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# INDO CARIBBEAN WORLD

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## President Ali speaks to energy, momentum back in homeland

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

Toronto – Energised by an embracing welcome and support from thousands of Guyanese resident here in Toronto, visiting President of Guyana Dr Irfaan Ali exuded a similar enthusiasm as he yet again issued the call to nationals to return to the homeland.

However, this time it was to not only “rediscover” Guyana, but to also invest in shaping what he described as his government’s commitment to its evolving, unique future.

It appears that energy and momentum were among the key themes that emerged from Ali’s three-day trip to Toronto.

While here, he took the opportunity to highlight the build-up of momentum in Guyana’s recovery, noting this was well underway, even as he emphasised that their nation was confidently driving forward with a new and fortifying energy.

Ali spoke to a Guyana that was being

energised by an awakened economy, saying to the diaspora, “Rediscover your country; rediscover its future, and then make appropriate decisions. There is no doubt we are talking about an economy that will be a (US) \$10 billion economy by 2030. We are talking GDP per capita that will move to be about (US) \$30K. We need people, and we need people badly.”

Ali made his energised and embracing pitch during a three-day visit to Toronto. While here he visited a number of well-attended locations with a packed itinerary that included meetings with community leaders, and engagements with thousands of members in the diaspora.

Other events included visits to a place of worship, and breakfast with the International Muslim Organisation of Toronto in Rexdale.

Expanding on the theme of an escalating and burgeoning economy, Ali noted that economic prospects and many

See Page 10: Guyana’s



Borne along on a sea of well-wishers, President Ali navigates his way through waves of upheld phone cameras, only to encounter an oncoming surge in a bevy of admiring ladies during his visit to the recently opened Triveni Mandir in Brampton. Photo courtesy the Guyana Consulate in Toronto.

## Kissoon golf fund-raiser tops \$50K for Guyana dialysis



Mom in the moment, matriarch Latchmin Kissoon (sitting, second row) is backgrounded by a phalanx of sons & golfers at the tournament that carries her name



Vishnu Mandir leader, Dr Doobay (centre) with members of the Kissoon clan, (left to right) Dhaman, Mitra, Danny, & Krish. Photos by Ramesh Ramkalawan

Toronto – The Latchmin Kissoon Golf Tournament fund-raiser last month topped \$50,000 in donations, the effort undertaken by the Kissoon family to assist with the humanitarian drive being pioneered by Vishnu Mandir’s leader Dr Budhendranauth Doobay to assist dialysis patients in Guyana.

Proceeds from the successfully concluded June 14 tournament will go towards dialysis care sites in Guyana, which are being administered to all Guyanese at centres set up and managed by Dr Doobay and VM’s Global Care Outreach.

Announcement of the tournament was made in March last year at VM by one of Latchmin’s sons, Dhaman, during a religious event celebrating her 85 birthday.

Dhaman is a tireless community worker, an associate professor at the Faculty of Law, Queen’s University, and an eminent lawyer.

He announced the re-incarnation of the tournament last year, saying, “In the first year of the revival of the tournament, the proceeds will go to the dialysis centre in Guyana. The centre is Dr Doobay’s baby; he has nurtured it, and it is in need of assistance with expansion from one area to three. If we as a family can assist in the expansion, and help needy people in Guyana, then we have to help,” Kissoon declared.

The success of the June 14 event was inspirational, Dhaman told *Indo-Caribbean World* earlier this week. He added the event also saw his typically quiet mother demonstrating remarkable public

See Page 10: Well-organised

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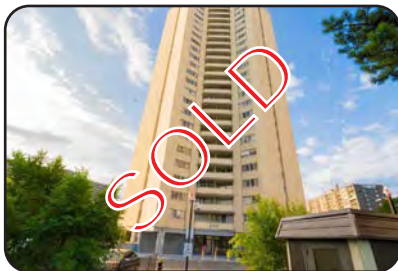
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Soch Volunteers with Peel Regional Police. Photos by Hardeep Rattan, HSR Photography

## Brampton Crematorium fund-raiser nets \$25k

**Brampton** – A community-driven car wash fund-raiser last month raised close to \$25,000 for a local mental health organisation, the effort showcasing the power of local unity and mutual support. The initiative, called *Soaps, Suds, and Soch*, was pioneered by Brampton Crematorium & Visitation Centre in collaboration with **Soch Mental Health**.

Founded by committed nurses Jasmeet and Maneet, Soch Mental Health has made commendable strides in raising awareness and providing education about mental health within ethnic communities.

The organisation delivers seminars and offers programs focused on addiction, mental health support for children, seniors, and international students.

Puneet Aujla from Brampton Crematorium played a pivotal role in planning the event. Leveraging his network through the funeral home, he rallied community businesses and partners to sponsor, attend, and contribute to the car wash. The effort turned out to be a day filled with fun, interaction, and unity.

Distinguished guests, among them Mayor Patrick Brown and

local politicians, stopped by to wash cars.

The Peel Regional Police and Brampton Fire Department were also at the site, further enhancing the community spirit with activities such as a three-point contest, a dunk tank, and delicious food for attendees.



Brampton Crematorium manager, Hardeep Aujla (left), with Puneet

For nearly four years, Aujla has partnered with Soch Mental Health, identifying unmet needs in mainstream mental health organisations. Understanding the need for continued support following a loss, and recognising cultural sensitivities around mental health, a pioneering grief support group was established.

This unique initiative aims to provide culturally-sensitive, ongoing help for grieving families.

All funds raised from the car wash will directly support Soch's mission, ensuring the continuity and expansion of its programs and seminars. Part of these funds will be invested in creating video resources for at-home learning and awareness.

The Brampton Crematorium team, in collaboration with Soch Mental Health, aims to make the car wash a recurring event. With hopes for a

larger fund-raising target next year, the team remains committed to making a positive impact on mental health awareness and resources in the community.

## One Love Table celebrates curry

**O**ne Love Family Services will be holding its *Curry In De Six* event in the One Love Table parking, 800 Arrow Road, North York on July 15.

The summer celebration will include all types of curries, with the culmination being the Duck Curry Competition. Food vendors and many talented chefs and their savoury dishes will be at hand during this signature event.

There will also be lots of family fun, which will include musical performances by Raz Hyder, DJ Vick, steelpan playing by Bhisham, and many more fun-filled activities.

Host for the event will be television personalities Chalisa Ram and Karan Singh.

The top event for the day will be the duck curry competition. This will be judged by Guyanese-Canadian chef, Devan Rajkumar.

Fondly known as Chev Dev, as his website notes, he is driven by his desire and ambition to be the best in the business.

And as many of us know from his media presence, Chef Dev has no boundaries when it comes to culinary exploration. As he has indicated, he is on a mission to create food worth sharing, and which modernises the craft, traditions, and tastes of East and Caribbean cuisines.

Chef Dev is well-known in Canada's mainstream kitchens and abroad, owning the role of food expert on Cityline, and appearing as a judge on Food Network Canada's Fire Masters.

He has also traveled abroad to gain more experience and share his craft, developing signature soups with Mema Foods International, and has hosted pop-ups with chef peers, both local and internationally.



Chef Devan Rajkumar

**Erratum Noted:** Our attentive readers have kindly pointed out an oversight in our June 21, 2023 edition where Kamala-Jean Gopie's name was incorrectly spelt in the second instance. The typographical error occurred in the review of Heidi McKenzie's exhibition, *Indo-Caribbean HerStories*, written by Nalini Mohabir, and which appeared on Page 17. The oversight is sincerely regretted. Ed.

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# Survey finds Canadians link wildfires to climate change

A new survey from Clean Energy Canada and Abacus Data has found that 68 percent of Canadians believe that this country's recent wildfires are "definitely" or "most likely" at least partly the result of climate change.

Additionally, the survey has found that 89 percent of Canadians say they have noticed an increase in natural disasters over the past decade, with seven in ten Canadians saying they believe this to be a direct effect of climate change.

It was also found that just 12 percent of Canadians who were surveyed say they have not noticed an increase in natural disasters. Meanwhile, another 18 percent have observed an increase, but believe it is "just a coincidence, not climate change."

When Canadians were asked to rate how fast Canada is moving on investing in, and transitioning to clean energy, 56 percent say that Canada is moving "fairly slowly" or "very slowly," while 49 percent say the same of our allies. On both fronts, Canadians are somewhat pessimistic about the pace of the energy transition.

Meanwhile, nearly 87 percent of Canadians feel that it is "very important" or "somewhat important" for federal and provincial governments to ensure that Canada remains competitive with our allies and trading partners when it comes to growing our clean energy sector and sustainably produced exports.

While 47 percent of Canadians saw the recent electric vehicle and battery manufacturing announcements in Canada, 68 percent of them say that they view these as evidence that the transition to clean energy can benefit Canada's economy and job creation. Younger Canadians were much more likely to see the announcements as beneficial.

Speaking to the next federal election, nearly 86 percent of Canadians indicated that having a good plan for addressing climate change, and growing Canada's clean economy will impact their vote, with nearly six in ten deeming it as "essential" or "very important" for their vote.

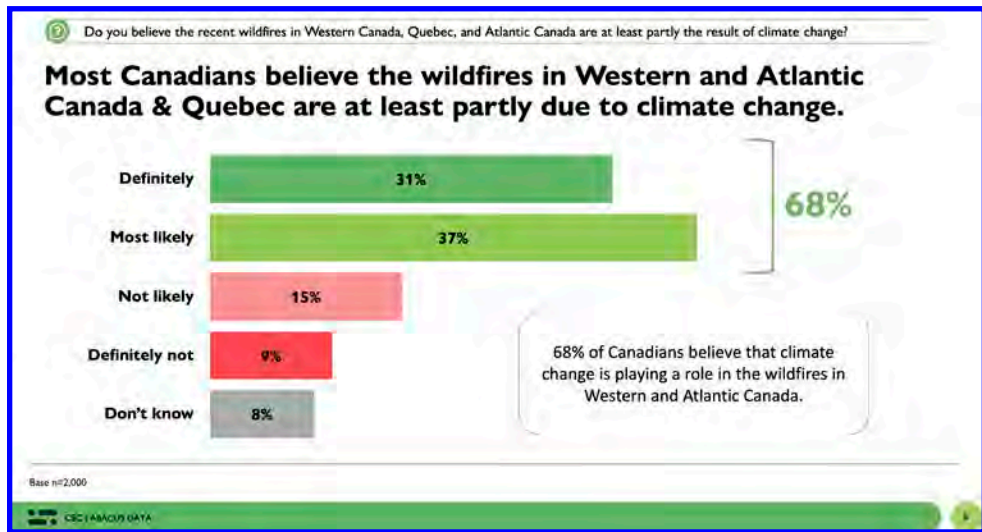
Finally, many Canadians are still getting their information through the news. When asked how they determine whether a political party has a good plan to address climate change and grow Canada's clean economy, 49 percent say they "read or watch the news", while 33 percent say they "listen to the experts". Only 16 percent indicated social media was a source of information.

Speaking to the findings in the survey, Trevor Melanson, Communications Director, Clean Energy Canada, said, "As the impacts of climate change become more frequent and apparent, Canadians are connecting the dots. They're also connecting the economic dots, with a strong majority seeing recent EV and battery manufacturing announcements as evidence that the clean energy transition can drive growth and job creation."

He added, "For politicians, this is more than a box to tick. Canadians both care deeply about climate action and are generally skeptical of political parties on this issue. It will take serious, sustained, and credible efforts to win them over."

Also, David Coletto, Chief Executive Officer, Abacus Data, noted that wildfires and extreme weather are reminding Canadians that climate change is not just a global or theoretical phenomenon.

"It is having real and often devastating impacts on people's lives. The result is that a growing number of people are making a party or political leader's commitment to tackling the crisis table stakes to their political behaviour," he said.



## Caribbean calls for climate change funding

A number of countries from Central America and the Caribbean are calling on the international financial and development institutions "to prioritise the provision of funds and resources" to support the efforts of developing countries in the region in addressing climate change, the Caribbean Media Corporation reported last week.

Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the Organisation of American States, Sir Ronald Sanders, drafted the original and historic declaration after securing unanimous support.

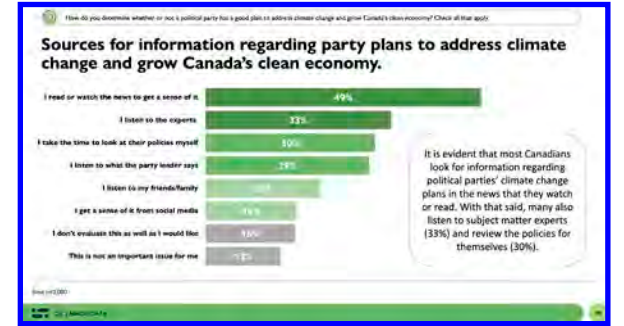
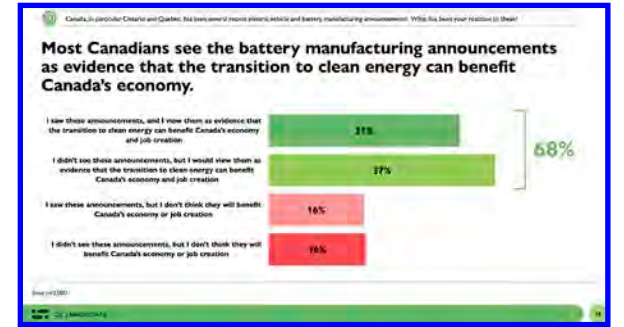
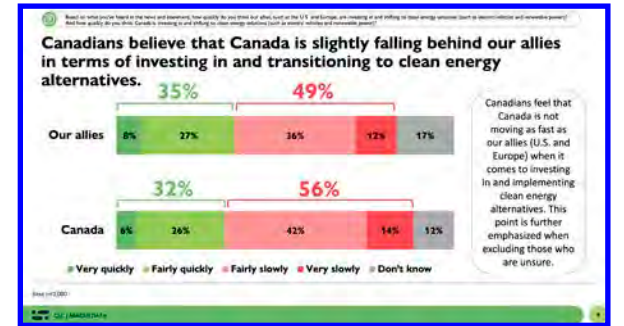
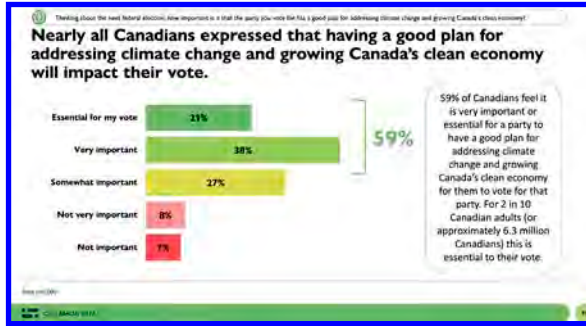
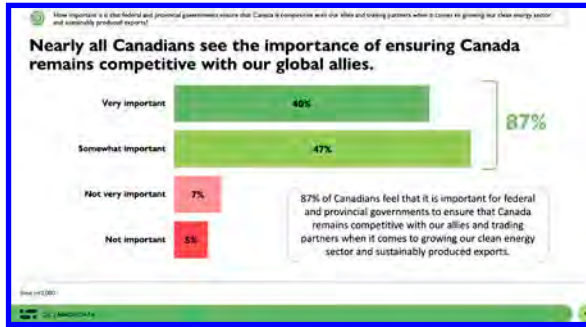
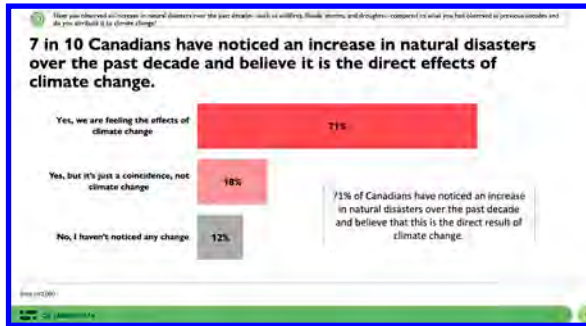
The joint declaration calls for international financial and development institutions to prioritise the provision of funds and resources to Central America and the Caribbean.

Also, Sir Ronald noted that while small island developing states have been making

their voices heard at meetings of the UN Committee of the Parties at many climate change meetings, there is a need to widen the alliance of states that are jointly seeking remedies for loss and damage to their economies and the livelihoods of their people.


"Now, they have not only let the world know of their joint worry, but they have also collectively called for action," Sanders said.

The 20 countries that made the joint declaration at the OAS General Assembly are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, The Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts-Nevis, Haiti, Jamaica, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama.



### METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted with 2,000 Canadian adults from June 06 to 11, 2023. A random sample of panelists were invited to complete the survey from a set of partner panels based on the Lucid exchange platform. These partners are typically double opt-in survey panels, blended to manage out potential skew in the data from a single source. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.



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Canadian women in business attended a CGCC information session late last month. A delegation of business women will visit Guyana in the fall. Also in photo are CGCC's Fared Amin (second from left), & lawyer, Dhaman Kissoon at right.

## CGCC focuses on women in business

**Toronto** – A successful information session held by the Canada Guyana Chamber of Commerce last month saw attendance by Canadian women in business interested in meeting counterparts in Guyana.

