm, and persuasive. He rode with a group of visitors from New York on a bus that was arranged by realtor Herman Singh. As the bus turned into Union Street, the Mayor pointed to a house and surprised his guests.

He said excitedly, "You see that house there? You can buy it for a dollar!"

This was incredible news to a group that wanted to own property. The bus visits became a regular feature and would help lead to an exodus of Guyanese from Queens to upstate Schenectady.

There is no doubt that when it mattered Mayor Jurczynski showed vision, perspicacity, and an acute sense of timing to pull off one of the most celebrated cases of urban renewal and revitalisation in America.

It was so powerful that it caught the attention of *The New York Times*, and other mainstream publications.

Who is Mayor Al, as he was fondly called, and what were the circumstances that led him to place his hopes on Guyanese to revitalise Schenectady?

Albert P. Jurczynski was born in Schenectady in New York. His parents were Joseph and Marguerite Jurczynski. They were married in 1947. Albert is the sixth of eight children and grew up learning the importance of family and togetherness.

Albert attended St Columbus School in Hamilton Hill, after which he articulated to Mont Pleasant High School. The young Albert took a liking to American history. He graduated from High School in June 1974, and contemplated going into the priesthood, but his brother Joe encouraged him to give the Army a try first. Albert went to Fort Dix in New Jersey to join the Army, following a family tradition.

He joined the Defense Language Institute in California where he studied Russian. An assignment in Southern Arizona followed that saw Albert becoming an Army Interrogator. He was 18 years old and the world was at his feet; additional responsibilities occurred in Fort Hood in Texas in military intelligence.

Albert returned to Schenectady in 1977 with a number of options available to him, including going to college, and of course the priesthood. He decided against the latter. There were a number of changes that had occurred while he was away, one



A happy family, from left: Albert Jurczynski, Maria, Pedro Garcia, Jessica, Allie, and Alexander

of which was prostitution, and no one was doing anything about it. This motivated him to act.

In July 1980, Albert was elected President of the Hamilton Hill Neighborhood Association, and proceeded to tackle the prostitution and other community issues. The media covered his work with the Association because he had deep roots in the community.

Albert furthered his education in business at Schenectady Community College. And then a life-changing event occurred.

He married a beautiful young lady Maria in 1984 and the marriage has produced two wonderful children, Jessica and Alex. Both children are doing well in their chosen professions.

What drove Albert to the Republican Party and politics? He said that his mom and dad were conservatives and their Polish values gave him a good sense of right and wrong.

"I was never one to buy into party politics," he said.

He added, "When I was a neighborhood president, I would have interaction with people from a wide-cross section of the community. I treated them with respect. The welfare of the peo-



Many Guyanese in the diaspora now live in Schenectady

CLIMATE CHANGE

How global warming is impacting on real estate and on our lives

By Jay Brijpaul

Special to *Indo-Caribbean World*

Toronto – Waterfront properties are in demand. Some of the most expensive pieces of residential and commercial real estate are near to beaches and lakes. It conjures a feeling of excitement and we all want a piece of it. With global warming, will the tides change? Would these properties go underwater, meaning will they be worth less than the mortgage owing? Toronto Island, one of the most expensive pieces of real estate, is on the verge of submerging.

The University of North Carolina Wilmington did a study in 2015 and found that oceanfront property values could drop. With global warming, we are experiencing more floods, hurricanes, and forest fires.

As the earth warms, there is more evaporation and heavier rainfall. In just within three hours in July 2013 Toronto was flooded, sending the transit system in disarray. The sewer system could not handle the flow, and countless basements were flooded, causing millions of dollars in damages. The government implemented new measures: changing building codes and installing back flow valves and sump pumps.

I came across a shopping plaza in Muskoka with over 40,000 square feet of retail space. It was situated at the edge of a river that served as a drainage for storm water. The rising water level created a problem.

Part of the solution was to install new drains higher up, above the frost line. In the winter, these drains must be heated, resulting in high electricity bills. The cost of maintenance ballooned and was transferred to the tenants, who eventually relocated. The once thriving plaza became an empty shell resulting in losses for millions of dollars.

The greenhouse effect damages property values near lake front properties that are not on flood zones as well. Ohio State University did a study in 2017, and found that home



values near Buckeye Lake and Grand Lake decreased by \$152 million from 2009 to 2015 because of inordinate algae growth. Communities in affected areas would lose some of their residences and businesses. With a smaller tax base, property tax would increase because fewer residences must carry the burden to run the city.

Some property owners are cashing in on the opportunity. They sold their waterfront properties and bought cheaper inland properties. A few families I knew sold their lakefront cottages, and used the proceeds to buy investment properties in Toronto.

It is a smart move for the future, since they got premium for the cottages and premium rent for their investment properties. They are on higher ground.

ple of Schenectady was more important than party affiliation."

Albert was elected to the City Council in 1983 at the tender age of 27 and he spent 12 years there. He was a minority member keeping an eye out for his neighborhood in Hamilton Hill. His activism did not go unnoticed, and in 1995 Albert was elected Mayor.

There were a number of issues that had to be addressed. He worked to keep jobs from leaving the city. The main employer was General Electric that was taking jobs elsewhere. In 1986, there were 6,000 jobs that were taken out of Schenectady.

The city was hurting and a visible impact of this was the out-migration to other places. As Mayor, Albert knew that one way to bring innovation was through population relocation.

Initially, he had planned to invite Hasidic Jews to relocate to Schenectady, but he was not successful. Then came 9/11 and his interaction with the Guyanese community in Richmond Hill, in Queens New York.

It led to one of the most successful migrations in the history of Schenectady and urban revitalisation in the US.

Albert Jurczynski became known as the visionary Mayor who took proactive measures to renew and revitalise his city. Guyanese to him were like Italians, hard-working and family-oriented, and yes, Albert visited Guyana to better understand Guyanese culture.

After a successful stint as Mayor, Albert left City Hall in 2003 to join the administration of Governor George Pataki. He was the Deputy Secretary of State for Business and Licensing for the State of New York.

In the course of a successful career, Albert is mindful of the many persons that have helped to shape him. He thanks Reverend Robert Pierce for his wisdom and mentoring skills, and Kawal Totaram for his friendship and advice.

Albert reserves a special place for Herman Singh, broadcaster and community activist, who made the regular visits from Richmond Hill to Schenectady possible. George Robertson from the Schenectady Economic Development Corporation was also helpful for his insights and advice.

Albert is grateful to the many advisors he has had over the years. He loves bike-riding and reading, and is a committed family man. He acknowledges his wife Maria for being an outstanding wife and mother, and nothing would give them more satisfaction than to celebrate the success of their children Alex and Jessica.

Albert Jurczynski has come a long way. He has always put the interests of Schenectady above all else, mindful of safety issues, for which he is to be commended. History will see Mayor Jurczynski as a pioneer who oversaw one of the greatest urban renewal projects in his community, and indeed the US. We wish him and his family all the best in the future.

In December 2019, Australia had a taste of the effects of climate change. The warm weather dried up the atmosphere and created drought like conditions. This sparked a forest inferno and then the heavy clouds came pouring down on soil that was too dry to absorb water.

