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Our Community Is Thriving!

TCC extends thanks, reaffirms inclusivity

– Toronto Caribbean Carnival closed its 2025 season with a heartfelt message of thanks, celebrating the communities, artists, and supporters who energised the city, while pledging to deepen its mission of building bridges, emphasising diversity, and inviting every race, creed, and culture to join in the journey.

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto – The Festival Management Committee of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival has delivered a heartfelt message of gratitude honouring attendees, cultural contributors, and partners who powered this year's celebrations, while reaffirming its commitment to unite communities through one of the largest transformative and cultural festivals in North America.

In a statement titled, *With Full Hearts, We Say Thank You*, Executive Chair Jennifer Hirlehey noted the quickening of our city's heartbeat, remarking that the streets of downtown Toronto came alive "in a spectacular display of colour, rhythm, and culture" during the 2025 Carnival.

Additionally, Hirlehey identified the community as being "the lifeblood of this festival", crediting its success to "every foot that danced, every hand that helped, every voice that cheered".

Said Hirlehey: "To our mas band community, our steelband community and calypsonian community, thank you for your creativity and brilliance. You turned the road into a moving work of art".

In her message of inclusivity and gratitude, Hirlehey praised spectators for bringing "the vibe that makes Carnival so unforgettable", cultural elders for "grounding us in tradition and reminding us of the roots from which this festival grows", and youth for being "the future of Carnival, with your laughter and pride lighting the way forward".

Vendors, artists, DJs, and performers were credited for keeping "the heartbeat of Carnival strong with every note and beat", and for "sharing the taste of the Caribbean with every delicious dish".

Hirlehey also recognised sponsors, partners, and supporters for believing in "the transformative power of this festival", highlighting its nearly

See Page 17: Now on to 2026!



The stellar *Fête En Blanc* took place last weekend at Carnival celebrations in Belleville. On stage, (left to right), are FMC's Adrian Charles, City of Belleville Councillor Sean Kelly, FMC's Mischka Crichton, and Executive Chair Jennifer Hirlehey. More on Page 17. Photo by Russell Lutchman



Guyana is now awash in a surging red tide with campaigning well-underway for the upcoming September 1 polls

Call goes out to diaspora as Guyana prepares for September 1 vote

– As Guyana heads toward the September 1 elections, the diaspora has been invited to return to the homeland to play a part in shaping their nation's future. The call to action has come from Honorary Consul Mani Singh to qualified Guyanese abroad to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Meanwhile, this week the election momentum picked up further with manifesto pledges, presidential assurances, and ongoing logistical, on-the-ground electoral preparations.

Toronto – A call to action was issued last week to Guyanese abroad here in the GTA with Honorary Consul Mani Singh reminding the diaspora that their role in the upcoming polls is not only symbolic but also constitutional; that those who are registered to vote in the homeland have the right to cast their ballots, provided they return

to do so.

"Members of the diaspora who want to return to Guyana to vote in the elections must be registered in order to cast their votes," Singh told *Indo-Caribbean World* last week.

He noted that overseas voting is not permitted under Guyana's Constitution. However, he encouraged **potential voters to check eligibility online**, and if registered, to then travel home to exercise their franchise.

As the Guyana government's representative here at the Consulate General in Toronto, Singh assured that all signals are pointing to peaceful polls, noting GECOM's ongoing work in ensuring free and fair national and regional elections.

He also expressed confidence in Guyana's solid

forward path to growth, declaring, "I think our country is on an upward trajectory; it is now unstoppable."

Meanwhile, the momentum continues to build in Guyana for the upcoming September 1 polls.

On August 18 at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre in Georgetown, the ruling People's Progressive Party/ Civic launched its manifesto under the theme *Forward Together for a Better Guyana*. The document presents a five-year plan that blends extensive infrastructure with social upliftment.

Among its highlights was the government's focus on healthcare, with the commitment to build 12 hospitals nationwide, and creating a National

See Page 5: Diaspora urged to help



Mani Singh

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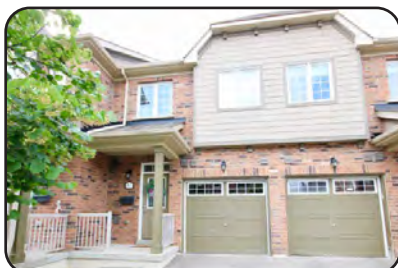
This spacious home is approximately 2,500 square feet and features an open concept living and dining room, a separate family room with a wood-burning fireplace, a spacious eat-in kitchen, and a main floor laundry. There are four large bedrooms upstairs. The primary bedroom has two closets and a full ensuite. The basement is unspoilt.



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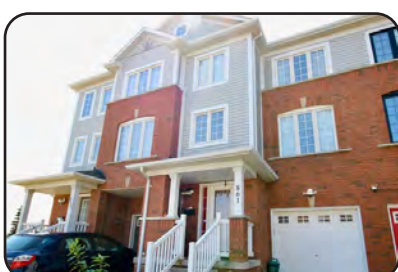
3-bdrm, 4-bath townhome blends style, space, unbeatable location. Bright open-concept layout with hardwood flring on mn & 2nd flrs - clean, modern vibe. Upstairs, spacious primary bdrm has walk-in closet & updated ensuite, 2 spacious extra bdrms - room for entire family. Prime Brampton area by schools, parks, shops, transit, & major hwy's, a move-in-ready home!



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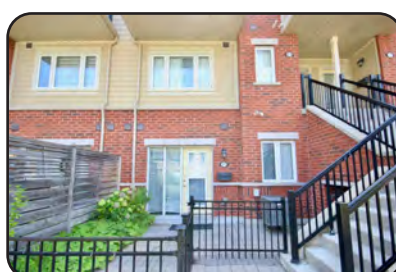
Bright, open-concept main floor, soaring 9-foot ceilings, tall windows. Curb appeal, covered porch, & grand double-door entry. Convenient shared laundry area, private entrance to spacious 2-bedroom in-law suite for family/rental. Direct access from garage, generous cozy, plush-carpeted bedrooms. Offers comfort, flexibility, & style for modern family living.



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...

A large, diverse crowd of people gathered at an outdoor event, likely a festival or protest. Many individuals are wearing red clothing, and there are red banners in the background. The crowd is dense and fills the frame.

Trinbago Toronto Festival back at Nathan Phillips Square

...

A large, white, standing statue of Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala, adorned with gold jewelry and a red shawl, holding a mace (gada) in its right hand. A red scaffolding structure is visible behind the statue.

A bronze statue of Lady Justice, blindfolded and holding a scale of justice in her right hand and a sword in her left.

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A portrait of Dr. Anjali Kulkarni, a woman with dark hair, wearing a brown top, with her arms crossed.



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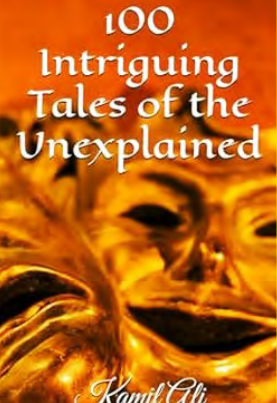
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Above, a large crowd gets ready for a PPP/Civic meeting; at right, President Ali greets attendees following presentation of the Manifesto. FB photos

Diaspora urged to help shape Guyana’s future

From Page 1

Ambulance Authority, supported by a modern fleet of land, air, and river ambulances.

The manifesto also indicated that Emergency Medical Services (EMS) units will be pre-deployed in strategic areas to cut response times, and call centres integrated with GPS will link patients directly to real-time support. Training and professionalisation of EMS personnel are also part of the plan, underscoring a systemic upgrade.

Youth development also occupies a central place in the manifesto. Alongside expanded vocational training and entrepreneurship opportunities, the government plans to complete the Palmyra international stadium, develop multipurpose sports centres, build synthetic tracks across the regions, and establish a high-performance conditioning facility to prepare athletes for international competition.

Education infrastructure is also receiving attention with construction of over 100 new schools with Information and Communication Technology labs, payment of higher salaries and improved working conditions for teachers, AI-assisted learning for even the most remote areas, and the continuation of unlimited GOAL scholarships. A new “Guyana Digital School” will expand online education options for parents and students alike.

Housing and community development commitments aim to construct 40,000 homes over five years, prioritising vulnerable families and young professionals, while eliminating the existing backlog of housing applications. Informal settlements are set to be regularised, and established communities will see upgrades with concrete drains, street lighting, security cameras, and recreational spaces.

To address the cost of living, the manifesto reaffirms the government’s policy of no new taxes across its term. It further pledges reduced income and corporate taxes, along with lower duties on vehicles, while continuing to allow imports regardless of age to maintain affordability.

