



# CANADIAN SUPERBILT SHUTTERS AND BLINDS



Providing smart motorized Window Coverings from Hunter Douglas, Altex/SunProject  
Provider of Hardwood Flooring. Visit our Showroom at 1571 The Queensway, Etobicoke, Ontario  
Beautifying homes one window at a time through light control and energy efficiency.

John Persaud, CEO B: (416) 201-0109 • C: (416) 239 2863 • sales@superbilt.com • www.superbilt.com

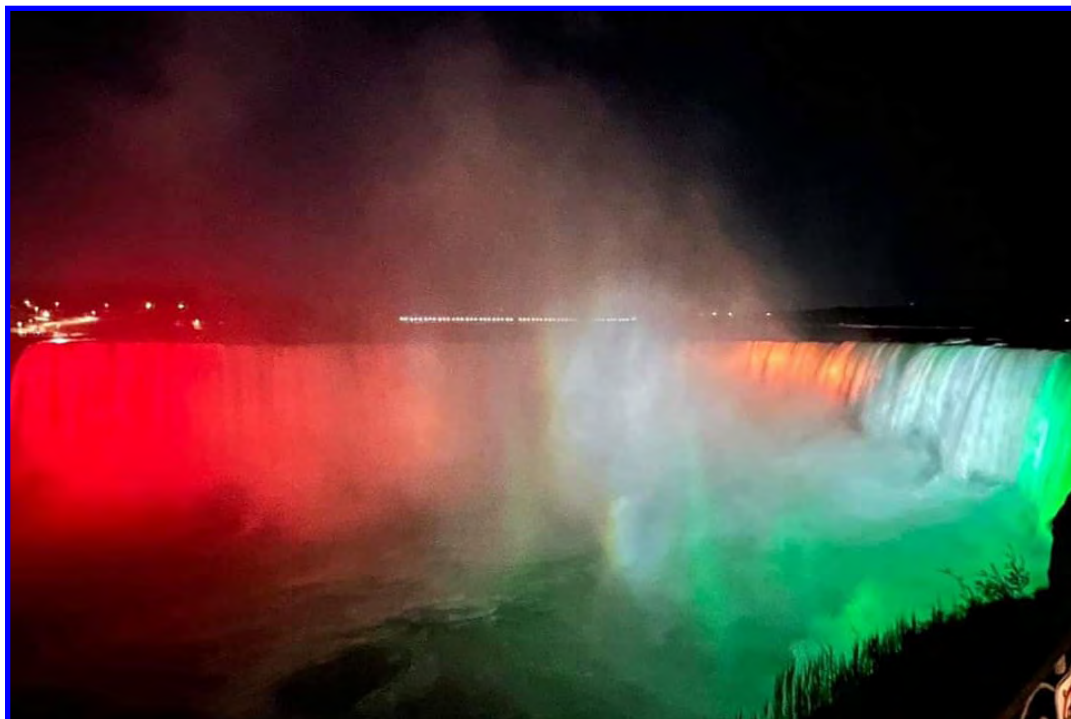


KEEPING ALIVE THE TIES THAT BIND

NOW IN OUR 40<sup>TH</sup> YEAR: 1983 - 2023

# INDO CARIBBEAN WORLD

Vol. 40 • No 19 • June 7, 2023 • Tel: 905-738-5005 • 312 Brownridge Dr. Thornhill, ON L4J 5X1 • indocaribbeanworld.com • indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com



Niagara Falls lit up with the colours of the Golden Arrowhead on the evening of May 26 in celebration of Guyana's 57th Independence anniversary. The occasion was also a solemn one, with the illumination a tribute to the 20 victims of the May 21 dormitory fire at the Mahdia Secondary School. The resplendent colours of the national flag on the Falls also recognised the bravery of first responders on the night of the tragic Mahdia fire. *Guyana High Commission Facebook photo. See story on Page 15.*



The Consulate General of Guyana in Toronto held a Candlelight Service on May 30 for the victims of the Mahdia fire. In attendance were community leaders & members of the diaspora. In photo above, also in attendance were parents of Guyana's President Irfaan Ali – at centre is father Mohamed Osman Ali, & far right, mother, Bibi Shariman Ali; left to right is Razia Khan, Mala Harripersad, & Nadira Samwaru, second from right.

## Majestic Brampton Triveni Mandir officially opened

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

**Brampton** – The Brampton Triveni Mandir was officially opened late last month with its founders and leader reaffirming commitment to the community, the GTA, and Canada through religious guidance, education, language, music, and the arts.

The auspicious inauguration event took place on May 27, and was attended by religious and community leaders, government officials, and thousands of devotees who were enchanted by the 50,000-square-foot mandir.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony that officially opened the mandir was the culmination of three years of dedicated construction and development.

Sister to the Bartica Triveni Mandir in Guyana, Brampton Triveni flows out of a similar confluence of commitment by the faithful to religious practice and its many traditions.

The name 'Triveni' refers to the meeting of three sacred rivers in India, The Ganga, Yumuna, and Saraswati. It is out of this sacred site of confluence in India on which Bartica has built a similar foundation in Guyana, with its three sustaining rivers being the Essequibo, the Cuyuni, and the Mazaruni.

And it is out of this flow of faith and practice from Bartica where its sister mandir, Brampton



The majestic 50,000 square feet Brampton Triveni Mandir

Triveni, now draws its inspiration, meaning, and foundation here in Canada.

Speaking with *Indo-Caribbean World* following the opening ceremony, head pandit of Brampton Triveni, Dr Yudhishthir Dhanrajh, said the mandir "will be focusing on religious and community events throughout the year, and classes such as language, music, and arts."

He added that Brampton Triveni Mandir will also be covering all aspects of education and religion. Dr Dhanrajh is also a distinguished scholar with a doctorate in Sanskrit.

During his address, one of the mandir's founders, Pandit Munesh Dhanrajh, reaffirmed the benefits derived from faith, commitment, and determi-

nation to a vision for the future.

"Whatever you want to do, put the name of God in front, and start this journey, and it will come through. Whichever form you choose God in, whether it be Allah... Christ... Buddha... Guruji, always put Him in front, and it will come positive," he said.

Pandit Dhanrajh then spoke to the connected sequence of historical events that led to the Triveni Mandir rising upwards to stand with majesty and prestige among the many other religious buildings inhabiting Brampton.

"Do not wait for tomorrow to start what you can do now... In 1991 I came to Canada as a visitor, and went to Vishnu mandir... I was very amazed; [there were] so many Hindus in Canada," he stated.

According to Pandit Dhanrajh, the thought crossed his mind whether it was possible to build a mandir to meet the growing needs of Hindus here in Canada.

His next visit to Canada was in 1999 as an investor; and then in 2008, when he returned to Brampton.

"In Brampton, we were searching for places for a temple," Pandit Dhanrajh said.

However, his determination began waning, and

**See Page 14: Faith, commitment**

## LIFE INSURANCE



Paul Ram, Life & Investment Broker

### MONEY FREEDOM INC.

AGE	\$100,000 M/F	\$250,000 M/F
30	10.00/09.09	13.73/11.70
35	11.00/09.90	15.30/13.05
40	12.78/11.70	19.13/16.43
45	16.02/13.59	25.88/19.80
50	22.05/17.73	36.88/26.65
55	27.27/20.43	56.03/40.95
60	39.69/28.62	88.65/61.43
65	62.28/43.20	142.20/94.50

Also offered: \*Non Medical & Mortgage Insurance \*No Load Funds \*No Penalty RESP \*Critical Illness \*Universal Life \*Dental & Drug Plans \*Disability. (E&O)  
Companies represented: Assumption, BMO, Canada, Empire, Equitable, Foresters, Industrial Alliance, Manulife, RBC.

Instant quote online: [www.moneyfreedom.ca](http://www.moneyfreedom.ca)  
Tel: 416.414.2204



# ALI'S ROTI

\* Eat In or Take Out \* We also Cater

Specialising in West Indian Dishes - Trinidad Style Cooking

1446 Queen St. W. Toronto  
(1/2 Block East of Lansdowne,  
North side, W. of Dufferin)

Only HALAL Meat Served

Tel: 416-532-7701

# JAY BRIJPAUL

416-418-BRIJ (2745)



## Advance Selling System

- House matching services
- Mass email to prospective Buyers
- Targeted Social Media Advertising
- 3-D virtual tours
- Floor plans
- Live streaming
- Electronic Signature
- We take all precautions



**\$789,900**

### A Modern Touch!

Spacious 2-storey freehold townhome designed for happy living! Open concept welcomes space & features kitchen w/sep b/fast area, mn flr laundry & large primary room with sitting area, ensuite wrm & W/I closet! Bsmt finished with beautiful rec room that can be used as a gym, office, or 2nd family room!



**\$699,900**

### Well Kept Home

Features large lot with 10-car driveway & double car garage with 220 volt outlet! About 25 mature fruit trees, large heated solarium, oversized kitchen & solarium-style dining room. Also, large rec room with wood burning stove & full washroom! The basement is finished with additional bedroom!



**\$1,700,000**

### Smooth, Smart & Rambling

This home has two main bedrooms with doors leading to a large open balcony overlooking the park. Impressive kitchen with skylight, granite counter & dining room that overlooks the family room. Also features two self-contained suites with separate entrance in the basement. Each suite features 2 bedrooms!



**\$2,000,000**

### W-O-W

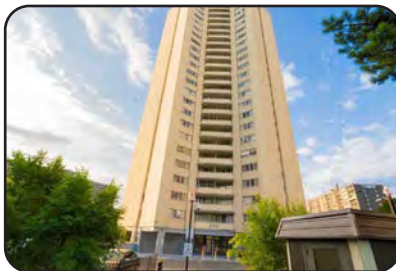
This home is on about 0.6 acre land. Features a 7-car garage/workshop with high ceilings, gas heating & 220 volts for welding + a 13' door for a truck. Ideal for a home business & a great property for redevelopment. Enjoy this sprawling 4 bedroom home while running your home-based business.



**\$469,900**

### A Touch of City!

Spacious 2 bedroom unit has gleaming laminate floors, spacious kitchen w/bountiful storage, open concept combined liv/din room walks out to open balcony with magnificent view of city's skyline. Large mirrored closets in both bedrms & hallway with lots of storage potential. Close to highways, public transit & amenities - best location in town!



**\$349,900**

### Spacious Suite!

Roomy suite with a lovely view! Features an open concept living & dining room, a large balcony, laundry room & underground parking. Close to public transit, amenities, & highways. Great location!



**\$845,000**

### Live in Luxury!

Show-stopper det. bungalow w/ modern upgrades & features! Includes custom floor plan w/expanded kitchen area, 8-foot kitchen island, stylish gas fireplace w/natural Eramosa stone finish, whole home dehumidifier & more. Engineered handwork in main living area boasts quiet floor systems.



**LEASED \$2,250**

### Bright & Spacious!

This modern dwelling features LED lights, laminate floor, quartz counters, new appliances & central air. You will enjoy the large kitchen & modern washroom. Boasts plenty of natural light. Close to Hwy 400 & major plazas and schools. Tenant to pay their own gas, hydro, & 30 percent water.

**TheBrij.com**

**3500+ HOMES**

\* Sales mean both buyer and seller transactions from 1990 to 2016, Team Sales combined.

**Jay Brijpaul, Broker, FRI**

Direct: 416-418-2745 (BRIJ)  
Office: 416-745-2300 ext 5292  
96 Rexdale Blvd., Toronto M9W 1N7

**RE/MAX**

West Realty Inc. Brokerage  
Independently Owned and Operated



**Anjie Brijpaul, MA**  
Broker

Office 416.745.2300

Fax 416-745-1952

anjiebrijpaul@gmail.com





Attendees at the moving, joyful, & nostalgic METC reunion enjoy the company of former Principal Satya Jiwan Sawh (seated left, front row), & former Vice Principal Mohamed Yusuf (seated at centre); third from left, second row, is Imdadul Islamic Centre's General Secretary Osman Khan. Photo by Ramesh Ramkalawan.

## Muslim Education-Brickdam holds successful reunion

By Hazrat Haniff

Former Mathematics Teacher and Principal of METC

Muslim Education Trust College of Guyana held a reunion on May 27 at the Bombay Palace Banquet Hall in Brampton. This was followed the next day with a picnic at G. Ross Lord Park in Toronto.

Alumni attended the event from as far as England and various parts of the US and Canada.

I was ably assisted by my working committee in New York, along with Osman Khan and Aubrey Carrega in Canada.

This group planned and executed the entire event leading to a very successful reunion.

Former Principal Satya Jivan Sawh and Founding Principal Mohamed Yusuf were in attendance. In spite of their age-related difficulties, they made every effort to attend.

The main event consisted of a program in which both principals were recognised and honoured for the roles they played in

the all-round development of students.

The atmosphere became very emotional when both principals addressed the gathering and described various hallmarks and milestones.



Former principal Satya Jiwan Sawh of METC (left to right, front row), with former Vice Principal Mohamed Yusuf (centre), & former student, Vilma DaSilva. In back row are Sawh's daughter, Griha Sawh, & Yusuf's daughter, Nadra Solaiman. Photo by Aubrey Carrega.

Yusuf, with his normal thunderous voice, relived some of his experiences and delivered a very emotional prayer. He beseeched God's blessings for all ex-teachers and ex-students who passed away.

Lyn Spooner also led the gathering in prayers for the children who tragically passed away during the recent fire in Guyana.

Several speakers, mainly from the alumni, reflected on the history of the school and their classroom experiences. Several teachers were recognised for their pedagogical skills, which led to very successful instructional programs and high student achievement.

It was a most heartwarming event filled with smiling faces and nostalgia. All who attended deserve commendation for their participation in this most memorable event.



The 2022-2023 Metro All Fours League ended recently with team 416 emerging as the Grand Champions. Team 416 were led by captain Miguel Maestre, who took the players to a 10 & 7 record to lead the West Division. The final was played against JB Gamblers. In the Best of the Rest, Tough Guys came from behind for an exciting finish against Friends. East Division saw its number one seeded team United Youth eliminated in the first round of the playoffs. West Division winners Untouchables were eliminated in the second round by team 416, which saved their best for the playoffs. In photo, 416 Captain Miguel Maestre (left) & Vice Captain Nekesha Caesar proudly display the trophy following the win. Photo by Russell Lutchman.

### DENTISTRY

## DR. NAR DALJEET

## DR. NIKHIL DALJEET



Ask us about our:

- Dental Implants (from start to finish)
- Invisalign (Misaligned Teeth)
- Snore Guard

**DENTAL EMERGENCIES ALWAYS WELCOME**

Servicing our community for over 30 years.  
Now two locations to serve you better

2942 Finch Avenue East, Scarborough, Ontario  
(At Victoria Park) Village Square Plaza (Ground Floor)  
**416-492-3077 • www.tddental.ca**

---

Second Office Location:  
**SmileVille Dental**  
86 Ringwood Dr, Unit 23, Stouffville, ON L4A 1C3  
**Tel: 905-640-4600 • www.smilevilledental.ca**

### Book Giveaway For Supernatural



Enter for a chance to win one of five copies of 'Supernatural - Volume 1' - A compilation of thirty-two tales from the popular newspaper series, 'Supernatural'. Collect your own personal autographed copy of Volume 1 and be the first to know when Volume 2 will become available. Good Luck!!!





**Kam Ali**

Please leave your email address at:  
[www.kamilali.ca/contact](http://www.kamilali.ca/contact)

## VEDIC BOOKS

- Complete set of the Vedas
- The Upanishads
- Bhagavad Gita
- Ramayan
- Philosophy of Vedas
- Vedic Thoughts
- Vedic Vision - Sanskar Vidhi
- Quest - The Vedic Answers
- Vedic Marriage Ceremony
- Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas
- Life & Teachings of Swami Dayanand
- Light of Truth
- Wisdom of the Rishies
- Gems of Vedic Wisdom
- Anand Gayatri Katha
- Daily Prayer
- Vedic Philosophy
- Whose Wealth?
- Mahabharata
- ... and many more

**Call AVM Bookstore**  
**416-805-2685 or 905-824-2685**

# Walnut Foundation initiative drives men's cancer awareness

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

**Brampton** – The Walnut Foundation held its 2023 Walk-the-Path fund-raising walkathon last weekend in support of Prostate Cancer Awareness in the Black community that saw the event receiving support from community leaders, the three levels of government, and a healthy turnout by community members.

As WF's honorary chair, Ivan Dawns noted, the event saw "the largest turnout, and the most funds raised, which surpassed what was raised last year".

At this time, WF is continuing with efforts to raise \$100,000 by August 31. As of early this week, with approximately three months left in the drive, the group has raised almost \$60,000.

The walkathon, and its ongoing fund-raiser, are part of WF's efforts in raising awareness in the Black community about the elevated risk of prostate cancer.

As WF notes on its website, "We know that Black men are 76 percent more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer, and 2.2x more likely to die from this disease. The funds raised go to raising awareness, providing support and advocacy, as well as working with researchers, leaders, and other organisations to influence policy and best practices around disease management for prostate cancer and other men's health issues."

Last year **CBC reported on a new study** that found African and Caribbean men have a higher incidence of prostate cancer in Ontario. The study was led by Dr Aisha Lofters, a family physician, and chair in implementation science with the Peter Gilgan Centre for Women's Cancers at Toronto's Women's College Hospital.

The report looked at population-based data between 2008 to 2016 in Ontario. It found that Ontario has the second-highest age-standardised incidence rate of prostate cancer of all the provinces, with the figures notable at 121.8 cases per 100,000.

And as **CBC** noted, it also found that men from West Africa had 171 percent, and men from the Caribbean had 90 percent higher



Getting the message out



MPP Parsa, MPP Barnes, & Ivan Dawns



Supporters from the Painters & Allied Trades

incidences of prostate cancer.

WF is seeking to make a difference in men's health and wellness, its website states: "We are a Men's Health Interest and Prostate Support Group working with the Black community in identifying the needs of Black men in the areas of health and related issues; and to provide a forum for discussion in a comfortable, safe, and supportive environment."