Scientists called this "compound extremes", where one climate disaster triggers the next. The financial cost to rebuild skyrocketed, and farmers were decimated. With forest fires, would home values on lovely ravine lots decrease in value?

Hurricanes can cause home values to increase. After a hurricane, the cost of building materials climb. With a shortage of properties, rental rates surge and with fewer homes available for sale, home prices increase.

Homes that are badly damaged create opportunities for investors who can purchase for little, rebuild, and then profit. While hurricanes benefit a fraction of people, many families without hurricane insurance suffered.

Insurance cost is on the rise, and many insurance companies have disclaimers and high deductibility. Basic home insurance may not cover for floods, hurricanes or any natural disasters. A homeowner may need regular home insurance, flood insurance, and hurricane insurance. Review your policy carefully so that you know what you are buying.

I recall an incident where the insurance company denied a claim for hurricane because the policy states that "if the hurricane has a name, then the insurance company will not cover the cost".

With global warming, people will be concentrated in smaller areas. With population growth and longer life spans, the demand for prime real estate is greater. We may not live to see the full effects of global warming, but our future generations will. While we are building wealth and transferring it to the next generation, let us give them a cleaner earth. Let's do our part.

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Exciting wealth of information in Balkaran's 'Biographical Dictionary'

Balkaran, Lal: *Biographical Dictionary of Guyana*
A review by Ken Puddicombe

This dictionary provides profiles of over 1,100 people, who in relation to Guyana, have either made an impact, achieved a great deal, or were recognised in their own disciplines.

Whether in the fields of sports, science, arts, law, medicine, politics, education, religion, community; or in social work, entertainment, travel, exploration, academia, or business, this book showcases the profiles of both those prominent and unsung heroes who have left their mark regardless of political stripe, religion, ethnicity, or belief.

Balkaran lists 25 resources on page XIX preceding the Introduction to the book, and I can imagine the energy and time involved in his research. Three of his own books form some of the study: including *Timelines of Guyanese History* (2007) (in my library).

Other notable names mentioned in the list include: Professor Frank Birbalsingh (*Guyana: History and Literature*); Dwarka Nath (*History of Indians in Guyana*); A. J. Seymour (*Dictionary of Guyanese Biography*), and Dr Cheddi Jagan (*The West On Trial*).

In his Introduction, Balkaran states, "Each entry has been painstakingly uncovered, edited, and validated for accuracy with its source acknowledged".

Looking at my own biography in the book, I can vouch for the accuracy of the entry, Balkaran having contacted me on several occasions for information.

The *Biographical Dictionary of Guyana* covers prominent Guyanese from all walks of life. Accomplished cricketers who made it to the West Indies team include Basil Butcher, Rohan Kanhai, Joe Solomon, who is "best remembered for his historic fielding in the first test WI against Australia, Brisbane, 1960, when his throw from square leg hit the stumps to run out Ian Meckiff by inches to secure the first tied Test match in cricket history".

Also included is Alvin Kallicharran, along with his contro-

versial participation in South African cricket during the apartheid era.

People who steered the course of modern-day politics in the country: Jagan, considered as the "Father of the Guyanese Nation"; L.F.S. Burnham, leader of the PNC and "Guyana's First Executive President"; Peter D'Aguiar, Leader of the United Force and coalition partner to the PNC, leading the country to Independence in 1966.

Internationally recognised personalities like Sir S.S. Ramphal, the first Third World Commonwealth Secretary General; Dave Martins International Singer/Songwriter, and Cultural Icon, and founder of *The Tradewinds*; Roxanne Persaud, New York State Senator; Dr Mohamed Shahabuddeen, who was a judge in the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

A number of personalities – people whose path I was lucky to have crossed over the years – are listed, including Professor Cecil Ramnarine Dipchand, who was my mentor at the Income Tax Department, Inland Revenue, Guyana, back in the 1960s. Dipchand co-authored *Fundamentals of Financial Management* (1975), which, to my pleasant surprise, I had to study when I pursued my Management Accounting Designation.

Birbalsingh is also featured, author of over 13 books, and Professor Emeritus, English, at York University, Toronto.

Two of my novels (*Racing With the Rain*, and *Junta*) were reviewed by Frank, to my utter delight.

Literary icon, renowned poet, sportsman and columnist Ian McDonald is featured in the book, and I have had the pleasure of publishing three books of poetry (*People of Guyana*, *Mary's Garden*, and *The Garden* by him through MiddleRoad

Publishers.

Dr Kennard Ramphal is also featured, and I am currently editing and publishing a new book (*Snaphots*) co-authored by him, for publication through MiddleRoad.

Open any page of *Biographical Dictionary of Guyana* randomly, and be excited and amazed at the wealth of information contained within this book.

The author has also written eight well-received reference books on Guyana, including the *Encyclopaedia of the Guyanese Amerindians*, and *Bibliography of Guyana* (now in its fifth edition), and nine educational documentaries including the four-part *Geography of Guyana*, all on YouTube. The National Library, UG Library, and the National Archives have all acquired copies of these texts.

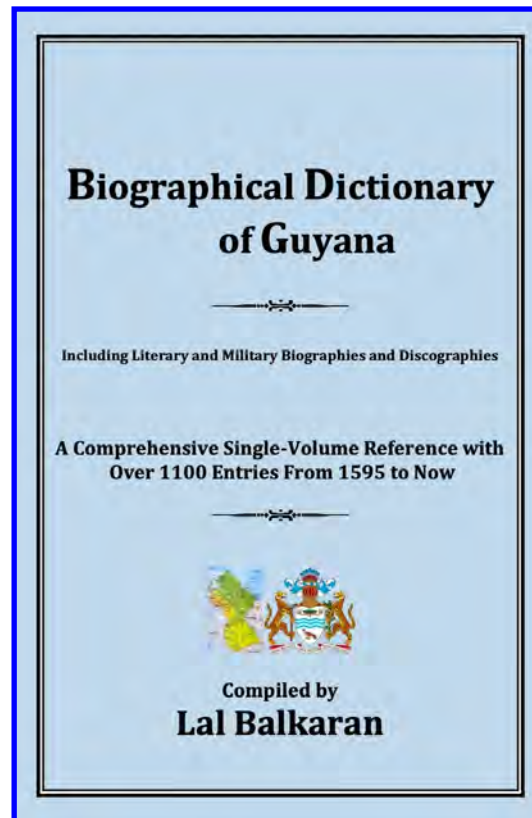
Balkaran is an award-winning Toronto-based auditor and a widely published author. An independent internal audit consultant, he previously worked at several large organisations including the Big Four.

He is widely published across the globe with over 50 articles, eight reference books on business, and another seven on Guyana, in addition to doing eight educational documentaries on the country, which are all available on YouTube.

A past IIA-Toronto President, Balkaran established the IIA-Guyana in January 2000. He recently

published a new book, *Financial Literacy For Anyone Anywhere*, and is listed in the 2023-2024 *Marquis Who's Who in the World* – the world's preeminent biographer.