The manifesto also outlines ambitious public works projects, promising to complete major roads and bridges to connect Guyana with its neighbours, open new markets, unlock land for productivity, and improve domestic connectivity.

At the manifesto launch, Guyana’s President Dr Irfaan Ali described it as not just a political document, but a pact built on years of consultation.

“This is not a wish list; it is not empty rhetoric. This is a declaration of intent; it is a blueprint for development, and importantly, it is a pact with the people,” he said.

Ali stressed that the plan was shaped in advance of the election cycle, guided by a long-term vision rather than immediate political gain. He explained that it integrates regional development, household empowerment, and small-business support into a framework that reflects both national aspirations and international realities.

With global conflicts and volatile markets in mind, Ali said the manifesto’s policies were designed to build economic resilience, ensuring Guyana can withstand external shocks.

He added that the overarching goal is prosperity shared across all levels of society, from households to businesses.

“Over the last five years, we have been listening, going to the community and listening... you, the people of Guyana, you are [in] this front [and] centre,” Ali said, presenting the manifesto as both forward-looking and grounded in, and centering, public engagement.

On the institutional side, the Guyana Elections Commission confirmed on August 18 that preparations for the polls are well advanced.

Deputy Chief Election Officer Anael Giddings announced that 757,690 electors are on the voters list, with 10,481 members of the Joint Services, including the police, defence force, and prison service, who are scheduled to vote early on August 22 to allow their deployment on Election Day.

Nationwide, 2,790 polling stations are being established, 62 of which will operate from private residences.

Giddings reported that logistical arrangements are complete: “We are well-poised for the conduct of this election. At this point in time, there is nothing, aside from maybe *force majeure* that can prevent such conduct.” *Force majeure* means unforeseen events that are beyond control, and which disrupt major plans.

Giddings also indicated that ballot papers for the September 1 polls have already been dispatched to Guyana’s overseas missions, while distribution to Returning Officers in the ten regions is underway.

Also, election materials are being delivered locally, and security arrangements have been finalised in collaboration with the police and Joint Services. In particular, GECOM confirmed guarantees for polling stations in border communities, addressing one of the more sensitive logistical concerns. (An LJJI Report)



President Ali during presentation of the Manifesto earlier this week

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Editorial

Guyana’s elections

The Caribbean’s 2025 political calendar reads like a quinquennial regatta, as sleek vessels of incumbency and patched-up boats of opposition are being launched into the waters of upcoming general elections.

One after another, Caricom nations are setting sail, some of its parties on familiar electoral trajectories, others hoping that an unforeseen gust will fill their sails. The wake left by Belize’s election verdict for the incumbent in March, Trinidad and Tobago’s April loss by the ten-year incumbent PNM, and Suriname’s May coalition is still rippling across our region. And as we head into September, eyes are now on Guyana, where the ruling PPP/Civic is widely expected to cross the finish line ahead of the pack.

While the surge in ballot-printing suggests heightened five-year political activity in our regional homelands, it appears history is also telling us we come from a region where a few political parties and its leaders have learned the finer art of staying afloat through storms and squalls.

As *Trinidad Guardian* columnist Wesley Gibbings has noted, Guyana’s proportional representation system, shared in principle only with Suriname, has produced long political lifespans for Forbes Burnham’s highly questionable mandate of 21 years in power, to the PPP’s own five-term tenure post-1992.

Across the Caricom map, SVG’s Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves’ Unity Labour Party has also strung together five consecutive wins since 2001; and then we saw the PNM in Trinidad and Tobago in free-fall, with its decades-long historical dominance taking a nosedive in April.

Viewed within this framework, Guyana’s September 1 contest is more than just another date in our region’s electoral diary. Instead, it will be a test of whether the gravitational pull of incumbency remains as strong in the oil-rich nation as it has historically across the region.

With campaigning in full swing, Guyana’s political landscape is now entangled in rallies, social media forays, and at times unsavoury rhetoric. While GECOM has approved six parties to contest the polls, in real-world practice, Guyana’s elections have always been a two-horse race. Afro-Guyanese are largely aligned with APNU, while Indo-Guyanese are mainly supporters of the PPP/Civic. Fringe parties have rarely dented this historical binary of support. Even in 2025, with the new parties on the ballot, the real contest still appears to be between PPP/Civic and APNU; with the other parties fractured.

The PPP/Civic retains healthy advantages in a number of key areas, among them being its leadership continuity, and an organisational depth finessed with decades of electoral presence and rootedness. Also among the advantages is the opposition remains in disunity; and then there is that historical binary voting architecture.

It is true that a unified opposition front could, in theory, deny the PPP/Civic a parliamentary majority, setting the stage for a minority government. It is also true that the memory of the 2020 elections, when results took five months to finalise, retains residual foreboding among some members of the electorate.

Yet the historical record and current alignments weigh heavily against a change in government for Guyana. APNU’s credibility remains heavily eroded, and the fringe parties have not made significant inroads to get into lane for the journey to the National Assembly.

Also, the electoral machinery for integrity in the 2025 polls will face unprecedented international scrutiny. GECOM has met with major diplomatic missions, while the US funds most of the OAS observation mission, is supporting the Guyana Police Force with training, and is fielding 50 observers. The Carter Center and EU will also be present, reducing the risk of a 2020-style delay.

As September 1 approaches, a lively campaign in Guyana is masking an emergent and sublime message, which in our political regatta metaphor, shows the captains on some State vessels being quite skilled with tacking into the wind, and with decades of electoral sea-craft, are capable of navigating unpredictable electoral currents.

Similarly, the PPP/Civic, like other regional incumbents with mandates of longevity, is sailing steadily ahead.

Petition seeks national recognition of our Caribbean identity

Our Caribbean community is a collectivity of the best of our histories and a representation of the possibility of what we can accomplish when we come together.

Caribbean culture is a vibrant tapestry woven from centuries of diverse influences, shaped by Indigenous heritage, colonial history, and global migration.

This cultural mosaic reflects the region’s Indigenous, African, Indian, Chinese, European, and Middle Eastern roots. Each nation has its unique blend of traditions, yet all share a common thread of resilience, creativity, and fusion.

Language diversity is a defining feature, with English, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Creole languages spoken across the region. Music and dance, such as reggae from Jamaica, soca from Trinidad and Tobago, and chutney from Suriname, exemplify our cultural richness and global impact.

Caribbean cuisine, too, showcases a mix of flavours and techniques, blending spices, ingredients, and cooking styles from different continents. Dishes of various origins build a spectrum of offerings with complexity of tastes based on histories from lands far away, mixed with Indigenous ingenuity.

Religious practices are equally varied, encompassing Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Rastafarianism, and Afro-Caribbean spiritual traditions like *Obeah* and *Voodoo*. Christmas, Eid, and Diwali are commonly understood and respectfully celebrated.

Festivals like Carnival, celebrated in numerous islands, highlight this diversity through elaborate costumes, music, and communal celebration.

The Caribbean’s multicultural identity fosters a strong sense of belonging while honouring differences. It continues to evolve through diaspora connections and global cultural exchange, making it one of the most dynamic and diverse cultural regions in the world.

The spirit of Caribbean culture has ensured the strength of the community here in Canada.

Coming together, learning from others, being respectful of the traditions of our neighbours, and sharing generous hospitality not only embody who we are as people from the Caribbean but also why we are exemplary citizens in our new home.

And as we came from various origins and composed a beautiful culture, we must continue to find opportunities to bring us together.



Ryan Singh

The opportunity of a Caribbean Heritage Month in Canada is a path to renewed community unity.

Despite the nations or ethno-cultural groups or religious backgrounds we all may hold, our Caribbean identity will bring us together.

As a petition calling for July to be Caribbean Heritage Month in Canada progresses in support, it is a symbol of what we can achieve when we come together.

In 2023, Canada’s Parliament adopted Bill S-246, Lebanese Heritage Month Act, declaring November as Lebanese Heritage Month in Canada.

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

It’s time for our community to be recognised.

Canada’s Caribbean community could be traced back to its origins in the late 18th century. Migration has continued and increased ever since.

The 2016 census reported that approximately 750,000 Canadians originate from the Caribbean. That number in 2025 is over one million.

Caribbean-led and serving organisations from across the country are endorsing the opportunity to have our community and culture heard and seen.

Caribbean Heritage Month won’t be for one singular entity, but for the entire community. Something that we all can celebrate.

Each year, it will be an opportunity to share our culture, bring together our community, and celebrate who we are, where we came from, and our future together.

Let us seize this opportunity to build a collective, demonstrate Caribbean unity, and make our mark here in Canada.

Take a moment, sign the petition here, and help forge a strong Caribbean community that is heard, seen, and served.

