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# INDO CARIBBEAN WORLD

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Christmas festivities are now on in the GTA, with the Unforgettable Parang Show that took place on November 18 in Etobicoke. Headlining the evening was Trinidad and Tobago's celebrity, Crazy (above). More on Page 10. HighLife Promos photo.



Celebrations of Hindu Heritage Month are now underway with The Hindu Federation marking the event on November 12 with a celebration that included students from the Panwar Music and Dance (above). More photos and story on Page 11.



ACG members, guests, and supporters gather for an historical 50th anniversary photo

## ACG celebrates its 50th anniversary

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

Toronto – Formed in Toronto in 1973 to mobilise support for the restoration of democracy to Guyana, the Association of Concerned Guyanese last week celebrated its 50th anniversary with a gala that brought together under one roof a couple of generations, and connections between the past and present that went back to five decades.

The event was later described as a “grand success”. So said Roger Sawh, while declaring that the magnitude of the energy and dynamism that filled the Panemonte Banquet and Convention Centre in Toronto was a fitting culmination of a year of the ACG celebrating its golden anniversary.

Sawh also spoke to the energy that filled the banquet hall on the evening of the gala. Indicators of the dynamic at play in the room were the enthusiasm and the applause that resounded throughout the evening, he stated.

“The attentiveness and engagement really brought out Guyana’s motto, ‘One People, One Nation, One Destiny,’” he declared.

“And don’t forget we still have the Christmas social coming up,” he added.

Sawh is the son of the late Satyadeow ‘Sash’ Sawh. A member of the ACG, Sawh also sits on its executive and 50th anniversary committees.

Additionally, he noted how charged the atmosphere was with the support and rapt attention that came from the highly-engaged, sold-out attendance.

Speaking to the golden anniversary itself, Sawh stated, “One can’t help but be reflective on the forces that would have galvanised the ACG from where it was to where it wanted to be. Sacrifice comes to mind. It is beyond comprehension how these men and women threw themselves into the”

See Page 5: ‘We have a civic duty’

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A reading, workshop, and discussion by Mawenzi House saw the works of six Muslim authors featured at the Aga Khan Museum's Nanji Family Foundation Auditorium. Among the works in focus was the book by Monia Mazigh, *Gendered Islamophobia: My Journey with a Scar(f)*. Monia came to national attention in 2002 when her husband, Maher Arar, was deported to Syria, where he was tortured and held without charge for over a year; he was later exonerated. She has campaigned vigorously for the rights of Muslims, and *Gendered Islamophobia: My Journey with a Scar(f)*, details these experiences. She is also the author of two novels, *Mirrors and Mirages*, and *Hope Has Two Daughters*. In photo, Monia speaks about her book at the event.

### Events Galore: Our Community Is Thriving!

**One Love Family Services** presents Pepper Pot Fest with its pepper pot competition and holiday festival on December 8, from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. There will also be food sales and games at the event. It takes place at the Jamaican Canadian Centre, 995 Arrow Road, North York. In attendance will be special guest Vicadi Singh, with guest judge Bombay Lemonade. Also in attendance will be Lakeram Rampersaud, Andy Nivalle, Joel De Connector, DJ Vick, Chandal Paul, Chalisa Raj, and iKhan. For more information, call Habeeb at **416-823-1738**; e-transfer to [onelovetable@gmail.com](mailto:onelovetable@gmail.com); or purchase tickets on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

**Uni-TnT** will hold Los Amigos, its 7th annual Saturday Night Parang Lime, on December 9, starting 9 p.m. It will take place at the elegant Twilight Family Restaurant, 55 Nugget Avenue, Scarborough. Note the event is also a Toy and Food Drive. Music for the evening will be delivered by the versatile Los Amigos, along with Dubble Impact, and a special guest DJ. For more information, email [info@uni-tnt.com](mailto:info@uni-tnt.com); or book tickets at [Tickets Gateway](https://www.ticketsgateway.com). All proceeds go to charity.

**Glamour and Glitz 2024**, Canada's premium New Year's eve gala presented by Mr NYE, will be held on December 31 at the Chandni Victoria Hall, 2935 Drew Road, Mississauga, which is minutes from Toronto Pearson International Airport. It will

feature a spectacular lighting show and sound, indoor fireworks at midnight, *hors d'oeuvres* in circulation among guests, a midnight champagne toast, and other celebratory events. This is the 25th anniversary of the event. Call **289-875-0234** for pricing and more information.

**Dance Academy** presents Dancers Unite, a showcase of talent in celebration of Diwali and Hindu Heritage Month on November 25, starting 5 p.m. It will be held at the Vedic Cultural Centre, 4345 14th Avenue, Markham. Hosted by Shobha Maraj Maeck and Vashtie Doorga, it will feature performances by the Dance Academy, Footsteps, Janvi Dance, Tassa Bhai Lucas, and other versatile groups. Refreshments will be on sale. Email [stccdanceacademy@gmail.com](mailto:stccdanceacademy@gmail.com) for more information, or call **647-490-2950**.


The executives and members of the Guyana Ex-Soldiers Association (Canada) will hold its Christmas Dinner and Dance on December 9 at the Sts Peter and Paul Banquet Hall, 231 Milner Avenue, Toronto, starting 7:00 p.m. Mix and mingle from 7:00 pm to 8:00 p.m., with dinner from 8:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. Music will be supplied by DJ Solid Gold. Proceeds will be used to assist the sick and disabled veterans in Guyana. For pricing and other information, call Lloyd Gill, **289-439-6519**; Michael Narain, **905-472-0405**; Earla Hinds, **647-713-2132**; Gordon Winter, **416-894-3675**.



**Metro All Fours League** gathered last Sunday at the Tribal Mass Camp in Scarborough to play one of its regularly scheduled game towards the grand finals to be held in May. There are nine teams in the league that are playing each team twice for a total of 18 games. Teams are always looking for new players. Interested players can contact the league via Russell Lutchman at **416-428-6894**. Photo by *Russell Lutchman*

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# Khera announces \$21.5M empowerment funding

Ottawa – Declaring that in Canada, diversity is the nation’s strength, the federal government last week announced it is investing in initiatives that both empower Black Canadians and address long-standing and systemic racism issues affecting them in the areas of recognition, justice, and development.

Under the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI), the government of Canada declared it is strengthening the capacity of Black-led and Black-serving community-based organisations across the country by bringing decision-making closer to Black communities to better meet their needs and priorities.

The announcement was made by Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Kamal Khera. As she indicated, \$21.5 million have been allocated to the Black-led National Funders network in a third round of funding.

“Since 2015, our government has been very deliberate in making the choice to be inclusive, working with communities themselves to deliver on their priorities. Through this Initiative, we’re making key investments in Black communities across the country to support the work of Black-led and Black-serving community-based organisations on inclusiveness and on the fight against discrimination, bias, and anti-Black racism,” Khera stated.

Additionally, “Working with the SBCCI National Funders network will ensure that investment decisions tailored for Black communities are guided and determined by the very communities they aim to benefit.”

The National Funders network, which includes Tropicana Community Services, Africa Centre, Black Business Initiative and Groupe 3737, has launched a call for proposals under SBCCI. The period started last week, and will remain open until December 15. Selected projects will be announced in the first half of 2024.

Through this call for proposals, registered non-profit organisations that are Black-led, and which serve the Black community, can apply for up to \$105,000 in funding across two streams: Capital Assistance and Capacity Building, to help Black-led organisations to increase their organisational capacity, and improve their workplaces and community spaces as needed to better serve Black Canadian communities.

SBCCI strengthens and complements existing measures that work towards greater social inclusion, improve the well-being of People of African descent in Canada, and address the unique challenges faced by Black communities in Canada, including discrimination, bias, and anti-Black racism.

**Quick Facts**

- The United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent spans from 2015 to 2024.

African Descent spans from 2015 to 2024.

- In recognition of this UN initiative, since 2019, over \$175 million have been invested through the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative to celebrate, share knowledge, and build capacity in Canada’s vibrant Black Canadian communities. Most recently, Budget 2023 provided an additional \$25 million for 2024-2025, extending the program for an additional year, and bringing the total commitment up to \$200 million.
- In the previous two rounds, the national funders collectively awarded \$50 million in grants to a total of 939 projects.
- Through SBCCI, the government of Canada seeks to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of Black-led and Black-serving community organisations, and the work they do to promote inclusiveness. Specific goals include: empowering Black Canadians and Black-led community organisations; addressing systemic barriers and anti-Black racism; and, advancing the full social and economic inclusion of Black Canadians into Canadian society.
- The SBCCI External Reference Group is a Black-led ministerial advisory group providing expertise and advice on the implementation of the SBCCI, offering insight on emerging priorities coming from Black communities, and supporting the advancement of the government’s commitments related to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent; an important part of respecting the principle of “nothing about us, without us”.
- The government has also created the Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund, which seeks to create a sustainable source of funding for Black-led, Black-focused and Black-serving non-profit organisations and registered charities. Through it, the government of Canada has provided the Foundation for Black Communities with an endowment of \$200 million. FFBC is responsible for managing the assets of the contributed funds to create a long-term self-sustaining source of funding for Black community organisations.
- The government of Canada continues to engage with Black communities and many Black-led organisations and stakeholders to integrate feedback and ideas back into policy and program development.
- Since 2019, the government of Canada has committed close to \$100 million to Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy, a first in Canadian history.



**Kamal Khera**

## Ontarians can now get flu shot with Covid-19 vaccine

Toronto – As of October 30, Ontarians are able to receive a free flu shot and the new, most recent Covid-19 vaccine at local pharmacies, public health units, and primary health care providers across the province, the Ontario government has said.

It added that staying up-to-date on vaccinations continues to be the best way for people to stay safe and healthy this respiratory illness season, and avoid unnecessary visits to the hospital.

“Getting your Covid-19 vaccine and flu shot is the best way to keep yourself, your loved ones and your community healthy,” said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

She added, “Our government is ensuring you have access to the tools you need this fall respiratory season by making Covid-19 vaccines and flu shots available in convenient locations close to home, at no cost to Ontarians.”

It is safe and convenient to receive both a Covid-19 vaccine and flu shot at the same time, reducing the need for multiple visits. The new Covid-19 vaccines now available are specifically designed to target the XBB variant, and were approved by Health Canada earlier this fall.

All Ontarians six months and older can receive their next Covid-19 dose if it has been a recommended six months since their last dose or confirmed Covid-19 infection. Ontarians are encouraged to speak with a health care professional to help determine their appropriate vaccination schedule.

“With the expected co-circulation of influenza, Covid-19 and RSV over the fall and winter, I encourage Ontarians to get their Covid-19 vaccine and flu shot as soon as they can,” said Dr Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Moore added, “Especially those who are elderly, immunocompromised, or have medical conditions that make you particularly susceptible to harm from respiratory illnesses.”

It was also announced that the Ontario government has introduced its first publicly funded RSV vaccine program for older high-risk adults. Through this program, the Ministry of Health covers the full cost of the vaccine for adults aged 60 and older living in long-term care homes, Elder Care Lodges and retirement homes licensed to provide dementia care services.



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ACG award recipient John Persaud (left), Peter Jallal, and Kamla Sharma

## 'We have a civic duty to be engaged'

### From Page 1

ACG, especially given the hopelessness they faced. Now there is a sense of achievement and advancement."

And pivoting away from the bad old days, Sawh spoke to the contemporary and positive universe that Guyana now inhabits.

"It is no secret that Guyana is in a special place today," he said.

Additionally, "Looking down the tunnel, we want to look forward, and the ACG still has a role to play. We all have a role to play. The dynamism here in Toronto is here to stay," he declared.

Sawh also spoke to the diaspora's concern over Venezuela's aggression into Guyana, stating, "Without a doubt, such a bright future and prospects [for Guyana] would see challenges. We have a civic duty to be engaged."

And looking down the road, Sawh noted the interconnectivity of the generations after 50 years, and the role the ACG now has to fulfil in maintaining the emerging, inter-generational ties.

"My personal perspective is how do you keep the children that are born here engaged? It is a question for us moving forward," he said.

Also speaking with *Indo-Caribbean World* earlier this week was Danny Doobay, a 46-year veteran of the ACG, a member on its executive committee, and chair of the 50th anniversary committee.

Doobay also spoke to the enthusiasm that permeated throughout the well-attended event, saying it all came together with the ACG membership, volunteers, and many others pulling together as a devoted and dedicated team.

"We achieved the objective we set out to do. This was one of the several events we planned for the 50th anniversary celebrations," he said.

Doobay's gaze then turned to the ACG's early years. He noted that his journey of over four decades with the ACG was "one of those things you never think about when you join an organisation."

He added, "However, it has been a phenomenal journey, and a privilege to be part of it for 46 years, to have seen the [ACG] grow from less than 15 members to over 100, and to be a part of an organisation that fought for the return of

democracy in Guyana."

Doobay also spoke to the inroads made by the ACG that saw its members participating in significant governmental roles here in Canada, and in Guyana.

As he stated, the ACG contributed "an unparalleled level of service to Canada."

Said Doobay: "In doing so, in 24 of the last 30 years there has been a senior ACG member heading the Guyana Consulate. Each of us has brought to that institution our experience. It is an achievement that no other Guyanese organisation can claim."

Doobay also pointed out that seven ACG members served in the Guyana government at senior levels. Among them were Gail Teixeira, Sash Sawh, and Geoff Da Silva. Serving in the top office of the Consulate General in Toronto were Doobay himself, Da Silva, Sattie Sawh, Dr Jang Singh, and presently occupying the role is Honorary Consul Mani Singh.

One of the major highlights of the evening was the recognition given to awardees, organisations, and families that helped nurture, support, and guide the ACG across the five decades.

Among the award recipients was Sawh's family. As the gala's program stated, the Sawh family – the late Sash, wife Sattie, and sons Roger and David, along with their families – remains "indivisibly linked to the ACG".

Also among the stellar cast of individual awardees recognised were Geoff Da Silva, Gail Teixeira, Ned Blair, Dennis Persaud, Jay Jairam, Jerry Karamat, Bejai Jairam, John Persaud, and an 'Honorary Guyanese', Elite Banquet Hall's 'Nino' Fawad Warda, who was noted for being "a longstanding and trusted friend who accommodated and supported the [ACG's] events..."

A posthumous award was also given to the late Herman Ali.

Organisations and families were also award recipients. As mentioned, the Sawh family; and the family of Mani Singh, Honorary Consul at the Guyana Consulate General in Toronto.

The organisations that were honoured were The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre; The Alliance of Guyanese Canadian Organisations; and the People's Progressive Party.



Friendship award recipient Ned Blair, Vice President, Ethnic Press (centre), with former Consuls General Geoff Da Silva at left, and Danny Doobay at right



Past ACG President Rupchand Sawh (left to right), ACG member for 47 years Dennis Persaud, Past President ACG Sumintra Sarju, former Consul General Geoff Da Silva, and ACG member for 41 years, Joe Jaglall



Roger Sawh

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**Editorial**

**Our battle with NCDs**

In July it was reported in Guyana that the government is working on building a national healthcare database with the objective being for it to aid in the implementation of strategic policies to reduce new cases of non-communicable diseases.

As the Guyana media further reported, the government has undertaken this project since there are no data currently collected from persons with NCDs.

Meanwhile, the hard fact is that what available data there are reveal significant and worrisome details, notably, that 74 percent of Guyana's deaths are due to NCDs; and that the number of persons with diabetes in the country stands at an estimated, yet staggering, 60,000-plus cases.

This astounding estimate for Guyana is derived from data gathered by the International Diabetes Federation, a non-profit umbrella organisation of more than 240 national diabetes associations in 161 countries and territories.

And according to the Pan American Health Organisation's Step Survey Country Report, which was released in June of 2021, 68 percent of deaths in Guyana in 2016 were attributed to NCDs, specifically cardiovascular disease, at 34 percent; cancers, eight percent; diabetes, eight percent, and chronic respiratory diseases, three percent.

