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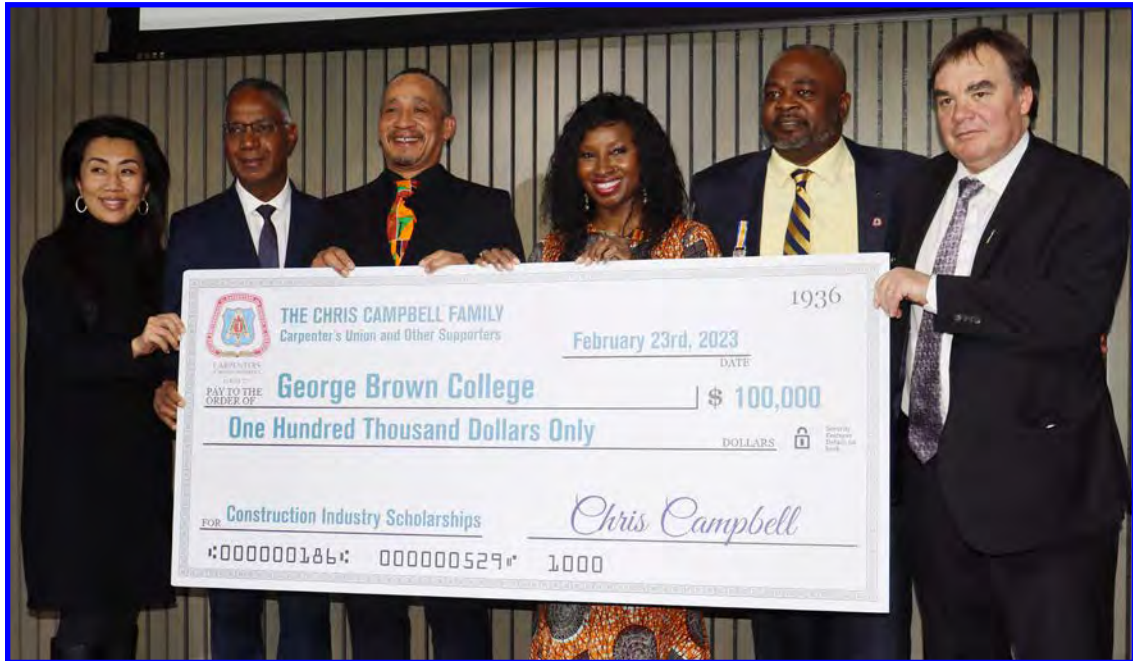
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With its theme 'Honouring the Past, Inventing the Future' the Carpenters Regional Council celebrated Black History Month with a commemorative silver coin to mark the past, & an endowment fund to George Brown College moving into the future. Holding the oversized cheque in photo (left to right) are Cindy Gouveia, Vice-President, Advancement & Alumni Relations, George Brown; Dr Gervan Fearon, President, George Brown College; Clifton Donegal, Instructor at the Centre for Construction and Engineering Technologies; Rokhaya Gueye, Chair of the Sisters in Brother Committee at Local 27; Chris Campbell, Director of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, CRC; & Mark Lewis, Chief of Staff, CRC. See story on Page 10



Canadian-Guyanese author Ken Puddicombe won the Guyana Prize for Literature last month for his book of short stories, *Down Independence Boulevard*. In photo, Puddicombe (at right) receives his literary award from Guyana's Prime Minister, Brigadier (Retired) Mark Phillips. *News Room (Guyana) photo*. See story on Page 16

Faith leaders, govt officials stand together in solidarity

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Brampton – In a move of solidarity and support in the face of ongoing hate-messaging, Hindu faith leaders, the City of Brampton's Mayor Patrick Brown, and Peel Regional Police gathered last week to publicly denounce growing incidents of graffiti vandalism at Hindu temples in Peel Region and the GTA.

The leaders also agreed to work together as a united front to amplify their commitment to zero tolerance for what was described as "despicable" acts of hate and intolerance.

Among the religious leaders in attendance in Brampton were Vishnu Mandir's leader, Dr Budhendranauth Doobay, who initiated the call for the gathering; President of the Hindu Federation, Pandit Roopnauth Sharma; and Yudhishtir Dhanrajh from the Brampton Triveni Temple.

Officials from the City of Brampton included Mayor Patrick Brown, and Peel Regional Police Deputy Chief Mark Dapat.

There have been four acts of vandalism dating back to July 2022, with incidents occurring as recently as last month at Hindu temples in Brampton. The most recent attack took place on February 14, when an outside wall at Mississauga's Ram Mandir was defaced with graffiti.

Following the latest defacement, Chandra Arya, Member of Parliament for Nepean, made yet another statement in Parliament in Ottawa, where he called on Canada to take the issue "seriously and address the growing Hinduphobia".



Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown addresses reporters on February 22; in back row (left) are Dr Doobay, Pandit Sharma (third from right), Dr Yudhishtir Dhanrajh (second from right), & Regional Councillor Michael Palleschi at right. Photo - Facebook screen capture

Said Arya: "It is with pain and anguish that I state the Ram Mandir, a Hindu temple in Mississauga, has become the latest target of hate crime. In recent times other Hindu temples across Canada have been targets of hate crimes by anti-Hindu and anti-India groups."

As he stated, "These groups first joined hands on social media targeting Hindu-Canadians and starting the trend of Hinduphobia. Now they have moved on to physical attacks on Hindu temples. There are reports that individual Hindu-Canadians also being

targeted." Arya repeated an earlier call, stating that Canada needs to take the issue "seriously and address the growing Hinduphobia".

He declared, "As Canadians we practice, celebrate, and share our many different religious faiths and heritage peacefully, and let us all pledge to continue to do so."

And at the gathering last week in Brampton, Mayor Patrick Brown spoke to the growing unease,

See Page 11: Sharma calls

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In group photo are special invited guests, the groups of young performers, and Guyana Consulate staffers

Youths top cultural show

A program highlighting all facets of Guyanese culture was held last week by the Guyana Consulate in Toronto to mark this nation's 53rd anniversary as a Republic. The event took place on February 23 at the Metro Hall Room in Toronto.

The event was notable for participation by many young Guyanese living in the diaspora, and who remain culturally connected with the homeland.

The highlights were notable even at the start of the program, with young Hamza Ally among the religious officers. Ally is a student and a Hafiz, and is affiliated with the Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana. Pandit Suraj Prashad also officiated.

A cultural program *par excellence* followed the inter-faith opening prayers, one that saw many talented youth on stage.

Among the performers was Bruce Yong, who is attending school in Toronto. Yong's musical versatility includes playing the djembe, tabla, dholak, harmonium, and the ukulele.

Another versatile musician was young Siddhart Deepak Ramotar, the assistant youth coordinator at the Malvern Spiritual Sai Centre. Ramotar plays the dolak, violin, harmonium, and is a vocalist.

The audience was also treated to a graceful performance by the Happy Linda Dance Studio. The dance, an *Awakening of Tang Figurines*, saw the young ladies dressed in elegant clothing and exquisite makeup, portraying the prosperity and glory of the magnificent and historical Chinese Tang Dynasty.

Performances also saw young Canadian-Guyanese reciting patriotic poetry, a fusion of drumming that including East Indian and African drums, and a rendition on the steelpan. There were also East Indian and African dance performances, and young voices singing Guyanese national and folks songs.



At the event were (left to right) Grenada's Honorary Consul General to Toronto Dawn Francois; Barbados Consul General, Sonia Marville-Carter; Guyana's Acting Consul General, Grace Joseph; Monique Cummings, Attaché at the Jamaica Consulate; & Chair of the Caribbean Consular Corps, Honorary Consul General for St Kitts and Nevis, Brenda Foreman



Guyana Consulate's Nutana Singh (left) with Acting Consul General Grace Joseph

TCCF holds successful Valentine's fund-raiser

The Caribbean Children Foundation recently concluded another successful fund-raiser event in fulfilment of the organisation's ongoing humanitarian objective to help children with critical medical needs.

Founded in 2000, the TCCF assists children from the Caribbean who are suffering from life-threatening ailments, for which no treatment is available in their country.

The TCCF's goal is to bring sick children from their homelands to medical institutions abroad, such as in Canada at the Hospital for Sick Kids in Toronto, where they receive life-saving treatment.

Headed by Jay Brijpaul, one of the TCCF's grounding philosophies is that absolutely no one is paid a salary or wages. As Brijpaul has noted, TCCF is managed and run entirely by volunteers, with each penny going directly to the cause.

TCCF's recent fund-raiser took place last month at the Etobicoke Banquet Hall. Guests at the 'Be My Valentine' event were treated to the vibrant and dynamic performances by Omesh & The Wave Band. They also took to the dance floor to the pulsating rhythms of DJ Riyad. Guests were also entertained to a performance on the steelpan by Rachel Walcott.

TCCF also offers opportunities for sponsorship of its ongoing humanitarian work, such as sponsoring an annual event in Toronto and the GTA. Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Signature sponsorship levels are also available, and range from \$500 to over \$5,000 investments in an Angel. Check out [TCCF's website](#) for more information.



Omesh Singh (centre) entertains TCCF guests



A MACaws' donation to TCCF; at centre, Jay Brijpaul



A section of TCCF's guests enjoying the 'Be My Valentine's' event at the Woodbine Hall

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Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Billy Pang (left to right), Mariah Rodriguez-Imbarlina, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Kiya Busby, Hireé Dugassa, & Education Minister Stephen Lecce at the award's ceremony last month

Top honour for 3 young leaders

Toronto – Three exceptional young leaders were presented with the Lincoln M. Alexander Award last month in recognition of their work in building a stronger and more inclusive and equitable Ontario.

The presentation took place during a special ceremony at Queen's Park, and saw the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism

Billy Pang, Education Minister Stephen Lecce, and others in attendance.

"I am delighted to celebrate the recipients of this year's Lincoln Alexander Award, and to congratulate each of them for being catalysts for meaningful, positive change," Lieutenant Governor Dowdeswell said.

She added, "Ontario is more ready than ever to receive the creative ideas and visions of today's young people, as they continue the legacy of Mr Alexander by challenging systemic discrimination and acting in substantive and distinctive ways to fight racism."

The Lincoln M. Alexander Award is given annually to students and community leaders who have demonstrated exemplary leadership in working to fight racism and discrimination, and to promote equity and inclusion in their communities.

It is named after the Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, a leading figure in the fight for racial equity in Canada. He was Canada's first Black Member of Parliament, first Black federal Cabinet Minister, and as 24th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Canada's first Black vice-regal representative.

The 2022 student award recipients were Kiya Busby and Hireé Dugassa. They were recognised individually for achievements as president and vice-president of the Black Futures Lab student club at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Mississauga.

Busby founded the Black Futures Lab to inspire, mentor, and empower Black students, and to create a space for them to have meaningful discussions about anti-Black racism and discrimination.

Dugassa organised student-led discussions and activities, and moderated discussions with notable Black Canadians.

The Community Award was given to

Rodriguez-Imbarlina. She was recognised for her efforts to inspire and empower aspiring Black physicians.

As part of Black Physicians of Tomorrow, Mariah planned, promoted, and facilitated events to teach students about the accomplishments of the African diaspora in science, technology, education, and mathematics.

Black Physicians of Tomorrow focuses on online community-building and exploring ways of eradicating racism and systemic barriers.

"I offer my sincerest congratulations to the young people and community leaders we honour today. Their work to promote inclusiveness, equality and understanding will make a lasting impact on our communities and province," said Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

He added, "They are leaders in our province and their determination to create

a more equitable society is an inspiration to us all."

And said Lecce: "Lincoln M. Alexander's life-long dedication to building a strong, united, and inclusive country serves as inspiration to us all. We celebrate the inspiring and exceptional students who have made it their own life mission to eradicate racism, carrying Lincoln's legacy into the future."

Each recipient of Lincoln M. Alexander Award receives a \$5,000 cash award and a personalised certificate.

Ontarians are encouraged to consider nominating outstanding young leaders for this award. Nominations close on May 31, 2023.

The Lincoln M. Alexander Award has recognized 76 recipients since its establishment in 1993.

Recipients of the award are chosen by an independent selection committee in recognition of their leadership and excellence in fighting racial discrimination and advancing social justice and equity.

In 2013, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario declared January 21 of each year Lincoln Alexander Day, citing Alexander's life as an example of service, determination and humility.

Ontario's honours and awards program also includes the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers, and the Volunteer Service Award.

Tom Whiten wins AGO award

Toronto – The Gershon Iskowitz Foundation in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ontario has announced Tim Whiten as the recipient of the 2022 Gershon Iskowitz Prize at the AGO.

The award includes a \$75,000 cash award and a solo exhibition at the AGO. It is presented annually to an artist who has made an outstanding contribution to visual arts in Canada.

For more than 50 years, Whiten has been creating personal and evocative works that unite the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and the material realms. He has pursued a creative practice – one that includes gestural drawings, sculptures, performances, and installations, which are rooted in a deep understanding of spiritual cultural practices from around the world.

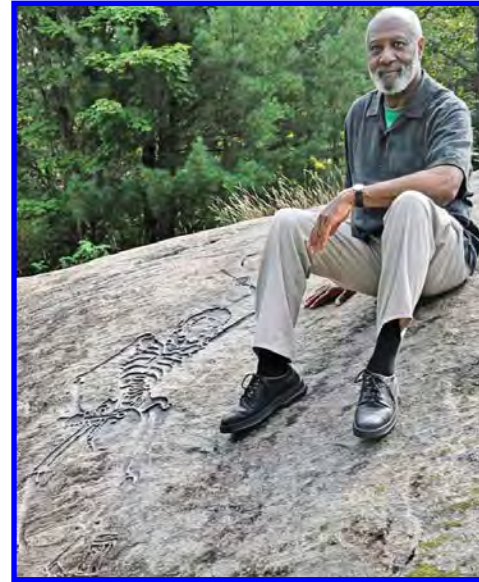
Whiten deploys this knowledge in his work, creating intimate experiences that allow for the experience and contemplation of forces beyond our conscious comprehension.

His profound spiritual investigations evade easy categorisation, and manifest in ways that are both spellbinding, and impeccably produced.

Rather than an artist, Whiten considers himself an "image maker who also creates cultural objects". He adds, "The process is what guides the work."

His choice of materials comes from every-

day experiences, and many of his objects are either tools or toys. These objects are meant to take the viewer to another place or another time.



Tim Whiten - Photo courtesy Mehraban Mehrabani

Whiten was born in Michigan in 1941. After completing military service, he moved to Toronto in 1968 to teach at York University, becoming a founding member of the institution's Department of Visual Arts, and inspired generations of artists through his long teaching career.

In 2007, after 39 years of teaching at York University, he retired as a full professor, and is now Professor Emeritus.

Member of the 2022 Prize jury Max Dean spoke to both Whiten's long-term commitment and outstanding involvement, saying, "One is at first taken in by the material, but the content of the work transcends."

Jurors for the 2022 Gershon Iskowitz Prize at the AGO were artist and recipient of the 2005 Gershon Iskowitz Prize, Max Dean; Michelle Jacques, Head of Collections/Exhibitions & Chief Curator, Remail Modern; Catherine Crowston, Director of the Art Gallery of Alberta (Iskowitz Foundation Director); Gerald McMaster, artist and Director of Wapatah Centre for Indigenous Visual Knowledge at OCADU (Iskowitz Foundation Director); and Stephan Jost, Michael and Sonja Koerner Director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Ontario (Iskowitz Foundation Director).

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CAF's Alicia Montalvo (left) & Specialist for the Adaptation on Climate Change & Environment Carolina Cortes speak at the tourism conference held at UWI's Mona campus last week. *Jamaica Observer photo*

Financial solutions for building tourism-resilience

Kingston – Financing solutions for Caribbean countries and Caricom member states to adopt resilient and regenerative tourism strategies, and to foster regional cooperation, are now being offered by the CAF Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, the *Jamaica Observer* reported last week.

The offer is part of the bank's latest moves as it expands into the Caribbean and Caricom region.

Manager for Climate Change Action and Positive Biodiversity at the bank, Alicia Montalvo, last week led a panel discussion at the Global Tourism Resilience Conference at the UWI Mona campus, where she proposed strategies for a climate-resilient tourism model.

In highlighting tourism's sensitivity to climate change, Montalvo noted the sector's contribution to environmental pressures, such as significant greenhouse gas emissions, and the high vulnerability of the sector in face of the impact of climate change, while stressing the need to develop mitigation and adaptation approaches for the industry.

