



**Canadian
SUPERBILT
SHUTTERS
& BLINDS**



**We Sell Only The Best Brands
Motorized Roller Blinds & Shutters**

HunterDouglas



MAXMAR
WINDOW FASHIONS

ALTEX

John Persaud, CEO C: (416) 239 - 2863 B: (416) 201 - 0109

sales@superbilt.com canadiansuperbiltshutters.com

KEEPING ALIVE THE TIES THAT BIND

NOW IN OUR 42nd YEAR: 1983 - 2024

INDO CARIBBEAN WORLD

Vol. 42 • No 6 • November 20, 2024 • Tel: 905-738-5005 • 312 Brownridge Dr. Thornhill, ON L4J 5X1 • indocaribbeanworld.com • indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com

Veda Lall
HOMES



**Most
Productive
Agent In
Canada!**

*With over 20
years of combined
experience, we will
help you to achieve
your dream of
home ownership!*

**Call
Veda
Today!**
Veda Lall
Broker

**416.
419.2140**

vedalallhomes.ca



Our Community Is Thriving!



Kamla Sharma (left in composite photo), and Jay Brijpaul address the gala. *Photos by Dwayne Photography*

TCCF's gala brings hope, healing, spirit of giving

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto – In the warm glow of Toronto's premier Woodbine Banquet Hall, The Caribbean Children Foundation (TCCF) celebrated its 24th Anniversary Angel Gala on November 9 – a night that was suffused with light, hope, and the spirit of giving.

As attendees gathered, Woodbine Banquet Hall was filled with a rising sense of unity of purpose, a testament to our community's enduring commitment in bringing healing to critically-ill children from the Caribbean.

The evening took on a poignant tone when Kamla Sharma, an advocate with over 25 years of experience in children's healthcare, delivered a moving speech that drew the audience into the heart of TCCF's mission.

With her profoundly compassionate appeal, Sharma asked everyone to pause and imagine the unimaginable – being a parent in the Caribbean who receives the devastating news of a child's life-threatening diagnosis, but without the means to access specialised, life-saving care.

"I want to take a brief moment with you. Imagine just for 60 seconds that you are a parent, grandparent, uncle, or aunt... During a doctor's appointment, you have just been given the devastating news that they have an illness that can be treated abroad, but you cannot get help because [of] no money; no access to specialised doctors; no community to lean on," she told the attentive banquet hall.

Sharma then paused, allowing her words to resonate, before adding, "I have met these parents – their fear is palpable. I have witnessed their devastation and anguish on their faces."

Her words were an evocative reminder of the life-changing and enabling work that TCCF undertakes. Drawing on her extensive background as the former Director of the International Patient Program at SickKids, she emphasised how TCCF transforms fear

See Page 15: TCCF marks



Edwin 'Crazy' Ayoung (left in composite) and Timothy 'Baron' Watkins were in TO for the Superstars' concert last weekend. They both received Lifetime Achievement Awards from TT's Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette. *Photos by Russell Lutchman. More on Page 18*



Chris Campbell, President of Local 27, and the Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Carpenters' Regional Council took part in TO's 2024 Remembrance Day Ceremony last week. He also attended an event honouring the No. 2 Construction Battalion. See story on Page 3.

LIFE INSURANCE



Paul Ram
Life & Investment Broker

MONEY FREEDOM INC.

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

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

Instant quote online: www.moneyfreedom.ca
Tel: 416.414.2204



ALI'S ROTI

* Eat In or Take Out * We also Cater
Specialising in West Indian Dishes - Trinidad Style Cooking

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

Only HALAL Meat Served

Tel: 416-532-7701

Now two generations serving our community

JAY BRIJPAUL
416-418-BRIJ [2745]

ANJIE BRIJPAUL
416-745-2300



\$799,000

Location! Location! Location!

Impressive bungalow, one of Hamilton's most sought after neighbourhoods! You will not believe sheer size of premium lot! Recently upgraded with stamped-concrete driveway & flagstone porch, beautiful home boasts spacious dining room, 2 fireplaces, & finished basement with side entrance, wet bar, bedroom & washroom!



\$1,169,000

Talk of the Town!

Beautiful bungalow located in one of Toronto's most sought neighbourhoods! Designed for happy living, this freshly painted home has been recently renovated throughout & features gleaming laminate floors, bright potlights, brand new appliances & boasts both modernity and marvels!



\$1,150,000

Right Place Right Value!

This lot has great potential for conversion into a commercial property! Has approximately 127 feet facing Confederation Parkway. Features a large double car garage – ideal for the home mechanic. It's a rare find with a lovely corner lot property – endless possibilities await!



\$999,000

Imagine the Possibilities!

This lovely four-bedroom home has a double-car garage for your family's convenience, and is nicely upgraded with laminate and ceramic floors. The basement is complete with a separate entrance, kitchen, washroom and large rec room.



\$879,700

Bright and Spacious!

Spacious princess-bungalow features an overlong driveway & a lovely balcony. Take in the beautiful oak hardwood floors, the spacious eat-in kitchen, & enjoy the finished basement complete with a separate side entrance, kitchen & two bedrooms! Located on one of the best streets in Malton, you need to see it to believe it!



\$990,000

Charmingly Delightful!

Spacious semi-detached bungalow in serene community! Beautiful home nestled in quiet neighbourhood - the perfect blend of comfort, convenience, & community spirit. 2 roomy bedrooms ideal for relaxation & privacy, 3 well-appointed baths, large fin. basement & lovely green-spaced backyard.



\$1,099,000

Double-Sided Coin!

A roomy 5-level split home on a lovely premium location. Features internal access from garage, open conc. liv. & din. rooms, large kitch. & fam. room leading to covered patio. Lower level feat. in-law suite with kitch., bedrm & washrm. Ideal for investor looking for top-notch quality tenants willing to stay.



\$489,900

Can't Beat Location

Spacious & clean unit features 2 bedrooms & 2 washrooms! Open concept living area walks out to large balcony. Minutes away from the University of Waterloo! Freshly painted unit comes furnished, & features laminate floors, large windows & stainless-steel appliances! Comes with a parking spot!

TheBrij.com

3,500+ HOMES

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

Jay Brijpaul, Broker, FRI

Direct: 416-418-2745 (BRIJ)

Office: 416-745-2300 ext 5292

96 Rexdale Blvd., Toronto M9W 1N7

RE/MAX

West Realty Inc. Brokerage
Independently Owned and Operated

**The Brij Team**

Anjie Brijpaul, MA
Broker

Office 416.745.2300

Fax 416-745-1952

anjiebrijpaul@gmail.com



Clyde Flood (centre) holds the commemorative plaque and his grandfather Sidney Flood’s medals. Also in photo are Chris Campbell (left to right), Clyde’s sons Justin and Jason, and Ivan Dawns.

From margin to memory: Forgotten heroes recalled

Toronto – In the soft light of November’s fall skies, a poignant ceremony held in Toronto, followed by a solemn tribute at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, unfolded as a powerful narrative of resilience and reclamation.

It was a moment both reflective and hopeful – a tribute to the sacrifices of Black Canadian soldiers who served in silence, and an overdue step towards further recognition and reconciliation. At its heart was the story of the No. 2 Construction Battalion and one of its distinguished soldiers, Sidney Flood, whose legacy, once pushed into the margins of history, is now brought into the revealing light.

The story of the No. 2 Construction Battalion began in 1916, at the height of World War I, when Black Canadians eager to enlist faced an unwelcome reality: the Canadian military, influenced by segregationist policies, refused their service.

Yet, the desire to serve their country was undeterred. Under pressure from Black community leaders and activists, the Canadian government relented, allowing the formation of an all-Black, non-combat unit – the only one of its kind in Canadian history.

Stationed in Pictou, Nova Scotia, the battalion comprised over 600 men who took on the backbreaking yet crucial work of constructing roads, railways, and lumber camps in France. Barred from the battlefield, they were relegated to labour duties far from the action and glory of the front lines. Still, their contributions were vital, providing the infrastructure needed to sustain the war effort. These soldiers, despite facing racism from their fellow servicemen and enduring harsh conditions, remained steadfast in their duties.

When the war ended, these men returned to a Canada that was largely indifferent to their efforts and sacrifices. Their story of quiet endurance amid systemic racism remained in the shadows for nearly a century, only to be properly acknowledged in 2022 as Canada confronts its historical injustices.

One of the men who answered the call to serve was Sidney Flood, born in Georgetown, Guyana, and later making his way to Canada. He joined the No. 2 Construction Battalion during World War I, and when war arrived yet again, he enlisted once more, this time serving in the Veterans Guard of Canada during World War II.

Flood’s unwavering dedication exemplified the spirit of Black soldiers, who, despite being marginalised because of their colour, chose to serve Canada with pride and determination.

Flood’s story might have faded into obscurity if not for the efforts of historian Kathy Grant, whose passion for preserving Black Canadian history led to a remarkable discovery. While researching Black veterans, Grant found that Flood’s wartime

medals were up for sale online, priced at \$6,000 – a painful symbol of how the embodiment of Black contributions could easily be forgotten, but its artefacts remain commodified.

Determined to reclaim this piece of history, Grant reached out to the seller. With limited funds at her disposal, she sought help, and our community responded.

In a show of solidarity, Chris Campbell of the Carpenters Union and Ivan Dawns from the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades came forward. Their unions pooled resources to secure the medals for just over \$4,000, ensuring that these symbols of service and sacrifice were returned to Flood’s family and our community.

On November 11, Remembrance Day, the medals – a British War Medal, a Victory Medal from World War I, and a Canadian Volunteer Service Medal from World War II – were ceremoniously handed over to Sidney Flood’s descendants. His grandson, Clyde Flood, made the journey from Ottawa to Toronto with his sons Justin and Jason, to receive these long-lost treasures.

In a moment filled with recall and gratitude, Clyde reflected on his grandfather’s legacy. As he indicated, the return of the medals was not just a personal victory for his family. At the same time, it was recognition of the countless Black soldiers whose sacrifices have gone unacknowledged for far too long.

The medals will be displayed at the Blackhurst Cultural Centre in Toronto after a temporary exhibition at the Canadian War Museum.

Chris Campbell, representing the Carpenters Union, spoke at the ceremony, underscoring the importance of recognising the contributions of these forgotten soldiers.

“I had the honour of attending the unveiling of the No. 2 Construction Battalion plaque. These men faced barriers at every turn, yet they stood up to serve their country. It’s our duty to remember their courage and ensure their stories are told,” he posted online.

Dawns echoed similar sentiments, emphasising the importance of making these narratives accessible to future generations. For him, reclamation of the medals was not just honouring Flood’s service; at the same time, so we do not forget, it was also acknowledgement of the resilience of a battalion that has been overlooked for too long.

The unveiling of a commemorative plaque honouring the No. 2 Construction Battalion also took place on Remembrance Day, drawing attention to the enduring contributions made by these hard-working and patriotic soldiers. The plaque stands as a testament to their courage, perseverance, and the battles they fought beyond the trenches – against both the enemy abroad, and the enemies of racism, exclusion, and erasure at home.

Daljeet & Tabuchi DENTISTRY

Dr. Nar Daljeet
Dr. Nikhil Daljeet
Dr. Sudong Ji
Dr. James Liang
Dr. Sara Safar

We Accept

CDCP

Canadian Dental Care Plan

Book Now
416-492-3077

daljeet@tddental.ca
2942 Finch Ave E., #4
tddental.ca

Family Dentistry
Over 40 years of experience providing caring, gentle dental care for all ages

Emergencies
Contact us anytime - emergencies and last minute appointments always welcome

Dental Implants
See us to replace any of your missing teeth - implants, bridges or dentures!

Orthodontics
Our board certified orthodontist specializes in braces and invisalign

Book Giveaway For Supernatural

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

Please leave your email address at: www.kamilali.ca/contact **Kam Ali**

VEDIC BOOKS

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

Call AVM Bookstore

416-805-2685 or 905-824-2685

RB PARALEGAL AND NOTARY SERVICES

Small Claims | Landlord & Tenant Board | Notary Services

Rita Boodram, B.S.W. (Hons), Paralegal, Commissioner of Oaths & Notary Public

BOOK YOUR FREE 15-MINUTE CONSULTATION BY VISITING: <https://calendly.com/rbparalegalandnotaryservices> OR CONTACT US AT: TEL: 647-745-8308 EMAIL: ritaboodram@rbparalegal.com Visit Our Website at: <https://bit.ly/RB-PARALEGAL-NOTARY-SERVICES>



INFORMATION SESSION INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN GUYANA

You're invited to join this interactive discussion on the range of investment options in Guyana; how to access procurement opportunities and the local content legislative provisions



SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 30, 2024



8:30 AM - BREAKFAST &
NETWORKING
9:00 AM - SESSION



AMANA EVENT CENTRE
& BANQUET HALL:
2855 MARKHAM ROAD,
SCARBOROUGH, ON
M1X 0C3, SUITE 320



MICHELLE MOSELEY, PhD, MBA
Financial Consultant
and Life Coach



FAREED AMIN
Managing Director, Canada
Guyana Chamber of Commerce

ADMISSION: FREE FOR CGCC MEMBERS
\$25 FOR NON MEMBERS



INFO@CGCC.GY



FAREED AMIN: 647-963-8757
DHAMAN KISSOON: 416-234-1446

Dignitaries, diaspora mark Dominica's 46th Independence anniversary

Toronto – In a vibrant and heartfelt celebration at Toronto City Hall on November 2, the Commonwealth of Dominica commemorated its 46th Independence Anniversary with a flag-raising ceremony that brought together over 100 attendees.

The gathering included dignitaries, members of the Diplomatic Corps, MPP Jill Andrew, and leaders from the Dominican community, who united to honour the island nation's resilience and progress.

The event, organised under the auspices of Dominica's Trade and Investment Commissioner Frances Delsol, was a celebration of not only Independence, but also the enduring spirit of the Dominican people.

The ceremony, supported by the Commonwealth of Dominica Ontario Association, Safety Awareness for Emergencies – Dominica (SAFE-D), and the Dominica Convent High School Alumni of Ontario, was rich with cultural performances, along with reflections on the island's journey to recovery.

In her address, Commissioner Delsol highlighted her homeland's remarkable progress since Hurricane Maria devastated Dominica in 2017, leaving behind extensive damage that equated to nearly 224 percent of its GDP.

"Six years ago, we stood here at City Hall to raise our flag, a proud moment given Hurricane Maria had devastated our island 12 months earlier; we were down, but not out," she remarked.

Delsol recounted the hurricane's impact, which destroyed 90 percent of the island's infrastructure, and resulted in damages totaling \$1.3 billion.

She went on to emphasise and celebrate Dominica's resilience, and its ongoing transformation, even as she wondered how much further the island could have come had it not been devastated by the hurricane.

"Today we stand in awe to the rest of the

world. Dominica has shown such resilience – one can only imagine and ask, 'Where would we be today had Maria not paid us this uninvited visit?'" she reflected.

She detailed several ambitious projects currently underway in Dominica, including the construction of an international airport, a geothermal energy project set to reduce electricity costs, and the modernisation of Roseau into a modern Caribbean city. On the projects' list are also a new cruise port, a marina in Portsmouth, and expanded hotel facilities to accommodate the growing influx of visitors.

The ceremony was a lively affair, blending cultural celebration with community solidarity. Attendees were treated to a palatable spread of Dominican cuisine provided by Jewo Catering.

The cultural program featured an array of performances, including the rhythmic drumming of Reggie Ambrose, the soulful voice of singer Dianne James, poetry from Nadine Williams, and a spirited dance by Rooselyn St. Jean.

Author Sharon Musgrave also shared her literary work, while spiritual leaders Bishop Thomas Parilon and Apostle Lovelace St. John offered prayers, adding a reflective note to the occasion.

Delsol also used the platform to encourage the diaspora to engage more actively in the conversation on climate change, noting that the Caribbean is most impacted despite being the least contributors to the global problem.

She called on Dominicans abroad to take pride in their homeland's resilience and to support its continued growth.

"Let us join hands in contributing to Dominica's growth and success, regardless of our political or religious affiliations. Dominica belongs to us all – *Paye nou, kado nou* – our land, our gift," she urged.

A highlight of Delsol's speech was the recognition of recent national achievements, includ-



Dominica's Trade and Investment Commissioner Frances Delsol (above left) with Saint Lucia's Consul General Henry Mangal; and dignitaries and members of the diaspora at Dominica's 46th Independence anniversary flag-raising in Toronto

ing the historic appointment of Her Excellency Sylvanie Burton as Dominica's first female President and a woman of Kalinago descent.

She also celebrated Dominica's first Olympic Gold medalist, Thea Lafond-Gadson, whose 2024 victory is now a source of national pride.

A reminder of Dominica's enduring strength

and the pivotal role the diaspora plays in its future, the flag-raising celebration in Toronto emerged as an enduring testament to the unbreakable spirit and resilience of Dominica, even as it bridged the distance between the island and its sons and daughters resident here in the diaspora.

CGCC building investment bridge

Toronto – Preparations are in full swing for the Canada-Guyana Chamber of Commerce's (CGCC) highly-anticipated November 30 Information Session, and registrations are steadily growing as the event draws near.

Scheduled to take place at the Amana Event Centre & Banquet Hall in Scarborough, the session aims to connect investors with the expanding opportunities in Guyana's dynamic economy, promising valuable insights and guidance for participants.

Earlier this week the CGCC's Managing Director Fareed Amin shared his enthusiasm for the upcoming event, noting the rising interest among potential participants.