Dawns said he was thrilled with the growing support noted in the weekend event, declaring, "I feel good about that. We're seeing traction, and a lot of the people who turned out for the first time, and first time donors, have already indicated they will return for next year's event."

Along with community leaders and supporters in the walkathon last weekend were Brampton MP Sonia Sidhu; Mississauga East-Cooksville MP Peter Fonseca; Aurora Richmond Hill Oak Ridges MPP and Minister of Children, Community & Social Services, Michael Parsa; and Ajax MPP Patrice Barnes.

Brampton City Councillors Kaur Brar and Rod Power attended on behalf of Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown; also in attendance was Mississauga Ward 9 Councillor, Martin Reid.

Also supporting Dawn's initiative were colleagues from the building trades. As he noted, "As a member of the building trades, and with it made up of 95 males, it is my responsibility to get the message out about prostate cancer."

Visit [WF's website](#); or [click here to donate](#).



Among the government officials were MP Peter Fonseca (left to right) & MP Sonia Sidhu; Ivan Dawns, & supporters Kristi Slade & Ron Kirby

## HINDU FEDERATION

INVITES YOU TO ITS SECOND ANNUAL




SCAN ME

# Hindu Recognition Gala

**Highlights of the Program**  
Recognition of five outstanding Canadian Hindus  
Awarding of scholarships of \$2,500 each to four post-secondary Hindu students  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2023, 4:00 PM**

**ENTERTAINMENT BY TORONTO'S FINEST**

  
**HAROLD BOODOO**  
Keyboard

  
**MOHUA PARIAL**  
Vocalist

  
**SHIVO MOHABEER**  
Tabla and Dholak

  
**BISRAM DEOKINANDAN**  
Vocalist

**\$50 PER TICKET | VIP TABLES \$1,000**  
REGISTRATION AT 3:00PM  
PROGRAM STARTS AT 4:00PM

**LOCATION:**  
Woodbine Banquet Hall and Convention Hall  
30 Vice Regent Boulevard,  
Etobicoke, ON, M9W 7A4

TO PURCHASE TICKETS, PLEASE CLICK ON THIS LINK  
[PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

TO NOMINATE SOMEONE FOR AN AWARD, PLEASE CLICK ON THIS LINK  
[NOMINATE FOR AWARD](#)

FOR INFORMATION TO APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP, PLEASE CLICK ON THIS LINK  
[APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP](#)

FOR SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY, PLEASE CLICK ON THIS LINK  
[SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES](#)


JOIN US EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 10:00 AM





FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.HINDUFEDERATION.CA](http://WWW.HINDUFEDERATION.CA), OR CONTACT THUSHY THURIN (416-560-7007) OR SAM PERSAUD (905-391-2048)

# KISSOON & ASSOCIATES

Barristers and Solicitors





**Dhaman Kissoon's Areas of Practice:**

- > CRIMINAL LAW
- > IMMIGRATION LAW

**Lawyers available for:**

Family Law, Real Estate Law, Corporate Commercial Law, Personal Injury Law, Civil Litigation.

**8 Beamish Drive**  
Toronto, Ontario, M9B 3P3

Tel: 416 234 1446. Ext.231  
Fax: 416-234-0154  
Email: [dkissoon@bellnet.ca](mailto:dkissoon@bellnet.ca)  
[www.kissoonlaw.ca](http://www.kissoonlaw.ca)

Tel: 416-234-1446  
Fax: 416-234-0154

Email: [dkissoon@bellnet.ca](mailto:dkissoon@bellnet.ca)

8 Beamish Drive  
Toronto, Ontario M9B 3P3

## ICCA holds successful brunch

Scarborough – The Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association recently held its first annual Bacchanal Brunch and fund-raiser on May 27 at Tropical Nights in Scarborough.

For the past two years the group has been amplifying the community's voice and working to making a positive impact.

Last winter it held a winter clothing drive for recent immigrants, shipped barrels of donated books to children in Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, and was co-lead in a food drive for Caribbean food items for those in need.

The group is currently running a mentorship program for young men in the community that is focused on professional skills and the community network. It is also engaged in advocacy work, with its Respect Diwali campaign last year receiving national media coverage.

Its latest Bacchanal Brunch was a first attempt at fund-raising for future expansion and growth in order to continue its work in the community.

The event featured an all-you-can-eat Caribbean-style buffet, while attendees were treated to live performances from talented young Indo-Caribbean dancers, musicians, and authors. Guests took away a swag bag that contained products and stationery.



Above, Ana Bailão, former Deputy Mayor of Toronto & 2023 Toronto mayoral candidate with Ryan Singh, ICCA Chair; right, Malini, Tracey, & Chey, from Footsteps Dance School



ICCA volunteers



Singh (left to right) with Anthony Perruzza, Toronto Councillor (Ward 7) & 2023 Toronto mayoral candidate, & Ayesha Khan



ICCA volunteers, well-wishers & supporters at the Bacchanal Brunch

[www.qtrexinternational.com](http://www.qtrexinternational.com)

# Q-TREX INTERNATIONAL

CONNECTING THE WORLD WITH AIR, OCEAN AND GROUND CARGO

**SUPER SPECIAL**  
TO GEORGETOWN, TRINIDAD,  
KINGSTON OR MONTEGO BAY

**3 BARRELS**  
**\$100**  
(Barrels up to 30" tall)

**Member of BBB**

**HEAD OFFICE**  
5185 Timberlea Blvd  
TEL: 905-290-1946  
TOLL FREE: 1-866-881-5433

**Georgetown Office**  
236-237 David St Kitty,  
Tel: 592-227-2969

**DOOR TO GATE IN GUYANA - \$120**  
Areas not covered in Guyana:  
Parika Backdam, Linden, Inner Ganje, Black Bush Polder, Beyond Skeldon, Mara and Cane Grove.

**Our NEW YORK OFFICE is now opened at:**  
**Queens Logistics Centre**  
186-10 Jamaica Ave,  
NY 11423  
**Tel: 866-861-5933**

We're the first Canadian Shipper to cross the border. We guarantee service that's second to none. Our prices are the best in the business.

**Tractors to Guyana - from US \$1000**  
**Pick Up Trucks - from US \$1500**  
**Full Containers - from US \$3400**  
**Barrels - from US \$50**

**Overseas Offices:**

**ANTIGUA:**  
Tel #268-462-4958  
Contact: Dunica

**DOMINICA**  
Tel #767-237-3737  
Contact: Geoff

**BARBADOS**  
Tel # 246-548-2891  
Contact: Anderson/Joel

**GRENADA**  
Tel #473-435-1545  
Contact: Valda

**KINGSTON, JAMAICA**  
Tel # 876-456-2944  
Contact: Kimberly

**MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA**  
Tel #876-294-1712  
#876-347-7939  
Contact: Sabrina

**ST. KITTS**  
Tel #869-465-5320  
Contact: Janice

**ST. LUCIA - CASTRIES**  
Tel#758-459-0675  
Contact: Spence

**ST. LUCIA - VIEUX FORT**  
TEL #758-454-5383  
Contact: Vacacie

**TRINIDAD**  
Tel #868-221-3905  
Contact: Paul

**ST. VINCENT**  
TEL #784-457-2547

**\* SPECIAL CARGO RATES \***

Destination	Reg Service	Express
Antigua	\$75/barrel	\$130
Dominica	\$75/barrel	\$130
Grenada	\$75/barrel	\$130
St Vincent	\$75/barrel	\$130
St Kitts	\$120/barrel	\$150
Barbados	\$75/barrel	\$130
St Lucia	\$75/barrel	\$130

**We also deliver empty barrels!**

Regular Service: 4-6 weeks delivery • Express Service: 3-4 weeks delivery • We deliver empty barrels/crates in the GTA

**Editorial**

**Mahdia tragedy**

**O**n the night of May 21, fire broke out in the girls' dormitory at Guyana's Mahdia Secondary School, tragically taking the lives of 20 students.

Many more were injured and are now recovering; however, as has since been revealed, the toxicity from the burning material inside the building could likely leave survivors with complications for the rest of their lives. There were over 60 students in the dormitory on the night of the fire.

For those among us who are unfamiliar with Guyana, in this nation's ten regions, Mahdia is the administrative centre for Region Eight, Potaro-Siparuni, named after the two main rivers. Mahdia Secondary School serves pupils from villages that are unable to fully meet the children's higher educational needs. Too distant for a daily commute from their mostly Indigenous communities, the girls attending this school board at its dormitory.

As the reports out of Guyana have indicated, a teenager accused of arson is now before the courts.

The heartbreaking conflagration at Mahdia with its loss of young lives sent ripples of pain and grief throughout the immediate surroundings that keenly felt the loss via direct impact, namely homes that are now without the voices and laughter of the children who perished on the night of May 21. Among these areas are Karisparu, El Paso, Micobie, Chenapau, and many others.

And the pain in the loss of such young lives also rippled throughout Guyana, and then outwards into the Caribbean region. Also, here abroad, where it is still being felt among Guyana's diaspora that resides among many supportive, empathetic Caribbean communities, with our regional membership here in the GTA also thoroughly pained by the untimely deaths.

It is such that a neural network of connectivity across our diaspora within our collective Caribbean consciousness makes Guyana's joys our community's joy; and so it is too with the sharing of unbearable burdens, such as the grief and pain that have landed at our doorsteps with the horrific deaths of these young schoolchildren.

The grief and helplessness we all feel, whether in Guyana, throughout the Caribbean, and abroad in Toronto, New York, and elsewhere, will stay with us for a long time.

And even as we mourn, we must examine what went wrong to cause such a disaster, and take steps to ensure there is no repeat of such a traumatic and terrifying outcome, not only in Guyana, but elsewhere in the Caribbean.

As is being discovered, and was reported in Guyana, it appears there were failures, gaps, and perhaps faulty economising leading to the tinder that lit up on the night of May 21.

One of the questions that was raised focused on the materials from which the dormitory was constructed. As was reported in Guyana late last month, Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn was quoted as saying: "... the fire got into the plastic-type ceiling and proceeded along the roof with burning pieces falling onto beds..."

Benn is speaking about a plastic-type ceiling that could likely be PVC, an attractive and inexpensive material, but which becomes extremely toxic with heat. It is thus likely that some of the children who perished may have been overcome by the toxicity from the gases emitted from the burning ceiling.

Also, as has been noted in reports in the Guyana media, the children who survived the fire could be facing adulthood with pulmonary issues from inhaling these deadly and toxic gases.

With the investigations still underway, it appears that one of the issues in the layers of what went wrong is likely that the dormitory was not up to code.

This possibility has now raised pertinent questions about the structural fitness of other educational buildings, and by extension, the soundness of many other public buildings throughout Guyana.

While our hearts break with the loss of lives, and as we mourn with the parents who lost the gems that are their children, we know that moving forward after learning from such a bitter experience means thoroughly examining safety standards and building protocols throughout Guyana.

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

**Finally, diversity of choice in mayoral election**

**T**oronto is the most diverse city in Canada, and it is witnessing a number of emerging and growing challenges, with these being compounded by budget limitations and a tax-burdened citizenry.

In a few weeks, the city will have one of its most consequential elections in over a decade. Voters will have the opportunity to select a new mayor. With that opportunity, voters have the power to redirect the trajectory of Canada's "megacity".



**Ryan Singh**

With 102 candidates registered for this mayoral by-election, there is plenty of choice for voters. Within such a mix of candidates, the diversity of the city is truly represented across the board. People from all backgrounds, experiences, and generations, are vying for the city's top job.

The six top polling candidates have provided a wide array of policy perspectives, some dramatically different from others. What is also stark is the diversity within the group itself.

For clarity, most polls agree that the top candidates (alphabetically by surname) are Ana Bailão, Brad Bradford, Olivia Chow, Mitzie Hunter, Josh Matlow, and Mark Saunders.

These candidates have provided plans and policy proposals that traverse the entire political spectrum. From stark plans to increase taxes to pay for more services, to proposals of eliminating arts and culture programs to curb spending. There have been no limits on the policy difference among candidates.

This range of outlook on policy, and the variety that voters have, is not only refreshing, but is needed. Much-needed debate on vital issues is allowing voters to have a real choice.

But the difference among the candidates is not only limited to their political positions. It is also the diversity of the candidates themselves, which is also much-needed.

Of these six, three are women, three are visible minorities, and four were born outside of Canada. This mix alone is an enormous milestone for the city.

Never has Toronto (in its amalgamated formation) been led by a woman, or person of colour. (Important to note that David Miller was born in the US).

With that, the stage at local debates has truly been representative of Toronto. The visual diversity among the candidates stands out, and it is a proper reflection of the demographic status of the city. Paired with that, these candidates have given stark views on how they would tackle major issues.

And this diversity, in all its definitions, is how politics and government should operate.

According to the 2021 Canadian census, 1,537,285 racialised people, or approximately 10.7 percent of Canada's visible minority population, live in Toronto – that is approximately 54.6 percent of the city's population. And annually, almost half of all immigrants to Canada settle in the Greater Toronto Area.

As diversity grows within Toronto, it is important the persons who are making the decisions are reflective of the people they serve.

It is not just about looking like the population, but it is ensuring there is a genuine understanding, even a first-hand experience, of knowing the struggles, challenges, and limitations that many Torontonians face on a daily basis.

The challenges that many residents face on a daily basis are the challenges that our next mayor will have to address.

For example, racialised residents have greater challenges in securing suitable housing. This is associated with affordability, and securing appropriate employment and support.

According to the United Way (2019), Toronto has the highest rates of income inequality among individuals of different races in the country. Racialised women earn 32 percent less at work than their non-racialised counterparts.

Another example is that according to the analysis of racial data compiled by Toronto Police, Black citizens are 2.2 times more likely to have an interaction with police officers, and are 1.6 times more likely to have force used on them during the interaction. People from Black, Middle-Eastern, Latino, and Asian communities were also over-represented in reported use-of-force incidents with police.

Corridors of power, political and financial, continue to be distant to many citizens within the city's diverse population. And this is why change has been so slow, and why many within Toronto's racialised population continue to remain disconnected, under-served, and at times forgotten.

Having a mayor who is an immigrant or person of colour would not bring an overnight change, but it might lay a path for much-needed change that will address the alarming challenges that are facing this city.

For a city as diverse as Toronto, political leadership must follow suit. Ensuring the current and future political leaders understand the barriers that many residents face, is one further step to ensuring that policy development is not only conducted using the lens to address this, but is designed to bring meaningful change.

Toronto has a serious decision to make, and the options are not limited. With that, we should understand who we are voting for, and their stance on important issues, and also ensure that their understanding of the needs of the city is strong.

If we elect a mayor who can truly understand the challenges many of us face, then we will have a mayor who is prepared to tackle those challenges.

Election Day is on June 26. Remember to vote. It's important. And it's your right.

**An amazing sight – 'A boy falling out of the sky'**

**T**he tale in Greek mythology of Icarus and Daedalus has stayed with me all my life after its discovery during my early years growing up back home. Some days it comes back to haunt me, as has been happening in recent weeks.

I first encountered this tale of woe during my early, youthful years of reading. Perhaps the encounter came in a book about Greek mythology from a library, which could be highly unlikely, given the landscape where I was born, and grew up in my early years, was one that was mostly filled with under-privilege, want, and what still resonates within today for its chains of empire that restrained early flight.



**Romeo Kaseram**

Or, more likely, I could have discovered it in a school text, perhaps dog-eared, with its spine broken, a few pages ink-stained with legacy fingerprints from generations of handling and mishandling; however, the tattered book continued to be used, occasionally taken out of exile for group reading from the darkness among ends of chalk and stubs of pencils in the tall classroom cupboard, which then was called "The Press".

Whatever the source, I recall being uplifted, perhaps even to soaring, by this fascinating, but tragic tale.

As a few of us would recall, the story in its simple narration is about the master Greek craftsman, Daedalus, builder of the labyrinth, who was later imprisoned by the king in a tower with his son, Icarus.

How they escaped was Daedalus constructed two pairs of wings, using, among other things, bird feathers and bees-wax. Leaping off the tower and lifting upwards, Daedalus warned Icarus to neither fly too close to the surf, nor to soar too close to the sun.

But young Icarus ignored his father's advice and soared, lifting upwards on the wings of youth and freedom, and so flew too close to the sun. As a result, the sun's heat melted the bees-wax, and the feathers floated away and downwards.

As did Icarus, who plunged into the surf below to drown, the story leaving to the imagination the tragic resonance of

Daedalus' horror, trauma, and his grief.

Many years later in high school, I encountered the poem, *Musée des Beau Arts*, by W.H. Auden. In what is known as ekphrasis, Auden riffs off Pieter Bruegel's painting about Icarus' death, *Landscape With The Fall of Icarus*, exploring, among other things, the collision among the mundane, the personal intimacy of suffering, and Icarus' unheralded descent into the depths.

In Bruegel's painting, Icarus' plunge resides at the edge of the landscape. At first it takes an effort to locate the two legs and one arm of the child as he disappears into the ocean.

Foregrounded and privileged in the painting is an agrarian, mundane scene of ploughing; a shepherd and his dog look upwards in the opposite direction as Icarus hits the surf behind their backs and disappears into the sea.

And nearby, a sailing ship continues on its journey after witnessing an amazing sight, in Auden's words, "a boy falling out of the sky".

I confess I am haunted by these traces of knowledge from my acquisition of early learning whenever I am forced to face its echoes in daily living, such as in tragic outcomes when young people today encounter untimely deaths after flying too close to the sun.

Some of us would be familiar with, and are similarly haunted by the untimely passing of an 18-year-old American man late last month, who in a dare, jumped off a boat into Bahamas waters, and likely perished after he was pulled down by a shark.

His fall is so emblematic, perhaps repetitive, of that Icarus moment of unchecked, youthful enthusiasm, the untrammelled escalation of invulnerability, and tragically, ascending hubris, all contributing to his fatal plunge from the sky into the depths.

Also resonant for a long time after is the horror, trauma, and immeasurable grief of parents, and those who are left behind to mourn such an unfortunate, and preventable loss.

And mourners like myself, who learned to fly wearing chains.