Such available data are disconcerting, to say the least. As Guyana's National Commission on NCDs noted back in July, the latest available data show "74 percent of our deaths are now due to the NCDs, and more than 32 percent of all NCD deaths are premature".

In the light of such a revealing and troubling escalation in the numbers, it is consequential and an act of responsible government that Guyana's administration has undertaken the implementation of NCD data acquisition to construct a national healthcare database.

As the Guyana's health minister, Dr Frank Anthony stated, building such a database would not only assist in better tracking healthcare needs in Guyana, but at the same time allow for more structural approaches in forging better healthcare strategies for Guyana's people.

Meanwhile, Guyana is not the only Caribbean country that is battling the regional NCD epidemic.

Trinidad and Tobago is also confronted with a dire NCD situation, as its Chief Medical Officer, Dr Roshan Parasram has revealed. As he noted, between 2012 and 2018, approximately 600 amputations were done yearly, a consequence of diabetic foot disease. Also, that 14.8 percent of Trinidad and Tobago's population has Type II diabetes, which means 148,900 persons are afflicted.

Disconcerting data are available for Trinidad and Tobago, with Parasram also indicating that the government spends (US) \$50 million annually to manage diabetes.

And even more available data reveal an astonishing narrative. As Parasram noted, in that time period, 3,586 amputations, or 85.87 percent, were done at public institutions, with 590, or 14.13 percent, performed at private institutions. The male-to-female amputation ratio was 1.2 to 1.

As Parasram noted, Afro-Trinidadian patients amounted to 47 percent, or 1,962 of the amputations; while Indo-Trinidadian patients accounted for 42 percent, or 1,899 patients; with the 'Others' category at 11 percent.

Such a dire picture emerging out of Trinidad and Tobago's NCD epidemic is why data acquisition is urgently required to guide Guyana to a more proactive response.

It is beyond doubt that these disconcerting narratives emerging out of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana evidence what the Caribbean Public Health Agency has stated quite unequivocally: that diabetes are a major health concern in the Caribbean; furthermore, that it affects millions of people, and is burdening healthcare systems.

This makes Parasram's statement, delivered last week in Port-of-Spain, to be predictable and filled with foreboding: that unless the NCD epidemic is arrested, Trinidad and Tobago's hospitals "won't have bed space" in 20 years.

At this point, it must be stated unequivocally, and as a warning to our diaspora: we trace our roots to the Caribbean, and arrived in Canada with cultural, and other predispositions, that make us vulnerable to NCDs. This makes it imperative that we attend closely to good health.

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

**Inclusivity means re-aligning old election laws**

**Second of Two Parts**

Involvement in the democratic process is important, which at the core includes citizens participating freely in elections. As a society, we must ensure that all eligible voters have equal access to voting. However, these systems can become dated, and if not updated, can hinder its own objectives.

As society evolves and matures, our government systems must also adapt. They must continuously opt to not only reflect the diversity of the citizenry, but it should be responsive and accommodating to that diversity.

Some of our laws have been amended, and many have adapted to current norms and standards. However, it is the responsibility of the government to continually seek opportunities on an ongoing basis that ensure its systems are absolutely inclusive, and do not disenfranchise or disengage any citizen.

As a result of the 'Respect Diwali' campaign by the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association, the core of the issue was not about Diwali itself, but it was about shifting to realising that from time to time we must be considerate of the diversity in the province, and respond to this by finding methods to accommodate that diversity.

We must ensure that the diversity within the province is always considered in public policy decision-making.

A year after our campaign, the next prescribed step for the provincial government is to institute a mechanism that will identify conflicts with upcoming election dates and prescribe solutions. This should be an amendment to the Municipal Elections Act.

Surprisingly, there is already a similar amendment in the Election Act that governs provincial elections. It states that "[if] the Chief Electoral Officer is of the opinion that a Thursday that would otherwise be polling day is not suitable for that purpose because it is a day of cultural or religious significance, then Chief Electoral Officer shall choose another day..."

The fact is that municipalities are governed by the provincial government, and, therefore, a similar amendment should be applied. Why can the provincial government move a provincial election date, but despite this oversight of municipalities, not opt to ensure municipal elections are able to be just as accommodating?

The call is not for every single religious and cultural observance to be considered for moving an election date. However, there are clear and evident dates that stand out as being largely important to significant populations.



Ryan Singh

Should an election date occur on Diwali, Bandi Chhor Divas, Shemini Atzeret, Eid al-Fitr, or any other major religious observances, then there should be an automatic process within the Municipal Elections Act to opt for an alternative date as seen in the Elections Act.

And as mentioned in the provincial variation, this should not only be limited to religious observances, but should also include major cultural occasions, such as Chinese New Year, Nowruz, and Thai Pongal, as examples.

The fact is that with election cycles every four years, the likelihood of a future conflict is rare; however, avoiding such a conflict and ensuring there is an alternative approach is necessary.

A country that prides itself on its diverse and "multicultural" society should not only benefit from this, but it must be reflective and responsive to ensure an absolutely inclusive society. This means the electoral system itself should not disenfranchise any voter.

When citizens do not have to choose between their right to vote, and participating in the fullness of the prescribed electoral system versus their religious or cultural observances, only then we truly have made strides toward being a fully multicultural society.

Shortly after our 'Respect Diwali' campaign, Toronto City Councillor, Josh Matlow, of Toronto-St Paul's reached out to the ICCA. He had vocally supported our call to change the municipal Election Day.

Before his bid to become Mayor of Toronto in early 2023, Matlow had inquired about our thoughts on whether the City of Toronto should call on the provincial government to amend the Municipal Elections Act to ensure that an election day can be altered to accommodate a significant religious or cultural observance. The answer was, "Yes".

There is interest in modernising our laws, and with people from around the world living in Ontario's largest cities, there is bound to be another eventual conflict with the municipal election date. The onus is on the provincial government to make the update to the Municipal Elections Act align with the Election Act, and ensure that we provide flexibility to accommodate the diversity we champion.

Diwali is known as the Festival of Lights, meant to begin a new year of renewal. The hope is that our experience with 'Respect Diwali' will inspire a renewed approach to how the provincial government opts to respect the diversity of the population through modernising election laws to be inclusive.

**Opening a coconut takes skill, intrepid disposition**

One of my uncles acquired my early admiration and esteem for his ability to quickly shave the top off a young, green coconut with a razor-sharp gilpin, effortlessly lopping the hard shell off at its top with the blade as if he was carving a slice out of a half-melted pound of butter, and all the while not spilling a single drop of the coconut's precious, nature-sweetened juice.

I find cracking open a coconut is always the hard part in enjoying the fruits of one's labour in acquiring and devouring its contents. This is how it was done back then, in that ageless time when I was growing up in the homeland.

Then I was young, giddy, and as clueless as a hatchling newly tumbled down the gangway of the fowl coop; and quite reckless with a young rooster's energy boosted with the incipience of youth. I would chop-chop clumsily, devoid of my uncle's finesse.

But it is a different story nowadays: what has been a count on one hand of fingers must now, on the other hand, seek out new digits to measure the passing of the decades.

As it is today, to be confronted with a young, green coconut, undoubtedly filled to capacity with so much thirst-quenching water that to merely fracture its tough shell is to be greeted with a geyser-gush, and with no obliging uncle at hand with a sharp silver-edged gilpin, is to see me turning a 360 on the narrow real estate of a toonie's aluminum bronze core, and then quickly heading at an agitated run in the opposite direction.

There is no drink refreshing and rewarding enough for me to wield a chopper at the top of a young green coconut. It is such that I can say today, with some certitude and thankfulness, that being "all-thumbs" is no longer a pejorative for clumsiness.

Today I can hold my head up, in a manner of speaking, of course, and say that I can walk and thumb a text message at the same time; that the days when I am "all-thumbs" are when I perform so that my fingers easily take to supersonic flight with messaging off the deck of a smartphone's keyboard.

Perhaps the rapid strides that food storage, and other technologies, are taking in its modern-day 100-metre Olympic record-breaking bolt, could be a good thing.

It is certainly so for me when fleeing from having to crack open a young, green coconut using a blade as sharp and as long

as a sword. Flight from the unpredictability of using a sharp blade sees me seeking out more user-friendly cans of coconut water ensconced in the far and distant corners of the fridge.

Now this is so far afield that to get to these cans of coconut water in the fridge means making a precarious journey across the aridity of abandoned leftovers languishing in fast-food containers, and which are being slowly consumed by the inescapable and inexorable march of mould.

Then there is some intrepid navigation required via tip-toeing through neighbourhoods where the milk has gone so bad that it now shuffles out from shady corners, idly kicking along decapitated heads of cabbage, with its temperament gone acidic and quite sour over the injustices encountered in a world that is now devoid of, well, the milk of human kindness.

Now to locate a can of coconut water, and then to pull away its aluminum tab is to be rewarded with ice-cold draughts of packaged coconut-goodness.

Or, if a can is unavailable, then there are the tiny tetra packs of coconut water sealed with a dot of aluminum on its top, which despite my fading hand and eye coordination, can still be finally pierced with patience, determination, and hopefully the sharp end of its attached small straw.

Stab for the count of fingers on two hands at the silver dot with the straw doubled at its accordion pleats, and the reward of coconut water arrives. Squeeze and release the body of the tetra pack using the fingers in a mix of action and reward, and the resulting peristaltic flow gives a whole new meaning to extracting milk from a coconut.

But back to my dear young uncle's prowess with the freshly honed blade and a young green coconut in hand.

Like an artisan seeking out efficiencies, my uncle kept the slicing to a minimum, accomplishing his task with three strikes, and one half of a strike to open up the top of the coconut.

The finale was an effortless fluidity with the blade, in what was a finishing blow delivered to the side of the coconut. A quick, upward upper cut, and a rudimentary spoon was knocked out ready to scoop out the soft, white insides.

Today, I toast to my uncle's sharp cutting skills with a can.



Romeo Kaseram

# Maduro a threat to all Venezuelans

Dear Editor,

Nicholás Maduro's threats to annex the Essequibo, an integral part of Guyana, will result in immense suffering for the Venezuelan people. Maduro is well-known for incompetence, something that has been established by every independent analyst who has ever evaluated the destruction of his country's economy.

As numerous scholars, journalists, economists, and world leaders have noted, Maduro is no Hugo Chavez. While Chavez had vision and courage, Maduro is known for myopia, and for cowardice against small nations.

Maduro is whipping up anti-Guyanese hysteria in Venezuela to fool them into voting 'Yes' on his bogus December 3 referendum.

In what must boggle the mind, he is telling Venezuelans that Guyana is "escalating" tensions against the Bolivarian Republic. But how could this be? Venezuela's military is among the most powerful in the Americas, while Guyana's is among the smallest.

Venezuela's Air Force has 263 aircraft (including 81 helicopters). Its Navy has 46 vessels including a submarine, two mini-submarines, frigates, 25 patrol boats, and six gunboats. The Army has 312 war tanks, 1,000 Armoured Fighting Vehicles, 200 field artillery, and 36 rocket artillery.

Estimates of their active military personnel vary from 125,000-150,000, according to the CIA, to 1.3 million, according to the Venezuelan government, plus a whopping 3.2 million militia personnel. Eight million Venezuelans are also available for recruitment.

By contrast, the CIA had this to say of Guyana's military – the Guyana Defense Force's limited inventory is mostly comprised of second-hand platforms. The GDF is only 3,000

strong. While they are well-trained, Guyana's military is massively outnumbered and has minimal war-fighting capability compared to Venezuela.

The Global Firepower Review ranks Venezuela at 52 out of 145 countries, with one being the highest. Guyana is not strong enough to be ranked. Maduro must know all of this. In fact, he has been whipping up sentiments precisely because he knows the differences in capabilities.

Yet, he is making a big mistake, only this time bigger than the ones he made that led to the crash of the Venezuelan economy.

While Guyana is a small country, it is on the right side of history. While we are a democracy with an open economy, Maduro is running a military dictatorship with massive human rights violations. While we follow international law,

Maduro has been breaking international law for years.

However, the most consequential difference is that while countries such as the US and the UK will stand with Guyana to defend its territorial integrity, Venezuela will stand-alone with its aggression.

Dictators have a predictable habit of oppressing their own people while simultaneously aggressing against smaller, weaker nations. However, the news for these strongmen is not good. All their gambits for territorial glory have imploded. Remember Iraq's catastrophic mistake of invading Kuwait. It was also about oil. Iraq was destroyed, and today the Iraqi people are suffering.

Maduro is a known territorial predator. He should be careful. If not, the Venezuelan people will suffer immensely.

Dr Randy Persaud, via email.



Venezuelans protesting

# Remembering an outstanding UG grad

Dear Editor,

It is with great sadness I write of the passing in New York on November 9, 2023, of my dear friend, Dr Morris O. Paul, a member of the first batch of students admitted to the University of Guyana in 1963.

Morris and I were among the approximately 20 students admitted to the Biology Department that year. Of that number, only five of us survived the rigours of work and study to graduate, and we became close friends. Morris is the first Biology graduate of the UG and the only one in our group to graduate in four years.

After a stint as an Instructor in the Biology Department and Research Assistant to Professor Harold Drayton, Head of the Biology Department, who was conducting research into equine encephalitis with facilities offered at the Central Medical Laboratory of the Georgetown Public Hospital, Morris was admitted in 1969 to the University of the West Indies in Jamaica to pursue a MSc in Medical Microbiology.

Upon completion in 1971 he proceeded to the University of Manchester, UK, where he completed a PhD, majoring in virology.

Dr Paul is one of the most outstanding graduates of the UG's Biology Department. Over the years he pursued a career in medical research and teaching, which took him to Canada, the UK, Nigeria, the Caribbean, and the US.

From 1977 to 1985 he was Senior Lecturer in Medical Microbiology and Parasitology at the University of Ife, Nigeria, and from 1980 to 1985 he served also as Consulting Microbiolo-

gist at the Ife University Hospitals Complex.

Subsequently, he held teaching and research positions at a number of US institutions, including Research Associate at the Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York; Director of the Retrovirology Laboratory, North Shore University Hospital, New York; and Assistant Professor of Microbiology at Cornell University Medical College, New York.

Also, from 1992 to 1999 he was visiting Scholar, Regional Virus Laboratory, East Birmingham, England. Prior to retiring, he was a Microbiologist with the US Food and Drug Administration, and Adjunct Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, Long Island University, New York.

Dr Paul published extensively in scientific journals on Aids, Immunology, and Microbiology, and made presentations at various international conferences.

In 2002 he was the Keynote Speaker at the dinner and dance of the Ontario Chapter of the UG Guild of Graduates, where he reconnected in person with many friends during his UG years.

He leaves to mourn his caring and loving wife Doreen, in whose arms he passed away, son Stephen, three grandchildren, and many relatives and friends.

On behalf of myself and my family, who he met for the first time in 2002, but who remembers him fondly, I extend our deepest sympathy to Doreen, Stephen, and the grandchildren.

To Morris, I say goodbye dear friend, may your soul rest in eternal peace.

Harry Hergash, Toronto, via email.

Dear Editor,

The topic of my poem is relevant and significant to every Guyanese at home and in the diaspora, and cannot be overstated.

Haimnauth Cecil Ramkirath, via email.

Who Dares to Trample Our Grass?

What's this loathsome itch, this unquenchable feverish thirst  
to dare to trample our grass with hard heavy boots,  
and raise the dust that tell of a wretched incursion —  
to erase the time-honoured demarcation,  
and grab Essequibo and its islands with a crooked line?

An unyielding defiance in every current that rages through this land,  
every wildflower, every blue saki and kiskadee, every jamun tree,  
every vein of gold and diamond, and in every grain of sand.

The leopard and cheetah will startle you with fire in their eyes  
The black caiman follow you at every step of every mile,  
until you come to know it's a madness—this bellicose show—  
to grow your far-flung legs, arms, and shoulders  
by snatching your neighbour's mountains and rivers.

The jewel of Essequibo will never dazzle on your crown.  
So let the silence along the Pakaraima mountains resound.  
Stop this prattle; rest your drums and guns.