Over centuries, we collectively came together, and a vibrant and beautiful culture was composed. The spirit of that togetherness will strive again as we leverage our connectivity to demand representation by the Canadian government.

Old brooms sweep best in the centuries-old arcs of memory

In the boyhood lethargy of afternoons back home, when the humidity pressed down thick and prickly as a synthetic blanket, a silhouette emerged out of the heat waves hovering above the asphalt sun-softened into putty. A call arrived ahead of the shadow, stretched and drawn-out, “Pick your mangoes! Pick your coconuts! Pick your breadfruit!”

Here was our ‘Climber-man,’ a professional climber of trees. He greeted Ma respectfully, bowing from the canopy of his lofty height with hands clasped, his spidery fingers intertwined.

“Maharajin, pick your coconuts?” Bare-backed, shoulders glossed with midday sweat, the ropes of muscles down his back to his calves coiling and uncoiling in currents, animated like young anacondas writhing under his skin.

His gaze was above low hanging fruit; much higher, it traversed canopies, focusing on the underside of our coconut trees, where he had already calculated a fee for his climbing prowess.

Later, I would understand that despite his precarity aloft, he had still lowered his price for Ma; that he was honouring her petite standing in life, compensating her for her courage in singly navigating a hostile world as a widow and grandmother.

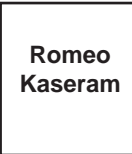
Perched between monetisation of his skill and the scarce currency of generosity among those in the trades who gouge us relentlessly, Climber-man knew our village history came with traction; that he could step up, grasp a trunk, and effortlessly climb to the top for a bird’s eye view of how our neighbourhood’s lives were lived. And so, he gave Ma a generous discount.

We watched the coconuts fall, cratering the soft earth; afterwards, long fronds crashed down, wings chopped away from giant birds that gouged out chunks of earth as they fell.

Ma and I plucked the lengthy leaflets off the compound leaves, shaving each like a feather down to its thin, flexible spine. We bound hundreds of the yellow spines firmly together with strips of cloth, forging unbreakable knots with the finality of teeth and fingers. Right away we put the newborn *cocoyea* brooms to work, sweeping up the umbilical shavings of its birth.

Our next door neighbour peered at our industry through rheumy eyes, noisily slurping on the clay stem of her pipe between toothless gums. Ma sneezed hugely from the burnt-asphalt acridness drifting across from its soot-blackened bowl.

Perhaps it was the rhythm of our work that energised our dozing neighbour; or maybe it was Ma’s exclamation of satisfaction that the new brooms were sweeping clean. The old woman stood up, rickety, clumsily levering herself off the wicker rocking chair, its splintered, thorny edges requiring caution when rising. “Old brooms know the corners,” she said irascibly. And then,



with great fatigue arching her back, knees rigid and wooden, she too began sweeping her front yard.

“This broom is a *besom*.” She was responding to my eyes following the arc of a stout stick with stiff shrubs tied to its end.

Later, illuminated by our kerosene lamp, the new brooms turned upside down in a corner to avoid early curvature, Ma disentangled her earlier “Ahem!”, a practiced warning to mind my own business.

Our neighbour’s mother, born far away to enslaved parents, had been sold young and then brought by ship to a nearby plantation during the

time of slavery in the homeland. During that journey a broom had been carried in the head, not the hand; shrubs and sticks used to craft this broom was a memory recalled after traveling across an ocean following branding with a hot iron, then put in chains.

“She will never use a *cocoyea* broom,” Ma said. “A dozen trees in her yard and she will not let Climber-man even prune one! That *besom* broom is how she remembers her mother – and how her mother told her to use it to never forget her grandmother.”

Sometimes grief and loss have no voice; instead, they sweep eternally in arcs across oceans and centuries, pushing into the decades ahead inheritances of memory and great pain.

Years later I travelled north. To stretch an indigent student’s income, I swept and mopped floors in a church between Sunday services. Pensive work in a sacred place, my mandate was to remain invisible during worship, ensuring the scrape of the broom’s bristles, the slopping of the mop, kept a respectful distance from the pervading susurrus of holiness during prayer.

A centenarian sat with a small group, awaiting the start of mid-morning service. Her voice, rising above mop and broom, traced patterns in threads of generational embroidery. Her story was low-hanging fruit in the family tree – a distant aunt, a slave owner’s daughter, brought to an auction-in-progress to comfort a slave girl whose wailing was drowning out the auctioneer’s chant.

Both girls had grown up together, and had now arrived at a parting of ways, the enforced severing of two always-diverging worlds. The slave-child’s grief, visceral screams and inconsolable sorrow, risked bruising the ascending auctioneer’s price.

“My ancestor thought she too was being sold,” the old woman crooned, delighting in the innocence of misapprehension, cackling at the fatuous turn in her anecdote of embedded privilege.

“She too began wailing! Imagine that! Thinking she was being put on the block to be sold as a slave!”

Her cackle found wings in that holy place, lifting above my scratching broom; up, up, it climbed, heavenwards to the canopy to meet the chopping blades of rows of apathetic ceiling fans.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of this publication.
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Publisher: Harry Ramkhelawan
Editor: Romeo Kaseram
Columnists/Writers/Photographers: Vidur Dindayal, Kamil Ali, Dwarka Lakhani, Dhanpaul Narine, Ryan Singh, Nalini Mohabir, Ramesh Ramkalawan, Russell Lutchman.
Contact Information: Indo Caribbean World Inc.
312 Brownridge Drive, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5X1
(905) 738-5005; indocaribbeanworld@gmail.com
Website: www.indocaribbeanworld.com

Retrospective on Guyana’s challenging 2020 General Elections

Dear Editor,

With Election Observer Missions from the international community in Guyana and meeting with parties that will be contesting the upcoming elections, I offer a retrospective on the 2020 elections as a reminder that the disgrace of 2020 must not be repeated.

Prior to Guyana’s General Elections of May 11, 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between A Party for National Unity (APNU) and Alliance For Change (AFC) for the two parties to contest the elections as a coalition. After the coalition won the elections to form the government, gaining 33 of the 65 seats in Parliament, David Granger of APNU was sworn-in as President and Moses Nagamootoo as Prime Minister.

In government, the leadership of the AFC abandoned their independence, supported every decision spearheaded by APNU, and allowed their party to function as an arm of APNU. On December 21, 2018, to the shock and dismay of his government colleagues, Charrandass Persaud of the AFC voted in support of a No Confidence Vote (NCV) to defeat the government by his one vote.

Instead of the government resigning and scheduling new general elections within 90 days of the date of the successful NCV, as required by the constitution, President Granger proceeded on a lengthy legal battle through the courts to challenge the validity of the NCV while his government remained in office.

At the same time a legal challenge by the Opposition PPP/Civic over the unilateral appointment by President Granger of retired Justice James Patterson on October 19, 2017 as Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) was underway in the courts. Both cases ended up at the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ).

On June 18, 2019, the CCJ ruled the appointment of Justice Patterson unconstitutional, and on July 12, 2019, it ruled the NCV legally valid. Justice Patterson resigned a week after the



Section of PPP/Civic supporters at a campaign meeting earlier this month

ruling, and by mutual agreement between the Leader of the Opposition and President Granger, retired Justice Claudette Singh was appointed as his replacement.

After the CCJ’s ruling on the NCV, President Granger refused to set a date for new elections. On September 19, 2019, *Reuters*, under the headline, *Diplomats declare Guyana government in breach of constitution as first oil looms*, reported, “US and European diplomats on Thursday declared Guyana’s government in breach of the country’s constitution until new elections are held and called on Guyanese President David Granger to set an elections date immediately or possibly face a cutoff of development funding”.

Finally, on September 30, 2019, President Granger proclaimed March 2, 2020, as the date for General elections.

Elections Day was generally peaceful and uneventful, apart from few minor glitches. At the conclusion of the elections, a news release from the UK and US envoys stated, “Heads of

Mission of the British High Commission, H.E. Greg Quinn and Ambassador of the United States of America, H.E. Ambassador Sarah-Ann Lynch, would like to congratulate all the people of Guyana for a successful and peaceful Election Day on 02 March.”


And on March, 3, 2020 *Stabroek News* reported, “While Chief Election Officer, Keith Lowenfield would not provide a definitive date for the declaration of results, he told a press conference last evening that he is hoping that the ten Returning Officers (RO) will be able to make a declaration of the results in their respective districts by lunch time today.”

However, expectation of a quick declaration of results soon changed. The Editorial *Elections being rigged* (*Stabroek News* March 6, 2020), four days after the elections, reports, “When all of the bewildering events of yesterday at the office of the Region Four Returning Officer are taken into account, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that GECOM and its staffers are working in the interest of APNU+AFC and rigging the 2020 general elections right before our eyes.”