Cocoa pods being prepared for drying

## Indentured labourers also worked in cocoa

Dear Editor,

From the mid-1880s, the Caribbean island of Trinidad witnessed a significant decline in sugar prices, leading to an economic depression in the sugar industry, and a consequent shift towards cocoa cultivation.

This transition was instrumental in making cocoa the dominant crop, experiencing a boom from 1866 to 1920. Cocoa replaced sugar as the leading agricultural commodity when the sugar industry went into depression in the 1880s.

Indian Indentured labourers (Girmitiyas - 1845-1920) played a pivotal role in the development of the cocoa industry in Trinidad, representing a significant but unknown chapter in the Trinidad and Tobago's history.

Although most Indentured Indians in Trinidad and the wider Caribbean worked on sugar plantations, some of them were also recruited to work on cocoa estates. Many of these labourers had prior experience in agriculture and plantation work in their Indian homeland, which made them well-suited for the complex and demanding process of cocoa cultivation and production.

After fulfilling their contracts, a fair number of them continued to work on cocoa estates, with some even later becoming contractors and small proprietors.

By 1891, an estimated 500 'time-expired' (contract-free)

Indians owned small cocoa estates, while a few owned substantial holdings.

Today, some descendants of these Indentured Indian labourers continue to live and work on the remaining cocoa estates. However, despite their significant contributions, their role in the cultivation of cocoa is not widely known.

Therefore, it is essential to conduct research, document, speak about, and communicate the hidden aspects of their histories and experiences to expand our understanding of Indian Indentureship and the history of the Caribbean.

**Kumar Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.**

[The preceding is the abstract from a research paper presented by anthropologist, author, and University of Guyana lecturer Dr Kumar Mahabir at the University of Fiji. Entitled *Recovering & Reclaiming the Lost History of Indian Indentured Labour in Cocoa Plantations in Trinidad in the Caribbean*, it was delivered online at the international conference on *Celebrating Girmitiya Lives: Documenting, Researching, Writing, and Communicating the Histories and Lives of Girmitiyas*. The conference took place at The University of the South Pacific in Fiji from May 12-13, and was organised by the Global Girit Institute, and The University of the South Pacific.]

## Think like winners, play cricket like winners

Dear Editor,

Congratulations to Daren Sammy on his appointment as head coach of the white-ball West Indies senior team. His approach to changing West Indies fortunes is correct – the mentality needs to be aligned.

We don't need bigger bats, bigger stadiums, more coaching, or better sunscreen for that matter. We have to develop a winning mentality, a never-say-never attitude, arrogance, and swagger to our style of play.

If we think like winners, we will play like winners because the mind is our power and the power is our mind. Too many times we play as though we are frightened or the game/series is lost already. I am not one to question Sammy's coaching qualifications, all WI fans care about is West Indies winning and winning some more.

No player is bigger than the West Indies. Though it is just a phone call, Sammy should not be chasing anybody to play for the region. This is where he must literally establish a boundary between his friends and his job. Players must earn their selection whether by averages, wickets tally, dismissals and so on, not because somebody is a "big" player and they are doing well elsewhere.

The region has enough talented players who have been knocking on the door for a long time to represent West Indies.



Daren Sammy



Gudakesh Motie

So, if players want to ply their trade elsewhere, Cricket West Indies should grant a no-objection certificate and move on with or without them.

For example, Brandon King has earned his selection as an opening batsman over Evin Lewis, soon to be in all formats. Kevin Sinclair has shown his exceptional spin quality in limited overs and is ahead of Sunil Narine, who is past his prime. Gudakesh Motie, Kevin Sinclair, and Akeal Hosein are a frightening spin combo that Sammy can consider.

Then the likes of Alick Athanaze, who is averaging over 50 in the ICC World Test Championship, is well ahead of the pecking order of batsmen like Darren Bravo and Shimron Hetmyer. Rovman Powell has proven himself to be the successor to Andre Russell, hence his T20 captaincy appointment.

Not to mention players such as pacer Akeem Jordan and Tobagonian Joshua James, who are waiting patiently for their maroon caps.

So, forgive me for being unceremonious, but Sammy, the selectors, and CWI need to be ruthless where players earn their selection, warrant their contracts, and perform to keep their place in the team. Sammy, no more Mr Nice Guy.

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

## Anniversary greetings to Guyana from IDC

Dear Editor,

While we mourn the loss of 20 children and injuries to several others in the recent fire at Mahdia, the Indian Diaspora Council International and its global partners congratulate the people of Guyana on celebrating the 57th anniversary as an Independent nation. Guyana achieved Independence from Great Britain on May 26, 1966.

IDC extends warm greetings to all Guyanese in Guyana and abroad who take much pride in this milestone achievement.

The 57th anniversary of Guyana's Independence provides timely recognition of the enormous progress that Guyana has made since its Independence towards quality of life, especially social, cultural, economic, education, and political advances by its people.

There is worldwide recognition of Guyana, its history, culture and traditions, as well as its decades of struggles to overcome hardships during and after colonialism, its resilience and courage to forge a national identity and agenda of progress in democracy, and mostly peaceful co-existence among its diverse ethnic groups.

As IDC president Ashook Ramsaran, who was born in Guyana, has said, "Our ancestors came to Guyana partly by choice, many forced, but they resolved and persevered under very difficult and harrowing conditions. That shared experience and that saga of shared history fostered an unusual kindred spirit of resolve, togetherness and kinship – a triumph over obstacles and difficulties with dreams and aspirations of a destiny intertwined by history and fate."

As Guyana continues its transformation and adaptation as it has done for decades, the future bodes well for continued progress that is beneficial to all Guyanese in Guyana and abroad. Guyana's enduring vitality is a reflection of its people, always strong, energetic, progressive and vibrant.

**Indian Diaspora Council International, New York, via email.**

## Indentureship in T&T was oppressive & no 'paradise'

Dear Editor,

According to the media in Trinidad and Tobago, Justice Frank Seepersad was reported saying that "the 'paradise' his Indentured Indian ancestors found when they were brought to 'Chinidad' is in peril".

Really, Justice Seepersad? Our Indentured Indian ancestors found "paradise" when they came to "Chinidad?"

In this paradise, Indentured workers were denied the natural freedoms of human beings outside their hours of labour. They were confined to their estates.

Free Indians found it advisable to carry Certificates of Exemption from Labour, which allowed them free movement; without it they could be jailed.

Indentured labourers could be fined if found off their estates. There were strict vagrancy laws with harsh penalties.

If a worker was absent from his estate for seven consecutive days he could be charged with desertion.

Wages were poor, absenteeism was a criminal offence, and workers were fined for minor infractions, just as security officers are treated today. Living conditions were terrible and mortality was high.

These terms and conditions were applied to all Indentureds, and not just Indian Indentureds. It may surprise many to know that, during the Indentureship period, beside the 143,000 Indian Indentureds, there were also 2,000 Madeirans (Portuguese), 8,000 Africans, and 3,000 Chinese.

A brief review of the academic work done on the history of Indian Indentureship should debunk this "paradise" thesis. Anyway, one man's paradise is another man's purgatory.

**Gerry Kangalee, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.**



Ashook Ramsaran



Frank Seepersad



Composite of newspaper photographs showing the Wismar destruction

## May 26 should be a day to remember Wismar Massacre's victims, survivors

Dear Editor,

May 26 was Guyana's 57th Independence anniversary. The historic date also marks the 59th anniversary of the atrocities committed against Indians in the mining town of Wismar.

Dr Cheddi Jagan referred to the atrocities as a "massacre", because of the totality of the death, destruction, and organised nature of the planned attacks against Indians, most of which took place in broad daylight.

The Wismar atrocities are documented by eyewitness narratives whose evidentiary submissions, personal and written, are buried in the Report of the Wismar, Christianburg, and Mackenzie Commission, which was established by the British Government and published on January 25, 1965. The result was the uprooting of the entire Indian community from Wismar.

The Report concluded that "the disturbances which took place in the Wismar-Christianburg-Mackenzie area on May 25th, 1964 were politically and racially inspired... and the fact that the security forces were in no case able to apprehend arsonists forces us to conclude that the destruction was not 'spontaneous', but was organised, and well organised".

Arson and anti-Indian violence took place on Saturday May 23, and Sunday May 24, and rapidly escalated on May 25. So traumatised were the victims that when the *RH Carr* and the *MV Barima* were made available for transporting evacuees to Georgetown on May 26, the mere presence of African policemen and volunteers at the disembarkation point at the Sprotons wharf in Georgetown invoked fears and anxiety on the part of the evacuees, despite assurances given by officials of the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha.

A curfew, imposed by British troops helped to restore order out of chaos in Wismar. On May 26, Isaac Bridgewater, the father of Senator Christina Ramjattan, was murdered, and his house was set on fire. Arson took place on the Mackenzie side of the Demerara River on May 27, 1964, and on June 2, 1964. Toolsie Persaud's gasoline installation at Section C, Christianburg was also destroyed.

Violence did not end there. On July 6, 1964, an explosion occurred off the docks of Hurudaia on the *Son Chapman* river launch, which was taking goods and passengers, the majority of them Africans, from Georgetown to Wismar. Forty-three persons perished in this disaster.

The Report noted that, "The echo of the *Son Chapman* disaster was immediately felt

at Mackenzie when five East Indians were murdered and seven seriously injured... more people were killed than on the whole day of the 25th May, 1964."

After David Granger became the leader of the PNC in 2011, he attended the *Son Chapman* Commemoration ceremony, now observed annually. The Motto on the Monument, listing the names of those who perished at Hurudaia declared: "Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it."

On July 6, 2020, Granger and the PNC kept a promise he made in 2013 to move the *Son Chapman* commemoration to the centre of Linden, so the people "would not forget". Not a single word was mentioned about the Wismar ethnic cleansing of Indians as the PNC representatives expressed sorrow over the "pain and hurt" of the survivors.

Guyanese Alissa Trotz, the Director of the Caribbean Studies Program at the University of Toronto and Red Thread, interrogated the purpose of this commemoration, and queried the silencing of the preceding tragedy of the violence and ethnic cleansing of Wismar. Trotz and Red Thread interviewed the refugees from Wismar, living on the East Coast of Demerara.

Jagan, writing in *The West on Trial*, noted his objections to the May 26 date accepted by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham for Guyana's date of Independence. Subsequently, Jagan omitted the date from the national calendar of holidays during his time in office.

However, it was reinstated by a subsequent PPP/Civic administration. Like the PNC, the PPP acquiesced to a conspiracy to silence the events, and victims of Wismar 1964, almost all of whom were PPP supporters.

Moreover, Janet Jagan, who was the Minister of Home Affairs during the Wismar atrocities, and whose politics were molded by "the prejudice and discrimination" she experienced "as a Jew", once told an audience of primarily Indian women in Queens, NY, that the atrocities of Wismar were best forgotten.

Remembering Wismar 1964 is not about political retribution, expressing moral superiority over others, or claiming victimhood. It is about reconciliation and giving a voice to the silenced victims, many of whom are still in our presence.

If May 26 is to be commemorated as a national holiday, then it should also stand as a day of remembrance for the victims and survivors of the Wismar Massacre.

Baytoram Ramharack, New York, via email.

RE/GUYANA

GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

## Who Owns Your Property in Guyana?

By Maj Khan RE/Guyana

For decades, a significant number of Guyanese have migrated to other lands, carved a new life for themselves and continue to own property in the country. But property for them is more than possession, it represents a continuous link of what they have left behind and what is possible.

What is possible is here today. The discovery of oil in 2015 has brought Guyana into sharp focus on the world stage. Global attention and investments are pouring in as everyone expects great fortunes to be made. The first acute impact of this hyperactivity is a property market that is already severely undersupplied, exacerbated by increasing demand, which has pushed values upward exponentially.

With this steep demand, a number of cracks and challenges in the system has been laid bare. The recent headline is the case of Marlene Todd who bought property, only to discover the person who sold it to her, Ann Jennifer Jeboo, forged her signature as power of attorney and actually sold land that belonged to Allan Price. The High Court ruled in favour of Todd because she had no knowledge of the fraud.

Fraudulent property sales is a double-edged sword where both the purchaser and the legitimate seller can find themselves in a legal battle. At least for now, it is clear the onus is on the buyer to determine the property they purchase is legitimate. It also begs the question: what measures, if any, are in place to prevent fraudulent activities, and who is responsible for its oversight.

"Prescriptive Title" is where a person has been in possession of a property for a period of 12 years without any interruption for the paper owner, can file to become the owner of the property. Next of kin, extended family, friends and whomever the owner has left in charge can file for ownership, often successfully.

Inheritance is also an interesting situation. Expats often have a rude awakening when attempting to claim what they consider is rightfully theirs. They discover other family members who reside on the property also file for ownership by virtue of the fact that they have lived on the said property, usually for decades.

All this is happening in a country where the proper storage of documentation is a somewhat fragile endeavour. Guyana has been plagued by a series of unfortunate incidents over the years. Between the late 1990s to today, the Government of Guyana has had at least 25 of its buildings destroyed; buildings where property owners' paper records are housed and leaving it vulnerable to destruction. This list includes: The Ministry of Public Works and Communications accounts department, The Ministry of Finance, The Central Tender Board, Ministry of Housing and Water (hundreds of transports, plans, and drawings destroyed), The central Housing and Planning Authority, to list but a few. Housed in these buildings are records forever gone.

To compound the issue Guyana has two legal codes working side by side. The Civil Code and the Common Law introduced by the British. The country also has a dual register system of property rights: The Deeds Registry and the Land Registry, that operate in separate jurisdictions. The mismatched legal framework is the backbone of a perplexing system weighed down under overlapping rules and complex regulations.

One thing is certain, the *status quo* cannot continue and the current government knows they have a daunting task ahead of remedying this crisis. They recognise the application process is tedious and frustrating, insufficient lands to develop, expensive construction materials, and inadequate access to financing. But it will take time, considerable time before real change occurs.

In the meantime, the question still stands: Who owns your property?

There are organisations positioning themselves to take the lead to work within the system to optimise the outcome for property owners. With implementation of technology and an ever increasing global village where information is readily accessible, Guyanese both at home and abroad are much sophisticated in their understanding of the property market.

As such, companies such as Re/Guyana are using technology and online platforms to take a streamlined step-by-step common sense approach to resolve the range of existing issues. It has forged ahead with its portfolio because of its ability to leverage its connections with the legal system, the government, and private entities in Guyana.

Simply put, it has boots on the ground, and understands what needs to be done.

The 18th century botanist, Thomas Drummond, encapsulated it well when he stated: "Property has its duties as well as its rights". Everyone seems to know what their rights are, but what of duty? Do they know and understand what questions must be asked, what actions need to be taken, what proof do they have, to ensure they own their property?

RE/Guyana is a property services company dedicated to making it easier and safer to administer, acquire, divest and develop real estate assets in Guyana. We offer property owners a free online assessment to determine if they face property fraud risk. [Click here for more information.](#)



# Food insecurity now trending higher in the Caribbean

In spite of intervention by regional and international governments and institutions, there appears to be little or no improvement in food security in the Caribbean region. In fact, the problem seems to be getting worse in the absence of coordinated commitment to promote food production beyond the boardroom table.

Incidentally, several exogenous variables have contributed to the region's food insecurity. The region continues to be impacted by high inflation, exacerbated by rising food and energy



**Dwarka Lakhan**

prices. It is also still recovering from the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic, and economic disruptions caused by the war between the Ukraine and Russia.

Though improving, shipping delays, skyrocketing freight costs, and reduced transportation and storage capacity have not only led to a shortage of food, but also of raw materials and inputs to the food producing/processing sectors.

As a result, food prices have risen sharply, making household affordability a serious problem.

The Covid-19 pandemic also led to vastly reduced tourist revenues, triggering dwindling foreign reserves for tourism-dependent countries in the region, resulting in reduced food imports.

In addition, a spate of natural disasters added to the woes of the region. Countrywide flooding in Guyana and Suriname last year resulted in tremendous loss of crops and livestock, destroying the livelihood of farmers, and consequently resulting in higher prices for available food in an environment of short supply.

According to a Caricom-World Food Program survey conducted in September 2022, the number of people estimated to be facing moderate to severe levels of food insecurity in the English-speaking Caribbean had risen by an alarming 46 percent over the previous six months. That translates to nearly 4.1 million people, or 57 percent of the population who do not have sufficient food.

The survey noted that when compared to February 2022, there has been a significant increase in households that have fallen into moderate levels of food insecurity, with the number of food insecure people increasing by 1.3 million.

It was found that nearly six percent of people in the English-speaking Caribbean reported going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey, which is a one percent increase since February 2022. Another 36 percent of respondents skipped meals or ate less than usual, and 32 percent ate less preferred foods in the week leading up to the survey.

According to Regis Chapman, Representative and Country Director WFP Caribbean Multi-Country Office, "we are seeing worrying trends in the region with people selling off their assets and using their savings to meet basic needs. This was unheard of in the region previously".

He added: "These negative coping strategies are unsustainable, and we fear that these short-term measures will lead to a further increase in the number of people who are unable to meet their daily food requirements."

Joseph Cox, Assistant Secretary-General, Economic Integration, Innovation and Development, Caricom Secretariat added: "Caricom recognises that further support is necessary to reduce the level of need in the region and establish systems which facilitate access to nutritious food for all. Leaders in the region are actively engaging with decision makers across all relevant sectors to identify solutions for increasing food production and reducing import dependency within the region in order to reduce the cost of food."

As a matter of fact, the Caribbean has

been traditionally over-reliant on expensive imported foods. The World Bank estimates between 80-90 percent of all food consumed in the region comes from abroad, and only three Caribbean countries – Guyana, Belize, and Haiti – produce more than 50 percent of their own food.

The region's food bill is currently in the tune of (US) \$7 billion.

Arguably, the region's affinity for foreign foods and the ability to freely import these foods stifles the development of regional agriculture, and consequently contributes to food security problems in the region.

Currently, Guyana, which has the potential to become the food basket of the region has been unable to meet its own demand for food.

In spite of its potential, Guyana's household food import bill has increased more than four-fold since the turn of the century – growing from (G) \$10 billion in 2000 to more than (G) \$45 billion at the end of 2020.