"As the Green Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean, we are focused on promoting sustainable tourism by prioritising a reduction in carbon footprints, and the adaptation of infrastructures through a restoration of biodiversity, reforestation and conservation and developing climate resilient and sustainable

infrastructure," Montalvo said.

The tourism sector took the biggest hit during the Covid-19 pandemic, proving that the industry remains vulnerable to other external shocks.

While recovering from the pandemic, Caribbean countries also suffer from other hindrances, such as environmental fall-outs seen from the destruction of mangroves and coral reefs, which call for immediate actions towards resilient and regenerative tourism.

Montalvo added, "The most important thing we can do is improve the lives of the people who live in tourist destinations through sustainable, climate-resilient tourism by creating long-lasting tourism products and employment opportunities."

In light of the United Nations observing Global Tourism Resilience Day annually on February 17, the bank's regional expansion is a timely one that equips Caribbean countries, and Caricom member states, with funding opportunities to explore sustainable tourism strategies.

It also offers advice and financial support to its shareholder countries' public and private sectors. The bank also produces knowledge to strengthen public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, while improving the quality and impact of the projects being promoted.

More govt \$ for EV chargers

Vancouver – The government of Canada last week announced federal investments totalling nearly \$19 million for the installation of up to 2,416 EV chargers. The announcement was made by Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Natural Resources.

Out of the total chargers, over 1,880 will be installed across Greater Vancouver, a government release stated.

"We're making electric vehicles more affordable and charging more accessible where Canadians live, work, and play. Investing in more EV chargers... will put more Canadians in the driver's seat on the road to a net-zero future, and help achieve our climate goals," Wilkinson said.

As the release noted, the government remains committed to reducing pollution from the transportation sector, noting it is critical to Canada achieving its climate targets. It is for this reason that it is making it easier for Canadians to purchase, charge, and drive electric vehicles.

As the release further indicated, the funding was provided to 26 projects led by organisations such as municipalities, multi-residential buildings, businesses, and utilities.

Since 2016, the government of Canada has invested an historic \$1 billion to make EVs more affordable, and chargers more accessible for Canadians, and has approved funding to support the installation of more than 34,500 EV chargers to date.

In support of the government's objective of adding 50,000 new zero-emission vehicle chargers to Canada's network, Budget 2022 also provided an additional \$900 million to Natural Resources Canada and the Canada Infrastructure Bank to continue deploying zero-emission vehicle infrastructure.

Budget 2022 delivered an additional \$1.7 billion to extend the government's purchase incentive program until March 2025, and to expand the types of vehicle models eligible under the program, which would include more vans, trucks, and SUVs.



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Editorial

'In good hands...'

We commend the Guyana Consulate in Toronto for a job well done during its February 23 celebration of Guyana's 53rd anniversary as a Republic. Among its many cultural offerings, the celebration that was held in Toronto also saw a welcome and visionary emphasis placed on the talents of our youths in the diaspora via a variety program that highlighted all facets of Guyanese culture.

As we report in this edition, the event was remarkable for participation by many young Guyanese-Canadians, who while born and living all their lives in Canada, are still culturally connected to the homeland.

As we highlight, the inter-faith and multicultural event saw the participation of a young Hafiz; there were also performances on a variety of musical instruments that saw a fusion of different drumming techniques; a highly-aesthetic, graceful, and fluid dance that portrayed the prosperity and glory of the magnificent and historical Chinese Tang Dynasty; uplifting singing by youthful vocalists; and recitation of poetry by what is certainly looking to be the next generation of upcoming poets here in the GTA.

Also, in this edition, our New York correspondent Dhanpaul Narine reports that celebrations of Black History Month in Queens saw participation by engaged and knowledgeable Guyanese and Caribbean youths in the diaspora.

As Narine writes, the Queens Book Fair and Literary Festival Inc. event celebrating BHM last month was an impressive function, which saw, among other things, qualitative participation by youths who performed music, poetry, and who made speeches that were quite elucidating, inspirational, and reassuring.

Such were the youths' dynamism, impact, and engagement, that at the end of the event, its highly-impressed moderator, touched by the output and its validity, concluded that "the future was in good hands".

But perhaps the future of our entire diaspora is altogether in good hands.

We make this claim in light of the recent and commendable achievements by Guyanese-Canadian Kenneth Puddicombe, and Clem Seecharran, who was born in Guyana and now resides in the UK. Both authors are this year's winners of the Guyana Prize for Literature, a new and improved version, which took place on February 10 in Georgetown.

Puddicombe, who has been described as "a master story teller", received the Guyana Prize for Literature Fiction for his critically-acclaimed book of short stories, *Down Independence Boulevard*. True to the dispersal narratives of migrants, in his book Puddicombe explores our diaspora's exposure to upheaval and trauma in the homeland, and then our re-invention abroad.

Seecharran is an Emeritus Professor in History at Metropolitan University, and is permanently based in the UK. He was the recipient of the inaugural non-fiction Guyana Prize for Literature for his book, *Joe Solomon and the Spirit of Port Mourant: The Making of the Guyana and West Indies Cricketer and its Context, 1930s-1960s*.

The book is co-authored by another of Guyana's eminent literary stalwarts, the renowned writer and poet, Ian MacDonald.

Joe Solomon and the Spirit of Port Mourant pays tribute to Solomon, now the oldest West Indies Test cricketer, even as it celebrates the career of this son of Guyana, who was born in Port Mourant, a sugar plantation on the Corentyne Coast in what was then British Guiana.

Meanwhile, even as Solomon is valorised for his ability to throw down wickets with historical end-results, Guyana continues to configure world class cricket talent that is pushing boundaries and breaking records in the game.

We commend the recent good work accomplished on the international cricket stage by young batter Tajenarine Chanderpaul, and bowler Gudakesh Motie, who both broke records at the Test level last month.

We recognise both players for their stellar contributions to the game, and while acknowledging their youthfulness, along with our diaspora's youths, at the same time reaffirm that indeed, our future is in good hands.

Hopeful first step in resource re-distribution

I am ashamed to say that growing up, I avoided telling people that my family was from Guyana. Usually, they mistook Guyana for Ghana and transplanted the South American country to the African continent. But if they had heard of Guyana, it was often because of the Jonestown massacre, an unspeakable horror in the midst of an unspecified jungle, its geographical location unimportant.

Occasionally, it was because Guyana was "the second poorest country in the Western hemisphere" after Haiti. I began to identify with my Trinidadian side, to avoid these reductive statements that boiled me down like bhaji.

With the discovery of oil, Guyanese at home and in the diaspora will never face this. A whopping 11 billion barrels of oil promises to transform Guyana into one of the world's top oil producers, according to the progressive metrics of experts.

But not everyone is convinced. Activists like the lawyer Melinda Janki argue that the economic benefits of oil will bring ecological trauma. She's fighting to raise awareness of the consequences of fossil fuel reliance for Guyanese development.

Warming temperatures resulting from the climate crisis mean coastal settlements like Georgetown will disappear due to rising sea levels, and islands in the region will continue to face record-breaking hurricanes.

A few years after the discovery of oil off Guyana's coast – and the lopsided deal signed by the Guyanese government which allowed Exxon Mobil to retain the lion's share of profits – the philanthropic foundation of Exxon Mobil announced it was giving (USD) \$10 million to Conservation International, and the University of Guyana, to support community conservation efforts.

Board members of Conservation International have close ties to big business (for example, Coca-Cola, Walmart, Google) and the US administration; therefore, it is easy to see this gesture as a form of greenwashing (distracting from the environmental impact of oil extraction).

This token gesture begs the question: how can we be more than a cog in the wheel of capitalism and maximise our human possibility?

In a region founded by the capitalist extraction of labour to

High-flying days with the mischievous energy of youth

There was no end to the mischief a young boy could get into growing up back home. Today, as I look at those back-in-times days, I wonder whether it was good fortune that steered me away from the path of overlapping dangers, which only a mischievous boy could walk into with both arms extended in a welcoming embrace, and with eyes opened wide with wonder.

Or perhaps not; since I was the beneficiary from the low-hanging fruits of daily prayers uplifted for my safety and comfort by my caregivers in what was then, and still is today, a world of turmoil, turbulence, and eternally in need of divine guidance.

Now I recall both my grandmother and my mother, rolling their eyes skyward after discovery of yet another of my boyhood offences, with each muttering, most of the times prayerfully, and sometimes gasping with exasperation, "Lord, I begging you to put a hand on this child!"

On the other hand, with acquired knowledge, and later experiencing first-hand the tribulations faced by my ancestors, family members, and of course, my immediate circle as an adult, I no longer take the ministrations of my elders for granted; and furthermore, I now appreciate with hindsight that my mother was employing techniques of escalation and recoupment.

While it was such that my dear grandmother took the path of least resistance, and went right away to the top with an immediate lamentation, wailing and gnashing her loose teeth for divine intervention, remarkably, despite my mother's legendary short fuse, she took a constructive path when it came to teaching me about the missteps that were being taken by my wayward feet.

So it was that I was made by my mother to contemplate the gravity of my wrongdoings as a first attempt at guiding my footsteps onto the true, albeit uninteresting and narrower path in my life ahead.

Then there was the route of recoupment, an attempt at recompense in returning a bobbin of white thread, for example, which had been purloined from her sewing basket, and wholly expended in a collective, contributory effort with my similarly mischievous cohort during our orchestrations to launch a kite upwards into a cloudless, indigo sky.

Our tributary efforts were always successful at its confluence. It meant delegating boyhood filching, each member of our backdoor and alley band of 40 thieves allotted acquisition of an item that was mostly secreted out of the house during well-timed and precisely coordinated episodes of parental distraction.

These guerilla tactics typically occurred during the engrossing hour of enchantment that included black and white televi-

serve the plantation, it is a real question.

Recently, the current Guyanese administration announced that 15 percent of the carbon credit payments received from another oil company operating in the region, Hess Corporation, will be directed towards 241 Amerindian villages. This amount will total (US) \$22 million.

However, some Amerindian critics charge that commodifying Nature, and giving Amerindian communities a sliver of the profits, do not go far enough. If Indigenous culture is fundamentally about conservation, it is imperative that Indigenous people control and regulate their own resources.

Guyana is in a moment of both economic transformation, as well as climate crisis and uncertainty. Market forces alone cannot shape a narrative of progress in service of the nation.

Yet it is also hard to imagine that Guyana could delink itself from the global economy, despite the obviously false claims that both extraction and justice are possible – at the risk of communities being destroyed.

Nonetheless, for a country whose body politic understands in our bones what it means to be viewed by dominant powers as a labouring body, whose only use is as a tool for extraction and production, a body omitted from the definitions of civilisation and human potential, I see hope in this decision to redistribute the profits.

This is not simply the cost of doing business, like we might understand the Exxon Mobil foundation's donation. This is a post-colonial society grappling with legacies of colonialism, which meant that some of its citizens were deemed inconsequential to modernity.

Shona Jackson writes in her book, *Creole Indigeneity*, about the Umana Yana site in Georgetown built by Wai Wai Amerindians, as a moment where Indigenous peoples were culturally embraced by the nation while still being political and economically marginalised.

This is different. Although the social redistribution of profits from resource extraction is not a perfect answer, it gives me hope that this is an important, if messy and imperfect, step toward social justice as we struggle towards the dream of liberation.



Nalini Mohabir



Romeo Kaseram

sion episodes of *Art Linkletter and the Kids*, and re-runs of *I Love Lucy*.

My role in the assault on the fortress of my mother's sewing room most times saw me mandated with procurement of a bobbin of thread, since the relentless warfare between my mother and her aging Singer sewing machine was well-known on our street.

Now that I look at these moments down the wide end of the telescope at the years narrowing into perspective, it appears to me that we were doing the sewing machine a favour.

That perhaps stealing the bobbins of thread was similar to secreting away ammunition from an oppressed weapon, which suffused with Weltschmerz, had grown world weary with its unending assault on humanity, and was now longing to have its barrel plugged and displayed in retirement at a fort. However, my mother's war with her sewing machine is for another telling.

But having been caught after the fact, how was one to return an expended bobbin of thread, and so hand-stitch repair the accumulating errors of his boyhood waywardness?

Another item procured for our kite-making were razor blades, which came from the shaving box of yet another parent distracted with the marital complications of *Peyton Place*.

Attached to the lengthy tail, these razor blades weaponised our airborne kites, converting them into lethal flying machines that guarded our territory of the entire sky with the ferocity of a bulldog endowed with the high-rise, dental real estate of a great white shark.

We did not win all our dogfights; there were those episodes when an opponent bested our kite. In those moments, we felt the umbilical of the string lose its tension, the kite then falling backwards and away against the red evening sky with a scream, the moment a reliving of the horror in the painting by Munch.

Recovering any left-over kite string meant following it into a labyrinth of clotheslines, over octopal arms of television antennas, and across electricity wires dotted with entangling air-plants that looked like pineapple plants gone rogue. Only to come to an inextricable dead end at the house guarded by the bulldog with protruding teeth thick and lengthy as bananas.

And in the opposite direction, to follow the string always led to an encounter with the Minotaur, which was my mother escalating my stubbornness to my old man, who in his man-cave sized me up with nostrils flaring like a bull about to charge.

In times like these, Ma's heavenly invocation for divine intercession, despite the rolling of her eyes, was always a welcome, skirting sanctuary inside the voluminous folds of her *gangaree*.

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

Statements questioned on oil safety in Guyana

Dear Editor,

On February 15 the Esso Guyana Media Relations Advisor, Kwesi Isles, stated that the increase of Liza 1 and Liza 2 projects combined output to 400,000 barrels per day was safe. This appears to be the second time in less than a year that an Esso Guyana representative has issued highly questionable statements about the safety of Liza 1 production.

For the last several months, Liza 1 has been operating at about 150,000 barrels per day as per the [government website](#). However, the Liza-1 Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), [see here](#), states on page 28, "a design rate of 100,000 barrels of oil per day (BOPD), with potential to safely operate at sustained peaks of up to approximately 120,000 BOPD".

How can operating 50 percent above the design rate of Liza 1 be safe? Imagine if you load a plane 50 percent above its cargo capacity, surely you won't get on such a plane. Then why is it acceptable for Exxon to risk a major oil spill which would result in the bankruptcy of Guyana and other Caribbean nations by significantly exceeding the approved design capacity for its oil projects?

The Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010 was estimated to cost (US) \$145 billion. Guyana has earned only a couple of billion

of US dollars from its oil production. A tiny fraction of what a major oil spill would cost.

On August 6, 2022 the Communications Manager of Esso Exploration wrote a letter that appeared in the major Guyanese newspapers in which she stated, "Production rates on the Liza facilities are maintained within safe operating limits at all times." This was when Liza 1 facilities were producing about 140,000 barrels a day. That is 40 percent above the design rate of Liza 1.

It is disturbing that Esso Guyana keeps using the Guyanese media to promote a highly questionable narrative about the safety of the oil production in the Stabroek Oil Block.

Isles claims, "Safety is a core value of ExxonMobil operations. We do not compromise safety standards to improve profits."

These sound like hollow words by Esso Guyana given that the legally required parent company guarantee to cover an oil spill in Guyana's Stabroek Oil Block has not been signed. Liza 1 began oil production about three years ago, if ExxonMobil is confident in the safety of its oil operations in Guyana, then why are a few strokes of the pen taking this long? [You can learn more here](#).

Darshanand Khusial on behalf of OGGN.



Liza Destiny FPSO

Guyana must move fast to maximise oil wealth

Dear Editor,

Guyana is facing a complex set of challenges and opportunities in the face of decreasing demand for oil worldwide. This decrease is driven by a variety of factors, including the rise of renewable energy sources and the increasing awareness of the environmental impact of fossil fuels. This trend has led to a decline in oil prices, which has affected the profitability of oil companies worldwide, and forced them to cut back on investment in new projects.

The reality is the market for oil and gas is shrinking. That is a reality we should be very aware of as an oil-producing nation. Guyana does not operate in a silo, policy changes around the world affect us. There has been a growing trend in recent years towards reducing and banning the use of fossil fuels in an effort to combat climate change and transition to more sustainable energy sources.

Recently, policies were implemented by some nations to reduce or ban fossil fuels. In 2020, the UK announced it would ban the sale of new gasoline and diesel cars and vans by 2030, with hybrid vehicles to follow in 2035. This policy is part of the UK's efforts to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Denmark is aiming to phase out the use of fossil fuels entirely by 2050, and has implemented a range of policies to achieve this goal. These include a tax on fossil fuels, incentives for electric vehicles, and a requirement that all new buildings meet energy efficiency standards.