"Registration is steady, and a lot of people are asking about the event. We continue to see a steady stream of registrants as the CGCC gets ready for November 30," Amin said. At the same time, he encouraged CGCC members, diaspora investors, and other interested parties to sign up early.

The session, starting at 8:30 a.m., will feature presentations from Amin, whose extensive public service career spans over three decades, and Dr. Michelle Moseley, an educator, entrepreneur, and financial consultant.

Together, they will delve into investment options, procurement opportunities, and local content requirements, making the session an invaluable resource for navigating Guyana's economic landscape.

This initiative comes as Guyana's industries diversify beyond its booming oil sector, presenting lucrative opportunities in sectors such as agro-processing, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), technology, and other industries.



Fareed Amin

Investors attending the session will benefit from CGCC's strategic guidance, helping them align their objectives with the Guyana's growth trajectory.

Adding to the excitement, the ongoing visit by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Guyana underscores the country's expanding global partnerships and potential for foreign investment.

Last week Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali highlighted potential discussions with Modi on areas such as SMEs, agro-processing, and technological collaboration.

"India has mastered the art of building Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and converting raw food into value-added products through agro-processing," President Ali said, emphasising the possibilities these industries hold for Guyana's development.

Ali also noted that the talks with Modi aim to boost collaboration in manufacturing, industrial development, healthcare, and climate-related initiatives.

"We are trying to enter [the health tourism] market to see how we can build our healthcare system to be a revenue arm for us," he added, pointing to Guyana's aspirations to expand its non-oil sectors.

The CGCC's upcoming event could not occur at a more propitious time for Canadian investors, with the Information Session being a timely opportunity to engage with these exciting developments, both in Guyana and its emergence on the global landscape.

With registrations underway and enthusiasm building, the November 30 session is set to bridge the gap between Toronto-based investors and Guyana's vast economic potential.

KISSOON Law Office

NEW LOCATION

Suite 304 1 Greensboro Drive
Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 1C8
(Near 401 & Kipling Avenue)

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

- **CRIMINAL LAW**
- **IMMIGRATION LAW**

Lawyers available for referrals
*Family Law, Real Estate
Law, Corporate Commercial
Law, Personal Injury Law,
Civil Litigation*

Tel: 416-234-1446

Fax: 416-234-0154

Email: dkissoon@bellnet.ca
Website: www.kissoon.ca

Editorial

Diabetes month

As we mark Diabetes Awareness Month, we are at a critical juncture that requires not just introspection, but action. For our Caribbean diaspora in the GTA, November serves as a poignant reminder of the urgency with which we must address the rising tide of diabetes within our community.

The statistics are alarming and also deeply personal, affecting families, neighbours, and friends. Now is the time to shift from awareness to proactive measures, embracing healthier lifestyles for ourselves and for future generations.

Across the globe, diabetes and non-communicable diseases are on the rise, creating a significant public health challenge. The numbers tell a sobering story in India, for example, where an astonishing 77 million persons are now living with diabetes.

Meanwhile, in our own Caribbean community, back home and here in Canada, the statistics show that in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Jamaica, diabetes is now epidemic, with prevalence rates exceeding 12 percent.

The consequences are severe for the afflicted – amputations, dialysis, and heart disease are daily, lived realities. South Asians and Afro-Caribbeans are at elevated risk in our Caribbean diaspora here in the GTA.

We must acknowledge the role that culture, lifestyle, and even migration plays in exacerbating the risk of diabetes. For many immigrants, the transition to a new country often brings unanticipated health challenges – stress, dietary changes, and a sedentary lifestyle converge to increase the risk of diabetes. Our traditional diets, rich in starches and sugars, combined with the conveniences of urban living, have only compounded the pathology.

Let us be clear: these are not insurmountable challenges. There is power in community, and this is where our strength lies. The success of initiatives like the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme in Trinidad and Tobago, and public awareness campaigns in Guyana demonstrate that with the right support, we can make a difference.

Here in the GTA, we have access to resources – health screenings, culturally-tailored education programs, and support groups – that can make a real difference. The challenge is ensuring that our community members are aware of such access, and go out and utilise these resources.

Prevention is a lifeline. Too often, we wait for symptoms to appear before taking action, and by then, the damage is often done. Early screening, healthier eating habits, and regular exercise are simple yet effective strategies to prevent diabetes. The choice to swap a sugary drink for water, to walk instead of drive, or to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into our diets can be life-changing.

But these changes require more than just individual effort. Families, too, play a crucial role. The strength of our Caribbean heritage is rooted in community, in the shared experience of family meals, social gatherings, and collective support.

Let us channel that strength into making healthier choices together. Let us challenge each other to take evening walks, prepare healthier versions of beloved dishes, and schedule regular check-ups.

Our call to action extends beyond individuals. Community leaders, healthcare professionals, and policy-makers have a critical role to play. We call on our government representatives in the GTA to invest more in these initiatives, and to keep working with grassroots organisations to reach those most at risk.

Caribbean governments have taken important steps: from sugar taxes in Barbados to new standards for diabetes care in Guyana. These measures are commendable, but they must be complemented by community engagement.

Here in Canada, we can learn from these initiatives and adapt them to our local context, ensuring that our community feels supported, informed, and empowered.

As we observe Diabetes Awareness Month, it is a time to reflect on the health challenges facing our community, and to take proactive steps toward better health. Let us use November as a catalyst for year-round efforts to prioritise our health, support each other, and ensure a healthier future for the next generation.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of this publication.
Letters to be published will be edited where necessary.
Publisher: Harry Ramkhalawan
Editor: Romeo Kaseram
Columnists/Writers/Photographers: Vidur Dindyal, Bernard Heydorn, Dwarka Lakhan, Dhanpaul Narine, Ryan Singh, Nalini Mohabir, Ramesh Ramkalawan, Russell Lutchman.
Contact Information: Indo Caribbean World Inc.
312 Brownridge Drive, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5X1
(905) 738-5005; indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com
Website: www.indocaribbeanworld.com

Indo-Caribbean diabetes approaching crisis levels

A common phrase heard in many Guyanese households: “Mi sugah high...” It is associated with a widespread disease that plagues the Indo-Caribbean community – diabetes. November is Diabetes Awareness Month, a time when advocates discuss the importance of recognising this disease and call for prevention and a cure.

Type 2 Diabetes is a common metabolic disorder characterised by insulin resistance and high blood sugar levels. It is influenced by genetic predisposition, lifestyle choice, and dietary habits, underscoring the importance of food management. While more common in adults, it can affect people of all ages.

The central issue is insulin resistance, where body cells do not respond well to insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas for blood sugar regulation. Elevated blood glucose levels result, leading to various health problems.

Most Indo-Caribbean households have been impacted by Type 2 Diabetes. Many of us have loved ones who have been diagnosed with this disease.

People of South Asian and African descent are three to five times more likely than persons of European descent to develop Type 2 Diabetes. South Asian individuals are higher in numbers for diabetes when compared to other ethnicities.

Diabetes is alarmingly found at higher rates in the Indo-Caribbean community. Research on the South Asian ancestry of Indo-Caribbean people indicates that dietary and other environmental and social impacts contribute to this illness.

As part of the South Asian diaspora, the bodies of Indo-Caribbean individuals directly carry extremely similar genetic traits. These traits establish a linkage of experiences seen in the South Asian subcontinent. With very similar dietary patterns, it further links the correlation of high rates of diabetes in the Indo-Caribbean community.

This is a disease that is common in South Asian bodies regardless of geographic setting, but possibly augmented by poverty/famine, trauma, and non-traditional dietary options.

In general, South Asian populations have higher levels of abdominal fat irrespective of their overall body fat percentage. Increased abdominal fat has been associated with an increased risk of insulin resistance.

Researchers have reported and identified a group of health-related risks frequently seen among people from the South Asia subcontinent. These health-related risks include problems with cholesterol, difficulties in managing blood sugar, increased risk



Ryan Singh

of blood clot formation, generalised inflammation, and blood vessel dysfunction.

As a community that originated from South Asia, our bodies are linked to patterns seen in present-day India. Our ethnicity is one of the most prominent factors responsible for the diabetes’ epidemic. This genetic predisposition is out of our control, and is an additional challenge for us to follow healthy lifestyle mantras professed by North American (white) thought processes.

The Caribbean has a particularly high prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes, for reasons that researchers are still determining. Genetics, diet quality, and physical activity have all been suggested as having a role in the development of Type 2 Diabetes.

In the Caribbean, the overall prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes is estimated to be approximately nine percent, and is responsible for 13.8 percent of all deaths among adults in the region.

In 2015, the International Diabetes Federation revealed that Trinidad and Tobago was in the top 12 percent of the world for the prevalence of diabetes. The survey was based on a total of 193 countries consisting of persons aged 20-79 who had Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes.

Diabetes is also prevalent in Guyana, with 11.1 percent of adults affected in 2021. This translates to about 54,000 adults in Guyana with diabetes. The prevalence of diabetes in Guyana is the highest in South America.

According to the Guyanese Ministry of Health, diabetes was ranked as the fourth leading cause of death in the country, and the second most prevalent cause of chronic non-communicable disease among individuals above the age of 45 years.

According to a report titled *Profile of Diabetes Mellitus Among Immigrants from Guyana: Epidemiology and Implications for Community Action*, the Indo-Guyanese community is disproportionately affected by diabetes in comparison to other ethnic community groups. This study at a clinic in Schenectady, New York, between 2004 and 2006 found that 31.6 percent of Indo-Guyanese patients had diabetes, which was twice as high in white patients and 65 percent higher than in African American patients.

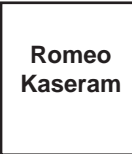
Alarmingly, this report found that diabetes appeared to be more common in younger and leaner men and women than was normally seen among other non-Guyanese patients.

As a community, we must be alarmed not only at the risk of diabetes, but also the drastic impact that this disease has across our community.

Living in a world that took us away, never to return

Second of Two Parts

Ma’s words echoed in the stillness after her grief faded: “Friends carry you, but they don’t bring you back.” In our village, warnings like this were more than mere scoldings – they were survival tools honed from centuries of deprivation and loss. This mantra held an unspoken weight, as if reminding us that in a world filled with unseen dangers, there were forces more powerful, more uncaring, that would carry people away without ever returning them.



very crops that fueled the factory’s endless churning. They had no choice but to leave us behind, entrusting us to our wandering feet that inevitably found its way to the edge of the pond.

In the fragments of the narratives that Ma told me across the years, Shorty-boy’s father had constructed his own grief, splinter by splinter, by tearing the front door from his house to build his child’s final resting place.

The irony was as sharp as those splinters – while the factory took the best of what the land offered, it left only scraps for people like us to make do. A door became a coffin, the final vessel to hold a life ended too soon. When he placed his son in the rough box and wheeled him to the cemetery, the narrative was yet another poignant re-purposing of a makeshift door into a makeshift coffin.

The procession moved slowly, each step a weary shuffle over the mud and rock-strewn paths, villagers in quiet solidarity behind the bicycle, itself re-purposed into a hearse. No flowers, no wreaths – only their presence in mute tribute. The chain on the bicycle ticked in time, a broken rhythm of intervals, like a clock slowly unwinding, tick, tick, tick. The villagers’ gaze shifted between the boy’s coffin and the factory’s smoke drifting into the distance, a dark reminder of what it took, and never gave back.

Ma trailed behind, a silent participant in this communal mourning. She had cut canes with Shorty-boy’s mother only the day before. And as she trudged behind the coffin, that is when I imagine she felt the first fracture opening inside her – a silent rage against a system that had put my uncle at risk, and taken away Shorty-boy.

In my time, as children we were left with no choice but to navigate by ourselves a world laden with dangers we could scarcely understand. Our games were played out around ponds that could swallow; near factories that poisoned; under skies streaked with smoke from burning fields, which Ma would then harvest for someone else’s wealth. We were small players in a greater act of exploitation, unwitting trespassers on land where we were unsafe.

Today, I understand Ma’s fears went deeper than my boyhood antics; that her worries were ancestral, rooted in the knowledge that a world controlled by others offered no branches to a drowning man; no safety net for those taken away by the currents of fate.

That the pond was just one more reminder that back then we were living on the brink of being pulled under, in a world where we could be effortlessly carried away, never to return.

Guyana's wealth paradox: Rich nation, but Guyanese still relatively poor

Dear Editor,

Suppose I tell you, dear reader, that Guyana is rich but Guyanese are relatively poor. What would be your reaction?

I'll get to my arguments shortly but it is first necessary to gaze at the economic landscape. Prior to 2020, Guyana was largely an unknown, backwater country and foreigners often confused it with Ghana, which is located in Africa. Guyana's economic growth was lackadaisical at best, averaging 2.1 percent over the 60 years from 1960 to 2019. That changed in 2020, when Guyana became the world's newest petro-state.

While the amount of oil discovered is unknown, the figure generally accepted is in excess of 11 billion barrels. The export of crude oil delivered a much-needed boost to growth, averaging 38.8 percent from 2020 to 2024. Growth reached as high as 63.4 percent in 2022, an incredible performance that is probably unparalleled in the Americas.

Not only is Guyana the world's fastest growing economy today, but it is also much more widely known and several airlines now fly into and out of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport. Quite a few pieces on the country have appeared in Bloomberg and other western media, while the inflow of FDI has surged, rising from US\$573.1 million in the first quarter of 2020 to US\$4,595.7 million in the second quarter of 2024, which is more than twice as large as non-oil GDP.

From around 2014, a dual economy began to emerge: an oil economy and a non-oil economy. The former is a highly capital-intensive, technologically advanced, skill-intensive, high-productivity economy. It is essentially a foreign-owned export enclave devoted to a single commodity thus far, crude oil.

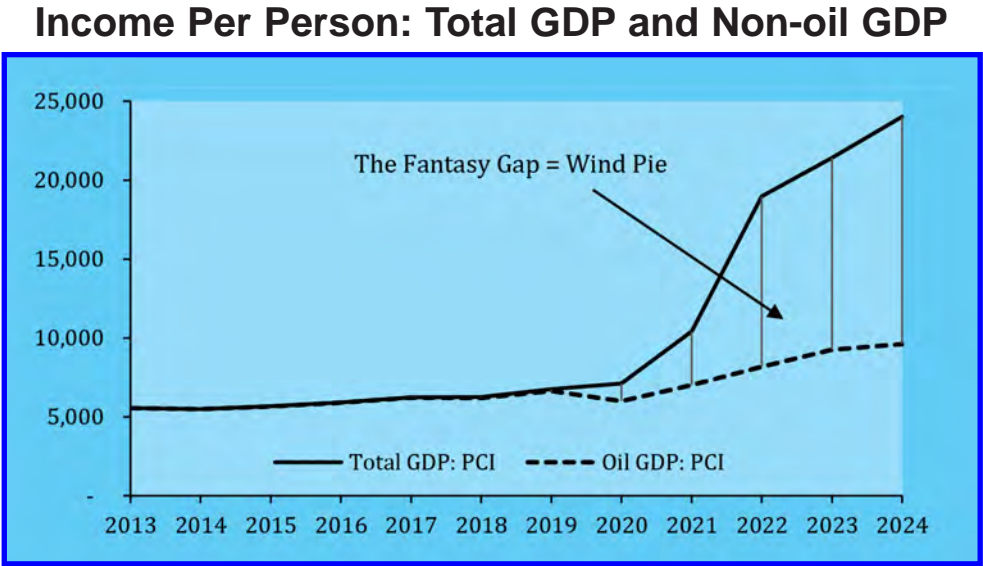
Oil GDP was (G) \$9.9 billion in 2019 or more than twice the previous year. Oil GDP reached (G) \$180.20 billion in 2020, amounting to 15.8 percent of the total economy (oil + non-oil). The oil economy grew rapidly and it was more than half of the overall economy two years later and is expected to reach about 60 percent in 2024. The rapid growth of the oil economy, 67.4 percent in real terms, annually, from 2021 to 2024, buoyed up growth of the non-oil economy, which averaged 10.1 percent during these same four years.

The upshot is that the total economy expanded by 37.6 percent annually. Incredibly, real GDP in 2023 was 2.6 times as large as 2020 (real GDP data for 2024 is not yet available).

Oil exports rose from (US) \$1.1 billion in 2020 to (US) \$11.6 billion in 2023 (it was (US) \$9.4 billion at the end of the first half of 2024). As a share of total exports, oil increased from 19.5 percent to 69.7 percent during the same period.

Oil exports comprised 56.9 percent of cumulative GDP during these four years. Given the country's huge oil reserves, the surge in economic growth caused by the export of oil and the current spending spree about a third of which is funded by drawdowns from the Natural Resources Fund, mainly on much-needed infrastructure, and a population of less than 800,000, there is only one conclusion: Guyana is a very rich country.

If the country is rich by the criteria presented in the above paragraphs, it is also



Note: Fantasy Gap = Per capita income based on Total GDP minus per capita income based on Non-oil GDP. In effect, the Fantasy Gap exists because of the oil economy (Oil GDP), which is foreign owned, does not belong to Guyanese, and hardly benefits Guyanese. Source of data: 2013-2023: BoG 2024. Annual Report 2023; BoG 2024. Half Year Report 2024. GDP for 2024 estimated by author; BoS website for population data

rich by another widely used indicator: per capita income. Per capita income is normally calculated as GDP divided by population (in Guyana's case GDP = Oil GDP + Non-oil GDP) and expressed in USD to facilitate international comparison.

Income per person rose from (US) \$5,600 in 2013 to (US) \$7,100 in 2020 (rounded to the nearest 100), which is an increase of 28.1 percent. Three years later per capita income reached (US) \$21,400 and is expected to climb to (US) \$24,000 in 2024.