Ken Puddicombe is a Toronto-based Guyanese award-winning author. He has written *Racing With the Rain*, *Junta*, and *Down Independence Boulevard and Other Stories*, the latter winning the 2022 Guyana Prize for Literature (Fiction).



Lal Balkaran

(*Dictionary of Guyanese Biography*), and Dr Cheddi Jagan (*The West On Trial*).

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Also included is Alvin Kallicharran, along with his contro-

At first, I believed that everyone had this ability, but it scared me when I found out that I was different. As the youngest of three children, I observed my family's interactions with each other. Their thoughts entered my head as voices, alongside their audible utterings. I found it fascinating that their unspoken thoughts did not always match their spoken words. I realised that not everyone told the truth.

Because I spent so much time listening to four people contradict their thoughts, I hardly spoke at family gatherings, such as at meals and during outings. When many people spoke at once, their words and thoughts entered my head as chaotic garble that my brain had to filter. I learned to block out the rest to focus on one person's thoughts at a time.

During my innocent toddler years, when I first discovered my gift, I attempted to intervene to align their thoughts with their words, but their glares shut me down. Feeling like an outcast, I retreated into myself and resisted the urge to confront their insincerities.

Sharing a room with two older sisters did not help. They did not have to speak to trigger my mind-reading ability. I could even read my parents' thoughts in the next room at night when everyone went to bed. I was thankful that I could shield incoming messages by bombarding my brain with thoughts of my own.

Sometimes I would wake up in the middle of the night by screams from one of my sisters. I would cower under the bed covers when someone else's nightmare entered my head. I started going to bed with headphones attached to my gaming tablet when other people's dreams affected my sleep.

When I started school, I entered a new world of jumbled signals entering my head. Clamping my palms over my ears did not help. I was forced to pick the teacher as the one source of input to my brain. While my hearing was occupied with voices and thoughts, I practiced keeping my other senses open for social interactions with people around me.

During elementary, I discovered that teachers had their own personal troubles at home. One teacher gave us work to do while she wrote on a piece of paper on her desk. I did not have to read

The Supernatural Altered States



the papers to know what she wrote on them. Her suicide notes made my heart skip a beat every time. I started having visions of her lying dead, like the enemies I killed in my video games. I sighed with relief when she tore them up every day and threw them in the wastepaper basket. I was not too young to know that one day she would fold her note and take it home with her. Many times, I glanced away whenever she would catch me staring into her sad moist eyes. She had no hope for her broken heart, which she thought would never heal.

One day, while the class went out for recess, I waited until she was in conversation with another teacher to sneak back in and snatch the pieces of paper in the waste basket. On that day, she had written her note more than ten times. I knew that the increased frequency meant that she was getting more desperate. I grabbed a handful of the papers and shoved them into my pocket.

That night, I waited until my sisters fell asleep to pull the papers out and used the night light to assemble them like a jigsaw puzzle in my workbook. It did not matter that I

had excess pieces of paper. I knew that all her notes were identical.

I had to trust an adult. I picked my dad since he was the earliest riser in the family. The following morning, I went out to the porch where he was enjoying the refreshing aroma of my mom's garden roses. His legs were crossed in the summer sunrise with a coffee on the side table and a newspaper on his lap.

"Dad." I peeked around the edge of the front door. He spun around in surprise.

"Hello, Timmy." He smiled and lowered his arms, which crumbled the newspaper. "How come you're up this early?" His forehead creased between his bushy eyebrows.

"I have something to show you." I stepped onto the warm wooden porch and padded toward him in my shorts and T-shirt. He stared at the book in my hand. I opened it to reveal the note that I had taped onto the page.

"What is this?" He read it and gasped. "Where did you get this?" He gazed into my eyes when he realised that it was not my handwriting.

"I have a confession to make." I hopped onto a chair across from him. I told him of my ability to read minds. Instead of the worried frown of doubt in my sanity that I expected, he seemed relieved at my disclosure even though he did not say why.

"It's from my teacher." I pointed to the note. "She writes the same note every day. She started with one a day, but yesterday she wrote it ten times. I am worried that practice makes perfect." I used his favourite adage.

The following day when my teacher was summoned to the office, I knew that my dad had visited the headmistress. After a few weeks off from teaching for therapy, my teacher returned with smiles and easy laughter which made my heart soar. She would never know how I turned her dark and hopeless thoughts into a new world of sunshine and joy.

My dad shared my secret with my mom and my sisters, and made them promise to keep it a family secret. He explained to us that he had suspected that I had inherited this talent from his grandfather. It had skipped two generations to manifest in me.

I have since used my talent throughout life to uplift the lives of others without revealing the source.

Kamil Ali





Keith Rowley

Salary hikes likely for top govt leaders

Port-of-Spain – Salary increases for several of the country's top public officials that have been recommended by the Salaries Review Commission will likely see Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley taking away the highest monthly income in the group.

Last week in its 117th report, the SRC proposed a hike of more than 30 percent in the Prime Minister's monthly salary, moving it up from (TT) \$59,680 to \$80,000.

The hike will make the Prime Minister the public official in Trinidad and Tobago with the highest monthly salary.

The SRC's 113th and 117th reports were laid in the House of Representatives by Finance Minister Colm Imbert last week.

In presenting the reports, Imbert said in the 113th report the President by letter dated March 13, 2020, gave approval for the SRC to undertake a general review of the terms and conditions of officers under its purview. At the time, Paula-Mae Weekes was president of Trinidad and Tobago.

Imbert continued that the 2020 review examined economic challenges that Trinidad and Tobago was experiencing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and compared it to economic challenges in 2014, when the SRC last reviewed terms and conditions for offices under its purview.

That review is contained in the 98th SRC report which was laid in the House on February 14, 2014. In that report, the President, Prime Minister, and Opposition Leader had monthly salaries of \$64,270, \$59,680, and \$29,590 respectively, which are still their current monthly salaries.

Now in the 117th SRC report, their respective proposed monthly salaries are \$73,920, \$80,000, and \$47,500.

The Chief Justice seems to be the only public official's monthly salary which remains constant at \$50,350. Proposed salary increases for other public officials as cabinet ministers, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Police Commissioner were small.

Meanwhile, last weekend it was reported that the Opposition will not support the salary increases. Also, it was stated that the Opposition believed Rowley would similarly not support the increase as well.

And earlier this week, Opposition Chief Whip Dr David Lee questioned the timing of the government's decision to lay the 117th report in Parliament. As he noted, Trinidad and Tobago is dealing with two significant issues, the oil spill disaster in Tobago, and the debate over nominations to Deputy Commissioners of Police.

"I'm surprised the government brought this report [last Friday]... [The] question I want to ask is: is it a deflection tactic?" he stated.

Lee noted the two issues that were occupying Trinidad and Tobago's attention at the time, namely the oil in Tobago, and the drama that took place in Parliament during the debates regarding the four Deputy Commissioners of Police.

It was "strange" the government would want to bring the report to Parliament, when these were more significant national issues, Lee declared.

"I think it was to deflect from that oil spill, and the lack of urgency this government has placed on the recovery and clean-up of that oil spill. This government knows when they lay that report, whether they want the increase or not, the Opposition will be asked our views on it," he stated.