Your cup filled to the brim with the waters of the Orinoco;  
you are choked with the black gold in its basin.  
Why then this readiness to fight with a gentle neighbour  
who relies on the watchful eyes of Mount Roraima,  
and the stealthy steps of the prowling Jaguar?

The forked tributaries of the Essequibo River admonish your flawed map.  
Not one feather of our toucan will fall on your lap,  
nor will you take from a balata tree one drop of blood or sap.  
And if you spread your hairy hands over our savannahs and wetlands,  
the spirit of Makonaima will strike you with ten thousand fangs.

To claim what's not yours — an ignoble thing —  
it's not the song you want your children to sing.  
And if you think we are too small to be strong,  
then listen to the thunder of Kaieteur —  
it will drown all your drums and guns.

## RE/GUYANA GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

### Selling Property in Guyana

Guyanese property owners who are considering selling should be aware of the process and the costs that lie ahead. For the uninitiated, buying and selling a property in Guyana is not a simple process, and will involve lawyers, realtors, valuation consultants, and accountants and take nine to 12 weeks to complete. Some attempt to reduce potential costs and tax liabilities by managing the process themselves, which is often an exercise in frustration.

In cases where the property may have increased substantially in value, taxes are most likely due. Regardless of the payment arrangements the seller may make with the buyer, the Guyana Revenue Authority will assess the current value and levy taxes on the increase in value from 2011 to today. In some Georgetown neighbourhoods, this increase can be substantial.

Even in cases where the buyer is known, there is a significant process that will include managing the sales and conveyance process, which includes getting a valuation, an audit, filing the paperwork with the Guyana Revenue Authority, and obtaining the certificate to complete the sale. Without this, the GRA will not permit the transfer of the property to the buyer.

The best approach for sellers is to retain an experienced lawyer and realtor to manage the process on their behalf. The fees associated are typically deductible from the taxes levied, so professional help pays for itself.

In cases where the seller may be a group of persons, there is the additional requirement of settling the proceeds as per their respective shareholding. The payment and receipt of large amount of funds today requires the appropriate paperwork to comply with modern anti-money laundering requirements common now in every jurisdiction.

RE/Guyana's service is designed to simplify this process for overseas sellers where we integrate all realtor, legal, valuation and accounting services. We ensure our clients are able to obtain market value, and are able to successfully complete the transaction without having to make a single trip to Guyana. The globalised Guyanese nation can see a buyer who is located in Canada with a seller located in Europe.

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.](#)

# Decisive legislative action needed after TSTT cyberattack

Dear Editor,

The recent cyberattack on Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago and the consequential data breach have not only exposed vulnerabilities in our corporate digital defenses, but also cast a spotlight on the inadequacies of national cybersecurity policy under the administration of Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley.

This incident amplifies the urgency for comprehensive cybercrime legislation, a process that has seen considerable delays in Parliament, contributing to the country's vulnerability to such attacks.

The response to cyber-threats requires proactive governance. However, the current administration, led by Rowley, has been notably slow in advancing cybercrime legislation in Parliament.

This delay is more than an administrative lapse; it is a critical gap in the nation's digital armour. Effective legislation is the cornerstone of a robust cybersecurity strategy, providing the legal framework to combat and prevent cybercrimes.

The absence of such legislation leaves our digital infrastructure, from government databases to private sector businesses like TSTT, susceptible to attacks.

Further accentuating this concern is the government's failure to align with the tenets of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. This international treaty serves as a guideline for developing national legislation and fostering international cooperation against cybercrimes.



Rushton Paray

The reluctance by the Rowley administration to adopt the convention's principles reflects a concerning oversight in recognising and addressing the multifaceted nature of cyber-threats. This inaction can be seen as a dark stain on the administration, signaling a disconnection from global cybersecurity standards and practices.

The government's inaction in strengthening cyber legislation directly impacts national security. Without robust legal frameworks, it is challenging to effectively counter and prosecute cybercrimes, leaving national data and infrastructure at risk.

The lack of decisive action in updating and enforcing cybercrime laws can dampen international business confidence in Trinidad and Tobago, hindering trade relations and foreign investments.

The government's sluggish response to cyber-threats, and its failure to adhere to international cybercrime standards can tarnish the country's reputation as a reliable digital economy partner.

In light of these challenges, the following measures are necessary:

- Expedited Legislation Process. The government must prioritise and expedite the process of introducing and passing

## Venezuela must respect the UN Secretary-General

Dear Editor,

I have always maintained that it is Venezuela's, and not Guyana's recent display of activist and aggressive unilateralism that has increased tensions on the border issue before the World Court. Venezuela's position also disrespects and undermines the Office of the Secretary-General of the UN.

It was a former UN Secretary-General on whose wise judgment the border issue was referred in 2018, to the International Court of Justice for its final legislative, legal, exclusive, and equitable determination (as prescribed by the 1966 Geneva Agreement).

Why must Secretary General António Guterres lump Guyana with Venezuela's sabre-rattling?

It is the latter that is placing a spanner in the works of the ICJ – increasing instability, rejecting the adjudicative process of the ICJ, having failed twice to discredit the ICJ's judicial process, and the ICJ's *locus standi* to preside over, and finally determine this sore in Guyana-Venezuela relations.

It is Venezuela's premature and injudicious introduction of a most threatening, illegal, outlandish consultative referendum set for consideration on December 3 that is exclusively ramping up tension, that led to the ICJ to meet in Emergency Session earlier this month to consider issuing an injunctive relief of provisional measures against Venezuela, at Guyana's request, to hold its hand on its domestic referendum.

That illegal referendum is inconsistent with, is an affront to, undermines, compromises, and infringes on the current proceedings before the ICJ.

It is a calculated and deliberate affront to prejudice, and prejudices the competence of the ICJ on the case before it.

Also, it violates several provisions of the UN Charter that prohibit the use and/or threat of force to settle disputes extra-

comprehensive cybercrime legislation in Parliament.

- Alignment with International Standards. Trinidad and Tobago should actively work towards adopting the principles of the Budapest Convention to align with global standards in combating cybercrime.

- Public-Private Collaboration. Enhancing collaboration between government bodies and the private sector is crucial for sharing knowledge, resources, and strategies to bolster national cybersecurity.

- Awareness and Capacity Building. Investing in public awareness programs and specialised training in cybersecurity will create a more informed and resilient populace.

- Incident Response and Recovery. Developing robust incident response strategies and recovery plans is essential to minimise the impact of cyberattacks.

The cyberattack on TSTT is a stark reminder of the pressing need for updated cybercrime legislation, and adherence to international standards in Trinidad and Tobago.

The failure of the Rowley administration to promptly address these needs has left the nation exposed to increasing cyber threats.

As a Member of Parliament, I urge the government to take immediate action in fortifying our digital infrastructure and legal framework, safeguarding our nation's security, economy, and international standing in the digital era.

MP Rushton Paray, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



## Accountability needed at TSTT

Dear Editor,

The recent security breach in Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago has left citizens rightfully outraged and concerned about the safety of their personal information. The revelation that customer files were dumped on the dark web without accountability has eroded public trust, making it imperative for responsible parties to be held accountable.

Public Utilities Minister Marvin Gonzales' assertion that he cannot terminate anyone only adds to the frustration, as citizens demand swift and decisive action.

The lack of accountability in this situation not only jeopardises the privacy of individuals, but also erodes confidence in the overall security apparatus. Citizens rightly expect their security to be sacred, and the failure to address this breach undermines that fundamental expectation.

Minister Gonzales' claim about the inability to take action is not only disheartening, but raises questions about the effectiveness of the system in place to safeguard sensitive information.

Moreover, the scepticism toward intelligence agencies, characterised by the perception that they only lie and lack competence, further exacerbates the crisis of confidence. If citizens believe that those entrusted with their security are unable or unwilling to fulfil their responsibilities, then it poses a significant threat to the social contract between the government and the governed.

In the face of this scandal, it is crucial for accountability to be established. Heads must roll to demonstrate that such negligence will not be tolerated, and those responsible for the security breach will be held to the highest standards.

Restoring public trust requires a transparent investigation, swift disciplinary measures, and a commitment to reinforcing security protocols. Only through these actions can citizens be reassured that their security is indeed a sacred commitment that will not be compromised.

The government must act decisively to rectify this situation and prevent future breaches, ensuring that citizens can once again have confidence in the protection of their sensitive information.

Gordon Laughlin, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



António Guterres

judiciously, and upsets the peace-and-order balance existing in the Caribbean region.

It appears Guterres is following the lead set by Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, who blamed both parties for the 'noises' as she downplays the liquidation threat being faced by a fellow Caricom member.

Guterres is said to be following the "recent escalation of tension" between both States with concern. However, he has urged both parties to act in "good faith".

As he stated, "In January 2018, after carefully analysing developments in the good offices process that had taken place over the preceding years, the Secretary General, in the exercise of the power and responsibility conferred on him by the 1966 Geneva Agreement, chose the International Court of Justice as the means that was next to be used for the solution of the border controversy between the two countries..."

Venezuela must take due note of, and respect, this affirmation issued by the Office of the UNSG, which is taking (and re-admitting) responsibility for referring the matter to the ICJ in accordance with the terms of the 1966 agreement.

This was after extensive diplomacy, unrestricted dialogue, and his well-intentioned, dispassionate good offices' role failed to bring about a negotiated settlement.

Venezuela must cease misinterpreting the 1966 agreement to suit its own militaristic and expansionist agenda to pressure Guyana to submit itself, and to accept a pro-Venezuela diplomatic agreement and a new alternative border with Venezuela in the Essequibo Region border.

That will reduce Guyana's current land area to 30,000 square miles, and loss of a substantial part of its current claim to the extensive maritime areas off-shore stretching to 350 miles.

Stephen Kangal, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.

## Narine did more for cricket than for West Indies

Dear Editor,

I fondly recall watching Sunil Narine bowl that infamous maiden super over to Nicholas Pooran in one of the earliest editions of the CPL, and that was a display of his wizardry in a nutshell. Deceptive, quick through the air, wicket to wicket, and very economical.

I place him a touch ahead of Ravi Ashwin in the art of bowling the carrom ball. It was that weapon that helped Trinidad and Tobago in the T20 Champions League in India, the West Indies in the T20 World Cup in 2012, and of course his IPL titles with the Kolkata Knight Riders.

Calling him a "pelter" is a cheap shot. Batsmen had to guess where the ball was turning. Give him his plaudits: he was an excellent bowler.

I cannot remember a time seeing Narine without his trademark Mohawk hairstyle, neither him celebrating extravagantly like Dwayne Bravo or Kieron Pollard. I do remember his debut as an opening batsman alongside Aaron Finch in the Big Bash. I did not know he had that in his locker.

Narine is a legend of the T20 format. His global prowess is what catapulted T20 franchise cricket around the world. Whether we like it or not, this is the future, and a pathway to more nations trying to get into the sport and rise to Test status.

Narine did more for cricket than he did for the West Indies, and that is a good thing. He was a major gear in the evolution and revolution of cricket. Cricket is now hitting the Olympic stage, and its globalisation is what will increase participants in ICC tournaments going forward.

Of course, sport is about the money, all athletes across all sports strive for that generational wealth. Sport in this part of the world is still tremendously disrespected, and that probably is why Narine gets that appreciation overseas.

Thanks for the memories, Narine, thanks for everything, it was a pleasure seeing you play the beautiful game. Trinidad and Tobago has not seen the influence of Narine on cricket around the world just yet. He is not just a West Indies legend, he is a cricket legend.

Kendell Karan, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



# Potential for open conflict with Venezuela up in the air

As the Guyana/Venezuela border dispute rages on, it is hoped that the conflict would not escalate into an armed confrontation. Guyana is expecting that the International Court of Justice would rule in its favour and prevent such confrontation. But Venezuela has openly stated that it is not obliged to abide by the decision of the ICJ, which leaves the potential for open conflict up in the air.

At the ICJ hearing earlier this month, Venezuela's Vice President, Delcy Rodriguez, emphasised that the country's participation in the hearing should not be misconstrued as recognition of the ICJ's jurisdiction over the territorial controversy.

She stated: "I wish to begin by emphasising that our participation in this hearing in no way implies recognition of the jurisdiction of this honourable court over the territorial dispute..." Earlier this year, the ICJ had ruled that it has jurisdiction to hear Guyana's case.

Guyana had earlier requested an urgent meeting with the ICJ to stop a Venezuelan referendum scheduled for December 3 on whether or not to annex the oil-rich Essequibo region. Unconfirmed sources contend that the Nicolás Maduro regime is manipulating the population to force the referendum, which includes a proposal to grant Venezuelan citizenship to the people of Essequibo.

The dispute, which has been simmering for several decades, intensified following Exxon's discovery of an estimated 11 billion barrels of recoverable oil resources in the offshore Stabroek Block located in the disputed territory.

Venezuela is claiming nearly 62,000 square miles, or roughly three-quarters of Guyana's territory, including the territorial waters containing the Stabroek Block. This area includes all of Guyana's land west of the Essequibo River.

The long-standing territorial dispute has never been really resolved, in spite of the fact that in 1899 the Washington Treaty of Arbitration granted Guyana the disputed land. The Treaty granted Venezuela control of the land surrounding the mouth of the Orinoco River, while Britain (British Guiana was then a colony) was given all land west of the Essequibo River. However, Venezuela was not satisfied with the arbitration results and in 1962 declared the Treaty of Arbitration null and void.

Venezuela's main contention is that the Essequibo River to the east of the region forms a natural frontier between the two countries, which was recognised as the border in 1777.

Prior to Guyana gaining Independence in 1966, the United Nations attempted to find a solution with the parties signing the Geneva Protocols, which stipulated that Venezuela, the UK, and Guyana will find a peaceful and satisfactory solution to the dispute. This led to the creation of the Good Offices Process by the United Nations to mediate Venezuela's territorial claim.

However, Guyana and Venezuela were unable to reach an agreement after several decades, and the matter was referred to the ICJ in 2018. The court accepted the case, but is

only now making some headway. In November 2022, the ICJ concluded its preliminary hearing on the objections raised by Venezuela, which argued that Guyana's case should be dismissed.

Earlier this year, the dispute gained steam following Guyana's decision to auction 14 oil blocks in the Essequibo region. Guyana's neighbour contends that Guyana has no right to award blocks to any oil company because the area is in its maritime territory.

Since Guyana commenced oil explorations in 2015, Venezuela has openly vowed to seize the disputed territory, and has been stepping up its aggression towards Guyana. It had ordered the Exxon exploration consortium to cease operations, but its orders were ignored. It also redrew the Guyana map to include the disputed territory as its own with the intent of infuriating Guyana and inciting its own people to take action in keeping with the popular slogan "Guyana is ours. We must take it".

In September, Venezuela's Foreign Minister Yvan Gil said the nation would be asked to vote in a referendum to ratify its borders against aggressive enemies.

In a release he said: "Venezuela's national assembly unanimously decided to call our people to vote in a consultative referendum to ratify the defense of our sovereign territory against the aggressions of the American empire, which wants to lead us to a war for natural resources."

Venezuela has also contended that the US government is using ExxonMobil to stir up war and enmity between the two countries.

"We alert the international community of US intentions to create, in our peace zone of Latin America and the Caribbean, a military base in the Republic of Guyana, to turn that country into the spearhead of an aggression operation against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which would put the peace and stability of the entire region at risk," a Venezuelan statement declared.

It added, "The people and the government of Venezuela, united in defence of the homeland, will not give in [to] or be intimidated by pressure, blackmail, or threats when it comes to defending the sacred homeland."

In the meanwhile, Guyana's President Irfaan Ali stated at the annual UN forum, "We demand that Venezuela honours its obligation under the charter to pursue only peaceful means to settle any disputes it may have with Guyana, including adjudication before the International Court of Justice."

He added, "Allowing the court to decide would ensure a resolution that is peaceful, equitable, and in accordance with international law. Guyana will spare no effort in defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

In mid-October, the Maduro regime beefed up troops on the border with Guyana, not only



**Dwarka Lakhan**



**Irfaan Ali**



**Nicolás Maduro**



Ministerial Group, and the US.