France has announced that it will ban the sale of new gasoline and diesel cars by 2030, as part of its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

Overall, these policies represent a growing trend towards reducing and banning the use of fossil fuels in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change and transition to more sustainable energy sources.

The current Guyana administration understands this very well. But every day we can see utterances in Opposition over the pace of development. We cannot miss this golden opportunity. There are too many that do not understand the entirety of the situation.

We have to move now, as the window is closing. We have at best three decades to maximise extraction. We have to "move fast and break things", or forever lose this opportunity and that is what's happening.

Anil Sukhdeo, Guyana, via email.



Moth-balled Pointe-a-Pierre Refinery in central Trinidad

Good move by Guyana on T&T refinery offer

Dear Editor,

I congratulate the government of Guyana for refusing Trinidad and Tobago's offer to refine their oil at the near-devastated refinery in Pointe-a-Pierre.

It demonstrates that the Guyana government is doing the right thing while it has the money in making its nation stand on its own, so they don't have to depend on anyone for anything. Indeed, the last thing you want is to depend on the People's National Movement government.

It should also be seen as the stinging slap it is that Guyana does not want Trinidad and Tobago in its business, and I have no problem with that.

It is clear they recognise the covert attempt to hustle them for money, given that the national refinery is up for sale, more like disposed of, because of its inefficiency. Its woes crystallised with the failure of the Malcolm Jones initiative on the gas-to-liquids fiasco, made worse by the retrenchment of all the workers, as well as the worst industrial accident in the Caribbean under any wretched government.

Such an incident will have damning consequences for any refinery. Everyone knows the refinery was in jeopardy unless the Trinidad and Tobago government rescheduled the billion-dollar loans, so unless it is sold, they have a heavily laden, debt-ridden mule to work with.

Hence Guyana's note to self: "Hell no: you ain't getting Guyana money to pay for all that bobol".

The government of Trinidad and Tobago has made an irreparable mess of the energy industry, and this should be their red flag that we are most unattractive to foreign investors.

Just imagine, our oil and gas production continues to decline to shameful levels, but we begging Guyana to send us their oil for the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery, or what is left of it. They damn right to shut the door in our faces.

Guyana is smart: they are no longer pound foolish like Trinidad and Tobago, chasing a fable in the Dragon Gas of

Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro, thinking they have hit gold, when they will be digging for decades to come, in negotiations.

They see an opportunist coming from a mile and this time, they are determined to keep their US dollars in Guyana. I applaud Guyana for its national fortitude to provide jobs for their people, to keep their foreign exchange, to look after their nationals and not lock them out for years.

Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago's government can conga line all it wants, they can send its Energy Minister Stuart Young to meet how many sanctioned VIPs in Venezuela; the word has gone out that Trinidad and Tobago should be avoided at all costs.

Linda Capildeo, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.

Vigilance needed in planning future oil negotiations

Dear Editor,

The potential for Guyana to become a regional leader has been acknowledged by several world leaders, due in large measure to our oil and gas reserves. This change in our country's economic fortunes was recognised by several speakers at the recent oil and gas summit held in Guyana.

Yet there are those in our midst who continue to see, as it were, the glass as being half-empty, rather than as being half-full. They continue to harp on the lopsided nature of the oil contracts, without taking notice of the fact that the country stands to benefit enormously from the billions of dollars from oil revenues that otherwise would not have been possible.

At a meeting with Amerindian leaders earlier this year, Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo, spoke of the billions of dollars that will be allocated to Amerindian development as a direct result of the sale of

carbon credits. These are substantial developments that will impact positively on the lives of our Indigenous peoples, and the Guyanese people as a whole.

This is not to suggest that we should not seek to get a better deal from our carbon resources. My own view is that the current contract is much too skewed in favour of the oil companies operating here, but there is not much to be gained from finding faults and engaging in the blame game.

The important thing now is to look ahead and learn from past mistakes, something which the current PPP/Civic administration is already doing. The prospects for Guyana are looking good, and will only get better in the coming years. But it requires all Guyanese to exercise patience while remaining vigilant that we do not get the raw end of

the stick in future negotiations with the oil companies.

Hydar Ally, Guyana, via email



Bharrat Jagdeo

T&T govt's response to Bheem's passing reveals disconnect

Dear Editor,

I have been approached by many since the death of my friend and colleague in broadcasting, Anil Bheem, to deal with how the Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Culture and the PNM dealt with his passing.

The ministry, while quick to recognise and laud calypsonians who pass away, was never ready to respond in kind to singers of the Indian genre.

First there was a weakly-worded letter that named *Bole Bole Hanuman* as a chutney soca song.

That is the same as saying that *Amazing Grace* is a soca song.

Clearly the PNM and its Ministry of Culture do not understand the multicultural nature of Trinidad and Tobago.

Then came a quick apology for the mistake. While we welcome the correction, we have to ask ourselves why was such a glaring mistake

Bheem's dulcet tones will be missed

Dear Editor,

Anil Bheem's impassioned and dulcet tones became his clear-cut signature to be dubbed "The Vocalist" in music and in the media. His illustrious career strongly evoked a sense of pride in us here in Trinidad and Tobago because of representations made in local and international spaces.

Such was a man of ebullience and artistic prowess. More so, very telling of his ubiquity was that spark of divinity he carried so well.

Selflessly, he imparted those offerings. His unexpected and tragic death is thereby unfathomable and utterly painful.

Expressions of this grief are ineffable. His



Cheryl Bheem (l) is comforted by Kamla Persad-Bissessar; (r) the late Anil Bheem made.

The answer is that the staff at the ministry simply are lost when dealing with East Indian

calm, vibrancy, and goodwill distinctly capture his very essence.

For us, the honourable mention of this venerated personality and legacy would forever be etched in our national and historical memory. Hitherto, the outpouring of tributes is a testament to the reverence for the late Anil Bheem.

Therefore, our cultural sphere owes a great debt of gratitude for his life and work.

My sincerest condolences to the family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones of the dearly departed.

He would be sorely missed.

Ancilla Kirby, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.

culture as practised and enjoyed by more than half of the population.

Again, I call on the powers-that-be to set up a committee for the purpose of avoiding such blunders.

Trinidad and Tobago is too small a place to continue to use culture as a tool of division. We can never realise the essence of the national anthem, "Here every creed and race finds an equal place".

Where was Bheem's equal place? Why was he not treated as his peers in calypso, and so on?

Where was the Minister of Culture in all of this? Why was there less than a passing glance, and an incorrect platitude at his passing?

It is abundantly clear that there was no regard for the contribution of Bheem as an artiste.

How can he contribute more than 30 years of his life to his art, and still be ignored by a Port-of-Spain-based government?

There was no State participation in his

funeral, but that did not stop him from having a stately funeral.

The entire East Indian community rose up to send him off in grand style after a private ceremony at his home.

The NCIC's Divali Nagar "big stage" became the place of his final farewell with hundreds in attendance.

His peers in music filled the stage as they paid tribute to him in song and speech. The Caroni cremation site was packed with mourners hoping for a last look at a man who shared so much love. They all came to give love, all except representatives of the Minister of Culture.

Bheem's music will live on despite the blatant disregard by the PNM government.

The Indian anthem, *Suhani Raath*, as sung by Bheem is now the rallying call for unity amongst East Indians, and will remain so for a long time.

The scant treatment of Bheem is just another glaring example of the inequality practised by the PNM since it has been in government. We all know better than to expect better.

I have always wondered how things would be if the roles were reversed.

How would the other side react if their women were denigrated in song, and their men were absent from ads?

How would they react if their precious cultures of calypso, pan, and Carnival were denied State funding?

How would they react if they were always passed over for promotion based on ethnicity?

The reality is that Trinidad and Tobago is a fractured society, with the PNM rulers and their minions clearly disconnected from half of the population.

Satyanand Maharaj, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



Wright addresses UG following her honorary degree

Questions on Wright's UG honour

Dear Editor,

It was reported recently in Guyana that Letitia Wright, star in the *Black Panther* movie, was honoured with an Honorary Doctorate Causa by the University of Guyana, presumably for acting in movies.

Is the university cheapening honorary doctorates? Does just being born in Guyana, and becoming an actress, qualify one for an honorary doctorate?

Wright was born in Guyana, but went to school in the UK. While a British citizen and pursuing schooling in England, and in her acting career, it will be useful to know what she did for Guyana.

I am curious to know whether she was active in Guyanese organisations in the UK. Was she involved in Guyanese-inspired humanitarian activities overseas and in Guyana?

Did she socialise with the diaspora? Did she contribute to charities in her former homeland? Did she offer help to potential actors in Guyana, who may want to pursue a career in acting?

Has she done any promotion for Guyana, or anything from which the country reaped

dividends?

Does simply being actress for a few films qualify someone for an honorary doctorate from the UG?

There are several outstanding Guyanese and organisations, from the diaspora and home, who made immense contributions to the homeland – cultural, political, social, and otherwise.

Also, the country produced outstanding writers and other distinguished achievers in the arts, sciences, and social sciences.

We have a Guyanese from Leguan who worked at Pfizer to produce the vaccine to combat Covid-19; millions of lives were saved.

How about the people who feed and care for the poor, underprivileged, hungry, and homeless? Their contributions and that of others were never recognised. They were not honored by UG with a doctorate.

What is it about Letitia Wright that makes her so deserving of a recognition with an Honorary Doctorate? And why not others who made greater contributions in their chosen field?

Gregory Massiah, Guyana, via email.

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Financial sector reforms can propel Guyana's stock market

Reforms to Guyana's financial sector are expected to benefit the development of its stock market.

For several years now, the government has been working to digitise the country's capital markets infrastructure and increase availability of financial products and services.

In its 2023 budget it was announced that in keeping with the government's vision to modernise the payment infrastructure, the Real Time Gross Settlement and Central Securities Depository Systems were fully integrated with an Automated Clearing House in 2021 and the National Payment System in 2022.

Also in 2022, two sets newly-drafted regulations – one on the dematerialisation of government and bank securities, and the other on the settlement and treatment of collateral – were finalised and enforced.

These regulations, according to the budget, will unlock opportunities for the private sector and other interested parties to safely trade securities on the Central Security Depository. Currently, the system is utilised for the trading of government securities with plans to roll out more widely, potentially benefitting the country's fledgling stock exchange.

It has been long recognised that the Guyana Stock Exchange can play a crucial role in the country's economic development. While the GSE was established in 1993, this is the first time any government has seriously considered its potential role in economic development, and taken steps to modernise its infrastructure to keep pace with the rapid development of viable stock markets in more than 35 developing countries around the world.

Incidentally, the GSE was established in accordance with the objectives of the IMF's Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy, with the aim of encouraging and/or supporting the private sector to raise local financing for investment. At that point in time, the country was overburdened by debt, and its recovery was being supervised by the IMF.

Essentially, stock markets play a major role in mobilising capital for corporations as well as governments to support their development initiatives. They also provide domestic investors with the opportunity to invest in listed securities and benefit from potential gains over time as the companies in which they invest grow.

As well, stock markets can be an attractive source of foreign investors who typically seek attractive investments outside their own borders. In the process, they can provide domestic companies with capital to grow their businesses.

Guyana currently has a small, underdeveloped and relatively illiquid stock exchange, with 16 listed companies that had total market capitalisation of (GYD) \$965 billion at the end of January 2023.

Since it was established in 2003, the market capitalisation of the index has grown exponentially to reach \$1.62 trillion in July 2022, before declining modestly to its current level of just under \$1 trillion. What this means is that the listed companies have experienced healthy growth in their stock prices, and investors in these companies would have made substantial capital gains, depending on when they invested in individual stocks.

In global terms, Guyana would be classified as a frontier market, that is, markets that are emerging, but are not yet classified as emerging markets. Generally, frontier markets are illiquid, have a small number of listed companies, and are undercapitalised.

More importantly, their regulatory, legal, disclosure, reporting and trading infrastructure is still evolving, making investment decisions challenging and difficult for global investors. That is why, unlike developed markets, frontier

markets are often categorised as a brave new world for investors willing to take the risk of investing in countries whose stock markets are now at a formative stage of development.

Arguably, while the risk of investing in these markets is greater, the rewards can be significant. Typically, investors who invest in frontier

markets like Guyana benefit from what is referred to as the "first mover's advantage", that is, they get in when stocks are relatively undervalued and hold their investments for the long-term with the objective of realising significant gains.

Incidentally, the GSE is well-positioned to attract a flood of local and foreign investors should the government successfully implement its plans to modernise its capital market infrastructure.

Currently, securities traded on the GSE are all equities, and the government hopes to diversify its listings to include equity as well as debt securities. It also hopes to develop a bond market. Typically, tradable bonds may be issued by the government as sovereign bonds or by large domestic corporations.

For foreign investors, bonds may be issued in local or foreign currency, usually the US dollar, British pound, or some other major currency. In the global arena, there is a growing tendency for developing markets to issue local currency bonds, which reduce the risk of a run on their currencies, thereby facilitating currency stability and minimising systemic risk. However, the Guyana dollar is now widely tradeable, minimising this possibility.

However, while domestic investors might be comfortable with investing in local corporate bonds and government securities, foreign investors pay attention to factors such as the country's and individual corporations' credit rating and currency stability. Guyana does not currently have a global credit rating.

Beyond the potential issue of high-yielding sovereign bonds as a component of its proposed Sovereign Wealth Fund, and the listing of local government securities, it is believed that equity securities will continue to dominate the GSE for years to come. Notwithstanding, there is potential for local corporations to list bonds on the GSE, primarily for investment by domestic investors.

New securities listings may come in the form of initial public offerings by private companies seeking to go public. Arguably, one of the drawbacks of new listings is that Guyanese private corporations tend to be narrowly held, and there appears to be a high degree of reluctance to diversify ownership.

In setting the stage for its modernisation plans, the government recognises that the legal and regulatory framework governing the operation of the securities sector has not kept pace with developments with global best practices.

As a result, it has commenced the introduction of a modern and comprehensive legislative framework to improve the regulatory regime, enhance investor protection, and strengthen cross-border supervision and cooperation among financial regulators, in order to reduce systemic risk. In a previous budget, the government proposed rewriting the Securities Industry Act to address the following areas:

- Improved licensing regimes for self-regulatory organisations, securities exchanges, and securities intermediaries;
- Extension of regulatory authority over the entire securities marketplace, including quotation and trade reporting systems and alternative trading schemes;
- Institution of a licensing regime for collective investment schemes;
- Establishment of a Central Securities Depository to record and maintain securities and register the transfer of ownership of securities; and,

• Conferral on the regulator (to be renamed the Securities Commission) of such powers and duties as would enable it to promote the orderly development of the securities market, and to protect the integrity of the market from abuse.

Evidently, Guyana's plans to modernise its securities markets infrastructure and its regulatory regime can put the country on the map to become a tradable market for investors globally. These developments can set the stage for Guyana to become an internationally recognised frontier market, putting it on par with Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, which are currently recognised as frontier markets by the globally recognised index provider, Morgan Stanley Capital International.

Such recognition would put the GSE on the radar screens of international investors, enhancing the potential inflow of foreign capital into the market to the benefit of listed companies. Investors in the market could also benefit from an increase in stock prices resulting from an infusion of liquidity and higher demand for local securities.

But the foregoing developments would be predicated upon the successful implementation of reforms proposed by the government.

Currently the Guyana Association of Securities Companies and Intermediaries Inc is responsible for organising and supervising the GSE. GASCI, a self regulatory organisation, is registered with the Guyana Securities Council.

GASCI Summary of Financials						
Session 1006 February 13, 2023						
Stock	Last Trade Price G\$	EPS G\$	P/E Ratio	Dividends paid in last 12 months G\$	Dividend Yield	Notes
DIH	230.0	9.88	23.3	2.00	0.9%	-
CCI	21.0	(0.75)	N/A	0.52	2.5%	1
CBI	146.0	30.26	4.8	5.00	3.4%	-
CJL		8,190.00				-
DBL	380.0	6.57	57.8	2.00	0.5%	-
DDL	339.9	6.38	53.3	1.55	0.5%	1, 2
DTC	2,999.9	87.17	34.4	82.11	2.7%	1
BTI	1,590.0	60.72	26.2	24.50	1.5%	1
GSI	104.0	5.01	20.8	4.00	3.8%	1
HCL		168.98		10.00		-
JPS	20.0	16.60	1.2	7.00	35.0%	1
PHI	10.0	(0.14)	N/A	0.16	1.6%	-
RBL	524.0	14.28	36.7	5.40	1.0%	-
RDL	500.0	(19.10)	N/A	0.00	0.0%	1
SPL	500.0	11.11	45.0	6.50	1.3%	1

A recent GASCI Financial Summary

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Two of these member firms, Beharry Stockbrokers Ltd and Hand-in-Hand Trust Corporation Inc, are also members of the Board of Directors of GASCI.