The phenomenal "wealth" performance means that income per person in 2024 is 3.4 times as large as in 2020. In the Americas, excluding the US and Canada, only Puerto Rico, The Bahamas, Barbados, and St. Kitts and Nevis were richer than Guyana in terms of per capita income in 2023. By my calculations, only the US, Canada, The Bahamas and Puerto Rico are richer than Guyana in 2024.

Income per person, too, portrays Guyana as one of the richest countries in the Americas, but the truth is revealed once the data supporting that perception is put under the microscope.

The problem with the above analysis is that the bulk of oil GDP does not belong to Guyana and should not, therefore, be used to calculate income per person. GDP = private consumption + private investment + government investment + government spending + Net exports (exports - imports).

There is comparatively little government spending or investment in the oil economy, so that its GDP is largely made up of private consumption, private investment and net exports. The extent to which each of these three components contribute to oil GDP is unknown because the requisite data are not available.

However, given the size of oil exports, which was 1.2 times as large as oil GDP from 2020 to 2023, it is clear that most of the revenue from oil export is captured by oil companies. Spending on consumption and investment are mostly done by the foreign oil companies.

In effect, the oil economy is a foreign-owned economy, and, therefore, most of its GDP is foreign-owned, and thus does not benefit

Guyana's, while that of Jamaica and Suriname was around two-third of Guyana's.

The enormous difference between income per person based on total and non-oil GDP exposes what I call the "Fantasy Gap", or the perception of wealth, which began from around 2019 and grows larger yearly. The Fantasy Gap, the split in economic fortune, is readily evident from the accompanying chart above.

Concluding, Guyana is a rich country, but Guyanese are either some of the richest or some of the poorest people in the Americas depending upon how income per person is measured. The idea that Guyanese are rich is an erroneous arithmetical idea; there is no substance to it.

The error stems from dividing total GDP (oil + non-oil = total income) by the population, which produces a very high income per person. Since oil-GDP, at least most of it, is neither owned nor enjoyed by Guyanese, it should be excluded from the calculation so that appropriate numerator in the division is non-oil GDP. By the "oil" metric, Guyanese are rich, but by the "non-oil" metric Guyanese are poor.


To give you an idea of the magnitude involved, non-oil income per person was only about 42 percent of total income (oil + non-oil) during the last three years, including this one. The inclusion of oil GDP in the per capita income metric creates the perception that Guyanese are rich, about 58 percent richer than they actually are.

Many years ago, an Australian forestry professional working in Guyana told me that you cannot eat what you do not have. That's still the case as far as I know - we are producing plenty of oil, but only the crumbs gets routed to our tables. Hence, the oil economy does not benefit the average Guyanese much even though it enriches the well-connected.

Ramesh Gampat, via email.



A marketplace in Guyana



GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

What to do with inherited property in Guyana

Anyone who has inherited property in Guyana should act to ensure the property is effectively administered, all fees and taxes due to the Guyana Revenue Authority are paid, the grant of probate is obtained, and the property is transferred to the new owner. Failure to act in a timely manner introduces the opportunity for property fraud as it is known by more persons that a property owner has passed on and their heirs are absent.

The documents required for the probate process would include the death certificate, the will of the deceased, a list of assets, and a valuation of the inherited land at the date of the death. The probate process usually takes approximately 6-12 weeks, and is best managed by an experienced attorney who prepares the necessary documents, manages the submission process with the Guyana Revenue Authority, and determines the applicable process fees and taxes.

Once a certificate of payment is obtained from the GRA, the application for probate is prepared and filed by the attorney, and the execution of the will and the transfer of the property can proceed. The cost associated with the probate process and transfer of ownership can be estimated by the attorney managing the case, and would be based on several factors including the value of inherited property.

In cases where multiple heirs are involved, the proceeds from the sale of the property would be distributed according to the will, or upon collective agreement by the heirs. Where the objective is to sell the property, it is possible to plan the sales process to coincide with the probate process so that the property is transferred directly to the buyer.

Many are torn between selling their inherited property or keeping it in light of Guyana's rising economic fortunes. For those that don't need the money, consider retaining ownership. Many have modernised their ancestral homes in Guyana into shared vacation properties used by the entire extended family. Others have renovated and rented out their properties, and receive significant incomes. Hanging on and renovating Grandpa's old house in the village may be one of the smartest investment decisions you might make.

RE/Guyana is a property services company dedicated to making it easier for overseas property owners to administer, divest, acquire, and develop their real estate assets in Guyana. [Click here to visit RE/Guyana's website.](#)

Author of reference book seeks info on accounting in Guyana

Dear Editor,

I am in the planning stages of writing my next reference book on Guyana titled, *A History of the Accounting and Auditing Profession in Guyana: 1854-2024*. It is expected to show the impact, growth and development of these professions, accounting education, regulation, standards, professional accounting firms, the professional associations and profiles of some of Guyana's most outstanding accountants over the years.

Such accounting 'giants' like W.G. Stoll, Edgar Heyliger, Yesu Persaud, John G. Barcellos, Noel Barcellos, Nizam Ali, V.J. Gangadin, Hazel Featherstone, Ramesh Lall, Sammy Singh, Paul Chan-A-Sue, Allan Luck, Komal Samaroo, and many more, greatly influenced the accounting landscape.

This dedicated group of individuals, serving in leadership roles, greatly contributed to the development of accounting, and provided mentorship to generations of Guyanese accountants. In addition, the book will profile such stalwarts like Edgar A. Adams, OBE, FCCA, who was the first Indo-Guyanese to qualify as a Public Auditor in the country in the early 1950s. He was the father of the eminent attorney B.O. Adams.

These pioneering accountants and auditors have made a significant impact, promoted the profession, and advocated its importance as part of today's modern Guyana.

It was through their efforts that the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Guyana (ICAG)



Lal Balkaran

was established in 1974 to oversee the profession of accounting in the country.

ICAG is now a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Caribbean and the International Federation of Accountants. Their vision, leadership, and passion for the profession have been echoed in the enduring values of accounting and serve as an inspiration to ICAG members past and present.

My proposed book will also capture the following: early beginnings of accounting; major companies and accounting firms; accounting Education, schools of accounting, accounting programs at the University of Guyana, and the various recognised and peripheral professional associations.

Also, the impact of nationalisation and national service on accounting; the audit office; internal auditing landscape; and the current accounting and auditing landscape in Guyana.

A range of issues and events around the world in the areas of laws, regulations, crises, and frauds helped shape accounting and its landscape in Guyana as well. A book of this nature has never been done before, and I intend to do some extensive research to bring all these factors to light.

As such, I would like to hear from those who may have an interest in this worthwhile project, and send me any information they may have on the subject.

Email me at: lalbalkaran@rogers.com.
Lal Balkaran, Scarborough, Ontario.

ASSERTION LAW

BUSINESS | LITIGATION | CONSTRUCTION

BUSINESS LAW

- Business Formation
- Charities and Not for Profits
- Leasing
- Contracts and Agreements
- Business Purchases and Sales
- Labour and Employment Law
- Franchising
- Corporate Agreements

LITIGATION

- Commercial Litigation
- Civil Litigation
- Small Claims Court
- Professional Liability
- Insurance Litigation
- Breach of Contract
- Negligence Claims

CONSTRUCTION LAW

- Construction Agreements and Disputes
- Construction Liens
- Construction Litigation
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Pre-litigation Negotiation
- Contract Negotiation

CONTACT US FOR A FREE CONSULTATION

ANEAL S. SEEOBIN
B.A.(Hons.), J.D.(Can.), J.D.(USA)
Barrister & Solicitor

TEL: (905) 499-8013
DIRECT: (647) 997-6325
EMAIL: INFO@ASSERTIONLAW.CA
WEB: ASSERTIONLAW.CA
2601 MATHESON BLVD E, UNIT 17
MISSISSAUGA ON L4W 5A8

Ajax Crematorium & Visitation Centre

289-372-3300
www.acvc.info
384 Finley Avenue, Ajax, ON L1S 2E3

Brampton Crematorium & Visitation Centre

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

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

Compassion – Care – Convenience

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

Bitter struggles to sweet success? Guyana's sugar industry on trial

In spite of a plethora of challenges that suggest that Guyana's sugar industry is dead, President Irfaan Ali remains optimistic about the future of the industry. Whether the President's optimism is overblown remains questionable.

When addressing his inaugural 'In the Seat' media engagement earlier this month, the President stated that continued investments in the Guyana Sugar Corporation (Guysuco) are aimed at making the industry economically viable.

He highlighted that rebuilding the sugar industry is a step-by-step process, requiring not only physical infrastructure but also a transformation in the industry's culture and workforce.

He suggested that the industry must not be viewed in terms of its financial viability but instead in light of its contribution to the economy, citing the industry's spin-off benefits to communities which the industry supports. Incidentally, sugar supports a network of communities across the coastal belt.

The industry has been plagued by a plethora of problems, key among them incompetent management, declining production, and high operational costs.

As a result, Guysuco has depended on government funding to keep it afloat.

The struggling industry was virtually shut down under the previous APNU+AFC administration.

The closure of the Wales, Enmore-East Demerara, Rose Hall-Canje, and Skeldon Estates led to the termination of almost 6,000 workers. Three estates and factories – Albion, Blairmont, and Uitvlugt – remain open.

Another challenge is the industry's aging equipment and lack of spare parts for the sugar factories, which has caused significant downtime.

As a result, production has declined to its lowest level ever. Production has fallen steadily since 2017 when the government commenced closing estates – from 137,300 tonnes in 2017 to 60,200 tonnes in 2023, with a low of 47,000 tonnes in 2022. (See Chart above: *Dramatic Decline in Sugar Production.*)

An examination of historical production patterns shows that annual sugar production is at its lowest level ever.

For instance, during the 1960s sugar output averaged almost 300,000 tonnes per year. During the 1970-1980 period, production averaged over 306,000 tonnes per year, with a peak of 369,000 tonnes in 1971.

However, during the 1990-2000 period, average sugar production fell to about 245,000 tons, with 1999 output of 365,000 tons being the highest.

Over the next decade, 2001-2010, average production increased to almost 270,000 tonnes annually, supported by three years (2002-2004) of production averaging 320,000 tones. The noticeable decline in production started in 2008, and production has largely trended downwards or fluctuated up until 2017.

What is important to note is that production fell further after the implementation of Guysuco's modernisation initiatives. It was also during this period that expectations were at their peak for the revival of the industry.

At the crux of the matter is the fact that the government was wildly optimistic that

its (US) \$200 million modernisation efforts launched way back in 1998 as part of a ten-year plan would lead to a dramatic increase in production. But when the ten-year plan finally materialised 12 years later with the commissioning of the modernised Skeldon factory in September 2009, sugar was still in trouble.

The embarrassing thing is that at the commissioning of the Skeldon factory, hope and wild imaginings were rampant. It was expected that the factory would become fully operational in 2011, producing some 500,000 tonnes of sugar annually for export, and that total industry production would increase to 1.2 million tonnes annually.

What happened to the industry at this critical juncture is anybody's guess. Management was comprehensively inept.

The bitter-sweet reality of sugar is that it never recovered from the withdrawal of preferential pricing by the European Union (EU) in 2006, which resulted in a price cut of some 36 percent.

Prior to the cut in EU subsidies, Guyana's sugar was shipped to the EU, its largest buyer, enjoying higher-than-world-market prices under the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Convention.

Although the EU subsequently provided funds to Guyana to help sustain the industry, it continued to head downhill.

In combination with the decline in production is a massive increase in the cost of production from (US) 28.41 cents per pound in 2020 to (US) 42.84 cents per pound in 2021 to (US) 62.22 cents per

pound in 2022.

Currently the cost of production is \$1.31 per pound, while the world market price is four times less at an average of (US) 35 cents per pound.

For this reason, it can be concluded that continuing to produce sugar is not economically viable. As a result, opposition forces have accused the government of pouring money into the sugar sector to appease sugar workers, most of whom are perceived to be its supporters.

However, President Ali contends that "the objective is to work to reduce the cost of production". He added that there is a high cost of production now because of the capital that is required to bring back the industry to where it was in the past, noting that the cost of production was linked to current and capital expenditure.

In addition, he suggested that the corporation needs to take steps to ensure that it is run properly.

"We have to fix that, so we have to invest in improving efficiency, creating higher yields and also reducing the cost of production," he said.

To bring the industry back to viability, the government has enlisted international support.

Said Ali: "We have to bring in technical capability to support what is there. And we have a team from India, for example, working now; we have a team from Cuba that is working on the field and in the factory, doing studies, working to help us to build back the system, improve the system, bring efficiency into the system at the field and the factories."

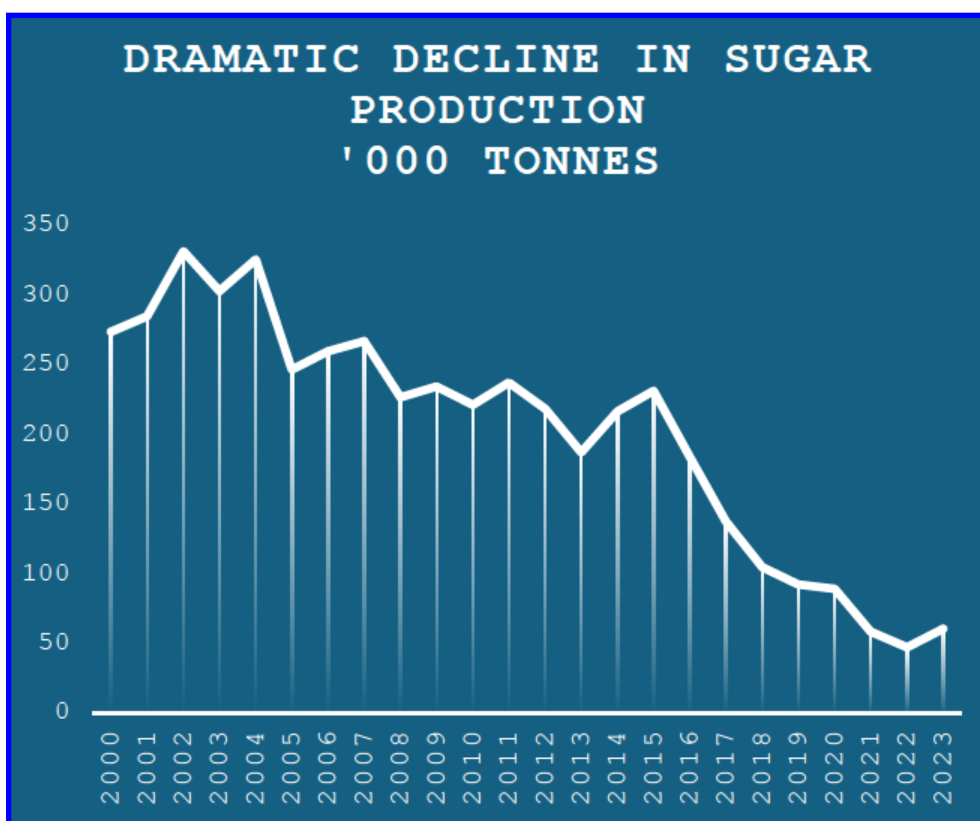
The government has also announced that new high-yielding sugarcane varieties were being brought from neighbouring Brazil, and



Dwarka Lakhan



Skeldon sugar factory



there was a likelihood of some being brought in from Cuba.

In addition to restoring the physical infrastructure, the President pointed out the need to create a new culture in the sugar industry – a culture focused on efficiency, productivity, and a sense of ownership among workers.

"We have to develop a new culture, a winning culture, within the industry. This period of rebuilding will have its challenges, but we have to embrace it if we are going to make the industry successful," he stated.

The underlying question is whether sugar can return to viability. It is a tough question

to answer given the current state of the bitter-sweet sugar industry. But evidently not necessarily so tough for Guyana's President Ali, who remains optimistic about the future of the industry.

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

Mani Singh

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

"The King of the Jungle"

Residential & Commercial Real Estate Specialists

647-274-4172
Email: manisinghhomes@gmail.com

- ★ It's the Experience that Counts!!
- ★ Members of RE/MAX Hall of Fame!
- ★ Winner of the RE/MAX Lifetime Achievement Award!
- ★ Father & Son Professional Real Estate Team
- ★ When Experience and Professionalism matter to you

Mani Singh
Sales Representative

Tej Singh
Sales Representative

www.manisinghhomes.com

Bus: 416-745-2300 • ReMax West Realty • 96 Rexdale Blvd., Toronto, ON M9W 1N7

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY FOR OVER 35 YEARS!

THE PEACE OF PARADISE!!!

Gorgeous, huge detached, open concept, 2 year old, beautifully upgraded, 4 huge bedrooms, 2 with full ensuites, 4 bathrooms, wooden shutters, privacy screens, concrete driveway, professional landscaping, security alarm. Asking \$999,900. Call Mani or Tej to view this beautiful property!



Radha Krishna Mandir and Cultural Centre honoured Dr Budhendranauth Doobay for his Order of Canada on November 3 at the Victoria Park Pavilion in Kitchener. In attendance were Kitchener Centre MP Michael Morrice; MP for Waterloo Bardish Chagger; and Kitchener's Mayor Berry Urbanovic, represented by Councillor Jason Deneault. Also present were Honorary Consul Mani Singh, and Cambridge's Mayor Jan Liggett. RKMCC leader, Dwarka Persaud, delivered the keynote address; also speaking was Dr Shekhar Pandey, lead cardiologist and founder of Cambridge Cardiac Care. In attendance were Pt Bhoj Sharma, Pt Avinash Sharma, Pt Rajendra Doobay, Pt Jageshwar Sharma, and Pt Varun Shukla, along with devotees from other mandirs, and many friends.