Commenting on the recommended salary increases, political analyst Dr Roger Hosein said he believed that the parliamentarians would not take the proposed salary increases.

"I don't think that the politicians would take that increase knowing the state of the economy; knowing that natural gas production would fall by a further 20 to 25 percent between now and 2027; and given that economic activity to this day is 21 percent less than in 2015," he said.

Increases may not go down well with nation

Port-of-Spain – The recommendation by Trinidad and Tobago's Salaries Review Commission to increase the salaries of the country's top public officials can only be viewed as obscene, and the government may face a push back from the population, political analyst Dr Bishu Ragoonath told the media earlier this week.

"The fact that public servants were given a four percent pay hike over six years, it could be seen as obscene that the Prime Minister and [others] would take a 30 percent while they call on the population at large to hold strain," he said.

Ragoonath said the offer the government put on the table for public sector employees "this is hardly one that I think would get the vast support of the population".

He said seeing that Parliamentarians would be the beneficiaries of the SRC's recommendations "they may seek their interest. They may put themselves first instead of the country first".

He added that while Cabinet has to accept the recommendations, it would have to come to Parliament for a vote, which would require a simple majority.

"The Prime Minister and the Cabinet can easily come out tomorrow morning and say the SRC has done their work, but we are not accepting it," Ragoonath noted.

Additionally, "In like manner, you have to give the government credit that the Regulated Industries Commission came up

with a recommendation to increase the electricity rates, and it has not yet been accepted."

Unable to say what metric the SRC used to arrive at the proposed increase, Ragoonath said "clearly we don't have that type of information so we cannot chastise them".

Also commenting on the development, economist Ronald Ramkissoon said the recommendation could have come at a time to woo competent public sector workers leading up to the next general election.

With the 2025 general election drawing closer, Ramkissoon said, "If this is what we might see coming down the road, it is quite possible, we might be able to encourage, perhaps, some more competent citizens to offer themselves up for public service." The 98th SRC's report was approved before the 2015 general election.

"We are a small country... we want the best and the public service is a very critical area," he added.

Ramkissoon said public sector performance and compensation are not something that should be sensationalised.

"Unfortunately some of that is going to happen," he stated.

He said public sector compensation must serve to encourage more capable citizens.

However, he noted that any pay increase in the public sector "will be unpopular at this time".



Bishu Ragoonath



Ronald Ramkissoon



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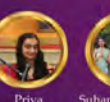
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Cops praised for Carnival duty

Port-of-Spain – Trinidad and Tobago Police Service officers who turned out for duty during the recently-concluded Carnival celebrations were last week praised by Police Commissioner Erla Harewood-Christopher.

She also stated that the welfare of officers has always been the service's top priority.

In a release from the TTPS, Harewood-Christopher said Carnival is a fixed event on Trinidad and Tobago's calendar of events.

"An event of this magnitude demands critical planning, astute leadership among the ranks, and above all, the critical management of the organisation's most valuable asset, its human resource," the release from her office stated.

It added, "The performance of officers on duty during this period was quite commendable, and this was acknowledged in several quarters, locally and internationally. As Commissioner of Police, I too, commend all officers who turned out for duty and proudly represented the organisation."

Harewood-Christopher said operational excellence and occupational health and wellness were strategic objectives in the service's 2022 to 2024 strategic and operational plans, which made the welfare of officers a top priority.

"It is for this reason that all officers who perform duties during the Carnival period are granted four days compensatory leave, and in the case of special reserve officers, they are granted monetary compensation. The service is committed to the welfare of its officers, and will continue to explore opportunities to implement initiatives that will redound to their benefit," she stated.

Also, "The service said managing events of this magnitude was challenging, and placed a heavy demand on the organisation's human resources, while also having to manage the daily challenges to safety and security, and the various categories of threats and risks. While managing the Carnival activities, we are also simultaneously required to ensure essential law enforcement to the rest of the jurisdiction and the protection of critical national plant and infrastructure."

Harewood-Christopher added this responsibility requires "the careful deployment of our available manpower as there cannot be any compromise of our services in any area."

She added, "While it is the norm to not have 100 percent turnout of officers for duty, we have always managed the availability of officers as a critical success factor in our operations."

She also highlighted her commitment to the



CoP Erla Harewood-Christopher (right) with a masquerader and a senior police officer during Carnival celebrations in Trinidad and Tobago last week

welfare of our officers, and "I look forward to constructive dialogue with the representative body, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Social and Welfare Association to agree and partner with us to implement initiatives that will redound to the benefit of the officers".

Said Harewood-Christopher: "As an administration, we will continue to routinely review our operational plans and improve on areas where there is an opportunity for us to do so.

I wish to assure all concerned that the TTPS remains a caring, competent, and committed organisation focused on providing consistent high-quality services to all our stakeholders."

Harewood-Christopher's statements came following reported complaints that were made by officers that they were subjected to arduous working conditions on Carnival Monday and Tuesday, which took place on February 12 and February 13.

Opposition questions gas supply

Port-of-Spain – The downstream sector is on the brink of collapse due to an insufficient gas supply, Opposition MP David Lee claimed last week.

At the same time, Lee demanded answers from the government on the status of the Dragon Gas deal, which is expected to provide additional supplies to keep the sector afloat.

Citing ambiguity over the licenses with the US that expire in April, Lee said, "We call on the government to stop giving the people of this nation false comfort by saying our license with the US goes until 2025, and tell us if they have received any assurances that we will go beyond 2025, which is the key to get Dragon off the ground."

Lee made the call for clarification on the 30-year Dragon deal agreement in light of a decision by Methanex to shut down its Atlas Mentanol Plant at Point Lisas.

As he stated, over the years, the Trinidad and Tobago government has been using the "Dragon Gas plaster" for every gas shortage problem, but the situation has now become dire.

Said Lee: "[Recently] we received confirmation of catastrophic and financially crippling news for the national economy, when the largest methanol producer in the world announced that it would shut down one of the largest methanol plants in the region, the Atlas plant based here in Point Lisas."

He added that the decision to close was "confirmation that the downstream sector under Energy Minister Stuart Young and this government has all but collapsed".

"This is confirmation that our energy sector is still in trouble and collapsing despite all of the 'old talk' by the government that they have stabilised the energy sector," he asserted.

Lee explored the ramifications the closure would have for Trinidad and Tobago, pointing to the national revenue, tax revenue, and even further significant reduction in foreign exchange, as methanol production will be reduced by at least one million tonnes per year.

He noted that the government has been trying to hoodwink the population into espousing the narrative that only old and inefficient plants have shut down.

"Atlas is no old plant. It is a modern effective plant that has become a victim of a government that has failed to stimulate gas production throughout its entire tenure. Atlas is shutting down as there is a gas shortage because this government failed on deep water bid rounds for over seven years, only offering one last year," he charged.

Also, "Atlas is shutting down as there is a gas shortage because this government has failed year after year to offer proper incentives for upstream companies to invest in exploration."

Lee said that natural gas production has dropped from 3.5 billion standard cubic feet to 2.6 billion standard cubic feet.