The GSC, a statutory body created by the Securities Industry Act, has oversight authority of the securities market. It is expected to be renamed the Guyana Securities Commission.

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

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Chris Campbell Perseverance Award for George Brown

Vaughan – Celebrating the accomplishments of Afro-descendant communities, even while acknowledging that challenges remain in overcoming systemic racism, the Carpenters’ Union last month celebrated Black History Month with the theme “Honouring the Past, Inventing the Future”.

In a release, the Carpenters Regional Council declared that it stood in solidarity with its Black community members, Black Canadians, and all people of African descent.

Additionally, the release stated, “We are proud of the contributions they have made, and continue to make to build our union and our country. We strive to promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for all people within our organisation.”

To commemorate its celebration of BHM and to configure its theme of recognising the past, the CRC unveiled a Carpenters Union coin commemorating the Second Construction Battalion of Nova Scotia, the only all-Black, battalion-sized expeditionary force in Canadian history.

Also, it revealed a commitment to the future with the unveiling of the Chris Campbell Perseverance Award.

The commemorative coin is in keeping with the contemporary recognition of the contribution to Canada by the battalion. Last July, following lobbying by battalion descendants, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Defence Minister Anita Anand both apologised on behalf of the Canadian government for the racism and harassment members of the battalion endured before, during, and after their service in World War I.

Announcing the \$20 face value, pure silver coin, the Canadian Mint said the battalion persevered and served with distinction, and risked lives to provide vital support to the war effort by aiding Canadian Forestry Corps lumber operations in France.

The coin was unveiled at the CRC’s showcase BHM event on February 23, which was presented in collaboration with Afroglobal Television and partners including painters, plumbers, and other construction trade unions. Held at the Bellagio Boutique Event Venue, the keynote speaker was Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament.

The event also saw the official launch of a new endowment scholarship for construction and trades students at George Brown College in Toronto. Known as the Chris Campbell Perseverance Award, it will support full-time students enrolled at the Angelo DelZotto School of Construction Management and the School of Apprenticeship and Skilled Trades at the Centre for Construction and Engineering Technologies.

Campbell is the Carpenters Regional Council’s Director for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The roughly \$5,000 per year award will recognise the achievements of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour students who demonstrate passion and commitment through extra-curricular activities, volunteer work, and involvement in the classroom.

In his address at the event, Campbell spoke to his commitment as head of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the CRC.

Said Campbell: “I understand the importance of representation. I also understand the importance of community engagement. In July 2022, I was moved when the Prime Minister... Justin Trudeau recognised and thanked the No. 2 Construction Battalion for their contributions.”

He added, “As a construction labour union representative, I felt compelled to reach out to my colleagues in the industry to do something to honour these heroes.”

Campbell also spoke to the other thematic event that evening. “Thirty-three years ago, I was fortunate to walk through the doors of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America to start a career as an apprentice at the 64 Signet Drive office. Look at where that has got me! To give young people that encouragement that they need to succeed like I did as an apprentice!”

Campbell also indicated the \$100,000 scholarship endowment at George Brown College was made possible with support from the unions, community, and friends.

“The Perseverance Scholarship Award will assist youths pursuing an apprenticeship training certification course, diploma courses, or degree studies for the construction industry or labour studies,” he stated.

Romeo Kaseram, LJI Reporter



Chris Campbell



Carpenters’ Union silver commemorative coin



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Sharma calls for safety, harmony following vandalism of Hindu mandirs

From Page 1

discomfort, and pain and anguish being felt in the Hindu community and beyond.

Said Brown: "Any act of intimidation, vandalism, or hate in a place of worship is despicable. And what I have seen across the GTA in recent months has been very cowardly, disappointing hate toward the Hindu community."

He added, "Our children shouldn't see that. They shouldn't see hate in our country; or our city; or our region. I think it is important as leaders that we stand up and say to any community that is facing hate that there is zero tolerance for that."

During his address, Hindu Federation leader Sharma declared that Hinduism was now being threatened.

"[Our] peace and tranquility are being disturbed by these acts of vandalism. What we are seeing in Canada today, and in this region, are blatant acts of anti-Hinduism. It is becoming to a point whereby we cannot... let it go. We have to take a stand," he said. At the same time, Sharma noted the police were doing an excellent job.

And like Arya, Sharma also repeated the call for national and definitive action to be taken to stop the escalating intolerance.

He added, "...We have to tell our political leaders, our politicians, the government, that taking the normal stance on this issue is not enough. We need to go beyond. We need to establish tribunals to investigate these groups: to seek them out, and to prosecute them; that they will stop these acts."

And he warned, "If it continues, we will become a cesspool of hatred, whereby our society of peace and harmony will be lost to the world."

In what was a shared moment of lived intolerance, Sharma recalled directly experiencing an act of racism that saw him positively asserting his ethnicity, religious faith, Guyanese heritage, and his commitment to Canada.

He added, "I want to be proud, and feel comfortable and safe to live in this country. We need everyone's support. The citizens



The community came out last Friday to "Wash Away the Hate" at Ram Mandir in Mississauga by erasing the hate-graffiti on its outside wall. It was led by Spiritual Leader, Pandit Roopnauth Sharma (second from left in photo). In attendance were MP Paul Chiang, MPP Deepak Anand, Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie, Local Councillor Dipika Damerla, & Peel Police officers. Members from the Buddhist & Muslim faiths were also present; & a letter of support was received from the Jewish community. Pandit Hardat Ashwar, Dr Yudhishtir Dhanraj, & Pandit Kishore Jani were also in attendance.

to take due diligence; to do what they must do; to report incidents to the police. Give them all the equipment that they need, and evidence, so they can find these people."

Deputy Chief of Peel Regional Police Mark Dapat spoke to the broader community, which he said was being impacted by these "heinous crimes".

"Peel Regional Police does not condone, and has zero tolerance for hate-motivated crimes and hate crimes," he said.

Dapat also revealed that 12 and 22 Division Criminal Investigation officers were on the case, and had been delegated to investigate and solve the hate-motivated crimes that have taken place at the Hindu temples.

Peel Regional Police were pursuing every investigative lead and pathway to solve this crime, he assured.

Additionally, "In concert with the investigators, our officers from community safety and well-being are engaged and support

the congregation and the broader community, and are offering reassurance."

Dapat also issued an appeal for anyone who may have information that would lead to the identity, or solving of these crimes to contact 12 Division or 22 Division. Additionally, he indicated that Peel Crime Stoppers was also an avenue for anyone to anonymously report a crime.

He gave the assurance to the community that the Peel Regional Police was taking "these hate-motivated crimes very, very seriously".

"We are going to be working directly with those involved," he said, while at the same time acknowledging the broader impact the trauma has brought to the community.

Meanwhile, Brown also gave the assurance that Brampton was committed and engaged, declaring that the gathering was an opportunity for him "to stand with our faith leaders... to let them know that we stick together; that if one aspect of our community

faces hate... we all rally by their side - that is part the beauty of Canada".

"We have seen that in other instances, where one community has faced hate, that other communities rally together. I think that is Canada at its best," he said.

Brown also noted that investigations into the hate-crimes were ongoing, and that it was too early to know who were the perpetrators, and what were the motivations driving the crimes. Presumptions were not helpful, and the police should continue with its investigation, he asserted.

Dr Doobay was also recognised for his leadership by Brown. As he noted, it was Dr Doobay's idea for a gathering in order to denounce Hinduphobia and hate of any kind, particularly at a place of worship.

"Regardless of what the place of worship is, hate has no place," Brown declared.





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Protestors march on the streets of Paramaribo on February 17

Attack on Suriname parliament denounced

Nassau, Bahamas – Caricom and regional leaders last week denounced the actions by Suriname protesters on February 17 following the storming of this nation’s parliament that saw windows broken and businesses looted.

The protesters had gathered to protest higher electricity and fuel prices, the *Caribbean Media Corporation* reported.

The statement of support from the leaders came during the closing press conference of the 44th regular meeting of the Caricom Heads of Government in Nassau, Bahamas, where Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit and Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley called for peace and order to be restored in Suriname.

Caricom also issued a statement condemning the acts of violence.

Skerrit said that while regional leaders respected citizens’ rights to protest within the confines of the Constitution and relevant laws, they stood in solidarity in recognising the democratically-elected government led by President Chandrikapersad Santokhi.

“And we do hope that all actors can respect the rule of law and respect people’s right to move freely. And we certainly condemn the storming of the parliament. It appears that this is becoming a practice in our hemisphere, and is something that we all need to seek to condemn and stamp out in our hemisphere,” Skerrit said.

He added, “We call for calm and a restoration of peace and order and allow for dialogue to take place and the issues among the Surinamese people can be addressed in a respectful, lawful manner.”

Mottley echoed Skerrit’s call for peace and stability to be restored in Suriname, saying it was “most unfortunate”. It was unacceptable for anyone to put people’s lives at risk, she declared.

Mottley added, “People can express their views, but there is no excuse for violence in any manner, form, or fashion. And to the extent that persons have been injured, and to the extent that property has been damaged, the ultimate loss is also to the stability of the country.”

In its statement, Caricom said it had received a report from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of Suriname on the ongoing disturbances.

It stated, “Caricom reaffirms its support for the democratically-elected Government of Suriname under the leadership of President

Chandrikapersad Santokhi. The Heads of Government took note of the unfolding situation in Suriname, and strongly condemned the violent attacks on people, as well as private and public facilities, including the parliament.”

Additionally, “[The Heads of Government] recognised the right to freedom of expression, and the right to peaceful protest, but expressed the view that there can be no excuse for the use of violence in any type of demonstration. They affirmed that these actions only serve to undermine the rule of law and the stability of democracies. Furthermore, they threaten the lives and livelihoods of our citizens, and are inimical to the interest of our population.”

What began as a peaceful demonstration by thousands of people in Suriname’s capital Paramaribo against the removal of subsidies later escalated into protesters clashing with police, storming the National Assembly, vandalising the lobby, smashing windows with rocks, and the looting of stores.

Suriname’s government condemned the actions, with Santokhi indicating that those involved in the violence were being tracked down, and will be brought to justice.

“All institutions of the rule of law are functioning. The home of democracy has been attacked, but democracy is functioning,” Santokhi said following the event.

He also noted organisers of the protest had been informed beforehand that they had permission to engage in peaceful protest. However, he said investigations have so far shown this was not the case.

Consequently, all individuals involved in the “escalation” will be held accountable, he stated.

Several people were injured during the attack, with over 100 protesters arrested so far.

On the day of the attack, thousands of demonstrators arrived in Paramaribo to protest against the policies of the government, including the removal of subsidies on several items, among them hydro and thermal energy, which the government said would result in savings of approximately (US) \$10.9 million annually.

According to Suriname’s Natural Resources Minister David Abiamofo, the new electricity tariffs that were introduced in 2021 would be removed in three phases within two years.

Suriname’s Vice-President Dew Sharman noted that any action must be within the bounds of law and order.

An attack on the parliament, cannot be justified, Sharman said.



Chan Santokhi

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How BMH helps us recognise 3 outstanding Afro-Guyanese

By Harry Hergash

In an article in the *Guyana Chronicle* of February 20, 2022, on Black History Month, Pat Dyal, Guyana's Archivist in the 1960s, and a former lecturer at the University of Guyana writes, "[February] is commemorated as 'Black History Month' in the USA. It was first formulated by the Afro-American academic Carter Woodson in 1926 to counterbalance the studied ignoring of the important contributions African American men and women had made to American life and to bring to the fore and remind all Americans of the achievements of African-American people... In Guyana, it is largely commemorated by organisations and groups dedicated to the preservation and promotion of African culture".

And on the same subject, an **Editorial in the *Kaieteur News* of February 8, 2022**, states in Guyana, "Black History Month is also observed and cheered and cherished, but it is noticeable for the attention (or lack thereof) that is afforded to it by those outside of the extended and diverse African or Black family".

Guyana has often been described as a "Land of Six Races". In my view, in this multiracial environment with its consequential stresses and strains as ethnic groups compete for resources, an appreciation of the history and contribution of each group is essential to promote understanding, peace, and harmony as Guyanese strive to achieve the national motto of "One People, One Nation, One Destiny".

Thus, BHM provides an opportunity for all Guyanese to learn about the history and culture of Afro-Guyanese, and their contributions to the society since the early 17th century, when the Dutch West India Company commenced importing slaves from Africa to work initially on tobacco, and later on the sugar plantations.

In this piece, I write to bring attention to the contributions of three outstanding Afro-Guyanese of Eastern Mahaicony, the area in Guyana where I was born, and where I grew-up as a child in the 1950s. These individuals have long passed on, but the contribution of each to the citizens of that part of Guyana must be recognised and recorded.

Eastern Mahaicony covers the villages from the Abary River in the East to the Mahaicony River in the West. I was born in the village of Huntley Mahaicony, about ten houses east of where former Prime Minister, Acting President, and now Ambassador to Washington, His Excellency Samuel Hinds and his siblings lived with their grandparents, Mr and Mrs Bruce.

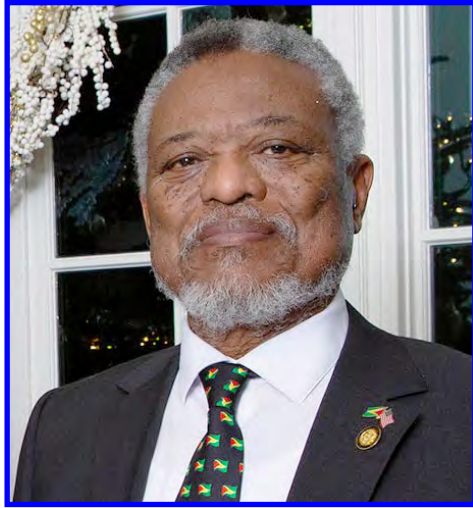
I believe Hinds is one of the most outstanding citizens, not only of Eastern Mahaicony, but of the entire country; however, his story is reserved for another time. My focus is on individuals who are now in the great beyond, and one of them is his grandmother.

My dad was born in Huntley in 1920 and passed away in 2015. In the 1920s he attended the Novar Canadian Mission School, a primary school funded and managed by the Canadian Mission, the overseas arm of the Canadian Presbyterian Church.

The CM focused on the education of East Indian children, mainly Hindus, and to a lesser degree Muslims, with the aim of gaining converts to Christianity.

The CM had experience in India, and its Canadian Head in Guyana, Reverend James Cropper, spoke Hindi fluently, enabling him to converse with and persuade East Indian parents to send their children to school.

According to my dad, one of his early class teachers was an Afro-Guyanese, Miss Drayton, who came from a village in Mahaica. She immediately won over parents when they found out that she taught the children to sing the *bhajan* (the equivalent of a hymn) – *Hey Prabhu Ananda Daata Gyaana Hamko Deejaye* (O Lord, Giver of Bliss, Give Me Knowledge).



Samuel Hinds

Later, Miss Drayton would marry Mr Bruce, Pastor of the AME Zion Church, becoming Mrs Bruce. Over the years she gained promotions, and finally held the position of Deputy Headmistress of the school.

She was an integral part of the community, was highly regarded, and well-respected.

Prior to writing this piece, I spoke on the telephone with Ambassador Hinds, and he added that his grandmother was able to read and write Hindi (Devnagari script) very well, but could not translate the language.

Incidentally, the original CM school was replaced by a new building in the early 1950s in a different location, but continued as Novar CM School until 1961, when the name was changed to Novar Government School as a result of the PPP government's initiative.

This initiative was spearheaded by Balram Singh Rai, then Minister of Education, ending the system of "dual control of schools".

In speaking with Ambassador Hinds, he reminded me that he attended the Novar CM School from 1948 to 1955, when he left to attend secondary school in Georgetown. He and his siblings were among the few children of African background to attend the school during that period.

Another individual on my list is William A. Seaforth, who was the Headmaster of Novar CM School during my dad's years of attendance, and when Miss Drayton joined the staff. Prior to his appointment at Novar CM, he was a teacher at the DeHoop Canadian Mission School.

After Novar CM, he was transferred to the Berbice region, where he remained until his retirement in the 1940s. He then returned to Eastern Mahaicony, where he ran his own private school under the name Dundee Private School, until around 1960 when failing eyesight caused him to close the school.