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

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

JUMBO BARRELS NOW AVAILABLE!

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

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

905-677-6400
rscargoexpress.ca rscargoexpressinc@yahoo.ca

WESTERN UNION
MONEY TRANSFER

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

Take one small, active step to beat diabetes in our diaspora

November marks Diabetes Awareness Month, a time to shine a spotlight on a global health crisis that hits close to home for many in our community. The Caribbean diaspora in Canada, particularly in the GTA, faces an urgent challenge. With higher rates of diabetes among South Asian and Afro-Caribbean populations, it is vital to understand the risks, take preventive measures, and make informed health choices.

In this exploration, we are taking a look at the impact of diabetes starting from the global context, then narrowing the focus to the Caribbean, and then at our own neighbourhoods here in the GTA.

Diabetes is a major Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) affecting over 537 million adults worldwide, with projections reaching 643 million by 2030, according to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF). Type 2 diabetes, the most common form, is closely linked to lifestyle factors such as diet, physical inactivity, and obesity. However, genetics and socio-economic conditions also play significant roles.

In the US the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that more than 37 million Americans live with diabetes, with an estimated 96 million adults having prediabetes. As the CDC further reports, the annual cost of managing diabetes in the US exceeds \$327 billion.

Diabetes UK reports that over 4.9 million people are currently living with diabetes in this nation, with an estimated 13.6 million at increased risk due to prediabetes. Its National Health Service spends over £10 billion annually on managing diabetes-related complications.

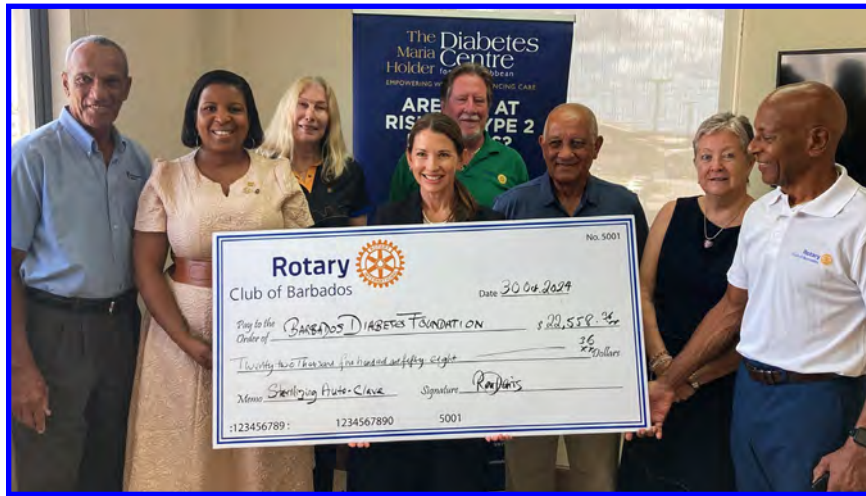
As for India, which is often referred to as the “diabetes capital of the world”, this populous nation carries one of the highest diabetes burdens globally. As of 2021, about 77 million Indians had diabetes, with projections suggesting a rise to 134 million by 2045. Rapid urbanisation and changing diets are major contributors, the IDF also reports.

A regional snapshot of the Caribbean reveals that the archipelago carries some of the highest diabetes rates globally, with nations like Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, and the Bahamas facing alarming statistics. In the Caribbean, diabetes prevalence among adults is estimated at 13.1 percent, which is the highest among all the IDF’s regions.

As the *Jamaica Observer* has reported, around 12 percent of adults have diabetes in this nation, prompting government-led initiatives to promote healthier lifestyles and dietary practices.

Barbados has a diabetes prevalence exceeding 15 percent, which has seen the government implementing a sugar-sweetened beverage tax in 2015 to curb consumption. Additionally, national campaigns promote healthier eating, BMC Public Health has reported.

For Trinidad and Tobago, its diabetes rate stands at 14.5 per-



As part of community outreach, the Rotary Club of Barbados last month donated over (B) \$22,000 to the Maria Holder Diabetes Centre for the Caribbean for purchase of an autoclave to sterilise medical equipment

cent, with approximately 148,900 individuals affected. As the media have reported, among them *Newsday*, the government has launched programs like the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP), which offers free medications to manage chronic conditions.

The prevalence of diabetes in Guyana is 14.7 percent. In 2023, the government introduced new diabetes care standards to improve early detection and patient education. Extensive training for healthcare workers aims to enhance diabetes management, BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care has reported.

The Bahamas has an adult diabetes prevalence of 13.6 percent. As a result, the Bahamian government has focused on public education and free screening programs to reduce the disease’s impact, the World Bank has reported.

For Caribbean immigrants in Canada, especially here in the GTA, lifestyle changes associated with migration often increase the risk of diabetes. Studies reveal that South Asians and Afro-Caribbeans in Canada are more likely to develop diabetes than other ethnic groups.

According to Diabetes Canada, the prevalence of diabetes in Ontario has increased by 42 percent since 2009, affecting over 4.4 million people with either diabetes or prediabetes in the province.

Migrating to Canada often involves adopting new dietary habits and experiencing higher levels of stress, which can exacerbate health issues. Limited access to culturally tailored healthcare services in the GTA adds another layer of complexity to managing chronic conditions in our Caribbean community.

Efforts to combat diabetes have been implemented both in the Caribbean and here in Canada, but more is needed.

In the case of Guyana, the government has allocated significant resources to healthcare, focusing on diabetes prevention

and management. In 2023, it introduced standards for diabetes care, and conducted nationwide training for healthcare workers to enhance early diagnosis and patient education.

Meanwhile, in Trinidad and Tobago its CDAP provides free medication to manage diabetes. Public health campaigns emphasise reducing sugar intake and increasing physical activity to lower diabetes risk.

Here in Canada, in 2021, the government launched *A Diabetes Strategy for Canada* to address the rising rates of diabetes. The strategy focuses on prevention, management, and research, and includes collaborations with organisations like Diabetes Canada to raise awareness and improve healthcare access.

While governments are stepping up their efforts, preventing diabetes starts with you. Here are some actionable steps you can take to protect yourself and your family:

Adopt a Balanced Diet: Reduce intake of sugary drinks, fried foods, and processed carbohydrates. Incorporate more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Culturally adapted options include traditional Caribbean dishes like stewed fish, vegetable curries, and dhal.

Stay Physically Active: Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. Walking, dancing, or even gardening can significantly reduce your risk of diabetes.

Schedule Regular Check-Ups: Early detection is key. Schedule annual screenings, especially if you have a family history of diabetes. Many community health centres in the GTA offer free or low-cost screenings.

Access Community Resources: Look for diabetes education programs and support groups in the GTA that cater to Caribbean communities. These programs offer culturally relevant advice and support to help you manage your health.

Educate Your Family: Diabetes prevention is a collective effort. Encourage open conversations about making healthier food choices, particularly when it comes to traditional meals shared during family gatherings.

As we observe Diabetes Awareness Month, it is a time to reflect on the health challenges facing our community and to take proactive steps toward better health. Small lifestyle changes can have a significant impact, not just on your life, but also on the health of your family and community.

Diabetes is not just a personal health issue — it is a community challenge. Let us use November as a catalyst for year-round efforts to prioritise our health, support each other, and ensure a healthier future for the next generation.

Stay informed, stay healthy, and remember: every small step counts in the fight against diabetes. Together, we can change the narrative and make our Caribbean community stronger and healthier.

Understanding the real costs, health complications for diabetes, NCDs

Diabetes and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are not merely chronic conditions; they are complex illnesses that lead to severe health complications if not properly managed. The Caribbean diaspora and global populations alike are facing these challenges, with a significant impact on both individual health and national economies.

The silent killer: Diabetes, particularly Type 2, is a condition where the body cannot effectively use insulin, resulting in elevated blood sugar levels. Over time, high blood sugar levels can damage various organs, leading to severe complications.

Amputation: High blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels, leading to poor circulation, especially in the lower limbs. This can result in diabetic foot ulcers that do not heal properly, often requiring amputation.

In the Caribbean, diabetes-related amputations are alarmingly high due to late diagnosis and inadequate access to early intervention. Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago report hundreds of amputations annually among diabetes patients.

Dialysis: Chronic kidney disease is a common complication of diabetes due to long-term damage to the kidneys’ blood vessels. Many patients eventually require dialysis to filter waste from their blood, as their kidneys can no longer perform this function. In Trinidad and Tobago, the government has invested heavily in dialysis centres, but the demand still exceeds capacity, with waiting lists growing annually.

Heart Disease: Diabetes significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks and strokes. High blood sugar leads to the hardening of blood vessels, which restricts blood flow. Heart disease is the leading cause of death among diabetic patients in the Caribbean, with governments struggling to provide adequate cardiac care facilities.

In addition to diabetes, other non-communicable diseases prevalent in the Caribbean include:

Hypertension: This condition is often a precursor to strokes and heart attacks. It is frequently diagnosed in patients with diabetes due to the overlap in risk factors like obesity and a high-sodium diet.

Obesity: Poor dietary habits and sedentary lifestyles in the Caribbean and diaspora communities contribute to obesity, which is closely linked to diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

Cancer: Certain cancers, such as breast and colon cancer, have been associated with obesity and diabetes. The financial burden of cancer treatment, particularly in lower-income Caribbean nations, is substantial.

Managing diabetes and related NCDs involves a combination of lifestyle changes, medication, and in severe cases, surgical interventions:

Medications: The first line of treatment often includes oral medications like Metformin to control blood sugar levels. In advanced cases, insulin injections become necessary. Trinidad and Tobago’s Chronic Disease Assistance Programme provides free medications to patients, but access remains uneven, especially in rural areas.

Dialysis for kidney disease: For those with end-stage renal disease, dialysis is essential. The procedure involves using a machine to filter blood, usually several times a week. Dialysis costs are extremely high. In Guyana, the government subsidises some of these treatments, but many patients still face out-of-pocket expenses that are often unaffordable.

Surgical interventions: For severe complications like diabetic foot infections, surgeries such as amputations become necessary. While public hospitals in Jamaica and Trinidad offer these surgeries, they often lack the preventative care that could reduce the need for such drastic measures.

Lifestyle modifications: Prevention and management heavily focus on diet and exercise. Public health campaigns in

Barbados and Jamaica have pushed for reduced sugar intake and increased physical activity, but cultural and economic barriers remain.

The cost of managing diabetes and other NCDs is enormous: **Global spending:** According to The World Health Organisation, NCDs are responsible for nearly \$7 trillion in healthcare spending worldwide annually. Diabetes alone accounts for \$966 billion, driven by rising treatment costs and increased prevalence.

Caribbean government expenditures: The Caribbean region spends a significant portion of its healthcare budget on managing NCDs, including diabetes. In Guyana, the Ministry of Health has allocated over (G) \$900 million in the current fiscal year to combat diabetes and related complications.

Meanwhile, Trinidad and Tobago has invested heavily in free medication programs, dialysis units, and diabetes education, but the strain on public healthcare remains significant.

Governments, healthcare providers, and communities must work together to curb the rising tide of diabetes and NCDs:

Policy initiatives: Increase taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages, as Barbados has done, to reduce consumption.

Preventative care: Expand free screening programs for early detection of diabetes and NCDs, especially in rural areas of Guyana and Trinidad.

Community programs: Culturally tailored education campaigns in the GTA targeting the Caribbean diaspora can help bridge the gap between awareness and action.

The fight against diabetes is not just a medical one – it is social, cultural, and economic. Understanding the complexities of this disease and its related complications is essential for building a healthier, more resilient community. As we observe Diabetes Awareness Month, let us commit to taking small, meaningful steps toward better health.



Grenada's PM Dikon Mitchell addresses COP29 last week

Calls by Caribbean heads for climate finance surge after flooding in region

Baku, Azerbaijan – As COP29 unfolded in Azerbaijan last week, Caribbean leaders seized the moment to highlight the grim reality of climate change's impact on their nations.

The opening days of the conference coincided with severe flooding across the Caribbean on November 12, which impacted heavily on Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, and other islands, bringing many areas to a standstill.

The devastation was a sobering backdrop for regional leaders, who renewed their impassioned pleas for the world to honour climate finance commitments, emphasising that the Caribbean is on the frontlines of an environmental crisis it did not create.

On November 12, incessant rainfall overwhelmed low-lying areas in Trinidad and Grenada, turning roads into rivers and submerging communities.

In Grenada, where it is believed floodwaters claimed the life of a woman whose vehicle was washed away by floods, authorities were still grappling with the aftermath this week.

The Maurice Bishop International Airport reported a staggering 69 millimeters of rain in just six hours last Tuesday, the equivalent to a month's rainfall. Across the region, nationals were forced to navigate flooded streets, impassable roads, and deal with the significant losses due to submerged homes.

Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Dikon Mitchell of Grenada, who currently chairs Caricom, addressed the global gathering. Speaking with urgency, he said, "It is just testimony to what we are talking about. You can have high, unpredictable, and erratic, but also highly dangerous weather patterns that are significant that we have to prepare for and respond to. Again, we have to be doing our best in those circumstances to treat and manage with this on an ongoing basis."

He added, "So it is just the new reality, the new norm that we have to live in."

Mitchell emphasised that the region urgently requires financing to bolster its resilience against increasingly frequent and severe storms.

Caricom Secretary-General Dr. Carla Barnett echoed this sentiment, stressing that climate finance is essential for the survival of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like nations in the Caribbean.

"For us to address the impact of climate change, there is a need for financing that we don't have," Barnett explained.

She added, "Every single one of our countries in Caricom, but in the wider SIDS, have very large debt burdens already – much of this debt related to dealing with the impact of climate change. We don't know that's what it is, but now it's costing more to build a road because you are engineering for the impact of climate change."

Barnett did not mince words when calling on developed nations to fulfill their obligations. She urged the Global North to "do the right thing" and take responsibility for emissions that are exacerbating climate extremes in

vulnerable regions like the Caribbean.

Dominica's Environment Minister Cozier Frederick, reflecting on his nation's experiences, underscored the urgency of keeping the Paris Agreement alive and limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

"It highlights to us that it is so important to keep the Paris Agreement alive and the 1.5," Frederick stated.

He added, "We are doing our part by keeping our forests intact, but we have little control of what is happening in the general scheme of things. When these weather events happen, it costs us money. When towns are flooded across our region, people can't get to work, and children can't get to school. Livelihoods are affected."

Frederick called for a unified regional approach, emphasising, "Yes, we do bear different flags, and yes we do bear different jurisdictions, but the commonalities in climate change are so profound, and we have to deal with it as a region."

The most impassioned plea came from Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne, who delivered a scathing indictment of wealthy nations' failure to fulfill their climate finance promises.

"Every year of inaction compounds our vulnerability and deepens the injustice that we endure," Browne asserted.

Additionally, "We cannot wait any longer for empty pledges to become meaningful actions. For decades, wealthy nations pledged \$100 billion annually to support vulnerable countries. Yet, these promises have largely gone unfulfilled."

Browne's call for climate justice extended beyond rhetoric, as he announced that Antigua and Barbuda, alongside Vanuatu, would appear before the International Court of Justice next month to seek an advisory opinion on the obligations of major polluters.

"To those who bear the greatest responsibility for climate change, I say this – the time for moral responsibility is now. The time for increased climate ambitions is now. If promises of support remain unfulfilled, then justice must demand that those promises be enforced."

Meanwhile, Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley, known for her relentless advocacy on climate issues, laid out a proposal for raising funds to support climate-vulnerable nations.

"If we put a \$5 per ton on CO2 for fossil fuel extraction, we can raise \$210 billion a year," she proposed.

She added, "If we put \$100 per ton on CO2 for shipping, we can raise in excess of \$80 billion a year, and we have not addressed aviation or the elephant in the room – 0.1 percent on all bonds and stocks could raise us in excess of \$400 billion."

Mottley argued that such measures are crucial to shock-proof vulnerable economies and provide the resources needed to withstand future climate shocks.



Ask Jay...

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

THE REAL ESTATE LANDSCAPE

The real estate landscape is changing, and buyers will have a window of opportunity to cash in before the market changes. Over 25,000 homes are currently on the Toronto and Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB), and with the recent interest rate cuts, buyers are beginning to re-enter the market. In October, sales climbed by 11 percent, with about 7,200 homes sold. With the recent change to lending rules, more buyers are emerging. More interest rate cuts are expected, and as the winter approaches, fewer sellers will put their homes on the market, resulting in price increases.

There is an oversupply of newly-built condos, so prices will continue to drop. The new condo market was fueled by speculators who bought to flip and are caught up in negative cash flow investments. Newly-built condos are minor and do not appeal to buyers looking for their first property. As a result, sellers compete for renters, and the rental market dropped by five percent in October. Older condos with big suite sizes, good management, and reserve funds are scarce and will hold their price.

The world is changing rapidly, and recently, we have experienced more wars and conflicts. This instability will disrupt the supply chain, increasing the cost of housing. Canada needs immigrants to carry its financial burden, and many will settle in the GTA. Home prices in the GTA will double in the next seven to ten years, so be ready to jump on the gravy train.

The best investments are freehold properties about an hour or two from the GTA. I call this the "waterfall effect". Water falls from high to low, and as the GTA becomes expensive, buyers will move to places where home prices are more affordable, pushing prices up in that area. As the GTA becomes overcrowded, many buyers will move to less crowded cities within an hour or two radius of the GTA. If you can afford it, buy detached homes in prime GTA neighbourhoods on large lots. It is easy to get premium rent.