It is hoped that the border dispute would not escalate, and can be resolved peacefully. In fact, Guyana would be unable to repel a Venezuelan invasion on its own, which would most likely lead to regional and/or international involvement.

Venezuela's Ambassador to Guyana Carlos Amador Pérez Silva is reported telling the local press earlier this month that Venezuela would not invade Guyana even if its people voted 'Yes' to the declaration of Essequibo as a State of Venezuela.

But Maduro might very well have a sinister motive. Some sources claim that Maduro is

using the conflict with Guyana to derail the upcoming Presidential elections, where he will have to face a strong Opposition candidate. He is willing to cause an armed conflict with Guyana to suspend the elections, taking advantage of the political and social situation in the country. Elections are scheduled to be held before the end of 2024.

Maduro also launched an aggressive campaign of disinformation that spilled on social media, prompting Guyana's Office of Foreign Affairs to request Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) in late 2022 to remove what it called "illegal maps" showing the Essequibo as belonging to Venezuela.

Under threat of a Venezuelan invasion, Guyana has garnered support from a range of international institutions and countries, among them Caricom, the OAS, The Commonwealth

increasing military personnel but also exercises, under the guise of a crackdown on illegal mining. Some reports seemingly indicate that the Venezuelan military is building an airstrip in the vicinity of the border area.

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# T&T's beloved Crazy starts off GTA's festivities



**Toronto** – The Christmas Season's festivities took off on the right foot, left foot, and its traditional Trinidad and Tobago two-step dance last week when this nation's beloved calypsonian Edwin Ayoung, more familiarly known as Crazy, took to the stage here in the GTA.

Crazy featured at the *Unforgettable Parang Show*, which took place on November 18 at the Mirage Banquet Hall in Etobicoke. The event was put on by GO Events, Stagefront Events, and SKF

The Champ. Also on stage with Crazy at the successful, pulsating event were a number of live bands, Maestre & Friends, LVL Exodus, FTR Stefan Jaxx, with music by DJs Tricky, Flexsonic, JRG, Stutta, and Icon.

And as it is said in Trinidad and Tobago after a successful event, and as the photos show, "A good time was had by all".

*Photos courtesy HighLife Promos, Rafi & Vanessa Naqvi*





Pandit Sharma (right) delivers his message on Hindu Federation Month

## Hindu Federation marks Heritage Month

The Hindu Federation celebrated Hindu Heritage Month in collaboration with the Devi Mandir (one of its members) in the latter's auditorium at 2590, Brock Road in Pickering on November 11.

Over 200 guests were in attendance, including representatives from the Devi Mandir, Bhavani Shankar Mandir, Mississauga Ram Mandir, Vishnu Mandir, Maha Rudra Dev Mandir, and Nityanand Meditation Academy.

It was an excellent program that included a video message from MP Chandra Arya, whose dedication and hard work led to Hindu Heritage Month being proclaimed in the Canadian Parliament in 2022.

A feature of the program were the contributions by young Hindu Canadians that included Debunking Common Hindu Myths by Ravisha Sharma of the Maha Rudra Dev Mandir; a Hindu Art Display by students of OCAD University, and Life as a Hindu Student and Art in Hinduism by Kashmeena Mangal and Ishaan Shetty from University of Toronto, St George Campus, and Khushy Jetley and

Vishwa Patel from OCAD University.

Also part of the program was a presentation, 'Relevance of Hinduism Today' by two youths from Nityanand Meditation Academy.

Cultural performances of a high standard included those provided by students from three of the four dance schools at the Devi Mandir (Panwar Music and Dance, West Indian Fusion Dance Centre, and Shobha Talent and Cultural Centre), as well as from youths from the Bhavani Shankar Mandir, Maha Rudra Dev Mandir and Mississauga Ram Mandir.

Solo performances by Pt Dhruv Raturi (bansuri) from Mississauga Ram Mandir, Avin Mangal (ghazal) from Bhavani Shankar Mandir, and guests Virendra Persad (key-board) from the Triveni orchestra in Trinidad, and Vedant Panwar (sufi song) added a wonderful touch to the program.

Messages from Hindu leaders present (including from Pandit Roopnauth Sharma, President of the Hindu Federation) urged all Hindus to recognise and celebrate Hindu Heritage Month.



A performance by young ladies from Bhavani Shankar Mandir



Pt Dhruv Raturi (right) on bansuri and Vedant Panwar on the tabla

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**Belize PM John Antonio Briceño (left) with King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**  
**Landmark Saudi Arabian summit**

**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia** – The inaugural Saudi Arabia-Caricom Summit concluded last week as a landmark event that fortified partnerships and opened up new avenues for collaboration between Saudi Arabia and the Caribbean region.

The summit came two months after the approval of the Joint Action Plan between the Gulf Cooperation Council and Caricom for the period 2023-2027.

This plan was endorsed during a joint meeting of foreign ministers on September 18 in New York. It outlined the primary objectives and mechanisms for political dialogue, trade facilitation, investment promotion, and tourism cooperation between the two regions.

As the *Caribbean Media Corporation* reported, according to both Saudi Arabian and Caricom officials, the summit's aim was to enhance trade and investment flows between both regions.

And as the official noted, while the trade volume between GCC countries and the Caribbean stood at approximately (US) \$6.5 billion in 2021, the plan provides a framework to amplify trade and investment through dialogues on both sides.

It also emphasises engagement with business leaders, regional, and international organisations to meet investment needs and business opportunities through partnerships across public and private sectors, including transportation and logistical services.

The summit was co-chaired by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, chairman of the 15-member Caricom group.

During the summit, both groups reaffirmed their mutual interests and friendly relations, with the leaders exchanging views on issues of common interest and discussing ways to further expand and advance their partnership.

Doing so would mean taking advantage of the growth opportunities that can be utilised through cooperation between the two dynamic regions based on a shared vision and the values embodied in the United Nations Charter.

Following the summit, a joint statement issued by both groups underlined mutual interests and friendly relations based on the common vision and the values contained in the United Nations Charter.

Also, it stressed the importance of concerted efforts to promote peace, security, stability and prosperity, through mutual respect and cooperation between countries and regions.

It would do so with the aim to achieve sustainable development and progress, and maintain the rules-based international order based on commitment to international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Also stressed was the support and endorsement of Saudi Arabia's bid to host the Expo 2030 exhibition in Riyadh.

Both Saudi Arabia and Caricom also pointed to cooperation in the field of developing circular agriculture, promoting sustainable food production, optimising the management of water resources, enhancing trade and investment opportunities in the food and agricultural industries, encouraging the exchange of information, and exchanging experiences, research, modern technologies and best practices.

The statement reiterated the importance of working together to confront the global challenges related to climate change, and the commitment to make all efforts to achieve the ambitious goals of reducing emissions and adopting renewable energy production and clean technologies.

It also welcomed the Green Middle East initiative, and Saudi Arabia's announcement of allocating (US) \$2.5 billion to support its projects and governance. The statement then stressed support for Saudi Arabia's establishment of an international water organisation, headquartered in Riyadh, and the call for more decisive global action.

It concluded with a commitment to hold further consultations and discuss ways of cooperation in specific areas, including education, health, maritime cooperation, communication, logistics, food security, energy security, tourism and economics, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.



**Caricom heads with Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**



# Ask Jay...

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## WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE DEPOSIT WHEN THE DEAL FALLS THROUGH?

**W**hen buying real estate, a buyer usually submits a deposit with an offer to purchase. The deposit is given in good faith, and in many ways, expresses the buyer's financial strength. Sellers would prefer to work with offers that have a substantial deposit. The buyer's deposit is in trust, usually at the seller's real-estate brokerage. If the deal falls apart, does the buyer automatically lose the deposit? It depends.

An offer to purchase a property, once accepted, becomes a contract. Specific clauses in the agreement dictate the outcome of the deposit. The contract can state that the offer is subject to the buyer obtaining financing within a particular time-frame, and if the buyer cannot obtain financing, then the deal dies and the deposit is refunded to the buyer. Offers can be conditional for many reasons, such as a lawyer's approval or home inspection. Once these conditions are met, the buyer signs a notice of fulfillment or a waiver to remove the condition, and the transaction becomes firm and binding on both parties. The next step is to wait for closing.

Closing is when the buyer gives the seller the remaining money balance, and in exchange, the seller transfers ownership to the buyer. It is a great disappointment for the seller and buyer if a deal cannot close. The seller may have committed to buying another property and is relying on the proceeds of the current home to buy. A string of buyers and sellers can be affected like a domino effect, or a multiple collision. Ultimately, the financial damages incurred along the process will be the original buyer's burden. At that point, the buyer can work out a settlement with the seller to forfeit the deposit or a part of the deposit. When the financial damage exceeds the deposit, the seller may seek legal action, and the court, in turn, can award the seller accordingly at the buyer's expense. If a transaction fails to close, the buyer may also need to seek alternate accommodations.

When a buyer uses a realtor to purchase a home, the deposit has extra protection because realtors contribute to a mandatory insurance program governed by the Real Estate Council of Ontario, which has deposit coverage in case of theft or other mishaps. Real estate brokerages are strictly regulated, and the deposit must be in the brokerage's trust account within five days. The brokerage can only release the deposit according to the terms of the trust. When a buyer cannot close a transaction, the deposit does not automatically revert to the buyer or awarded to the seller. The buyer and seller must have a mutual written agreement stating how to distribute the deposit. If both parties cannot settle, then strict rules are in place to protect the deposit.

Sometimes the deal fails to close, and the buyer's deposit is refunded. For example, when the buyer cannot obtain insurance for the property, or the property is damaged by fire or flood. There are instances where more than the proceeds from the sale are needed to pay off the seller's expense, and as a result, the deal falls apart, and the buyer gets the deposit.

Ontario's purchase and sale agreement states that the buyer must bring the deposit within 24 hours of acceptance, which is easier because the buyer only has to give the deposit if the seller accepts the offer. If a buyer submits the deposit late, the seller, in most cases, can cancel the offer, especially if another buyer is willing to pay more for the home. Failure to make the deposit does not automatically relieve the buyer from the contract unless the contract specifically states that non-payment of the deposit terminates the deal. If a buyer anticipates a delay, it should be in the agreement.

The market is cooling, and when this happens, the price drops quickly, and, in some cases, the drop is more than the deposit. Also, lenders would lend based on the current value, and if the appraisal is lower, the buyers would need to increase their down payment. When the market is shifting, try to close the transaction quicker, and before removing the conditions, ask the lender to appraise the property up front.

Saving up a significant deposit can be a lengthy process, and when it comes to making an offer in real estate, caution is key. If you're not well-versed in the real estate world, it is a smart move to make your offer contingent on your lawyer's approval, or enlist the help of a trustworthy realtor. It is like having an experienced guide to ensure you navigate the complexities smoothly.

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A celebration of Hindu Heritage Month was held by the Canadian Intercultural Association for Humanity on November 16 at the Markham Civic Centre, Markham. Among the dignitaries in attendance were MP for Markham, Paul Chiang; Mayor Frank Scarpitti; Councillors Amanda Collucci and Isa Lee of the Markham City

Council; and Guyana Consulate, Toronto's Honorary Consul Mani Singh, who was guest speaker at the event. Singh was accompanied to this special event by members of the Consulate staff. In photos, from left to right, are guests at the celebration; Mayor Scarpitti; MP Chiang, and Honorary Consul Singh.



Vishnu Mandir held its annual Diwali celebration on November 19 to mark the true essence of light overcoming darkness, and goodness over evil. Friends and family gathered for the celebration and a sumptuous dinner, along with entertainment

that saw performances by singers, dancers, and children. Among the dignitaries were Guyana's Honorary Consul Mani Singh; Richmond Hill Mayor David West; MP for Richmond Hill, Majid Jowhari; and Lotus Funeral's Kamal Bhardwaj



Pranav celebrated Diwali with Lakshmi Puja and Bhajans in a grand religious service on November 12 at the Bharat Sevashram Sangha Canada Hindu Heritage

Inc. In photos, Pranav devotees in worship during one of the sessions of Lakshmi Puja that was held at the Ashram



Epic Entertainment and Tropical TV hosted its Grand Diwali Gala/Pageant Show at the Noor Convention Center in Brampton on October 28. Performers at the event included Vanita Willie, Terry Gajraj, and Devindra Pooran. In photos, left to right,

are Rajmini Ram, Shashti Samaroo, and Chalisa Ram; Devindra, Chalisa, and ACG President Bejai Jairam; Chalisa, MPP Rod Powers, Rajmini; MPP Ragbhir Chauhan, Chalisa, and Rajmini; and Rajmini, Vanita, and Chalisa



YouTube screen captures courtesy *It's Your Local Family Rita & Khrisna*



Lighting of the symbolic diya

## Little Guyana lights up with Diwali celebrations

By Dhanpaul Narine

It was spectacular and unforgettable. The crowds took over the entire block, many bedecked in traditional wear and to the sounds of music for Diwali. It was the annual Diwali "Light Up Liberty Avenue" celebration, and was aptly held at the junction of Liberty Avenue and Lefferts Boulevard in the heart of Little Guyana.

The weather was set fair for a grand celebration, and hundreds poured in from Richmond Hill, and elsewhere, to witness a wonderful display of culture. Diwali is known for the lighting of diyas, or earthen lamps, to welcome the return of Lord Rama and his entourage from exile. The festival represents the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness.

Diwali or Deepavali originated in India thousands of years ago, and was taken from there to other parts of the world. It became an important observance in the lives of indentured immigrants in the Caribbean. A good number of countries have declared Diwali as a national holiday, including Guyana. When Indians migrated to North America, they took their festivals and cultural practices with them.

Diwali was celebrated in a big way since the 1970s in New York, and some would argue that it may have been earlier. Diwali is widely regarded as a Hindu celebration, but the festival is also popular in the Sikh and Jain communities. Its popularity has resulted in Diwali being proclaimed as a school holiday in New York, and this will take effect in 2024.

The celebration in the Indo-Caribbean community was given a great start by Pandit Ramlall and the Arya Spiritual Center.

It was taken to another level by the Divya Jyoti Association. It started off small, like most events, but it grew into a motorcade that attracted wide participation with attractive floats on Liberty Avenue, and culminated with a grand cultural program at the Arya Spiritual Center Ground.

The past three years has seen the program at the Liberty Avenue and Lefferts Boulevard site, that is co-named Little Guyana, and it has lived up to expectations.

It should be noted that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Divya Jyoti Association found a way to hold a public Diwali event in the community.

The 2023 program was elaborate, well-planned, and inclusive. This was evident by the great turnout. There were several booths that catered to the needs of the community. It was a 'back-home' atmosphere in the heart of Queens, New York.

Pandit Bharat Singh from the Arya Spiritual Center set the tone performing the havan, or prayers, and Pandit Krishna Inderjeet from the Shri Durga Mandir gave his blessings. His mandir also decorated a booth with the children depicting various characters from the holy Hindu texts.

The proceedings began with Pratima Doobay, from Shridevi Arts, giving the opening prayer, and setting the mood. Vashtie Doorga's performance was memorable, as was the item from the Wendy and David Ali Dance Academy.

Pandit Vijay sang the glories of the Lord most admirably, and Kimberly Raghobar excelled in her presentation. The Saraswati Dance Academy was impressive and left everyone wanting more.

It was now time for Pandit Navin Doobay from the Shri Trimurti Bhavan. He read beautifully from the *Shri*

*Ramcharitmanas*, and expounded on the meaning and significance of Diwali.

Nashley and Vikash Persaud dedicated their song to Mother Lakshmi, and many in the audience sang along with them. Sattie Ramnarine, and her husband Kesh, sang the glories of Mother Lakshmi to an appreciative audience.

Shivana Subir has been a dancer in the community for over 20 years. She was the first Mother Lakshmi that walked in the Diwali Motorcade. She performed a special Diwali mix at the 2023 event that went down well with the audience. The performance by Navin Ramsaran Maharaj was like a majestic white tiger and it embodied the true spirit of Diwali. Anil Sukul is one of the most passionate and genuine performers in the

community. He touched the hearts of everyone with his performance.