According to the country's Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, Guyana produces 59 percent of the food for local consumption, which means that it imports 41 percent of its food.

The country currently holds lead responsibility for agriculture, agricultural diversification, and food security in Caricom. In May 2023, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture announced that Guyana's President Irfaan Ali will be the first recipient of the IICA Award for Contribution to Food Security and Sustainable Development.

IICA decided to present this award in recognition of Ali's leadership in agricultural transformation, food security, and support for building resilient economies in a sustainable manner in Guyana and the Caribbean.

During a virtual pre-summit meeting held in late July 2022 in preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit held in September, Mustapha noted that "actions to reposition Caribbean agriculture include strengthening linkages between the agri-food, tourism, and health sectors; establishing public-private partnerships in local food production and processing; implementing climate-smart technologies, and transitioning towards digital agriculture".

He added that "financing for mitigation and adaptation to climate change has become more critical today than ever before, and is necessary to protect and transform Caribbean food systems".

Mustapha also noted that "international support from international financial institutions, and bilateral partners will be critical to ensuring a more resilient agricultural sector through financing, technology, and creating an enabling global environment".

He also identified a number of issues that can have a positive impact on food security, including expanding the non-traditional agricultural sub-sector, which he claimed is critical for diet diversification and enabling equality in availability and access, especially for rural populations.

Mustapha also expressed the need to reduce

on-farm and post-harvest food loss and waste through adopting appropriate harvesting, post-harvest, and storage technologies.

Barring endless talks about food security, there has never been any real political commitment – beyond the boardroom – to push agriculture at a regional level.

More than a decade and a half ago, Caricom claimed that the region's agriculture agenda is moving full speed ahead. It then stated that there will be a "fundamental transformation of the Region's agriculture sector to a market oriented internationally competitive and environmentally sound production of agriculture products, improved income and employment opportunities and nutrition security, poverty alleviation."

Then, Caricom asserted that "we have indeed given focus to what it will take to move agriculture forward. Some work has been done to identify the key binding constraints and we are seeking to remove those constraints so that agriculture can become more competitive and also that we meet our food and nutrition requirements."

More than a decade later, the region is still at square one.

At around the same time, a meeting of regional and international institutions, including IICA, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Caricom, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute, and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation, concluded that agriculture is losing ground to other activities in the pecking order in the region, and that there is a "continuous decline in government budgetary allocations relative to other sectors". This still holds true today in spite of concerns of food security.

The truth is agriculture has always been on the regional agenda, but commitment to the sector has largely been at the conference table. Endless rounds of talks and volumes of policy documents have not resulted in any material impact on accelerating the development of the sector.

Ironically, the record of solidarity among Caribbean governments is far from reassuring. This is largely due to a myriad of factors, among them varying levels of wealth, geographic size, and population, and differing political configurations, foreign policies, trade relations, and national expectations.

The truth is solidarity among Caribbean countries is a dream, especially when it comes to making sacrifices – adding to the operational problems of regional institutions like Caricom.

In fact, individual governments are most likely inclined to embark on their own initiatives to promote agricultural development, regardless of potential co-operation at a regional level.

At the end of the day, there must be political commitment to push agricultural development at a regional level – beyond the conference table. At least there is recognition about the benefits of agricultural development. Collective action is necessary for Caribbean countries to attain food security objectives that they cannot accomplish individually.

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



**Zulfikar Mustapha**

## House for Sale in Trinidad & Tobago



**Three Bedroom House in Arena Gardens, Freeport on 1 1/2 LOTS, fenced. Lots of space for expansion/rental income potential. Two full toilets & baths (Master bedroom ensuite).**

**The development is quiet, away from the main road (cul de sac) with well-stocked grocery, doctor, pharmacy, well-kept savannah (privately maintained) within walking distance. Eight minutes driving to major highway, police station, street food, fresh vegetables, local restaurants. All amenities.**

**WhatsApp Debbie for more info & pictures: 647-829-2765. Asking price \$400,000 Cdn.**



## Affordable Mortgages

ARE MORE THAN JUST A RATE. IT'S ALSO:

- Debt Consolidation
- Access to Equity
- Flexible Prepayment Options



Scan the QR Code to Start your Mortgage Application

Rita Boodram, Mortgage Agent Level 1 (FSRA License # M22000325)  
Tel: 647-745-8308 | Email: [ritab@mortgagediligent.com](mailto:ritab@mortgagediligent.com)  
Check us out at [www.affordablemortgages.ca](http://www.affordablemortgages.ca)

\*\*\*DISCLAIMER: OAC, E&O.E., TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. RATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE





Stella (Ramdai) Gajadhar celebrated her 80th birthday on June 4 at Vishnu Mandir. The joyous occasion was marked with the performance of puja, prayers, & celebratory bhajans that saw hundreds of friends & relatives in attendance; a sumptuous meal & lavish sweets were served following the thanksgiving. In photo, Stella receives a gift from VM's leader, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay.



Shirley Ramjeet recently celebrated her 90th birthday with a prayer service at Arya Samaj Mandir in Markham. The ceremony was attended by friends & family members, many of them traveling from abroad. Shirley is the mother of nine children, 16 grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren. She is an active member of Arya Samaj Mandir, and enjoys the Sunday services & the community at large.



Yudhbeer Singh celebrated his 80th birthday with a prayer service at the Arya Samaj Mandir, which was attended by friends & family, many of them arriving from abroad. He is currently the Treasurer of Toronto Arya Samaj, a position that he has held for several years. He and wife Vedwatie were presented with a plaque recognising their dedicated service to the mandir. They came to Canada in 1981 & ran a successful retail store in downtown Toronto until they retired. They have two children & three grandchildren, & enjoy their retirement doing community work & spending time with their children & grandchildren.



# TWO BEDROOM CONDOS FOR SALE IN GUYANA



### AMENITIES INCLUDED

- ✓ Swimming Pool
- ✓ Gym
- ✓ Tennis Court

### AMENITIES FOR A SMALL FEE

- ✓ Cleaning
- ✓ Laundry
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Grocery Services

**BOOK NOW**

PRICE STARTS AT ONLY  
**US\$274,000**  
 RENTAL GUARANTEE:  
**\$1,500 - \$2,500 USD**

## WHY INVEST IN GUYANA?

- ✓ Because of its **OIL BOOM**
- ✓ Guyana will soon produce **over a-million barrels of oil per day**, which, on a per capita basis, will even surpass Dubai.
- ✓ Real Estate is by far the **safest & best investment** to make.

### SEMINAR DATE

**Thursday, June 8 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Riverstone Community Centre,**  
**195 Don Minaker Dr., Brampton ON L6P 2V1**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Ryan Shivraj<br><b>+592 624-4633</b>       | Kavita Singh<br><b>(416) 824-0008</b>  |
| Dr Lake Singh<br><b>(416) 825-2700</b>     | Shiv Misir<br><b>(416) 275-7911</b>    |
| Charrandas Persaud<br><b>+592 707-1132</b> | Thamesh Singh<br><b>(416) 400-1647</b> |

Email Us At  
[info@shorelineestatesgy.com](mailto:info@shorelineestatesgy.com)

# What does the global south want from climate change governance?

By Randolph Persaud

In the early aftermath of Independence, Third World countries (Global South if you prefer) agitated for a New International Economic Order. Caribbean countries, including Guyana, played an important role in that effort. The call for the NIEO was aimed at getting the most powerful states in the world to democratise international institutions and their own conduct.

Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sukarno, Kwame Nkrumah, and others were particularly interested in reforming the structures and principles governing multilateral institutions, among them the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IMF, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

The NIEO also implied the restructuring of the conduct of bilateral relationships. These changes were intended at the time to correct the fundamentally unequal relations between developed countries (especially in the West), and the poor or developing countries in the Global South. The Security Council of the UN was also called upon to do away with the privilege accorded to a handful of states.

Now, towards the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, we are still asking for the same. No doubt, the rise of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa and the G20 have created some space for developing countries to, at a minimum, establish a more level playing field among themselves.

Yet, it is difficult to do so because much like the colonial flight paths for air travel, most poor countries are forced to access world markets and international capital via the paths defined by the hegemonic states. China's One Belt, One Road initiative has changed the dynamics in measurable ways, but this is mostly confined to African states.

The observations above are occasioned by some aspects of the recently arrived at debt

ceiling deal between US President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy. The key issue in the deal relevant to Guyana is the green light duplicitously given to the oil and gas industry in the US.

According to a [CNBC report by Emma Newburger](#), the deal allows for the following:

- (1) "...expedited approval of all permits for a West Virginia natural gas pipeline...";
- (2) restrictions on "environmental reviews under one of the country's landmark environmental laws";
- (3) approval of "steps to boost fossil fuel production" in the name of American "energy security";
- (4) construction and operation of the pipeline through the Jefferson National Forest;
- (5) restriction of judicial review, most likely on matters such as possible future explosions and contamination;
- (6) "...[streamlining of] the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)... to limit its requirements...";
- (7) shortening of the time for environmental impact assessments in order to fast-track approval of exploration and development.

The deal was struck with the assistance of the oil and gas lobby and industry insiders who heavily fund election campaigns for Republican and Democratic candidates alike. Further, and on a different trajectory, Kathleen Sgamma of Western Energy Alliance, bluntly framed the deal in terms of maintaining American "energy dominance."

By not so fantastic a co-incidence, McCarthy framed the debt-to-pipeline deal (my construction) as "transformational", the very same language employed in Guyana by President Irfaan

Ali and Vice President Jagdeo, as well as the entire PPP/Civic leadership. When that word is used here, however, the anti-PPP lobby hiding in the garb of 'civil society' denounces it as poppycock.

The gas-fueled debt ceiling deal struck by Biden and McCarthy would only shock naïve little outfits like Oil & Gas Governance Network and their local counterparts. For its part, the Opposition press will no doubt find ways to twist and defend the deal on the basis that Americans know best.

Yet, the bigger issue here is the duplicity of hegemonic states that have the power to not only lecture poor countries on climate change, but to take concrete actions to impede the development of Guyana's hydrocarbon resources.

Biden, you may recall, essentially vetoed a (US) \$182 million loan that has gone through two years of prior approval at the IDB and other institutions associated with the application.

For transparency, I should let you know I do think that the US is a force for good in the world. However, that does not prevent me, or anyone else, with a basic sense of fairness, to acknowledge that there is lots of climate change bullying taking place against small countries like Guyana.

In the event you think that the debt-to oil deal is a one-off, you should know that earlier this year "...the Biden administration approved a major and controversial oil drilling plan in Alaska, known as Willow, just one day after unveiling protections for more than 16 million acres of land and water in the region."

The plan would allow Conoco-Phillips to produce 600 million barrels of oil during its

lifespan ([Newburger, CNBC, March 13, 2023](#)).

In the same article, CNBC stated that Conoco-Phillips will have access to "...a 23-million-acre area that is the largest expanse of public lands in the US".

This writer is keen to hear from all those activists who are against Guyana developing its natural resources for the betterment of its citizens and residents. These naysayers are likely to invoke the old bogeyman, namely, that the US is advancing its 'national interest'.

Fine, but Guyana also has national interests, and so do all of those states in the Third World that have not for decades, but for centuries, been disciplined, punished, and ultimately oppressed by those with the resources to conduct hegemonic governance of the international system.

At times like these, one cannot help but think back to the Bandung (1955) moment in world history when India, Indonesia, and other states just freed from colonialism, issued the call for greater Third World solidarity. I use Third World in that Bandung sense, in that spirit of progressive internationalism.

One can only hope that the local collaborators who are against the economic development of Guyana would for once draw a lesson from how the world really works. It is called realism; political realism. This is what the conduct of international economic affairs are based on. What Guyana wants from climate change governance is basic fairness defined as equal treatment.

Dr Persaud is Adviser in the Office of the President of Guyana, & Professor Emeritus, SIS, American University, Washington, D.C.



Randolph Persaud

**SHIPPING WEEKLY TO:**  
**ANTIGUA, ARUBA, BARBADOS, DOMINICA, GRENADA, GUYANA, JAMAICA, ST. LUCIA, ST. VINCENT, AND TRINIDAD**



**R&S Cargo Express Inc.**  
*Air Land Or Sea We Deliver For Less*  
 2715 Rena Road, Mississauga, Ontario, L4T 3K1





**JUMBO BARRELS NOW AVAILABLE!**



**SPECIALS TO GUYANA**  
**SHIP EARLY FOR SUMMER**  
**PLEASE CALL FOR PRICES & SPECIAL RATES**  
**WE SHIP FOR LESS**  
**CHECK THE OTHERS AND COMPARE**




Shipping all personal and household items to your destination in 6 weeks or less!

**WESTERN UNION**  
**MONEY TRANSFER**

**VISITING GUYANA SOON? FOR AN ENJOYABLE STAY FURNISHED 2-BEDROOM SUITE ALL AMENITIES INCLUDED**  
**LOT 128 NEW ROAD, VREED-EN-HOOP WEST COAST DEMERARA GUYANA**  
**CONTACT: 416-738-8078**



**905-677-6400**  
[rscargoexpress.ca](http://rscargoexpress.ca) [rscargoexpressinc@yahoo.ca](mailto:rscargoexpressinc@yahoo.ca)





Members celebrate a job well done at the VCC's Indian arrival commemoration

## VCC celebrates Indian Arrival

By Janet Naidu

The Vedic Cultural Centre held its 25th annual commemoration of the 185th anniversary of the arrival of Indians in the western hemisphere on May 27. The event took place at the Vedic Cultural Centre in Markham.

The presentation featured artifacts and historical information, a stage program with a keynote address, a dance drama, and a souvenir magazine with historical and contemporary information about the new generation of Indo-Caribbeans in the Canadian landscape.

While the celebration marked the history of Indians who left India between 1838 to 1917 to settle in Guyana and other parts in the Caribbean, at the same time it also recognised their migration to Canada as a diaspora.

Admission to the event was free thanks to sponsors, especially from the City of Markham. Attendees viewed displays of historical artifacts ranging from a mini model of a *logie*, where Indentured Indians lived while working on sugarcane plantations.

Also among the historical artifacts were a mud fireside, cooking utensils, and other household instruments used in the kitchen and in homes.

The program in the lower hall was hosted by Adit Kumar, who introduced Member of Parliament Paul Chiang.

In his address, Chiang conveyed the City of Markham-Unionville's greetings to the gathering, and also presented VCC with an award in recognition of its outstanding contribution.

He also commended VCC for "preserving, practicing, and growing the Vedic tradition for the benefit of all Canadians", and participated in the launch of the souvenir magazine.

In the 88-page magazine are several articles on Indo-Caribbean experiences and overall contributions to both the pre-Indentureship and post-Indentureship periods.

It also explores the arduous journey Indians endured, their successes, and positive influences in society, which are notable in the legacies of their descendants, and now in the Indo-Caribbean diaspora.

Generously supported by several businesses in the community, the magazine was distributed to attendees at no charge.

Also among the exhibits were tables with books, with booths available for *mehndi* art, sari wrapping, learning to write one's name in

Hindi script, and cooking roti.

Locations in Guyana were also on exhibit, along with typical Indo-Caribbean meals. A wide variety of Indo-Caribbean vegetarian dishes and refreshments were also available.

Also featured was a display of leaders in the Indo-Caribbean Canadian community that depicted the movement and settlement of Indo-Caribbeans in Canada.

The evening's program was hosted by the youthful Varun Kumar and Nadia Umadas, whom Kumar introduced as "the next generation of leaders of the VCC who will be taking the VCC to higher levels".

And in his keynote address, Cliff Rajkumar emphasised the importance of young people getting involved in the community, and then playing an important role in continuing Indo-Caribbean cultural heritage in Canada.

The program also included readings by poets Peter Jailall and Janet Naidu.

However, the evening's main feature was a dance drama, *Hesperus 1838 2.0*, which was presented by Panwar Music and Dance Productions. Its main actors and dancers depicted the youths born in Canada, and who are involved in learning about their Indian cultural heritage through artistic performances.

Kumar noted that *Hesperus 1838 2.0* was written and choreographed by Vaishali Panwar of Panwar Music and Dance. Performed for the 175th anniversary celebrations in 2013, the original drama was re-scripted and expanded into Version 2 for this year's 185th celebration.

For its commemoration effort, the VCC received many congratulatory greetings for continuing to tell the story of a people who made their journey from the east to the west.

And notably, this commemorative event would not have been possible without the dedication, commitment, and effort from the VCC South Asian Heritage Committee, chaired by Kumar, with co-chairs Rabindra Nauth and Varun Kumar.

Its strong team of committee members included Sita Raykha, Norman Jainarine, Hema Singh, Keoli Kumar, Savi Ramsaroop, Das Ramsaroop, Viresh Raghubeer, Nadia Umadas, Sharada Bhajan, Harry Persaud, Shailesh Joshi, and Rabi Nauth.

Gratitude was also expressed to Rajiv Persaud of Bluetree Publishing and Design for the design and layout of the commemorative souvenir magazine.



Dance performance at the VCC commemorative event



# Ask Jay...

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

## RENTAL INCREASE GUIDELINE CONFUSES LANDLORDS & TENANTS

The GTA rental market is rattling. The combination of high levels of immigration, steep borrowing costs, and low inventory are sending rental prices higher from pre-pandemic to now; the cost of renting jumped by 41 percent in the GTA. An average two-bedroom condo is renting for around \$3,200 plus monthly hydro. When a tenant adds hydro and insurance, the total is around \$40,000 after-tax dollars in a year. Ouch!

With escalating rent, the new rental increase guideline is confusing to landlords and tenants alike. The rent increase guideline is set every year based on inflation. For 2023, the rent increase guideline is 2.5 percent for rental properties built before November 15, 2018. This guideline is the maximum a landlord can increase most tenants' rent for a given year without approval from the Landlord and Tenant Board.

New buildings, addition to an existing building, and most new basement apartments occupied for the first time as a residence after November 15, 2018, are exempted from rent control.