If you want a condo in the \$500,000-600,000 range, buy a detached home for the same price elsewhere, such as in Niagara. Many first-time buyers working from home are doing this. I always prefer buying a freehold property to a condo because the extra condo fees can be used to carry a bigger mortgage. Homeowners can help their children buy a home by taking equity from their current home and using that as a down payment on a second home. The children can afford to pay for the carrying cost, but do not have the down payment. If you are doing this, consider being a part owner of the second property.

Should I choose variable rates or lock in my mortgage? During the pandemic, many sellers chose variable rates, and when the rates climbed, they were caught in a storm. Now that the interest rate is subsiding, they are sailing safely. Sellers with locked-in mortgages enjoy lower rates until renewal. Interest rates will continue to fall, so it is best to choose variable rates with an option to lock them in whenever you feel comfortable.

Homeowners planning to sell and buy can benefit from buying now with an extended closing period of four to six months and putting their house up for sale by mid-January. The home they purchased and their current home will increase in price and value, while interest rates continue to fall. Buyers waiting for rates to fall further should also take advantage now while they can negotiate a better deal with desperate sellers and choose a more extended closing date.

Many homeowners in their retirement years are choosing reverse mortgages, and because of the soft housing market, they are having difficulties. Instead of taking a reverse mortgage, make your loved ones partial owners and take out equity to supplement your retirement. Knowing they will benefit later, your loved ones will gladly pay the mortgage.

Yesterday was a seller's market; today is a buyer's market, and tomorrow may differ. While we cannot predict precisely when tomorrow will arrive, we know there is a shortage of suitable shelters. Now is an excellent time to invest in real estate.

LAW OFFICE

GENERAL PRACTICE

Chet Sharma

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

Barrister, Solicitor & Notary Public

- Immigration Law
- Criminal Law
- Divorce & Family Law
- Notarisations, Affidavits
- Power of Attorney, Wills

OFFICE

416-285-1550

Emergency:

416-284-9191

By Appointment Only

150 Lawson Road, Toronto, ON M1C 2J4





MUNGOL SINGH
BARRISTER SOLICITOR & NOTARY PUBLIC

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

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

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

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



Free Estimates

KNK RENOVATIONS

- Kitchen • Bathroom • Basement • Hardwood Floor
- Tiles • Plumbing • Painting....and more
- * No Job Too Small * Prompt * Efficient
- * Dependable * References Available

ANIL 647-280-8755
anilroopnaraine@hotmail.com
www.knkrenovations.webs.com



Play more. Stress less.

Switch your home and auto insurance today to enjoy one-on-one personalized service and coverage uniquely tailored to you.

Get in touch today.



Sherry A. Harrikissoon
Insurance Agency Inc.
Sherry Harrikissoon, Agent
13311 Yonge St Unit 103
Richmond Hill ON
905-773-9782



Desjardins
Insurance

1920949CN Desjardins, Desjardins Insurance and related trademarks are trademarks of the Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, used under licence.



LOTUS
Funeral and Cremation Centre Inc.

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

121 City View Drive, Toronto, Ontario M9W 5A8

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

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

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




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

Time to stop the flow - our rivers are drowning in a toxic tide

By Dhanpaul Narine

The rivers of the world are dying. They are poisoned by the most selfish of all the species, the handiwork of human-kind itself. Each day tons of waste are dumped in rivers. As the waterways groan and belch under the weight of garbage, official action takes the form of lip service. Communities suffer and the planet gets closer to the day when the wheels will grind to a halt.

Ten years ago, the waters of La Pasion River in Guatemala were covered with dead and poisoned fish. It was found that the river was contaminated by malathion, an agricultural insecticide that is said to be 100 times more poisonous than sewage. The community that is affected is Sayaxche, where oil plantations occupy large tracts of land.

The local community has been adversely affected as a result. In what has been described as an ecological disaster, many fisherman "are embroiled in conflict and the La Pasion River has lost its crabs and *xixi*, or blue fish". The cause for the pollution has been placed on REPSA, an African oil facility that is located upriver.

Poverty hit the area and a fisherman summarised the feeling of the community. He said, "I only know how to fish. The poison that fell in the river... continues to harm us. We are all turning against each other and the fish is gone. But what's worse, we've lost our dignity."

The same can be said about the Citarum in Indonesia. This is the largest river in the country, and over 30 million residents rely on the river for agriculture, domestic, and personal use. But rapid industrialisation has meant expansion of the textile industry.

In 2020, it was estimated that over 200 textile factories were lining the banks of the Citarum. One report says "the dyes and chemicals used in the industrial process - lead, arsenic and mercury amongst them, are churned into the water, changing its colour and lending an acrid odour".

The Citarum is one of the most polluted rivers in the world with dead fish and a carpet of debris and junk accounting for much of its contamination.

China too is a major player in the pollution of its rivers. The United Nations reported that enormous stretches of its rivers cannot be used anymore "either for drinking, fishing, farming, or even in factories".

The first sign of civilisation in Northern China started around the Yellow River, but the river has become polluted in recent years. According to the River Conservation Committee, 4.3 billion tonnes of polluting effluent were tipped into the river recently.

It appears that the Yellow River is only one in a series of rivers that is being polluted in China. In 2013, Chinese farmers dumped 6,000 pig carcasses in the Huangpu River. A sample of the water found *porcine circovirus* that was caused by intestinal fluids, blood, and other pollutants of the dead pigs, and which "could alter the taste and colour of tap water".

By the end of 2013, the Fuhe River in China had problems of its own. There were tons of poisoned fish in the river. This occurred as a result of the discharge of high levels of ammonia in the river by a local chemical plant. The samples indicated that the ammonia density was 196 milligrams per litre, which was in excess of the national standard.

The Niger Delta is a recent newcomer to the horrors of pollution. The Delta is the biggest oil-producing region in Africa. Shell operates 5,000 kilometers of pipeline, and since 2007 it is said that there were at least 1,700 oil spills.

The situation in the Niger Delta is a classic case of the multinational claiming to follow the rules, but appears to be flouting them. In November 2015, the Nigerian Center for Human Rights and the Environment stated that "the quality of life of people living sur-



Thousands of pilgrims visit the Ganges each year

rounded by oil fumes, oil encrusted soil and rivers awash with crude oil is appalling, and has been for decades".

What has been the response of Shell to the criticisms? Shell says that it has addressed the oil spills, but it has not provided details. Amnesty International said in 2015 that certain areas remain "heavily polluted". It gave the example of Ogoniland, where the late Ken Saro-Wiwa led a mass movement against the military in his state. Saro-Wiwa was protesting against the pollution in the state, and was also calling for political independence.

The United Nations in a study concluded that "the Ogoni people live with pollution 365 days a year. Children born in Ogoniland soon sense oil pollution as the odour of hydrocarbons pervades the air day in, day out".

In Kerala in India there is the statement that "a poisoned river means a dying population". Kerala is one of the most densely populated places in the world with a population growth rate of 14 percent in 2010. The rivers of Kerala are said to be polluted from industrial and domestic waste.

These industries discharge hazard pollutants such as "phosphates, sulphides, ammonia, fluorides, heavy metals and insecticides into the downstream reaches of the river". The industrial belt of Eloor is described as one of the world's toxic hot spots.

A Greenpeace study shows that on an island in the Periyar River, unchecked pollution has resulted in diseases like cancer, congenital birth defects, bronchitis, asthma, and stomach ulcers.

Brazil seems to have a non-policy towards its rivers. Many of them have been poisoned to accommodate the miners, much to the opposition of the native Indians. In November 2015, mud and iron ore residue were found in the Rio Doce, and the water became brown.

The area is known for its humpback whales, dolphins and turtles. Oxygen levels were reduced by 50 cubic meters; mining waste, plant and animal life were devastated. This led Brazil's environment minister to call the spill "the worst environmental disaster in Brazil's history".

It is easy to think that the poisoned rivers occur only in poor countries. In the US, three million gallons of water were released by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Animas River in Colorado, turning it into sickly orange colour. This occurred in the summer of 2015, and it was stated that the "lead level of the released water was at least 12,000 times higher than normal, and also contained extremely high levels of beryllium, mercury, cadmium, iron, copper, zinc, and arsenic".

This pollution has affected the life of the Navajo Nation, and what was disturbing was the fact that the slick of poison traveled to a reservoir in the Colorado River, and could potentially affect cities such as Las Vegas.

William Rivers Pitt concludes that "we are killing ourselves with chemicals, carelessness, and with greed. The greed dies hard even when

the rivers have turned to soot and the tap water catches fire".

In Europe the situation is grim as well. The *New Scientist* reports that "Europe's rivers are awash with organic chemicals that can kill or subtly damage aquatic life". The Upper Tiza was one of Europe's cleanest rivers, but a 40-kilometre flow of toxic cyanide "has wiped out the river's entire ecosystem - everything from microbes to otters". It is said that in terms of complete destruction, the damage was more than Chernobyl.

Any discussion of pollution of rivers must take into account the Ganges. This river is worshipped by many Hindus as a goddess. It is exalted in movies and books for its powers of purification and absolution. There are pilgrims and other travelers who believe in the curative powers of Ganga Jal. This is the water from the river that is bottled and shipped to

various places. But recently Ganga Jal has been replaced by Ganda Jal.

Reports have described the Ganges as an environmental catastrophe. It is said that municipal waste is pumped directly in the river to become someone else's problem downstream. Organic waste that comprises food, trash, and human and animal remains comprise 80 percent of the waste that is dumped in the Ganges.

But there are also industrial pollutants that account for 15 percent of the deposits. This is particularly evident at Rishikesh, where raw sewage is dumped along with hydrochloric acid.

By the time the river reaches Calcutta, the water is fetid and filled with toxins and diseases. It is estimated that there are 132 factories that include tap and die manufacturers. It has also been noted that waterborne diseases such as viral hepatitis, dysentery, typhoid, cholera, gastro-enteritis plague communities up and down the Ganga.

The Ganges has nurtured Indian civilisation, but the view in many circles is that while the river can take care of sins, it cannot handle the pollution. The Ganges is the sewer for millions.

The government of Narendra Modi has earmarked the cleaning up of the Ganges as a priority project. The government will also do well to clean up the Yamuna River, which is said to be dying from industrial pollution and untreated waste. The Yamuna is described as the lifeline of Delhi.

It is estimated that each year mining companies dump over 200 million tons of hazard waste into rivers worldwide. Polluting our rivers has to stop. Our rivers give life, and they need to be treated with kindness. A clean river restores beauty and balance to the ecology.



SENIOR GUYANESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Annual Christmas Dinner & Dance

Saturday, November 23, 2024

Qssis Banquet Hall
3474 Kingston Rd., Scarborough
(W of Markham Rd.)

CASH BAR

Cocktails: 6:00 p.m.

Dinner: 7:00 - 9:30 pm

Members - \$60.00

Non-Members - \$75.00

DJ Solid Gold

For more information call:

Ingrid King: 416-993-9266 ♦ Mark Boodie: 416-291-1388

Carmen Brewster: 437-912-0418

Cheryl Vogleson: 416-286-0009 ♦ Pam Joseph: 647-865-2044

Yvonne Headley-Luces: 416-492-9098



TCCF marks 24 years of saving young lives

From Page 1

into hope.

“When TCCF agrees to support a child, the parent’s feelings are transformed from helplessness to courage; hopelessness to faith; defeat to determination,” she declared.

It was a reminder to the audience, which she had touched deeply with her heartfelt message, that this was why their support matters; that it was not just about funding surgeries, but also restoring hope to families who had arrived at the edge of darkness.

Later, Sharma’s resonating message was further energised by a video message from Dr. Rodrigo Soto, a paediatric cardiac surgeon who has been a key partner in TCCF’s outreach efforts through Gift of Life International (GOLI).

With over two decades dedicated to treating children with congenital heart disease in developing countries, Dr. Soto spoke of the ongoing collaboration with TCCF.

“What started as a strategic partnership with TCCF has evolved into a friendship, and also into a very solid team capable of saving children’s lives,” he shared.

Reflecting on their work in Guyana, Dr. Soto highlighted the progress made since their program was re-established in March 2023.

“When we restarted, there was a waiting list of 120 children. So far, we have operated on 34 children, but there are still close to 80 families waiting for their kids to have life-saving surgery,” he revealed.

His message underscored not just the immediate impact of surgeries, but the broader mission of empowering local health-care providers to sustain paediatric cardiac programs.

“By 2025, we believe that Guyana will be able to open the doors of a pediatric ICU, 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” he said, adding, “This is going to be a huge achievement for the country and for us as a team.”

Dr. Soto’s heartfelt plea for continued funding, and about the support and healing structures being put into place in the Caribbean, were reminders to the audience that each donation, and every act of generosity, were infusions that give seriously sick children a second chance at life.

Following the gala, a heartfelt and touching message was sent to the TCCF leadership from Katie McHugh-Escobar, Director of Community Partnerships at SickKids. Since its inception, TCCF has been guided by its President, Jay Brijpaul, the foundation’s Vice-President Jankie Dolaram, and a dedicated and committed team of volunteers who take no payment for their efforts.

Said McHugh-Escobar: “We are so grateful for all of you at TCCF – especially the two of you,” she stated, addressing Brijpaul and Dolaram.

She added, “Your support of the Herbie Fund and the other programs you donate to comes from your love of children and humanity, and we are lucky to have people in our community like you to support the next generation.”

For Brijpaul, who has been at the helm of TCCF since its inception, the mission is deeply personal. Reflecting on his journey earlier this month to *Indo-Caribbean World*, he stated, “For me, it’s about seeing these children healthy and full of life again. We find happiness in helping them return to a normal life. Many of these children are today young adults living fulfilling lives.”

In his statement was quiet pride afloat on a depth of humanitarianism, as he reflected on the 411 lives that have been touched by TCCF’s good work in the last 24 years.

Dolaram similarly echoed Brijpaul’s sentiments, saying, “I love giving back, especially to children. It is a blessing to be part of their journey. To see a child smile again, to see a family’s relief – that’s why we do this.”

The recent success stories of TCCF’s intervention in the lives of children like 12-year-old Sariel Sala Azor, 11-year-old Óscar Marino Martinez Tejeda from the Dominican Republic, and young Elijah in Guyana, are more than just numbers. That these young children are now on journeys of recovery, and on the road to a healthy life, is living and breathing proof of what TCCF’s work can accomplish.

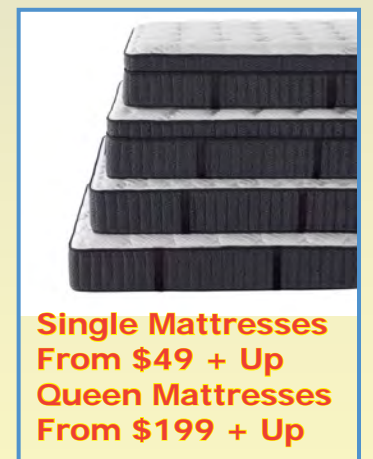
The journey of each child from critical illness to health, from hopelessness to hope, is a testament to the power of our thriving community’s collective action in giving, and the impact of our empathy and love for our homelands.

The result is distilled in Sharma’s resonant words, “When TCCF agrees to support a child, the parent’s feelings are transformed from helplessness to courage; hopelessness to faith; defeat to determination. They light up a pathway to hope for these families during a dark time. What a blessing!”

Under the warm lights of the magnificent chandeliers at Woodbine Banquet Hall, the evening concluded with a similar illumination that was notable within our community’s commitment to enabling young lives through the power of compassion, empathy, and in our giving. With the light emanating from the hearts of the gathering energised in support of TCCF’s mission, each donation, every word of encouragement, and every hand that reached out were evidence that in our thriving community, angels truly walk among us.



BLACK FRIDAY BLOWOUT SALE!!!



**Accessories
and
Rugs**

**Up to
50 %
OFF**



Financing Available • 12 months • No Interest • No Payment

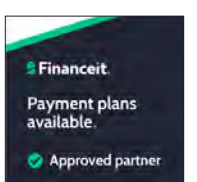
**While
Supplies
Last**

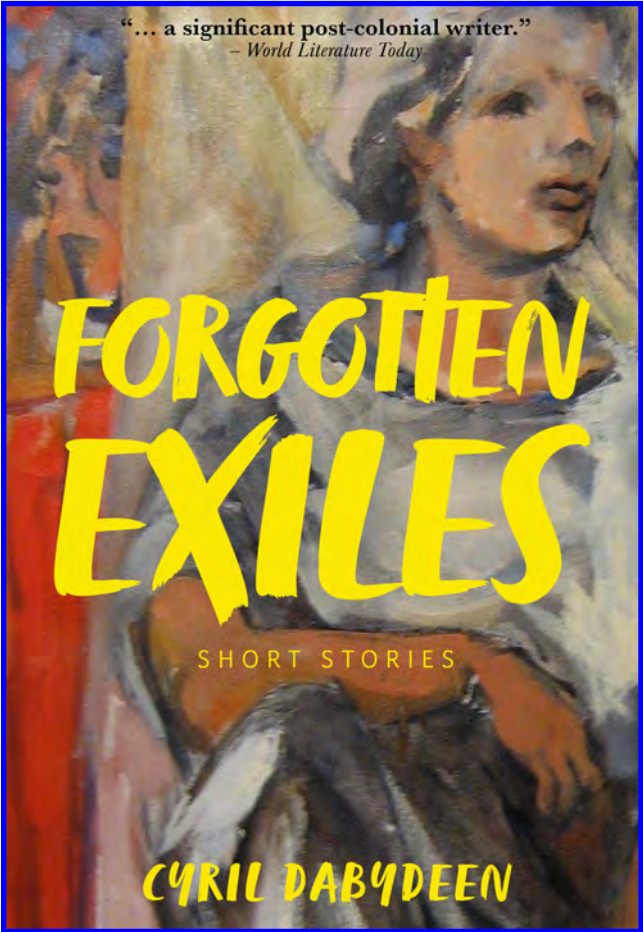


**2575 STEELES AVE E, UNIT #14-17
BRAMPTON ON L6T 5T1**

TEL: 905-790-0560 • FAX: 905-790-3702

customerservicestephensfurniture@hotmail.com • www.stephensfurnitureltd.com





Dabydeen’s latest, *Forgotten Exiles*

Drawing on his rich Guyanese and Caribbean heritage, Cyril Dabydeen’s latest book, *Forgotten Exiles*, reflects on his life in the 1970s, recalling experiences from planting trees in the rugged terrains of Lake Superior to bridging cultural divides between Canada and the Amazon. In it he explores the complexities of race, class, and self-discovery, weaving love triangles and social issues into compelling, thought-provoking narratives.