The Sanasani Dancers have become one of the main attractions at Diwali. This year's presentation lived up to the high standards as the audience recorded every move with their smart phones.

Lisa Hariprasad used her wonderful talent to spread the message of peace and love and this went down well with all. Pally Dass is Mr Versatility. He is one of the most recognised singers around, and has been the lead singer in many local bands. He brought sunshine with his melodious voice.

Natasha Sundar captivated the audience and created a sense of togetherness with her heartfelt lyrics. Rajiv Ramdeen from Trinidad and Tobago created harmony with beautiful melody and brought the audience to their feet with his performance.

Sindu Harripersaud joined the Nirvana Humanitarian Foundation at a tender age, and has used dance to create awareness and to support many worthwhile activities. Randy 'Recklez' Ramdin is the total package as he sings and dances and brings cheer to light up the lives of others. He was memorable at the event.

A number of community leaders spoke about the magnificent program, including this writer, as well as Naro Balli and Pandit Bharat Singh from the Arya Spiritual Center, Balram Rambrich from Arya Samaj USA, and Japneeth Singh from the Sikh community.

The program also honoured members of the 106 police precinct on stage.

The Divya Jyoti Association would like to thank Moheed Oasman for the Diwali sign at the junction of Lefferts Boulevard and Liberty Avenue, and all the sponsors for their generous contributions.

Toro Sound was crystal clear and Roshan Shiwcharran's all-round contribution was invaluable. Leon Suseran brought the community live feed on social media; Buddy Singh took wonderful pictures, and Dev Dilchand and Saleena Ram (Miss Lotus 2023) were excellent hosts with the microphone.

Finally, Lakshmee Singh's vision must be commended. In London, Diwali is associated with Trafalgar Square, and in other countries, it is in the main cities.

In New York, the Diwali event has become synonymous with Richmond Hill in Queens. This could only happen with vision, thinking big, and planning on a grand scale.

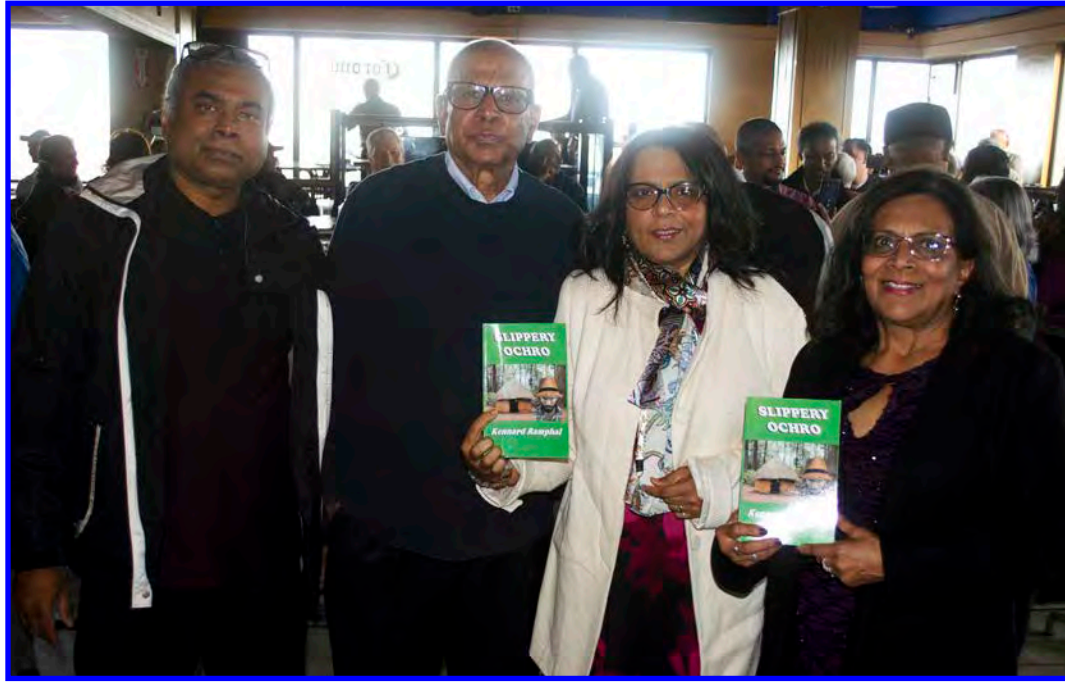
Lakshmee Singh embodies the vision to put Little Guyana and Trinidad, Suriname, India, and other communities, on the map. It should be supported.



Lakshmee Singh



Jiantee Jagessar



Members of Ramphal's fan club with purchased copies of *Slippery Ochro*



Ramphal autographs *Slippery Ochro*

## Writers' group Carican issues call to diaspora to write our stories

By Romeo Kaseram  
LJI Reporter

**Scarborough** – The call was made earlier this month by the writers' group, Carican, for members of the community to begin adding their stories to the growing inventory of narratives on the diaspora.

The enjoiner for the community to ensure our voices are heard was made during Carican Writers group launch of two books at a well-attended event that took place at the Tropical Nights Restaurant in Scarborough on November 5.

The book launch was chaired by author Harry Persaud, who issued the call for the archiving of our voices via narratives that tell our stories as a growing and settling diaspora.

"You don't have to be an academic to write a book; just tell your story. Many people are interested in your journey, your adventures, and interests in life," Persaud told the gathering.

Additionally, Persaud declared there is "a book in each of us". At the same time, he enjoined the community to "be bold, do not be afraid that you may be judged; leave a legacy for your children and future generations... if you don't share, it could be lost forever – we are all dancing with time".

In the lineup at the launch were writings by the late Ram Jagessar, *Two Novellas: Anand's Strange Adventures in Canada, and The Guyana Jungle Road to Nowhere*, and the latest fictional work by author Ken Ramphal, *Slippery Ochro*.

Present at the launch for Jagessar's novellas was Jiantee Jagessar, while Ramphal presented his own text. Both Jiantee and Ramphal offered corollary commentary on the works, and read humorous excerpts from both books.

The writers' group, Carican, came into existence about 12

years ago. Its formation occurred shortly after an anthology of poems was published by six writers of Caribbean origin. The collective saw five members and published authors in the group, Ram Jagessar, Ken Ramphal, Narain Datt, Roop Misir, and Harry Persaud working together for support and inspiration to disseminate their ideas and voices outwards to the community.

Sadly, since its inception, Carican has lost two founding members, Narain Datt, who passed away in January 2021; and Ram Jagessar, who died in April this year.

Meanwhile, Carican continues to grow, with author, poet, and publisher Ken Puddicombe being the most recent member to join its ranks. Puddicombe is the winner of the Guyana Prize, 2022, for literature in the fiction category. He also heads the publishing house, Middleroad Publishers.

At this time, Carican has collectively authored 13 books, among them a number of fiction and historical novels; along with books of poetry, short stories, a compilation of essays, and biographies. Three more books are in the works, and are currently being prepared for publication.

In his commentary on Ramphal's *Slippery Ochro*, Persaud noted how the text's "wit and humour" captures "the essence of the ever-elusive character", often referred to as a "confidence trickster".

As he noted, in Ramphal's novel, Sugrim Singh, also known as Slippery Ochro, and his wife Phulmatie, were "wrecking balls" in the village where the novel is set, a locality similar to the novelist's early days, which were spent at Canal No. 2 on West Bank, Demerara, in Guyana.

"In a series of plots and scams, husband and wife, quintessential diabolic mendicants, worked together as a single mind

creating havoc upon upstanding and honourable members of the village community. Two such members were... Mohabir and his wife Dularie, who fell victims to the sweet and silky overtures of the vindictive and cunning Slippery Ochro and his wife Phulmatie," Persaud noted.

He added, "The novel... is a great read, and in my estimation, in many ways reflects village communal life. Hopefully, in the foreseeable future, a graduate student at university could develop a scholarly thesis on the sociology of human interaction in rural Guyana."

In his commentary on Jagessar's novellas, Ramphal declared both texts were "an excellent read".

Said Ramphal: "All immigrants can relate to the first novella, *Anand's Strange Adventures in Canada*, and can empathise with Anand as he navigates his way in a new and cold country".

And commenting on the second novella, *Guyana Jungle Road to Nowhere*, Ramphal noted the scope of Jagessar's authorial and perceptive gaze in describing his experiences, along with a group of students, who were invited by the then Guyanese leader, Forbes Burnham, to work on building a road to connect Brazil and Guyana.

As Ramphal noted, "Jagessar's description of his stay at the camp at Mahdia, where the road begins, is full of humour. During his stay in Georgetown, and in Matthew's Ridge, and in his meetings with [Burnham] and other government officials, he [gains] insights into the political and social situation of Guyana at the time. Jagessar shares these not very positive perceptions with the reader."

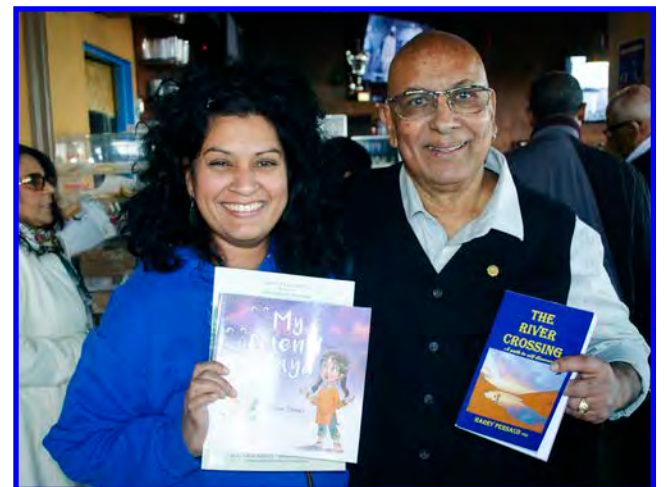
Ramphal summed up, stating, "The road, incidentally, was never finished, and is now reclaimed by the forest."



Harry (left) and Jiantee



Ken Puddicombe and wife, Rohini



Author Kiran Shines (left) with Harry



Ken greets a guest at the book launch



A section of the gathering at the launch



Harry (right) greets a guest at the event



# A tribute to the scholarship, legacy of UWI's Dr Brinsley Samaroo

By Dr Kumar Mahabir

Professor Emeritus Dr Brinsley Samaroo was a distinguished Caribbean historian, retired university lecturer, and a government minister. He died in Trinidad on July 9, 2023 at the age of 82. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Among his many legacies, Samaroo will be most remembered as one of the few pioneers of the study of Indentureship and the Indian Diaspora.

After obtaining his BA and MA degrees in History from Delhi University in India, and then his PhD from the University of London in 1969, he taught New World and South Asian History at The University of the West Indies in Trinidad, where he was born and lived.

He rose through the ranks to become the head of the History department. After his retirement from The UWI, he was appointed a senior research fellow at the University of Trinidad and Tobago. He wrote extensively on the history of Trinidad and Tobago with a focus on working-class movements, Indo-Caribbean history, and political and institutional development.

During his political career, he was an Opposition senator from 1981 to 1986, and was elected the Member of Parliament for Nariva in 1991. He served in the National Alliance for Reconstruction government from 1987 to 1991, successively as Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister; Minister of Decentralisation; and Minister of Food Production and Marine Exploitation.

Samaroo was one of the architects of the Sugar Museum, and was deeply hurt when the in-coming PNM government scrapped the project.

At the time of his passing, Samaroo had just completed a book on the history of San Fernando, having just launched a book on the life of trade union leader, Adrian Cola Rienzi (born Krishna Deonarine).

A pan-Indo-Caribbean Memorial Tribute was chaired by Shakira Mohommed and moderated by Shalima Mohammed, both from Trinidad.

The programme was hosted by the Indo-Caribbean Cultural Centre, and the Ameena Gafoor Institute for the Study of Indentureship and its Legacies.

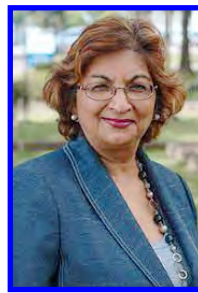
There were eight speakers in the ZOOM programme. Excerpts of their presentations are given below. [Click here to view entire ZOOM program.](#)



Brereton



Mahabir



Mohammed



Vahed



Samaroo



Hassankhan



Kassim



Ramchand



Dabydeen

Dr Kumar Mahabir

"Samaroo's pet topic which he spoke on at many venues was *Changing Caribbean geographies: connections in flora, fauna and patterns of settlement from Indian inheritances*. He drew heavily from my book, *Medicinal and Edible Plants Used by East Indians in Trinidad and Tobago* (1991), and my paper *Animals from India in the Caribbean* (2004). For his recognition of my research, I am grateful."

Dr David Dabydeen

"Brinsley was Trinidad. He was a perennial presence. He was

always there for his family, friends, colleagues, students. And for me. I could always lean on him; I could always phone or email him for advice, direction, and contacts; and he always obliged."

Dr Maurits Hassankhan

"In my opinion, Brinsley Samaroo is the driving force for the promotion of historical research on Indentured labour and the descendants of the *girmitiya* themselves. He encouraged people to do research. The Indian Diaspora conferences he organised were not only for Trinidad, but also for the Caribbean and the world."

Dr Goolam Vahed

"Professor Samaroo continued to inspire me over the years with his pioneering work, political commitment, and determination not to frame his work narrowly as an 'Indian issue', but to contextualise it within the broader political economy."

Dr Bridget Brereton

"Brinsley was also what we call a public historian, a public intellectual, who took his knowledge and ideas out to the people in so many ways and over so many decades. He gave innumerable talks and lectures, he took part in so many initiatives to preserve and disseminate our history. He led many tours to places of historical interest, such as Moruga, Valencia, and Nelson Island."

Dr Kenneth Ramchand

"We should honour his life, his love and his work by returning to his model project. I am taking this opportunity to appeal again to the government of all the peoples of Trinidad and Tobago to make a priority of finishing what he started by moving to establish a Brinsley Samaroo National Sugar Museum."

Dr Halima-Sa'adia Kassim

"His scope of work included Muslims, and he was also sought out by segments of that community for his knowledge. Samaroo had an [unquenchable] curiosity for places, communities, and people... he also viewed knowledge as a tool to promote change, understanding, and tolerance in our communities."

Dr Patricia Mohammed

"He did not confine himself either to Trinidad, or to the Caribbean. He was perhaps one of the leading thinkers in the region who forced us to embrace the history of Indentureship in Fiji, Mauritius, and Suriname. How he brought history alive was by telling the stories of the people who were involved. He had the true gift of a storyteller."

My first frightening experience sent chills down my spine and gave me sleepless nights for weeks after it happened. I was about four years old. Our five-member family lived in a small two-bedroom ancestral home on a 50-acre cattle farm.

Our parents occupied one bedroom, and I shared the second bedroom with my older brother and younger sister. My brother and I slept on a double bed against one wall, and my sister slept on a single bed against the far wall.

One night, my brother, who was three years older than me, screamed in his sleep and slid against me, jolting me awake. I saw a small potbelly man with an evil grin fade into the sheer curtain and become one with the light of the half-moon beaming into the room.

I shut my eyes and pretended to sleep when Kelvin glanced at me. I did not want to scare him by confirming the genuineness of his nightmare. For the rest of the day, my brother walked around in a daze, as if haunted by the bad dream.

I asked him why he was moping around to try to pry his feelings out of him, but he seemed too scared to revisit the traumatic event.

Eventually, the episode faded out of our memories, and we carried on as normal until another event jolted us into the realm of the supernatural. The movie, *The Exorcist*, had arrived to scare the world. It happened at the time when my sister was 12 years old, about the same age as Regan, the demon-possessed girl in the movie.

As board game enthusiasts, we had accumulated a stack of board games that the neighbourhood kids loved to come over and share with us. One game that captured our imagination was the *Ouija* board. We had lots of fun with this game and asked the invisible entity of the game some hilarious and entertaining questions with equally amusing answers.