Here is an example of how to calculate the rental increase. Suppose you signed a lease on July 1, 2022, for \$2,000. Since the guideline for 2023 is 2.5 percent, the monthly rent can be increased by \$50. A landlord can increase the rent on July 1, 2023. Landlords must give a tenant written notice 90 days before July 1, 2023, using the [N1 form from Tribunals Ontario's website](#).

The recent spike in rental rates leaves many landlords with underperforming properties. Some landlords seek reasons to evict tenants so that they can rent the property at a much higher rent. One reason for eviction is constant late payment of rent.

A landlord can also evict a tenant in good standing if they want to use the unit for themselves or a family member, or if they are selling the property, and the buyer wants it for their own personal use. If a landlord is evicting a tenant for personal use, the landlord must give the tenant a minimum incentive of one month's rent.

The Landlord and Tenant Board can fine landlords or purchasers who evict tenants for personal use and then rent the property to someone else. The fine for acting in bad faith for an individual is now \$50,000, and for a corporation, \$250,000.

My advice is to respect each other. A tenant should endeavour to take care of the landlord's property, and a landlord should take care of the tenant.

## LAW OFFICE

### GENERAL PRACTICE

**Chet Sharma**

B.A., B.S.W. (Hons), LL.B

Barrister, Solicitor & Notary Public

• Immigration Law

• Criminal Law

• Divorce & Family Law

• Notarisations, Affidavits

• Power of Attorney, Wills

OFFICE

**416-285-1550**

Emergency:

**416-284-9191**

By Appointment Only

150 Lawson Road, Toronto, ON M1C 2J4



**MUNGOL SINGH**  
BARRISTER SOLICITOR & NOTARY PUBLIC

ROMA S. MUNGOL (SINGH)  
LL.B. - LONDON ENGLAND  
(SOLICITOR OF THE SUPREME COURT  
OF ENGLAND AND WALES)

**SPECIALTY: FAMILY LAW**  
OTHER: CRIMINAL LAW | REAL ESTATE LAW | WILLS & ESTATES LAW

40 WESTMORE DRIVE, SUITE 202  
ETOBICOKE, ON M9V 4C2

(416) 745-SING (7464)  
FAX: (416) 745-1464  
ROMA@MUNGOLSINGH.CA



**RESHMA AUDHO**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

tintalee  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Tel: 647-237-9816  
email: rdaudho@hotmail.com  
www.tintaleephoto.com

/tintaleephoto  
@tintaleephoto

**Better savings start here**

Lower your premiums when you insure both your car and home with us.

Stop in, call or click to get a quote today.

Sherry A Harrikissoon Ins Agcy Inc  
Sherry A Harrikissoon, Agent  
13311 Yonge St Unit 103  
Richmond Hill ON L4E 3L6  
905-773-9782

**Desjardins**  
Insurance

Certain conditions, limitations and exclusions may apply.  
Desjardins Insurance refers to Certas Home and Auto Insurance Company, underwriter of automobile and property insurance or Desjardins Financial Security Life Assurance Company, underwriter of life insurance and living benefits products.  
Desjardins, Desjardins Insurance and related trademarks are trademarks of the Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, used under licence.



**YOUR COMMUNITY FACILITY OWNED AND OPERATED BY KAMAL BHARDWAJ, ONTARIO LICENCED SOUTH ASIAN FUNERAL DIRECTOR. WE ARE PROFESSIONAL, RESPECTFUL AND CARING.**

**Tel: 647-547-8188**  
info@lotusfuneralandcremation.com  
www.lotusfuneralandcremation.com

**Seating capacity for 500. Adaptable rooms for smaller funerals. Can accommodate larger gatherings.**

121 City View Drive, Toronto, Ontario M9W 5A8

Conveniently located to serve Toronto and areas west of the City including Etobicoke, Brampton, Bramalea and Mississauga. Cremations are done on the premises without leaving the building. Large gatherings can view start of cremations. Media available to broadcast proceedings.



Pre-arrangement plans available. Free executor support for Canada Pension Plan and Survivor Benefits. In-home services offered if desired.

# Lalchan 'Rafi' Singh - Trinidad songbird thrills NY listeners

By Dhanpaul Narine

Lalchan 'Rafi' Singh is one of the most versatile singers to emerge from Trinidad and Tobago. He has cultivated a following over the years, and he remains one of the most sought after singers in the New York area.

In addition to his singing talent, Lalchan is modest, personable, and a wealth of information about singing and social issues.

He has a most interesting history. He was born in Tunapuna, in east Trinidad. His mom was Somaria and his dad was Girwar Singh, a sadhu from India.

Girwar arrived in Trinidad in 1910 on the *Matla Jahaj*. He was from Nandagao Barsana in Vrindavan, and the port of entry was Mathura.

On arrival in Trinidad, Girwar was assigned to work on Boodhoo Singh estate in San Fernando. He married Somaria and the union produced one child. He was Lalchan.

Growing up in Trinidad was exciting for the young Lalchan. His dad took him to various religious functions and taught him Hindi, a language that Lalchan can read and write fluently.

Girwar and Pandit Satnarine Panday worked closely, and they would ask Lalchan to participate in the singing of *bhajans*.

Lalchan attended the Tunapuna Hindu School, where the headmaster was Ramcharitar Rickey. He then went to the Tutorial School of Commerce in Morton Street, where he learned Advanced Bookkeeping.

Lalchan did a series of jobs that included delivering mails, and collecting advertisements for some of the leading newspapers.

He would listen to the radio, and decided that he liked the Mohamed Rafi songs.

He practiced hard and joined the *Beena Sangeet* orchestra

where he did well. This led Lalchan to the *Naya Zamana* orchestra, which was led by Narsaloo Ramaya. A street is named after Ramaya at the Diwali Nagar in central Trinidad.

The *Naya Zamana* orchestra gave Lalchan the opportunity to improve his singing talent. He teamed up with such notables as Myroon Mohamed, Jameer Hussain, Myadeen Akbarali, Terran Persaud, King Ratiram, and Dolly Gulcharan.

The late Kamaludin Mohammed, one-time right hand of the now-deceased Dr Eric Williams, was the Master of Ceremonies for *Naya Zamana*.

It was Mohammed who gave the 'Rafi' title to Lalchan. He credits the Yankaran family as being influential in his singing, especially Isaac Yankaran.

In 1966, Lalchan's idol, Mohamed Rafi, visited

Lalchan went on to own a record store, and he built a house for his parents. In 1983, there was a momentous occurrence. Lalchan went to India to visit Sri Satya Sai Baba. He took the time to tour Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore. The meeting with Sri Satya Sai Baba was electrifying. Sai Baba looked at Lalchan, and asked out of the blue, "You sing?" A book on the trip was published in 2005 called *Sparshan*.

Lalchan left Trinidad for the US in 1994. He stayed in Richmond Hill, and found a job at JFK Airport. He became friends with Jimmy Maharaj, and soon he was singing in the mandirs and making compact discs.

The community in New York has shown its appreciation for Lalchan. He is warmly received, and given the respect as one that carries the culture in his bosom.

Lalchan says that he is proud to connect with India. He knows the lyrics and the meanings of the Hindi words, thanks to his dad. This was evident in his performance at the Indian Arrival Day 2023 celebrations that was sponsored by the Indo-Caribbean Federation. Lalchan

excelled on stage and was accorded a huge round of applause.

Lalchan is grateful to the many persons that have helped to mould his career. His parents Girwar and Somaria remain icons in his life. He thanks singers Bansraj Ramkisoon and Latchman Bissoon for their guidance. Lalchan speaks highly of Pandit Reepu Daman Persaud of Guyana, who was an inspiration to many.

Apart from singing, Lalchan follows cricket. His favourite cricketers are Garfield Sobers, Rohan Kanhai, and Brian Lara.

There is no doubt that Lalchan "Rafi" Singh has done much to put Indian culture on the map in Trinidad and Tobago, and in New York. He is only too happy to sing at various events, and to share his talents. We salute him for his contributions and wish him and his family all the best in the future.



Lalchan 'Rafi' Singh



Sadhu Girwar Singh

Trinidad. There was a 'Rafi competition', and Lalchan won it. The song was *Rakhwale* from *Baiju Bawra*, and he was awarded a trophy. This led him to sing with the *BWIA International National Indian Orchestra*, and *Dil-e-Nadan*.

In 1971, Lalchan was invited to sing on the *Mastana Bahar* competition, where he won prizes in the preliminaries. He went on to win the competition, and was awarded a motor car. This pleased his dad greatly.

Lalchan began working with Kirpalani's store in Frederick Street, where he was assigned to the record department.

In 1975, a most joyous event occurred in Lalchan's life. He met the love of his life Parbatee. She was from Las Lomas. The marriage has produced two wonderful children, Narendra and Anju.

## Faith, commitment, dedication, '... and the rest is history'



Brampton Triveni Mandir family portrait (left to right) are daughter Gauri Dhanraj; son Dr Yudhishtir Dhanraj; dad Pandit Munesh Dhanraj; & mom Seeta Dhanraj



Co-spiritual leader & head pandit at Brampton Triveni Mandir, Dr Yudhishtir Dhanraj, places a tika on the forehead of MP Melissa Lantsman, deputy leader of the Conservative Party of Canada; looking on are Morarilal (left), & Gauri Dhanraj at right



A section of devotees that attended the opening of Brampton Triveni Mandir

From Page 1

he began thinking about returning to Guyana.

Then there was a pivotal moment that came one evening when the land was discovered upon which Brampton Triveni Mandir now stands.

"[We] came to the showroom that was on this land... the sign was on the side... [indicating it] was designated as a place of worship. And from that moment, the magic started to work," he said.

Pandit Dhanraj also indicated that the land on which Triveni was built was being sought by a Catholic church. However, its owners, Royal Prime, chose to sell it for the construction of the mandir.

"And the rest is history," he declared.

In light of the quest to continue the confluence of faith and tradition from

India to Bartica, and now in Brampton, Pandit Dhanraj said, "I want to tell you that you can do anything that is possible... The Gita says, 'It is not how it begins, but how it ends'. Many things that begin good do not end good; and many things that begin very hard, will be successful."

In a release following the opening, the Hindu Federation described the ceremony as "truly a magical occasion that will go down in Triveni's history as one of its greatest events".

It added, "After three years of construction, and even more years of hard work, the founders and board of Triveni Mandir felt as though everything was worth it when they saw so many people flood Triveni's doors to celebrate the opening."

Also, "To see the public gather together, pray as one voice, relish the building and its scenery, and smile and dance inside the temple, makes one hopeful for the future of Triveni Mandir and its goal to reignite the fire of Satya Sanaathan Dharma in the hearts of all those who visit."

The opening ceremony also saw celebratory speeches made by pandits, government officials, and community leaders. It ended with a massive and uplifting ceremonial blessing, the *aarti*, which was followed by a sumptuous meal.

Dhevin Indar contributed to this article

# Queens Book Fair celebrates Indo-Caribbean heritage

By Dhanpaul Narine

We celebrated Black History Month in March 2023. Two months later, we gathered to celebrate Indo-Caribbean Heritage, and to pay homage to the forebears that crossed the *kala pani*, or dark waters, from India to the Caribbean.

This year's observances were different. The idea was to look ahead, to chart a course for the children of the second migration, and to examine the extent to which they could influence policy in the receiving societies.

The program took place at the Queens Library in New York, and attracted a mixture of students and seasoned professionals.

It was held under the auspices of the Queens Book Fair and Literary Festival, a not-for-profit organisation whose objective is to promote literacy in Queens, New York.

A moment of silence was observed for the victims of Mahdia tragedy in Guyana.

This was followed by greetings from Michael Brotherson of the Guyana Consulate in New York.

He congratulated Guyana for its anniversary, and also the Queens Book Fair for holding a function to recognise the contributions of Indo-Caribbeans to Guyana and the Caribbean.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Sunil Sitahal, Suriname's ambassador to the United Nations. He expressed the hope that all communities could work together to bring about worthwhile change.

The meeting was declared open by Vijaykrishnan from the Indian Consulate in New York. He congratulated Guyana on its Independence, and lauded the close relationship between Guyana and India, and the rest of the Caribbean.

He said, "Young people should have respect for each other. There is a lot of similarity between Guyana and India. The Book Fair shows that studies are very important. I am glad to see so many young people. Everything is easily available out there, but you should concentrate on your studies."

There was a scholarly paper by Ashook Ramsaran who looked at *Indo-Caribbeans in America*. He examined the origins of East Indian migration, the regions with significant populations, their religion and culture, their prominent high achievements, and a number of street-namings that were done in the name of the community.

Ramsaran was involved in some of these naming of streets, including Ramesh Kalicharran Way, Little Guyana Avenue, Pandit Ramlall Way, Maharishi Dayananda Gurukula Street, and Dharamacharya Laldharry Seeratan Way.

The Queens Book Fair and the community are indebted to his service and scholarship.

The students selected a variety of Indo-Caribbean personalities to highlight.

Ariana Narine spoke of the contributions of President Dr Cheddi Jagan to the freedom movement of Guyana and the Caribbean, and said he was an inspiration to freedom fighters everywhere.

Amelia Persaud dealt with the life and contributions of Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the former Prime Minister of Trinidad



Vijaykrishnan (center) from the Indian Consulate in New York, shares a light moment with members at the Queens Book Fair

and Tobago. She concluded that Persad-Bissessar is a voice that will continue to be heard in Trinidad and Tobago's politics.

Veena Bedasie took on the task of interviewing a number of Indo-Caribbean women trailblazers. They were Principal Mala Panday, Jennifer Bisram, a reporter for *CBS Channel 2 News*; Judge Karen Gopee; Judge Andrea Sabita Ogle; Dr Kamini Doobay, a Mt Sinai Emergency Room Attending Physician, and Shamela Karrim of *WPAT 930 AM Radio*.

This was a most admirable assignment, and Veena did remarkably well. The message from these personalities is that young people should not give up in the face of challenges. They should persevere and become motivated by what are nothing more than temporary setbacks.

Anil Bedasie echoed these sentiments, and suggested that we need more academic meetings to showcase the intellectual side of the community.

There was a musical interlude that featured Son Son Sonipersaud. He sang a popular Mohamed Rafi song *Akela Hoon Main* in the company of several persons.

Jelecia Blair gave a short biography of Basdeo Panday, the former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Panday surprised everyone by calling live to the Book Fair and giving his best wishes. This was done through the efforts of Deo Gosine.

Melissa Deokie chose to profile Swami Aksharananda and the Saraswati Vidya Niketan High School. She pointed out that Swamiji had long wanted to open a school to bring affordable and quality education to Guyanese.

The SVN school has over 450 students, and currently tops Guyana and the Caribbean in the examinations.

This led to the presentation by Anita Sanehi from Richmond Hill High School in Queens, New York. She spoke about the importance of mental health in the community, and distributed literature on the subject.

Amy and her sister Aruna Lall recalled the important role played by Kowsilla, who refused to allow scabs to break a strike in the sugar industry. Kowsilla paid the ultimate sacrifice and her sculpture is engraved by the eminent Karr Dyal as a reminder of the fight against colonialism.

The distinguished Trinidadian Deo Gosine reminded young Indo-Caribbeans to do the research on Indian ancestry, and to publish the findings for the benefit of the community.

Suriname has always been an important part of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora. Mohini Shibsahai gave a concise history of Suriname, and highlighted the role of its President Chandrikapersad Santokhi, who is working hard to make his country self-sufficient.

Rusat Ramgopal viewed the future with optimism. He saw the day in which Indo-Caribbean leaders would be elected to higher office in New York, and elsewhere, and effect political and other changes.

Samantha Tappin read a poem *Black and Brown* in which she called for racial unity in Guyana.

Poems with similar themes were also read by Shivaaya Diya Ramdial and Selena Khelawan.

Sara Ali spoke glowingly about her mom Dr Minewattie Ali, a former teacher in the New York Public school system.

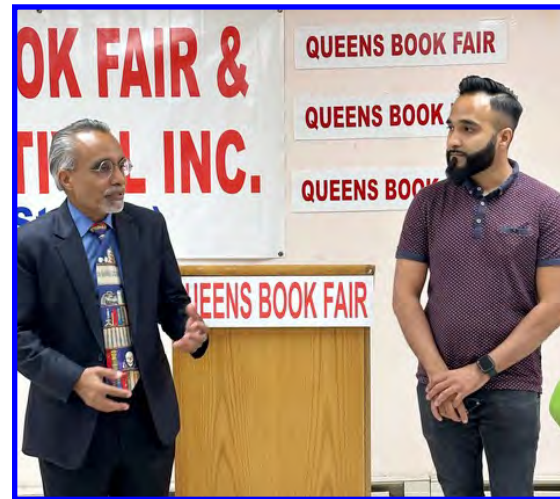
Ali was an effective and caring English Language Arts teacher, who worked hard to earn a doctoral degree from St John's University in New York. She gave most of her service in schools where the intake of Indo-Caribbean students was high.

Sara, an attorney, is the Section Chief in the Refugee Division, of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service.

One of the highlights of the Book Fair was the award of two scholarships to Richmond Hill High School students. This was done by Dr Mirza Ijaz Rahman, a brilliant Guyanese doctor. He is currently president of the American College of Preventative Medicine. The scholarships will be awarded to Indo-Caribbean students starting in 2023.

The vote of thanks was given by Indi Mohan, who thanked the Director of the Queens Book Fair, Dr Dhanpaul Narine, as well as Ashook Ramsaran, the Queens Library, and the participants and donors, for an outstanding event.

The next meeting will be on July 1, 2024 where the theme will be "Poetry is Life".



Dr Mirza Rahman (left) presents two scholarships to the Assistant Principal of Richmond Hill High School that are to be awarded to Indo-Caribbean students

# Niagara Falls lit up with colours of Guyana's Golden Arrowhead

**Niagara** – The colours of Guyana's Golden Arrowhead illuminated faces, the sky, and Niagara Falls on the evening of May 26 in celebration of Guyana's 57th anniversary as an independent nation.

While the occasion was festive, at the same time it was marked with solemnity, with the illumination of the Falls paying tribute to the children who perished in the fire that swept through the Mahdia Secondary School Dormitory. Twenty children died, with many more students injured following the tragic event, which occurred on May 21.