Problems started at elections headquarters in Georgetown, where the results from the Regional Offices across the country were being consolidated and reported in the presence of agents from the contesting political parties who had copies of Statement of Polls with results from each polling station of each Region; diplomats from the UK, US, and the European Union (EU); international observers from the EU, the OAS and the Commonwealth Secretariat; and the Carter Center.

The Summary of *The European Union Election Observation Mission Final Report* notes, “Voting, counting and the tabulation of results in nine of Guyana’s ten regions were generally well managed. However, the integrity of the entire electoral process was seriously compromised by the non-transparent and non-credible tabulation of results in the largest and decisive Region

See Page 7: Critical to heed



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A sea of red as supporters of the PPP/Civic attend a campaign meeting

Critical to heed what transpired in Guyana’s 2020 elections

From Page 7

4 by senior Guyana Elections Commission officials, acting in blatant violation of the law and High Court orders issued in this regard.”

Based on reports in the local news media and reports of the various International Observers missions, the infamy that occurred included: (a), threat by the Foreign Minister of APNU+AFC caretaker government to revoke the credentials of the International observers, who were invited by President Granger to observe the elections, for voicing concerns over the tabulation which was contrary to the documented process.

And (b), intimidation and threats to foreign diplomats observing the vote tabulation causing them to walk out; (c), fear of tampering of ballot boxes in containers stored at GECOM premises for recount thereby causing a civic society group *Guardian of Democracy* to keep 24/7 watch on the containers.

And (d), following a ruling by the Caribbean Court of Justice, the Chief Elections Officer refused requests by GECOM chairperson on three occasions to prepare a final report based on the results of the recount. Instead, he prepared a report largely based on discredited numbers, indicating that APNU+AFC coalition won the elections.

Finally, after the CCJ’s ruling and with threats of sanctions of

individuals by the US government, President Granger conceded defeat based on the recount, and allowed Dr Irfaan Ali of the PPP to be sworn-in as President on August 2, 2020, and establish a PPP government.

Subsequently, a Commission of Inquiry appointed by President Ali issued a report stating, “After careful consideration and analysis of the evidence before us, it is our considered view that CEO Keith Lowenfield, DCEO Roxanne Myers , and RO Clairmont Mingo were principally responsible for clear and deliberate attempts to frustrate, obstruct and subvert the ascertainment of votes in electoral district No. 4.”

As Guyana moves forward into the September 1, 2025 elections, it is critical to be reminded of what transpired in 2020, and heed the *Stabroek News* Editorial of August 12, 2024:

“The five-month impasse that delayed the transition in governments had nothing at all to do with a bloated list of voters or malpractices at polling stations... it is worth repeating that the vast majority of the hundreds of polling day workers on March 2nd, 2020, worked industriously and heroically to enable voters to cast their ballots, for these to be counted, results posted up outside polling stations and the relevant documents transmitted to the district returning officers. That system functioned marvelously...”

Harry Hergash, Toronto, via email.

Need for civil rhetoric

Dear Editor,

The outcome of Guyana’s 2025 general and regional elections will be largely influenced by the response of first-time voters and youthful, independent thinkers who have befitting from international exposure through the reach of information technology, and are emboldened by social media leverage. It is therefore heartening to see all the parties fielding a preponderance of young people as candidates and spokespersons in an effort to woo the electorate.

However, I wish to caution that some misguided, self-assured youth (and adults) could become emboldened and reckless by the elephant of over exuberance.

Thus, party leaders and Presidential candidates must be able to recognise the implications of this human frailty, and monitor the behaviour of their close disciples to help guarantee a well-oiled campaign machinery that delivers according to planned expectations, instead of allowing itself to be side-tracked.

I am uneasy about an apparent growing tendency by some politicians and social media influencers who are hurling personal abuse at and about persons while responding to a viewpoint expressed, often crossing the line as they get riled up and driven by emotions.

And because such a reaction usually generates entertaining, supportive, and ego boasting comments in almost real time, such behaviour often passes the mark of acceptable societal norms; some are even seasoned with insulting expletives.

In the early 1970s, I read Mario Puzo’s crime novel, *The Godfather*. In that novel, there is a particular lesson that has stayed with me about how one of the characters was set up for his demise after being manipulated.

Consequently, I would describe this takeaway from the novel to be: “Strive to maintain self-control over your emotions, and do not allow yourself to be programmed to react with unintended, self-defeating overreach”.

And so I am appealing for more civility, less pettiness, less crassness, and in general, a more dignified approach in engaging each other based on mutual respect among societal influencers. Let us remember that modesty is a way to stay connected to the people we serve.

Derrick Cummings, Guyana, via email.

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Ruling PPP/Civic favoured to win September 1 Guyana elections

By the time the next edition of this publication comes out, Guyana would have held national and regional elections on September 1. It is widely anticipated that the incumbent People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic) would emerge victorious, allowing it to serve a second term.

However, the potential for turmoil after the elections cannot be ruled out, as opposition parties, particularly A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) and the Alliance For Change (AFC) are likely to raise objections about the fairness of the elections. The apparent bloated voters roll which lists 738,484 voters or 88 percent of the estimated population of 836,560 could very well emerge as a major dispute.

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) has earmarked September 2 as the tentative date for the release of the results of the elections, but should disputes arise this could lead to a delay. In 2020, it took five months for the results to be finalised, following accusations of rigging, and the subsequent intervention of local and regional courts, as well as foreign governments and institutions to resolve the stalemate that ensued.

With campaigning in full swing in the final days leading up to the elections, this might be the first time that the results would not depend purely on racial voting. Traditionally, the PPP/Civic garnered the support of primarily Indo-Guyanese supporters, while Afro-Guyanese largely voted for APNU (formerly the People's National Congress).

This is not to say that racial voting has been eliminated, but shifts in allegiances will likely change the pattern of voting. For instance, several key members of APNU have crossed the floor to the PPP/Civic, which could take some Afro-Guyanese support across to the PPP/Civic. In addition, it is expected that We Invest in Nationhood (WIN) will attract both Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese votes, albeit not of significance, from both PPP/Civic and APNU.

The two new parties, Assembly for Liberty and Prosperity (ALP) and Forward Guyana Movement (FGM) are likely to split the Afro-Guyanese votes, though without any significant impact on the total number of votes.

Effectively, the new fringe parties will merely take away support from the two major parties, with APNU expected to be the biggest loser. Incidentally, APNU appears to be the weaker of the two major parties.

Its leadership is shoddy at best, and it has lost the impact it once had with the people. With support from the Working People's Alliance, which is not an official party, it is the party that is expected to benefit most from racially motivated voting patterns.

From a policy perspective, the PPP/Civic will be the largest beneficiary of its success over the past five years. It will benefit from its track record in oil-funded infrastructure development, health and education programs, national cash transfer benefits, and the spin-offs from strong economic growth.

APNU, on the other hand, has been emphasising wage increases, larger pensions, and more equitable distribution of oil revenue. Incidentally, the country's booming oil revenues have been a target of all the opposition political parties. They simply believe that more

money should be disbursed to the people, cultivating a new culture of laziness supported by handouts.

WIN, which has apparently benefited from a following of people looking for cash handouts, does not have a leader with any political experience. Leader Azruddin Mohamed's popularity is largely based on his so-called charitable activities. But he is tainted by US sanctions for allegedly evading more than US \$50 million in taxes on the export of more than 10,000 kilograms of raw gold.

He has also been charged by the Guyana Revenue Authority with tax evasion, and making a false declaration in connection with the importation of a Lamborghini vehicle.

The FGM and ALP can be deemed as "also ran", as these parties would have an infinitesimal impact on votes. FGM, incidentally, is a coalition of three parties: Forward Guyana, The People's Movement, and the Vigilant Political Action Committee, which agreed to contest the election as a single entity.

Both these parties hope to make an impact on the country's entrenched two-party system. They would most likely attract support from APNU supporters, but like all fringe parties that have come before, they would most likely be sidelined as in previous general elections.

In spite of the PPP/Civic's popularity, the party has been tainted by allegations of corruption and nepotism, which are major strikes against it. However, this systemic problem has left the party largely unscathed so far.

In anticipation of post-election turmoil, the Guyana Elections Commission met with the Heads of the Diplomatic Missions of the US, UK, Canada, EU and the UNDP in late July to discuss the Commission's state of readiness for the conduct of the upcoming elections.

In early July, Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo told the press that the only threat to the conduct of free and fair elections in Guyana is from the People's National Congress/Reform (PNCR).