The CGCC's objective was to explore, develop, and nurture synergies among women in businesses in Canada and Guyana.

Among its explorations was to identify opportunities in energy, tourism and services, agriculture, manufacturing, national projects, and in information and communication.

It was chaired by Fared Amin, CGCC board director, and took place in Etobicoke on June 22.

Among those attending were Janet Naidu, Michelle Haynes, Mala Kissoon, and Nutana Singh from the Guyana Consulate in Toronto. Also in attendance was community stalwart and

senior lawyer, Dhaman Kissoon, from the law firm Kissoon & Associates, a CGCC member.

In his address, Amin discussed Guyana's burgeoning economic growth. He also spoke to the CGCC's philosophical grounding, noting its



Amin addresses the group

progressive and transformative roots, and the commitment to identifying and strengthening opportunities for women in business.

As he noted, the CGCC's objectives in enabling women in business were, among other things, for them to gain perspectives on how Guyana is being transformed at this time; for the acquisition of insights in doing business in Guyana; for them to connect with key business leaders and elected officials; and to tour prominent future investment sites.

The trade delegation of women in business heads to Guyana this fall.



Dr Jamal Deen (centre) with his honorary doctorate in recognition of excellence in his academic career; also in photo are Dr Luc-Alain Giraldeau - Directeur Générale de l'INRS (left), & Dr Alexandre Cloutier - Président de l'Université du Québec

## Dr Jamal Deen gets honorary doctorate

Distinguished University Professor Jamal Deen of McMaster University, was awarded an honorary doctorate degree at the 2023 graduation ceremony of l'INRS (Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique).

The doctorate is in recognition of Deen's excellence in his academic career, and is the highest recognition from INRS, which is part of the Université de Québec system.

In his citation, Director General of INRS, Dr Luc-Alain Giraldeau stated that Deen's journey "is so vast and rich that it is hard to believe that it fits in a single existence".

He also described Deen as a world leader in the fields of nanoelectronics, optoelectronics, nanotechnology, data analysis, and their emerging applications.

Giraldeau added that Deen stood out "as a scientist, an educator and a citizen".

Also, "His formidable career, driven by an insatiable thirst for learning, is the basis of decisive breakthroughs in the areas of research that fascinate him."

Giraldeau also stated, "In addition, Professor Deen's willingness to act at all times by prioritising the well-being of those around him makes him a rare source of inspiration."

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**Editorial**

**NCDs as legacy**

**W**hile dramatic in its illustration about the destructive and negative impact Non-Communicable Diseases are having in the Caribbean, the recent statements made by Sir Hilary Beckles that link modern-day NCDs ill-health to historical diets imposed by slave masters during slavery remain insightful, and are worthy of wider exploration.

Sir Hilary is the current Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies; he is also Chairman of the Caricom Reparations Commission.

As the Caribbean media have reported, in addressing a recent university gathering, Sir Hilary noted, perhaps again with a touch of the dramatic despite the sobering statistics, that “more than 60 percent of all the people in the region over the age of 60 either have hypertension, or diabetes; or both”.

It is reported that Sir Hilary also referred to Jamaica and Barbados as amputation capitals of the world, a consequence from complications brought on by diabetes and hypertension.

As an aside, with their similar trend of growing amputees, both Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana must also be added to the list of Caricom “capitals” that are dealing with the debilitating and lifestyle-changing fallout from diabetes and hypertension.

Other Caricom nations face similar and worsening scenarios, with the Pan American Health Organisation noting the high NCDs expenditure in some Caribbean households. PAHO cites survey data that indicate diabetic patients in St Vincent spend as much as 40 percent of their annual income on health care.

Meanwhile, the media reports have noted Sir Hilary going on to state that the unbalanced, economical, and inadequate diets imposed on the enslaved by slave masters maximising profits by minimising overheads in food expenditure, among other deprivations, still resonate today.

This is evidenced as a legacy in ill-health from imbalanced diets that echo in the growing numbers of overweight, obese, diabetic, and hypertensive persons in the Caribbean, and its sites of “amputation capitals”.

Meanwhile, a few regional commentators have indicated Sir Hilary may have been wearing his second career hat as head of the Caricom Reparations Commission when he made the linkage between modern-day NCDs lifestyle diseases and historical enslavement food practices.

That, and albeit understandably, Sir Hilary is driven by his commitment to an unwavering path on the road to achieve imperial accountability through reparations for the inhumanity, resource thievery, brutality, and injustices that were imposed on the enslaved by an extractive and colonising empire.

Whatever the commentary, and whether Sir Hilary clothed his statements with stage-craft and the performative, it still remains that an important, and albeit academic linkage, has been made to a major, and unpalatable component of the Caribbean's past that continues to resonate in our lives today.

It is quite a nuanced and outlier linkage; and indubitably a new facet to guide our understanding on how the lives and bodies of our ancestors were altered not only by brutality and inhumanity, but by the foods they ate, also part of their enslavement, and with indentureship that came afterwards in the post-emancipation period.

No doubt about it, part of that alteration lies in the nutritional impoverishment through the unhealthy foods that our ancestors consumed. Now that the link has been made, it has become possible to appreciate yet another historical path that took us down the road to where we are now dealing with NCDs and its destructive impact.

It is also possible now to make the link to our export of such a lifestyle from the Caribbean, and into our diasporic lives abroad, where our community in the GTA is similarly dealing with debilitating NCDs fallout.

Views such as Sir Hilary's remain valid, and to further unpack and explore such outlier thinking means we remain one step ahead in forging healthier lives for ourselves, and for the generations ahead.

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 Dindoyal, 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](mailto:indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com) Website: [www.indocaribbeanworld.com](http://www.indocaribbeanworld.com)

**Time for Caribbean Heritage Month in Canada**

**W**e are now in July, and not only will the weather replicate the warmth of the Caribbean, but across many large cities there will be an explosion of Caribbean culture.

This is especially notable in Canada's largest city, Toronto, where the warm weather is accompanied by the launch of several events this month leading up to the annual Toronto Caribbean Carnival (formerly known as Caribana). This summer event is scheduled for the Saturday of the Civic Holiday long weekend.



Ryan Singh

Despite this huge demonstration and acknowledgment of Caribbean culture in Canada, and its well-known influence in major cities, unlike many other communities, the Caribbean community has not received official recognition.

Amidst the festivities, the music, food, and excitement carefully disguise the fact that in Canada there is no official designation of a ‘Caribbean Heritage Month’.

Unlike Canada, the US has recognised the growth and significance of its Caribbean community. In 2006, June was designated as National Caribbean American Heritage Month via Presidential Proclamation.

Identifying and celebrating cultural and national communities in Canada are not rare phenomena. It is actually quite common, and several other communities have received this honour. This provides these communities with a special opportunity to share and celebrate their culture and heritage.

More importantly, it officially recognises their place within the fabric of Canada's multicultural landscape.

There are many examples to share. This past month, Canada's Parliament adopted Bill S-246, *Lebanese Heritage Month Act*, declaring November as Lebanese Heritage Month in Canada.

Many other communities have also acquired similar national and provincial recognition. For example, the federal government has marked January as Tamil Heritage Month. March is recognised as Irish Heritage Month, while June is designated as Heritage Month for the Italian, Filipino, and Portuguese communities. German and Latin American communities share October for their Heritage Month.

In our province of Ontario, as with the federal government, many other cultural and national communities have received similar month designations.

We have Tamil Heritage Month in January, and Bangladeshi Heritage Month in March. Sikh Heritage Month is celebrated in April, with Asian, Dutch, and Jewish Heritage following in May.

Islamic and Hispanic Heritage Month is marked in October, with Hindu and Albanian Heritage Month recognised in November.

Meanwhile, legislators here in Canada's largest province have

attempted to designate certain months for the Caribbean community, but none of these bills completed the legislative process.

We had Bill 134, Caribbean Heritage Month Act, 2019, which was introduced by then Member of Provincial Parliament, Michael Coteau (now a federal Member of Parliament), and then Bill 139, Caribbean Heritage Month Act, 2019, which was introduced by former Member of Provincial Parliament Sara Singh (Ontario's first female Indo-Caribbean MPP).

Bill 134 proposed October as Caribbean Heritage Month in the province, and Bill 139 proposed August. As mentioned, both these bills failed to complete the legislative process.

It is now more than time for a national Caribbean Heritage Month in Canada; in fact, it is overdue.

Canada's Caribbean community could be traced back to its origins in the late 18th century. Migration has continued, and increased, ever since. The 2016 census reported that approximately 750,000 Canadians originate from the Caribbean.

At times, our community's growth in Canada has outpaced the growth of the national population. During the period between 1996 to 2001, Canada's population increased by four percent, whereas our Caribbean community grew by 11 percent.

The impact by our Caribbean community in Canada is extensive as it is immeasurable.

From countless restaurants and grocery stores, places of worship, and religious supply stores, among many others, these visible indicators reside merely on the surface that is the significant economic and societal impact our Caribbean community is making on the Canadian landscape.

An in-depth review of the extent of the contributions of the community would require much more than one article. However, it is without question that the Caribbean community in Canada is a vibrant and significant community; and it is for this reason that our impactful contributions deserve to be recognised and celebrated.

As many of us attend Caribana events, and enjoy the revelry of the summer weather, we should not lose sight of the accomplishments of our community.

The diverse mixture of the Caribbean has enriched Canadian society for the better. It has brought many attributes that are now permanently embroidered into our nation's multicultural fabric.

And it is time to ensure that we recognise this significant community with formal heritage month recognition by the federal government.

If Canada were to declare a month as Caribbean Heritage Month, then which month would you propose, and why? Reach out at [indocaribcdn@gmail.com](mailto:indocaribcdn@gmail.com).

**Now here is a timely walk down memory lane**

**A**n image is retained from my reading of Paul Theroux's lamentation and loss over what turned out to be quite a toxic relationship between his good self and the late English author who was born in Trinidad and Tobago, V.S. Naipaul. The book is called *Sir Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship Across Five Continents*.

In the moment that I am recalling, Theroux's path has overlapped with Naipaul's during a walk in the English countryside. I do not recall too many specifics of the serendipitous encounter: perhaps it was a Sunday afternoon.



Romeo Kaseram

However, images from good writing that are inked on the wall of recall hardly fade, and so it is that I remember Theroux describing his tormentor, and the *bete noir* that was their decaying friendship, being quite formally dressed for the casual outing of an afternoon stroll, with Naipaul, a heavy smoker, heaving forward with his “smoke-tortured lungs”.

Theroux's description of Naipaul gasping for breath as he pushed his overdressed frame, clothed in suit-and-tie, perhaps accessorised with the triangle of pocket handkerchief, no doubt mimicking an English gentleman's cultural mores, always comes to me whenever I set out on my walks.

In fact, I am quite a walker, and have always enjoyed it for the activity and exercise, but more for soaking-in the ambiance of neighbourhoods; and of course, people-watching.

Recall of my earliest peregrinations are undoubtedly a mix of curiosity about the agrarian world of my childhood when I was growing up back home, along with a thirst for new experiences; and of course, as my dearly departed grandmother liked to point out, an unhealthy and untameable waywardness.

“You mash that gap and I coming for you,” Ma warned. “Don't let this fireside burn this pot, you hear me, child?!”

It seems that my dear grandmother's warning about crossing over the “gap”, the threshold from our front yard and out into the many dangers on the roadway, was always accompanied with dire threats, including dinner being burnt, and was always

delivered with her constant and unrelenting use of the punctuation mark, the emphatic interrobang.

Of course, back in my day, a stolen moment away from Ma's too-watchful eyes and her roiling pots with a quick dive into the hazards of the wider world meant dodging an occasional donkey cart, with both its cart-driver and the hitched animal sailing by in a doze, the cart on autopilot and softly heaving on flaccid rubber wheels as if tossed by gentle, somnolent waves.

Then there were the box-carts, dilapidated wooden contraptions on tall ball-bearing wheels that were noisy and playful as puppies, with its large containers of water splashing out half the contents as the youthful handlers, who were much older and sturdier, raced them forward along the bumpy, gravelled roadway.

Enraptured on this highway of activity and life at its unrestricted best, the urgent ringing of a bicycle's bell behind would see me agilely leaping out of the way; and out of the corner of my eye, there was my grandmother standing by the gap, her forefinger curved like a sickle, ready to cut me down to size the way the water grass fell at her feet, chopped down at the knees in their prime as feedstock to nourish her milk cows.

Since those days back then, I would like to think I have walked good, to borrow the metaphor for diasporic mobility and exploration that was constructed by my dear colleague, Bernard Heydorn, in his eternal book, *Walk Good Guyana Boy*.

Indeed, the journey “across the gap” has seen me walk a long way since my youthful escapades from the constraints of maternal over-watchfulness, and its accompaniment of heightened activity in diligent evasion of Ma's short bursts of ineffective pursuits, which always terminated with her smoke-tortured lungs heaving as she hurled imprecations that my “hot-foot” would outrun me one day.

I continue my walks today; part of a regimen for activity and health, nowadays I dodge people-traffic on the walking track at the gym. Sadly, I can no longer look over my shoulder for Ma.

# Debunking 'the great assertion' of the 80% economy ownership rule

Dear Editor,

A recent letter in *Stabroek News*, "Inappropriate statement on incarnation," by C. Persaud attracted a few interesting comments.

One of the commentators, Colonel 1232, made an unwarranted and inappropriate observation: "BTW...good deeds are considered Godly, and [Forbes] Burnham did a lot of good stuff fuh alyou who ended up owning 80% of the economy with his help, and without alyou getting the government jobs too!"

Aside from the induced amnesia, it is pure jiggery-pokery to proclaim that the Burnham dictatorship not only benefitted Indians tremendously, but benefitted them more than any other group.

No evidence was offered for the "great assertion". It appears that dishonesty and distorted beliefs have colonised the minds of this commentator and people of his "kith and kin".

Otherwise, how does one explain the ethnic purchase of the idea that Indians own 80 percent of the economy?

A few years ago, the claim was that Indian Guyanese own 90-95 percent of the economy. In a letter to *Stabroek News*, dated March 26, 2019, **I endeavoured to debunk this myth.**

It appears that a transmutation of some sort has been performed by those who peddle misinformation and disinformation. In 1993, Clive Thomas wrote that the "commanding heights" of the economy firmly rested in the hands of the PNC government by the early 1980s: it owned and controlled about 80 percent of the economy.

He said: "The Government then boasted of its '80 percent ownership and control of the economy.'" That "80-percent" fact has been transmuted into – to attach a label to it – the great 80 percent myth and pinned upon Indians.

One of the major conclusions of the letter referred to above was that: "If one optimistically assumes that Indians completely own and control these seven sectors, their mean contribution to GDP was 22.9 percent during 2006-2017."

Consequently, "Even with the most optimistic assumptions, the belief that Indians own and control 90-95 percent of the economy – GDP – is a myth." Pure and simple.

Today, after the Desmond Hoyte Administration Economic Recovery Program, which the PPP endorsed and fully implemented in a remarkably short period of time, the heft of the



Forbes Burnham



Desmond Hoyte

"Government Economy" is much reduced.

Downsized to such an extent that one simple fact dispels the great 80 percent myth: total central government expenditure accounted for 27.9 percent of non-oil GDP from 2009 to 2022, rising from a fifth to more than a half of GDP from the beginning to the ending of the period.

How, then, can Indians own 80 percent of the economy? The arithmetic simply does not add up.

Spending of this magnitude, more than a third of non-oil GDP during 2020 to 2022, can have a huge impact on the economy. Further, it is likely that recent growth would have been more subdued or even negative if Central Government spending followed its trend from 2010.

The sheer size of the Central government means fiscal policy – fiscal dominance in this case – is an important instrument of government policy, which it can use to influence economic growth, the sectoral composition of the economy, and more importantly, the just distribution of the fruits of economic progress across regions and ethnic groups.

The central government is simply the single largest economic agent in Guyana's economy, more than the 300,000 plus Indians put together.

Besides the mysterious and concocted statistic, there is a fundamental underlying issue with the claim: what does its peddlers mean by the "economy"?

There are at least four possible answers to that question.

First, the "economy" usually means the annual flow of GDP, and Indians are directly responsible for little over a fifth of the "economy".

Second, consumption could be contorted to mean the economy. Studies have shown that annual mean consumption by Indians and Africans are about the same. The most recent data lie buried in the bowels of the Bureau of Statistics.

Here I refer to the Household Budget Survey (HBS 2018), the results of which were supposed to be published towards the end of 2019. If I am not mistaken, it is now July 2023.

Funded by the IDB, which has used the survey results to compute consumption/income Gini coefficient, Guyana's ethnic/political entrepreneurs are apparently afraid to publish the data because of – and I am guessing – its ethnic ugliness.

The third possible interpretation of the "economy" refers to the annual flow of income. To the best of my knowledge, data on income distribution by ethnicity do not exist. It is considerably harder to estimate income than consumption, let alone its ethnic distribution.

Reasons for the difficulty include the great reluctance of people to share data on income, or to underestimate their income, tax implications, and undisclosed income, such as remittance and income from self-employment.

The fourth and final point of view of the "economy" refers to wealth, which is buried in an even larger data black hole, rendering it even more difficult to estimate wealth than income.