Meanwhile, here in Toronto, a Candlelight Service was held for the Madhia victims by the Consulate General on May 30. The event was attended by leaders and members of the diaspora.

In a statement on its Facebook page, the High Commissioner and Staff at The High Commission in Ottawa expressed satisfaction that "many Guyanese witnessed, either in person or via social media, the illumination of the colours of the Golden Arrowhead at Niagara Falls".

The statement also noted that the illumination "paid tribute to the [20] children who perished in the fire at the Mahdia Secondary School Dormitory", and the children who were injured.

Additionally, it noted that the Niagara event also honoured the bravery of fire fighters, other first responders, and pilots, "all of whom risked their own lives to rescue those who were trapped in the Dormitory, and to take relief to, and transport those, who needed medical attention".



Mohamed Osman Ali, Bibi Sharimal Ali, & Joe Jaglal at the candlelight vigil

The statement further noted, "The compassion of our medical workers and the immediate response from the community of Mahdia – and Guyana as a whole – give all of us much hope and inspiration."



Acting Consul General Grace Joseph, Swami Bhajananda, & the Consulate's Nutana Singh

It also noted, "As Guyana continues to heal as a nation, the illumination celebrated our togetherness in good times and bad; our sense of pride as a people; and our commitment to each other in the darkest hour."

# THE CARPENTERS' REGIONAL COUNCIL TAKES PRIDE IN ALL OUR MEMBERS HAPPY PRIDE MONTH



**SAFE, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE  
TO EVERYONE.**

222 Rowntree Dairy Road, Woodbridge, ON L4L 9T2

T: 905-652-4140 | F: 905-652-4139

 @CarpentersONT

<https://thecarpentersunion.ca/inclusive-workplace/>





## Indo-Caribbean women panel

An upcoming panel presentation, *Indo-Caribbean Women Past and Present*, will take place at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto (across from the ROM) on June 14 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. It will be followed by a discussion moderated by the University of Toronto's Alissa Trotz.

The panel supports and expands upon the subject of ceramist Heidi McKenzie's innovative exhibition, *Reclaimed: Indo-Caribbean HerStories*, which is now taking place at the Gardiner Museum; it ends on August 27.

Ramabai Espinet will reflect on the jahaji legacies of *Coolie Belles* in Caribbean nation states and their expanding diasporas; Nalini Mohabir will trace the trajectory of Indo-Caribbean women's role in politics shaped by labour movements in the sugar industry; and Joy Mahabir will discuss the literal and symbolic meanings of Indo-Caribbean women's jewelry.

The panel is free, and all are invited. However, please note that registration is required for the event. [Click here to register.](#)

Entry to the Museum itself is free on Wednesdays. Also, the exhibit itself is a multi-faceted presentation, utilising photography, jewelry, the famous "coolie belles" photographs by Felix Morin, and McKenzie's own ceramic pieces.

Innovative and inspiring, it opens up many possibilities for discussion of the experiences of Indo-Caribbean women then and now.



## Is the brave new world of AI an existential threat to humanity?

Is Artificial Intelligence (AI) a threat to humanity? There are growing signs that it could very well be. You cannot un-invent things. AI follows algorithms – a set of rules in problem-solving as in a computer. It has a fabulous memory. Its logic and the principle of parsimony – bits of information following a pattern, are pulled together to form a conclusion. Doctors often use this principle in medical diagnosis.

There is an old saying... if it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, looks like a duck, it must be a duck. AI grabs bits and pieces from all around, quickly and efficiently, and works on it.

Does computer science have built in ethics? Does it develop autonomously? AI is in its infancy.

We might be the last generation of "human beings". The next generation may be aliens.

Some say that AI is becoming an existential threat. Some of the pioneers of AI have retreated from its development for fear of where it might go. Some suggest that it could explain the origin of the Covid-19 virus escaping from the lab, and mutating on its "merry" way! The same with the development of nuclear energy to blow us all into dust!

Machines now have the ability to converse with humans, to play a game of chess and win against a human. Unscrupulous politicians have been using AI for propaganda purposes in advertising and brainwashing an audience with misinformation. The evils of the likes of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin come to mind, even in Canada. Entities like Google and Tesla have been quick to utilise the new technology.

AI has invaded the field of medicine in no uncertain way.

**Bernard Heydorn**



A paralysed man is now able to walk just by thinking about it! Operations are being performed remotely, with the help of CAT scans, MRI, brain scans, computerised blood scans, DNA identification... all modern miracles, virtually unknown when I was born.

Doctors offices may soon shut down and be replaced with remote diagnosis and treatment. Many clients are already diagnosing themselves online, avoiding a visit to a doctor's office.

In business and commerce, banks are closing tellers and the like, retreating to bank machines and financial advisers. One of my first jobs was a bank clerk – cash book boy, going around and entering daily transactions in a big "cash book". It took the better part of a day, and even overtime, if the books did not balance. Compare that to the computerised system today. My former job is long obsolete.

Teaching and learning have been transformed. Distance learning, TV and computer learning, home learning, and schools may very well become obsolete. Working and learning from home became viable during the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

Transportation is a modern miracle. Self-driving cars, buses, trains, aircraft – you name it. Robots are doing the job. They are very efficient, do not complain about the hours of work, and do not require a cup of coffee to keep them going.

War is being conducted many miles away from the battlefield. The movie *Star Wars* comes to mind! Intergalactic warfare. There are still soldiers in the trenches, not with rifles and bayonets but with deadly drones. Nuclear war some say is AI

indocaribbeanworld.com | june 7, 2023

## Beyond Indentureship explores legacies

The pioneering role played by Indo-Trinidadian women in the growth and development of successful enterprises following Indentureship in Trinidad and Tobago is among explorations by author Hemraj Ramdath in his book, *Beyond Indentureship: Indo-Trinidadian Entrepreneurs*.

*Beyond Indentureship* was launched last month, and was featured during Indian Arrival Day celebrations, which took place on May 30 in Trinidad and Tobago.

Among the reports published in the Trinidad and Tobago media, Ramdath noted that a section of the book focused on the role played by Indo-Trinidadian women in the growth and development of businesses in post-indentureship Trinidad and Tobago.

"For too long... we have not recognised their contributions. Simply because they have been in the background, although they were [pillars] of strength," he said.

Among the women pioneers who established businesses that are now iconic to Trinidad and Tobago were SM Jaleel and the work of Anna Mohammed; there was the input from Pulbassia Charran of Charran's; and the guiding hands of the mother of developer Dr Krishna Bahadoorsingh.

As Ramdath noted, the Bahadoorsingh family, through its companies Caribbean Housing Ltd, Westmoorings Ltd, and Jang Estates Ltd, is today recognised for the development of many communities and spaces in Trinidad and Tobago. Among them are Westmoorings in western Trinidad; and Brentwood, which is located on the old Edinburgh sugar estate in the central town of Chaguana.

As Ramdath revealed, the company began with the Bahadoorsingh matriarch handing her two sons \$90 back in 1920. The boys bought cloth with the money, which they sold in Penal, south Trinidad, and in the capital city of Port-of-Spain.

Also featured in the book are Radhica Saith, who started the first local halfway house for battered women. Also, the work of business mogul Helen Bhagwansingh, who was named Woman of the Millennium by the Energy Chamber of Trinidad and Tobago. She was the first woman to be inducted into Trinidad and Tobago's Chamber of Industry and Commerce Business Hall of Fame.

The hard work, commitment, and vision of these matriarchs are among the 33 businesses featured in Ramdath's text. He also describes some of these businesses as "legacy companies", noting they took root during Indentureship.

As he said, around ten to 12 companies in the book are over 100 years old, are still in existence, and are currently being managed generations later by family members.

"These companies were built to last. Rahamut Enterprises Ltd started in 1888, and is most probably the oldest company to exist in the Caribbean region," he said.

And as Ramdath noted, the founders of some of the companies that are today eminent and successful arrived in Trinidad as indentured labourers. Today these companies are among the largest employers in Trinidad and Tobago, notably in the service sector, he said.

Among the companies is Sacha Cosmetics, which is now an international brand, and operates in up to 100 locations worldwide. There are also products that are well-known in international markets that are manufactured by SM Jaleel, Karibbean Flavours, and Chatak Food Products.

"These are all brands, made in Trinidad and Tobago, developed in Trinidad and Tobago, and which are global. [These companies] developed products in the family, and entered all those markets," he said.

Little-known details are also revealed about how Indo-Trinidadian entrepreneurs overcame international obstacles, such as the founder of Solo Beverages Ltd being compelled to change his name from Sarjad Muckmadeen to Joseph Charles after his many letters to various UK soft drink manufacturers did not yield a single reply.

Another was the story of businessman Fen Mohammed, who left school at an early age to urgently find full-time work. Mohammed later went on to create a lasting business legacy.

Said Ramdath: "The book is a celebration of entrepreneurship. The idea is to demonstrate that there are no limitations to what you can achieve once you decide what you want to do with your life."

He also recognised his ancestry, acknowledging the challenges faced by his grandparents.

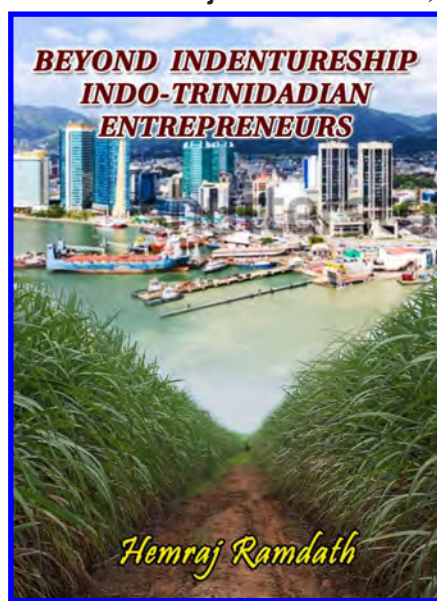
"My grandfather was born aboard the SS *Avon* on December 17, 1904, the 20th day of the ship's voyage from Calcutta to Trinidad. As a newborn, he would survive 69 days under unimaginable sea and ship conditions," Ramdath revealed.

His grandfather's name was Rampersad. Grandmother, Ramkaliah, was a market vendor for over three decades.

In extending one of the book's motifs on visionary matriarchal input, Ramdath noted his grandmother taught him that everything is possible with hard work, faith, and determination.



**Hemraj Ramdath**



gone crazy!

Entertainment on the TV, Internet, iPads, and computers can meet all your requirements. Old movies, new movies, home-made movies, are all there for the asking. My father owned one of the first televisions in Barbados in the 1960s, and the folks living along our street used to come by and peep through our house windows to see a bit of the TV news, and shows like *Dr Kildare*. Electronic games can now be played. You can do almost everything from home.

The post office is just about to disappear as we know it. Growing up as a child in British Guiana, the postman made three deliveries a day, on foot: 8 am, 12 noon, and 4 pm. Drones can now deliver your mail or dinner at your front door.

The taxi is on its way out. Self-driving cars are more reliable. They never get lost, or rip you off like an unscrupulous taxi driver, who takes you into an alien neighbourhood, supposedly lost!

A mate can easily be found from a choice of hundreds on the computer. In fact, marriage is becoming more obsolete. Intelligence testing IQ is becoming a relic from the past.

You have to match up and compete with artificial intelligence. Life is not what it used to be. The machine, more and more, is becoming boss at home, and at work. More and more it is dictating our lives. Science Fiction is becoming the new "truth".

This is evident "in modern man syndrome": the head is bent forward, downwards, from many hours of watching an iPad or a screen! My neck is hurting me right now from doing the same, so I have to get out of here.

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



Procession marking Indian Arrival Day

## Centenarian honoured during Indian Arrival

**Port-of-Spain** – Celebrations of Indian Arrival Day on May 30 in Trinidad and Tobago by the Divya Jivan Hindu Mandir saw tribute paid to 104-year-old Ramrajie Ramsawak. During the event, Ramsawak recalled and honoured her father, who arrived in Trinidad with his parents as Indentured workers. She was born in 1919.

Ramsawak also rode in a procession seated in pirogue that was used to depict the *Fatel Razack*, the first ship that brought Indentured labourers to Trinidad.

Following the procession, Ramsawak recalled the harsh conditions Indentured labourers and their families endured under British colonial rule. Many amenities that make life easier are available today that were not around when she was growing up in the early 1900s, she said.

“[Then] things were hard. We were drinking the river water. I was cooking and washing. [Today we] have pipes, sinks, comfort. I planted rice and cane. I cut cane and worked hard,” she said.

The mandir’s Pundit Rajendra Maharaj said the procession was held to honour the Jahajis who arrived in Trinidad 178 years ago. The procession was accompanied by traditional Indian music and tassa drumming.



Centenarian Ramrajie Ramsawak

## ‘Paradise in peril’ but hope remains: Justice Seepersad

**Port-of-Spain** – The “paradise” that his Indentured Indian ancestors found when they were brought to Trinidad over 100 years ago is in peril today, Justice Frank Seepersad said last week. However, he added it was not all lost.

At the time, Seepersad was addressing the Citizen One Foundation’s annual Heritage and Leadership Conference breakfast fellowship, the event taking place in Port-of-Spain on Indian Arrival Day, which was marked in Trinidad and Tobago on May 30.

Noting the observance of Indian Arrival Day and the legacy left by his ancestors, Seepersad said, “Today we proudly herald their sterling contribution in converting this land into a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and diverse society.”

However, he went on to declare, “Sadly, our ancestors’ paradise is in peril. Crime is out of control, many are struggling to meet their basic daily requirements, and there exists an unacceptable degree of divisiveness, dishonesty, and disingenuous discourse. Far too often, issues and solutions are no longer addressed or formulated in a rational, logical, or methodological manner.”

He added, “Instead, they are fashioned by considerations of class, ethnicity, lineage, and affiliation. Our Indentured forefathers overcame significant challenges, discrimination, and prejudices, but they persevered, and in one generation, excelled. This day of remembrance and reflection should serve to renew our resolve to protect and preserve this paradise, this home in which our all forefathers saw tremendous and unlimited potential.”

In order to achieve this objective, changes have to be made on an individual basis, Seepersad said.

“This must commence by rejecting the rancorous rhetoric aimed at dividing us. The preservation of our paradise requires us to spurn the polarisation, which prevails because this position pulverises peace, productivity, prosperity, and progress, and poses as our primary threat,” he stated.

Additionally, “We are at a critical juncture, and there can be no room for complacency, hatred, bias, or inaction. Every civil-minded citizen must now put the country first. If we fail to act, our comeuppance will be a cacophony of cries, and the clamour of citizens as the society implodes.”

However, on an optimistic note, Seepersad said paradise was not yet lost. He later recommended strategies to be explored in order to save what his “Papo” [maternal great grandfather] had declared to be a “paradise”.

‘Papo’ arrived in Trinidad as Indentured labourer, Seepersad revealed.

“The conversations we shared about his Indentured experience were engaging, and he related the trauma and inhumanity to which he and his *Jahaji Bhai* were subjected. Having gone to a village fair [in India], he was informed there was a lucrative job offer to farm in Trinidad. This, he thought, was some place in India,” Seepersad said.

He added, “After entering the Registration office, he lost his freedom, as he was virtually imprisoned, subjected to rigorous medical testing, and eventually placed on a boat which landed him on these shores. His wife and three year old son never saw him after he bade them farewell to attend the fair. Here in this land, he created a new life, and when his servitude ended, he elected to stay.”

‘Papo’ passed away when Seepersad was 16 years old.



Justice Frank Seepersad (left to right), urologist Dr Trudy Kawal, & NGC chairman Dr Joseph Khan during the Heritage and Leadership Conference breakfast fellowship, which was held on May 30 in Port-of-Spain to celebrate Indian Arrival Day in Trinidad & Tobago

However, before he died, both he and Seepersad shared several memorable conversations together.

Among the talks was why ‘Papo’ did not return to India. Seepersad said ‘Papo’ noted that “Trinidad [was] well nice.”

Additionally, “He said, ‘Everything grows here. In India when it hot, you [can’t] breathe; when it rains, it floods; and when it cold, nothing does grow. Here is paradise’. And as dehumanising and arduous as his journey across the *kala pani* [black water] was, it led him here, to his paradise; our paradise. Papo had no say in the decision effected to bring him here, but he, like many others who arrived here, elected to stay because they all saw and understood how special this land really is.”

Against the background of his ancestor’s recognition of the potential in his new homeland, Seepersad said nationals cannot pretend that everything is well today in Trinidad and Tobago.

Changes are needed, he declared. Among them was reform of the Constitution, which would be a pivotal moment in the process of unity.

He said this reform needed to be relevant and relatable, and the antiquated administrative and electoral processes that currently exist have to be replaced with efficient, effective, and practical systems designed to reflect Trinidad and Tobago’s “unique plurality, facilitate ease of business, foster economic growth, and curb corruption”.

There is also a need for a bi-partisan formulation of a long-

term National Development Plan, instead of parliamentarians pressing the “reset button” every election season, he said.

And he noted that unity in Trinidad and Tobago was the most important way forward, and once it was achieved, the nation would be unstoppable.

“We have a lot to be proud of as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, but we have a lot of work ahead of us if we are to truly realise our fullest potential, and preserve this paradise which all our ancestors cherished and revered. The struggles of the past and the indomitable spirit of all our forefathers, of every ethnicity, should inspire us all to become agents of change,” he said.

Also, “Our shared history must now motivate us to embrace each other as we form a beautiful and binding ‘brotherhood of the land’, and prioritise being “Trinbago bhai.”

Seepersad said nationals must pledge themselves to alter “our current course, and elect to traverse a path which is defined by honest engagement which transcends the ethnic, political, religious, and social divide in an earnest attempt to transform Trinidad and Tobago into a nation where every creed and race truly finds an equal place”.

He added, “Our diversity is our greatest asset as it enriches this nation. There is unity in diversity, not in uniformity. We are a rainbow people and we must trust, embrace and accept each other... to ensure that we live and work together harmoniously.”

And he affirmed, “This is, not yet, a paradise lost.”