After his return to Eastern Mahaicony, Seaforth and his wife Gertrude lived in Huntley, a few houses away from where I was born. She was a quiet, dignified lady who stayed at home. He, on the other hand, was outgoing and very popular throughout the district. He was also the lay preacher on Sundays in a Christian church in the nearby village of Airy Hall.

Gertrude and my paternal great-grandmother were very good friends, and I basically grew up in her presence. When I was ready for primary school in 1952, my great-grandmother was adamant that I should attend Seaforth's school, where the monthly fee was two shillings (48 cents) per month, instead of the Novar CM school, where education was free.

The key reason for her insistence was because, in her opinion, the teachers at Novar CM were not "proper teachers, they don't wear suit and tie like teacher Seaforth". And she paid my fees for the entire duration of my years at Dundee Private School, which was from 1952 to 1958.

In chatting with Ambassador Hinds, he reminded me that Novar CM was perceived as an 'Indian' school, while Dundee Private was perceived as a 'Black' school, and joked, "So you attended the Black school while I attended



Harry Hergash

the Indian school".

Dundee Private school was a one-room schoolhouse and Seaforth taught all the classes from Standard One to Six with an Assistant who helped with the Beginners (ABC class).

Seaforth was an outstanding organiser, who was able to manage and teach all the classes, a strict disciplinarian who resorted to the strap for schoolwork and discipline, and most of all, an excellent teacher.

I left the village for secondary school, but returned every year during the August holidays and would always pay him and his wife a visit, even after he lost his sight completely. He relished those occasions, would treat me with respect, and would fill me in on his boyhood years growing up in Buxton.

When I spoke to Eusi Kwayana about two decades ago, he admitted he was not aware of William Seaforth, but promised to do some checking. About a year later he called to say that after he was able to speak with Kwame

Apata (formerly Eardley Seaforth), and the latter confirmed that William was a senior member of the Buxton Seaforth clan who had moved away from the village many, many decades ago.

Last, but not least on my list, is an exceptional human being who was popularly known as Nurse Joyce, and who lived in Dundee village. I do not know when she was appointed Nurse-Midwife for the district, but I was told that she took care of the delivery when I was born in the late 1940s, so I guess her appointment predates my birth. And I believe she continued in that role until around 1960.

This was a time when expectant mothers had no access to prenatal care in the district, and only a Government Officer (doctor) was stationed in Central Mahaicony with no hospital facility.

All childbirths took place at home, were all handled by the Nurse-Midwife, and only exceptionally complicated cases were rushed to the Georgetown Public Hospital, while a woman was already in labour.

Worse yet, there were no hire cars (taxis) for transportation, and less than five private cars in Eastern Mahaicony that could be hired to transport a person to the GPH.

Incredibly, during my childhood years, I can only recall hearing of two cases where an expecting mother had to be rushed to the GPH, and in both cases, each mother and her child died in the hospital.

It was well-known that night or day, rainfall, or sunshine, soon after Nurse Joyce received a call, she would arrive to help an expectant mother deliver her baby. She was an extremely competent and caring person, and a blessing to the generations of women and their babies to whom she attended.

'Our future is in good hands' as youths mark BHM in NY

By Dhanpaul Narine

The Queens Book Fair and Literary Festival Inc. celebrated Black History Month with an impressive function. It was held at the Queens Library, Richmond Hill Branch, in Hillside Avenue, New York. The program took the form of a panel discussion followed by music, poetry, and speeches. The meeting was chaired by Dr Rosalind 'Rose' October, artist and activist. The members of the panel were Ashook Ramsaran, Dr Jackie Jones, and Rusat Ramgopal.

Since its founding five years ago, the Queens Book Fair has attracted some of the best talents in the community to share their knowledge on a wide range of subjects. Last week's meeting was no exception.

Dr October traced the origins of Black History Month from its start with Dr Carter Woodson, to the current celebrations. She pointed out that two other countries celebrate Black History Month: the UK and Canada. She said that the reach of social media has penetrated Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and elsewhere.

She also highlighted the role of Shirley Chisholm, whose parents were from the Caribbean. Her father was Guyanese and her mother Barbadian. She won a Congressional seat in 1968 and ran for the presidency in 1972. Dr October asked the audience to learn from our "heroes and sheroes", so that their lives can be an example to all.

The resident musician, Tafazool Baksh from New Jersey, played an appropriate classical piece, and this was followed by presentations from the students.

Ethan Manav Misir read a poem on the Tuskegee Soldiers, while Maya Hardwar highlighted the power of the rose, and Jelicia lauded Black inventions. Every day, we use some products that were invented by Blacks that we take for granted, she said. Malia Hardwar's poem was about the need for tolerance and respect.

Ramsaran is an engineer by profession. He is president of the Indian Diaspora Council. He spoke on the topic *Black History and You*.

Ramsaran commended the Queens Book Fair for its lecture series. He said that we need to understand history to know what is happening around us.

Black History Month is the body, the heart and soul of America, he said. He referred to the 1619 project that encapsulates the history of slavery. American history has been touched by slavery. Ramsaran outlined some important dates in American history. Two of these dates were 1619, when the first slaves landed in America, to 1965, when President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act.

He said, "We are standing on the shoulders of those who came before us".

Blacks in America have made significant improvements in all walks of life, from entertainment to politics, Ramsaran said. But there is more to be done for Black and Brown peoples in the field of social justice.

Ambika Chandra spoke about the contribution of Harriet Tubman, while Melissa Deoki read a poem from Langston Hughes, *I too am America*.

Samantha Tappin spoke about the significance of the African Burial Grounds in Lower Manhattan. The discovery of the bones led the Federal government to declare the site as a landmark in 1993.

Amelia Persaud read from memory the unofficial anthem of Black History, *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou. Alexander Dial asked us to remember Rosa Parks and her contribution to the struggle. He elaborated on Black inventions, from potato chips, the traffic lights, the many uses of peanuts, and invention of the blood bank by Dr Charles Drew.

Ariana Narine reminded the audience that Black history is American history. She disagreed that we should not have a month for Black history.

Shana Lilwah wanted us to hold fast to dreams, a poem she read from Langston Hughes.

Dr Jackie Jones is an educator and motivational speaker. She is also Deputy Superintendent of District 79 in the New York City, Department of Education. She congratulated the children for their performance. She said she was inspired by them. She made a case for the study of history.

Looking back gives us the opportunity to understand past events, and to appreciate and recognise how we can all do better, she said.

Dr Jones reinforced the fact that we take many Blacks for granted. The iron board, alarm system, detection of cataract, and others, were invented by Blacks.

"Those who understand the importance of Black history can become better leaders because they are more aware of the



Samantha Tappin (l-r), Dr Jackie Jones, Dhanpaul Narine, Dr Rosalind 'Rose' October, & Jelicia Blair



Vote of thanks was given by distinguished Trinidadian Deo Gosine

motivation and the challenges of Black people," she said to applause. She said that we are all living history, and we have the power to create history.

Said Dr Jones: "If we do something impactful, and show more kindness, spread more love, smile more, give more, teach more, encourage more, and inspire more, we are creating history."

Karissa Jagbeer read a poem *The Middle Passage* by Dhanpaul Narine that traced the journey of slaves from Africa to America, and said that "they cannot bend us because we too are America".

Silkee Smith asked for us to think of freedom whether we are in Ohio or North Carolina.

Dr Melina Basant read *Phenomenal Woman* by Maya Angelou. It was magnificently done. Dr Basant is a phenomenal woman, having just earned her MD degree.

Hiram Rampersaud, a nurse and radio host, said he was impressed by all the speakers, especially Dr Jones. Hiram told the audience to have confidence, and not to allow negativity to enter their minds. He invited Dr Jones to his radio show.

The final speaker was Ramgopal, who has law degrees from Kings College London, and Georgetown University. He spoke on *Black History: Lessons for the Future*.

He congratulated the children for attending. Ramgopal gave a brief background of the racial situation in Guyana, and said that Blacks in New York were among the most inspirational and helpful persons he has found.

He has admired the achievements of Blacks, but in going

forward there is much more to do. There is the need for more Brown and Black representation in the halls of power.

He suggested that we learn from the examples of Dr Martin Luther King, Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, John Lewis, Andrew Young, and others. We need to tell our own stories, which is what the Queens Book Fair is all about.

Rohana Chetram highlighted the role of Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat and set off mass protests in the South.

The final speaker was Nayana Chetram. She is a politician in the making. She gave a history of the Black struggle, and highlighted the significant contribution of Blacks to the community.

She singled out one of the most iconic figures in history, Dr Martin Luther King, and requested that we learn from him.

Chetram said, "Let us honour the legacy of Black Americans by promoting equality and freedom for all. The history of Black Americans is the history of America."

Nayana's speech was described as powerful, which led the moderator Dr October concluding that "our future is in good hands".

The vote of thanks was given by distinguished Trinidadian Deo Gosine.

He congratulated the participants for their presentations. He said it was a wonderful evening, and the message of peace, unity, and mutual respect should ring loudly from the Queens Book Fair to the wider community.

Gosine presented mementos to the panelists, and Malia was asked to be his helper.

In summary, the Black History celebration was to the point. As is common at the Queens Book Fair, the majority of the presenters were youths. Moderator, Dr October, did an excellent job. Ramsaran was exceptional in organising the event. Thanks are extended to the parents for bringing out the children on a wintry day, and to Rebecca Alibatya and the staff of the Queens Library, Richmond Hill Branch.

The next offering of the Queens Book Fair will be on April 8, 2023 to honour the women of our community.



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Tony Deyal



Shirley Najhram

Pakaraima Writers' Association holds One Guyana Vibes event

The Pakaraima Writers' Association once again lauded attendees in its virtual One Guyana Vibes event, which took place on February 22. The event saw a number of poets and writers presenting their poetry and stories. Established in 2005 by Janet Naidu, the Association aims to help Guyanese writers share their work with a wider audience.

While many of the writers are Guyanese-Canadians where the Association was formed and continues to operate, the February 22 event was also graced by readers from Guyana, Bahamas, and Trinidad & Tobago.

Presenters included Petamber Persaud, Lisa Freemantle, Janet Naidu, Ray

Williams, Ken Puddicombe, Steve Persaud, Andrew Knight, Tony Deyal, Franklin Mohan, and Mohammed Khadim.

The Pakaraima Association continues to bring this literary circle together with the support of Habeeb Alli as its President; Janet Naidu, the association's former President; and Shirley Najhram, its Executive Director.

The Association has seen a growth in interest of poets and writers, with recently published poet, Lisa Freemantle, joining the organisation.

Freemantle was also co-presenter for the evening's event, which saw approximately 35 attendees.

Canadian-Guyanese author Puddicombe wins Guyana Prize for Literature



Ian MacDonald receives his prize from PM Phillips

Georgetown – Writers in the diaspora, along with Guyana-based authors, playwrights, and poets, featured among the winners in the Guyana Prize for Literature, which was held in Georgetown on February 10.

Among the winners was Guyanese-Canadian author Ken Puddicombe, who received the Guyana Prize for Literature, Fiction, for his book of short stories, *Down Independence Boulevard* (2017).

Describing Puddicombe as a master story teller, Rosaliene Bacchus tells us in her review that his *Down Independence Boulevard* is a collection of 16 short stories that “takes us within the homes of families faced with racial violence and upheaval”.

Bacchus adds, “With keen eyes... Puddicombe lays bare their ruptured lives and re-invention as immigrants in a foreign country.”

Puddicombe received his prize from Guyana's Prime Minister, Brigadier (ret'd) Mark Phillips.

In his remarks at the event, Phillips told the gathering that the Guyana Prize for Literature had been restored by government of Guyana after a six-year hiatus. The return of the prize was due to the importance of the written word, he said.

“It is unfortunate that for six years, our writers were left

without an outlet, a platform, on which they could exercise their talent, and be recognised for their self-expression,” he added.

Also, “Our government felt that this was unacceptable, and upon return to office, sought to revive this prestigious programme and return to our local writers the opportunity to hone their craft and expand their horizons through the written word.”

Hinds also spoke to the investments the Guyana government was making to the industry, among which were the creation of the cultural/creative industries grant, and a soon-to-be-accredited Institute of Creative Arts to develop the skills of Guyanese artists.

He also noted that Guyana's creative industry has untapped

potential, while citing actress Dr Letitia Wright as an example of how far Guyanese can go when given the right impetus.

Phillips said the government's commitment was to “ensure that the future Letitia Wrights, the future Eddie Grants, the future Martin Carters and Edgar Mittelholzers of Guyana are able to realise their potential... on home soil”.

Also among the diaspora's authors receiving the Guyana Prize for Literature was Professor Clem Seecharan, who received the inaugural non-fiction prize for his book, *Joe Solomon And The Spirit Of Port Mourant*. It is co-authored by Ian MacDonald.

Another inaugural prize was won by young Samir Mohamed, who took first place for both the Poetry (Male) and Short Story (Male) categories. Mohamed was named the Best Youth Performer for both categories.

In other categories, Kimora Payne received the award for Best Short Story (Female), and Zelena Khan received the award for Best Poem (Female).

Elly Niland received the award for the Best First Book of Fiction for, *Bone Soup and Other Stories*, while Berkeley Wendell Semple received the prize for the Best Book of Poetry, with Rae Wiltshire the winner for Best Drama Piece.



Puddicombe reading from his winning book



Stacey Johnson is congratulated by PM Phillips



Ashwannie Harripersaud (left), & Daizal Samad with the PM



Berkeley Wendell Semple reads from his poetry



Leon Saul won in the drama category

Photos courtesy News Room (Guyana)



The Guyana Prize for Literature was held at the National Cultural Centre in Georgetown on February 10. While the festival typically includes activities for the benefit of the creative arts industry, there were new categories this year in non-fiction & for youth. Among the awards were for best book of fiction, best book of non-fiction, best book of poetry, & youth awards for best short story & best poetry. In attendance were Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, & Culture, Youth & Sport Minister, Charles Ramson Jr. Among the winners (top left to right) were Elle Nylon (fiction), Clem Seecharan (non-fiction), who received their prizes from PM Hinds; & Samir Mohammed (poetry & short story), who received his award from Minister Ramson Jr. *News Room (Guyana) photos*

T&T-born poet explores paternal void, wins prestigious TS Eliot prize

Poet, novelist, and musician Anthony Joseph has won the TS Eliot prize for his poetry collection *Sonnets for Albert*, *The Guardian* reported last month.

The collection, which was described as “luminous” by the judges, took away the £25,000 poetry prize.

There were a record 201 submissions for the prize. As Chair of the judges Jean Sprackland noted, each of the shortlisted books “spoke powerfully to us in its own distinctive voice”.

Also on the panel were 2021 Costa book of the year winner Hannah Lowe, and the 2019 TS Eliot prize winner Roger Robinson, who like Joseph, also has Trinidad and Tobago roots.

Said Sprackland, “From this strong field our choice is *Sonnets for Albert*, a luminous collection which celebrates humanity in all its contradictions and breathes new life into this enduring form.”

Sonnets for Albert is an autobiographical collection that weighs the impact of growing up with a largely absent father. It was also shortlisted for the Forward prize for best collection last year.

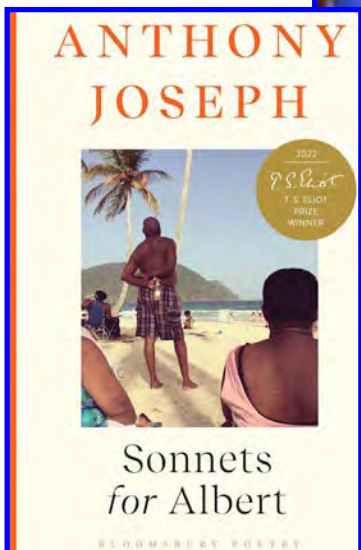
In his review in *The Guardian*, David Wheatley said that “after much silence and absence in life”, Joseph’s father was “painstakingly restored in death in a book-length ‘calypso sonnet’ sequence”.

As Wheatley wrote, “Albert is a rogue, and encounters with him often take place on the run... Others have respectability, but Albert has style and mystique. Joseph’s relationship with his father is profoundly ambivalent, but *Sonnets for Albert* movingly makes peace with his shade...”

Joseph is also a lecturer in creative writing at King’s College in London.

And as Gillian Caliste wrote in the *Trinidad Guardian* last month, Joseph has used fragments of mental and physical photographs to piece together, and to bring to life, the persona of his father, Albert, who was largely absent.

Sonnets for Albert is the poet’s way of confronting his



Joseph reads from his *Sonnets for Albert* father’s absence through poetry, Caliste wrote.