Incidentally, the PPP/Civic is aware of this potential outcome. Jagdeo publicly warned PPP/Civic supporters of what he described as a covert plan among the opposition parties, including several smaller newly-formed political parties, to recreate the political instability of 2011, when the PPP/Civic held a minority government, and faced repeated legislative blockages by the combined Opposition of APNU and the AFC.

He added that with the PNC-led APNU and AFC no longer holding credibility to make promises to the electorate after failing to deliver during their 2015 to 2020 term in office, "they have now turned to the small parties like WIN to ensure the PPP/Civic fails to secure a parliamentary majority".

Jagdeo added, "If there is ever a threat to holding free and fair elections at GECOM from anyone, it would be the PNC cabal... In the five months [after the 2020 elections], that cabal sought to support the rigging, and that cabal is already seeking to undermine the preparations for the [2025] elections."

Regardless of its declining fortunes, APNU remains a well-oiled machine.

So far, several overseas missions have also committed to observing the elections. The



Dwarka Lakhan



Bharrat Jagdeo



PPP/Civic supporters gather at a campaign meeting over the weekend

US has announced its support for the Guyana Police Force (GPF) in strengthening its capacity, according to American Ambassador to Guyana, Nicole Theriot.

She said law enforcement agents from Las Vegas and Miami-Dade, accompanied by a small number of experts to train GPF trainers, are expected to arrive in Guyana.

Theriot also said her government would be funding two-thirds of the Organisation of American States' (OAS) election observation mission, and "working closely" with the Carter Center that would be observing the results tabulation. The UK, European Union, and Canadian Chiefs-of-Mission are also backing these efforts.

In addition, the US Embassy would be fielding 50 observers, and would be assisted by United Nations Development Program advisors.

At the end of the day, the cards appear to be stacked in favour of the PPP/Civic to emerge a victor in the 2025 elections.

...

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

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RKMCC building foundation for future with largest-ever summer camp yet

– RKMCC is deepening its investment in youth and community growth, drawing record numbers to its largest-ever Summer Camp while preparing for completion of its new mandir in 2025 to meet rising demand and expand outreach.

...

Cambridge – Record participation in the Radha Krishna Mandir & Cultural Centre's (RKMCC) largest-ever Summer Camp this August has underscored the mandir's growing focus on youth engagement and future community building.

From August 5 to August 8, the camp united children, families, and community members for a week of cultural discovery led by RKMCC Spiritual Guru Acharya Rudra Prasad Dhungana, a former teacher and principal at Vivekananda Kendra in Arunachal Pradesh, India. He joined RKMCC in January 2017.

Participants at the camp immersed themselves in yoga, storytelling, traditional dance, arts and crafts, and music, each activity designed to inspire cultural pride, strengthen community bonds, and encourage respect across generations.

"This year's unprecedented participation shows that our community has a deep and genuine desire to learn, share, and celebrate cultural traditions in Hinduism," said RKMCC President Dwarka Persaud. "It is a proud moment for [RKMCC] to be a place where such connections can flourish."

A hallmark of this year's program was the strong presence of youth counsellors from as far as Scarborough and Burlington, whose enthusiasm and leadership inspired younger participants. Their contributions enriched the program while giving them valuable skill-building, work experience, and hours toward high school certificates.

The camp also benefitted from a unique collaboration between Panditji Rudra's cultural and spiritual leadership and the professional exper-

tise of educators from multiple school boards.

Among the teachers and administrators were Kanika Babra of the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB); Gita Maharaj of the Toronto District School Board; Mala Takhar of the Peel District School Board; and Shailja Pandey of the Upper Grand District School Board. Each professional brought to the event curriculum design, training, and classroom management expertise.

Retired WRDSB principal Madan Dheer served as Camp Principal, working alongside key community volunteers to ensure the program remained focused and well-structured.

"This year, we were filled to capacity, and even had a waitlist for campers and youth volunteers, as we simply did not have the space to accommodate everyone who wanted to attend and volunteer," Persaud said.

He added, "This is one of the key reasons we are building a new mandir, to better serve the growing needs of our community, provide more room for cultural and educational programs, and ensure that events like this camp can continue to grow for future generations."

The week concluded with a lively Children's Showcase on August 8, where campers presented mantras, yoga dances, music, stories, and handcrafted art projects.

Families filled the temple hall, celebrating not only the skills learned, but also the friendships, confidence, and cultural understanding developed over the week.

RKMCC aims to complete its new mandir by the end of 2025, and continues to seek donations to help make this commendable vision a reality. A cornerstone of the Region of Waterloo, the mandir promotes spiritual growth, cultural understanding, and community service, guided by a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. RKMCC also welcomes people of all backgrounds who wish to learn about Hinduism and Indian culture.



Panditji Rudra speaks with a group from the summer camp



Some campers along with RKMCC's leadership



Some campers and volunteers with Acharya Rudraji



Members from the youth leadership who participated in the summer camp

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Ambassador Sam Hinds addresses the gathering; in other photos, guests at the Emancipation event



Unity, heritage shine at Emancipation Day event

– The Guyana Consulate General in Toronto hosted its annual Emancipation Day celebration on July 31, bringing together community members, dignitaries, and cultural performers for an evening of reflection, history, and Afro-Guyanese heritage.

Toronto – Dignitaries, leaders, member of the diaspora, and cultural performers gathered at the Guyana Consulate General in Toronto on July 31 for its annual Emancipation Day celebration, marking the occasion with tributes to Afro-Guyanese resilience, cultural performances, and calls for unity in building “One Guyana”.

The celebration, held at the Consulate General’s office, was attended by more than 80 guests, including former Prime Minister of Guyana and current Ambassador to the US and Permanent Representative to the Organisation of American States, His Excellency Sam Hinds, accompanied by wife, Yvonne. Also present were Mohamed Ousman Ali and Bibi Shariman Ali, parents of Guyana’s President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

Honorary Consul Mani Singh delivered the welcoming remarks, offering an historical snapshot of slavery within the Guyanese context. He highlighted the long struggle and resilience of Afro-Guyanese people, noting, “Their fight for freedom wasn’t only a fight for themselves, but for the dignity and honour of future generations.”

Singh spoke about the trans-Atlantic slave trade, describing it as “the worst form of exploitation and cruelty ever inflicted upon man by his fellow man”, while emphasising that “all other crimes of history that were committed by man against his fellow man pales in comparison”.

Turning to modern-day Guyana, Singh affirmed the government’s commitment to inclusivity, stating, “In the One Guyana that we are establishing, Afro-Guyanese, like all other groups, will have no reason to fear economic emasculation or political marginalisation. We are committed to ensuring that everyone benefits from the progress and development of our nation. All will have greater opportunities for social, political and economic advancement, and no one will be left behind.”

He also cautioned against those who seek to “prey on and manipulate ethnic suspicions” for personal gain, urging the community to “reject those who seek to deploy the banner of racism and discrimination to divide our people and stymie national development in our country”.

Singh concluded with a call to honour the legacy of ancestors by striving for “a just and equitable society” where “every individual is valued and respected”.

The evening’s cultural program featured Afro-Guyanese storytelling, singing, and drumming performed by Guyanese musician, singer, and educator Kenton Wyatt.

Caribbean educator, author, and poet Nadine Williams recited two poems, *We Africans* and *The Immigrant Child*, addressing the history of slavery in Guyana and the broader Caribbean experience.

The event was chaired by Consulate staff member Lorraine Harry, with the Vote of Thanks delivered by Executive Officer Devina Richmond. Guests were later treated to a traditional Guyanese meal of metemji, spinach rice, fried butter fish, and cassava pone, catered by Hazel Catering.





The Consulate General for Jamaica in Toronto marked Jamaica's 63rd anniversary of Independence with a flag-raising ceremony at Toronto City Hall on August 6. In photo, the Jamaican flag after it was raised; inset, Jamaica's Consul General Kurt Davis delivers an address before proudly raising the Black, Green, and Gold. Facebook photos

US sanctions Grenada over Cuban doctors

– The US has imposed visa restrictions on government officials from Grenada, Africa, and Cuba, accusing them of enabling Cuba's controversial medical mission programme. The move has drawn sharp responses from Caribbean leaders who credit Cuban doctors with sustaining fragile health systems.

...

Castries – The US has announced new visa restrictions against Grenadian government officials and their families, citing their alleged role in what Washington has described as Cuba's "forced labour" medical mission scheme. Similar restrictions have also been put on Africa and Cuba.

In a statement issued on August 13, the US State Department said the programme "enriches the corrupt Cuban regime while depriving the Cuban people of essential medical care".

The restrictions expand on earlier measures, and, according to Washington, are intended to hold governments accountable for "renting" Cuban medical personnel at high cost while allowing Havana to keep most of the revenue.