David Lee

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The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

Golden Age sparkled in 1955 with gems like Shri 420, Azaad

By Vidur Dindayal

The year 1955 in the Golden Age of Hindi Cinema seems the most exciting and creative so far with so many hits.

Topping the list of highest audience numbers is *Shri 420*; second is *Azaad*; then *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje*, *Uran Khatola*, *Mr & Mrs '55*, *Insaniyat*, *Munimji*, *Seema*, *Baradari*, and *Devdas*.

Shri 420 is produced, directed and starred Raj Kapoor, a true showman, starring in successes like *Neel Kamal*, *Andaz*, *Sargam*, *Dastan*, *Anhonee*, *Aag*, *Barsaat*, and *Awaara*.

The movie *Shri 420* also starred Nargis and Nadira. The number 420 is from the Indian Penal Code, and deals with fraud.

Raj Kapoor is a poor but educated orphan who comes to Bombay with dreams of success. He falls in love with the poor but virtuous Vidya (Nargis), but is soon seduced by the riches of Maya (Nadira). He eventually becomes a confidence trickster, or 420, who even cheats in card gambling. Vidya tries hard to make Raj a good man, but fails.

Music is by Shankar-Jaikishan. Who can forget the song *Mera Joota Hai Japanese*. It became a patriotic favourite among Indians. *Mud Mud Ke Na Dekh* is the other hit.

The movie was popular in countries like the Soviet Union, Romania, and Israel. In Russia it was said that Raj Kapoor was as popular as Jawaharlal Nehru due to the success of *Awaara* and *Shri 420*.

Filmfare Awards in 1956 to *Shri 420* were Best Cinematographer: Radhu Karmakar; and Best Editing: G.G. Mayekar. National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi, Certificate of Merit.

Azaad is one of my favourite films with lots of songs. I like the song where it ends with Meena Kumari riding a horse. It is a happy film, entertaining, starring Dilip Kumar and Meena Kumari. She did a few entertaining songs and dances. Dilip Kumar won his second Filmfare Award for Best Actor in this movie.

After her widower father passes away, Shobha goes to live with her father's friend. Their son had gone missing as a child. Years later, Shobha is abducted, and then returns home and tells them that she was rescued by a wealthy man named Azaad, whom she wants to marry. Guess who was Azaad?

C. Ramchandra was the music director. One of the hit songs was *Aplam Chaplam*, sung by Lata Mangeshkar and Usha Mangeshkar. I like all of them.

Jhanak Jhanak Paayal Baje was a history-maker. It was a popular film, and it was seen as a classic. It must have inspired many an upcoming actor and actress. I believe later movies took the point and adapted the classical to styles that cinema-goers were familiar with.

It stars Shantaram's wife Sandhya, and dancer Gopi Krishna in lead roles. One of the earlier Technicolor films made in India, the film won the All India Certificate of Merit for Best Feature Film; the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi; and the Filmfare Best Movie Award. V. Shantaram, the exceptional movie maker and actor, won the Filmfare Award for Best Director.

Classical dance guru Mangal saw a performance by Neela. He orders his son Girdhar to demonstrate the true method of classical dance. Entranced by Girdhar's skill, Neela begs Mangal to admit her as a pupil. Mangal gives Girdhar and Neela his blessings to marry.

The music was by Vasant Desai. Hasrat Jaipuri wrote the lyrics. The song *Jo Tum Todo Piya* was inspired by Meerabai. All of its 13 songs were entertaining. I like best *Saiyyan Jao*, and *Nain So Nain Naahi Milao*.

Uran Khatola has memorable songs. It was produced by Naushad, who was music director. It starred Dilip Kumar and Nimmi.

Kashi (Dilip) travels by plane, which crashes near a city ruled by women. Kashi is rescued by Soni (Nimmi) and taken to her home. Rani, the ruler is attracted to him. The rest of the story



tells how both Soni and Raj Rani try to make Kashi their own.

The film's music was composed by Naushad. Of the 12 enjoyable songs, I like best *O Dur Ke Musafir*, *Mohabbat Ki Rahon Mein*; *Mera Salaam Leja*; and *Ghar Aaya Mehmaan Koi*, a dance number.

Mr & Mrs '55 is a beautiful, must-see movie with catchy songs. It was produced and directed by Guru Dutt, who also starred in it, with attractive Madhubala, plus the very entertaining Johnny Walker, Cuckoo, and Lalita Pawar.

The story is about Preetam (Guru Dutt), a struggling cartoonist who meets Anita (Madhubala). Her aunt, Seeta Devi (Lalita Pawar) is suspicious of men. Preetam kidnaps Anita, who recognises her feelings for him. In the end, the couple gets united.

Music is lively by the great O.P. Nayyar. The song *Preetam Aan Milo*, originally sung by C.H. Atma, was sung by Geeta Dutt at the end. Of the ten beautiful songs, I would often play these: *Udhar Tum Haseen Ho*; *Jaane Kahan Mera Jigar Gaya Ji*; *Neele Aasmani*; and *Thandi Hawa Kaali Ghata*.

Insaniyat is the first time Dilip Kumar and Dev Anand are paired together in a movie, co-starring the lovely Bina Rai. I enjoy this movie, especially the song of Bina Rai and Dev Anand.

Produced and directed by S. S. Vasan at the famous Gemini Studios, this movie is about a once loyal soldier who faces many challenges, and then turned into a rebel.

The music was composed by C. Ramchandra with lyrics by Rajendra Krishan. There are 16 songs in this movie, all entertaining especially the following: *Chup Chup Chup Hone Laga Kuchh*; *Aayi Jhoomti Bahaar Dekho Pyar Ho Gaya*; *Aasha Ke Phool Meri Bahun Mein Jhool*; *Bansuriya Bole Madhur Rus Ghole*; *Bolo Jai Jaikar Prabhu Ki*; *Tere Sang Sang Piya Khel Ke Main Rang*; *Aasha Ke Jab Deep Bujhe*; *Zulm Sahe Naa Zulm Kare Naa*; *Hassenon Ka Manjur Kar Lo Salaam*; *Main Ravan Lanka Naresh*; and *Sunte Hai Koi Maut Ka Mehman Hua Hai*.

Munimji is a delightful story. Roopa (Nalini Jaywant) lives a wealthy lifestyle with her widowed dad, Captain Suresh. She is told she is to marry Ratan (Pran), the son of a friend. However Roopa has fallen in love with handsome young Raj (Dev Anand). There are problems, a bandit Munim is caught, and everyone finds out that Munim is Raj, masquerading as Munim for years.

Music is composed by S. D. Burman, and lyrics by Sahir Ludhianvi and Shailendra. The song *Jeevan Ke Safar Mein Rahi Milte Hai Bichhad Jane Ko*, sung by Kishore Kumar, (Dev Anand) became a super hit. It is also sung in another part of the

movie by Lata Mangeshkar (Nalini). I like these other songs: *Ek Nazar Bas Ek Nazar*, and *Nain Khoje Khoje*, a dance number. The song *Dil Ki Umangen Hain Jawan*, *Rang Mein Dooba Hai Sama* was sung by Dev Anand, in the company of Nalini Jaywant and Pran. Nalini teased Pran to sing the song as well. Reluctantly when he sang it, he sounded out of tune. The song *Zindagi Hai Zinda*, sung by Geeta Dutt, is a dance number.