The ominous and unavoidable collision between the movie and the board game occurred one night when we escaped through our bedroom window while our parents were asleep to see the late-night playing of *The Exorcist*.

After the movie, we jumped at every sound and glanced over our shoulders with every step on our walk back to our house. Because our sister was about the same age as the girl

## The Supernatural I See Dreams



possessed by the demon in the movie, neither one of us wanted to climb through the window into the room, especially since the moonlight shone off her face and gave the appearance of a smile. We imagined frosted breaths emanating from her nostrils. We had to pass by her bed on our way to ours.

We ended up sleeping on the back stairs leading to our bedroom window until daylight made us brave enough to crawl into the room and fall sound asleep.

About an hour later my sister let out a blood-curdling scream from an early morning nightmare. I glanced over at her and saw a dark cloud hovering above her for a split second before it seemed to get sucked under the bed by the *Ouija* board.

The *Ouija* board rattled and stopped, and my sister fell back to a peaceful sleep. Exhausted from the night's ordeal, Kelvin did not budge. My parents stirred, but my dad's snoring reassured my mom that nothing was out of the ordinary.

It was my turn to be jumpy all day. The sight of the dark cloud being sucked into the *Ouija* board haunted me. The rattling of the *Ouija* board terrified me.

Kamil  
Ali



I heard that sound everywhere. That is when I realised that I had entered a terror-filled world of living nightmares. My fear of the night kept me awake, which forced me to witness and confront the demons that haunted others in their sleep. It would have been easier for me to live through my own dreams, whether good or bad. At least I would be able to get some sleep.

Lack of sleep at night forced me to nod off during the day in school. I had to shift my routine to self-teach each evening using the sparse notes I made in class each day to keep from failing, while being frequently distracted by the demons conjured up by my family and others in their dreams.

The dreams took me to the village where my father's parents lived. I was happy to know that ancestry originated from a humble village in Nepal, where the women kept house, and the men walked hundreds of miles to provide lumber for the world from the sides of the Himalayas.

I confirmed that my mom's grandmother did not die from cancer as the pathologist wrote on her death certificate. My mega-rich grandfather had poisoned her to marry her nanny, 20 years younger than he was at age 65.

Payback happened when she inherited his multi-million-dollar estate by taking him out of the picture with arsenic that her doctor boyfriend had secured for the purpose. They had never lived to enjoy it. An accident a few months later transferred the assets to an adopted child who grew up in an orphanage. The orphanage still benefits from his contributions.

I started my job as a prison warder at the age of 22. I walked through the halls of the prison, watching the tormented men dream of the crimes that they had committed, and witnessed the ghosts of their victims haunt them into insanity.

I also saw many pardoning ghosts begging for their forgiveness for being wrongfully accused and convicted.

I am now a priest. I watch over my congregation, and I can tell who is sincere, and who is dressed to impress. I say nothing; but in my heart, it does not matter. Everyone is here for a reason, and I accept their commitment like I do mine. We are not here to judge each other, but we are obliged to get along and accept our faults as humans.

# CoE report on Paria tragedy ready November 30

**Port-of-Spain** – The final report into the Paria diving tragedy that claimed four lives is to be delivered to President Christine Kangaloo on November 30, Secretary to the Commission of Enquiry Sarah Sinanan said last week.

Following the news, lone survivor of the tragedy, Christopher Boodram, said he was not holding his breath.

“I am trying not to think about it. I have been disappointed too many times,” he told the media following Sinanan’s disclosure.

CoE Chairman Jerome Lynch had initially hoped to hand in a draft report in early April this year, with the final report at the end of that month.

However, since then there were two requests for extensions. Lynch later said that the volume of evidence was far greater than he had anticipated.

The CoE requested an extension to August 31, but then came yet another delay when a request was submitted for an extension to November 30.

The final report will contain the CoE’s findings into the incident, along with recommendations. Lynch has also suggested the report be made public.

Boodram said the CoE’s report into the incident was an initial start in finding closure for him, and for the loved ones of the four deceased divers.

“This report was the first step to closure. Now I am living a life filled with anxiety and panic attacks. My co-workers and I were left to suffer inside that pipeline. I thank God I managed to get out,” he stated.

On February 25, 2022, five LMCS divers: Kazim Ali Jnr, 36; Fyzal Kurban, 57; Yusuf Henry, 31; Rishi Nagassar, 48; and Christopher Boodram, who was 36 years old at the time, were conducting maintenance works on a pipeline owned by Paria Fuel Trading Company Ltd in Pointe-a-Pierre.

All five men were sucked into the pipeline, with Boodram being the lone survivor.

The CoE heard evidence over a six-month period, with the final piece of evidence, the hyperbaric chamber, being viewed on the compound of Paria, Pointe-a-Pierre, in March this year.

The enquiry into the tragedy was chaired by Lynch, and included fellow commissioner Gregory Wilson, a subsea specialist.

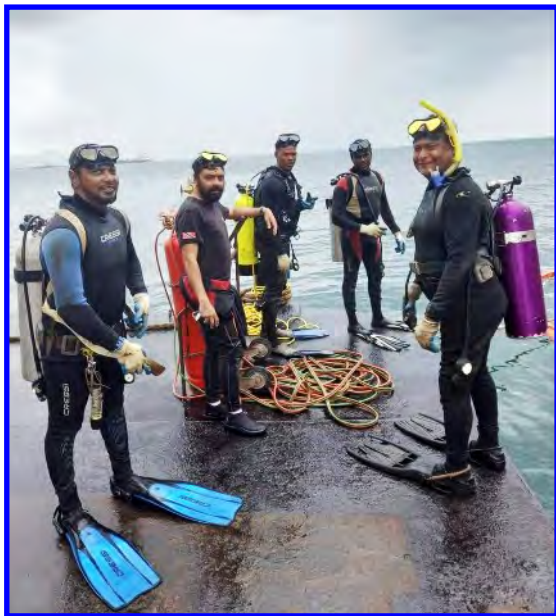
The CoE was represented by Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj.

So far, the enquiry has accumulated (TT) \$21 million in costs between the Office of the Prime Minister and Paria.

At a virtual news conference in September, Lynch said lawyers from Paria and Heritage Petroleum Company Ltd sent letters to the commission; and prior to that, attorneys from Kenson, a service contractor to oil and gas companies, sent letters on August 2 and previously, all claiming bias.

He said further that there has been some media speculation that the cause of the delay has been as a result of either political or [Paria] interference in some way.

However, he stated categorically, “That is not the case. If there were even a whiff of such an approach, I would make that very public indeed.”



The five divers (from left) are lone survivor Christopher Boodram, Kazim Ali, Yusuf Henry, Rishi Nagassar, & Fyzal Kurban



Marvin Gonzales



Lisa Agard



Ken Western

# TSTT urged to be transparent after cyberattack

**Port-of-Spain** – The Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago was last week urged to be truthful and transparent with the population following a cyberattack that saw publication of sensitive data of thousands of nationals on the dark web.

The call to TSTT was made by Public Utilities Minister Marvin Gonzales.

Also last week, Gonzales and Minister of Digital Transformation Hassel Bacchus met with Kent Western, the new acting TSTT Chief Executive Officer.

Also attending the meeting with Western were TSTT Chairman Sean Roach, and the Ministry’s Permanent Secretary, Nicolette Duke.

Western replaced former TSTT CEO Lisa Agard, who was fired on November 14 following the cyberattack debacle.

As is now known, TSTT was the target of a malware incursion on October 9. However, the public was only notified of the cyberattack on October 27.

Notification of the intrusion came after international hackers RansomExx announced TSTT had been attacked with ransomware, and that as much as six gigabytes of data, including names, e-mail addresses, national ID numbers, phone numbers, and “a lot of other sensitive data” had been accessed and extracted.

TSTT addressed the cyberattack for the first time in a release issued on October 30, downplaying the scope of the breach. Following this revelation, based on the information received from TSTT officials, Gonzales also downplayed the attack in a report to the Parliament.

Last week, during the meeting with Western, Gonzales emphasised the need for TSTT to be forthright and transparent.

A release from the ministry stated, “During the meeting...

Gonzales emphasised the need for TSTT to be transparent, truthful, and forthright with the population, and to move with dispatch on the investigations as the breach may have national security implications.”

As Gonzales stated, “What is critical at this point in time is restoring the public’s trust and confidence in the company.”

The release further stated that Bacchus offered the two TSTT executives advice on the approach to the investigations, and the level of skill and competency that the investigating bodies must possess.

He also cautioned the population against trawling the dark web, noting that individuals who did so were putting their security at risk.

The release added: “Both Ministers offered the resources and support of the government to the company as it conducts its investigations and works towards regaining the population’s trust. They also congratulated the new CEO on his appointment, and wished him all the best in his new role.”

Gonzales later told the media that two investigations are still underway into the TSTT cyberattack.

He added that Western will reinforce there must be full cooperation, and the securing of all information and equipment as the probes continue.

According to Gonzales, one investigation is being done internally by TSTT, and the second is an independent probe, which he ordered.

He did not indicate names of the investigators, only declaring that the probe will be undertaken by an external agency.

Gonzales was also vague on when the findings of the probe would be submitted, stating, “I can’t give a timeline as yet, but once I have that information, the public will know.”



Harewood-Christopher (left) with Minister of Social Development and Family Services Donna Cox at the National Parenting Programme launch last week

# CoP: Police cannot fix bad parenting fallout

**Port-of-Spain** – Poor parenting is a contributing factor to the violence and criminality that are now plaguing Trinidad and Tobago, Police Commissioner Erla Harewood-Christopher stated last week.

In the wake of that statement, Harewood-Christopher then issued the complaint that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service now faces an unfair expectation from the public in having to deal with criminals, who in the first place should have received earlier and better guidance from their parents.

Harewood-Christopher made the statements last week while speaking at the launch of the 2023 edition of the National Parenting Programme by the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services in Port-of-Spain.

As she said, parenting remains a root cause, or a contributory factor, to violence and criminality locally. Since it all starts at home, the failure by parents to better guide their children are now being made the responsibility of law enforcement officials.

“What we are confronted with is an unrealistic expectation that the police can somehow miraculously transform the propensity, the disposition, and the behaviour of people with criminal intent. How practical a proposition is that? Policing is not a substitute to parenting,” she said.

Harewood-Christopher added, “The police as the law enforcement agency has its very definite role of ensuring the laws are enforced, and that any infractions are detected and prosecuted. That role in a conscious society will have an effect on deterring and preventing crime, but there is also a very definite, and perhaps more important role to be performed by parents and guardians in the nurturing of our young people, and this role requires very deliberate actions.”

She also noted that intolerance, disrespect, and insubordination are rampant in schools. It culminates in violence among students, towards teachers, and security officers, she declared.

Additionally, it was noted this breakdown also occurs within homes, where parents appear to be relinquishing their authority.

She also lamented that community elders no longer involve themselves in raising children, as they sometimes face “violent objection” from parents.

Noting that adults now avoid reprimanding deviant behaviour in even the youngest of children, such bad behaviour then escalates into offences that are punishable by law, she declared.

“Whether the offender survives or ends up dead, the whole of society then cries out to the police to solve the problem. By then it is too late,” she said.

Harewood-Christopher further urged parents to live by example, and to take their task of raising the nation’s future generations with more focused guidance and better values.

“Your children are learning from what you do. What you do and how you do it makes a difference. Teach your children respect. Teach them to have a right sense of values. Be involved,” Harewood-Christopher advised.

Additionally, “We need adults to be involved in their child’s life. Being involved takes time and hard work, and may even require a rearranging of your priorities. It frequently means sacrificing what you do for the sake and welfare of your child. When parents become an absentee, or neglect their children, they create a vacancy for someone else to fill, and too often it is filled by persons of ill-repute with the wrong influence.”

# NCD epidemic in T&T heading for dire hospital outcome says CMO

**Port-of-Spain** – Unless an ongoing epidemic of Non-communicable Diseases is arrested, then Trinidad and Tobago’s hospitals “won’t have bed space” in 20 years, Chief Medical Officer Dr Roshan Parasram warned last week.

With cardiac disease, hypertension, and diabetes continuing to be the leading causes of death among men and women in Trinidad and Tobago, Parasram said the focus must now be on children, who must be targeted to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Parasram made the statement during an appearance with other public health officials before a Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration.



**Roshan Parasram**

The focus of the JSC was an enquiry into Trinidad and Tobago’s response to the prevalence of NCDs, with specific focus on diabetes, cardiac diseases, and cancer.

Parasram noted that “lifestyle” choices in Trinidad and Tobago continue to be the primary cause of people developing NCDs. Among these choices were the use of tobacco, poor diet, and low to no exercise activity.

Parasram said the Ministry of Health was focused on getting Trinidad and Tobago to a place where “we are a healthier society as a whole”.

Getting there required a “whole of society approach” that included both government and public interventions, he stated.

In response to JSC members expressing concern over Trinidad and Tobago’s annual costs of managing NCDs, Parasram warned that additional hospital beds would not help in the future.

It is a problem that must be dealt with now, so “in ten years we don’t have a cluttering of the [Accident and Emergency] depart-

ments”, he stated. According to Parasram, the rate of NCDs now apparent are symptoms of an epidemic that started 20 years ago.

He added, “If we don’t stop it now, I guarantee, even with a 500-bed tower in Port-of-Spain General, Arima... we won’t have bed space.”

As he declared, Trinidad and Tobago is tending to obesity, making the entire country



**A patient attends an NCD clinic at a hospital in south Trinidad** an “obesogenic” environment. Also, it is such that this obesity trait was already evident in the younger generation.

A “paradigm shift” was needed, with all stakeholders on board to contain this downward momentum, he declared.

At the event, the Health Ministry’s team noted a range of programmes aimed at encouraging lifestyle change, some in collaboration with the ministries of Education, Sport, and Agriculture.

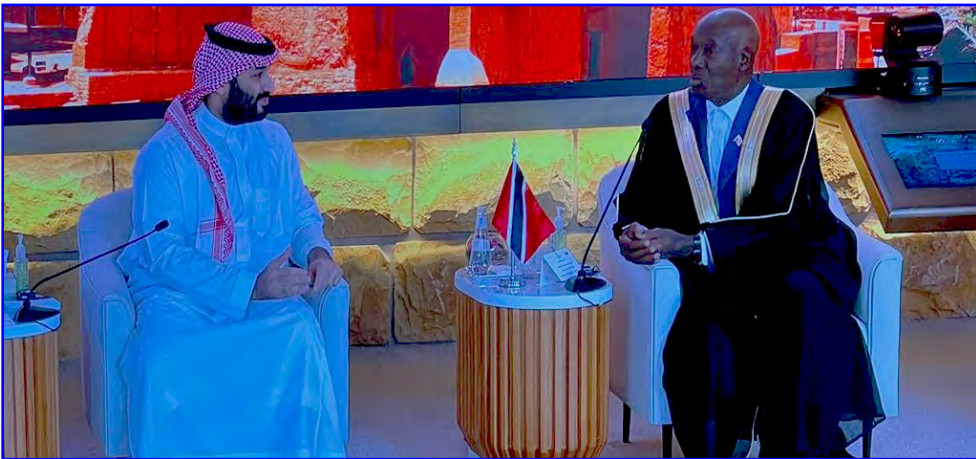
However, Parasram underscored the importance of targeting the primary and secondary school system, stating that “children will drive

change”. He also said the current rate of obesity among children was as yet unavailable, with the annual survey being conducted locally by the Pan American Health Organisation.

Meanwhile, Parasram noted that data in 2015 suggested a high rate of childhood obesity; however, he avoided using anecdotal information.

In 2011, PAHO’s survey showed up to 27 percent obesity among minors.

An updated survey would show whether there has been an improvement since, Parasram stated.



**Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (left), met with Dr Keith Rowley during the inaugural Caricom-Saudi Arabia summit last week**

## T&T delegation meets with Saudi officials

**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia** – Trinidad and Tobago’s Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley and other Caricom leaders met with various officials in Riyadh during the inaugural Caricom-Saudi Arabia summit last week.