Dabydeen was born in Guyana, and began his career as a teacher before moving to Canada in 1970. Now retired, he taught Creative Writing at the University of Ottawa for many years, and served as the city’s Poet Laureate from 1984 to 1987. His work has appeared in more than 60 literary magazines and anthologies across the globe.

He has adjudicated in Canada’s Governor General’s Award (Poetry), and was a judge for the Neustadt International Prize for Literature. He is retired, and resides in Ottawa.

The phone jolted Eric out of a scary dream. He jumped up into a sitting position in the semi-dark room with the light of the full moon filtering through the sheer curtains. The mobile vibrated on the night table where he had plugged it in to charge before he went to sleep. A glance at the clock beside the phone showed midnight. Eric wondered who would be calling at that late hour. He rolled over to grab the phone but the call ended and the screen went dark as soon as he touched it. He stared at the phone, hoping that the caller would leave a message but the phone remained silent.

The truck stop employee unplugged the phone and rolled onto his back to investigate what had just happened. He checked the caller ID but found no traces of the call. The last recorded call was the one he had received at 4:30 the previous afternoon when Dominic, his boss, had called to ask if he had heard from Sylvie, their co-worker. She had not shown up for her four o’clock shift and had not called to give a reason for her absence.

“Oh, my God...” Eric’s throat tightened. Both Sylvie and Dominic had mentioned that they were spooked by strange phone calls they were getting at midnight just like the one he had just received. Someone kept calling and bugging their phones but there was no caller ID or evidence of the calls.

Eric gasped when the phone buzzed with a text message that flashed on and disappeared before he had a chance to read it. The phone’s odd behaviour disturbed him. When a gravelly voice called out his name, he threw the phone across the floor and pushed against the headboard to distance himself from it. He pulled his legs up to his chest when he was confronted by the sudden howling of the wind outside and the moving shadows in his room from the tree branches swaying and tapping against his window. The sound of a deep male voice intermingled with static emanating from the phone raised the hairs at the back of his neck. The phone was set on vibrate only!



Nunez nurtured marginalised voices

Distinguished Caribbean author and educator, Elizabeth Nunez, passed away in the US on November 8 at the age of 79 following a stroke. Born in Trinidad and Tobago on February 8, 1944, she built a prolific career that spanned over four decades, contributing significantly to Caribbean literature and academic life in the US.

Nunez relocated to the US in her teenage years after completing her early education in Trinidad, eventually earning her degrees at the University of Wisconsin. Settling in New York, she went on to become a respected professor at Hunter College, where she rose to the rank of Distinguished Professor of English; following her retirement, she was named Professor Emerita.

Known for her nurturing approach, she was deeply committed to fostering critical thinking and a passion for literature among her students.



Elizabeth Nunez

As a writer, Nunez authored 11 novels, tackling themes of identity, cultural displacement, and the legacies of colonialism. Her work resonated with readers both within the Caribbean diaspora and beyond, earning her numerous accolades.

Among her celebrated works were *Bruised Hibiscus*, which won the American Book Award in 2001; *Beyond the Limbo Silence* received the Independent Publishers Book Award in 1999; and *Prospero’s Daughter* was named a *New York Times* Editors’ Choice.

Her *Anna In-Between* was selected for the 2010 PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award for literary excellence as well as a *New York Times* Editors’ Choice, and received starred reviews from *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist*, and *Library Journal*.

Nunez was also shortlisted for the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for *Discretion*, while *Boundaries* was selected as a *New York Times* Editors’ Choice and nominated for a 2012 NAACP Image Award.

Nunez was also a passionate advocate for marginalised voices. She co-founded the National Black Writers Conference, creating a platform that continues to uplift emerging Black writers.

In her role as executive producer of the Emmy-nominated TV series *Black Writers in America*, Nunez championed the visibility of Black authors and their contributions to the American literary landscape.

Following her death, tributes poured in from the literary

community, reflecting her wide-reaching influence. The British Virgin Islands Literary Arts Festival paid homage, stating: “Dr. Elizabeth Nunez’s legacy is not only preserved in her novels but also in her dedication to creating spaces where marginalised voices can thrive.”

They added that she was “an unparalleled voice of Caribbean literature whose legacy was woven into the hearts of readers and writers around the world.”

In a heartfelt tribute, the Bocas Lit Fest in Trinidad and Tobago acknowledged Nunez’s contributions to fostering Caribbean literary talent.

“Nunez was beloved for her books and cherished for her mentorship of young and emerging writers,” the group said.

They noted that the BCLF Elizabeth Nunez Award for Writers in the Caribbean, and the BCLF Elizabeth Nunez Caribbean-American Writers Prize were named in her honour to enhance the visibility of Caribbean authors and connect them to broader literary networks.

As the festival remarked, “The outpouring of praise and fond memories following her passing demonstrates how central she was to the lives of many Caribbean writers and readers.”

The NGO Island Girls Rock highlighted Nunez’s profound impact on Caribbean storytelling, stating, “Nunez’s journey from Trinidad to New York at the end of her high school years, her celebrated career as a professor at Hunter College, and her profound storytelling have left an indelible mark on Caribbean literature and beyond.”

Additionally, the Brooklyn Caribbean Literary Festival celebrated her enduring legacy by showcasing *Five Minutes with Elizabeth Nunez*, a film that captured her reflections on the creative journey behind her novels.

“In that brief yet powerful conversation, Elizabeth guided us through the creative journey behind five of her most celebrated novels, each one a testament to her insightful exploration of the human experience, cultural identity, and social justice,” the BCLF stated.

Nunez’s legacy lives on in her words, her teachings, and the countless lives that she touched. Her influence in Caribbean literature, and her voice, will continue to inspire future generations of storytellers and thinkers.

She is survived by son, Jason Harrell.

The Supernatural Reset

“What is the password...?” Eric thought he heard these words from the scrambled voice. An unexpected breeze blew around the room and swayed the curtain even though the ground-floor apartment’s only door and window were closed. Eric yelped when the phone slid across the floor and hopped onto the bed to land an inch from his feet. He recoiled.

“What is the password...?” Flashed across the screen. Eric turned away from the phone but his eyes were riveted to the message.

“What password...?” He heard himself ask the question in his head. “I don’t know the password...” He gritted his teeth. “What do you want with me...?” He was too scared to voice his thoughts.

“What is the password...?” The voice became louder, more demanding. “What is the password...?” This time the emphasis was on the

word ‘is’.

Eric gasped when the phone buzzed and Sylvie’s name appeared on the screen. Before he could grab it, Sylvie’s voice cried out for help. The voice sounded weak and hollow as if coming from a tunnel.

“Sylvie, where are you?” Eric shouted at the phone but his question was ignored. Sylvie continued calling out for help as if she did not hear him.

“Eric, are you there?” Dominic asked the question through Eric’s phone. The screen showed the image of a blackened and smoldering truck stop with a huge oil tanker on fire in its midst. “Eric, please help us.” Dominic’s voice pleaded but he was not in the picture.

“Dominic?” Eric responded to his boss’ voice but like Sylvie,

Dominic continued to ask Eric if he was there as if he never heard him.

In that instant, Eric knew his colleagues were in serious trouble and they were calling on him to help. Ignoring his self-protective instinct, Eric picked up the phone. He grimaced at the pain of the red-hot phone scorching the skin of his palm.

“What is the password?” The phone yelled at Eric. “Say the password!”

“Reset!” Appeared on the screen.

“Reset!” Eric shouted the word. The phone cooled and went silent. He sighed with relief and glanced at the clock. It was one minute to midnight. He stared at the clock and scratched his head. Did he just reverse time? He called the truck stop and spoke to Dominic, who assured him that all was well. Sylvie was late but she did show up to take her shift.

“There is a red oil tanker in the parking lot,” Eric tried to stay calm. “The driver has just had a heart attack with the engine in gear and his foot on the brake.” He read off the screen of the phone. “Tell Sylvie to call an ambulance and run out there to turn the engine off and perform CPR on the man.”

Eric jumped into his car and sped to the truck stop. His tense body relaxed when he spotted the flashing ambulance lights from a distance. A smile crossed his face when he saw the red truck in the parking lot and the truck stop still standing. His quick actions had averted disaster but the mystery of the events haunted him. Did he have the ability to turn back time and change events that fate had in store? Because they cheated death, did his friends and the truck driver now live on borrowed lives? What about his interference in the natural order of life?

Eric pulled out the phone from his nightshirt pocket and shook his head while he stared at it. It appeared to be just a phone once more. Was it possessed or was there some kind of divine intervention? He glanced at his palm. The scorch marks had vanished and his skin showed no signs of being singed. Eric smiled and shrugged at his colleagues’ questioning stares.



Kamil Ali



Crazy, Baron bring Christmas cheer

In a thrilling Christmas event, Trinidad and Tobago heavyweight performers Edwin ‘Crazy’ Ayoung and Timothy ‘Baron’ Watkins kept the dance floor energised at the sold-out Superstars’ Christmas Concert on the evening of November 16. It was held at the Mirage Banquet Hall in Etobicoke.

Also a tribute to Trinidad’s performers Kenny J and Scrunter, the event saw Moses Revolution and Los Amigos in attendance for what was an entertaining night of parang, old soca, and comedy.

Successfully holding down comedy central was Trinidad and Tobago’s eminent laugh-generator, Ken Supersad.

Following their entertaining performances, Crazy and Baron were both presented with Lifetime Achievement Awards by Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette from the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate General for Trinidad and Tobago here in Toronto.

Ramsubagh-Mannette thanked both performers for their years of dedication to the arts. And to the venerable Baron she said the award was in recognition of his “velvety voice, and timeless holiday classics [that] have meant so much to so many people over the years; for as long as Trinbagonians celebrate Christmas, the name Baron will certainly live on”.



Photos by Russell Lutchman



Ward Boundary Review

The City of Brampton is reviewing the boundaries of the ward you live in, which may affect where you vote, and who your municipal representatives will be, in the 2026 municipal election.

The City of Brampton Ward Boundary Review (WBR) aims to establish fair and equitable wards with balanced representation of the citizens at the Council table.

The review is guided by the following principles:

- Effective representation
- Representation by population
- Population trends and growth
- Physical boundaries
- Protection of established neighbourhoods and communities

There are two options being proposed to realign the ward boundaries.



Scan the QR code
brampton.ca/wbr
to provide your feedback.



Teelucksingh, Persad-Bissessar call on men for empowerment, agency

Port-of-Spain – In a powerful International Men's Day (IMD) 2024 message, The University of the West Indies' lecturer, Dr. Jerome Teelucksingh, founder of IMD and the World Day of the Boy Child, issued an urgent call for men to value themselves amidst rising concerns about crime, self-harm, and the glorification of gang culture in Trinidad and Tobago. Simultaneously, Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar highlighted the need for mentorship and encouraged men to seek help without shame, emphasising the role of men in building a harmonious society.

Speaking to the media earlier this week, Teelucksingh painted a sobering picture of the challenges facing men in the country. He underscored how gang culture, exacerbated by societal neglect, has created destructive pathways for young men.

"The gang culture has been glorified. We now have to provide more appealing alternatives to those being offered in subcultures. Many boys no longer see the value of education or a good work ethic. The 'zesser' image has led teenagers and young adults to seek quick wealth, disregarding the importance of meaningful relationships and valuing their lives," Teelucksingh told the media.

He also highlighted the high rate of self-harm among men, which he attributed to a "cold, uncaring, and fast-paced" society.

"We need to teach our boys and men proper coping mechanisms, such as being less competitive and avoiding stressful situations and people. Let us also teach them to be less materialistic and to appreciate life," he added.

Despite these troubling trends, Teelucksingh expressed optimism about Trinidad and Tobago's capacity for change, emphasising the existence of positive male role models who quietly contribute to the betterment of society.

"There are men involved in NGOs, donating blood, volunteering, feeding the poor, and supporting charitable causes. However, these noble men are neither highlighted on social media nor receive awards. We need to ensure these positive stories are told so they can inspire others to follow," he said.

Teelucksingh also cautioned against the misuse of terms like "toxic masculinity," which he argued unfairly labels men and discourages them from expressing their emotions.



Jerome Teelucksingh

Instead, he advocated for sustained mentorship programs as a vital tool for empowering men and boys.

"Mentors must realise it is a lifelong experience. Don't be a temporary mentor; continue to inspire and guide those you train," he urged.

Reflecting on IMD's global impact over its 25-year history, Teelucksingh shared mixed emotions, noting the persistent challenges men face worldwide, including high rates of depression, unemployment, and violence. Yet, his message for IMD was one of unity and hope.

"I want men to value themselves. Every man must care for his mental and physical health. I want men to put aside their differences – religious, ideological, political, ethnic, and class – and unite to prevent bloodshed, hate, and save our planet," he stated.

In a complementary message, Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar echoed the call for men to seek support and contribute to societal transformation. Through a media release, she paid tribute to Teelucksingh's vision and to the men of Trinidad and Tobago who work tirelessly to uplift the nation.

"International Men's Day was founded by Trinidadian Dr. Jerome Teelucksingh in 1999, and I salute him for his immense foresight, which encouraged all societies to recognise that men and boys are equally victims of mental burdens, abuse, and inequitable circumstances," she wrote.

Persad-Bissessar noted this year's theme, *Positive Male Role Models*, was particularly



Kamla Persad-Bissessar

relevant in addressing the needs of young men.

"It is a clarion call for men from all walks of life to become more involved in mentoring the male youth, both within their families and in

the wider community, by helping fight, eradicate and erode the epidemic of violence in our nation – in our schools, communities and the heinous acts of domestic violence," she added.

Acknowledging the collective efforts of men, she emphasised their critical role in building strong democracies alongside women.

Said Persad-Bissessar: "Today we honour the contribution of the fathers, brothers, sons, and all men of our world for their courage and determination to make our society a better place. I have always said that men hold up half the sky, and women the other half. On this day, then, when we reflect on the contribution of our beloved males, may we always remember that both genders are each other's harvest; we are each other's concern; we are each other's magnitude and bond."

Persad-Bissessar closed her remarks with a blessing for all men, urging society to cherish them as essential pillars of community and family.

TT Consulate holds Open House

Toronto – The Consulate General of Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto has announced its Christmas Open House, a warm and festive 'Meet & Greet' set to take place on November 28 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The free event will be held at the Consulate's office, and is open to nationals and friends of Trinidad and Tobago.

In keeping with the spirit of the season, this informal affair promises an evening of camaraderie, holiday cheer, and cultural connection. Admission is free, with refreshments available for purchase courtesy of Sweethand Delights.

Adding a special touch to the evening are guest appearances by Gervail 'Jr Lee' Lemo and Jean Paul, two prominent Trinidadian entertainers. Jr Lee, in Toronto for the highly anticipated *Red, White and Laff* comedy shows in Pickering on November 30, and Ottawa on December 1, will bring his signature charm to the 'Meet & Greet' event.

The Consulate General expressed its excitement about hosting this holiday gathering,

emphasising its commitment to fostering community spirit among the diaspora.

It is an opportunity for the diaspora to connect with nationals and friends, celebrate the season, and enjoy the vibrant culture and cuisine of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Consulate has also arranged convenient parking options. While limited spaces are available on the grounds, Toronto Police has granted parking consideration on Welbeck Rd (east side), and on Harlandale Avenue (south side), just across the street on Sheppard Avenue West.

The Consulate General invites everyone to stop by, whether to share a quick greeting, or stay and enjoy the evening's festivities.

The Open House offers a moment to reflect on the richness of Trinidad and Tobago's culture and the warmth of our community abroad.

For more information, contact the Consulate General of Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto at (416) 495-9442; also, see display below.

Govt firm on no devaluation of \$TT

Port-of-Spain – In the face of mounting pressures and ongoing debates, Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley and Finance Minister Colm Imbert have firmly ruled out devaluation or floating of the Trinidad and Tobago dollar (TTD), citing the potential for severe economic repercussions.

Their position comes as the country grapples with a persistent foreign exchange shortage, driven by increased demand from economic growth, online purchases, and rising food import bills.

Earlier this week, during a session in the Lower House, Prime Minister Rowley responded to concerns raised by Couva North MP Ravi Ratiram about the government's plans to address the foreign exchange shortage and the restrictions faced by businesses in accessing forex.

Rowley acknowledged the challenges, but emphasised that the government's financial support for the forex market remains consistent.

"The amount of foreign exchange available in the banking system between 2023 and this year is perhaps the same figure that was available some ten years ago," Rowley explained, highlighting that of the annual (US) \$7 billion in forex usage, the government supplies (US) \$2.5 billion, with banks directly acquiring the remaining (US) \$4.5 billion.