Readers interested in income/wealth distribution may wish to read articles written by Dr Collin Constantine, as well as my 2022 book, which is called *Essays*, especially Part I.

While Indians directly generate a little over 22 percent of non-oil GDP, and both major ethnic groups spend about the same dollar amount on consumption, it is probable that they command a larger share of the income and wealth generated by the "economy".

But whatever the definition of the "economy" adopted by whatever ethnic group, Indians do not own 80 percent of it. Peddling such a myth amounts to gross distortion and mischief-making.

Alas, there is a saying in politics that goes like this: if you are explaining, you are losing!

**Ramesh Gampat, via email.**



Nicholas Pooran plays a shot in Zimbabwe last week

## Eternal belief in WI

Dear Editor,

My advice is to remain calm, West Indies; do not lose your heads. Stay off social media, do not listen to all those media personalities who want to jump on our backs to make themselves relevant.

West Indies fans, they know what they have to do, now is not the time to slag them off, it isn't over till it's over. West Indies, play the game, not the occasion!

When the chips are down and your backs are against the wall, that is when you've got to show them your mettle. Don't let the anger consume you. Reflect, regroup, and we go again.

I believe in Shai Hope, Nicholas Pooran, Alzarri Joseph, Akeal Hosein.

I believe in all of them. I believe in the West Indies!

Darren Sammy, take control of the camp and sort this out; do not ever give up, boys.

Rally 'round the West Indies across the multiverse and back!

**Kendell Karan, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.**

## Stay inside your own boundary, Dr Rowley

Dear Editor,

Prime Minister Rowley took to social media to publicly deride and belittle the West Indies cricket team for its performance against the Netherlands.

On his Facebook page Dr Rowley wrote: "Today I saw THE WORST CRICKET MATCH ever played by a West Indies team. This amateurish demoralising embarrassment has to stop."

Can you imagine the hurt, shame and humiliation that the players, the coaches, the families, the fans must have experienced on reading or hearing about the Prime Minister's post?

To the players who would have already been dejected and depressed by their painful defeat on the field, Rowley's words would have pierced them to the core like daggers being slowly driven into their bodies.

Leadership must not be taken lightly. Those in leadership positions can make or break people. True leaders are uplifting, motivational, inspiring, encouraging; they look for the best in people. They lift the downtrodden and help them restore their confidence in themselves; they do not further denigrate, deprecate, and destroy.

Trinidad and Tobago is ill-fated to be burdened with a prime minister who spews venom and hatred, who denounces, derides, and tramples on those who are already broken; a prime minister who cares nothing for people.

While Rowley may not be prime minister to all the players of the West Indies team, the other players are our neighbours, they are our friends. Their prime ministers are our Prime Minister's colleagues, they sit together and formulate plans and policies for the region. What must the citizens of those countries be thinking? What must the leaders of those countries be thinking? Their hearts must go out to us for being saddled with such an uncaring, heartless, ranting-and-raving Prime Minister.

It is quite possible that Rowley was expressing his deep disappointment that the West Indies cricket team could not match its number of runs with the number of murders and other crimes under his watch. Maybe he and his failed Minister of National Security could advise the team on how to reach that hallowed number. Instead of condemning the West Indies team, Rowley should assess his own abysmal performance.

A high murder rate does not translate into "exceeds expectations." Water in taps once every three weeks is not "satisfactory." Pothole-ridden roads, collapsed bridges, and a failed public health sector do not qualify for a bonus. He should also undertake a review of the performance of his ministers and allocate



Rowley's FB post following WI's loss

failing grades to each one. Rowley should focus on his own miserable lack of accomplishments and leave the West Indies cricket team alone.

**Jasodra Rampersad, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.**

## Worst performance ever

Dear Editor,

I have witnessed the worst performance by the West Indies cricket team in a very long time. That is saying a lot.

They put themselves out of qualifying for the final two positions in the 2023 Cricket World Cup when the Netherlands defeated them in a cracker of a game. No mental fortitude or self-belief were exhibited by the West Indies.

I have questioned over the years why Dr Rudi Webster is not a part of the mental conditioning of the team. It is clear this team is not up to the required standard, and massive changes must be made.

There are players on the fringe who, if given the chance, would show more courage and heart. It is time to bring them in, and release those who cannot perform at the highest level.

New coach Darren Sammy was not part of the selection process, and had to work with what he was given. Unfortunately, as happens in sport, when the team does not do well, the coach has to go.

Maybe, he might be given a chance to show what he can do with the Test team in the upcoming series against India.

**Linus F. Didier, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.**

# Welcome focus on mental health

Dear Editor,

Even as many are ranting about a Commission of Inquiry into the recent Mahdia school fire, our government must be lauded for its 'first things first' approach in this regard.

I speak here in relation to the "Mental health training (that was) conducted with Mount Sinai University", as it seeks to "...improve the mental health services provided to vulnerable communities..."

The joint media reports detailed that the exercise was a collaboration of the Health Ministry's Mental Health Unit and the New York-based Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

It was dubbed 'train-the-trainers' Disaster Mental Health Training for participants from various communities across Region Eight (Potaro-Siparuni).

I thank the organisers for this event, as mental health is quite a challenge globally.

In general, over the past few years, it is fair to say that most people still do not have a true understanding of just how big, onerous, and potentially damaging the 'mental crisis' really is, on both a societal and personal level. The numbers simply do not lie.

According to the WHO, around 450 million people currently struggle with mental illness, making it the leading cause of disability worldwide.

In Canada, a highly developed country, it affects more than 6.7 million. In fact, one in two Canadians have, or have had, a mental illness by the time they reach 40 years. Alarming statistics like this only underscore the need for governments to get involved in one way or another.

According to Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony, this training will help healthcare workers in the area to be better able to identify challenges that patients may have, and refer them to professional doctors so that they can get the necessary care needed.

As we all know, early detection of health issues precludes major disasters.

Also, in light of the recent Mahdia school fire, the repercussions to mental health can indeed take a heavy toll on families and community members, and Guyana must act accordingly.

## Why Guiana Shield is important to Guyana

Dear Editor,

The statement by Chinese Premier Li Quang, during the annual World Economic Forum, for all nations to "enable each other's success", is a great reminder of the importance of working together in cooperation, and the benefits of an interconnected global economy.

As a nation, we must also find our path to national and regional cooperation in order to quickly realise our full potential.

Continuing to live amicably with the great powers of today, without favour to a particular political philosophy, will allow for increased cooperation and opportunities for growth.

Peaceful coexistence is our best path forward, and we must avoid controversy on the world stage.

Environmental stewardship is where our strength continues to be rooted, and this is where we must remain sincere advocates for sustainable development and global economic cooperation.

Thus, the government is right in taking the initiative, dispatching several mental health teams in the Region Eight surroundings, where they are offering counselling and mental health assistance.

These local teams comprise psychiatrists, child psychologists, counsellors, and social workers, and they were supported by specialised counsellors from Mount Sinai, Southcom Health Clinic, Northwell Health, and the PAHO.

Finally, let me emphasise that all forms of mental illness overall are quite costly to society, as they form the leading causes of disability in many regions of the world, preventing a host of people from attending to basic duties such as work and studies.

In fact, it gets worse, as we think of the reality that the cost that disability leaves (as a result of mental illness) is about double the cost due to physical illness.

At the personal level, many of us do not think of mental illness as something we can die from

(in the same way that people die from cancer, heart disease, or diabetes), yet the inter-relationship between addictions and other forms of mental illness and their connection to physical health is undeniable.

Consider these findings: the WHO estimates that globally, a person dies by suicide every 40 seconds. People with mood disorders are at much higher risk of developing a long-term medical condition.

People with mental illness are two times more likely to have a substance use problem versus the general population; and people with mental illness and addiction are more likely to die prematurely versus the general population.

Let us rally around Health Minister Anthony, who disclosed that telemedicine services are now being offered in Region Eight (Potaro-Siparuni) communities to improve the level of care available to residents.

As he stated, "In the affected villages, telemedicine capabilities have been installed to improve and deliver an expanded level of care to those communities."

It is a long road to healing, and we must take the necessary steps towards prevention and control.

H.B. Singh, Guyana, via email.

The Guiana Shield is becoming more important as the world continues to experience extreme weather conditions and more adverse events as a result of climate change.

Our future hinges on this fundamental shift, and we must never lose sight of the fact that all of our economic development can be lost due to severe climate change.

The responsibility is within our hands, and our stewardship of this aspect of the earth's ecosystem must remain a top priority as we move forward. The interconnected global economy has already shown its vulnerability, and has given an indication of the value of predictable and mild weather events.

The time will come when global leaders will be willing to pay a fair price for the services of the Guiana Shield. It is our duty to ensure that the value of the Guiana Shield remains top of mind at the United Nations and in our interactions with the United Nations Security Council.

Jamil Changlee, Guyana, via email.



Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony addresses attendees



Guyanese attend a government & Mount Sinai University mental training session



Officials inspect the Mahdia site in the aftermath of the tragic fire

## RE/GUYANA GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

### Property Values Rising in Guyana

By Kal Juman-Yassin

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

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

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

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

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

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

RE/Guyana is a property services company dedicated to making it easier for overseas property owners to administer, divest, acquire and develop their real estate assets in Guyana. [Click here to go to our free online property risk assessment.](#)



Li Quang



# Guyana in a good place when it comes to energy sustainability

As the shift to renewable energy continues to accelerate globally, increasing pressure is being applied to fossil energy producers like Guyana by major developed countries and international watchdogs to increase production of alternative energy such as solar and wind power.

Incidentally, Guyana is way ahead of the curve globally in terms of net carbon emissions, but yet has faced pressure on environmental issues from countries like the US because it is now a major oil producer.

The truth is, there are too many foxes in the hen house when it comes to pushing renewables. Plus, the space is occupied with a lot of self-made experts and charlatans.

It goes without saying that the use of renewables has significant benefits over the long-term, but they come at a significantly higher cost and greater challenges, also over the long term.

In fact, several developed countries have abandoned the use of renewables.

For instance, countries such as Germany, Spain, Canada, and the US have cut subsidies to renewable energy largely because they have created a heavy burden on government finances; they also weaken the potential for economies to grow, and undermine private and public investment in the energy sector.

At the same time, the production and consumption of fossil fuels have been rising in the wake of greater use of renewables.

The relative rise in the use of renewables as a replacement for fossil fuels is, therefore, fraught with more half-truths than facts.

**See accompanying chart.**

In promoting the use of alternative energy, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat Simon

Stiell highlighted the long-term environmental and financial benefits of the Caribbean fast-tracking its shift from oil and gas to solar and wind as energy sources.

He noted that the Caribbean is to a large extent still dependent on fossil fuels for its energy supply, and stated that solar and wind are cheaper than ever before.

He acknowledged that oil and gas could not be abandoned in the short-term, but said Caribbean nations should take urgent steps to move towards renewable energy sources.

However, the International Energy Association states that although renewable energy has great potential to reduce prices and dependence on fossil fuels in short and long term, the cost for new solar PV and wind installations has been increasing, reversing a decade-long cost reduction trend.

Arguably, natural gas, oil, and coal prices have risen much faster, and have, therefore, improved the competitiveness of renewable electricity.

However, the question of how rapidly renewables can substitute fossil fuels hinges on several uncertainties, including demand and pricing.

In the case of Guyana, the country has a plan for supporting sustainable energy development, and has been actively engaged in developing solar power.

The country has also embarked on developing a natural gas plant, and is also seeking to resuscitate plans for the Amaila Falls Hydroelectric Project, as well as develop other small hydro power plants.

The fact that the country has entered into an arrangement to sell up to \$750 million in

carbon credits to Hess Corporation by 2030 clearly shows that it has more carbon credits that it needs to meet net zero emissions goals.

While beneficial to Guyana, the whole carbon credit system is "kind of a scam." It simply allows polluters to buy credits to offset their emissions so that they can continue to pollute.

In spite of Guyana's net zero position on sustainability, the US vetoed an Inter-American Development Bank (US) \$180 million loan to Guyana Shore Base

Inc last year because its operations were dedicated to the oil and gas sector.

The hypocrisy in the US move is evident, because the US is both the world's largest producer and consumer of oil. In reality, the US actions had nothing to do with sustainable development.

Though the US comes across as a bastion for sustainable development, it is not a signatory of either the Kyoto Protocol or the Paris Accord, which sets standards on sustainability. Guyana is a signatory, on the other hand.

Therefore, any pressure on Guyana by the US on the sustainability front must be taken with a grain of salt.

The bottom line is that there is no broad acceptance of the whole concept of sustainability, resulting in different reactions by individuals and countries.

For instance, in March, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law a bill barring State officials from investing public money to promote Environmental, Social and Governance goals, and prohibiting ESG bond sales.

The law outlaws a popular way to fund renewable energy projects or lower debt costs for borrowers if they meet greenhouse gas emissions targets.

The truth is that regardless of the purported benefits of investing in alternative energy, they might not necessarily be in the best interest of investors' objectives.

That leaves more questions than answers for believers in alternative energy.

The same goes for the push to electric vehicles, whose sales across North America have been declining, in spite of the environmental benefits.

Guyana is, therefore, in a good place when it comes to sustainability. It should stand its ground and not be pushed into uncompetitive sources of power.

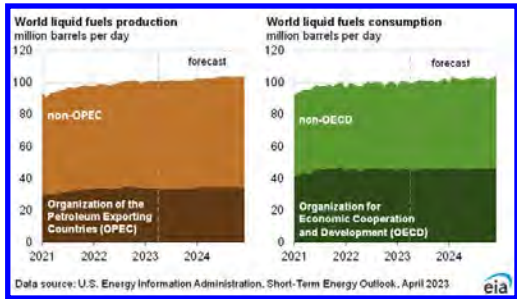
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**Dwarka Lakhan**



**Simon Stiell**



**IMDADUL ISLAMIC JAMAAT PRESENTS:**

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**f in**

# Well-organised & well-executed golf tournament helps raise profile of dialysis cause

**From Page 1**

speaking skills.

“Mom took the microphone for seven minutes. In that time, without notes, or prompts, she thanked everyone for participating in the cause for dialysis. She also thanked Dr Doobay for the good work he is doing in Guyana,” Dhaman recalled.

He added, “It was for many the first time they had seen mom in action. Typically, she goes to the temple and sits quietly. However, this tournament in her name was for a good cause, and in her speech she showed how much she was invested in making it a success.”

The event was held at the Granite Ridge Golf Club in Milton, and saw over 144 golfers in attendance. That this number of golfers participated, on the one hand, was out of respect for his mom’s eminence, Dhaman indicated.

Then there was another driving cause, which

was more than participants having a great golf swing – it was all about respect for Dr Doobay, and the humanitarianism and philanthropy evident in the Global Care Outreach programme that is helping all Guyanese nationals access affordable dialysis care.

“It was quite inspiring and touching,” Dhaman revealed.

He also indicated that following the event, Dr Doobay reached out to the tournament’s organising committee, informing them that the effort was a “classy act”.

As Dhaman noted, Dr Doobay revealed he was pleased that the message was getting out about the work being done in Guyana to ensure patients have access to affordable, critical, and essential dialysis care.

Dhaman said Dr Doobay arrived early, played in the tournament, and remained until it was finished.

“He left with a smile on his face. The morning after the tournament, [he] emailed to say that it had been a classy event; that it was well-organised and well-executed. Also, that it was not all about the money raised, but that the tournament had lifted the profile of the dialysis cause,” Dhaman said.

He concluded, “Indeed, it was a remarkable event! We have a lot of experience in running tournaments like these, and I think it all came together well. There is always that good feeling when a well-executed plan comes together!”

*(Romeo Kaseram, LJI Reporter; with files by Dhevin Indar)*



Dr Doobay (centre) with the Kissoon brothers & other tournament players



Also participating in the tournament was nine-year-old Canadian Junior Golf champion, Nathan Dyke; with Nathan were mom, Chantal Dube (second from left), & dad, Dwaine Dyke (second from right). *Photos by Ramesh Ramkalawan*



Ali at the IMO breakfast with a family, & Imdadul leader, Osman Khan at left

## Guyana’s transformation unique

**From Page 1**

developmental projects were already in the works, and there were many more in the pipeline. And even as he riffed on the positive, national transformation that was now underway in Guyana, he also indicated that more and more windows of opportunity were becoming available to nationals living abroad.

“We have a massive transformational programme, and if you come to Guyana and you don’t feel the energy and see the transformation, I would ask you to come back, or you can get good eye-care in Guyana,” he remarked.

And adding to the soft levity that rippled among his listeners, Ali said, “[Or] at Hakim Optical [in Canada]... and get your eyes tested. It is all over: development is massive; it pushes you. It energises you.”

Ali also spoke to Guyana and the government taking control of its unfolding and developmental narrative.

In his feature address delivered at the La Primavera Banquet Hall in Woodbridge, Ali spoke to this narrative that is driving Guyana’s

transformation as it begins construction of its own “world-class service sector”.

Accomplishing such an objective did not mean Guyana had to replicate the development strategies of other countries, Ali said.

Instead, he declared his government’s objective was one that was enabling, autonomous, and focused on experiences that were unique, and nationally identifiable and characteristic of the Guyanese milieu.