Trinidad & Tobago's Health Minister Dr Terrence Deyalsingh (left) meets with WHO's director-general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus during the 76th World Health Assembly late last month in Geneva

## T&T targets fast food marketing, NCDs

**Port-of-Spain** – A call was made last week by Trinidad and Tobago's Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh for robust and targeted approaches to address marketing strategies used by multinational corporations that encourage increased consumption of fast food by teens and adolescents.

Deyalsingh said the objective in doing so was with the intention to prevent an explosive increase in the rate of Non-Communicable Diseases, including cancer.

Deyalsingh made the call during his delivery of the national statement at the 76th World Health Assembly, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland. During his address, he highlighted the scourge of NCDs, and called for more robust, targeted action.

In a release later from the Health Ministry, the government stated that with Trinidad and Tobago listed as one of the 28 front-runner countries set to receive support from the WHO to implement strategies aimed at prevention and management, Deyalsingh told the Assembly that unrepressed expansion of NCDs posed devastating global health consequences for individuals, families, and communities.

He also indicated that NCDs threaten to overwhelm health systems around the world.

It was later revealed that Deyalsingh also intends to meet with major fast food chains in Trinidad and Tobago to discuss providing healthier options for children, and limiting its marketing to such a young demographic.

As he noted, doing so is part of the government's plan to

reduce the incidence of NCDs.

"We are not speaking about regulations. We are not speaking of any punitive measures. What we are speaking about is sitting down with the fast food industry, the mega brands especially, and asking them to be aware of two things. One, how they market their products, and two, if we can work with them to offer healthy options for food and drink," he said.

He added, "We want these companies to thrive and to continue to make their profits because we understand they are major employers; [that] they pay taxes. So we are going the way of moral suasion, the same way I did it with the local soft drink manufacturers."

Deyalsingh said local soft drink manufacturers reduced their sugar content up to 50 percent in some instances, after he used a similar approach about four years ago.

He said a comparison can be drawn between how fast foods are marketed given its established health risks, and how cigarettes were advertised in the past.

Deyalsingh also revealed that the plan was supported by the Pan American Health's director, Dr Jarbas Barbosa.

He also spoke to the issue of obesity, saying Trinidad and Tobago was among 28 frontrunner countries identified by the WHO in May 2022 to receive support to combat the disease.

He also noted that Trinidad and Tobago has been receiving technical assistance from the WHO, and aid in sourcing medication and treatment for NCDs.

## More Hindi teachers needed says HFTT

**Port-of-Spain** – An appeal was made last week for more of the membership in the Hindi Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago to teach Hindi as a language.

The appeal came from HFTT President Chanka Seeterram during the organisation's 37th Annual Awards Ceremony and Dinner.

Seeterram said it was important that a new generation comes to the forefront so future generations can look back with pride.

He also noted that culture was an important vehicle for conveying Indian traditions in Trinidad and Tobago.

"It is not only through the formal and informal classroom methods and diverse written formats we have employed over the years, but equally through the media of culture via music, song, and dance," he said.

Thirteen awardees were recognised at the event, including posthumous awards given to entertainers Anil Bheem, Jameer Hosein, and Ramnarine Moonilal.



Cheryl Bheem, wife of singer & entertainer, the late Anil Bheem, collects a posthumous award for her late husband from HFTT's Surujdeo Mangaroo



HFTT president, Chanka Seeterram (left) receives an award from HFTT's Chairman for Cultural Affairs, Surujdeo Mangaroo

## Govt says no to call for foreign observers

**Port-of-Spain** – The Opposition's request for international observers to oversee the upcoming local government elections will not be considered by Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley.

The request for observers was made last week by Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar at a UNC meeting.

Persad-Bissessar made the call for foreign oversight while underscoring that her party does not trust the PNM with the process. She noted a letter had been delivered Rowley that made these claims.

Following Persad-Bissessar's call, Rowley responded saying his government was not going to entertain the Opposition's request.

Rowley's negative was emphatic, with him saying, "We are going into a local government election, we've had that over and over and over, and there's one due in a few weeks. Some of our colleagues are telling me I must invite foreigners to come and observe our local government election. No!"

He also wondered why Persad-Bissessar believes such an intervention is necessary.

Rowley added, "They free to come if they wish; it's a free country, but why are we selling ourselves short?"

As Rowley noted, Trinidad and Tobago has a reputation of being "superstars" with elections, adding such a strong record was why its nationals are invited as observers to other countries during their elections.

"And you know why I am saying no to those troublemakers? It is because our record in the PNM is without blemish. When we lost an election for the first time after three decades, what did the PNM do? We walked away quietly to Balisier House and functioned in such a way in Opposition that the public re-elected us five years later," he said.

Rowley also cited the attempted *coup d'état* in 1990 as evidence that the PNM has always respected the democratic process.

Said Rowley: "When they took up arms against us in this country, and burn down the Parliament and kill people, and ordered who should be Prime Minister, what was the PNM's position? I was in Washington, Patrick Manning was here in Trinidad, and he said we will have no part of any government that comes to office in that way. That is our record!"

Rowley also claimed the UNC was being hypocritical, saying the party wanted foreign observers to monitor an election, which the UNC itself was trying to undermine.



Keith Rowley

## The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

# Nadia the epitome in 'pitchas' of what young boys loved

By Vidur Dindayal

When I was a child of about ten years old, we liked to see 'fighting pitchas'. Nadia was more than a heroine to us. She was exciting and different. She was always involved in fighting and she always beat the crook. Nadia was the main star of the fighting pictures. She was a white lady with white hair and she was an Indian film star. She was famous.

I know a few people in Guyana and Trinidad who were given the name 'Nadia'. I am sure their parents liked the name Nadia and all the associations with her as a fighter and heroine, that they were happy to name their daughter Nadia.

Nadia was born on January 8, 1908 in Perth, Western Australia. Her real name was Mary Ann Evans. Her parents were Scotsman Herbert Evans, who was a volunteer in the British Army, and Margret.

Mary was one year old when Herbert's regiment was seconded to Bombay (now Mumbai). Mary came to Bombay in 1913 at the age of five with her father.

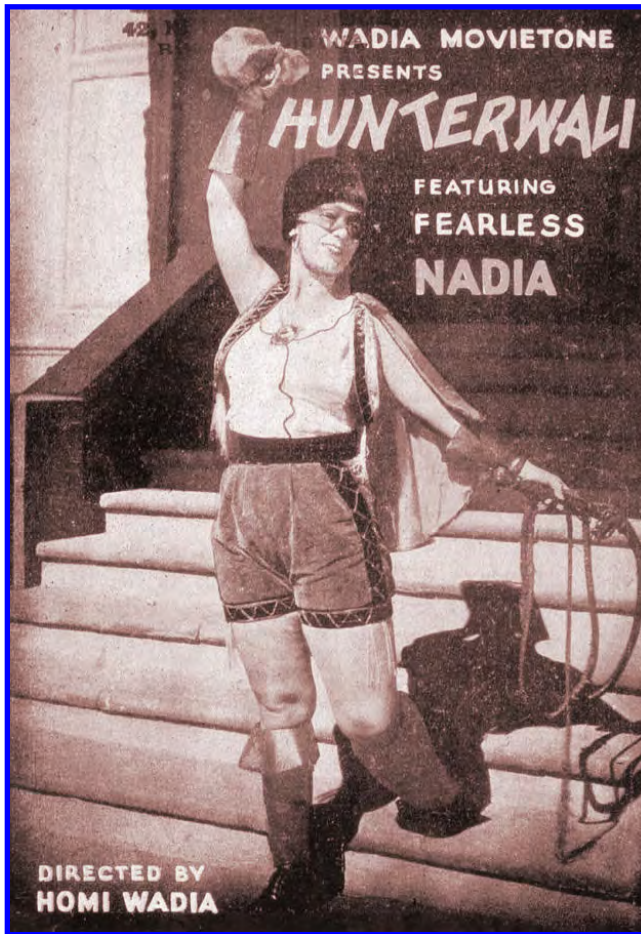
In 1915, after her father died in World War I, the family moved to Peshawar (now in Pakistan). Here Mary learnt horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and shooting during a stay in the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

During the 1920s, Mary returned to Bombay with her mother, and then studied ballet under Madam Astrova. Astrova's troupe performed for British soldiers at military bases, and for Indian royalty, and other audiences. She mastered the art of cartwheels, splits, and other stunts. A fortune teller told her that a successful career lay ahead but she had to choose a name starting with the letter 'N'. She chose the name Nadia because it was "exotic-sounding".

Nadia came into Bombay films when she was introduced by Jamsheed B.H. Wadia. She was a stunt woman in Zarko Circus in 1930 and a theatre artist.

When she met Wadia, she told him she was keen to get into movies. He gave her a chance, to act as a slave girl – with her blonde hair and sparkling blue eyes – in the film *Desh Deepak*, and then as a princess in *Noor-e-Yaman*. She became a huge hit with the audience, which opened the door for her into movies.

Wadia and his brother Homi Wadia decided they would make her into a movie star. She was a stunt woman in the



circus. She had the skills and looks to be a movie star. She eventually starred in nearly 50 Wadia films, making stunt history starting with *Hunterwali* in 1935. In her late 50s, in 1967-1968 she appeared in a 'James bond' type of movie called *Khiladi*.

*Hunterwali* is the first film where Nadia acted in the lead role. The story is simple. *Hunterwali* is a princess who fights injustice; she disguises as a masked lady with a whip, who protects the poor and punishes evil doers, doing stunts like jumping over a moving carriage, beating up 20 soldiers in one go, with swashbuckling whipping style.

The film, with all these qualities, made Nadia an instant

attraction to the Wadia brothers of Wadia Movietone.

The film pictured Nadia as a swashbuckling princess in disguise. In this disguise, she rode on her horse around the countryside chasing enemies, swinging from chandeliers, kicking or whipping men, righting wrong with her fists.

The film had many bhajans by Govind Gopal. One of the popular songs was *Hunterwali hai bhali duniya ki leth*.

The Wadias had spent a fortune in making the film and in its publicity campaign. It premiered in Bombay at the Super Cinema on Grant Road. There were huge crowds to see the film on its opening night. It was a great success.

Afterwards, Nadia starred in numerous stunt films. A sequel to the film, *Hunterwali Ki Beti*, was released in 1943. This was the first Indian movie ever to have a sequel.

In my early years, Indian action movies were popular. One that I remember was *Nishan*, with the star Ranjan. There was a lot of fighting and sword fencing. Ranjan was impressive and I thought he would be a big star.

I first saw Ranjan in the film *Chandralekha*, produced by S.S. Vasan of famous Gemini Studios, based in then Madras.

*The Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema* by Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen classifies *Chandralekha* as "one of India's most famous films". More significantly, it was the first film produced in South India to become a hit across the country.

Here also, there was fighting and sword fencing. I remember *Chandralekha* for the music – a waltz – being played as background music to a circus artist swinging on the trapeze.

Also, the elaborate setting of the engaging 'drum dance' of some 500 'Gemini dancers'.

Another star I always associate with action films was Jairaj. He acted in many silent films including: *Triangle of Love*, *Flight into Death*, and *My Hero*.

Among notable movies, he acted the characters of Amar Singh Rathore (1957), Prithviraj Chauhan (1959), Maharana Pratap (1960) and Shah Jahan (1947).

His other portrayals have been in *Hatimtai* (1956), *Chandrashekar Azad* (1963), and *Durga Das* (1964), among others.

Jairaj did films as hero with Suraiya in the 1940s and 1950s, including, *Humaari Baat* (1943), *Singaar* (1949), *Amar Kahani* (1949), *Rajput* (1951), and *Resham* (1952). He was recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1980.

## Legacy in silent movies speaks to Father of Indian Cinema

Late Shri Dadasaheb Phalke is the pioneer of the Indian Film industry who hailed from Nashik District. His full name is Dhundiraj Govind Phalke. Born on April 30, 1870 in Trimbakeshwar – about 30 kilometres from Nashik – he devoted his life to making silent movies.

Dadasaheb Phalke was a student of Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay and Kalabhavan of Baroda. After completing art school he happened to see a movie on the life of Jesus Christ made by a foreigner and projected on July 7, 1896 in Watson Hotel by Meris Sestiye, representative of the pioneer of the Cinema Industry, Lumie Brothers.

That inspired him to experiment on a movie in India at a time when film making techniques were alien to Indians.

Starting with the famous movie on the mythological character Raja Harishchandra in 1913, he made 95 movies and 26 short films in the span of 19 years. He earned a lot but ploughed it all back into the industry.

When he stepped into this venture, no one had anticipated the film industry would flourish as it does today, where thousands of people are able to earn their livelihoods with huge amounts of money.

At that time, people were skeptical whether the population would appreciate movements of artificial pictures on a screen in place of live dramas on a stage. Investors were hesitant to come forward. Workers were also not available in this area and intellectuals and educated people preferred to distance themselves from the industry considered of a lower grade than drama.

Dadasaheb made his first movie in Bombay where facilities were available, although there were many problems.

He later moved to Nashik, where he set up his studio. The shooting in those days, even of the interior of houses or mansions, used to be in open air. Animals like peacocks, rabbits, monkeys, deer required for shooting in the movies were kept in the yard. Comfortable arrangements for the pets



Dadasaheb Phalke

were provided and the surroundings looked very beautiful.

In 1913 for the first time, shooting of the movie *Bhasmasur Mohini* was done in the Nashik studio. In those days women did not work in drama or the film industry, so men used to play women's roles.

But in the movie *Bhasmasur Mohini*, for the first time Durga Gokhale and Kamala Gokhale played female roles. Durga is the grandmother of the famous Marathi actor Chandrakant Gokhale, and Kamala is Chandrakant's mother.

Dadasaheb's first silent movie *Raja Harishchandra* had its official premiere show in Coronation Theater in Bombay on May 3, 1913 open to the public. Prior to this, Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatawadekar alias Savedada had made short movies and laid down some foundation for India's film industry.

R.G. alias Dadasaheb Torne had shot *Pundalik* drama and showed it in Coronation Theater of Bombay. People were astonished to witness it. But since Dadasaheb Phalke devoted his life to Indian films, he is considered the pioneer of the film industry.

In 1932, the age of silent movies ended in India. Dadasaheb's last silent movie *Setubandhan* was released in that year and late released again by dubbing voice onto it. Records as to who did the dubbing for this movie are not available.

Dubbing voice was also a pioneer experiment then. Later, Dadasaheb made the only talkie, *Gangavataran*, that was unsuccessful. He then retired from the

industry. Talkies affected the silent movies business adversely, and Dadasaheb's company was closed in 1932.

Around 1935, Godavari Cinetone Limited was founded. This was the first limited company in the cinema industry. Godavari Cinetone Ltd, using the machinery of Dadasaheb, made a movie named *Sati Sulochana*, under the direction of Mama Shinde.

# Market forces drive Bollywood films back into Bangladesh theatres

Comments from Bangladeshi Bollywood fans recently, who could once again watch the Hindi blockbuster film *Pathaan* in a movie theatre, went like this: “It was fantastic”; “The king is back”; and, “It was so good to see Shah Rukh Khan on the big screen”.

Although Hollywood films have been regularly screened in Bangladeshi cineplexes, it has been many decades since Bollywood movies made it on the big screen.

On May 12, the Bollywood movie *Pathaan* starring Shah Rukh Khan created history when it became the first Indian film to be screened in theatres in Bangladesh in over five decades.

Unlike Hollywood films, which are released only in a handful of cineplexes for the viewing of high-end audiences, *Pathaan* was released in 40 theaters across the country. Audiences included middle and lower-middle-class people.

The decision to allow Bollywood back to Bangladesh was the culmination of lobbying by a consortium of 19 Bangladeshi film associations who “decided to allow Hindi-language films to release in the country and suggested that ten films release a year”.

Bangladesh banned Bollywood films in 1971, when the country attained Independence from Pakistan. The decision was a continuation of the ban on Indian films that was in place when Bangladesh was East Pakistan. Pakistani films were also banned in Bangladesh after it gained Independence.

It is not that Bangladeshis did not get to watch Bollywood blockbusters in this period. Pirated copies of Bollywood films were available, and Bangladeshis would watch them on VCR cassettes, DVDs, and later, through online cable channels.

Actors like Jitendra, Sridevi, and Mithun Chakraborty in the early 1980s, and subsequently, Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Salman Khan, Amir Khan, Deepika Padukone, and Katrina Kaif, enjoyed huge popularity in Bangladesh and became household names there.

Similarly, Bollywood songs have been widely popular in Bangladesh, and are listened to on local FM radio channels and via YouTube.

In a nutshell, Bangladeshis have been consuming and enjoying Bollywood products despite an official ban.

The impact of Bollywood films on Bangladeshi culture is palpable. Dancing to Bollywood music is popular at weddings

of upper-middle-class and upper-class families in Dhaka. The entertainment sections of Bangladeshi newspapers regularly publish Bollywood news updates. Traffic in Dhaka grinds to a halt when Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif are in town for concerts.

Even Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has been dubbed the Iron Lady of Asia by *The Economist* magazine, was present in person to enjoy a performance by Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif.

So why did it take so long for a Bollywood film to be released in Bangladesh, despite the widespread consumer appetite for it in the country?

One of the probable answers could be that Bangladeshi film artists and film producers were strongly against the idea of screening Bollywood films in Bangladeshi theatres. They feared that the huge appetite for Bollywood products would result in Bangladeshi films losing audiences to Bollywood films. This would impact on Bangladeshis’ jobs and livelihoods.

Opposition to Bollywood films was also backed by anti-India sections in Bangladesh. However, for Bangladeshi film exhibitors, screening Bollywood films makes business sense, as their film industry is not doing well, people are already losing jobs, and their movie theaters are closing down one after another.

As Sudipta Kumar Das, the chief adviser to the Bangladesh Film Exhibitors’ Association, said in an interview recently, “One after another, cinema halls have been shut down due to the impact of ‘obscene’ movies, halls losing audiences, a drought of quality movies, and the terrible toll of movie piracy on the business.”

Simultaneously annual production of Bangladeshi films has dropped from over 100 films a couple of decades ago to around 50 films in 2022.

To sustain their business, Bangladeshi film exhibitors were lobbying the government to lift the ban on Indian films.