However, Rowley pointed to a growing demand for foreign exchange, driven by an improving economy and increased consumer spending. To address these challenges, he noted that the Minister of Finance is currently

meeting with stakeholders to explore potential solutions, including stricter regulations for banks.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Colm Imbert has also rejected calls to float the TTD, stressing the devastating impact such a move would have on ordinary citizens. Speaking on a *Facebook Live* session with blogger Rhoda Bharath, Imbert underscored the risks associated with devaluation.

"If you allow the dollar to slide, food prices will increase by 30 percent to 50 percent, almost immediately," Imbert stated, adding, "We don't grow wheat, make cheese, or produce flour here. Most of our food is imported, so a devaluation would instantly drive up costs for everyone."

Imbert highlighted the burden that higher food prices would place on the poor and middle class, while noting that only a small, wealthy minority with significant US dollar reserves abroad would benefit.

"Trade unions would justifiably demand wage increases to match the higher cost of living. But who would pay for that? Where would the money come from? I won't allow myself to be bullied into making life harder for everyday citizens," he asserted.

He was adamant he would not float the dollar despite the pressure from commentators, editorials, or front-page headlines.

He also criticised banks for promoting credit card usage, noting the strain this places on limited forex reserves.

Reels become real: Bollywood brings roots, identity to the Caribbean

An Ongoing Series On Our Caribbean Diaspora A Local Journalism Initiative

For the Indo-Caribbean community in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, Bollywood films were not just an imported form of entertainment – they became a cultural lifeline that reconnected us to the India that had already seen over 100 years of separation through Indentureship.

Indian cinema arrived in the Caribbean not with the intention of creating cultural revolutions, but it did exactly that. It brought with it the songs, stories, and imagery of India, offering our diaspora a way to experience our ancestral heritage in a deeply personal and communal way.

In this exploration, we look at how Bollywood intervened as a cultural force that helped re-establish the bonds between the Caribbean diaspora and our Indian roots. It was not a top-down imposition like colonial culture; rather, it spread organically, laterally, and in ways that transformed how we saw ourselves as Indo-Caribbean communities.

...

Trinidad and Tobago – A Longing for “Imagined India”

Until the 1930s, our Indo-Trinidadian community had largely been cut-off from India. The colonial system encouraged Indo-Trinidadians to stay on after the Indentureship contract ended, ensuring a steady and continual supply of labour for the plantations. Most Indo-Trinidadians lived in isolated rural settlements, far from the main urban centres, which meant we had limited contact with the outside world.

However, we maintained a cultural continuity through memory and oral traditions, passing down songs, dances, and religious practices from one generation to the next.

According to the Trinidad and Tobago scholar Dr. Primnath Gooptar, this community created an “imagined India” within Trinidad – a version of the homeland that we carried in our hearts and in our minds. We preserved Indian customs through festivals, music, dress, and language, even though the physical connection to India had been severed during our journey across the *kala pani*.

So it was that the arrival of Bollywood films in Trinidad was like opening a window into that imagined world for us. It was, as Gooptar describes, “India coming to them”, offering a glimpse of the homeland we had never seen, but to which we yearned to be reconnected.

The first Indian film to reach Trinidad, *Bala Joban*, in 1935, was a game-changer. While it was considered an average film back in India, as Gooptar notes, in Trinidad it became a monumental event. Indo-Trinidadians from all over the island traveled by train, bus, or even cart to reach the cinemas of Port-of-Spain, eager to see the India we had only heard about in stories. Every screening was sold out, sparking such demand that new cinemas were quickly established in rural areas to cater to the burgeoning audience.

For those unable to make the journey to town, enterprising locals brought Indian films to the villages through mobile “tent cinemas”, turning open fields into makeshift movie theatres. These gatherings were not just about watching a film; they were collective experiences where families, friends, and entire communities came together.

As Gooptar notes, the films brought with them “Destination Identity India” – a sense of belonging that went beyond the screen. For a people starved of Indian culture, these movies were like a slice of India we could savour in our new Caribbean home. The characters on screen wore familiar clothing, sang in Hindi, and played instruments like the *tabla* and *sitar* – offering to us a cultural mirror that we had not seen for many decades.

...

Guyana: Cinematic Journeys to the Heart of “Destination India”

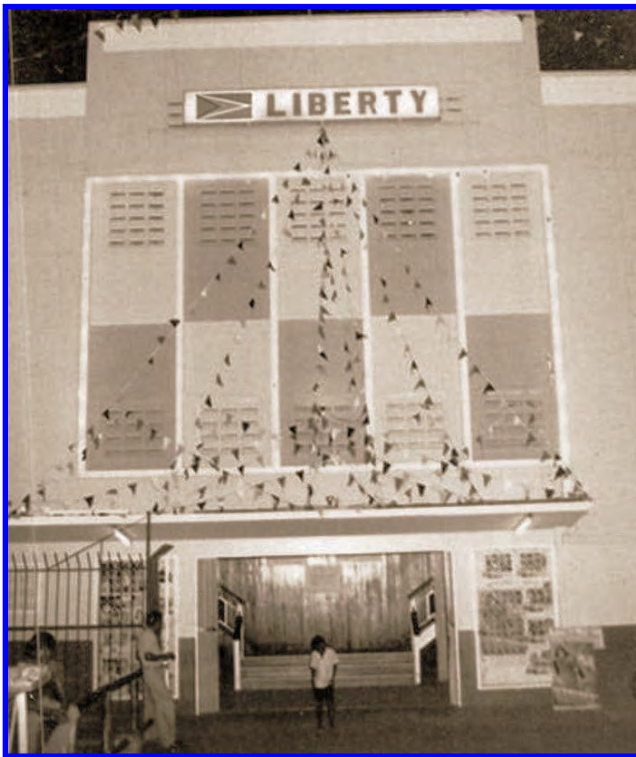
In Guyana, Bollywood’s influence was equally transformative. Just like in Trinidad, our Indo-Guyanese community had been similarly disconnected from India, and were living in rural areas far from the urban centres.

But we, too, had kept our culture alive through music, religious rituals, and festivals. The arrival of Indian cinema in the 1930s was a revelation, sparking a wave of cultural renewal that swept through our Guyanese communities.

Cinemas like *The Metropole* in Georgetown and *The Strand* in New Amsterdam quickly became the go-to places for Bollywood screenings. The first Indian films to reach Guyana created a buzz like nothing else. The streets around these cinemas filled with Indo-Guyanese eager to watch movies that brought India into our lives.

Some cinemas – the *Empire* on Middle Street, even dedicated themselves exclusively to Indian films, fulfilling the demand that was our insatiable appetite for reconnection to India.

The impact was profound. For the diaspora, these films were more than just entertainment; they were a cultural homecoming. Watching *Haathi Mere Saathi* (1971), with its themes of loyalty and friendship, was like revisiting the values our ancestors had cherished. Films like *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) offered romantic



Liberty cinema at the corner of Vlissengen Road and Garnett Street, Newtoun. Facebook photo



Strand De Luxe Cinema on Charlotte and Wellington Streets in Georgetown. Guyana Chronicle photo

narratives that resonated deeply, allowing young couples to explore ideas of love and identity through the lens of both Indian and Caribbean cultures.

Bollywood’s Golden Era of cinema in Guyana saw cinema-goers arriving from towns like Anna Regina, Albion, and Bartica, turning each screening into a community event. These gatherings were celebrations of both Indian culture and Indo-Guyanese life, where the lines between tradition and modernity blurred in the flickering light of the projector.

It was as if, for a few hours, we were transported back to India, embracing a culture that had been passed down through generations, now brought to life before us on the silver screen.

...

The Lateral Flow of Bollywood: Connecting Communities

The popularity of Indian cinema in both Trinidad and Guyana illustrates what can best be described as a lateral cultural movement – a flow that spread organically rather than being imposed from above. Bollywood films acted as a rhizome, similar to the way ginger and bamboos root grow laterally, creating new connections across the Caribbean, allowing Indo-Caribbean communities to reterritorialise their cultural identities. Through the laughter, songs, and emotional drama of these films, we found a way to reclaim the India we had been forced to leave behind.

But what made these films have so powerful an impact? It was not just the allure of escapism. For our Indo-Caribbean diaspora back home, Bollywood was a way to bridge the past with the present. It was a means of “becoming”, where identity was not fixed but constantly evolving.

As Gooptar aptly puts it, “These films fulfilled many of the longings which [we] harboured over the years and transmitted from one generation to the next.”

Our Indo-Caribbean community back home embraced Bollywood not just as consumers, but as active participants in a cultural dialogue that allowed us to remain rooted while adapting to our new world across the *kala pani*.

The stories, the music, and the vibrant visuals of Bollywood films helped us to reimagine, and bring into confluence, what it was like to simultaneously and vicariously inhabit both India and the Caribbean.

...

Gooptar: Illuminating the Cultural Tapestry of Bollywood in Trinidad

Gooptar’s work is like a lamp guiding us through the rich, textured landscape of Trinidad’s Indo-Caribbean community. He has devoted himself to uncovering how Bollywood

became more than just a flickering image on the silver screen. Along with becoming a lifeline, it was also a cultural compass that pointed generations of Indo-Trinidadians back to our roots, to an India that we had carried not only in our *Jahaji* bundles, but also within our hearts.

When Gooptar talks about Bollywood, he is not just speaking of celluloid dreams or catchy soundtracks. He is speaking of a time when Indo-Trinidadians were, in many ways, culturally adrift. By the time Indian films made their way to the island, as descendants of Indentured labourers we had been separated from our homeland for nearly a century. The colonial system had intentionally isolated us, keeping us on plantations far from urban centres, our bodies too commodified to set loose.

But the spirit of India lived on in our songs, dances, and in our prayers – passed down through memory, like a gold *beera* carefully wrapped in a *sari*.

Gooptar paints this picture vividly in his work, *The Role of Indian Films in the Creation of Indian Identity in Trinidad*. Until 1935, the connection to India was almost entirely severed. Most Indo-Trinidadians lived in “Indian settlements”, where we recreated a version of India from the memories and artefacts we had brought across the *kala pani*: songs hummed while we were cutting cane; wedding dances performed on the mud floors in our *ajoupas*; the brass vessels we used for our *pujas*; the careful preservation of our Hindi and Bhojpuri language through prayers, conversations, and transactions in the markets.

But then came 1935, and with it, the arrival of the first Indian film, *Bala Joban*. As Gooptar notes, it was not a blockbuster by Indian standards, but in Trinidad, it was nothing short of a revelation.

It was, as he describes, “India coming to [us]”. Imagine the excitement: families, neighbours, entire communities coming together, piling into buses, trains, even carts, all headed to the cinemas in Port-of-Spain. Anticipation was thick as air was humid. *Bala Joban* was more than just a movie – it was a piece of India, transported across the *kala pani* right onto the screens in Port-of-Spain.

...

Bollywood as a Cultural Bridge

Gooptar’s research reveals that when *Bala Joban* hit the screen, it was like striking a match in the dark. Cinemas were packed, show after show sold out, as crowds clamoured for a glimpse of this India they had heard so much about.

He paints a picture of men, women, and children dressed in their finest, making the journey to the city to see their “imagined India” come to life. For a people starved of connection to their roots, the film’s songs, dances, and dialogues were like rain nourishing the ricefields in Felicity. After close to a century, its arrival had quenched a thirst that had crossed into the threshold of forgetfulness.

And it did not stop there. As Indian films continued to trickle into Trinidad, these became the beating heart of our community. Rural areas, which had little access to urban cinemas, saw the rise of makeshift “tent cinemas”.

Gooptar recounts how these traveling tents took Bollywood into the countryside. Here the audience would gather under canvas roofs to the chirping of crickets, the rustling of coconut trees, and the biting of mosquitoes. However, flickering before us was an experience that was immersive, communal, and transformative.

Gooptar’s concept of “Destination Identity India” is at the heart of this analysis. The films did not just entertain; they offered a destination, a place where Indo-Trinidadians could anchor our cultural identity. The characters on screen looked like us, wore clothing our ancestors recognised, spoke the language of our grandparents, and played musical instruments remembered from stories told to us back in India.

It was as if the makeshift screen was a mirror, reflecting back a version of ourselves that had been blurred by years of colonial rule and geographic distance from the embarkation point that had been a Calcutta shore.

...

The Creation of an “Imagined India”

In his exploration, Gooptar introduces the idea of an “imagined India” – a place that existed more in the hearts of Indo-Trinidadians than in reality. For the community, Bollywood became a way to flesh out this imagined world. It brought colour, texture, and life to the stories that our elders had passed down. These films were not just entertainment, but a living, breathing India that danced across the screen, a vibrant counter-narrative to the colonial world that surrounded us.

Films like *Mother India* (1957) became powerful cultural touchstones. The impact of *Mother India* in Trinidad was nothing short of revolutionary. The film’s story of sacrifice, strength, and resilience resonated deeply with a community that had endured its own struggles. Nargis’ character was more than just a mother on screen; she was every mother in Indo-Trinidad settlements who had fought to preserve her family, her culture,

See Next Page: From India to Georgetown

From India to Georgetown, PoS: Bollywood reels in roots, belonging

From Previous Page

her dignity.
Gophtar captures this beautifully when he writes about the crowded cinemas of Port-of-Spain. He describes a scene where people gathered hours before showtime, the lines snaking up the street and around the corners. The excitement was not just about the film; it was about being part of something larger, a collective affirmation of who we were, and where we came from.

Guyana: The Bollywood Rhizome Spreads

Our story was not only happening in Trinidad. Over in Guyana, Bollywood's influence was spreading with similar fervour. The bustling streets around cinemas like *The Metropole* and *Strand De Luxe* were filled with the sounds of anticipation whenever a new Indian film was set to premiere.
Along a similar trajectory, at the same time Guyanese families were traveling from places like Bartica and Albion to Georgetown to watch Bollywood films, an echo of the similar mobilising that Gophtar says was happening in Trinidad.

The films provided a communal experience that brought people together, not just to watch, but to reconnect. The songs from *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) became wedding anthems; scenes from *Sholay* (1975) sparked discussions in the *backdams*. And as Gophtar emphasises, these gatherings were more than mere cinema – they were acts of cultural renewal, where an imagined India was not just remembered, but actively celebrated.

What makes Gophtar's work so powerful is its humanity. He is not just recounting facts using academic lens; instead, he is bringing to life a story of resilience of our people, who, despite being uprooted from our homeland, still found new ways to reconnect with it. Bollywood became the thread that stitched our past to our present, allowing us to weave a new identity that was both Indian and Caribbean.

Gophtar's research reveals how the songs, dances, and stories of Bollywood became interwoven with the everyday lives of us as Indo-Trinidadians and Indo-Guyanese. It happened in the temples, at weddings, during the celebration of *Diwali* and *Eid*. Bollywood had moved beyond the screen and into the soul of our community, becoming part of the fabric of who we were.

As we continue to explore the impact of Bollywood on the Caribbean, Gophtar's work reminds us that culture is not a static thing. It is fluid, adaptable, and always reaching out for connection. For our Indo-Caribbean community, Bollywood was more than just a movie. It was a home-coming, a way to find ourselves again, even in a land far from the one we once called home.

Vidur Dindayal: Bollywood Comes Life In British Guiana

For Vidur Dindayal, Bollywood was more than just an escape for Indo-Guyanese toiling daily on the sugar plantations and in the sugar factories. It was a transformative force that breathed life into the hearts of British Guiana's Indo-Guyanese community.

In his reflections in his writings for *Indo-Caribbean World*, Dindayal vividly recounts how the silver screen brought India to his doorstep, rekindling a connection to a homeland many had never seen but carried deeply in their souls. Through his memories, we gain insight into how Bollywood films became cultural touchstones that resonated with generations of Indo-Guyanese, offering them solace, identity, and a sense of belonging.

In his series on the Golden Age in Bollywood, Dindayal paints a vivid picture of how certain films left an indelible mark on the community. Take, for example, the film *Anarkali*, starring Bina Rai, Pradeep Kumar, and Kuldip Kaur.

Dindayal writes, "Bina Rai was superb in her role of Anarkali, being the target for suffering and humiliation, all with dignity. The movie has captivating songs especially *Jaag Dard Jaag Dard*. I heard this song before I saw the movie. I learnt to sing this song, and liked it very much."

For Dindayal, it was not just about watching the film – it was about embracing its emotional depth. The haunting melodies from *Anarkali* did not just fade away with the end credits; they lingered in the air, were taken away and sung by families in their homes, and echoed in the streets of Guyana's capital city, Georgetown, and throughout its towns and villages.

Songs like *Jaag Dard Jaag Dard* became a way for our Indo-Guyanese community to express hidden longings, a musical thread connecting us to an India we yearned for, but which we could no longer reach.

A Spiritual Connection: The Power of Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai

Bollywood's impact was not confined to entertainment; it reached into the spiritual realm, deeply influencing our



The Strand cinema in San Fernando, Trinidad. Perhaps late 1950s from the movies *The Conqueror* and *All Mine To Give*. Facebook photo, Angelo Bissessarsingh Virtual Musuem of TT.

Indo-Guyanese psyche. Dindayal recalls the profound effect of *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*, writing, "The name of the movie has deep meaning – blessings of the country where the most holy river flows. The river Ganges is most sacred for Hindus, the personification of Goddess Ganga. Bathing in the river is a 'cleansing'."