"The US continues to engage governments, and will take action as needed, to bring an end to such forced labour. We urge governments to pay the doctors directly for their services, not the regime slave masters," the statement said.

Washington added that it seeks to "support the Cuban people in their pursuit of freedom and dignity and promote accountability for those who perpetuate their exploitation".

The move has reignited tensions in the Caribbean, where many governments say their health systems depend on Cuban assistance. When Washington first signaled possible sanctions, several Caricom leaders responded saying they were willing to risk losing US visas in defence of the Cuban brigades.

St Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves underscored the dependence of his country's health services on Cuban expertise.

"At least 60 people in the small island nation are on a Cuban-run haemodialysis programme used to treat kidney failure," he said, adding, "If the Cubans are not there, we may not be able to run the service. I will prefer to lose my visa than to have 60 poor and working people die."

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley also indicated she was prepared to have her US visa revoked. She also urged Caricom countries to ensure that they are able to explain "what the Cubans have been able to do for us" in their

moves to defend the Cuban health programme.

Said Mottley: "Barbados does not currently have Cuban medical staff or Cuban nurses, but I will be the first to [get into line] to tell you that we could not get through the [Covid-19] pandemic without the Cuban nurses and the Cuban doctors," Mottley said in Parliament.

Jamaican Foreign Minister Kamina Johnson Smith also emphasised the contribution being made by the Cubans.

"Their presence here is of importance to our healthcare system," she said, pointing to 400 doctors, nurses, and medical technicians currently serving in Jamaica.



Joseph Andall

Grenada's Foreign Affairs Minister Joseph Andall strongly defended the Cuban medical programme. As he noted, it has been "indispensable towards our health infrastructure" over the last two years, stressing that "without the input of the Cuban medical brigade there is no question that our health system will collapse".

Andall rejected Washington's allegations of forced labour, saying, "We are quite satisfied that the Cuban medical programme with us is totally above board and in compliance with international labour and human rights standards. So we have no qualms about being able to defend them."

While he would not confirm whether he had been directly targeted by the visa restrictions, he said Grenada's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was engaging US authorities through diplomatic channels.

"We assure the people of Grenada that your government is attending to this situation with the utmost responsibility and in the best interests of our nation," a ministry statement noted.

Andall added he had "no idea why Washington had targeted Grenada," and would not speculate, noting, "[To] be honest, I am not perturbed". He studied in Cuba.

Earlier this year, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Caricom leaders and signaled that Washington would expand restrictions tied to Cuban medical missions. He confirmed that the measures also apply to the families of officials supporting the programme.

Caribbean foreign ministers have since voiced concern that US policies and the long-standing embargo exacerbate hardships for ordinary Cubans. They highlighted Cuba's international medical outreach, pointing to its doctors' service, not only in the Caribbean, but also in places as far away as Italy during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.



Ask Jay...

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

DREAM HOMES OR DECEPTION? HOW TO STAY PROTECTED

Fraud in GTA is becoming more advanced and widespread, especially in the real estate sector. We've heard of fraudsters stealing home titles, remortgaging properties, and fleeing with their profits. There are also cases where scammers pose as landlords, collecting rental deposits from many unsuspecting tenants before disappearing. Recently, I came across one involving false pre-construction home sales.

Moiz Kunwar, a 28-year-old man, allegedly impersonated a real estate agent by offering fake homes, false financing options, and misleading promises while pretending to be a trusted developer. He reportedly operated under a company name that closely resembles a well-known builder, Paradise Development Homes Limited. Notice how similar it sounds to the legitimate Paradise Developments Inc.?

Police are currently investigating over 40 cases involving alleged fake pre-construction sales, in which Kunwar allegedly collected more than half a million dollars in deposits from unsuspecting buyers. Kunwar advertised the properties at low prices and offered very low mortgage rates. It has been reported that Kunwar would take prospective buyers to the development sites and show them specific properties, which were later completed and sold to legitimate buyers.

Kunwar's buyers only realised they had been scammed when their original closing date passed and they did not own the property. One buyer paid a \$170,000 deposit, expecting to close on a five-bedroom home by January 1, 2025. According to victims, Kunwar provided all the paperwork, including purchase and sale agreements, and introduced them to an unregistered financial firm, Empire Financing, where he was listed as the president.

The allegations have not yet been tested in court. Kunwar has said he intends to defend himself against all the charges, and denies all the allegations.

As the number of victims exceeds 40, this case serves as a warning that not all real estate deals are as they appear, especially in a market where desperation meets deception. Many families have saved for years and then believed they had found a great deal, complete with exclusive VIP access and early pricing. They signed the paperwork, handed over the deposit, and then it disappeared. How can you protect yourself? Here are six red flags every buyer should watch for.

1. The company name might look correct, but it isn't. Always verify the developer's name with official records. A single word, letter, or number can differentiate a legitimate home from a scam. The developer will also have a sales office that you can visit.
2. The agent is not registered. In Ontario, all real estate professionals must be licensed with RECO — the Real Estate Council of Ontario. [Verify their registration here](#).
3. You're being asked to send money directly to an individual or a numbered company. That's a major red flag. Deposits should always be made into a brokerage or builder's trust account. If you have the account number, you can visit the bank to verify if it is a trust account.
4. There's pressure to sign immediately, leaving no time for a lawyer to review the agreement. Every buyer deserves adequate time to consider and verify.
5. It sounds too good to be true – VIP pricing, guaranteed approvals, no competition. Be cautious of any deal that skips due diligence. Remember, the bigger the bait, the bigger the hook.
6. The paperwork is minimal – there are no floor plans, no Tarion warranty, no builder license details. Legitimate builders will provide all of this up front.

Scams like these are becoming more sophisticated. But with some knowledge, buyers in Canada can stay protected.

So here's what you can do to protect yourself.

- Confirm the builder's registration with Tarion and the Ontario Home Builders' Directory;
- Verify credentials of agents, brokers, and lawyers;
- Never hand deposits directly to individuals;
- Consult your lawyer for review;
- And most importantly, take your time. Ask questions – *Google* the company. Look for complaints or lawsuits.

Protecting your investment starts well before making an offer. Today, many buyers face uncertainty, legal costs, and emotional stress, but you don't have to be among them.

In real estate, doing your homework isn't optional – it is essential. Stay sharp, stay safe, and remember, the best deal is the genuine one.

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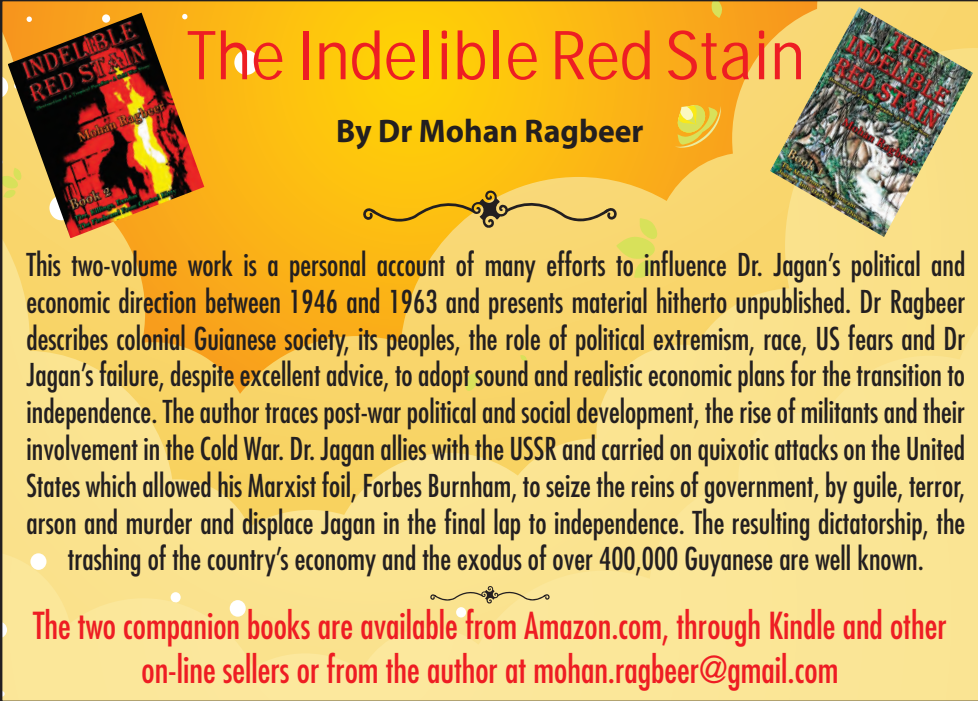
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The Indelible Red Stain
By Dr Mohan Ragbeer

This two-volume work is a personal account of many efforts to influence Dr. Jagan's political and economic direction between 1946 and 1963 and presents material hitherto unpublished. Dr Ragbeer describes colonial Guianese society, its peoples, the role of political extremism, race, US fears and Dr Jagan's failure, despite excellent advice, to adopt sound and realistic economic plans for the transition to independence. The author traces post-war political and social development, the rise of militants and their involvement in the Cold War. Dr. Jagan allies with the USSR and carried on quixotic attacks on the United States which allowed his Marxist foil, Forbes Burnham, to seize the reins of government, by guile, terror, arson and murder and displace Jagan in the final lap to independence. The resulting dictatorship, the trashing of the country's economy and the exodus of over 400,000 Guyanese are well known.