“What is wrong with us developing our own model? We must have the ability to design and propel our own brand. That is what is going to make us different,” Ali proudly declared.

He further highlighted the importance of identifying the core values, principles, and societal structure that define the Guyanese identity, while recognising these “soft issues” as fundamental to building a wholesome and lasting prosperity.

To fulfil such a vision, Ali said the government acknowledges the necessity of modernisation and the integration of advanced technologies.



Attending an information session were (third & fourth from left, front row) Vishnu Mandir’s Roy & Nina Doobay. *Guyana Consulate Toronto photos*

# Mani Singh

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## TCCF holds fund-raiser boat cruise

**Toronto** – The Caribbean Children Foundation held its 19th annual boat cruise on July 2. The packed event took place onboard the *Enterprise 2000*, with supporters dancing to pulsating Caribbean music, and enjoying a delicious lunch buffet.

Captained by TCCF's president, Jay Brijpaul, along with the organisation's devoted crew of volunteers, the cruise was yet another successful fund-raiser to help sick children from the Caribbean access critical medical procedures abroad in Canada and elsewhere.

So far, the TCCF has assisted over 350 less

fortunate children in the past 20 years. Also, since its inception for this worthy cause, the TCCF has raised close to \$500,000 to help sick children access life-saving treatment abroad.

And as Jay has indicated, the TCCF's commitment to such a humanitarian and philanthropic cause is to ensure that all funds raised go directly towards the much-needed and critical care for the children.

There are no administration and other costs, with Jay indicating that not a single drop of the precious funding is wasted.

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## CAL offers more Caribbean routes

Caribbean Airlines continues to spread its wings, this time with flights heading to the Eastern Caribbean.

Starting July 24, CAL will be adding new nonstop services between Barbados and St Vincent, as well as Saint Lucia. There will also be increased capacity to Dominica and Grenada, the airline said in a statement last week.

According to the statement, the Barbados to St Vincent route has been increased to seven weekly services on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Additionally, there will be four new weekly flights between Barbados and Saint Lucia on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays.

Direct Saint Lucia to St Vincent return

flights will operate on Thursdays, making island-hopping a breeze, CAL declared.

CAL's ATR-72 fleet, comprising nine aircraft, will operate these routes. With these strategic additions, Caribbean Airlines will be bringing more convenience and seamless travel experiences to its valued customers, the statement assured.

Said CAL's CEO, Garvin Medera, on the airline's expanded schedule: "We are excited to progress our plans for regional connectivity. There continues to be a call for increased frequency and capacity between Caribbean destinations, and by adjusting our strategies and route network to connect these destinations, we can provide more sustainable travel options for our customers."



Mottley addresses bankers & African leaders at the Africa Export Import Bank's anniversary annual meeting that was held this May in Ghana

## Afreximbank opens up in Barbados

Barbados will be the regional headquarters of the Trade Finance Bank For Africa, the move making available (US) \$1.5 billion with room for expansion if all the Caribbean countries come on board, Prime Minister Mia Mottley has said.

Last week Mottley told the Caribbean media that Barbados will also be a pilot site to facilitate use of the Pan African Payments and Settlements System, which will be a "huge, huge benefit if it works".

It will streamline trade by netting off transactions and minimising the need for extensive foreign currency exchanges, she added.

Additionally, she revealed this latest move came together during her trip to Africa in May, where a decision was taken for Afreximbank to open its headquarters in Barbados on August 4.

"That is the date we are looking at now. They have already chosen an office, and they are already looking to see what else they need to do in order to be able to get functional,"

Mottley revealed.

Additionally, "The other major benefit that we have worked out is that there will be a pilot scheme to be able to facilitate our use of the Pan-African Payments and Settlement System, which is a huge benefit if it works."

However, she could not say when the pilot for the settlement system would begin. Neither could she speak to how long it would be before taking off.

However, she explained that once introduced, it would allow for countries to do trade using some of their own local currency.

"Why is this important? Instead of having to find US dollars for every single possible trade that you do within the region, it then means that you can do that netting off. So, the absolute amount of US dollars that you need to find will be significantly reduced. This is a major achievement for the region if the pilot works out well. It will be a huge advantage to us, but we must start with the pilot," Mottley said.



# Ask Jay...

Please send your questions to  
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## EFFECTS OF RISING INTEREST RATES ON THE HOUSING MARKET

The rising cost of living since the pandemic has spurred the Central Bank of Canada to raise interest rates. When the interest rate goes up, house prices are supposed to go down. The Bank of Canada's key interest rate reached a 1.75 percent low in March 2022, and homeowners borrowed excessively because of cheap money.

It took eight successive rate hikes to stabilise the market, which cooled a little in early 2023, but then reignited in April. In May 2023, the market picked up drastically, which caused the Central Bank to raise interest rates again.

According to Statistics Canada, mortgage interest cost is the most significant contributor to inflation. In May, the mortgage interest cost in the money increased by over 70 percent year-over-year.

The rising interest rates will cause lower financing activity, especially among first-time buyers. Over 30 percent of first-time buyers are estimated to not be able to afford to buy. Swarmina Pandey, analytics manager at Equifax, noted an increase in early delinquencies (30+ days) in the GTA and Vancouver.

Approximately 750 mortgages will be up for renewal within the next year, and these borrowers will have a mortgage shock. According to Equifax, around 1.3 million borrowers are considered high risk, and another three million medium risks.

Many buyers will qualify for lower mortgages, and when combined with a traditionally slower summer market, we can expect a gentle correction resulting in lowering inflation. Sellers motivated to sell will be ahead by pricing their homes at fair market prices.

Many buyers are waiting to see if the Central Bank will raise interest rates. If the interest rate increases again in July, these buyers will have a few months to get a good deal. Buyers should get prequalified for a mortgage before shopping.

For CMHC-insured mortgages where the downpayment is less than 20 percent, the purchase price can be, at most, under one million dollars. Buying a home with a five percent downpayment only applies to property purchased up to \$500,000. If a buyer accepts a home above \$500,000 and under \$1,000,000, then the down payment is five percent on the first \$500,000 and ten percent of the difference.

Staying financially strong is essential. Over my career in real estate, I have seen many people who sold their homes and moved up to grander homes expecting their children to stay with them. Still, eventually, they became empty nesters in a large house with high property taxes and massive mortgage payments. When making financial decisions, try to be objective and not emotional.

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Pandits perform the opening ceremonies at the Hindu Federation Gala



Ramesh Chotai

# Hindu Federation Gala recognises outstanding achievers

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

**Etobicoke** – Scholarships awarded to five brilliant university students, along with recognition of the contributions from five outstanding Canadian Hindus, were among the highlights of the second Hindu Federation Gala, which was held on June 25 at the Woodbine Banquet Hall and Convention Centre in Etobicoke.

To qualify for the \$2,500 Scholarship award, the students – Maya Lekhi, Priya Nandini Persaud, Ariana Singh, Renada Annirood, and Aneal Mahadeo – were required to have successfully completed their first-year university studies, as well as being involved in volunteer temple or community activities.

The Recognition awards for proven commitment and consistent dedication to the promotion and upliftment of Hinduism were handed out to the following: Ramesh Chotai (Outstanding Leadership); Pandit Lallman Sharma (Outstanding Hindu Priest); Dr Deeneshwar Yudhisthir Dhanrajh (Outstanding Academic Achievement); Kamal Bhardwaj (Outstanding Innovation), Ragini Sharma, PhD (Outstanding Community Volunteerism); and MPP Deepak Anand (Outstanding Ambassador).

### The Scholarship Awardees

**Maya Lekhi** is enrolled in the Bachelor of Health Sciences Program at Western University, where she was on the Dean's Honor List at the end of her first year with an average of 92 per cent. Academic excellence apart, Maya has been actively serving as President and Marketing Director of Project 5K, a Not-for-Profit organisation that focuses on empowering youth to create community change through volunteerism.

Her efforts helped Project 5K grow to a membership of over 2,000 youths across 210 schools in Ontario, and a network of over 145 events, making it one of the largest organisations of its kind in Canada.

**Priya Nandini Persaud** completed her first year with a GPA of 3.4 at the University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus, where she is enrolled in a Specialist Program in Psychology, with a Minor in Creative Writing. A versatile musician and vocalist and student of Tarana Dance School, Priya is very involved in the Hindu community. She supports families in their moments of need by attending wakes and satsanghs, and volunteers at fund-raising events. She is a fine role model for many to whom she is a music teacher at the Pickering Devi Mandir.

**Ariana Singh** is pursuing studies in Sociology at York University, where she is a well-rounded individual juggling studies with part-time work and significant involvement in the Hindu community. She is one of the youth leaders at the Shiv Ganesh and Sri Krishna Sudama Mandirs in Brampton. Last year, she performed at the Hindu Federation's Hindu Heritage Month's celebrations, and is well recognised for her talent and versatility.

**Renada Annirood** has had a successful first year at Toronto Metropolitan University, where she is pursuing a degree in Psychology. Renada is an active member of the Toronto Hindu Dharmic Sabha's regular service, as well as at fund-raising events. She plays a key role in helping to mould the minds of the young congregants where she leads by example.

**Aneal Mahadeo** balances work as an auto service advisor for Canadian Tire while pursuing a Bachelor of Automotive Engineering at Ontario Tech University.

His tenure as an Air Cadet led to his position as the inaugural Regiment Sergeant Major of six military bases in Canada. Aneal is guided by the principle of service above self, and seeks opportunities to positively impact his community, as evidenced by his

time as a youth instructor for the Devi Mandir Baal Vikaas Class and his participation in shoreline restoration and park cleanups of the Peak Trail Open Space.

### The Recognition Awardees

**Ramesh Chotai**, who was booted out of Uganda by the tyrant Idi Amin, arrived in Canada in 1972 as a refugee and established Bromed Pharmaceuticals Inc, the largest privately-owned Pharmacy chain in Canada in 1973. He is sometimes described as "Canada's refugee with the golden touch". Chotai has donated liberally to humanitarian causes, including helping refugees to settle in Canada; donating Oxygen concentrators to India during Covid-19; providing relief funds to Gujarat during the 2021 earthquake, and supplying 110 beds to a hospital in Uganda.

He received the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award from the Government of India in 2019 for his efforts in improving Canada-India bilateral relations, and was also recognised as a "Jewel of India" in 2022, one of 75 leading Indo-Canadian personalities.

As President of Vraj Canada Community Centre and leader of the Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre in Mississauga, Chotai has supported many religious and cultural organisations in the GTA. He built the Shrinathji Haveli Temple in Caledon where kids are taught to stay away from drugs, and where women are empowered.

Chotai has been a member of the leadership team of many prominent organisations including the Canada-India

See Page 15: Hindu Federation

# Hindu Federation head appeals for unity, strength, & stability

From Page 14

Foundation. He is the former President of Canadian Council of Hindus, and a lifetime member of the Hindu Federation, where he currently leads its Anti-Hinduism initiative.

...

**Pandit Lallman Sharma**, who hails from Guyana, is one of the first Hindu Priests in Canada who arrived in 1973 with his wife and two daughters. He lived in Montreal before moving to Mississauga, where he obtained his clergy licence.

He performed religious services on Sundays in school halls for many years. Later, an Indian National purchased a Christian Church that was converted into the Hindu Prarthana Samaj located on Fern Avenue, where Panditji officiated for over 17 years. He later conducted satsanghs at his residence in Scarborough. He is a true pioneer whose dedication to dharma is immeasurable.

...

**Dr Deeneshwar Yudhisthir Dhanrajh** was born in Guyana, but grew up in Canada, where he completed high school at Brampton Centennial Secondary School and his BSc at York University.

He went to Varanasi, India, in 2016, and completed his Masters in Sanskrit and his PhD in Sanskrit Sahitya (Sanskrit Literature) from Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in 2022.

He earned a Diploma at Benares Hindu University in Jyotish. A gold medallist from Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, he spent six months in Vrindavan studying Bhagwat Puran. He returned to Canada in 2019 to oversee the construction of the awe-inspiring Brampton Triveni Mandir.

...

**Kamal Bhardwaj** has shown from a tender age two remarkable traits – compassion and leadership – with a burning desire to help his



**Kamal Bhardwaj**



**Ragini Sharma**



**Deepak Anand**

fellow humans. This in turn led to his founding of the Lotus Funeral and Cremation Centre.

Kamal empathises with the devastation and shock families face when they lose a loved one. With care, concern, and a deep understanding, his funeral establishment caters to the needs of all faiths.

This involves, among other things, playing appropriate music in Lotus' vehicles while transporting a deceased from the location of its passing to the final resting place. He offers an individualised service that is required by each grieving family.

As a member of the Hindu Federation, Kamal contributes unreservedly to the Federation's multiple initiatives. He was the event sponsor of the June 25 Award Gala, with a contribution of \$10,000.

...

**Dr Ragini Sharma**, born in India, is Founder and President of Canadian Organisation for Hindu Heritage Education, a Not-for-Profit body whose mission is to educate, promote, and celebrate Hindu heritage.

Sharma worked for over 25 years with individuals, families, and communities of diverse backgrounds to support their human dignity and economic, social, and political rights. She has extensive experience as a volunteer with

seniors, immigrants and children in social service agencies, community centres and schools. Her doctoral studies were on decolonising yoga in academia.

Over the past 18 years, Sharma has volunteered with the International Art of Living Foundation as a teacher of the Happiness Program, a spirituality-based wellness and health program.

She is a passionate learner and educator of Hinduism. Currently serving as Co-Chair, she was a founding member of the Hindu Heritage Month Committee of the Toronto District School Board. She has written a resource guide on Hinduism for educators and others. She also works with many other school boards and public institutions (such as the police) on inclusion and equity relating to Hindus in Canada. Sharma has presented on Hinduism at numerous Interfaith fora, and has been a media spokesperson on Hinduism and Hinduphobia.

...

**MPP Deepak Anand** was first elected as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Mississauga-Malton in 2018, through a grassroots and community-led campaign. He is an engineer by education, a businessman by profession, and a community leader by passion.

Born in Patiala, Punjab, India to humble

beginnings, Deepak immigrated to Canada in 2000 with a degree in chemical engineering. He received his Master of Business Administration from the Schulich School of Business, and has become a vocal advocate in his community through the following volunteer positions: Director for Telcare Brampton; Director for the Indus Community Services, an immigrant settling service; Director for the Canadian Federation of Truckers; Co-Chair for the Malton Building Community Project; and, Founder of Meaningful Media, an organisation that focuses on highlighting different charities.

Deepak is Producer and Host for *Radio Saanjh*, a show that discusses local issues and provides exposure to different local organizations that are working for the betterment of the community.

In his address, Hindu Federation's President Pt Roopnath Sharma issued a stirring appeal for all Hindus, regardless of belief systems or gurus, to band together for the strength and stability of the world's oldest surviving faith in order for it to withstand the onslaught of detractors.

Other sponsors, in addition to Lotus Funeral and Cremation Centre were Lakeridge Collision Centre (Platinum Sponsor); and Ramesh Chotai (Gold Sponsor). Those sponsoring the scholarships were Shiv Misir; Data Solutions Consulting Inc; and Brampton and Ajax Cremation and Visitation Centre.

The program featured a healthy complement of music, songs, and dances with maestro musicians Harold Boodoo and Shivo Mohabeer accompanying singers Bisram Deonandan, Mohua Parial, Rahul Anand, and Vandna Anand.

The eventful evening ended on a sumptuous note with a multi-course vegetarian buffet dinner.



During a visit to Guyana last month, leaders from Pranav Ashram in Toronto paid a courtesy call to this nation's President Dr Irfaan Ali. Meeting with President Ali (at right in photo) & updating him on the good work being done by the mandir in Toronto, along with others in the visiting group, were Swami Bhajanandaji (centre), & at left, Sat Purushuttam, President of Pranav Ashram.



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# First Sharda found peace in this life, & now in eternal rest

By Dhanpaul Narine

Sharda the Bollywood singer passed away on June 14, 2023. This profile was done some time ago, and is reprinted as a mark of respect.

Sharda is the lady with the golden voice. It is a rich velvet with frissons to stretch a summer's evening into timeless rapture. The fame was wonderful while it lasted. But the bright lights faded, the stage became empty, and we are left to ponder on what could have been.

Sharda made history in 1966. She failed to win the Filmfare Award, and so became famous. The Filmfare Award was one of India's premier achievements. It was a keenly anticipated annual event. But Sharda lost and was catapulted into stardom. How did losing an award become an excelsior in one's career?

Sharda explains it best. She says, "In those days there was only one award given to the best playback singer in the Hindi movies. When the votes were counted, my song tied for first place with that of Mohamed Rafi. The judges decided that there would be no award that year; they agreed that from then there would be two separate prizes, one for a male and the other for a female singer."

Sharda would go on to win Filmfare Awards in the future, and to rock the music industry. But her reign was short-lived, as forces beyond her control would plot to take away her crown.

Who is Sharda? And why did her popularity soar to dizzying heights, and then plummet unceremoniously to the distant beyond?

Sharda Rajan Iyengar was born in Tamil Nadu, in India. Her dad, Desikant, was a government employee, while her mom Padma was a homemaker. Sharda was the eldest of seven children. She attended school in Tamil Nadu, and found that she liked singing at an early age. Her mother gave her singing lessons, and soon Sharda was versed in Carnatic music. She went on to earn a degree in music.