Among the events was a visit to the King Abdullah Financial District of Riyadh. Agriculture Minister Kazim Hosein accompanied Rowley on that visit.

Also, Rowley and other Caricom leaders held a meeting with Saudi Tourism Minister Ahmed Al Kateeb.

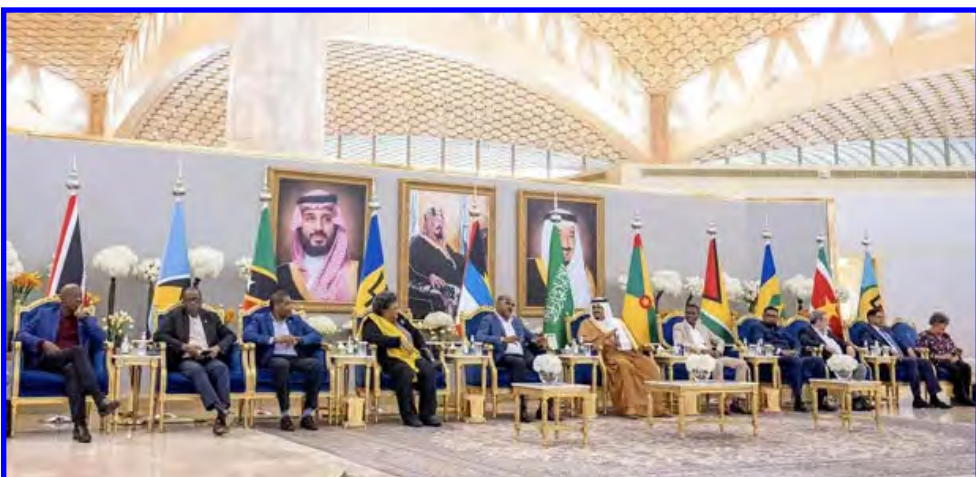
The opening day of the summit saw Rowley holding bilateral talks with Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman on opportunities for both countries to work together to create energy security for the Caribbean.

The summit also saw discussions held between Caricom leaders and members of the Saudi Arabian government that explored possibilities for collaboration in areas such as agriculture and food security, renewable energy, climate change, finance, and tourism.

Energy Minister Stuart Young and Foreign and Caricom Affairs Minister Dr Amery Browne were also members of the Trinidad and Tobago delegation.

The summit came about following Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir meeting with Caricom leaders at their 43rd regular meeting in Suriname, which took place in July 2022.

At that meeting, the Saudi minister proposed the summit as one initiative to deepen ties between Caricom and Saudi Arabia.



**Caricom leaders met with HRH Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Governor of Riyadh Region last week**

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## The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

# Many happy memories from evergreen *Awara*, *Naujawan*, *Albela*

By Vidur Dindayal

**A**wara, *Albela*, *Deedar*, *Naujawan*, *Sagai*, *Shabistan*, and *Kalighata* were among the big movies in the early 1950s. Those movies are evergreen – their stories and songs are forever popular.

The early 1950s seem to me the time of the greatest movie productions to come out of Bombay, some from Madras, and the height for super stars Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand, Kamini Kaushal, Nargis, Vijayanthimala, to name a few.

*Awara* was a big hit. Thanks to the marvels of modern science, today you can see the whole film on *YouTube*, sitting comfortably at home.

I did just that the other day, after the 70 odd years when I saw it for the first time in Guyana in the early 1950s.

Many positive points struck me about the movie. Shanker Jaikishan made their name as music directors for this movie. It was the highest grossing in the history of Indian cinema. Nargis was a young star then. After established stars Suraiya, Nalini Jaywant and Madhubala, she was a winning actress, and very convincing in her portrayal.

Raj Kapoor's father Prithviraj Kapoor played a role throughout the film. The love song on the boat is most memorable. Since then, there were other love songs on boats in later movies, with the most memorable being the one with Rajkumar and Meena Kumari in *Pakeezah*.

*Awara's* story is about a 'fatherless' child who because of no money and no proper schooling took to pick-pocketing and crime. He served some time in prison. When he got out he vowed to be straight.

He got a job and was doing okay until the boss discovered he had been in prison and immediately sacked him. His childhood friend Nargis stuck with him when she learnt who he was, and the actual father relented at the end.

I would seriously recommend looking at this black and white movie. It was excellent to look at, and gripping throughout.

No wonder this movie made a good name in Russia and China for Raj Kapoor, who was its producer and director. I was a student in India when I learnt of Raj Kapoor being received in Russia as a celebrity because of *Awara*.

The film was well-known in Russia. It also did well in China in those days. To this day, the song *Awara Hoo* is for me the most memorable melody of all time.

Bhagwan had just made a name for himself as a comedy star, when out of the blue the movie *Albela* blast onto the screen. There are many scenes of *Albela* that one would never forget, but *Shola Jo Bharke*, the song and dance for us from Guyana and the Caribbean, was made for us. Many of us danced on the beach to the rhythms of *Shola Jo Bharke*.



*Awara* is a story about a 'fatherless' child



*Naujawan* is evergreen for its song *Thandi Hawayen*



*Albela* was a superhit for its songs and story

*Albela* was a super hit for its story and all its songs by music director C. Ramchandra.

Bhagwan could not hold down a proper job because his mind was always on being a super singing and dancing star. He saw a dance on stage by someone who looked like him.

I remember his words distinctly. He said to himself, "What is the difference between me and the fellow on stage. We look alike, nose same, eyes same. I am fat, so is he, but look how people are after him for his autograph, and me, look at me, not

even a dog wants to come near me."

He is well-known for pretending to be a superstar where he works. One day his colleagues made fun of him when he came into the office, announcing that he was a great prince when he made his entrance.

His head was full of dreams, which he often played out in real life. Going into the office when the boss was not there, he acted like he was talking to an equal.

He immediately changed his tune when the boss arrived, and was told to go do his job preparing letters for the mail.

However, he begins dreaming again while preparing the letters. Watching the clock, he dreams he is singing and dancing with Geeta Bali. Then the boss arrives with 100 rupees. Bhagwan is happy, but the boss says, "Fifty rupees for wages, and 50 rupees as payment on dismissal."

Bhagwan buys a dhoti and kurta for his father, and a sari for his mother. When he tells his father he was dismissed, his father was so upset that he turned Bhagwan out of the house.

He found a job to wash dishes in Geeta Bali's kitchen. He makes up a tune, which he starts singing to the sound of the clanking and clinking utensils. Geeta Bali heard the song, noted his talent, and she made him the *kalakar* – star he wanted to be. He became a song and dance star.

Meantime, his parents are evicted since they could not pay the rent. In this scene, the father is sitting at a street corner with his daughter, who is singing to comfort him. She stretches out her hand while singing.

Passersby seeing them poor and helpless put money in her hand. Soon more coins were left on the pavement for them. The daughter is happy to receive the money, but the father retorts, "Leave the money. We are poor, but we are not beggars." They maintain their pride and dignity.

For the movie *Naujawan* I remember its most popular evergreen song sung by Nalini Jaywant, *Thandi Hawayein*. It is a happy and cheerful song. Watching the movie recently, I discovered the lead male star was Premnath. He has such a striking personality, and of course, has good looks.

I wonder why he did not play more lead roles in his young days. I know he has done many character roles, the most memorable being the father of new young lady star Dimple in the movie *Bobby*, starring young Rishi Kapoor as the male hero.

The story is simple. Nalini Jaywant is from a wealthy home. Her father is very suspicious of suitors for his daughter, whose interest may be getting at his money. She ends up marrying poor but handsome Premnath, whom she bumped into at the start of the movie and fell for him. She sang *Thandi Hawayein* after she first saw him, and imagined themselves romantically together.

## Indian cinema in the 1950s, 1960s explored themes of poverty, caste

**W**ith cinema a medium to highlight issues affecting Indian society, the 1950s and 1960s saw filmmakers making movies aimed at social regeneration.

As the *Indulge Express* has noted, these filmmakers introduced a philosophy of reformist cinema that defined a nation-building narrative.

It means that even while enjoying these movies, at the same time the shows opened up to audiences critical narratives about dissonances within a world to which they were at times oblivious, or perhaps were choosing to ignore.

Among the themes explored by many of these Indian movies in that period are traumatic social upheavals following India's partition, poverty and deprivation, unemployment, racial discrimination, the caste system, and hostile living conditions leading to crimes.

All of these themes were explored in one way or the other in movies that were produced by the filmmakers during the era of the 1950s and 1960s.

Below are a few of these movies that explored national and universal themes that remain relevant today, not only to India, but also further abroad.

### Exploration of economic inequality in *Mother India* and *Do Bigha Zameen*

Economic inequality, such as the rich getting richer and poor getting poorer, have existed in India since it was ruled by kings. Later, the gap widened under the British rule, and continued following India gaining independence from colonialism on August

15, 1947.

Exploring the complications faced by the India's poor, notably its farmers, movies like *Mother India* and *Do Bigha Zameen* depicted systemic poverty, deprivation, and hopelessness.

### In the movies *Devdas* and *Mughal-e-Azam*, the filmmakers explored caste, religion, and status in Indian society

Marriages are believed to be made in heaven; however, in reality, they remain in control on earth by orthodox ideologies such as caste, religion, and class.

*Devdas* and *Mughal-e Azam* depict the struggles of lovers. Despite more than five decades after release of these two movies, the existence of these themes in both movies remain modern-day challenges in India today, and in other parts of the world.

### *Sujata* and its exploration of untouchability

Dealing with the sensitive issue of untouchability, *Sujata* explored the love story of an untouchable orphan girl and a Brahmin boy, and their struggles to be together in a society that discouraged their relationship.

While there has been a cultural shift nowadays with untouchability, India is yet to fully embrace its dissolution.

### *Shree 420* and *Awara* and its thesis that poverty drives crime

Poverty has been widely addressed in many of the movies from the 1950s and 1960s. *Awara* and *Shree 420* are among those that highlighted how poverty drove youngsters into lives of crime.





Deepika Padukone

## Padukone speaks to success, impact of nepotism

**New Delhi** – One of the biggest superstars in India today, Deepika Padukone continues to make her presence felt globally with her acting talent, entrepreneurship successes, and luxury brand endorsements.

Having made her acting debut with *Aishwarya* (Kannada, 2006) and her Bollywood debut in *Om Shanti Om* (2007), Padukone recently reflected on her journey in cinema during an interview with *Vogue India*. The conversation was reported on by *NDTV* last week.

In the *Vogue India* interview, Padukone spoke about making it big in the film industry despite having no connections, and accepting that nepotistic practices are here to stay. She is the daughter of badminton player Prakash and Ujjala Padukone.

Speaking about nepotism in the film industry, she told *Vogue India*, “When you were an outsider 15 or 20 years ago, there was no other option. It is an uphill task for any individual trying to make a mark in a field or profession that their parents don’t come from. The fact that we have started to articulate things like nepotism is a new trend. It existed then, it exists now, and it will continue to exist. That was my reality.”

Padukone also revealed that she was proud of having achieved

it all on her own.

“Back then, I had so many things to deal with, not just professionally, but also personally. I was a teenager moving to a new city with no family or friends in a new industry. I had to figure out my meals (a time before Swiggy or Zomato, mind you), and transport, and lug my own bags around.”

Additionally, “I never thought of it as a burden back then. I would finish late at night, exhausted, then carry my suitcase across town in a cab, and sometimes fall asleep on the drive back home. My mother would be so worried about whether I would get home safe.”

Looking back at those challenging days, Padukone declared, “...I think, ‘Not bad, girl! You did this, and you did it on your own.’ But at that moment, there was no time to reflect.”

Padukone also spoke about the impact her experience in sports and modelling had on her acting career. Speaking to the challenging world of modelling, she summed up the difficulties saying, “If sport is one thing that teaches... life lessons, then modelling is another.”

She was last seen in *Jawan*, and later with appearance in *Pathaan*. Her next appearance will be in *Fighter*.

## Emotional song from ‘Animal’ explores father-son bond, turbulences

**A**n emotional song portraying a father-son bond from Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s upcoming release *Animal*, titled *Papa Meri Jaan*, was released last week, the *Indian Express* has reported.

The song portrays the bond between father and son, and is between the characters of Anil Kapoor and Ranbir Kapoor.

Sung by Sonu Nigam, his voice makes it quite soothing for the ears, although it is slow and may not make it into playlists.

*Papa Meri Jaan* is written by Raj Shekhar, and composed by Harshvardhan Rameshwar. Shakti Kapoor also makes an appearance in the song.

*Papa Meri Jaan* hints at the absence of Balbir Singh (Anil) during his son’s early and formative years. The role of the son is played by Ranbir.

While Ranbir’s character loves his father immensely, his dad is busy with his work. A scene in the movie shows the son being severely punished by the father.

After growing up, it appears that father and son now have a

troubled relationship. However, the son is ready to protect his father from any possible danger.

*Animal* is scheduled to hit the theatres on December 1, starring Bobby Deol as an antagonist.

While speaking at the Jagran Film Festival, Deol described the film as an “emotional, violent drama with love, romance, and hate”.

He added, “I was really lucky that I got to be a part of *Animal*. I have loved [Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s] work. He is the only director who has made the same film twice and succeeded both the times.”

*Animal* is an action thriller that is co-written, edited, and directed by Vanga.

It is produced by T-Series and Cine1 Studios, and stars Ranbir, Anil, Deol, Rashmika Mandanna, and Tripti Dimri. Cinematography has been handled by Amit Roy.

It was scheduled to be released in August this year, but was pushed to December 1 due to extensive post-production work.



Anil and Ranbir Kapoor in the song *Papa Meri Jaan*

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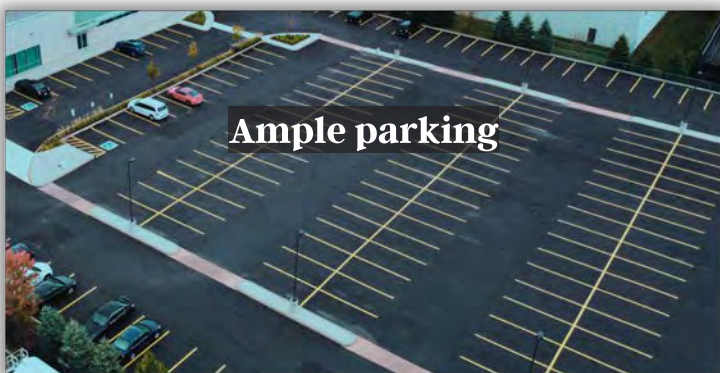
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# Kohli takes lead for most WC ODI tons

It was “the perfect picture” for Virat Kohli last week when he took the record as the first batter to score 50 ODI centuries in the World Cup.

Kohli put down the milestone during the World Cup semi-final against New Zealand. He took point as his wife Anushka Sharma and Sachin Tendulkar looked on.

It was Tendulkar’s record that was broken when Kohli flicked Lockie Ferguson behind square in the 42nd over of India’s innings and completed the two to acquire his 50th hundred.

He celebrated the achievement with a leap and a punch in the air before taking off his helmet, raising both arms and bowing towards the stands. Applauding in the stands were Tendulkar and Anushka.

“It’s stuff of dreams, Anushka was sitting right there, Sachin paaji was there in the stands,” Kohli said during the innings break.

“I mean, it’s very difficult for me to explain this, but if I could paint the perfect picture, I would want this to be the picture. My life partner, the person I love the most, she is sitting there. My hero, he is sitting there. And I was able to get the 50th in front of all of them, and all these fans at Wankhede as well, such a historic venue. It was amazing,” an exhilarated Kohli stated.

While Tendulkar had scored his 49th hundred in his 451st ODI innings, Kohli equalled that landmark in just 277 innings, in a game played against South Africa in India’s penultimate league game of this year’s World Cup. He broke the record in his 279th innings.