And as also Caliste reported, Joseph described the judges’ decision to award him the TS Eliot prize as vindication for years of quietly pursuing his love of writing and creativity.

He also described *Sonnets For Albert* as his attempt to memorialise his “charismatic” parent who was missing from his life, and who became almost a “mythological figure”.

At the same time, Joseph said his effort also has the potential to speak to others who have experienced the same void.

As Caliste wrote, Joseph cited the Trinidad and Tobago author, Earl Lovelace, and his vision of the Caribbean being a place that is central to humanity. He also said that Lovelace’s vision is one where the Caribbean is not an isolated area that is resident on the periphery.

Rather, as Joseph declared, the archipelago is a place for Caribbean people, even if it is everyday people, where they can be immortalised.

Said Joseph: “The Caribbean is also a centre of humanity, and it is important that we recognise the mythologies and the folklores we live in. We have to realise that they are universal. A lot of people have a difficult relationship with their father, so when I talk about my father on a very personal level, I’m also

reaching out universally to touch anyone who has had similar experiences.”

In *Sonnets For Albert*, the poet features photos of his father, and lays bare his complex relationship with this absent parent, contending with the man’s shortcomings while still longing for and loving him, Caliste wrote.

Caliste also revealed that, “Joseph’s love for and acceptance of his father, who passed five years ago were influenced by his grandmother Sylvia, a nurturing woman, who loved Albert, her last son. Joseph said, at a very young age, he was sent to live with her and his strict step-grandfather Clarence Hoyte in Mt Lambert after his parents split up. His younger brother stayed with his mother.”

Additionally, “Joseph would develop a very close relationship with his Cocoa Panyol grandmother who was a country woman, originally from Santa Cruz. His aunt Ursula would also impact his life.”

As Joseph recalled, “My father wasn’t around. He was in and out. You would see him once a year if you were lucky.”

Albert was a carpenter, who later became a foreman on construction sites.

Joseph most cherished memory of the man who was his father, and whom he often idolised, was being hoisted as a young boy onto his shoulders near the General Hospital in Port-of-Spain during a Carnival fight.

The memory is retained of watching the Carnival masquerade bands pass from this lofty perch on his father’s shoulder.

That recall is titled *POSGH 1* in *Sonnets for Albert*.

Joseph has written three novels, and recalled that his earliest memories of writing poetry started when he was 11 years old.

His second novel *Kitch* (*Peepal Tree Press, 2018*) is a fictional biography of the late calypsonian, Lord Kitchener. It was shortlisted for the 2019 Republic of Consciousness prize, and the Royal Society of Literature’s Encore award.

While Joseph told Caliste that writing *Sonnets for Albert* brought him closer to filling the void of having grown up without a father, he remains ambivalent about the closure.

However, he added its writing helped him better come to terms with who his father was, and to gain an understanding of unconditional love.

Sonnets for Albert is available on [Amazon](#).

Reading discovers many great novels valorising the power of love

The power of love is eminent in many great novels! Love and war are often intertwining themes. I always felt that I had one romantic novel in me, hence *Carnival Girl* (1996). It is a story of love and tragedy, set in the island of Trinidad, with a background of Carnival. There are calypso music, dance, and romance, with the Caribbean pulsating in my veins. It has many of the themes that move me, and take me back to the islands.

Being an avid reader from childhood, I read and re-read a number of great novels, many of which were made into successful movies and theme songs.

Many of them have a background of war. *All Quiet on the Western Front*, an Eric Maria Remarque novel (1929), now up for an Academy Award this year as a movie, gripped me as a child.

It portrayed the brutality of war, increasingly evident in our modern world as we see it in Ukraine and Russia. It is an existential novel in which many of the victims are young and caught up in circumstances beyond their control.



Bernard Heydorn

Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, is set against the background of the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939. The title comes from the metaphysical poetry of John Donne – “Don’t ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.”

It is a call to action to you and me. The American hero in the novel listened to that call, and had a tragic love affair with a Spanish woman.

This is considered by many as Hemingway’s best novel, which was also made into a movie. I have read it a number of times.

Who can forget Boris Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago*? With the background theme of the Russian Revolution, *Doctor Zhivago* was made into a long, but very successful movie, which won the Academy Award for best movie in 1965.

There is a romance between Zhivago and Lara, with an interplay of violence and war running through it.

Not to be outdone is *Gone with the Wind* (1943), written by Margaret Mitchell. It portrays the life of a Southern belle and a rogue, with the background of the American Civil War.

The tragic history of the South, and themes of war, issues of race, slavery, classism, and human nature are evident then as now. It is a tear-jerker as are several of the novels I mentioned.

There are more like *Out of Africa*, written by Karen Blixen (1937), which was also made into a movie. Set in Kenya, it is a portrayal of Africa and colonialism, a theme which many of us are familiar with.

There is loss, nostalgia, and colonialism which also shows up in my book, *Walk Good Guyana Boy* (1994).

There is *Love is a Many Splendoured Thing*, Han Suyin’s, love story; *Of Human Bondage*, and *The Moon and Sixpence* by Somerset Maugham; and many others, all exploring universal themes of human nature, love, and war, and which are set in various locations.

These themes bring out the best in gifted writers throughout history. They display our existential fragility, at times noble, at times mistaken, forever appearing and disappearing in our psyche.

It is the siren call that brings these books to mind as many of us approach “the golden age”, death, and beyond. If the creeks don’t rise and the sun still shines I’ll be talking to you.



Dive survivor Christopher Boodram holds daughter Caira at the memorial site last week

Family of diving tragedy victims holds memorial

Port-of-Spain – The families of the four LMCS divers who died tragically in an underwater accident at the Paria Fuel Trading Company a year ago last week marked the one year anniversary of the deaths by planting trees in memory of their loved ones.

The event took place at the Couva South constituency office, where MP Rudranath Indarsingh hosted a tribute for Rishi Nagassar, Kazim Ali Jr, Yusuf Henry, and Fyzal Kurban.

Nagassar's common-law wife, Vanessa Kussie, appealed to officials of Paria to allow the families to mourn in peace as they planned to visit the area where their loved ones died near Berths No. 6 to offer prayers on the anniversary of the incident.

Kussie said the families had written to Paria requesting permission.

Henry's mother, Nicole Greenidge, said it felt unnatural for parents to outlive their children. She added that the family has faced hardships since Henry's death, and there have been no offers of assistance from Paria. Greenidge has lost three sons.

Also at the tree planting was Christopher Boodram, the only

diver to survive the accident.

"My wounds are still open. I still feel like this thing happened a week ago," he said.

Indarsingh called on the State, saying the government must tell the country what measures have been put in place to ensure such a tragedy does not recur.

He said the government must also say whether the OSH Agency had completed its investigation into the incident, and whether that report will be laid in Parliament.

He also called on the government to say how much it had cost to hold the Commission of Enquiry into the tragedy.

"In the context of the duty of care, we call upon the Attorney General to ensure that when this report is submitted, the report is not sanitised in any way, and the State must be prepared to send this report to the Director of Public Prosecutions and examine if there is the basis for a criminal prosecution," he said.

Kazim Ali, LMCS Managing Director and father of Ali Jr, along with his wife Catherine, also participated in the tree planting, but did not speak at the event.

However, he added: "But certainly, the thematic area you've referenced, the flow of guns from North America and elsewhere into the region, has been already the subject of detailed scrutiny and that examination will continue."

Browne said he anticipates a "comprehensive participation" in the symposium, especially given that security concerns were expressed by many of the regional heads of government during the recent conference.

"A number of heads of government, including Prime Minister [Dr Keith] Rowley, but certainly not limited to Prime Minister Rowley, made robust interventions during caucus and during the plenary on this issue of crime, violence and the treatment of violence as a public health concern within the Caribbean community," he said.

Additionally, "The observations were ubiquitous across the region – the

easy access to high-powered weapons, the challenges both at the level of the judiciary, the level of the police service in many jurisdictions to assist governments in coming to grip and bringing down the level of violent crime that we have been experiencing."

Browne also said he anticipates that the symposium will allow the mobilisation of key stakeholders, including the private sector, "to participate more fully in the suppression of this threat which we are seeing with alarming homicide rates."



Amery Browne



Keith Rowley

Attack of the killer bees sees mas players fleeing

Port-of-Spain – Masqueraders were sent scampering along Ariapita Avenue in the capital city when they were attacked by a swarm of bees last Monday.

According to media reports, an investigation into the incident is now underway, with the mayor of Port-of-Spain Joel Martinez stating late last week that he was awaiting a report on the Carnival Monday attack.

In a video that was posted to social media last week, a man was recorded being chased by bees near the corner of Stone Street and Ariapita Avenue in Port-of-Spain. During the chase, the man could be seen frantically removing his T-shirt to minimise the stings and to rid himself of the insects.

The bee attack was followed by calls made to the Port-of-Spain City Corporation, and which later saw a response from the fire services.

Officer Earl Samson told the media the incident arose after two hives that were located in nearby trees were disturbed by the high decibel levels from approaching music trucks. It is believed the swarming hives contained aggressive killer bees.

As was reported, attending police officers recommended that the masqueraders take an alternative route.

Said Martinez, "I was told bees attacked a masquerader. I understand the Ministry of Agriculture was contacted, and they may have approached the situation and dealt with it."

He added, "I understand the loud music would have irritated the bees, and that caused them to get into a 'tizzick' sort of situation. They were affected, and [masqueraders]... nearby were attacked."

Martinez said he was unaware of anyone being hospitalised following the incident.

Govt in strategic move to modernise rice industry

Port-of-Spain – Five million dollars will be spent on phase one of revitalising and modernising the rice industry to help reduce Trinidad and Tobago's food import bill, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries Minister Kazim Hosein said last week. At the time, Hosein was meeting with a group of rice farmers in central Trinidad.

During the discussion, Hosein indicated that the proposed funds would be used for the first phase of the project, and that funding would increase as the project develops in the medium and long term.

A statement was later issued following the discussion.

"The government is committed to reducing the food import bill. We recognise that rice is one of the most important staple foods in Trinidad and Tobago, constituting a regular part of the daily diet of most citizens... we must work together to get it right. We are working towards the same goal, boosting local rice production," the release stated.

Hosein also indicated that the initial phase would lay the foundation of the project rollout, which will entail rehabilitating and repairing access roads, irrigation and drainage channels, and other infrastructure works.

Works will also include land clearing, and drainage and irrigation upgrades, a mammoth project that may span years, "but we are committed to starting and completing it," he stated.

He further described the project as strategic, saying revitalising and modernising the local rice industry will increase regional food security, and reduce the nearly 100 percent dependence on imports for this crucial staple food.

As the release stated: "After listening to the concerns of the farmers, [Hosein] pledged to meet with key stakeholder agencies, including the Ministry of Trade, National Flour Mills, and the Agricultural Development Bank officials, to discuss the issues facing them and, by extension, the sector."

It also noted since 2008 local rice production has accounted for less than five percent of local demand, with the 95 percent shortfall in supply met by multi-million dollar expenditures for imports.



Joel Martinez



Kazim Hosein

T&T accelerates Venezuelan gas negotiations

Port-of-Spain – Trinidad and Tobago is soon expected to begin negotiations with Venezuela for gas to be produced and sold to the twin-island republic from the Bolivarian Republic's Dragon field.

This was disclosed by Energy Minister Stuart Young following his return from Caracas on February 23, where he met with several officials to pave the way for teams from both nations to begin negotiations.

The meeting in Caracas follows the agreement by the US government to grant Trinidad and Tobago, the National Gas Company, and Shell a waiver to develop the Dragon field with the prospect of increasing LNG and petrochemical production.

Young said he believed that the issue of payment to Venezuela has been worked out, assuring that a way will be found to pay the Venezuelans.

He added that a lot of work was done pre-2018, and while the waiver is for two years, he was assured by the US that there should not be any major challenge for a reward.

Both teams have agreed to sign confidentiality agreements to govern the negotiation process.

Trinidad and Tobago has been suffering from natural gas shortages, and it is believed Venezuela gas can extend the life of the LNG and petrochemical sectors.

However, following Young's announcement, UNC MP Rodney Charles said the Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley and Young should stop negotiating oil deals on behalf of the country. Instead, the government should send Trinidad and Tobago's best and brightest energy experts to negotiate on the country's behalf.

Said Charles: "In a real country, Rowley and Young would be banned from carrying out negotiations without on-hand technical support from proven local experts in energy, finance, diplomacy, and law. Both Rowley and Young lack finely-tuned, nuanced, and proven diplomatic skills. They have no known qualifications, expertise and/or track record on energy matters."

He added, "Trinidad and Tobago is yet to see their profi-

ciency as accomplished negotiators. Both men are not known to be experts in international law or finance. Therefore, we have to ask if they have none of these things, what are you going abroad to do? The two men negotiate with highly-qualified energy experts from some of the world's largest Fortune 500 companies, while Trinidad and Tobago sends two novices unaccompanied by local experts. The experts probably laugh at us behind closed doors."

Charles said between October 2015 to September 2022, Rowley racked up (TT) \$1.8 million in tax-free *per diems* for official travel, while Young pocketed \$809,899. He added that Trinidad and Tobago has nothing to show for this expenditure of taxpayers' money.

Additionally, Rowley's offer of the Petrotrin refinery on the altar of Guyanese-Trinidad and Tobago energy cooperation while in Georgetown last month cemented an unsavoury perception of the country.

"Of all the things Rowley could announce in Georgetown to such a distinguished audience was his willingness to palm-off a moribund scrap iron refinery to global energy experts who understand everything they need to know about refinery operations," Charles said.

"According to those present, senior Guyanese officials looked at each other in utter dismay and disbelief on hearing in Georgetown to such a distinguished audience was his willingness to palm-off a moribund scrap iron refinery to global energy experts who understand everything they need to know about refinery operations," Charles said.

Rowley's ill-conceived, poorly-timed, and foolish sales' pitch. It reinforced an unfortunate narrative taking root in Guyana that Trinis believe they are inherently more intelligent. It played into a false narrative that Trinis are all smart-men and women interested solely in feeding off the Guyanese trough."

He said the official Guyanese response was swift, contemptuous, and dismissive.

Charles suggested that Rowley could have seized the opportunity to highlight Trinidad and Tobago's century-old expertise in energy, or deepening collaboration between UWI and the University of Guyana in petroleum engineering, or the willingness to use Trinidad and Tobago's expertise to the mutual benefit of both countries and the region.



Stuart Young



Richie Sookhai at his senatorial swearing-in

Deep-end entry for Sookhai into politics

Port-of-Spain – In what has been just over a month into his new role, newly-appointed Government Senator Richie Sookhai was last week denying accusations made on social media that his family had donated air-conditioning units to the PNM administration.

According to the social media posts, the units were installed at the PNM's Balisier House headquarters in Port-of-Spain.

Sookhai also claimed the accusations were false that his family company, Sookhai's Diesel Services, is a favoured recipient of State contracts.

Said Sookhai: "I don't know where that came from. Neither me, nor anyone in my family paid for air-conditioning for anybody. I did not buy a seat."

He added there have been attempts to sully his senatorial appointment, and to misinform Trinidad and Tobago that there was disquiet in the PNM.

As Sookhai noted regarding his appointment to serve the government, he was surprised by Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley's offer, and saw it for what it was, which was an opportunity to serve the nation.

Said Sookhai: "When given the opportunity I did not look at party, [or] race. I was given the opportunity to serve to the best of my ability. I may or may not have stepped on toes, and if I did, I am extremely sorry, but I did not ask for this. I was asked to serve, and I am humbled to do so for Trinidad and Tobago."

He said he is willing to serve wherever Rowley thinks he can be valuable, while citing knowledge and expertise in transportation, works, digitisation, technology, and trade due to his academic pursuits and business background.

However, Sookhai said he presently focused on learning about his Senate role, and making valuable contributions to legislation. Also, that he would like to start studying law to better understand shaping of legislation for Trinidad and Tobago.

He delivered his maiden contribution on February 14 at the Senate on the Firearms Amendment Act 2022.

Sookhai is former president of the Chaguanas Chamber of Industry and Commerce. He was appointed a Senator on January 18 following the ascendency to the position of president-elect of Trinidad and Tobago by former Senate President Christine Kangaloo.

Sookhai recalled Rowley's statement that anyone can stand up on the outside and talk; however, when given the opportunity to make the change, how many really rise to the occasion, he asked.

"I took that challenge to heart, I have always held a position of advocacy [as] head of the Chamber. I've always been an apolitical voice trying to lobby for the betterment of the people and the burghesses."