Seema is a touching movie. Nutan plays a role which is hurtful in part. Eventually she found sanctuary in an ashram run by Balraj Sahni.

It was inevitable when you see the movie that you would want them to get closer, because they both seem to need one another, and so it happened at the end.

Music was by Shankar Jaikishan and lyrics by Hasrat Jaipuri and Shailendra. Nutan won Filmfare Best Actress Award and Amiya Chakrabarty, Filmfare Best Story Award.

Baradari was a sweet movie with brothers who had not seen each other for a long time. Two playmates in their young days, they grew up to be Geeta Bali and Ajit. They were to get married. Ajit's lost younger brother, a prince, came along, saw Geeta Bali and wanted to marry her. When he found out Geeta Bali was really in love with Ajit, he happily gave up his wish, and the Raja also said he would arrange a lavish marriage for Ajit and Geeta Bali.

riage for Ajit and Geeta Bali.

Devdas was the great movie starring Dilip Kumar and Suchitra Sen, with Motilal and Vijayanthimala playing very important roles.

Produced and directed by Bimal Roy, in this movie Suchitra Sen was in her Bollywood debut as Parvati "Paro", Vijayanthimala, in her first dramatic role playing a call-girl named Chandramukhi.

In 2005 *India Times Movies* ranked it amongst the Top 25 Must See Bollywood Films. *Devdas* was also ranked No 2 on University of Iowa's List of Top ten Bollywood Films. Forbes included Dilip Kumar's performance on its list, 25 Greatest Acting Performances of Indian Cinema. It won India's National Film Awards, Certificate of Merit; Filmfare Awards: Best Actor by Dilip Kumar; Best Supporting Actor by Motilal; and Best Supporting Actress by Vijayanthimala.

The role of Dilip Kumar is amongst his most famous. *Devdas* is from a Zamindar family in the early 1900s. Paro is a young woman from a middle-class family, of lower caste.

Devdas and Paro were childhood friends. Paro's parents proposed to Devdas' parents, a marriage of Paro to Devdas. His mother rejected the proposal. Devdas, cowardly goes along with his mother's rejection.

Afterwards Devdas bitterly regrets his decision, but Paro is getting married to someone else. He takes to drinking in his despair. His friend Motilal introduces him to a call-girl dancer, Chandramukhi (Vyjayanthimala), who falls in love with him.

His health deteriorates. Sensing his fast-approaching death, Devdas returns to meet Paro to see her before he dies. Here the most iconic dialogue of Bollywood movies of all time occurs.

He said to her: "Kaun kambakht bardaasht karne ko peeta hai ... hum toh peete hai ki yahan par baith sake, tumhe dekh sake, tumhe bardaasht kar sake - Who the hell drinks to tolerate... I drink so that I can sit here, so that I can see you, so that I can tolerate you." He dies at her doorstep on a dark, cold night.

Music director was S. D. Burman; lyricist was veteran poet-lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi. Among its 12 songs, I like: *Mitwa Lagi Re Yeh Kaisi* and *Kisko Khabar Thi Aise Bhi Din Aayege* sung by Talat Mahmood; *Ab Aage Teri Marzi* by Lata Mangeshkar; *O Aanewale Ruk Ja*; *Aan Milo*; *Aan Milo Shyam Saware* by Manna Dey and Geeta Dutt; and *Sajan Ki Ho Gayi Gori*.

House No 44, a 1955 movie, is special for me. It starred Dev Anand and Kalpana Katrik, his better half in real life. Music is by S.D. Burman. All the songs are entertaining, but I like two in particular: *Teri Duniya Mein Jeene Se*, and *Peechhe Peechhe Aakar*.

Malini says recently separated daughter Esha may likely enter politics

Mother of actress Esha Deol, the legendary Hema Malini, recently shared insights about her daughter likely entering politics following the announcement that Deol and her husband had parted ways.

According to reports by *NDTV*, and other Indian media, Deol and her husband Bharat Takhtani announced their separation earlier this year, marking the end of an 11-year marriage. They are parents to two daughters, Radhya and Miraya.

Last week Malini shared insights into her daughter's potential interest in politics. In an interview with *ABP News*, Malini remarked, "Esha is very interested in joining politics. In the upcoming years; she will join politics if she wants."

Deol and Takhtani announced their separation in a joint statement. The statement read, "We have mutually and amicably decided to part ways. Through this transition in our lives, the well-being and welfare of our two children remain our utmost priority. We kindly request that our privacy be respected during this time."

The daughter of film veterans Dharmendra and Malini, Deol entered the Indian film industry with the 2002 film *Koi Mere Dil Se Poochhe*, and has featured in films such as *Dhoom*, *No Entry* and *Dus*, among others.



Malini (left) with daughter Esha

She took a brief break from Bollywood after her marriage in 2012. However, she made a comeback in the short film *Cakewalk*, and featured as one of the gang leaders in the TV reality show *Roadies X2* in 2012.

She also featured in the projects *Rudra: The Edge of Darkness*

(2022), and *Hunter Tootega Nahi Todega*. She was last seen in the short film *Ek Duaa*.

Malini has always been a pillar of support for Deol. During the 69th Filmfare Awards, after *Ek Duaa* received a special mention, Malini shared a congratulatory note on her *Instagram* account. With the note was a photo of Deol elegantly dressed in a blue saree.

In her note, Malini expressed her admiration, saying, "It was a proud moment for my darling Esha – her first film as a producer, *Ek Duaa* got a special mention at the 69th National Awards in the category of Non-Feature Films. A feather in her cap indeed! Congrats to my baby!"

After the Filmfare win, Deol also shared a note that read, "Over the moon as my film *Ek Duaa* has won at the 69th National Awards. As a producer and actor in this film to get this recognition in the non-feature special mention award means the world to me. The subject of our film is about female foeticide, save the girl child and for this to get recognition at the National awards is so overwhelming"

Apart from starring in several films, Deol is also the author of the book *Amma Mia: Stories, Advice and Recipes From One Mother to Another*.

Dangal star Suhani Bhatnagar passes at age 19

Dangal star Suhani Bhatnagar died at the age of 19 in Delhi on February 16. According to family members, the young actress was battling a rare disease, Dermatomyositis.

According to reports in India's media, she was admitted to All India Institute of Medical Sciences on February 7, and passed away on February 16 from respiratory and other medical complications associated with the illness.

According to a family member, Bhatnagar's symptoms appeared two months ago, and she was diagnosed with the disease on February 6. Dermatomyositis is a rare illness that causes inflammation and skin rash.

Bhatnagar played the young Babita Phogat in 2016 film *Dangal*. Her co-star Aamir Khan's production house extended condolences to the family on social media following her death, saying: "We are deeply saddened to hear about our Suhani passing away. Our heartfelt condolences to her mother Poojaji, and the entire family. Such a talented young girl, such a team player,

Dangal would have been incomplete without Suhani... you will always remain a star in our hearts. May you rest in peace."