Said Kohli: “I said it in Kolkata, the great man [Tendulkar] just congratulated me, all this feels like a dream for me, honestly. It’s too good to be true, feels surreal, I never thought I’ll be here ever in my career. Just to help the team so many times, again, a big game today, I had to... play the role I’ve played throughout the tournament so that the guys around me can go and express



Virat Kohli

themselves. Just glad that everything came together so nicely, and we put up a great total on the board as well.”

Kohli’s historic ton also broke another Tendulkar record. His total also passed Tendulkar for the most runs in a single edition of the ODI World Cup.

In the 2003 World Cup, Tendulkar scored 673 runs. Kohli passed that total when he scored his 80th run in the semi-final. He is now the first batter to score 700 runs in an ODI World Cup.

His dismissal for 117 off 113 balls saw an aggregate of 711 runs in the tournament at an average of 101.57, and strike rate of 90.68.

The hundred was Kohli’s third of this World Cup to go with five half-centuries in ten matches. In the semi-final, he came in to bat in the ninth over of India’s innings, with the score on 71 for 1, and put on 93 off 86 balls with Shubman

Gill, and 163 off 128 balls with Shreyas Iyer.

Kohli brought up his half-century off 59 balls and then scored his next 50 runs off 53 deliveries, after seeming to suffer cramps while in his 90s. He played the anchoring role as India amassed 397 for 4, the highest total in a knockout game of a World Cup.

“As I’ve said a lot of times before, the most important thing is to make my team win, and whatever it takes to do that, I’m ready to do that, whether it’s running singles and doubles, hitting boundaries, whatever the team wants me to do,” Kohli said.

He added, “I’ve been given a role this tournament, and I’m trying to play that to the best of my ability, trying to dig deep, bat long, so that the others can play around me, and have that confidence that I’m going into the later overs where I can dominate with the bat as well. That is the only key to consistency I guess, just playing according to the situation, playing for your team at all times.”

## Pakistan’s Azam quits captaincy of all formats

Batter Babar Azam walked away from leading all three formats of the game after the team failed to reach the World Cup semi-finals. Following Pakistan missing a spot in the finals, Azam announced he had resigned as captain. However, the Pakistan Cricket Board later announced that he had been relieved of the white-ball captaincy.

The PCB also indicated that Azam had chosen to step down from captaincy of all the formats, despite being asked to stay on as Test captain.

Batter Shan Masood takes over as Test captain, while pace bowler Shaheen Afridi will lead the Twenty20 side. Up to this week a captain for the one-day side had not yet been named. Also asked by the PCB to take the walk was the entire coaching staff of the men’s team, including team director Mickey Arthur.

As *ESPNcricinfo*, *Cricbuzz*, and other international sports media reported, a new coaching team will be put in place for the tour of Australia and New Zealand, which begins in December.

Babar’s exit came following Pakistan placing fifth at the World Cup, winning four and losing five of nine games.

Babar himself had a challenging run in the World Cup, where Pakistan finished fifth with eight points. He scored 320 runs in the tournament, ranking third in runs for Pakistan, maintaining an average of 40, and a strike rate of 82.90.

He came under a lot of pressure from both experts and fans regarding his captaincy. Also, his lack of form with the bat added fuel to the criticism.

Pakistan faced setbacks in five out of their nine matches, including a defeat against arch-rival India by seven wickets.

According to the media reports, Azam met with the PCB in Lahore on November 15, and following discussions with his family, decided to also stand down as Test captain.

“It is a difficult decision, but I feel it is a right time,” he said in a statement on X, formerly *Twitter*.

Additionally, “I vividly remember the moment I received the call to lead Pakistan. Over the past four years I’ve experienced



Babar Azam

many highs and lows, on and off the field, but I wholeheartedly and passionately aimed to maintain Pakistan’s pride and respect in the cricket world. I will continue to represent Pakistan as a player in all three formats. I am here to support the new captain and the team with my experience and dedication.”

Babar first led in white-ball cricket in 2019, and took over as Test skipper in 2021.

Under his leadership, Pakistan won ten out of 20 Tests. However, the team was beaten 3-0 at home by England last December, the first time they have suffered such a loss on the home grounds.

Pakistan reached number one in the world ODI rankings in August, and also made the final of last year’s T20 World Cup, where they were beaten by England.

Chairman of the PCB management committee, Zaka Ashraf, said: “Babar Azam is truly a world-class player, and we want him to continue to thrive as a player. He is one of the best batters Pakistan has ever produced. He is our asset, and we will continue to support him. His batting prowess is a testament to his dedication and skill. He is a role model for the present generation.”

Ashraf added, “We want to see him grow as a great batter and now without his additional burden of the captaincy, he can focus more on his performances to reach even greater heights. We respect his decision and will continue to back him.”

Other departures in Pakistan’s configuration saw Morne Morkel resigning as bowling coach following the team’s exit from the World Cup tournament.

The former South Africa fast bowler joined the Pakistan team on a six-month contract in June this year. Morkel’s first assignment with the men’s team was their tour to Sri Lanka for the two-match Test series.

“Pakistan Cricket Board will announce his replacement in due course. Pakistan’s next assignment is a three-match Test series against Australia scheduled to take place from December 14, 2023 to January 7, 2024, in Australia,” the PCB stated following Morkel’s exit.



Sunil Narine

## CWI pays tribute to off-spinner Narine

Cricket West Indies has paid tribute to the “magical” Trinidad and Tobago off-spinner Sunil Narine for his contributions to West Indies cricket following announcement of his retirement from international duty early last month.

Narine played 122 matches for the West Indies in a career that spanned from 2011 to 2019. He took 165 wickets for the West Indies across three formats, with his career-best of six for 27 against South Africa in an ODI in Guyana in 2016.

Often described as a “mystery spinner” for his subtle and effective variations, Narine took his career-best Test figures in New Zealand in 2013 when he took six for 91 in Hamilton.

He played just six Test matches in his career. However, it was in the T20 format where he spun his best webs.

Narine was a member of the Daren Sammy-led West Indies team that won the T20 World Cup title in 2012, defeating hosts Sri Lanka by a 36-run margin in the final in Colombo.

In that final, he took away figures of three for nine, and accounted for the wicket of opposing captain Mahela Jayawardene.

CWI Director of Cricket Miles Bascombe paid homage to Narine in a CWI release last week.

“On behalf of CWI, I would like to thank Sunil Narine for his contribution to the West Indies during his time on the international stage. He was the kind of bowler who excited fans and brought them to the game,” the statement said.

Narine remains a fixture with Trinbago Knight Riders in the Caribbean Premier League, and was a key member of the Trinidad and Tobago Red Force team.

Bascombe also declared, “Narine was the ‘X’ factor in the West Indies bowling attack and produced some amazing spells. When at his best, he ranked among the very best in the modern era. We all remember the magical bowling performance in Sri Lanka, when he helped the West Indies to their first T20 World Cup title. As he continues his playing career, we wish him more success.”

Narine announced the exit from his international career on November 5.

“I appreciate it has been over four years since I last played for West Indies but today I am announcing my retirement from international cricket,” he wrote on *Instagram*.

He added, “Publicly I am a man of few words but privately there are a few people who have given me unwavering support throughout my career and helped me realise my dream of representing West Indies and to you I express my deepest gratitude.”

Narine has been a regular fixture in the Kolkata Knight Riders squad since 2012, and is now a familiar face in the T20 circuit across the world, which remains “business as usual” for him in the foreseeable future.

He continues to play for the Knight Riders franchise across leagues in the KKR in the IPL, Abu Dhabi in the International League T20, Trinbago in the Caribbean Premier League, and Los Angeles in Major League Cricket.

He is also part of the Hundred men’s competition with Oval Invincibles, and also plays in the Big Bash League, Pakistan Super League, and Bangladesh Premier League.

In 2014, he was reported for a suspect action following which he withdrew from the ODI World Cup the following year.



Sophie Ecclestone

## Ecclestone back in England's squad after injury

Left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone has been included in England's squads for the tour of India in December after recovering from a shoulder injury, both the *British Broadcasting Corporation* and *The Guardian* reported last week.

She dislocated her shoulder during *The Hundred* this summer, which required surgery.

The India series consists of three T20s, which starts on December 6, and a four-day Test, which takes place from December 14 to December 17.

Heather Knight will lead both sides, while experienced seamer Kate Cross has only been included in the Test squad.

Batter Bess Heath has also been included in both squads after making her One Day International debut against Sri Lanka in September. Also, all-rounder Alice Capsey could make her Test debut, now that she has established herself in England's white-ball sides.

Bowling all-rounder Danielle Gibson and fast bowler Mahika Gaur are included in the T20 squad. Both cricketers made white-ball debuts in the summer.

Fast bowler Lauren Filer was included in the Test squad after an impressive Ashes debut in the format in June.

Commenting on Ecclestone's return, head coach Jon Lewis revealed the player was "working her way back to full fitness".

Lewis added, "We expect her to play, but getting people back to fitness isn't always linear, so we will have to see how she progresses over the next few weeks. The medical people are telling me she will be ready, but we will build her up gradually, and a lot of it will be getting her confidence back in her own body."

England impressed during the summer's Ashes against Australia to draw the series 8-8 on points.

However, a more inexperienced side was disappointingly beaten by Sri Lanka in September's T20 series, and struggled in particular batting against spin, an aspect of their game that will be tested in India.

Some of England's batters travelled to a training camp in

Mumbai in October before Australia's Women's Big Bash League started, and the whole squad will travel to Oman for another camp before the India series starts.

It is the first time that England have toured India since 2019, and will be crucial for Lewis' side as they build towards 2024's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh, and the 2025 50-over World Cup in India.

"India are one of the strongest sides in the world so it will be a good challenge, but with those two World Cups coming up in the subcontinent, it is a very important tour for us," Lewis said.

Additionally, "A lot of our players won't have played international cricket in India before, and it is a unique experience, so it will give us some insight into how we play in those conditions."

An England A side will also travel to Oman, and then play three T20s against India A, with seamer Tash Farrant returning to the set-up after a long absence from the game with back stress fractures.

Fast bowler Issy Wong is also included in the A squad after struggling with her run-up during the summer, which meant she did not feature in the Ashes.

Meanwhile, in other news, Chris Liddle has been appointed England women's performance pace bowling coach. The former Leicestershire, Sussex and Gloucestershire bowler joins England from Nottinghamshire, where he was assistant head coach and fast bowling coach.

### England women squads for India tour

**T20:** Lauren Bell, Maia Bouchier, Alice Capsey, Charlie Dean, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Mahika Gaur, Danielle Gibson, Sarah Glenn, Bess Heath, Amy Jones (wicketkeeper), Freya Kemp, Heather Knight (captain), Nat Sciver-Brunt, Danni Wyatt.

**Test:** Tammy Beaumont, Lauren Bell, Alice Capsey, Kate Cross, Charlie Dean, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Lauren Filer, Bess Heath, Amy Jones (wicketkeeper), Heather Knight (captain), Emma Lamb, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Danni Wyatt.

## Aussies recall Cheatle to Test lineup for India

Australia have recalled left-arm bowler Lauren Cheatle to their squad for the women's multi-format series against India across December and January, the *British Broadcasting Corporation* reported last week.

The recall is the first time since March 2019 that she has been named in Australia's squad.

Wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy is also included after having surgery on her hand, which she injured when separating fighting dogs at her home.

Australia will play a Test, three ODIs, and three T20s in India.

Cheatle made her Australia debut aged 17 in 2016. However, she has been hampered by injuries, among which have been four shoulder reconstructions in five years. She also had a cancerous lump removed from her shin at 22.

She was part of an Australia A side that toured England in the summer, taking 11 wickets across five matches. She has also been in impressive form for the Sydney Sixers in the WBBL.

"Lauren Cheatle has overcome significant injury setbacks, and thoroughly deserves her place in the squad through her performances over the past six months," said Cricket Australia national selector Shawn Flegler.



Lauren Cheatle

"[She] has playing experience in India, and provides another fast-bowling option, particularly in regard to the Test match, which is the format she has been selected for. At this stage, we are planning for Lauren to return to Australia ahead of the white ball formats to play [in the Women's National Cricket League]," Flegler stated.

He added, "Darcie Brown missed the last two ODIs against the West Indies with a hamstring injury, but is back bowling, and is on track to be available for Test selection. [And] Alyssa Healy's finger is healing, but remains in a splint, and our medical team is continuing to monitor her recovery closely. We are obviously very hopeful she will be available for the Test, but those decisions are still a while away."

Australia captain Meg Lanning announced her international retirement earlier this month. Meanwhile, Flegler noted that Lanning's successor "will be confirmed closer to the tour".

**Australia squad:** Darcie Brown, Lauren Cheatle (Test only), Heather Graham, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Grace Harris (T20s only), Alyssa Healy, Jess Jonassen, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Tahlia McGrath, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Wareham.

## Cricket Schedule

### (Matches ALL TIMES LOCAL)

#### Wednesday November 22, 2023

- ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier 2023
- Kenya vs Rwanda, 1st Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM
- Uganda vs Tanzania, 2nd Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM
- Namibia vs Zimbabwe, 3rd Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 1:50 PM
- Cambodia tour of Indonesia 2023
- Indonesia vs Cambodia, 5th T20I, Udayana Cricket Ground, Bali, 7:00 AM

#### Thursday November 23, 2023

- New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
- TBC vs NZ, 2-day Practice Match, Day 1, Sylhet Int. Cricket Stadium, Sylhet, 9:30 AM
- Australia tour of India, 2023
- India vs Australia, 1st T20I, Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium, Visakhapatnam, 7:00 PM

#### ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier 2023

- Kenya vs Nigeria, 4th Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM
- Tanzania vs Zimbabwe, 5th Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 1:50 PM
- Cambodia tour of Indonesia 2023
- Indonesia vs Cambodia, 6th T20I, Udayana Cricket Ground, Bali, 7:00 AM

#### Friday November 24, 2023

- New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
- TBC vs NZ, 2-day Practice Match, Day 2, Sylhet Int. Cricket Stadium, Sylhet, 9:30 AM

#### ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier 2023

- Nigeria vs Rwanda, 6th Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM
- Namibia vs Uganda, 7th Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 1:50 PM

#### Saturday November 25, 2023

- ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier 2023
- Kenya vs Tanzania, 8th Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM
- Namibia vs Rwanda, 9th Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 1:50 PM

#### Sunday November 26, 2023

- Australia tour of India, 2023
- India vs Australia, 2nd T20I, Greenfield Int. Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram, 7:00 PM

#### ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier 2023

- Nigeria vs Tanzania, 10th Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM
- Uganda vs Zimbabwe, 11th Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 1:50 PM

#### Monday November 27, 2023

- ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier 2023
- Nigeria vs Uganda, 12th Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM

- Rwanda vs Zimbabwe, 13th Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 9:30 AM

- Namibia vs Kenya, 14th Match, United Cricket Club Ground, Windhoek, 1:50 PM

#### Tuesday November 28, 2023

- New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
- Bangladesh vs New Zealand, 1st Test, Day 1, Sylhet Int. Cricket Stadium, Sylhet, 9:30 AM

- Australia tour of India, 2023
- India vs Australia, 3rd T20I, Barsapara Cricket Stadium, Guwahati, 7:00 PM

#### ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Region Qualifier 2023

- Namibia vs Tanzania, 15th Match, Wanderers Cricket Ground, Windhoek, 1:50 PM

#### Wednesday November 29, 2023

- New Zealand tour of Bangladesh, 2023
- Bangladesh vs New Zealand, 1st Test, Day 2, Sylhet Int. Cricket Stadium, Sylhet, 9:30 AM.



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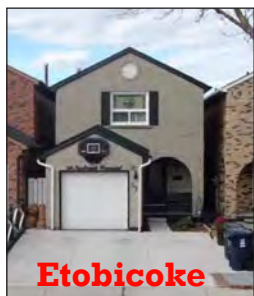
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Located at The Gore Road and Queen St E., CityPointe Heights is a new condominium community connected to three of the GTA's most beloved cities. Your favourite - and soon-to-be favourite - Brampton, Toronto, and Vaughan locations are very close to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



## 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.



## 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.



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