His role as a senator now presented an opportunity to do more for Trinidad and Tobago, he said. He plans to advocate for traffic relief in Chaguanas and other parts of the country.

There was also a need for patriotism in the way citizens engage in politics, and also in the manner they look after Trinidad and Tobago, Sookhai said.

"Why can't we be so patriotic that we will stop littering and clogging our waterways, and having our beaches littered? We must have pride in our country, which is gifted by God, and which we should treasure," he declared.

Additionally, "Look at the rest of the Caribbean and how they treasure their countries, we need to start to understand that this is not a PNM country, or UNC country; it is a Trinbagonian country and we need to understand that."



Archbishop Gordon pastes ashes on the forehead of a student in south Trinidad last Wednesday

Archbishop: Spend less time on social media

Port-of-Spain – Declaring there is too much negativity in Trinidad and Tobago that has poisoned people's minds, making them find fault with everything, Archbishop Jason Gordon last week called on the country to reduce the time spent on social media and to instead pray, meditate, and give thanks.

He made the remarks while delivering the Ash Wednesday sermon at Our Lady of Perpetual Church in San Fernando.

Said Jason: "Of late we have a lot of negativity about Trinidad and Tobago. Have you noticed? Lots of negativity. This is not a real place and then all that negativity. Could we fast from negativity over Lent?"

He also challenged the congregation to engage in 40 days of fasting during Lent to free themselves from negativity

"There is so much beauty in our twin-island Republic, and like every relationship you look at the faults. All you see are the faults, and you lose what is beautiful. You lose what is true, gracious, and glorious, and all you start to see is what is wrong," he said.

Additionally, "As Trinidadians and Tobagonians we have become experts at finding fault in everything."

Gordon encouraged the public to pray more during the

Lenten period, and to put aside alms for the poor.

He said, "This Lent I want you to consider where you are with God. Is the relationship tight, cosy, or have you had some distance from God? Have you attended mass every Sunday, or is it now and again? Have you been praying every day? Is prayer a part of your routine life, or do you pray when you remember? Where is God in your life?"

Lent involves three practices: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, he said.

"What if this year we found more time in our day for prayer? Do you think we could do that? Do you know where to find the time? Well, look at how much time you spend on social media; how much time you spend on TV. So, pull back on social media, and take some of that time to make more time for God in our prayer," he stated.

Gordon also asked the congregation whether Trinidad and Tobago needed a day of public repentance.

Saying 2023 should be regarded as "the mother of all Lents", Gordon advised that the country make sacrifices, and put aside alms that can be shared with the poor at the end of the Lenten period.

The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

Billion Indians can't be wrong about Sholay

Movie Review: *Sholay*
by Filmi Geek

If you only see one Bollywood film ... make it *Sholay*. *Sholay* (Flames) is a film that deserves a full review.

This 1975 film is a true classic of Hindi cinema. I've been told that, at least for a while, it held the title of longest continuously running film in India.

It features a sparkling and immensely popular soundtrack by R.D. Burman, a favourite composer of mine, who was an absolute genius at fusing funky Western pop sounds with traditional Indian rhythm and melody. (He was also Asha Bhosle's husband.)

And it also features a terrific cast, headed up by Amitabh Bachchan, Hindi film's biggest hero of the 1970s, in his seminal 'Angry Young Man' role.

Sholay is sometimes called the first "Curry western," a parallel to the term "Spaghetti western," as it ushered in a spate of cowboy-type films.

Sholay includes countless references to contemporary American westerns like *Once Upon a Time in America*, and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*.

But independent from these homages (some would say rip-offs), *Sholay* stands on its own as a truly wonderful piece of film-making – one of the four or five best Hindi films I have ever seen.

Sholay tells the tale of two career crooks Jai and Veeru (Amitabh Bachchan and 1970s heartthrob Dharmendra) pressed into service by a retired police officer and landowner (Sanjeev Kumar) to flush out a local thug, Gabbar Singh (Amjad Khan), who is terrorising the villagers with his peculiarly sadistic brand of extortion and banditry.

Arriving in the village, Veeru immediately falls madly in love with the chatty, effervescent carriage-driver Basanti (played adorably by Hema Malini), while Jai is quietly, broodingly taken with Radha, a sad, silent widow who lives in the landowner's household.

(Radha is played by Amitabh's real-life wife Jaya Bhaduri, who here conceals in the folds of her white sari a round belly containing their son, Abhishek Bachchan, today a Bollywood star in his own right.)

In the course of scouting the surroundings and waiting for their opportunity to take out the vicious Gabbar Singh, Jai and Veeru warm to the charms of village life and contemplate ending their run of adventures, heists, and jailbreaks in favour of settling down in peace.

But first, there is business to attend to – the business of besting Gabbar Singh at his own violent game.

What sets *Sholay* apart is the scope of its story, the sensitivity with which it portrays the triumphs and sufferings

of its characters; and of course, flat-out excellent song and dance.

In relating its story, it meanders through themes of tragedy, love, friendship, loyalty, and revenge, testing the difference

between good and evil, and questioning what it is that makes criminals criminal.

It is grand in scope, and includes many flashbacks and evocative exposition aimed at illuminating the lives and struggles of all of the main characters, as well as some side characters. Yet while it is happening, it doesn't feel like a heavy piece of cinema.

Mixed-in are plenty of fun comedic scenes to relieve the otherwise relentless tension, executed in a brilliant, tight, clever script that subtitles and my rudimentary Hindi skills can only partway illuminate.

The buddy chemistry between Amitabh's Jai and Dharmendra's Veeru is

delightful – and the romantic chemistry between Veeru and Basanti is adorable. (Hema Malini later became Dharmendra's real-life wife – both couples in this film are paired off-screen as well.)

The result is a film with a leisurely pace, appropriate to the sweeping backdrop in which the hot sun bakes the desert dry.

Rounding out the film's generous 200 minutes are five of the most delightful film songs I have ever heard.

From the raucous buddy number, *Yeh dosti*, in which Amitabh and Dharmendra hold hands on a motorcycle, to the famous *Jab tak hai jaan*, in which the spunky and defiant Basanti dances barefoot on broken glass in hopes of preserving Veeru's life, the songs do not let up for a moment.

There is even a slinky nighttime number by the legendary Bollywood dancer known as Helen, who during her illustrious career performed sensuous, outrageously-costumed numbers in hundreds of Hindi films.

Sholay may be an unconventional choice as a first Bollywood film – my virtual friends over at *BollyWHAT?*'s discussion board tend to introduce their friends to Hindi cinema by way of the modern weepies with their dreamy romance and big-time production numbers.

But I think *Sholay* is a perfect entrée to the best that Hindi film has to offer, especially to a Western audience that may be skeptical that song-and-dance has any place in a movie brimming over with guns and criminals and grand themes of violence and vengeance.

There is a reason this film is a classic: it is among the best ever to come out of the Bombay film industry. It's readily available from services like Netflix, or at your local masala shop. Go see it – a billion Indians can't be wrong.



Dharmendra (left) & Amitabh Bachchan



Iconic shot 're-shot'

Sholay is loved by every audience that has viewed the film. Every single scene of the movie is iconic and is etched in the hearts of viewers. In February of last year, 47 years after the film's original release, one such scene was recreated by the movie's actor Dharmendra, but the original Basanti (Hema Malini) was replaced by Kirron Kher.

Dharmendra visited the sets of the reality show *India's Got Talent*, which is judged by Kirron Kher, along with Shilpa Shetty, Manoj Muntashir, and Badshah. Sony TV shared a promo of the reality show on social media that shows Dharmendra dressed in a blue suit and hat and Kirron Kher in a red saree.

Both the actors can be seen recreating the scene from *Sholay* on the stage. As Dharmendra plays Veeru, Kirron steps in the shoes of Hema Malini to play Basanti. The latter is seen taking an aim with a pistol while Dharmendra guides her by standing behind her. He places his hands on her shoulders and asks her to take aim by closing her eyes.

She then asks him, "Yuki dono aankhein band karke nishana kaise lagaungi?"

The veteran actor then closes her one eye by placing his hand over it and then asks her to take the aim. This leaves Kirron blushing, who eventually fires a shot and Dharmendra lauds her by tapping her cheek.

Shilpa Shetty, who is also a judge on the show, can be seen bursting into laughter and holding a chair to support her. Badshah also cheers for the two, and also bows in front of them as a mark of respect.

Sholay is one of the biggest blockbusters of Bollywood. The movie, released in 1975, stars Hema Malini, Dharmendra, Amitabh Bachchan, Amjad Khan, Sanjeev Kumar, and Jaya Bachchan.



Kattassery Joseph Yesudas

40K songs & counting...

Kattassery Joseph Yesudas or Jesudas, born January 10, 1940, is a great Indian classical musician and playback singer whose repertoire also includes devotional and popular songs. He has recorded more than 40,000 songs in many languages, including Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Gujarati, Oriya, Marathi, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tulu, Malay, Russian, Arabic, Latin, and English. He has been singing for most Indian languages except Assamese and Kashmiri.

Yesudas was born in Fort Kochi, Kerala, to Augustine Joseph and Alicekutty. His father, a well-known Malayalam classical musician and stage actor, was his first guru. Later he joined the Music Academy in Thrippunithura and underwent training.

For a brief period, he was with Sri Vechur Hari Hara Subramania Iyer, after which he took advanced training from Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavata, a maestro of Classical Music. Although he is a Carnatic Music expert he mastered Hindustani Music. He has taken the words of Sree Narayana Guru, "One Religion, One Caste for all humans" to heart.

Yesudas began his career in playback singing in Malayalam and Kollywood movies in the early 1960s, and by mid 1970s he entered Bollywood. He has won seven National Film Awards for the best singer in the Indian film industry, which is a record no singer has equalled. In 2006, he sang 16 film songs in four South Indian languages on the same day at AVM Studio, Chennai.

Yesudas has performed in many major cities around the world. In 1965, he was invited by the Soviet Union government to perform at music concerts in various cities in the USSR, and also sang a Russian song over Radio Kazakhstan.

In 2001 he sang for the album *Ahimsa* in Sanskrit, Latin, and English, and in a mix of styles including New-Age and Carnatic. In his music concerts in the Middle East he sings Arabic songs in the Carnatic style. He frequently did the role of a cultural ambassador for India through his numerable performances abroad by promoting Indian music.

He is the only singer who has been accorded the title Asthana Gayakan (Official singer) of Kerala State. He has been awarded the Padma Shri in 1975 and Padma Bhushan in 2002. In 1970, he was nominated to head the Sangeetha Nataka Academy of Kerala, and was the youngest person ever to occupy that post.

In 1971, Yesudas with his musical troupe travelled all over Kerala to raise funds for the Indian Prime Minister's National Defense Fund during the Indo-Pakistani War. He also became Senate member in the International Parliament for Safety and Peace. On November 14, 1999, Yesudas was presented with an honorary award by UNESCO for 'Outstanding Achievements in Music and Peace' at the *Music for Peace* event in Paris, a concert held to mark the dawn of the new millennium. and whose attendees included artistes as Lionel Richie, Ray Charles, Montserrat Caballé, and Zubin Mehta.

Shree Narayana Guru's great message, *One caste, One religion and One God for all Humans*, influenced young Yesudas in his dealings with others. He had his own heroes among the musicians too. Mohammed Rafi, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavata, and Balamurali Krishna are the ones he admired the most.

He completed the Ganabooshanam course at R.L.V. Music Academy, Thripunithura, Cochin and graduated from the Sree Swathithirunal Music Academy, Trivandrum.

He was trained under well-known musicians like K.R. Kumaraswamy (former principal of the Music College, Kochi), Kunjuvelan Aasan (a disciple of Nagaswera Vidwan Rajaratnam Pillai), Augustine Joseph, Ramakutti Bagavathar, Sivaraman Nayar, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, and Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavata.

Yesudas is married to Prabha for more than 30 years. They have three sons, Vinod, Vijay, and Vishal. The second son Vijay Yesudas, is a budding musician. The family is currently settled in Chennai and Kerala. He also owns estates in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Lantana, Texas in the US.



Grandma Sharmila with grand daughter Sara Ali Khan

Sharmila & Sara star

Sharmila Tagore will be making a comeback on-screen with *Gulmohar* after 12 years. The veteran actress was last seen in *Break Ke Baad* starring Deepika Padukone and Imran Khan. *Gulmohar* revolves around a dysfunctional family that sees Manoj Bajpayee playing Tagore's son.

Meanwhile, Sharmila's grand daughter, Sara Ali Khan dropped a picture on the weekend with her. While she didn't mention the details of where it was clicked, Saba Ali Pataudi also shared the picture and wrote that Sara attended the screening of *Gulmohar*. Sara shared the picture with the note, "Mere sapno ki Rani". Is my most stunning Granny."

Sara then dropped a picture saying she is shooting with "the most beautiful". Fans are now left wondering what the duo are shooting for, but this could be a promotional video for Tagore's show *Gulmohar*.

Sharmila doesn't live with her children and grand children, but she believes that geographical distance doesn't mean you're away from your loved ones. The actress had told the media, "If you don't stay under one roof, it doesn't mean that your relationship has broken. Geographical closeness doesn't mean that you're close, because sometimes even if everyone is staying together, people are on their phones, in their rooms or texting someone. It's what you inculcate in your children and what they feel about family. So, I liked many aspects of Kusum (her character in *Gulmohar*) and I related myself to that."

Gulmohar is set to release on March 3.

Kaushal boys told to make their own way in the world

Bollywood star Vicky Kaushal, today counted among the ace actors, made his debut in the industry as an assistant to Anurag Kashyap on the sets of *Gangs Of Wasseypur*. Now, this is something that everyone knows about him.

However, did you know that when Vicky initially expressed his desire to work in the film industry, his father made sure not to give him any false hopes?

Vicky Kaushal's father Sham Kaushal, who is a well-known action director, in his recent interaction with *Rajshri Ungplugged*, said that he told Vicky he will have to get work on his own merit, and that he would not be able to help him in any way.

He said that he is just a small action director, and he cannot leverage from his position. People might let Vicky into their office or might offer him tea, but he will have to find work on his own.

Sham also mentioned that he used to ask both his sons Vicky and Sunny to leave the house for auditions by 10 am. He would ask them to face rejection, and to live through humiliation. Even when they had no auditions, he would ask them to go out and study people.

Today, Sham is really happy and proud of what his children have achieved.



Vicky & Sham Kaushal



Ranbir Kapoor (left) & Sourav Ganguly

Innings yet to open on Ganguly cricket biopic

In September 2021, Luv Ranjan's production house had announced that they are going to produce cricketer Sourav Ganguly's biopic. Since then, there hasn't been any update on the cast or the director. But recently, some reports suggested that Ranbir Kapoor is set to play Sourav Ganguly in this biopic. And Ranbir was at Eden Gardens this past weekend to promote his film *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar*, directed by Luv, where he was spotted with the cricketer, sparking rumours of the biopic.

However, a few days ago, Ganguly was quoted by *Bombay Times*, refuting these rumours.

He had said, "No final decision has been taken."

Ankur Garg who is the film's co-producer had said, "Honestly, there's no update to share at this point in time. The biopic will be one of the projects that we will focus on after our upcoming film's release. For now, casting or anything else hasn't been discussed."

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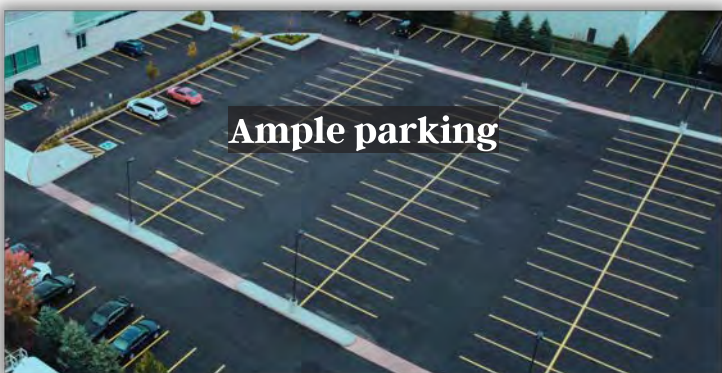
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Chahar now fully fit & ready for comeback

India fast bowler Deepak Chahar has said he is fully fit and recovered from two major injuries, and is now set to make his comeback with the IPL starting March 31.

As *ESPNcricinfo* reported, Chahar has had a challenging time recovering from a stress fracture, and more recently, a quad grade 3 tear. He last played for India in the second ODI against Bangladesh in Mirpur in December, where he broke down after bowling three overs.