Dangal director Nitesh Tiwari also said in a statement, "Suhani's passing away is absolutely shocking and heartbreaking. She was such a happy soul, so full of life. My deepest condolences to her family."

And speaking to the *Bombay Times*, Suhani's co-star, the former actress Zaira Wasim, said that she was at a loss after hearing the sad news.

Wasim added that after hearing news about her passing, she immediately had flashbacks of the time she spent with Bhatnagar when they were working on *Dangal*, and of all the memories they made together.

"I cannot imagine what her parents must be going through. I pray they find the strength," a distressed Wasim told the *Bombay Times*.

While Suhani played young Babita Phogat in *Dangal*, Sanya Malhotra played her grown-up version.



Suhani Bhatnagar

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Shamar Joseph wins award for ICC Player of the Month for January

In the acquisition of yet another accolade and further recognition, West Indies fast bowler Shamar Joseph has been named the International Cricket Council Player of the Month for January. The honour came following the pacer's heroics in the two-match drawn Test Series against Australia.

Following the recognition, Miles Bascombe, Cricket West Indies Director of Cricket, congratulated Shamar on receiving the award.

Said Bascombe: "On behalf of Cricket West Indies I wish to congratulate Shamar on this award, may it be the first of many in what is hopefully a long career in maroon."

In his first Test Match at the Adelaide Oval, Joseph scored 36 (41 balls) with the bat, including three fours and a six, in a feisty innings where he took on the formidable Australian pace attack.

He then took an impressive five-wicket haul, including having Steve Smith caught at slip off his first ever delivery in Test cricket, before going on to claim the wickets of Marnus Labuschagne, Cameron Green, Mitchell Starc, and Nathan Lyon.

Building on his success in the first Test, Shamar came back in the second Test at the Gabba, Brisbane, with another powerful performance. He took one wicket in the first innings and had to retire hurt at the end of Day Three after being hit flush on the toe with a yorker from Mitchell Starc while batting.

In serious doubt of being able to take any further part in the match, he went on to etch his name in the history books during play on Day Four.

After coming onto the field late due to not having his uniform at the ground, he emerged from the tunnel and immediately started bowling.

In an incredible spell of 11.5 overs, he took seven wickets and led the West Indies to their first Test match win in Australia in 27 years. The win also tied the two-Test Series.

Joseph's award from the ICC was announced on February 13.



Shamar Joseph

In a release, the ICC said Joseph pulled ahead of the competition from England batsman Ollie Pope, and Aussie seamer Josh Hazlewood to take the prize.

In the first Test of their five-match Test series away to India last month, Pope cracked a massive 196 in England's second innings to help his team to a 28-run victory in Hyderabad. He scored 23 runs in either innings in the second Test as India rebounded with a big 106-run win.

Hazlewood is the number-five ranked bowler in Test cricket. As Joseph's competition for the ICC award, he picked up 19 wickets in three Tests in January.

He also claimed career-best match figures of nine for 79 versus the West Indies in the first Test of their two-match series at the Adelaide Oval. In that match, Australia took an emphatic ten-wicket win after reducing the Caribbean team to scores of 188 and 120.

Hazlewood also grabbed his 250th Test wicket during Australia's win in the first Test.

However, Joseph took the lead, and the attention of the cricketing world, with his very first ball in international cricket when he took the Smith's prized wicket. He went on to acquire figures of five for 94 in his debut Test, in what was a losing effort by the West Indies.

In the second Test in a pink-ball/day-night affair at The Gabba in Brisbane, Joseph produced his historic spell of seven for 68 that took the West Indies to victory by eight runs.

It was a feat made doubly impressive with Joseph bowling 11.5 consecutively with an injured toe.

He took 13 wickets in the series at an average of 17.30, and also claimed the Player-of-the-Series award.

Upon receiving the Player of the Month honour, Joseph said, "I am extremely delighted to win this award. To get such an award on the world stage feels special. I totally enjoyed every moment of that experience playing for West Indies in Australia, especially the magic of the final day at The Gabba. Taking the wicket to win the match was a dream!"

Joseph said he is focused on putting in the hard yards to deliver more match-winning performances with the ball – and with bat in hand as well. Batting at number 11, he scored an entertaining 36 off 41 balls in the first innings during the Adelaide Test.

"I want to say special thanks to the teammates and support staff in Australia who backed me from the start to get the job done. I will be the one receiving the award, but this is also for the team, and all the fans of the West Indies as well."

On February 1, Joseph was immediately rewarded by CWI for his heroics in Australia, when he was given an international retainer contract for the 2023-2024 period.

He also landed a deal with Pakistan Super League team Peshawar Zalmi, which is coached by West Indies white-ball coach Daren Sammy.

Earlier this month, he was announced as Lucknow Super Giants' replacement player for English seamer Mark Wood for this year's IPL season.

He had also been signed by Dubai Capitals for the ongoing ILT20 campaign, but was subsequently ruled out due to the toe injury that he sustained from the Starc yorker at The Gabba during the second Test.



Ollie Pope



Josh Hazlewood

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Shemaine Campbelle

Campbelle gets nod to captain Guyana team

Georgetown – Experienced campaigner, West Indies star, and senior all-rounder Shemaine Campbelle will captain the Guyana women’s national Super50 and T20 teams ahead of the upcoming Cricket West Indies regional tournaments.

The announcement of the full 14-woman squad was made last week by the Guyana selectors following the conclusion of the Guyana Cricket Board competitions. The squad also includes reserves and coaching staff.

As CWI notes on its website, Campbelle “is one of the most versatile cricketers to ever play at the international level”, adding that she is the “ultimate all-rounder as a middle-order batter, spin bowler, and also wicket-keeper”.

Among her unique achievements has been scoring over 1,000 runs, taking over 50 wickets, and successfully managing 50 dismissals behind the stumps.

CWI also notes that “not many wicket-keepers have bowled, and very few bowlers consider themselves to be good enough to transition to keep wicket”, as Campbelle has done.

She started her career as a leg-break/googly bowler, and batted in the lower-order.

However, as CWI states, Campbelle “improved her skills and moved up the order”. Among her stellar achievements is scoring a century in an ODI against Sri Lanka at the Rangiri Dambulla

International Stadium – 105 off 138 balls with eight fours and four sixes.

Campbelle’s latest role as Guyana’s captain will see her being supported by a number of talents, including current West Indies players.

Among them are openers Mandy Mangru and Realeanna Grimmond, and spinners Ashmini Munisar, Plaffiana Millington, and Kaycia Schultz.

West Indies seamer Cherry-Ann Fraser, and the inter-county stars Trisha Hardat, Cyanna Retimiah, and Sheneta Grimmond, are also on the team.

The Guyana women’s team comprises Mandy Mangru, Realeanna Grimmond, Naomi Barkoye, Shemaine Campbelle (captain), Ashmini Munisar, Sheneta Grimmond, Plaffiana Millington, Shabika Gajnabi, Cherry-Ann Fraser (vice-captain), Kaycia Schultz, Niya Latchman, Trisha Hardat, Yonette Welcome, and Cyanna Retimiah.