In 2009, Salman Khan’s film *Wanted* was released in 50 cinemas, but within a week it was pulled because of strong protests from local film artists and anti-Indian cultural elites in the country. The government was forced to back down.

As a result, as Dr Harisur Rahman argues in his book

*Consuming Cultural Hegemony: Bollywood in Bangladesh*, the movie piracy industry and the syndicate of cable TV operators benefitted financially.

The release of *Pathaan* in Bangladesh’s cinemas is the outcome of the lobbying of Bangladeshi film exhibitors.

But not everyone is happy about it.

Dhaka-based journalist Iftekhar Mahmud, who is a critic of the government’s decision to allow the return of Bollywood to Bangladesh, argued that the wider release of *Pathaan* is detrimental to the local industry, and to the new generation of Bangladeshi filmmakers.

However, Dr Fahmidul Haq supports the government’s decision. He is a visiting professor at the Bard College in New York, and a well-known film

scholar of Bangladeshi origin.

Said Haq: “I am in favor of the limited release of Indian or any foreign films, with some distinct policies that will not damage the local market, but rather may save the declining number of theatres, such as fixing the maximum number of releases, higher taxes on foreign films and limited screen quota.”

Despite the contrasting views on the issue, it is a fact that *Pathaan* has opened up a new income stream for Bangladeshi film exhibitors.

The challenge for Bangladeshi policymakers is to now maintain a delicate balance between supporting the country’s film industry, which has been in decline for many years, and expanding support to film exhibitors through regulation to allow Hindi films in Bangladeshi theatres.





**Ajax Crematorium & Visitation Centre**

**289-372-3300**  
www.acvc.info  
384 Finley Avenue, Ajax, ON LIS 2E3



**Brampton Crematorium & Visitation Centre**

**905-458-2222**  
www.bcvc.info  
30 Bramwin Court, Brampton, ON L6T 5G2





**Ample parking**



**State of the art facilities**

As the experts in funerals we can offer many options that fit your traditions, wishes and budget  
**CALL US TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR FAMILY BY PLANNING AHEAD**

*Compassion - Care - Convenience*

Lock in funeral costs and protect against inflation and price increases  
 Make decisions now and protect your family from the emotional burdens of planning a funeral



Ravi Shastri

## Youth, experience take India to the top - Shastri

A right blend of youth and experience has been pivotal in helping India maintain top position in the MRF Tyres ICC Men's Team Rankings, former coach Ravi Shastri said last week.

India recently passed Australia to become the No 1 ranked Test nation ahead of the upcoming ICC World Test Championship final. India are also maintaining a healthy lead at the top of the T20I rankings.

Shastri spoke about the rankings during an episode of *The ICC Review*. He also paid tribute to India's recent consistency under the captaincy of Rohit Sharma, and the tutelage of head coach Rahul Dravid.

"It's a tribute to their consistency, their fitness and the way they've worked over the last five or six years to now be hungry and proud of wanting to belong there," Shastri said.

He added, "It's the quality of players. If you look at these players, a lot of [them] are at their prime when you look at the Indian Test side. They're experienced, they're at that age where they're battle-hardened, they've travelled around the world. They know what Test cricket is all about, they know what one-day cricket is all about, they know what T20 cricket is all about. And the mix is with experienced players and youth."

Shastri also noted their youthfulness was "filtering" into the team.

However, at the same time, he said there were "tons of experience" functioning as a "nucleus in Test match cricket".

"... [That's] what makes the difference. When you have that, you'll see sides that make it to the top two-three, [and] as history will tell you, they remain there for three-four years," he said.

Shastri said he kept a close eye on the ICC rankings when he was coach, and was proud that he helped India rise to the top of the Test charts during his tenure.

"It mattered a lot to me. To be in that top two or three was extremely important, and you looked at the rankings and if you knew you were four or five, then that upsets you because your team deserves to be in the top two or three, or that's what you strive or play for," he said.

Additionally, "Every coach, no matter who he is, wants his team to be in that top two or three... it was my endeavour when I took over as coach of India... to bring it into that top two or three. It was a desire to get it into the ICC rankings, into the top two or three. And as a coach, I'm proud that my team was number one for five years on the ICC rankings. No one can take that away. It's important and coaches do keep a fair track of that."

At this time, India hold a five-point lead at the top of the Test rankings with 121 rating points, with their World Test Championship final rivals Australia their closest challenger on 116 rating points.

Shastri does not expect India to be motivated by the lure of maintaining their hold on the top Test ranking during the World Test Championship final.

As he said, it will be the team that adjusts better to the conditions that will come away as winners at The Oval.

"I think when it comes to a one-off final, I think it's about how good you are over those five days," Shastri noted.

Also, "How well you start off is extremely important as you don't want to be in a one-off match and be blown over during the first day and a half. Either get hammered in the field or you get an opportunity to bat and you're bowled out by tea time, or bowled out on day one. You don't want that to happen," he said.

He added, "But if you get into the contest, where you have a good first day, then there's nothing — I mean all this one and two and three (in rankings) won't count at all. It'll be day by day session by session that will matter."

## Just short of 3 figures, Chanderpaul thankful for form

Despite coming close to the magic three-figure twice and missing out on hundreds in the three-match "Test" tour of Bangladesh, young Test opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul told the *Caribbean Media Corporation* he was "thankful" for his form.

Chanderpaul is now 26 years old. So far, he has played six Tests since making his debut Down Under late last year.

Last Tuesday he made 83 on the opening day of the final four-day "Test", with West Indies A scoring 320 for six at the close at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

The knock marked the second time Chanderpaul flirted with a century in the series, following his 83 in the drawn opener earlier last month.

"Most definitely I would like to hit the three figures. It's my second score of 83 again, but I'm thankful. I will hopefully try and get past it the next time," Chanderpaul said.



Tagenarine Chanderpaul

His input was required after West Indies A, choosing to bat first, slumped to two for one in the morning's third over after Kirk McKenzie (0) and debutant Zachary McCaskie (1) were cheaply removed.

Chanderpaul then combined with Alick Athanaze (59) in an 81-run, third wicket stand before partnering with captain Joshua Da Silva (82) in a 132-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

Da Silva's bat contributed with Chanderpaul's in keeping Bangladesh A wicketless in the second session.

Chanderpaul struck nine fours and a six in a patient 160-ball stay before finally departing in the final session.

"Obviously the pitch has got a bit of grass on it so I tried to get through the new ball and after that, I started scoring a bit easier. [Also the] weather was hot... so I had to dig deep and try and go as far as possible," he said.

## New ICC revenue sharing model favours top nations

A newly-proposed international revenue distribution model that heavily favours the alpha superpowers could potentially stall the growth of the game, a number of cricket's cash-starved associate member nations have said.

As was reported by *Reuters* last week, the International Cricket Council is proposing a new revenue sharing model for the 2024-2027 cycle, which will be voted on at its July board meeting to be held in Durban.

However, according to figures that were leaked to *Cricinfo*, cricket's financial engine India would alone claim 38.5 percent, primarily in recognition of its contribution to the commercial revenue pot, *Reuters* reported.

It means that the 12 full members of the ICC would collectively take 88.81 percent of the revenue, with the rest distributed among 94 associate members.

The ICC has not commented on these figures. However, general manager Wasim Khan said last week all members would get more money under the proposed model than in the past.

Meanwhile, Pakistan have already made clear their opposition to the model in its current shape. Also, resentment is growing among other, less developed cricketing nations.

One of the three associate member representatives on the ICC Chief Executives' Committee, Sumod Damodar, said the proposal would not meet the needs of associate members.

"If what is being proposed and discussed is likely to be the outcome, then as an associate member representative, I would be (disappointed)," *Reuters* reported him saying.

Additionally, "There are numerous practical reasons why it would be inadequate for associate members."

Damodar is also vice chairman of Botswana's board. As he stated, associate members who have earned ODI status need more money to sustain their high-performance programmes, while the others need cash to bridge the gap.

Citing the rapid rise of Nepal in men's cricket, and Thailand in the women's game, Damodar said more countries would step up if they were given the required financial support.

Vanuatu Cricket Association Chief Executive Tim Cutler said the proposed model would only accentuate the inequality between cricket's haves and have-nots.

"The new model is now even more heavily weighted towards the bigger cricketing nations, and there is a risk that the proposed changes will exacerbate this imbalance, putting the future of the game at further risk," Cutler said.

He added, "The sad reality is, cricket will not grow beyond its current corners of the world... if the allocation of the game's global funds aren't more equally allocated with a view to actually growing the game."

With full members having 12 of the 17 total votes on the ICC board, Cutler said diverting funds away from themselves, or making independent decisions for the good of the game, would be like "turkeys voting for Christmas".

As of last week, *Reuters* reported that the ICC had not responded to a request for comment over concerns being expressed by associate members.

Former ICC President Ehsan Mani said there was a lack of vision at the governing body in its approach to developing cricketing nations, despite the huge commercial potential of some of them.

"One of the biggest risks for global cricket is its over-dependence on one country, India, for a major part of the revenues generated," he said told *Reuters*.

Mani is also the former Pakistan Cricket Board chairman. "Countries like the USA and the Middle East, and in longer term, China, would bring enormous benefits to the ICC, its members, and the global game. World cricket would be stronger and richer for it."

And as Mani also said, India grabbing the lion's share of ICC revenues "makes no sense". He advocated equal shares for all full members.

He added, "World cricket needs a strong West Indies, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Cricket in Zimbabwe has suffered due to lack of funds, as have Ireland and Afghanistan. Lack of investment in some of these countries will make the game unsustainable, and world cricket will be poorer for it."



Wasim Khan



Merissa Aguiliera

## Low-scoring women's games a concern - Aguiliera

Low-scoring performances with the bat in the recent CG United Women's Super50 and T20 Blaze regional competitions were last week described as "disappointing" by former West Indies women's captain Merissa Aguiliera.

She made the comment to the Trinidad and Tobago media following Barbados completing a sweep of the tournaments in Saint Kitts late last month.

Trinidad and Tobago were runners-up in the Super50, before finishing in fifth place in the T20 Blaze. The Divas ended the T20 campaign with an embarrassing one-run loss to Guyana. Led by Anisa Mohammed, Trinidad and Tobago bowled out Guyana for 39, before crumbling to 38 all out.

The batting in that match was no anomaly, with low scores prominent throughout the T20 Blaze, where no team scored seven runs an over. Only two batters (Qiana Joseph and Kycia Knight) scored over 100 runs for the tournament.

The Super50 batting was no different, with only three teams hitting scores of over 200 runs.

Aguiliera is an ex-West Indies wicketkeeper/batter and an assistant coach for the Red Force Divas. She had mixed results in the competitions. She was named an honorary life member of the Marylebone Cricket Club in April.

As she stated, the batting performances last month were of concern, since these tournaments are used to select West Indies players.

The women's regional side has been struggling to replace the void in quality left by Barbadian Deandra Dottin, who retired in August last year. Also, there has been difficulty replacing the injury-plagued Jamaican all-rounder Stafanie Taylor.

Along with these notable omissions is Mohammed, who is now taking a break from international cricket.

"I was really disappointed with the performances throughout

## Lanning ruled out of Aussie women's Ashes tour

In a major blow for the Australian women's team, captain Meg Lanning was last week ruled out of the women's Ashes due to medical issues, the *Guardian* has reported.

Lanning returned to cricket in January following a four-month mental health break. It was in March when she led Australia to the women's Twenty20 World Cup triumph.

She also played in the inaugural Women's Premier League in India. However, she is now unavailable for the blockbuster UK Ashes tour.

Lanning was withdrawn from the squad on the advice of medical staff, according to Cricket Australia women's cricket performance boss Shawn Flegler.

"It is an unfortunate setback for Meg and she is obviously disappointed to have been ruled out of the Ashes; it's a significant series for the team and she'll be missed, but she understands the need to put her health first," Flegler said.

She added, "Meg will remain at home where she will continue to work with medical staff with the aim to return to playing as soon as possible. We ask that Meg's privacy is respected at this time."

Lanning has scored 17 international centuries, and has led

the tournament. The wickets were good enough that the teams could have got good scores, but unfortunately it didn't happen. You can see there is a lot of development (still) to take place," Aguiliera said.

Citing a recent Brian Lara interview discussing the mental aspect of the game, Aguiliera said: "That is exactly what is lacking in the Caribbean right now - the mental part of the game... When it comes to skills, the girls have a lot of talent."

She called for more development at the grassroots level.

"You're getting players in the Under-19 bracket and they still don't understand the basics of cricket, so that's a cause for concern. If you can get to the grassroots, the secondary schools and primary schools, and teach the basics of cricket, you will get them coming into the system with more knowledge and understanding," she said.

Additionally, "Once you develop the players mentally and educate them on the history of cricket... That is an area they need to really focus on."

Aguiliera also noted that it was not enough to select a team a month before a tournament and try to get them ready.

"The territorial boards need to show more emphasis on women's cricket and take it more seriously. I know funding is an issue, but when it comes to developing players, you need to give them time. The more you play cricket is the more you will understand," she declared.

Aguiliera also spoke about the new Cricket West Indies boss Dr Kishore Shallow, saying he has women's cricket's best interest at heart.

"He understands what is happening to women's cricket and the emphasis that needs to be shown. I know CWI has women's cricket on the front burner right now, so that is a positive," she said.

Australia on an unbelievable run of success. She was on two winning ODI World Cup squads in 2013 and 2022, and five successful World T20 squads in 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020, and 2023.

During her break from the game last year, she spoke of needing to speak to others, and spent some time overseas.



Meg Lanning

Wicketkeeper-batter Alyssa Healy will step up to captain Australia in the Ashes, with all-rounder Tahlia McGrath wearing the vice-captain's cap.

Speaking to *ESPNcricinfo* about the development, Healy said the news came as a shock for the Australian side. She added the team was a bit emotional for Lanning.

"I've finally probably come to terms with it. It has been a rough couple of days. Everyone is a little bit emotional about the whole Meg situation, but at the same time I'm grappling with being really excited and nervous about the challenge of captaining an Ashes series," said Healy.

Apart from Healy, Australia women's cricket team head coach Shelley Nitschke also talked about the effect of Lanning's absence, saying the news 'rattled' the team.

However, she declared they were determined to win the series anyway, citing Healy's leadership skills while at the same time expressing faith in her ability.

## Cricket Schedule

(ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday June 7, 2023

ICC World Test Championship Final 2023  
Australia vs India, Final, Day 1, Kennington Oval, London, 10:00 AM

Thursday June 8, 2023

ICC World Test Championship Final 2023  
Australia vs India, Final, Day 2, Kennington Oval, London, 10:00 AM

Friday June 9, 2023

ICC World Test Championship Final 2023  
Australia vs India, Final, Day 3, Kennington Oval, London, 10:00 AM.

Saturday June 10, 2023

ICC World Test Championship Final 2023  
Australia vs India, Final, Day 4, Kennington Oval, London, 10:00 AM

Sunday June 11, 2023

ICC World Test Championship Final 2023  
Australia vs India, Final, Day 5, Kennington Oval, London, 10:00 AM

Friday June 16, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 1, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 11:00 AM

Saturday June 17, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 2, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 11:00 AM

Sunday June 18, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 3, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 11:00 AM

Monday June 19, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 4, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 11:00 AM

Tuesday June 20, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 1st Test, Day 5, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 11:00 AM

Wednesday June 28, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 2nd Test, Day 1, Lord's, London, 11:00 AM.

Thursday June 29, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 2nd Test, Day 2, Lord's, London, 11:00 AM

Friday June 30, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 2nd Test, Day 3, Lord's, London, 11:00 AM

Saturday July 1, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 2nd Test, Day 4, Lord's, London, 11:00 AM

Sunday July 2, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 2nd Test, Day 5, Lord's, London, 11:00 AM

Thursday July 6 2023

The Ashes, 2023

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

Friday July 7, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

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

Saturday July 8, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

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

Sunday July 9, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

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

Monday July 10, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

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

Wednesday July 19, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 4th Test, Day 1, Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester, 11:00 AM

Thursday July 20, 2023

The Ashes, 2023

England vs Australia, 4th Test, Day 2, Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester, 11:00 AM.



# GTA LEADERS REALTY INC., BROKERAGE

4300 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 26  
Vaughan ON, L4L 4C2

**Tel: 416-241-3337 Fax: 416-987-0056**

www.teamgtahomes.com  
gtaleaders@gmail.com



~ RESIDENTIAL · COMMERCIAL · INDUSTRIAL · INVESTMENT ~



**Abdool Saif Saheed**  
Sales Representative  
647-894-0764



**Abdool Saheed**  
Broker of Record/Owner  
416-731-7527



**Ralford Chatrie**  
Sales Representative  
416-806-1803



**Shawn Ambedkar**  
Broker  
437-235-7599

## 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

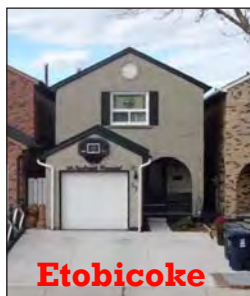
Welcome to one of highlands east, fully renovated (2010) three bedrooms all-season cottage with one full washroom, open concept dining/kitchen, & living area with wood fireplace & potlights. Relax on two huge decks and enjoy nature's beauty at your doorsteps. This spacious lot offers lots of parking 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!!!



**FOR ALL YOUR INSURANCE NEEDS**

- LIFE • MORTGAGE
- DISABILITY
- TRAVEL • VISITOR
- CRITICAL ILLNESS
- SUPER VISA
- RESP & RRSP
- INVESTMENT

If you fail to plan, then you're planning to fail.

**Abdool Saheed**  
Financial Advisor  
Cell: 416-731-7527

## 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.



647-852-7243  
**MORTGAGE**  
**1st, 2nd, & Refinance**  
**PROPOSAL/**  
**BANKRUPTCY**

Make One Small Monthly Payment For All Your Debts  
**INCOME TAX SERVICES**  
Personal • Business  
Business Registration  
HST • Payroll • WSIB

**Abdool Saheed**  
C: 416-731-7527  
**Jason Saheed**  
C: 647-293-8397