The two companion books are available from Amazon.com, through Kindle and other on-line sellers or from the author at mohan.ragbeer@gmail.com



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A young lady is guided in a ritual offering at Shiv Sewa Sangh mandir. Photos by Hinano Beekhoo

Shiv Sewa Sangh's august events

– The Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir & Cultural Center in Scarborough marked August with two major religious events – its Shravan Multi-Kund Hawan, and the Krishna Janmashtami celebration. The mandir continues to serve as a welcoming space for worshippers and friends from across the Greater Toronto Area.

Scarborough – The Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir & Cultural Center hosted its Shravan Multi-Kund Hawan on August 4, and last week celebrated Krishna Janmashtami, drawing devotees together for prayers, offerings, and cultural observance.

For its Shravan Multi-Kund Hawan, participants offered prayers 108 times while chanting the Mrityunjaya Mantra. A special samagree, blended from 108 ingredients with ghee, was used during the hawan. Then following this auspicious event, devotees observed Krishna Janmashtami, marking the birth of Krishna, with collective worship and deep reverence.

Founded by the late Savo Nowlackhia on March 5, 2000, the Scarborough-based mandir welcomes worshippers and visitors from across the Greater Toronto Area, including Whitby, Brampton, and Mississauga. According to its website, the temple provides a safe space to “practice your religion free of judgement, engage in cultural events, and participate in the many services offered”.

The mandir also emphasises the role of youth in sustaining religious and cultural traditions.

As the mandir notes, “We particularly pay attention to the care of our youth devotees by thoroughly educating them on the Hindu religion, as well as ensuring that they have all the resources they need to prosper in life.”

Programs include simplified in-house presentations on scripture and initiatives designed to build self-respect, confidence, and respect for others. The mandir underscores its promise to support young people “with open arms, open hearts, and open minds”.

Beyond religious practice, the Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir & Cultural Center stresses its responsibility to the wider community. It donates non-perishable food items to the Daily Bread Food Bank twice yearly, and ensures that meals are provided at the conclusion of each religious or cultural event.

“We contribute non-perishable items ... because we are eager to aid in any way that we can,” the mandir affirms. Its members also extend assistance to children, young adults, and elders alike, reinforcing the temple’s mission of service.

Shiv Sewa Sangh Mandir & Cultural Center is located at 2555 Eglinton Avenue East, Unit B, in Scarborough. It can be reached at 416-261-0281. Visit its website here.



ICF honours Larry Gomes, celebrating Mr Dependable's cricketing legacy

By Dhanpaul Narine

It was another successful event by the Indo-Caribbean Federation (ICF). The hall was packed and there were smiles all around. The president of the ICF Ralph Tamesh beamed with satisfaction as people lined up to greet his guest.

The celebrity was Larry Gomes, former West Indies cricketer who was widely regarded as Mr Dependable in the team. Sir Clive Lloyd said recently that the current struggling West Indies team needs another Larry Gomes to hold up the side. This was indeed high praise for a cricketer who was most consistent and gave his all for the team.

Larry Gomes is easy going, soft-spoken and with an infectious humour. But when he strode to the wicket the resolve and determination could not be mistaken.

He took his time and marked out his territory. He would drop anchor for hours, dispatching the bad balls and defending his wicket like a true warrior. They would have to deceive him with a special delivery. Larry was not in the habit of giving away his wicket cheaply. Extravagance could wait for the others as he set about building his innings.

Larry Gomes was born in Arima, in east Trinidad. He comes from a family of ten children, a cricket team in its own right! His father, Cecil, was a medium fast bowler for the local club, while mom Josephine was a supportive care-giver.

The young Larry was surrounded by cricketing influences. His brother Sheldon was also an all-rounder and his fielding was splendid. Many of the future stars were around Larry, including Phil Simmons who lived down the road. But Larry's idol remains Sir Garfield Sobers. The world's greatest all-rounder continues to inspire players in the Caribbean, and beyond as well.

Larry did well at Arima Boy's Government School and Holy Cross College in Arima. His talent as a cricketer shone and he toured England with the West Indian Schoolboys team in 1967. He was picked to play for Trinidad and Tobago in 1971-1972, and made his debut against the touring New Zealand team as a batter.

There were occasions when he opened the bowling "to get the shine off the ball so that the spinners could take over". Trinidad had three quality spinners in Rangy Nanan, Raphick Jumadeen, and Inshan Ali.

Larry said that during the New Zealand game at Guaracara Park, he was batting with Richard DeSouza. They took two runs comfortably but Larry was given out, run out, when wicketkeeper Ken Wadsworth appealed. The umpire was blindsided and could not see that Larry was in his crease.

Larry was well set for a big score. In those days, there was no technology to do the replays and a disappointed Larry returned to the pavilion.

Larry scored heavily for the Trinidad and Tobago Under-19 team against the touring Australian side, and he repeated this fluency in England in 1970, where he scored 422 runs and took 20 wickets.

These impressive performances caught the eyes of the counties in England, and soon he was receiving offers from Warwickshire, Nottingham, and Middlesex. Larry chose Middlesex because "it is in London and Lords is the team's home ground". He was outstanding with his four seasons with the club, particularly with his medium-pacers. His 190 against Derbyshire was memorable as were his performances in the Lancashire League in 1977 and 1978 respectively.

The natural progression was for Larry to gravitate to the Test arena, but the door was closed with Clive Lloyd's invincible team winning everything. Larry was picked for the England tour in 1976. He played in two Tests but failed to impress the selectors.

The Kerry Packer affair changed everything. The West Indies Cricket Board sacked Lloyd and his team in 1978 against the touring Australians, and began looking for replacements. Larry was one of the few players that rose in the rankings.

A new team was selected under Alvin Kallicharran as captain. Larry was picked for the Bourda Test and registered his first Test century. He followed this with another century and was chosen for the tour to India. He averaged over 40 in the Test matches. According to one report, "the left-handed Gomes was a model of consistency, hitting 405 runs with four half-centuries".

World Series Cricket was disbanded, and Clive Lloyd and



Larry Gomes (left) presents a copy of his book to Ralph Tamesh, president of the Indo-Caribbean Federation during a visit to New York



Larry Gomes (centre) presenting the winning trophy to Guyana's captain Karan Ganesh (left); also in picture is Indo-Caribbean Federation's President Ralph Tamesh who is at right



Larry 'Mr Dependable' Gomes wears ICF colours as he inspects the Idlewild ground in New York before participating in a celebratory cricket match that took place during his recent visit

his team were reinstated. Larry and the other players found themselves relegated and treated as strangers. He scored heavily in the local Shell Shield games, but was overlooked for the West Indies 1980 tour to England.

The rank and file in Trinidad complained bitterly and called for a boycott of the Shell Shield, and some even wore black armbands. According to *Wisden Almanack*, Larry was called toward the end of the tour to replace an injured Lawrence Rowe, but he declined, a decision he regretted.

Larry toured Australia with West Indies in 1981-1982. He did not disappoint. He scored centuries at Sydney and Adelaide. His form dropped on his return to the West Indies. But the selectors stayed with him and picked him for the 1984 tour to England. This proved to be epic for Larry and the team.

Larry was named Man of the Match for the First and Third Tests when he scored 143 and 104 respectively, and in the Second Test at Lords, he put on a record-breaking partnership with Gordon Greenidge for the second wicket. West Indies won the series 5-0.

This prompted Richie Benaud to describe Larry Gomes as "the most dependable player in the West Indies team". He was named *Wisden Cricketer of the Year* 1985, one of the greatest honours that can be bestowed on a cricketer. Larry played in 60 Test matches, scoring 3,171 runs at a respectable average of nearly 40.

A professional cricketer is never really retired. There are still lots to do. There is coaching, advising young cricketers on the technicalities of the game, broadcasting and journalism, and playing in the odd exhibition matches. There are those that pen their life stories to keep as a legacy.