Sharda moved to Chennai where members of her family were singing Hindi songs.

She says, "I loved Hindi songs. They were so beautiful. I wanted to sing them, so I started singing *Aja Aja* and it was enjoyable."

Sharda's parents went to Tehran on government duty in the 1960s, and while there she continued to sing.

One day, she heard that Raj Kapoor would be visiting Tehran. He was going to release his movie *Jis Desh Men Ganga Behti Hai*. After the release, there was a function for Raj Kapoor at the residence of Shrichand Ahuja. Sharda was invited and they called on her to sing.

She says, "I sang some songs from *Barsaat* and Raj Kapoor



Two eras of Sharda (left) later in life, & at right, starting her illustrious career

liked my voice. He invited me to go to Bombay. I was told to meet with music directors Shankar and Jaikishan."

Raj Kapoor worked exclusively with Shankar and Jaikishan. They were among the top music directors in India at the time. She found Shankar and Jaikishan to be masters at their craft. In those days the voice tests were given by singing into a microphone. Sharda's voice test was impressive. Shankar and Jaikishan gave her lessons and training in music.

The training lasted about two years, and after she had met the requirements, Sharda was accepted to sing in the movies. Then a number of 'firsts' happened.

Sharda sang *Titli Udi* in the film *Suraj*. It was her first song in a movie. The song soared up the charts, and was the most popular rendition in 1966.

Mohamed Rafi's song *Baharo Phool Barsao* was also popular. When the votes were counted for the Filmfare Award, it was found that there was a tie between Sharda and Rafi. It was then that the rules were changed to give two awards, one each for a male and female category. After this success, Sharda was in great demand.

She sang with some of the biggest names in Bollywood. They included Mukesh, Kishore Kumar, Mohamed Rafi, Yesudas, Suman Kalyanpur, and others.

Sharda's playback singing was for heroines such as Vyjayanthimala, Saira Banu, Hema Malini, Sharmila Tagore, Rajshree, and Mumtaz, among others.

In addition to *Titli Udi*, some of Sharda's other hits were *Jaane-Chaman*, *Leja Leja Mera Dil*, *Chale Jana Zara*, *Tum Pyar Se Deko*, *Woh Pari Kahan Se*, *Kisike Dil Ko*, *Jab Bhi Yeh Dil Udass*, *Aap Ki Rai Mere Baare Mein*, *Jane Anjane Yahan*, and *Jaane Bhi*

*De Sanam Mujhe, Abhi Jaane*, to name a few.

Sharda says that the playback singers were "all nice people".

She adds, "They were dedicated singers. I got along well with all of them. Mohamed Rafi, Mukesh, and the others were great. Kishore was fun-loving, and made one feel at home. He puts petals in his songs."

Apart from the movies, the stage shows were also amazing. Sharda's stage performances with these stars won excellent reviews in the media.

What went wrong then for Sharda? Why was she, at the height of her popularity, relegated to a corner of the musical establishment, and rarely given the chance to sing?

There are two reasons why Sharda was ignored, and they reflect the prevailing attitudes of a cut-throat industry.

The first relates to the relationship between Shankar and Jaikishan. It was known at the time that Shankar favoured Sharda, while Jaikishan

went towards Lata Mangeshkar. Many of Sharda's hits were composed by Shankar, and she went on to win two Filmfare Awards – that was unheard of by a newcomer.

Moreover, Sharda won her awards in the 1960s, when Lata, her sister Asha Bhosle, and Rafi, Mukesh, Kishore, and Manna Dey were at their peak. Sharda's success ruffled many feathers, particularly that of Lata Mangeshkar. It will be recalled that at one time Lata refused to sing with Rafi over the payment of royalties. That was the period when Rafi sang with Suman Kalyanpur; they recorded over 100 duets together.

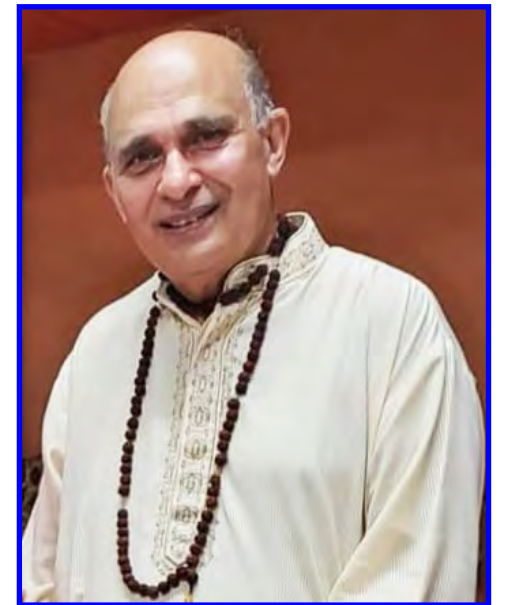
The second reason is that Bollywood politics became testy and factional. Music directors and composers were told to choose their playback singers. They chose Lata and her group, and Sharda was left out in the cold. Three of her songs in the movie *Mera Naam Joker* were left out by the producers, and some of her songs were also left out in other movies.

According to Sharda, "Lata thought that I was trying to compete with her. There is room in the film industry for everybody. I have no ill-feelings against anyone. I have met Lata many times, and we have always been pleasant toward each other."

Sharda was impressed with Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, Sunil Dutt, and Sharmila Tagore.

She is busy these days with her family. Her son lives in India, while her daughter is in Australia. Music continues to pull Sharda. This once songbird of Bollywood is at peace with herself, and she puts her faith in God. She continues to share her talents with the younger singers, and is busy with several projects.

We salute Sharda as a musical icon that is loved and respected by many. May her soul rest in peace.



## Shiv Sewa Sangh celebrates life of compassionate & nurturing Pandit Sukul

The Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir & Cultural Centre celebrated the life of their beloved Pandit Krishna Sukul on June 25 following his passing on June 4. The event was held to honour his contributions to the mandir, and to celebrate the community as a whole.

As Shiv Sewa Sangh's President, Nadira Raghunandan-Dyal stated, Pandit Sukul was kind, caring, and a very approachable person.

"He was someone who lit up the room whenever he walked in with that megawatt smile," she said.

Pandit Sukul's contributions at Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir were many. Among them were his commitment as a pandit, where he provided spiritual guidance on the Hindu way of life.

Raghunandan-Dyal also noted that Pandit Sukul's three

main principles were the importance of parents in the lives of children; children's duties to parents; and promoting peace and goodwill.

She also stated that as a counselor, Pandit Sukul partnered "with me on how we can best guide our children".

"[He] tried his best to advise and find solutions to people's problems & situations," she declared.

Raghunandan-Dyal added that Pandit Sukul's many interventions in the lives of devotees were compassionate, supportive, and nurturing. She also recalled his timely mediation in the lives of devotees and their children following episodes of turbulence, separation, and trauma.

"[Pandit Sukul] was a team player. No task was too little, or too much for him. In [his] own words, 'A family that prays

together, stays together," she recalled.

Said Raghunandan-Dyal: "We will forever miss Pandit Krishna Sukul: his values, and everything he stood for."

Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir was founded by the late Savo Nowlakhia on March 5, 2000. It welcomes all members of the community for prayer, celebrations, and social engagement.

Among its many mandates is offering a prayerful, safe, and religious space that is free of judgement, one that focuses on cultural events, and participation in the many services that are offered.

Particular attention is paid to the care of its young devotees through a thorough education on the Hindu religion, even while ensuring they have all the resources needed to prosper in life.

The mandir can be reached at 416-261-0281.



# Remembering Gordon Lightfoot, legend & Canadian for all seasons

Gordon Lightfoot has now gone beyond death's door, having knocked on it a few times. The legend lives on. His funeral in his hometown of Orillia, Ontario, attracted thousands of mourners from "early morning rain" to "sundown" – two of his famous songs.

Described in many ways, including "Canadian Royalty", there is a statue of Lightfoot erected in his hometown. There is also talk of having a statue in the city of Toronto, a square in the downtown area, and a subway station to be possibly named after him. Many say he deserves them all.

My interview with Gordon Lightfoot in April 2003 was a great privilege. In my early days in Canada, living as an immigrant in Ottawa, I bought his first LP entitled *Lightfoot*. I presented it to a girlfriend as a Christmas gift in 1967. I played the album many times including the hits – *For Loving Me*, *Early Morning Rain*, and *Ribbon of Darkness*. Lightfoot said the album did well in Canada, but not so well south of the border.

I was a graduate student at the University of Toronto in the 1960s and visited Steele's Tavern on Yonge Street where Lightfoot at the time was discovered by two legendary Canadian singers, Ian and Sylvia. A fellow countryman from Guyana, Andy Niccols, performed there at that time.

Lightfoot soon started playing and singing in Yorkville, in the Village, at the Riverboat. The place was often packed with "hippies", and a new generation of folk music followers. I lived in a rooming house on Cumberland Street nearby.

My first personal encounter with Lightfoot in 2003 was an interview at his office on Yonge Street. The interview had been arranged several months before, but was postponed as a result of his life-threatening illness, an abdominal haemorrhage near his kidney. He was just about to go on stage to do a charity show at the Opera House in Orillia, his hometown September 7, 2002. He said, "I did not wake up for six and a half weeks. I was out cold. The operation that followed affected my voice, hearing, and other parts of my anatomy."

Seven months later, he arrived at our meeting in a limousine, and took me up the stairs to his office. He was painstakingly slow in walking and starting on his road to recovery. More operations were to follow over the next year.

During the interview, he thanked his wife and family, the fans who had sent him many letters and well-wishes, the doctors and nurses who cared for him, his loyal band members, and others. His band had been with him for a long time.

"They have been an inspiration, and are like friends in a hockey team," he said.

My first impression of Gordon Lightfoot was his quiet humility. He was most co-operative to sit through an interview of more than 75 minutes with me. My tape recorder was running, and he even offered to play snippets of two new tracks of songs for a new album, which were to come the following year. It was voice and guitar he explained, and was quite excited to play it as a sample of new work.

What came out of him at that interview was his strength and determination to continue his career.

"No spinning wheels for me! My goal is to get out there and do it again! In the past, I had a fear of death. I have lost that fear. It may be further down the road for some than for others. I feel much better about accepting death now. Perhaps, it's the experience I have been through. Death was very much on my mind in the early days."

He continued, "The fear of death seems to resign itself as you get older. The most important thing in life is to keep trying; don't give up. There is always hope. Keep moving. Keep being kind to others."

He came across as a sincere, sensitive person.

Lightfoot has reckoned that he had written about 200 hundred songs. I asked him about his favourite song, which he pondered for a while and suggested *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. His favourite albums were *East of Midnight* and *Sundown*.

Gordon Lightfoot and Massey Hall in Toronto seem almost synonymous. He performed there first at the Music Festival for Boys at the age of 13, and later in life for over 170 performances. I saw one of those shows. It was vintage Lightfoot – professional,

running through a string of his hits with backup band, adoring fans, and nostalgia at its best.

During my interview he said he was on the road on average 60 times a year, touring Canada, the US, and even into Europe.

He played famous places like The Troubadour in Los Angeles, and Carnegie Hall in New York in 1971.

Ironically, the *New York Times* described his program at Carnegie Hall as "dull, lacking spark and bland", suggesting that his magic must work better in the vast open stretches above our northern border. Perhaps his quiet, Canadian humility was a bit alien to our American neighbours down south.

When asked where is the heart of Canada, Lightfoot pondered the question and replied, "I have been up and down in the Territories, in Northern Quebec, ten times in the Wilderness, many long canoe trips, and into all the cities. It's hard to say where the heart of Canada is. As close as I can get I'll have to say the Great Lakes. I love Toronto, always have. I am Canadian. I prefer to live here in Toronto."

Lightfoot has reportedly been spotted taking a stroll in town, on occasion. His love of Canada probably explains why, unlike a number of Canadian artistes who moved on to the US, Lightfoot returned to his roots.

"I have stayed in Canada because my parents, relatives, friends, children and grandchildren live in Canada. I do sincerely love Canada."

However, he added that Canadians and Americans are like cousins.

When I asked Lightfoot if he was "the heart of Canada", his reply was instantaneous: "That would be rather presumptuous for me to say. There are many, many fine Canadians."

With a question about his "tempestuous" past, he replied, "I don't think I can find too many regrets, perhaps a few. I am in a state of repentance over the last 20 years, not in a religious type of way. I stopped drinking 21 years ago."

When I asked about the wildest thing he had done, he said he had done nothing really outrageous.

"I keep myself on the straight and narrow. I just don't do some of the things I used to do. I have many, many happy moments; many satisfying moments. I am making progress. That's when I am happiest."

With regards to the skill of writing a song, Lightfoot said there are a few ways: "You have to make them like snowflakes – they all have to be different. You have to write different melodies, then find the words to fit the melodies. You can start working from a title. The melody sometimes comes first. Sometimes the chord progression comes first. Everything has to be different from everything before."

I asked: "Can alcohol or drugs enhance the creative process?" He responded, "That could very well be. Alcohol was a great fuel for me for a long time, until it finally caught up with me and started to ruin my life. It was like gasoline for the engine."

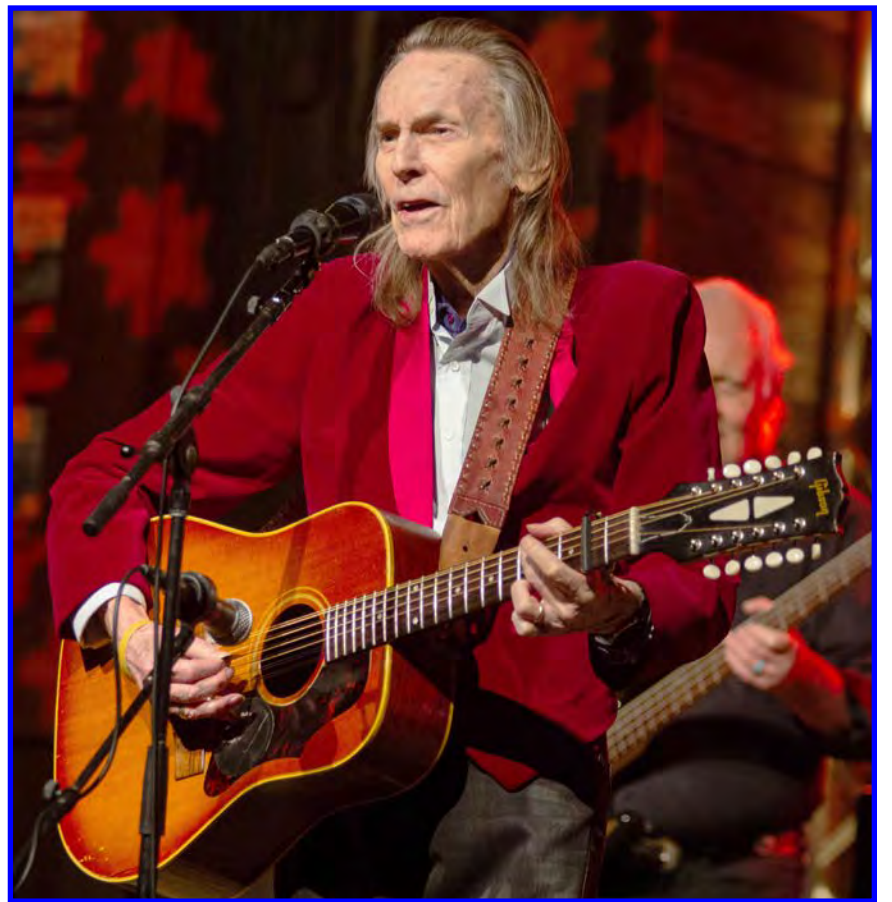
With regard to spirituality and religion, he said that he was raised in a small town, Orillia, and went to church on Sundays. "They put me into the choir, and when I was in the choir, they taught me how to sing."

When asked about the thread of sadness that runs through a number of his songs, he replied, "That is a very good question. I don't know. It finds its way in. I try to be uplifting too. I try to get a balance between the two. Everything I write is not destitute. I try to cover different emotions. I don't want an album of heartfelt sad songs."

Lightfoot has been called "The Canadian Hank Williams" (the singer of sad songs). He has also been compared to Leonard Cohen, another legendary balladeer with a penchant



Bernard Heydorn



Lightfoot in 2018. Republic Country Club, Wikimedia Commons' photo. for sadness.

About his reported "shyness", he said that he had overcome his shyness, if he was ever shy, a long time ago.

"I don't think about that these days," he said.

Perhaps his stage presence can at times be interpreted as "shyness", compared to other flamboyant singers and artistes.

The artistes who influenced him the most were Bob Dylan; Leonard Cohen; Pete Seeger and the Weavers; Peter, Paul, and Mary; Ian and Sylvia; and others.

"I would hate to leave anybody out," he said.

He told me a lot of artistes had covered his songs over the years, including Elvis Presley.

He said a number of young singers and others had been influenced by him. As a Caribbean person, I can think of Emile Straker and the Merryman of Barbados (*The Hands I Love*) and Bing Serrao and the Ramblers (*Beautiful*), originally from Guyana.