Standby players are Letisha Jordan, Melanie Dover, Crystal Durant, Roshanna Harper, Tilleya Madramootoo, Nikesha Narine, Luerene Williams, and Nidia Andrew.

Clive Grimmond will serve as the head coach, Tremayne Smartt as manager, with Natisha Mokutnauth serving as the team’s physiotherapist.

Multan Sultans hires Dalton as fast-bowling coach

Catherine Dalton says that cricket pioneer Sarah Taylor was her inspiration following her breaking new ground in men’s cricket. As the *British Broadcasting Corporation* reported earlier this month, Dalton is the first female fast-bowling coach in the Pakistan Super League after being hired by Multan Sultans.

Former England off-spinner Alex Hartley will be the franchise’s spin coach in 2024, with Dalton the first female fast-bowling coach at a top-level men’s side anywhere in the world.

“It’s powerful to see female coaches on the sidelines,” Dalton said.

Additionally, “I would never have seen that as a junior – this is the generation that is finally going to change that, and the more young girls who turn up to sporting events and see female coaches, and not just females playing sport, is a massive thing.”

Former England wicket-keeper Taylor played in more than 200 internationals, winning the 50-over and T20 World Cups in 2009 and 50-over tournament again on home soil in 2017. She also played men’s club cricket in the Birmingham Premier League and grade cricket in Australia before starting her coaching career with Sussex.

Dalton said Taylor was “the first one to break down that barrier”, and that made her “really excited” about what she could achieve herself.

“From a female perspective, Sarah Taylor was the very first one and the first one to really break into men’s cricket, coaching Sussex, coaching in the Hundred, and in franchises in Dubai and

Abu Dhabi,” Dalton said.

Also, “I thought if she could do that, I want to be the first one to do that from a fast-bowling perspective, and somehow I’ve managed to.”

Dalton credits former Nottinghamshire and Essex bowler and coach Ian Pont as a role model. Also, as she noted, she hopes that the current generation of female coaches in all sports would now make women coaching in men’s sport the norm moving forward.

“Ian has always told me to go for things and backed me one hundred percent. It’s that bravery to think ‘I can step into this environment, and I am good enough to be there,’” she said.

She added, “When you get that, and have that confidence, you’re fine, and realise it’s just another day’s coaching, but it’s that initial step.”

Dalton joined up with Multan Sultans last week with Hartley, in what was a double win

for female coaches.

She hopes that she can prove to be a role model herself by being successful in the PSL.

“It is a big step, but hopefully not the only step that happens,” Dalton said.

Additionally, “You want to break a barrier, and it fills you with a lot of pride that you’ve done that. But you want it to be the pathway for other females to break into the men’s profession because there’s so much knowledge and understanding out there in women’s sport and women’s coaching, it needs to be the norm.”



Catherine Dalton

Cricket Schedule

(Matches ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday February 21, 2024

Afghanistan tour of Sri Lanka, 2024
Sri Lanka vs Afghanistan, 3rd T20I, Rangiri Dambulla Int. Stadium, Dambulla, 7:00 PM
Australia tour of New Zealand, 2024
New Zealand vs Australia, 1st T20I, Sky Stadium, Wellington, 7:10 PM

ICC Cricket World Cup League Two 2023-2027
Nepal vs Namibia, 4th Match, Tribhuvan, University Int. Cricket Gnd, Kirtipur, 9:15 AM

Friday February 23, 2024

Australia tour of New Zealand, 2024
New Zealand vs Australia, 2nd T20I, Eden Park, Auckland, 7:10 PM
England tour of India, 2024
India vs England, 4th Test, Day 1, JSCA Int. Stadium Complex, Ranchi, 9:30 AM
ICC Cricket World Cup League Two 2023-2027
Netherlands vs Namibia, 5th Match, Tribhuvan University Int. Cricket Gnd, Kirtipur, 9:15 AM

Saturday February 24, 2024

England tour of India, 2024
India vs England, 4th Test, Day 2, JSCA Int. Stadium Complex, Ranchi, 9:30 AM

Sunday February 25, 2024

Australia tour of New Zealand, 2024
New Zealand vs Australia, 3rd T20I, Eden Park, Auckland, 1:00 PM
England tour of India, 2024
India vs England, 4th Test, Day 3, JSCA Int. Stadium Complex, Ranchi, 9:30 AM
ICC Cricket World Cup League Two 2023-2027
Netherlands vs Nepal, 6th Match, Tribhuvan University Int. Cricket Gnd, Kirtipur, 9:15 AM

Monday February 26, 2024

England tour of India, 2024
India vs England, 4th Test, Day 4, JSCA Int. Stadium Complex, Ranchi, 9:30 AM

Tuesday February 27, 2024

Nepal T20I Tri-Series 2024
Nepal vs Namibia, 1st Match, Mulpani Cricket Ground, Kathmandu, 11:30 AM
England tour of India, 2024
India vs England, 4th Test, Day 5, JSCA Int. Stadium Complex, Ranchi, 9:30 AM

Wednesday February 28, 2024

Nepal T20I Tri-Series 2024
Nepal vs Netherlands, 2nd Match, Mulpani Cricket Ground, Kathmandu, 11:30 AM
ICC Cricket World Cup League Two 2023-2027
United Arab Emirates vs Canada, 7th Match, Dubai Int. Cricket Stadium, Dubai, 9:00 AM
Afghanistan vs Ireland in UAE, 2024
Afghanistan vs Ireland, Only Test, Day 1, Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi, 9:30 AM

Thursday February 29, 2024

Nepal T20I Tri-Series 2024
Namibia vs Netherlands, 3rd Match, Mulpani Cricket Ground, Kathmandu, 11:30 AM
Australia tour of New Zealand, 2024
New Zealand vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 1, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM
Afghanistan vs Ireland in UAE, 2024
Afghanistan vs Ireland, Only Test, Day 2, Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi, 9:30 AM

Friday March 1, 2024

Nepal T20I Tri-Series 2024
Nepal vs Namibia, 4th Match, Mulpani Cricket Ground, Kathmandu, 11:30 AM
Australia tour of New Zealand, 2024
New Zealand vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 2, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM
ICC Cricket World Cup League Two 2023-2027
Canada vs Scotland, 8th Match, Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Dubai, 9:00 AM
Afghanistan vs Ireland in UAE, 2024
Afghanistan vs Ireland, Only Test, Day 3, Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi, 9:30 AM

Saturday March 2, 2024

Nepal T20I Tri-Series 2024
Nepal vs Netherlands, 5th Match, Mulpani Cricket Ground, Kathmandu, 11:30 AM
Australia tour of New Zealand, 2024
New Zealand vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 3, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM



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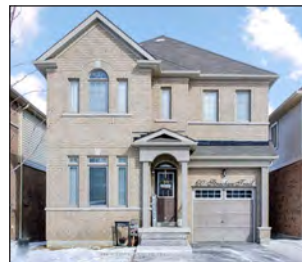
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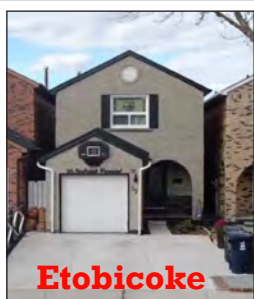
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