For the Indo-Guyanese community, *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* did more than just entertain – it became a source of spiritual solace. The film invoked the sanctity of the Ganges, allowing viewers to feel a deeper connection to their faith and heritage. Dindayal's words capture how the mere mention of the Ganges brought waves of nostalgia, the cinema becoming awash with our collective yearning for the spiritual lands of India. Watching these films was, in a way, a pilgrimage, a way to reconnect with the divine from thousands of kilometres away.

Perhaps one of the most powerful examples of Bollywood's cultural impact in British Guiana was the effect of the film *Bharat Milap*. As Dindayal recalls, "I am certain the makers of *Bharat Milap* chose correctly, so when you saw Shobana Samarth and Prem Adib as Sita and Ram, it was almost believable that they were real life Sita and Ram. Shobana Samarth as Sita was, and will always be, the most divine, the most beautiful Sita for me, and I believe for most people who watched *Bharat Milap*."

The influence of *Bharat Milap* went beyond the screen. As Dindayal recounts, the film sparked a wave of transformation in how our community visualised our sacred deities.

"After seeing *Bharat Milap*, British Guiana in the 1940s experienced a transformation in the way people saw Rama and Sita. Enlargements were made and framed as photos, and were sold everywhere from movie clips of Rama and Sita. These were happily acquired as replacements of drawings/pictures of Rama and Sita, and were hung in living rooms or prayer rooms to bless the homes, or to be objects for prayer," Dindayal states.

The imagery from the film became so iconic that it replaced the traditional drawings and paintings of Rama and Sita that adorned the walls of many homes in British Guiana, Dindayal recalls. This was more than just a change in décor – it was a cultural shift.

Indo-Guyanese, who had for so long been disconnected from the artistic and spiritual traditions of India, found a way to bring the divine into our homes through the moving images of Bollywood. These scenes were no longer just cinematic moments; they became sacred icons, visual anchors that deepened our community's spiritual connection.

Dindayal's reflections are a testament to Bollywood's role in cultural reclamation for our Indo-Guyanese diaspora. These films were more than stories – they were lifelines to a world that colonial forces had tried to erase. In the glow of the projector's light, we found ourselves being vicariously transported to the banks of the Ganges, the royal courts of Anarkali, and the divine presence of Rama and Sita.

Bollywood presented a way for us see ourselves, our customs, our spirituality. Our Indo-Guyanese community, which had endured decades of cultural suppression, found in these films a way to reclaim our identity. The songs, the stories, the visuals, the *mise-en-scène*, became tools of resistance, a way for us to push back against the erasure of our heritage.

For Dindayal and others who lived through these transformative years, Bollywood was a beacon in the darkness, a source of light that brought joy, healing, and a sense of belonging.

It was like India was coming to us. We did not have to re-

cross the *kala pani* to reconnect to our roots. Here they were, right in front of us on the silver screen; we could hear it in the songs we sang; and follow along as the narratives unfolded in the movies' plots.

The Legacy Lives On

Today, the impact of those golden years of Bollywood in British Guiana continues to reverberate. The cinemas may no longer be packed with eager crowds, but the memories linger in the minds and hearts of those who experienced it.

For Dindayal, the songs of *Anarkali*, the imagery of *Bharat Milap*, and the spiritual resonance of *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* remain vivid reminders of a time when Bollywood was more than just a form of entertainment – it was a lifeline, a thread that kept our community's cultural fabric intact.

To go to the core of Dindayal's message, we discover not just nostalgia, but deep gratitude for what these films brought to his family, and to our community. Bollywood did not merely entertain: it healed; it connected; and it provided coordinates for us as a displaced people to now find our way back to our roots.

Bollywood's Dance Across the Caribbean - A Story of Reconnection, Identity, and Cultural Flourishing

We've taken quite the journey, haven't we? From the flickering lights of Trinidad's *Globe Cinema* to the bustling streets outside Georgetown's *Metropole*, we have seen how Bollywood's magic transcended mere entertainment to become something much richer, deeper – a bridge to a distant world, a lifeline to an imagined India that resonated in the hearts of our Indo-Caribbean community.

When we began this exploration, we set out to understand how Bollywood did not just show up in the Caribbean by chance. It was more like an unexpected gift that flowed sideways into the lives of our diaspora, creating new cultural, rhizomic roots in Trinidad and Guyana.

If we borrow a bamboo shoot from the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, we could think of Bollywood as a kind of rhizome – a sprawling, organic network that does not follow a single line but branches out, creating connections in unexpected places. These films did not just drop from the sky; they grew into the cracks of



Primnath Gophtar

This was no top-down imposition of imperial culture. It was something that grew organically, like a vine, which having rooted in a crack, began spreading its tendrils into every corner of the Caribbean; and for us today, abroad in our second migration.

Weaving it All Together: The Lasting Impact of Bollywood's Cultural Dance

So, what does it all mean? As we draw our journey to a close, it is clear that Bollywood's influence on the Caribbean was not just a fleeting trend – it was a profound cultural movement that brought us together, rekindling a connection to a homeland we had only known through stories. The films acted like threads in a tapestry, weaving together the torn pieces of our identity that had been ripped apart by colonialism.

In a way, Bollywood's arrival was like planting a garden in the midst of the monochromatic sea of the green sugar canes. It brought life, colour, and a sense of belonging to the communities where we had been left to fend for ourselves on the margins of colonial society. For our Indo-Caribbean diaspora, these films were more than entertainment; they were vessels of memory, carriers of tradition, and beacons of light and hope.

Bollywood's arrival did not just bring films. It brought laughter, the tears, moments of joy shared in crowded cinemas that rippled outwards into our humble homes. It brought a reclamation of self, and the energising of our voices that now spoke up collectively, saying, "This is who we are; this is where we come from" in a world of Empire, which with its ideology and state apparatuses, was trying to make us forget who we were.

As the credits begin to roll on our story, we are left with a clear message – that the power of storytelling is timeless. Whether through song, dance, or a flickering image on the screen, the stories that Bollywood brought to Trinidad and Guyana were more than just tales – they are a reminder that no matter where Indentureship took us, leaving enough pieces of *roti* in a trail behind helped us to find our way back home.

Failure to assess cost WI the series

Rovman Powell stood under the darkening skies at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground, reflecting on what might have been. A rain-shortened final match capped a bitter end to a T20 series where moments of brilliance were overshadowed by missteps.

The West Indies captain, visibly disappointed, admitted that his team's struggles to adapt to the conditions early on cost them the series against England, who emerged triumphant with a 3-1 victory.

"We just didn't adjust quickly enough," Powell conceded, a mix of frustration and resolve in his voice. "If we had assessed the conditions better in those first games, the story might have been different."

The series opened with promise, but quickly turned sour for the West Indies at Kensington Oval, Barbados.

England's decision to send West Indies in to bat proved a masterstroke, as the hosts repeatedly stumbled in the powerplay. In the first two matches, three wickets fell within the opening six overs; in the third game, the collapse was even more pronounced, with five wickets lost in the same span.

Trailing 3-0, the West Indies finally found their rhythm in the fourth T20I, pulling off a record-breaking run chase. Their 221 for five became the highest score ever at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground, offering a glimmer of what could have been.

Powell, who finished as the second-highest run scorer in the series with 153 runs, credited England for their adaptability.

"A lot of credit has to go to Jos [Buttler] and his team," he said. "They came into our conditions and dominated."

But he was also candid about his team's shortcomings.

"We have a batting template we try to work with, but it just didn't click in the first few games," Powell explained. "It took us two or three matches to really understand what was going wrong, and by then, the series was slipping away."

The bowling group, too, did not escape Powell's critique. He acknowledged the need for sharper execution, hinting at areas requiring immediate improvement before the upcoming series against Bangladesh.

Despite the disappointment, Powell sought to highlight the positives.

"The way we played the last game showed that we can compete at the highest level. If we had assessed earlier, it could have been a different series. But this experience gives us something to build on," he stated.

With the West Indies set to play Bangladesh in three T20Is next month, Powell said there were still some positives to take away from the England series.

"The way we played the last game, we showed that we can play really good cricket. You know, if we just assessed a little bit earlier in the series, it possibly would have been a different series, but a lot of credit has to be given to Jos and his team..." he said. According to the *St. Lucia Times*, a talking point that may have factored in the series was the decision to start fixtures at 4 p.m., a move partly to cater to the English audience watching from a different time zone.

As the publication noted, Caribbean cricket depends on tours from the England, Australia, and India for financial reasons, and streaming to audiences in the visiting country is a necessary part of the games' start.

However, what emerged was afternoon starts posed significant challenges for teams batting first in the series, as pitches became increasingly easier to bat on as the game progressed.

The T20 series loss marks back-to-back defeats for the West Indies, following their fall to Sri Lanka away last month. Additionally, the victory marks England's first series win of any kind in the Caribbean since 2019.

West Indies will be looking to improve their T20 fortunes when they face Bangladesh in December as they continue to build toward upcoming ICC tournaments.



Rovman Powell



Tanzim Sakib

Bangladesh's Sakib passes fitness test

Bangladesh heaved a sigh of relief earlier this week after pace-bowling all-rounder Tanzim Sakib was cleared to play competitive cricket after passing a fitness test.

The right-arm pacer, considered an integral part of Bangladesh's white-ball setup, missed the recently concluded three-match ODI series against Afghanistan due to injury.

Sakib experienced neck stiffness during warm-ups ahead of a National Cricket League match, Bangladesh's premier first-class tournament, where he represented Sylhet Division.

"He passed the fitness test," a member of the national selection panel told the online cricket website *Cricbuzz* on Monday.

"It's quite a relief for us considering he is an integral part of our white-ball setup," the selector said.

"We missed him in the ODI series against

Afghanistan, but at the same time, the other pace bowlers performed well, so the competition is quite stiff at the moment. But I know he [Sakib] is a fighter, and will give his best to reclaim his spot," he added.

After the two Tests against West Indies, Bangladesh will play three ODIs and three T20Is against the hosts.

The clearance from the BCB medical team has also paved the way for Sakib to participate in the inaugural edition of the Global Super League in Guyana, starting on November 27.

The five-team competition will feature the Caribbean Premier League's Guyana Amazon Warriors, Pakistan Super League's Lahore Qalandars, England's Hampshire, New Zealand's Victoria, and Bangladesh's Rangpur Riders.

Sakib has been picked by the Guyana Amazon Warriors for the T20 tournament.

UNI-TNT SKF CHAMP

SATURDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2024

Los Amigos TERENCE SWEENEY MYSTIC RHYTHM TASSA

\$20 ADVANCE TICKETS | DOORS OPEN AT 7:00PM | BRING TOY OR NON PRESIHABLE ITEM

INFO & TICKETS PLEASE CALL UNI-TnT :- 416-309-0754 | SKF:- 647-705 5205

twilight Family Restaurant

MUSIC & HOSTED BY arnell

TICKET OUTLETS

ONLINE: www.ticketgateway.com

Twilight Restaurant 55 Nugget Ave. Scarborough 416. 754. 6894

Dave Drupati (Scarborough) 2866 Ellesmere Rd. Scarborough 416. 289. 9811

M&A Discount Store 1168 Morningside Ave. Scarborough 416. 208. 9474

Trini Bites 4286 Kingston Rd unit 8 Scarborough 416. 283. 1111

SPONSORS

STAG Carib EXPRESSIONS TicketGateway

SCAN TO REGISTER

Ho-Ho-Ho

UNI-TNT under the patronage of The Consulate General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Toronto Presents

2ND ANNUAL KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY AGES 1-9 YEARS OLD

To be held at Tropical Nights Restaurant & Lounge 1154 Morningside Ave, Scarborough, ON on

SATURDAY DECEMBER 14TH FROM 2PM TO 6PM

SANTA WILL BE VISITING WITH LOTS OF GIFTS

SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED

MUSIC WILL BE PLAYED BY DON SAN JUAN

Please RSVP: ticketgateway.com/give-a-gift

SO WE CAN MAKE SURE WE GET THE RIGHT GIFT FOR YOUR CHILD

Proudly Supporting our Kids and Our Comunity

Carnival Nation Saldor Carnival TRINIDAD

Verma out of squad headed to Australia

Alice Capsey back on English team

A portrait of a young woman with blonde hair tied in a bun, smiling. She is wearing a light blue polo shirt with a white 'NB' logo on the left chest and a 'cinda' logo in purple and blue on the right chest. The background is a solid light blue.





TRINIDAD & TOBAGO FIFTY PLUS & SENIORS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
 (ONTARIO CHAPTER)

invite you to **Eat Drink**
and be **MERRY**

AT THE THIRD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BRUNCH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2024

ST. PETER & PAUL BANQUET HALL **231 MILNER AVE, SCARBOROUGH, ON**

12 NOON TO 6:30 PM DOORS OPEN AT NOON, LUNCH SERVED AT 1 PM

DRESS CODE - SEMI FORMAL

TICKET PRICES BEFORE

OCTOBER 31ST **\$70**

TICKET PRICES

NOV. 1ST AND AFTER **\$75**

CHILDREN UNDER 12 - \$40
 (NO REFUNDS/ NO EXCEPTIONS)

DOOR PRIZES & RAFFLE MUSIC BY **DJ SOOKIE**

FOR TICKETS & INFORMATION CONTACT

TERRY BROWN 416-897-7312	CHARLENE JOHNSON 416-298-7059	ALICESON MNOVECLETCHIE 647-530- 9494	
LA SIRJU 647-287-3602	JUNE STRAKER 416-269-6900	SHANE SUEPAUL 416-407-8403	VIVIAN YOUNG 647 924 9231



GTA LEADERS REALTY INC., BROKERAGE

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

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

www.teamgtahomes.com
gtaleaders@gmail.com

~ RESIDENTIAL · COMMERCIAL · INDUSTRIAL · INVESTMENT ~



Abdool Saif Saheed
Sales Representative
647-894-0764



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



Ralford Chatrie
Sales Representative
416-806-1803



Shawn Ambedkar
Broker
416-580-9189

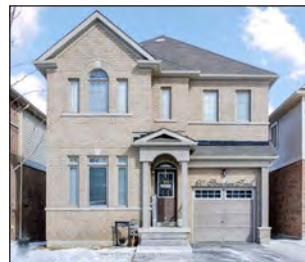
Mississauga For Sale \$740,000

Location! Location!
Location! Welcome to this beautifully well-kept 3 bedroom townhouse in the highly sought after neighbourhood of Malton. Home features large living and good-sized dining room. Large kitchen with stainless steel appliances & granite countertops. Walkout to your fully-fenced private backyard. Upstairs features 3 good-sized bedrooms and updated bathroom. Lower level features recreation room with additional storage area and walkout to your private garage. Close proximity to highways, public transit, Go, Westwood Mall, schools, library, airport, park, and community centre.



Beeton For Sale \$1,139,000

Location! Location!
Location! Welcome to this lovely 4 bedroom, full brick home. This premium lot boasts a beautiful walk-out with patio, brand new glass façade deck above, both outdoor spaces providing an unobstructed view of the Beeton Creek. Hardwood throughout, freshly upgraded oak stairs with iron pickets, new light fixtures, open-concept kitchen with custom backsplash, quartz counters & breakfast bar, rough-in for central vac as well as three piece basement rough-in & an extended driveway.



Pickering Condo For Rent \$2,800

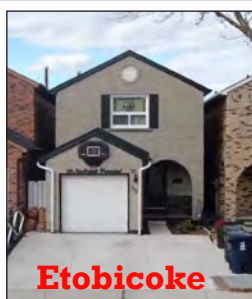
Location! Location! Location! Step into the world of modern elegance with this exquisite 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom home for lease in one of Pickering's new vibrant neighbourhoods. This unit boasts an updated, open-concept living space, perfect for entertaining and relaxation. The kitchen shines with stainless steel appliances and sleek design. Unit features beautiful wraparound balcony with extravagant views. Nestled in a desirable neighbourhood, this home provides unparalleled access to local schools, shopping, and entertainment options. The proximity to Pickering GO Station makes commuting a breeze, while Farm Boy and Pickering Town Centre are just a short walk away. Highway 401 access further enhances your connectivity to the greater Toronto area. Seize the opportunity to be part of this vibrant community. This brand-new unit is more than just a home; it's a gateway to a lifestyle of convenience, luxury, and charm! Don't miss out!!



For Sale \$999,900

Family Friendly
Neighbourhood,
Walking
Distance
To Schools
& Parks.

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



Etobicoke

Ajax For Sale \$949,000

Location! Location! Location!
Welcome to this BRAND NEW, NEVER LIVED IN modern 3 story 3 bedroom 3 bathroom townhouse in a highly sought-after neighbourhood in Ajax. The main floor beckons with its open-concept design, guiding you to a spacious second floor featuring a generous kitchen and breakfast area that overlooks the combined living and dining room. This seamlessly flows to a walk-out balcony, the third floor features 2 adequately-sized bedrooms with a large primary bedroom with 4 piece ensuite.



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

Location! Location! Location!
Bright & spacious 1 bed 1 bath corner suite located in the rarely available prestigious French quarters. The residence features a functional open concept layout boasting 9' ceilings. The spacious living room seamlessly transitions to a breathtaking private balcony overlooking quiet courtyard. Building features world class amenities; spectacular roof top garden with BBQ, gym, party room, lounge/library suites. Steps from the St Lawrence Market, distillery, and financial district.



**FOR ALL YOUR
INSURANCE NEEDS**

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

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

Abdool Saheed
Financial Advisor
Cell: 416-731-7527

CityPointe Heights starting @ High 400s

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



Essa For Lease \$2,995

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



LEASED

**SOLD FOR \$160K
OVER ASKING!**

\$949,000

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

Narrative Condos

**STARTING
FROM LOW \$300s**

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



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

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

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