Lightfoot's wife and family mean a lot to him; they were very supportive. Also, support came from many fans – cards, letters, well-wishers, correspondence from all over the world. There is reportedly a room full of fan mail in his office.

I asked, "Are fame and fortune all they are cracked up to be? Would you prefer to return to the simple life?"

Lightfoot simply replied, "As long as it paid the bills!"

In a snapshot of "self-descriptors", he did not see himself as a wandering minstrel; neither as an itinerant philosopher, nor a rebel; neither a recluse, nor a manic artiste; but simply a dedicated artiste and family man.

He was also an environmentalist. He worked with David Suzuki and other environmentalists in the Amazon Basin of the Rain Forest in Brazil, looking at dams in the latter part of the 1980s. He said he sang to the chiefs in the bush. This part of the Rain Forest neighbours Guyana.

I asked, "What do you think your place in history will be? Is that important to you?"

He replied, "Not really. It is even less important after you have been out for over six weeks, as I have been with my illness in 2002."

"How would you like to be remembered?"

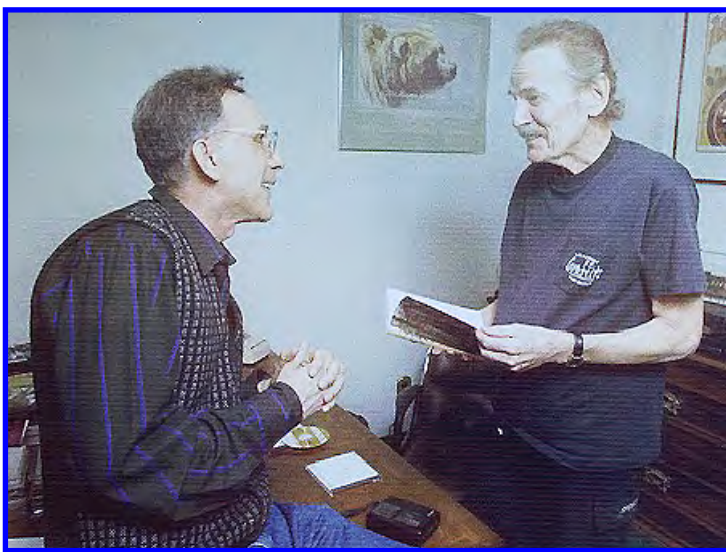
He responded, "As a person who tries to take people's feelings into consideration. To be a kind and considerate human being. That's what I have worked on diligently over the last 20 years. I think I have changed a long time ago. I would have never got a second chance at marriage if I had not changed."

True to his words, Lightfoot even stopped singing the hurtful words of one of his first hit songs, *That's What You Get For Loving Me*.

Lightfoot called me at home a few days after our interview. To my surprise he had already read my book *Unlit Roads* (2000), which I gave to him during our interview. It was a compilation of short stories and poems, which seemed to have struck a chord with him. He wanted to know what happened to my Amazon parrot mentioned in the book. He even picked out one of my poems as lyrically musical. That is Lightfoot for you – in word, and in deed!

Indeed, a legend in his time. A Canadian for all seasons.

If the creeks don't rise and the sun still shines I'll be talking to you.



Lightfoot (at right) with Heydorn, discussing the latter's book, *Unlit Roads*



Erla Harewood-Christopher

## T&T's murder rate continues upward climb

**Port-of-Spain** – The last day of June marked six months since Commissioner of Police Erla Harewood-Christopher assumed office. Following her appointment, Harewood-Christopher promised to bring a reduction to homicides and other violent crimes in the shortest time possible.

However, there has been no reduction. Instead, official statistics from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service last week indicated a total of 286 murders had taken place this year so far, compared to 259 for the same period last year.

Also, the comparative monthly murder rate was said to be up by 44 on June 30, compared to 36 for the same time in 2022.

Commenting on the 27 more murders recorded in the first six months of this year compared to 2022, criminologist Dr Randy Seepersad said, "With 605 murders recorded at the end of 2022, and 259 of them occurring in the first six months, there was a higher proportion of murders in the latter half of the year."

He heads the University of the West Indies' Criminology Department.

Seepersad said looking at current trends, following last year's record number, this year's murder toll could reach as high as

660, or surpass this total, when the statistics were considered.

Acknowledging the increased number of killings in which two and three lives were being lost at once, Seepersad said, "If you have a higher propensity of incidents occurring with multiple murders happening, that itself is a very, very bad sign. This means people are becoming either more callous or more violent, to the point where they don't care about the collateral damage."

Looking back at incidents between 2022 to present in which children were killed by gunmen with disregard and disrespect for human life, Seepersad speculated that this could be a continuing trend going forward.

"It's too soon to say that, but my honest guess would be yes, because the murder statistics have been going up and up, that is the simple fact. And what it suggests in the long term is that it is simply going to get worse if we don't keep doing something about crime," he said.

However, it would be misleading to just look at the murder statistics to determine police performance, he noted.

"You have to look at the broader range of things that the police are involved in," he said.

## Rowley warns voters on electing Griffith

**Port-of-Spain** – National Transformation Alliance leader Gary Griffith came under attack from Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley last week at a public meeting held by the PNM in St James.

At this time, Trinidad and Tobago is in election mode as politicians hit the campaign trail. Local Government Elections will take place on August 14.

Earlier last month, Griffith and the UNC came to an accommodation to undertake the LGE together.

During his speech, Rowley waved a Ministry of Finance Central Audit Committee Report, where it is being alleged that Griffith exceeded the million-dollar limit of contracts while he was Commissioner of Police.

Reading from Page Five of a 46-page document, Rowley alleged that the report started out with "abuse of delegation of authority".

He said: "The Commissioner of Police is an accounting officer, so he too had a limit of one million dollars, this executive summary of this audit starts out with saying 'abuse of delegation of authority'."

Rowley then added more allegations, stating: "Let me read

a couple of lines of it for you. There were numerous instances where single-contract agreements approved were in excess of the Commissioner's delegated authority of one million dollars, and contracts were broken up to bypass the delegated authority of both the Ministerial Tenders Committee and the Central Tenders Board. There were nine instances where contracts were approved internally by the TTPS of which the Commissioner's authority did not exist."

Also, "In particular, on December 30, 2020, the TTPS and a private company entered into a vehicle lease agreement for the lease of 114 vehicles for a period of three years from January 1, 2021, at a cost of [TT] \$51.1 million... His authority limited as Commissioner is one million dollars, but he managed to get the police to enter into a contract under his authority of \$51 million."

Rowley added this was what Griffith "wants the authority to do in the Port-of-Spain Corporation and Diego Martin".

Last month Griffith formed an accommodation with the UNC, which will fight 110 seats in Corporation Electoral Districts, with the NTA contesting 31 seats.

In Port-of-Spain, Griffith will be fighting six seats, while the



Gary Griffith



Keith Rowley

UNC will also be competing for six seats.

In response, Griffith said, "It is not about the PNM. The PNM has done a lot to help develop the country, just as the UNC has done, but... the Rowley-PNM is what needs to go."

He added, "Joining with the 300-thousand-odd UNC supporters means one thing, the annihilation of the PNM democratically to have... Rowley removed from office because what we are seeing now in this country is a democratic dictatorship."

Rowley has since warned voters to not support Griffith, and to ensure that all NTA candidates lose their deposit at the LGE.

## 'Expect rain in the rainy season' - Sinanan

**Port-of-Spain** – There was no "human suffering" from last week's torrential rain and flooding, Works and Transport Minister Rohan Sinanan has said.

"We are in the rainy season, and in the rainy season, we must expect rain," Sinanan told Parliament in rejecting the assertion of extensive flooding exacting a human toll.

At the time, Sinanan was taking issue with an urgent question posed by Oropouche East MP Dr Roodal Moonilal.

Moonilal had asked: "[In] the light of the devastating damage and inconvenience caused by the heavy rainfall, what urgent clearing, cleaning, and drainage works would be undertaken to assist residents, and prevent another incident of destruction and human suffering?"

Sinanan responded: "[Last week] we got some flash flooding and within one hour the water receded. Yes, some debris came down. ...I was in most of the areas where that happened, and it [was] already cleaned. So I don't know where the humans [are] suffering."

He added, "What happened... was that [there was] a large volume of water that was anticipated based on the local and international weather pattern, and what that resulted in was some severe flash flooding in certain parts of the island. The report that I have [is that] no rivers broke their banks..."

Sinanan added that his ministry will continue with the desilting programme and improving the infrastructure in the effort to deal with climate change.



Rohan Sinanan



Roodal Moonilal

## Police audits into ammunition & uniforms

**Port-of-Spain** – Two audits are now underway in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service focused on the arms and ammunition issued to divisions, and into the issuance of police uniforms within the service.

The audits are seeking to determine, among other things, why police items and equipment are being found in the possession of criminals.

Revelation of the audits were made last week by Government Leader Dr Amery Browne in response to a question from UNC Senator Wade Mark in the Senate.

Browne was responding to Mark in the absence of Security Minister Fitzgerald Hinds.

Mark wanted to know what action had been taken by the government to address the increase in the quantity of police equipment being found in the possession of criminals.

As Browne indicated, while pieces of equipment, including items of uniform, had been discovered at crime scenes by the TTPS bearing the word 'police', or containing emblematic markings, these were not necessarily the property of the TTPS.

Nonetheless the TTPS was taking several steps to address the issue, and was being advised by Police Commissioner Erla Harewood-Christopher, he revealed.

These steps included full probes into all cases where such items had been found to determine their ownership and source.

Said Browne: "An audit of all arms and ammunition issued

to divisions, branches, sections and units of the TTPS. Thus far no irregularities have been identified, but the process remains ongoing."

He also announced a review of the TTPS standing orders on distributing uniforms, and ensuring officers were cognisant of the rules on properly securing their kit and uniform.

An audit of all items of police uniforms issued would be concluded in the near future, Browne assured.

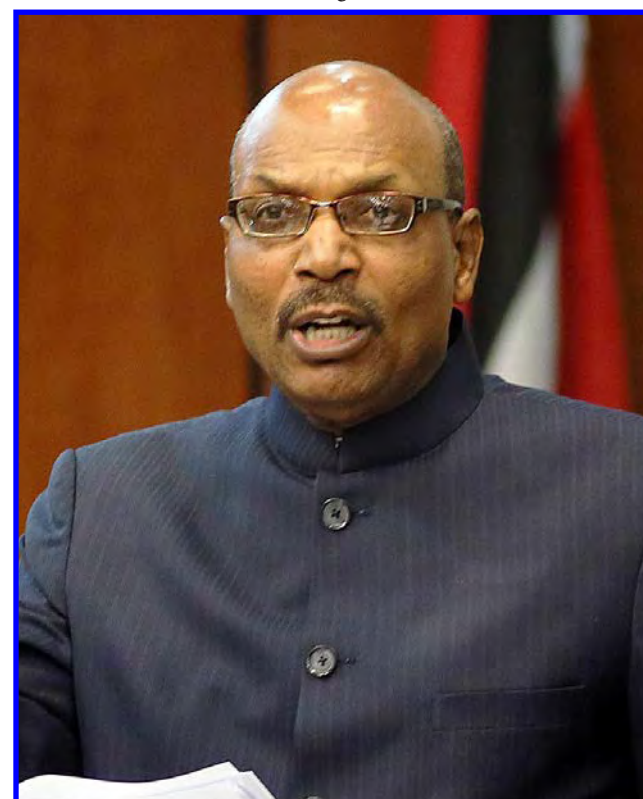
"It is expected that any discrepancies identified by the audit will be thoroughly investigated and forwarded to the [TTPS] Complaints Division for consideration and appropriate disciplinary action as necessary. Additionally, the Commissioner has further advised that instructions have been given for the ascribing of all items of uniform assigned to police officers with their full name and regimental number to facilitate proper identification and tracking of these items in the near future."

Browne also indicated there was yet another measure.

"The TTPS also plans to hold discussions with security companies as it relates to the use of uniforms resembling that of the TTPS," he revealed.

Also, an audit of all arms and ammunition issued to divisions, branches, sections and units of the TTPS was now underway.

Another step being taken was a re-examination of the TTPS' procurement practices relating to the acquisition of firearms and ammunition.



Wade Mark



Victor Hugo Morales Melendez

## Mexican diplomat, local in vehicle accident

**Port-of-Spain** – Insisting he did not threaten to kill Mexico's ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, a Port-of-Spain resident accused of assaulting Victor Hugo Morales Melendez has since issued an apology for his behaviour.

Henry is a resident of Cocorite, a small town west of Port-of-Spain. According to media reports late last week, Henry said he had just purchased a tire for his vehicle when an accident occurred in St James, another town east of Port-of-Spain. The collision caused damage to the vehicle's front right wheel.

According to police reports, a driver pulled out of a parking spot and collided with another vehicle. The man then allegedly came out of his car, pulled the diplomat out of the driver's seat, and threatened him.

It was also reported by Melendez to police that his attacker then took out a piece of iron and struck the roof of his Hyundai Santa Fe.

Henry was remorseful for his actions after being contacted by the media.

"I am very sorry. I didn't know he was an ambassador. I was just real mad because after the incident, he was acting like he wanted to just drive off. I thought [he] was a Venezuelan

because he talking and I not understanding him properly," Henry said.

Henry said he was later informed an article that appeared in the media had reported he had threatened the Mexican ambassador.

"I spend my last money to buy that tire because I didn't want police to give me no ticket, and like this man just pull up on me and hit me and then want to drive off. I admit I was a bit aggressive, and I am sorry. I did take out a piece of iron from the trunk, because I does bend iron, and hit his vehicle," Henry said.

He added he had a beer, but was not intoxicated, just infuriated. He recalled his vehicle being hit in the past with the offenders not stopping after the collisions.

Henry said he only found out later that Melendez was an ambassador from police officers that responded to the accident. He spent an hour at the St James Police Station before being released.

He now has to borrow money to fix his car, he lamented.

"Boss, if you could get that message across to him and tell him I am sorry for my behaviour, I will appreciate that," Henry told reporters.

## Court finds merit to Warner's latest claims

**Port-of-Spain** – Former FIFA vice president Jack Warner has been allowed to take his latest legal challenge to the High Court in his battle against extradition to the US, where he will face a multiplicity of corruption-related charges.

Chief Magistrate Maria Busby Earle-Caddle last week ruled that the seven questions Warner had raised were legally grounded and had merit. She was also critical of the actions of the government of Trinidad and Tobago and the US.

Warner is challenging the constitutionality of an alleged agreement former Attorney General Faris Al-Rawi signed with the US in 2015, before signing off on the authority for the chief magistrate to go ahead with extradition proceedings.

Warner's argument relates to the arrangement between the US and Trinidad and Tobago for extradition and the speciality principle. Both of these, by law, provide that a person who is extradited can be prosecuted or sentenced in the requesting State only in relation to the offences for which extradition was granted, and not for any other crime allegedly committed before the extradition took place.

Chief Magistrate Earle-Caddle said the actions of Al-Rawi lacked consistency. Also, that the agreement should be in writing to ensure the requirements of the Extradition Act were adhered to, and only then can the AG sign the certificate to move forward with the extradition.

In his authority to proceed, Al-Rawi certified there was an arrangement with the US.

"There appears to be colossal misrepresentation on behalf of the team by AG and the requesting State (the US)," Chief Magistrate Earle-Caddle said.

Warner's latest legal challenge was prompted by a freedom of information request for the alleged special arrangement. He

received a response from the Office of the AG saying a search of its Central Authority's records had not uncovered a written version of the arrangements.

Chief Magistrate Earle-Caddle said Warner's application was not frivolous or vexatious, and referred Warner's questions to the High Court for its immediate attention.

She further questioned: "How does one certify something that is possibly non-existent? Is this the new norm where this is a flagrant disregard for what is right? Is this the presumption of regularity that ordinary citizens must now accept? A regularity of whatever is expedient? Surely not a rubber-stamping inimical to the protections guaranteed by our legislation and Constitution."

She emphasised that the law was clear, as the extradition process involved the liberty of citizens.

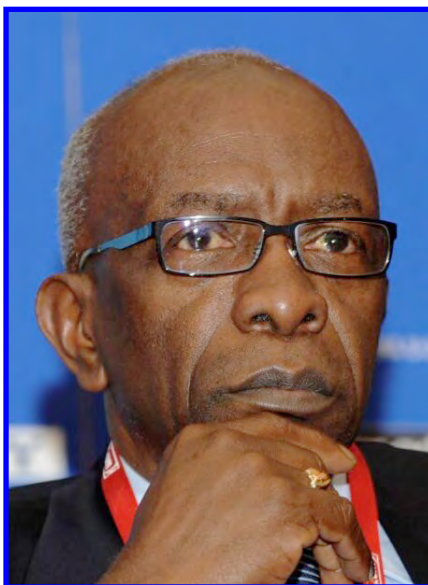
"The end result of extradition is the deprivation of a person's liberty and subjection to a foreign jurisdiction. It is of paramount importance that any process which supports taking away that freedom must adhere strictly to the legal requirements," Chief Magistrate Earle-Caddle said.

She also noted that entering into an agreement was intended to protect those rights. Also, that the burden was on the US to ensure that the speciality agreement was in place, and its absence may result in a breach of a national's rights.