He could only feature in 15 games for India in 2022, and was also ruled out of the T20 World Cup due to injury.

Having done an extensive rehab at the National Cricket Academy, *ESPNcricinfo* reported last week that Chahar is now preparing for the IPL, where he will represent the Chennai Super Kings.

Said Chahar: "I have been working hard for the past two three months on my fitness. I am fully fit and preparing well for the IPL. I had two big injuries. One was a stress fracture, and one was a quad grade 3 tear. They are both very big injuries. You are out for months. Anyone who comes back after the injury it takes time, especially for the fast bowlers."

He added, "If I was a batter, I would be playing way back, but as a fast bowler, when you have a stress fracture, it is very tough to get back on track. You can see other bowlers struggling with



Deepak Chahar

the back as well."

Chahar made a return to competitive cricket with a first-class game against Services in January, which was his only appearance in the Ranji Trophy.

Multiple injuries have pushed him down in the Indian order, but he hopes to be part of the team for the ODI World Cup at home later this year.

"I have lived by one rule all my life. If I am fully bowling the way I want, if I am batting the way I want, there is no stopping me. That was the basic rule with which I started my career. I don't care who is playing, who is not playing, my motive is to get fully fit and perform with the ball and bat one hundred percent. If I do that, I will get my chances," he said.

The men's IPL will be preceded by the inaugural Women's Premier League, and Chahar could not be more excited for the new tournament.

"IPL changed men's cricket forever, people got a lot of opportunities. Same thing will happen with [WPL]. Women's cricket will

grow very fast as they will face international players very early in their careers. It will also help a lot of women cricketers who have not been able to make money, and will fuel competition," he said.

Aussies Maxwell, Marsh also return following injuries

Australian players Glenn Maxwell and Mitchell Marsh both won the toss last week to make it into the 16-man squad for the three-match ODI series.

Both all-rounders are returning from a lengthy period on the sidelines with leg and ankle injuries respectively, *Cricbuzz* reported.

Maxwell and Marsh missed the entirety of the Big Bash League due to injuries. Maxwell broke his leg in a freak accident at a house party right after the T20 World Cup, while Marsh underwent keyhole surgery to his left ankle to remove loose bone fragments and repair cartilage.

Cricket Australia's national selectors also gave the nod to fast bowler Jhye Richardson, who missed the BBL finals with a hamstring injury.

Meanwhile, Josh Hazlewood will miss out due to an Achilles injury, which was acquired while running on the soggy Sydney Cricket Ground outfield during the New Year's Test against South Africa.

David Warner was picked in the Pat Cummins-led squad. He was recently ruled out of the final two Tests in Indore and Ahmedabad with an elbow fracture.

Ashton Agar also made a return after being released from the Test squad to feature in domestic cricket.



Glenn Maxwell



Mitchell Marsh

Said Chair of Selectors George Bailey: "With the World Cup just over seven months away, these matches in India are an important step in our preparation. Glenn, Mitchell, and Jhye are all important players in what we think the squad might look like come October."

He added, "It would be great for Josh to be part of this series, but we have taken a conservative view ahead of a very important winter in England of which he will be an integral part."

The three-match series set to be played in Mumbai on March 17; Visakhapatnam on March 19; and Chennai on March 22. The games round off a 50-day tour of India for Australia. Australia will potentially have a World Test Championship final to play in early June before partaking in the marquee The Ashes series.

Australia ODI Squad:

Pat Cummins (captain), David Warner, Travis Head, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Marsh, Alex Carey (wicketkeeper), Josh Inglis (wicketkeeper), Marcus Stoinis, Mitchell Starc, Jhye Richardson, Adam Zampa, Cameron Green, Ashton Agar, Sean Abbott.

CPL in Guyana beats records for earnings, viewership

Guyana hosting the 2022 Hero Caribbean Premier League turned out to be a lucrative investment, with the first-time effort Cricket Carnival creating a huge economic impact for the country, the CPL revealed last week.

According to the CPL, the total economic impact for Guyana in 2022 saw (US) \$84,425,587 being generated, a 186 percent increase in the figure the last time it hosted Hero CPL matches in 2019.

Businesses across the country benefited from the uplift of inbound tourism during September last year. The tournament also saw an attendance of almost 50,000 during the playoff games alone.

Another metric showed a total of 25,783 hotel room nights filled during the tournament, which was a 236 percent increase on the figure from 2019.

The report was generated by YouGov Sport, with the make-up of the values including the total spent by Hero CPL to put on the 2022 event, the value of media exposure for the country



Fans enjoy the moment during the CPL in Guyana last year

from the broadcast of matches, and the money spent with local business by those who travelled into Guyana for the tournament.

Total viewership for the 2022 Hero CPL also smashed all records at 721.8 million.

It was the third successive year that the tournament generated a viewership figure of over half a billion.

Said Pete Russell, Hero CPL's CEO: "The reception for the Hero CPL in Guyana last year exceeded anything we have seen before, and we are hugely grateful for the vision of His Excellency Irfaan Ali, who masterminded the Cricket Carnival concept, and showed how cricket can deliver significant economic value when planned alongside other

entertainment initiatives."

He added, "We are so grateful for the amazing support we continue to receive in Guyana, and are thankful that we have been able to repay the country with these fantastic numbers. We can't wait to make an even bigger impact in 2023."



Shannon Gabriel

Gabriel gets a recall to West Indies ODI team

Veteran fast bowler Shannon Gabriel secured a recall to the West Indies ODI side for the first time in almost four years, making up the 15-man squad for the three-match series against South Africa later this month, the cricket website *Cricbuzz* reported last week.

Gabriel led Trinidad and Tobago Red Force's attack at the Super50 Cup last November, finishing with 15 wickets at 14 runs apiece.

Also, he is the only noteworthy inclusion, with the selectors keeping faith with the core of the squad that featured in the last ODI series against New Zealand in the Caribbean eight months ago.

"We have had some injuries to our fast-bowling pool, so therefore, we see Gabriel as an ideal fit heading into South Africa, and the surfaces we expect to play on," said chief selector, Desmond Haynes.

He added, "It is felt that we need someone to get those early wickets, and he is the kind of bowler that can do that. Judging from his performances in the CG United Super50 Cup, he is potentially a wicket-taking option up front."

Off-spinning all-rounder Roston Chase also secured a place in the squad. He played his last ODI 15 months ago.

Meanwhile, Kevin Sinclair, who grabbed five wickets in his three ODIs against New Zealand, was omitted after a lean Super50 campaign.

The squad will be led by new ODI skipper Shai Hope, with Rovman Powell, the T20 International captain, as his deputy.

The selectors have meanwhile named left-arm seamer Obed McCoy in the 15-man T20 squad, "subject to medical clearance". He has not featured since the failed campaign by West Indies in the T20 World Cup qualifiers in Australia last October.

Neither fast bowler Jayden Seales, nor Anderson Phillip were considered for selection due to both players recovering from injuries.

Said Haynes: "For the T20Is, we have an experienced squad. What we are looking for, is to form a cohesive unit, and look at the players, who we believe can form the nucleus as we build towards doing very well, and challenging when we host the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in June 2024."

Batting all-rounder Kyle Mayers will serve as Powell's vice-captain.

West Indies take on South Africa in the ODI series from March 16 to March 21, with the first two matches – day/night affairs – scheduled for East London, with the final game set for Potchefstroom.

The T20I series run from March 25 to March 28 – the first two games scheduled for Centurion, with the final one to be played in Johannesburg.

ODI squad

Shai Hope (Captain), Rovman Powell (Vice Captain), Shamarh Brooks, Yannic Cariah, Keacy Carty, Roston Chase, Shannon Gabriel, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith.

T20I squad

Rovman Powell (Captain), Kyle Mayers (Vice Captain), Shamarh Brooks, Yannic Cariah, Johnson Charles, Sheldon Cottrell, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Obed McCoy, Nicholas Pooran, Raymon Reifer, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith.



Richa Ghosh

Ghosh's batting prowess takes her up a notch

Richa Ghosh has become the fifth Indian player in the top 20 for batters in the ICC T20I rankings for women following her stellar work at the women's T20 World Cup. As *ESPNcricinfo* reported last week, this performance is a career-best for Ghosh in the batters' table.

She was joined in the top zone by Amelia Kerr and Muneeba Ali, who also hit career-high numbers.

Ghosh scored 44 not out in 32 balls in a win over West Indies, and 47 not out in 34 balls in the defeat to England, which gave her enough points to finish that week up 16 spots to 20th place, despite a first-ball duck against Ireland.

Smriti Mandhana (Number 3), Shafali Verma (Number 10), Jemimah Rodrigues (Number 12) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (Number 13) are the other Indian women in the top 20.

Meanwhile, Kerr hit a match-winning 66 against Sri Lanka to get to number 16 in the batters' list, which was her best to date. She was also up at number 3, a one-spot rise, among all-rounders in T20Is. Keer is also the 13th-best T20I bowler in the world.

Another of Ghosh's India team player making big moves last month was Renuka Singh, who picked up a career-best 5 for 15 against England. This acquisition meant a rise of seven spots to place her in fifth spot among the bowlers.

On February 15, Muneeba scored 102 in 68 balls against Ire-

land to become the first Pakistan batter to score a century in women's T20Is.

That performance lifted her ten spots to 64th position, which is the highest place her career has seen so far.

Within the top ten for batters, Meg Lanning moved up one place to fourth after scoring 48 not out against Bangladesh, while Suzie Bates climbed two places to number 6 after her 81 not out, and 56 against Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, respectively.

Some distance behind, Tazmin Brits (up six places to Number 21), Amy Jones (up two places to 26), Orla Prendergast (up eight places to 38), and Harshitha Samarawickrama (up four places to number 39) were the other batters to move up.

On the bowlers' end, Lea Tahuhi not only moved up from tenth to seventh after picking up eight wickets in four games – including a three-for against Australia – but also crossed the barrier of 700 rating points for the first time in her career.

Darcie Brown, still only 19, also entered the top ten for the first time at number 8, while Hayley Matthews hit the tenth spot after a 2 for 14 against Pakistan.

Among the all-rounders, Ashleigh Gardner remained at number 1, but Deepti Sharma dropped a couple of places to fourth place, with Matthews and Kerr moving up, and Nida Dar reaching the fifth spot after going up two notches.

Now Tata Group taking women's cricket to the next level

The Tata Group has bagged the title rights of the Women's Premier League, the cricket website *Cricbuzz* reported last week.

The deal was clinched between the Board of Control for Cricket in India and the group on February 21, *Cricbuzz* further reported.

According to the website, Tata Sons, the holding company of the conglomerate, will have the title rights for the first five years, and the products that will be leveraged during the league will be Tata Motors and Tata financial service.

The Tata group already holds the title rights of the Indian Premier League after Vivo, the Chinese handset manufacturer, pulled out of the agreement. The value of the WPL title sponsorship is yet to be confirmed.

The on-boarding of the title sponsor is a major step for the WPL and the BCCI, which called for tenders in late January. The BCCI already has a broadcaster – Viacom 18 – in place for the league, the maiden edition of which runs from March 4 to March 26. It will be played entirely in Mumbai.

As *Cricbuzz* noted, the BCCI hit a jackpot of sorts by selling the franchises to five top business houses in the country. It earned (Rs) 4670 crore from the sale of the five teams. Adani Group, Reliance, RCB (Diageo), Delhi Capitals, and Capri Global have the teams in the league, which will have 22 games for the first three years.

Last week Jay Shah, BCCI secretary, confirmed the development, saying the sponsorship has taken the WPL to the next level.

"I am delighted to announce the #TataGroup as the title sponsor of the inaugural #WPL. With their support, we're confident that we can take women's cricket to the next level..." Shah said in a social media post.

The BCCI has since announced the schedule for WPL 2023.

For the inaugural edition, five teams – Delhi Capitals, Gujarat Giants, Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore, and UP Warriorz acquired some of the best talents in the international and domestic circuit.

India's Smriti Mandhana was the top buy at Rs 3.40 crore to Royal Challengers Bangalore. Team India Captain Harmanpreet Kaur was sold to Mumbai Indians for Rs 1.80 crore, while the rest of the stars from India and around the globe also made the pick in one of the five franchises.

Among the foreign players, Australia all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner and England all-rounder Natalie Sciver were the top buys, sold to Gujarat Giants and Mumbai Indians for Rs 3.20 crore, respectively.

From the India U19 stars, ICC U19 T20 World Cup winning captain, Shafali Verma was the top buy, sold to Delhi Capitals for Rs 2 Crore.

In its first season, the WPL will stage a total of 20 league matches and two Playoff games, which will be played over the duration of 23 days.

It starts on March 4 at the DY Patil Stadium with a blockbuster clash between Gujarat Giants and Mumbai Indians. On March 5, the WPL will have its first double-header day, where Royal Challengers Bangalore will square off against Delhi Capitals at the Brabourne Stadium, CCI. UP Warriorz will play their first game of the league against Gujarat Giants at the DY Patil Stadium in the evening. There will be four double headers.

A total of 11 matches each will be held at the DY Patil Stadium and Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai. The final game of the league stage will be played between UP Warriorz and Delhi Capitals on March 21 at the Brabourne Stadium, CCI.

The Eliminator will be played at the DY Patil Stadium on March 24, with the final played at the Brabourne Stadium on March 26.

Cricket Schedule

(ALL TIMES LOCAL)

Wednesday March 1, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
South Africa vs West Indies, 1st Test, Day 2, SuperSport Park, Centurion, 10:00 AM
England tour of Bangladesh, 2023
Bangladesh vs England, 1st ODI, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 02:30 PM
Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 1, Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamsala, 09:30 AM

Thursday March 2, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
South Africa vs West Indies, 1st Test, Day 3, SuperSport Park, Centurion, 10:00 AM
Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 2, Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamsala, 09:30 AM

Friday March 3, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
South Africa vs West Indies, 1st Test, Day 4, SuperSport Park, Centurion, 10:00 AM
England tour of Bangladesh, 2023
Bangladesh vs England, 2nd ODI, Shere Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka, 02:30 PM
Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 3, Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamsala, 09:30 AM

Saturday March 4, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
South Africa vs West Indies, 1st Test, Day 5, SuperSport Park, Centurion, 10:00 AM
Sri Lanka tour New Zealand, 2023
TBC vs Sri Lanka, 2-day Warm-up Match, Day 1, Hagley Oval, Christchurch, 11:00 AM
Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 4, Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamsala, 09:30 AM

Sunday March 5, 2023

Sri Lanka tour New Zealand, 2023
TBC vs Sri Lanka, 2-day Warm-up Match, Day 2, Hagley Oval, Christchurch, 11:00 AM
Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 3rd Test, Day 5, Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamsala, 09:30 AM

Monday March 6, 2023

England tour of Bangladesh, 2023
Bangladesh vs England, 3rd ODI, Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chattogram, 02:30 PM

Wednesday March 8, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
South Africa vs West Indies, 2nd Test, Day 1, The Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg, 10:00 AM

Thursday March 9, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
SA vs West Indies, 2nd Test, Day 2, The Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg, 10:00 AM
England tour of Bangladesh, 2023
Bangladesh vs England, 1st T20I, Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chattogram, 06:00 PM
Sri Lanka tour New Zealand, 2023

New Zealand vs Sri Lanka, 1st Test, Day 1, Hagley Oval, Christchurch, 11:00 AM
Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 4th Test, Day 1, Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, 09:30 AM

Friday March 10, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
SA vs West Indies, 2nd Test, Day 3, The Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg, 10:00 AM
Sri Lanka tour New Zealand, 2023

New Zealand vs Sri Lanka, 1st Test, Day 2, Hagley Oval, Christchurch, 11:00 AM
Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 4th Test, Day 2, Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, 09:30 AM

Saturday March 11, 2023

West Indies tour of South Africa, 2023
South Africa vs West Indies, 2nd Test, Day 4, The Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg, 10:00 AM.



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Mississauga For Sale \$1,588,000

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



Oshawa For Sale \$824,900

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



FOR SALE HALIBURTON \$584,999

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



Oshawa For Sale \$719,990

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



Belmont Newcastle Starting @ \$800,000s

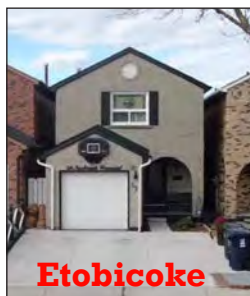
Belmont is a new townhouse & single family home development by Treasure Hill Homes currently in preconstruction at Given Road, Newcastle. Belmont has a total of 288 units. Belmont in Newcastle combines the best of luxury living & country charm. An expertly designed & spacious collection of town & single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



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

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