Warner argued that in his case there was none, and Chief Magistrate Earle-Caddle said she was inclined to agree. She said there appeared to be uncertainty that the arrangement existed.

Chief Magistrate Earle-Caddle maintained it was the statutory duty of the Attorney General to ensure the protection of citizens' rights.

"There must be a written copy of the arrangement in existence," she asserted.



Jack Warner

## Nationals exiting banks & ATMs lose (TT) \$1m

**Port-of-Spain** – Nationals leaving banks and ATMs have been robbed of more than (all currency TTD) \$1 million in the past 18 months, statistics from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service have indicated.

More than \$580,000 were stolen in 18 incidents this year, while \$509,245 were stolen in 25 incidents for 2022, totalling more than \$1.06 million. In ten separate incidents, nationals were robbed of \$50,000 or more.

The single largest robbery during that period resulted in the victim losing \$100,000 outside the Masjid-Ul-Mutaqeen Mosque on Munroe Road in April 2022.

The area with the most reported robberies outside of financial institutions is San Juan, where there have been eight robberies. Trincity, Valsayn, and St Augustine have had five robberies each. Of those, the University of the West Indies' St Augustine campus had three robberies, while Trincity Mall, and Valpark, had two robberies each.

Other areas where robberies occurred were Chaguanas and San Fernando, with four robberies each. Two took place at an ATM located at Cipero Street. Tunapuna, Curepe, Penal, Maraval, Arima, Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain, Glencoe and Point Lisas each had one reported robbery in that period.



Curt Simon

As recently as the middle of last month, a 36-year-old Bon Air Gardens resident withdrew \$9,000 from a bank located off Trincity Central Road. Shortly after, he went to the East Gates Mall car park to deposit the cash into another bank.

However, when he parked his vehicle, he was robbed by two armed men. He was also further robbed of \$10,000 in cash, as well as a cell phone.

Following the incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police Curt Simon said TTPS analysts are "drilling down deep" into the upsurge of robberies targeting bank customers.

Since then, Simon said the TTPS made a number of arrests in relation to the robberies. This was the result of a special team acting on a data and intelligence-driven project, and it had already yielded results. This special team was constituted a month ago, he said.

"We have made some arrests... We have made some significant arrests, and persons have been charged," he said.

He also revealed that an arrest had been made in relation to the \$100,000 robbery.

Simon could not say whether these robberies outside financial institutions were a result of criminals being tipped off by bank staff, since investigations were still underway. However, he was positive the TTPS was making inroads.

"We expect to see a reduction in these crimes, but that doesn't mean that because we see a reduction, investigations will come to a halt. The investigations will be completed until we are satisfied that we have eradicated this problem, or reduced it significantly," he said.

Last week the Bankers Association of Trinidad and Tobago said it remains concerned about recent reports of robberies that seem to be related to cash withdrawals from various financial institutions. The association said it has a zero-tolerance policy for any type of criminal activity, and has always placed customers' security as its number one priority.

"Our banks have instituted several safety measures including improvements to the internal technological infrastructure, as well as collaboration with the [TTPS] through BATT's Inter-Bank Security Committee to apprehend any individual who engages in any type of criminal activity against the banks or its customers," it stated in a release.

Additionally, "With regards to the new fraud typology, there have been no shimming incidents across all banks in Trinidad & Tobago. The new chip technology rolled out by all member banks prevents the successful swiping of cards locally."

BATT also urged customers to use online banking platforms; verify the transaction amount before using their card; shield their PINs when using point-of-sale machines and ATMs; and to not share their PINs.

It also advised against leaving debit or credit cards unattended, or out of sight; to avoid making payments to clear any packages promised through interaction with persons on WhatsApp; and to avoid clicking on links in unsolicited emails.

## The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

# Recalling how Noor Jehan & Surendra uplifted our childhoods

By Vidur Dindyal

Most memorable old Hindi film song was *Awaz hai kaha hai*. It was sung by two legends Noor Jehan and Surendra in the 1946 movie *Anmol Ghadi*. I saw it in my childhood, and I remember the song very well. I was in the balcony of the 'Tee-a-taa' [theatre] at Rosignol.

Noor Jehan was a big film actress and singer in my early days. She sang a number of well-known songs. The other singers in those days were Amirbai Karnataki, Shamshad Begum, Suraiya, and Geeta Dutt.

Amirbai Karnataki sang the famous bhajan, a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi, from the 1940 movie *Narsi Bhagat - Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye*.

Her other hit songs were those from the 1943 movie *Kismet*, the 1944 *Rattan*, and of course, *Maar Katari Mar Jana* from the 1947 movie *Shehnai*.

Shamshad Begum is well-known for her song *Mere Piya Gaye Rangoon*, in the 1949 movie *Patanga*. It is a duet sung with C. Ramchandra, who also did the music. It was then the second highest grossing film.

Suraiya was a big actress and singer renowned for many roles, as well as for her songs including *Tu Mera Chand Main Teri Chandni* sung with Shyam in the 1949 movie *Dillagi*, and *Tara Ri Aara Ri Aara Ri Yeh* sung with Raj Kapoor in the 1950 movie *Dastan*.

Geeta Dutt sang a number of songs for the 1951 movie *Baazi*. Her other popular songs, included *Ae Dil Mujhe Bata De* from the 1956 movie *Bhai Bhai*, and *Mera Naam Chin Chin Chu*, picturised by Helen in the 1958 movie *Howrah Bridge*.

Noor Jehan's career spanned more than six decades from the 1930s. She started singing from as early as age six. Her father sent her to learn classical and other forms of music in Calcutta. On finishing her training, she performed in a tented theatre, where she was given the stage-name Noor Jehan. In 1935, she sang a Punjabi song which became a big hit.

In 1942, she played the main lead opposite Pran in the film, *Khandaan*. It was a major success. In 1944, she starred in the movie *Dost*. The two songs from that movie that I like very much were *Badanaam Muhabbat Kaun Kare*, and *Koi Prem Ka De Kar Sandesa*.

From 1945 to 1947, Noor Jehan was one of the biggest film actresses of Indian films. Among her top grossing films were: *Anmol Ghadi* (1946); *Mirza Sahiban* (1947); and *Jugnu* (1947).

In *Mirza Sahiban*, she played opposite Trilok Kapoor, brother of Prithviraj Kapoor. *Jugnu* starred Dilip Kumar. He and Noor Jehan were picturised singing the song *Yahaan Badala Wafa Ka Bewafai*.

*Jugnu* also featured Mohammed Rafi in person, actually



Noor Jehan

singing the song *Woh Apni Yaad Dilaane Ko*.

In 1947 Noor Jehan moved to Pakistan. There she starred in her first Pakistani film *Chan Wey* (1951) as a heroine and playback singer. She and her husband directed this film together, making her the first female director. It became the highest-grossing film in Pakistan that year.

Her second film in Pakistan was *Dupatta* (1952), which was an even bigger success than *Chan Wey*.

In 1963, Noor Jehan gave up acting after a career of 33 years. She made 14 films in Pakistan. She then concentrated on her singing for which she gained another audience for herself. Her song *Mujhse Pehli Si Mohabbat* resounds in my ear whenever I think of Noor Jehan.

Noor Jehan was one of the most influential singers in her day, and consequently received many awards.

She was honoured with the title *Malika-e-Tarannum* in Pakistan, including the *Pride of Performance* in 1965 by the Pakistani government.

She sang a large number of duets with celebrities including Mehdi Hassan and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

She had an understanding and friendship with many singers, including, of course, the unmatched Lata Mangeshkar.

Lata, in commenting on Noor Jehan's vocal range, said she could sing as low and as high as she wanted, and noted that the quality of her voice always remained the same.

Noor Jehan visited India in 1982 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Indian movies. She met Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in New Delhi, and was received by Dilip Kumar and Lata in Bombay.

She also met all her erstwhile heroes and co-stars, including Surendra, Pran, Suraiya, composer Naushad, and others.

...



Surendra

Surendra has a special place in my memory as a film star and singer. He was an impressive personality, tall, and dignified. In Guyana, a relation of my better half was married to someone who was like his double. I never mentioned it to him because he did not see Indian films. It was always a joy whenever he visited our home.

His singing in *Anmol Ghadi*, and the scene where he and Noor Jehan sang the famous song *Aawaz De Kahan Hai*, I can see forever. Other songs in the movie that he sang beautifully were *Woh Yaad Aa Rahe Hain* and *Ab Kaun Hai Mera*.

He starred in the 1948 romantic love triangle Hindi film *Anokhi Ada*. The music composer was Naushad. It was produced by Mehboob Productions, and starred also Naseem Banu, Prem Adib, and Cuckoo - the dancer in *Andaz*.

Naseem Banu was in one of her few films. She is mother of the famous Saira Banu, who later married Dilip Kumar.

I saw this film some years ago in England. I do not remember it in

Guyana.

I like the film for two reasons: one, it pictured Surendra as one of the three stars who was acting; and second, and more enjoyably, singing.

The film also starred Prem Adib of *Bharat Milap* fame. His role was quite different here when compared to *Bharat Milap*, but I felt sympathetic with him in his role, which he played very well.

Surendra sang three very enjoyable songs *Kyun Unhe Dil Diya*; *Jale Na Kyon Parwana* and *Bade Bhole Bhaale Hai*.

The scene of *Kyun Unhe Dil Diya* was engaging. Surendra was singing this romantic song while driving his car slowly behind a bullock cart. Naseem Banu was enjoying his singing, lying on a load of straw in the bullock cart, gently leading the way ahead of the car - very romantic.

## Reality of superstardom a mix of fans, fame, & loneliness - Chakraborty

Actor Mithun Chakraborty is the one who stole the hearts of the audience by dancing his way to our hearts in the 1980s. Chakraborty recently mentioned that at the peak of his career he found himself struggling with the reality that fame not only brought numbers of fans, but also brings feelings of loneliness.

Chakraborty started his acting journey with the film *Mirgayaa* in 1976 and he won his first National Film Award for best actor. He also performed in films such as *Surakksha*, *Sahas*, *Wardast*, *Wanted Boxer*, *Pyar Jhukta Nahi*, *Pyari Bhena*, and many more. But it was when he did *Disco Dancer* that he became a superstar.

The actor was busy shooting films for years. He acted in more than 100 films in the decade. At times he used to shoot four films in a day. Fans gave him a title of 'Dancing Star' and 'Disco Dancer'.

PTI reported the actor saying, "I had never imagined that I would become a superstar. But, when I did become the number one star of the country, I found that it was... Oh my God, an extremely lonely place. It is really, very, very lonely. You are all alone there. It was lonely because everybody thought I was beyond their

reach, I was unattainable."

As Chakraborty grew in his reputation, it started invading his personal space. He was the most wanted star, but everyone was very scared to talk to him.

He added, "Everyone would say that 'Stay away from Dada; he has become too big star'."

Friends were also scared of him. The atmosphere got very weird, he revealed.

"I would wake up, go to shoot, come back and be lonely, while being the biggest star of the country. *Main ek bohut akela aadmi ho gaya tha*. (I had become a very lonely man)," he declared.

In the 1990s Bollywood turned urban, and slowly started letting go of the 1980s masala films led by Chakraborty and the actor Jeetendra, with the support of late music composer Bappi Lahiri.

According to Chakraborty, stardom is not only for a good actor, but one should be a good human being as well. If the actor is not a good person, the fame will

vanish.

"There is no survival without talent. Only your talent can take you ahead, if you have it, you will make it. No one in the world can stop you. A good actor, who is a bad human being,

will have a short life. A bad actor, who is a bad human being, will have no life. A good actor, who is a good human being, will have a long life," he said.

Additionally, "The only magic to hold on to stardom for so long is that a good actor, who is also a good man, will live for long. Your superstardom will vanish in a heartbeat if you are not a good person. Karma will just wait for the right time. No one can escape that."

The multiple National Award-winning actor juggled with both Bollywood and Bengali films, and made his debut on the small screen by the end of the 2000s.

Now he has made his digital debut with the psychological thriller series *Bestseller*. Chakraborty works only on those projects that leave him thinking after he finished reading the script.

"It has to pinch or tickle me. Once I have read the script, and if it hits me, I think I am on the right part. *Bestseller* was one of those. My character in it is funny, unpredictable and sometimes even ruthless," he added.

The actor said his shift to OTT was fueled by the need to keep up with the times. If even today he expects to play a disco dancer, he would be "foolish", Chakraborty said.

He also noted, "I want to go with the time; not swim against the tide. If I think I'm still a *Disco Dancer*, I'll be foolish. So I have to think what kind of roles will suit me now, and the one I can do effortlessly. If OTT is the current time, then I'll have to mould myself like that," said Chakraborty.



Mithun Chakraborty

# Kangana explores the marginalised & 'underbelly' of Bollywood

In a recent launch event in Mumbai, actor Kangana Ranaut unveiled the trailer of her upcoming production, *Tiku Weds Sheru*. The film features acclaimed actors Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Avneet Kaur in the lead roles.

During the event, Kangana expressed her belief that only the stories of successful individuals, the achievers, find their way to the silver screen.

And in unpacking her remark, Kangana shed light on the underbelly of Mumbai, highlighting the darker aspects of the city. Drawing from her own experiences as a struggler in the industry, she shared personal anecdotes, and reflected on the challenges she faced on her path to success.

"There are lakhs and lakhs of people coming to Mumbai every day with a dream. Where do these people go? What happens to them? Some of them run away from their homes. I was in a kind of situation where I had shut all the doors behind me. There was no going back for me," she wondered.

Also, "What happens to people like me? This thought often occurs to me. This was just one incident that happened in my life. Every day I would get rejected while auditioning. One selection changed my life when Anurag Basu had approved of

me. Had that not happened, what would my life be?"

She further added, "All of us, including Nawaz sir, have gone through the grind of those struggling days. Today, we have everything, like stardom and fans, and the world is very kind to us. But we have also seen the other side of Mumbai, of Bollywood, and the underbelly of Bollywood, as we call it the shady audition offices and offers."

*Tiku Weds Sheru* started streaming on Amazon Prime Video on June 23.

Kangana was last seen in *Dhaakad*, which also featured Arjun Rampal and Divya Dutta. The film performed poorly at the box office.

Currently, Ranaut is awaiting the release of her next film, which is also her second directorial venture, *Emergency*. Based on the 1977 Indian Emergency, the ensemble star cast also stars Anupam Kher, Shreyas Talpade, Mahima Chaudhry and Milind Soman in pivotal roles.

It was slated to release on October 20. However, to avoid a clash with Tiger Shroff and Kriti Sanon's *Ganapath*, Kangana cancelled the release. Ranaut has said that she will announce the release date a month prior along with its trailer in a Tweet.



Kangana Ranaut

## Priyamani speaks to limiting onscreen intimacy, kissing to a peck on the cheek

Actor Priyamani recently discussed her no-kiss policy in contracts, and asserted that she is uncomfortable about kissing another man as she is answerable to her husband. She said she had many such project offers which required her to do intimate scenes. However, she added that it is her personal choice to avoid anything more than a kiss on the cheeks onscreen.

Elaborating further, she added that she feels it is a responsibility from her end. Even when she was seeing her husband, she never got any role where she had to kiss somebody, and even if she did, she would definitely tell them that she is awkward.

Priyamani made her acting debut with the 2003 Telugu film *Evare Atagaadu*. She rose to fame with the romantic drama *Paruthiveeran* in 2007, and received a National Film Award for Best Actress. In Bollywood, she first starred in Mani Ratnam's *Raavan*, and is best known



Priyamani says she is answerable to husband Mustafa Raj for her special dance song 1 2 3 4 Get on the Dance Floor from *Chennai Express*, followed by *The Family Man*. She will be next seen in *Maidaan* and *Jawan*.

Priyamani plays the onscreen wife of Ajay Devgn in *Maidaan*, a film based on the golden era of Indian football (1952-1962). Ajay plays the legendary Indian football coach Syed Abdul Rahim. She is not doing intimate scenes onscreen.

Talking about her no-kiss policy, *News18* reported Priyamani saying, "I won't kiss onscreen. That would be a no for me. I know it is just a role, and it is my job; but on a personal note, I would not be comfortable if I have to kiss another man onscreen, simply because I have to be answerable to my husband."

She added that her show *His Storyy* initially required her to perform an intimate scene with actor Satyadeep Mishra, which she was not comfortable with.

She said, "I'm not comfortable with anything more than a kiss on the cheek. There were many projects that came my way that had such scenes, and I told them that I am not comfortable with it."

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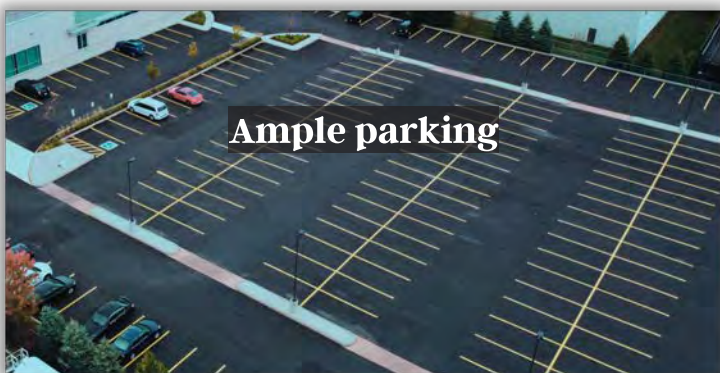
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Ruturaj Gaikwad



Yashasvi Jaiswal



Mukesh Kumar

## Pujara dropped from Indian squad for WI tour

As was anticipated, India's selectors have dropped Cheteshwar Pujara from India's squad for their two-match Test series against the West Indies, the cricket website *Cricbuzz* reported last week.

However, the 16-man squad has included uncapped Ruturaj Gaikwad, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and Mukesh Kumar for what will be India's first assignment in the 2023-2025 World Test Championship cycle.

As *Cricbuzz* reported earlier, Pujara holding on to his place in the side was set to be a matter of debate among the selectors. He is India's long-standing No. 3 batsman, and is now 35 years old. Also, he has scored only one century in 52 innings (28 Tests) since 2020 at an average of only 29.69.

While he registered 11 half-centuries, his average further drops to 26.31 when his scores of 90 and 102\* in the Chittagong Test in December 2022 are excluded.

This is the second time in two years that Pujara has been dropped. The last one was during the home series against Sri Lanka in 2022.

However, with his bat delivering in the county circuit, Pujara was back in the India fold for the fifth and final Test against England at Edgbaston, and was able to hold on until now.

Pujara's replacement is likely going to be Gaikwad. He plays domestically for Maharashtra, and was back-up for the WTC final before he missed out on the trip owing to personal reasons.

Gaikwad was replaced by Mumbai's Jaiswal, whose call-up then and inclusion now is in recognition of a bumper recent first-class season, during which he scored 1,169 runs across nine games, including five hundreds.

Alongside Gaikwad, Jaiswal remains a potential No. 3 candidate for India, *Cricbuzz* reported.

While Virat Kohli held on to his place despite ordinary

returns in the last WTC cycle, Ajinkya Rahane returned to the squad as the vice-captain of the side after making a notable impact in the WTC final against Australia at The Oval.

Also, Rahane had been another big name dropped for the home Test series against Sri Lanka last year, and his selection for the WTC final was only possible due to injuries to regular players.

Mohammed Shami is not on the squad, and is being rested from both Tests and the ODIs from back-to-back IPL assignments. During his extended stint on the IPL, he featured in 17 games, and the WTC final.

Umesh Yadav was dropped after his wayward ways in the WTC final, which opened the doors for Navdeep Saini, whose last Test was the epic Gabba victory over two years ago.

Bihar-born Kumar was one of the standbys during the WTC final, and has been one of Bengal's leading seamers for some time. He took 22 wickets in the 2022-2023 Ranji season, and helped Bengal reach the final.

A seam bowler, he has taken 149 wickets in 38 first-class matches, and could get an entry as India look to build towards the final at Lord's in 2025.



Cheteshwar Pujara

India also continue to keep faith in left-arm seamer Jaydev Unadkat, who was a late addition to the squad for the two-Test series in Bangladesh last year. He came in as a replacement for the then-injured Mukesh, and even went on to add to his lone Test cap after a gap of 12 years.

Unadkat is also a part of the ODI squad against the WI, keeping in mind the upcoming World Cup back home.

Ishan Kishan remains one of the wicket-keepers in the squad, with the management seeming to keep their faith in their first-choice pick in K.S. Bharat.

India play their Tests against the West Indies in Dominica from July 12-16, and in Trinidad from July 20-24.

## WI women get Samuels as interim head coach

Cricket West Indies last week announced the appointment of Robert Samuels as the interim head coach for the West Indies women's team for the CG United One Day International series and West Indies T20 International series against Ireland in Saint Lucia.

Courtney Walsh was removed as West Indies women's coach in April.

Samuels is a former Jamaica captain and West Indies batsman, and played six Test matches and eight ODIs in addition to 106 first-class matches and 77 List A matches.

His most recent role was as assistant coach with the West Indies women's team.

Speaking on Samuels' appointment, CWI's High Performance manager Graeme West, said, "Robert brings continuity and stability to get the team through this period. He has great knowledge of the players and the women's game in general and strong knowledge of the support staff, so it's almost a seamless transition with Robert coming in as interim head coach."

He added, "He has his own ideas and is trying to implement them now as interim head coach as opposed to assistant coach. He has made a good impact and a start over the last few days, and I'm sure it will continue throughout the series."

The interim assistant coaches are former West Indies spin bowler Ryan Austin and Steve Liburd, the former Leeward Islands batsman and captain.

Liburd is the head coach of the West Indies Women's Under-19 Rising Stars.

The West Indies 18-member squad is now playing a three-match T20I series, which ends on July 8.



Robert Samuels

## Bascombe replaces Adams as CWI's director of cricket

Former West Indies batter Miles Bascombe has been appointed as Cricket West Indies' new director of cricket on a three-year contract. Bascombe will take over from Jimmy Adams, who leaves the position after six years.

Bascombe played one T20I for West Indies in 2011, and was the men's selector at CWI between 2019-2021, and the technical director at the Windward Islands Cricket Board over the last two years.

"Following a thorough recruitment process, Miles stood out to the panel with his skills, experience, and intimate knowledge of our cricket system, especially at Territorial Board level," said CWI CEO Johnny Grave in a board release.

Grave added, "His passion and understanding of the game at all levels are outstanding. He is a critical thinker with a strong analytical and strategic mindset, which will be hugely beneficial to us as we embark on formulating our new four-year strategic plan. I have no doubt he will hit the ground running, and will relish the challenge before us to develop higher standards and better structures within our cricket system."

Bascombe was appointed at the board of directors meeting held last Friday at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua.

"West Indies Cricket is at a critical stage with an urgent need to improve performances," Bascombe said.

He added, "We have made significant progress with establishing a central High-Performance system that now needs to be rolled out across all of our Territories. I am looking forward to working as a member of the CWI senior leadership team and closely with the Territorial Boards to bring about the necessary improvements that I am confident will lead to more success by implementing a robust system based on achieving world-class standards and by driving a winning culture."

Bascombe played for Windward Islands and Combined Campuses and Colleges while featuring in all three formats in domestic cricket. He played 24 first-class games, 26 List-A matches and 25 T20s.

He will take up his new role on August 1. Until then, CWI high performance manager Graeme West will act as the interim director of cricket.



Miles Bascombe



A sombre Rovman Powell leads WI off the field after their humiliating defeat by Scotland

## West Indies out of World Cup after loss to Scotland

West Indies sank to their newest low last week after failing to qualify for the One-Day International World Cup for the first time in history.

The team's embarrassing exit came courtesy of a less than mediocre batting display, which saw them dismissed for a meagre 181 from 43.5 overs against Scotland in Harare, Zimbabwe.

In reply, the Scots quashed all hopes of the West Indies' World Cup chances by executing a match-winning performance of 185 for 3, with just over six overs remaining.

While the loss was a bitter pill, it was sweet revenge for Scotland. In 2019, the team was on the losing end following a controversial umpiring decision against West Indies. The decision opened the door into the World Cup for West Indies.

Saturday's defeat capped a dismal campaign that saw coach,

Daren Sammy, describing the West Indies as the worst fielding team in the qualifying tournament.

Team captain Shai Hope was also critical of his team's performance, saying, "We need to look at all areas. We have let ourselves down at this tournament. We have to go one way from here and that is up. I don't think we gave that 100 percent effort every single time. We only did it in patches."

He also noted that the team's build-up to the tournament was not ideal either.

"The preparation needs to be better. We can't expect to be an elite team without that backing from [the cricket board] at home," Hope said.

West Indies still have two qualifier matches remaining against Oman today, and against Sri Lanka on Friday.



Heather Knight

## Racism & elitism 'unsurprising' says Knight

The findings of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket were "unsurprising", OBE and English captain Heather Knight said last week.

As reported by the *Guardian*, Knight also indicated the hope that the report will enable cricket to "lead the way in terms of being more equitable, diverse, and inclusive".

The ICEC report was released last week, and noted the "routine marginalisation" of women's cricket in England, while calling for a fundamental recalibration, including the introduction of equal pay at the international level by 2030.

It also found "widespread" discrimination in English and Welsh cricket.

"As a group of England Women cricketers we feel very strongly that the game needs to keep moving forward. We want to be a key part of that," Knight said.

Knight added that sustainability was key in the light of concerns that equal pay may be unattainable within a short time-frame.

"The priority is getting the structures in place to give equal opportunity, to give any young girl exactly the same opportunities to be a professional cricketer as a young boy has," she said.

Meanwhile, the *British Broadcasting Corporation* reported her saying that while cricket has made progress, it still "a long way to

go" following the revelations contained in the report.

Knight said: "I started out playing men's club cricket and being asked: 'Do you do the ironing for the men when you're finished?' Now I lead my team-mates out in front of a near-full house with 85,000 tickets sold for the whole series. Cricket has come far, but still has a long way to go."

The 317-page report, produced by the ICEC, found racism, sexism, classism, and elitism in the sport in England and Wales. Knight was among those who submitted evidence to the ICEC.

When asked if she believed it was realistic to expect the report's 44 recommendations to be delivered by cricket's stakeholders, Knight was guarded with her response.

"Potentially. Working towards them is very important. To all of us, it hasn't been a surprise what's been in there, about women's sport in particular. I think having done this report, cricket can lead the way in being more equitable, more diverse, and more inclusive," she said.

Additionally, "In terms of the women's game, the priority is getting the structures in place to give equal opportunity – to have a young girl that gets the same opportunity as a young boy, that is in terms of facilities, coaching, support, whatever it might be. Getting that pathway right and professional structure in the right place is going to make the women's game sustainable."



Ben Stokes

## Stokes 'deeply sorry' for victims of racism, sexism

England men's captain Ben Stokes told the UK media last week he was "deeply sorry" for those who experienced racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in English cricket.

At the same time, *The Guardian* reported him saying that the game needs to be more inclusive and diverse.

Stokes was commenting on the 317-page Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket report. It found, among other things, that racism was "entrenched", and women are treated as "subordinate" to men.

"To the people involved in the game who have been made to feel unwelcome or unaccepted in the past, I am deeply sorry to hear of your experiences," he said from a prepared statement.

He added, "Cricket is a game that needs to celebrate diversity

on all fronts, because without diversity, this game would not be where it is today. As a sport, we need to learn from past mistakes, and do all we can to make people feel safe and be themselves at every level. I have been an England player since 2011, and I feel very fortunate to have been a part of some incredibly diverse teams, and love how everyone has a different story to tell."

Stokes also noted that cricket in the UK needed to "go further and be more inclusive and diverse".

He added, "[The] game I love – and millions worldwide love – should be enjoyed without fear of discrimination or judgment, whether that be due to your upbringing, race, or gender."

The ICEC report was based on evidence from more than 4,000 people across recreational and professional cricket. It was also critical of the elitism and classism in the sport.

## Cricket Schedule

(ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday July 5, 2023

Afghanistan tour of Bangladesh, 2023  
Bangladesh vs Afghanistan, 1st ODI, Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Sta., Chattogram, 11:00 AM  
ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifiers 2023

Oman vs West Indies, Super Sixes, Match 7, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 9:00 AM

Uganda tour of Namibia, 2023

Namibia vs Uganda, 1st T20I, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 2:00 PM

Thursday July 6, 2023

ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifiers 2023  
Netherlands vs Scotland, Super Sixes, Match 8, Queens Sports Club, Bulawayo, 9:00 AM  
TBC vs TBC, 9th Place Play-off, Takashinga Sports Club, Harare, 9:00 AM  
The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 1, Headingley, Leeds, 11:00 AM

Uganda tour of Namibia, 2023

Namibia vs Uganda, 2nd T20I, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 2:00 PM

Friday July 7, 2023

ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifiers 2023  
Sri Lanka vs West Indies, Super Sixes, Match 9, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 9:00 AM  
The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 2, Headingley, Leeds, 11:00 AM

Inter-Insular Men's T20I Series 2023

Saturday July 8, 2023

Afghanistan tour of Bangladesh, 2023  
Bangladesh vs Afghanistan, 2nd ODI, Z.A.C. Stadium, Chattogram, 11:00 AM  
The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 3, Headingley, Leeds, 11:00 AM

Uganda tour of Namibia, 2023

Namibia vs Uganda, 3rd T20I, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 2:00 PM

Sunday July 9, 2023

ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifiers 2023  
TBC vs TBC, Final, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 9:00 AM  
The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 4, Headingley, Leeds, 11:00 AM

Uganda tour of Namibia, 2023

Namibia vs Uganda, 4th T20I, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 2:00 PM

Monday July 10, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 5, Headingley, Leeds, 11:00 AM

Tuesday July 11, 2023

Afghanistan tour of Bangladesh, 2023, Bangladesh vs Afghanistan, 3rd ODI, Z.A.C. Stadium, Chattogram, 11:00 AM  
Pakistan tour of Sri Lanka, 2023

TBC vs Pakistan, 2-day Practice Match, Day 1, TBC, TBC, 10:00 AM

Uganda tour of Namibia, 2023

Namibia vs Uganda, 1st unofficial ODI, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 09:30 AM

Wednesday July 12, 2023

Pakistan tour of Sri Lanka, 2023

TBC vs Pakistan, 2-day Practice Match, Day 2, TBC, TBC, 10:00 AM

India tour of West Indies, 2023

West Indies vs India, 1st Test, Day 1, Windsor Park, Roseau, Dominica, 10:00 AM

Thursday July 13, 2023

India tour of West Indies, 2023

West Indies vs India, 1st Test, Day 2, Windsor Park, Roseau, Dominica, 10:00 AM

Uganda tour of Namibia, 2023

Namibia vs Uganda, 2nd unofficial ODI, UCC Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM

Friday July 14, 2023

Afghanistan tour of Bangladesh, 2023  
Bangladesh vs Afghanistan, 1st T20I, Sylhet District Stadium, Sylhet, 3:00 PM  
India tour of West Indies, 2023

West Indies vs India, 1st Test, Day 3, Windsor Park, Roseau, Dominica, 10:00 AM



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## Mississauga For Sale \$1,588,000

Location!  
Location! Pride of ownership move-in ready detached 4+1 spacious bdrms, 4 washrooms on quiet street. Freshly painted, 6 parking spaces, hardwood floors, LED lighting, W/O to an entertaining deck & beautiful landscaped backyard w/exquisite seasonal floral gardening. Sep entrance to newly reno open concept bsmt w/custom kitchen, quartz countertop, potlights, porcelain tiles, vinyl floor & much more. Close to major hwy's & all amenities. Walking distance to Square One.



## Oshawa For Sale \$824,900

Location! Location! Location!  
Fully reno. 3+1 bdrms, 2 full bthrm (+1 half bthrm) in family friendly neighbourhood in the lakeview area of Oshawa. Main flr has: hardwood floors thru-out, open concept w/upgraded ktchn w/ large eat-in island, granite countertops & all new S/S appls (2022). Open concept lvngrm flows seamlessly to private backyard w/ deck. Bsmt has engineered laminated flooring thru-out, large open concept lvng/rec. area, bdrms w/ private ensuite (2022), sep. laundry area w/brand new washer & dryer (2022). Upper flr has 3 large-sized bdrms w/full bath (2022), close to all amenities; walking distance to schools, parks, trails & shopping. Short drive to the beach. Don't miss opportunity to own one of the few detached homes in this neighbourhood.



## FOR SALE HALIBURTON \$584,999

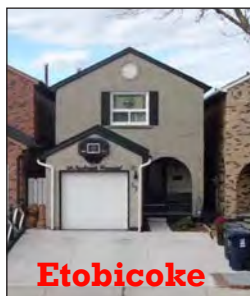
Welcome to one of highlands east, fully renovated (2010) three bedrooms all-season cottage with one full washroom, open concept dining/kitchen, & living area with wood fireplace & potlights. Relax on two huge decks and enjoy nature's beauty at your doorsteps. This spacious lot offers lots of parking spaces, 1 fully insulated natural pine bunkie, lots of storage spaces (5 sheds), and beautiful landscaping with a firepit. Steps to Tamarack lake for swimming, fishing, and canoeing. Minutes to the town of Gooderham.



## For Sale \$999,900

Family Friendly Neighbourhood, Walking Distance To Schools & Parks.

**SOLD \$350,100 OVER ASKING PRICE**



**Etobicoke**

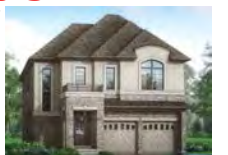
## Oshawa For Sale \$719,990

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



## Belmont Newcastle Starting @ \$800,000s

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



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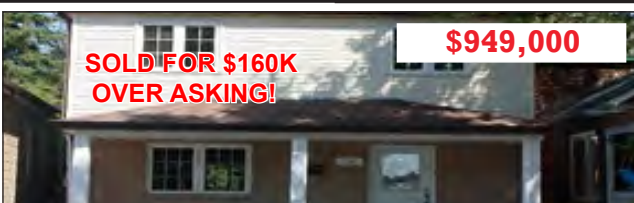
## CityPointe Heights starting @ High 400s

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



**Essa For Lease \$2,995**

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



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

## Narrative Condos

STARTING FROM LOW \$300s



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



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