Larry has been busy in many of these activities. He has had a cricket stadium named after him in Arima, which is fitting honour and tribute to this son of the soil. And he documented his life story in a book called, *Larry Gomes: Mr Dependable, My Life in Cricket*. Sir Clive Lloyd and Michael Holding wrote appreciation pieces. Sir Clive said he enjoyed batting with Larry, and recalled that some of the partnerships may have won or save the game for West Indies.

Holding said, "Larry, in my eyes, didn't and still doesn't get the appreciation that he deserves in the strong West Indies team we had in the 70s into the 80s." Holding thinks that the more exuberant and flamboyant players overshadowed Larry, but the "little firecracker Larry played a huge part in adding solidity to the middle order".

Deryck Murray describes Larry as a "steely competitor", and a good man to have in the team. Larry sat down with this writer to highlight some memories and discuss issues that are relevant to West Indies cricket.

Larry says that the innings at Bourda, in which he scored his first Test century will always be special. But there are times when he would lament the loss to India in the 1983 World Cup. It was a game that West Indies should have won, but the team had a bad day and let in India to win a famous victory.

In fact, Bollywood has made a movie titled '83 to commemorate that victory with, Tase Chanderpaul playing the role of Larry Gomes.

There is no question that Larry has one of the shrewdest cricketing brains. He sees the importance of cricket to West Indies nationhood. He explains that in the old days the fans would come from all over England and revel in a West Indian victory. It would become the talk of the inner cities as fans walked tall. The same would apply to victories in the Caribbean. The players too would experience the adulation and gratitude of

the fans, as this made for a wonderful relationship.

Larry says that these days, with all the different formats, pride is lost and money has taken over. He is not against players making money in the T20s, but they should see Test cricket as the true test, and should not turn their backs on the game in the West Indies.

He also has a word for the administrators of West Indies cricket. They should see cricket as a priority, put aside insularity and politics, and work to bring back cricket to its glory days.

The folks in Cricket West Indies would do well to consult with Larry, and others, for ideas as to how West Indies cricket could be improved.

Larry's extensive experience begs other questions. For example, who were the top three cricketers he has seen? Larry says, "I like Majid Khan. He was a stroke-maker with

all the shots. The Chappell brothers were also good, and Imran Khan was a top all-rounder."

He also credits Denis Lillee and Jeff Thompson, Richard Hadlee, Michael Holding, Andy Roberts, Joel Garner, and Colin Croft, as wonderful fast bowlers.

Larry says that the 2025 Australian tour to the West Indies exposed the weaknesses in the batting in the home side. The bowlers did a remarkable job in containing Australia, but lapses in the batting caused each of the three Tests to end in three days.

How does he feel about the score of 27 runs made by West Indies in the final Test?

"It's sad, and shameful that a once great batting side was so humiliated," he said.

Larry states that West Indies does not have the money like the big nations to pay the players. Top players were paid 500 pounds to play in the finals of the 1983 World Cup, but cricketers today are paid millions to play in the T20 franchise, and can pick and choose where they want to play.

Larry does not believe in a two-tier structure in Test cricket. He wants the competition to be fair, and even and for the poorer nations to get a better deal.

Larry's visit to New York, and his participation in the cricket match at Idlewild, was one of the best events put on by the ICF. Ralph Tamesh and his team should feel proud of a job that was well done. They honoured a cricket legend and a gentleman.

Larry's wife Ann Marie was pleased with the reception given, and she thanked the ICF for honouring her husband.

The events put on by the ICF are free of cost and attract a sizeable following. It promises to be a busy winter for the ICF as they continue with their humanitarian work.



With Full Hearts, We Say Thank You

From the Toronto Caribbean Carnival

During this year's Toronto Caribbean Carnival, our city came alive in a spectacular display of colour, rhythm, and culture as this grand festival once again took over the streets of downtown. And none of it would have been possible without you.

To our community, you are the lifeblood of this festival. Thank you for showing up in record numbers, filling the city with energy, joy, and pride. To our mas band community, our steelband community and calypsonian community, thank you for your creativity and brilliance. You turned the road into a moving work of art. To our spectators, who cheered, danced, and celebrated from the sidelines, you brought the vibe that makes Carnival so unforgettable.

To our cultural elders and ambassadors, thank you for grounding us in tradition and reminding us of the roots from which this festival grows. To our youth and families, you are the future of Carnival, and your laughter and pride light the way forward.

We are deeply grateful to our vendors for sharing the taste of the Caribbean with every delicious dish, and to our artists, DJs, and performers who kept the heartbeat of Carnival strong with every note and beat.

To our sponsors, partners, and supporters, thank you for believing in the transformative power of this festival. Your investment in culture fuels one of the largest celebrations in North America, generating nearly half a billion dollars in economic impact while showcasing Toronto as a city of diversity and vibrancy.

This year, the Carnival was supported by much needed funds from the Federal Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto. This level of support is crucial for the continued success and future of the Carnival. Thank you to the advocates who raised their voices to secure this support.

The Carnival is made possible by those working tirelessly behind the scenes: our volunteers, production crews, city staff, security, fire, paramedics, emergency services, and police. Your commitment ensured that this year's events were safe, seamless, and unforgettable.

It goes without saying that our staff and executive team bring the Carnival to life. It takes hard work, coordination, long hours and the most steadfast dedication. Thank you to the entire team and to our leaders Mischka Crichton, Chief Executive Officer and Adrian Charles, General Manager, for everything you do to make the Carnival possible.

We are proud of what we achieved together: a festival that not only celebrates Caribbean culture but also builds bridges between communities, celebrates diversity within our community and throughout the world, we will remain steadfast in our commitment to inviting and celebrating every race, creed and culture to our city.

Every foot that danced, every hand that helped, every voice that cheered – you made this Carnival extraordinary. As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with immense gratitude and renewed excitement. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. We cannot wait to see you on the road again.

With gratitude,

Jennifer Hirlehey
Executive Chair

Toronto Caribbean Carnival
Festival Management Committee





Now on to Toronto Carnival 2026!

From Page 1
half-billion-dollar economic impact and its role in showcasing Toronto's diversity to the world.

The statement also acknowledged "much needed funds" from the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and the City of Toronto, describing such support as "crucial for the continued success and future of the Carnival".

And she thanked advocates who raised their voices to secure this funding, while underscoring the vital work of "volunteers, production crews, city staff, security, fire, paramedics, emergency services, and police" for ensuring events were "safe, seamless, and unforgettable".

Special recognition went out to the festival's leadership team, CEO Mischka Crichton and General Manager Adrian Charles, whose "hard work, coordination, long hours, and steadfast dedication" make the Carnival possible.

Hirlehey then extended the frame, situating the festival's cultural purpose in global terms, stating, "We are proud of what we achieved together – a festival that not only celebrates Caribbean culture but also builds bridges between communities, celebrates diversity within our community and throughout the world. We will remain steadfast in our commitment to inviting and celebrating every race, creed, and culture to our city."

Looking ahead to 2026, the TCC statement expressed "immense gratitude and renewed excitement" for what lies ahead, while extending the invitation for everyone to return.

"From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. We cannot wait to see you on the road again," the statement declared.



Novelist Claire Adam roots memory across continents, oceans, and time

– In two acclaimed novels, Claire Adam bridges continents while keeping Trinidad and Tobago’s pulse alive. For our diaspora, her path from island childhood to Booker recognition proves that our stories, told with care, can honour the past while speaking powerfully into the present.

By Romeo Kaseram
An LJI Series on the Caribbean Diaspora

Two novels, two milestones: an award-winning debut rooted in Trinidad’s hills and bush; a follow-up on the Booker longlist that traces a perilous crossing to Venezuela and ends in the long shadow of a mother’s loss.

Claire Adam’s ascent is welcome headline material. But the deeper story is what her work gives to readers like us who live far from Trinidad and Tobago, yet who feel its pulse daily as a diaspora in the GTA that recognises the ache of distance, the memory that lingers, and the stubborn urge to find language for both.

Trinidad-born and London-based, Adam studied physics at *Brown University* in Rhode Island, before turning to fiction; she later earned an MA in Creative Writing at Goldsmiths. Her debut, *Golden Child* (2019), won the *Desmond Elliott Prize* and was serialised as *BBC Radio 4’s Book at Bedtime*.

Now *In Love Forms* (2025), longlisted for the *Booker*, she brings readers back to Trinidad in 1980, where a pregnant 16-year-old boards a clandestine boat to a Venezuelan convent and gives up her child for adoption; decades later in London, she begins searching for the daughter she never stopped missing.

For our diaspora, the overlap is recognisable. Adam’s fiction is a literature of return to our homeland. *Golden Child* anchors itself in rural south Trinidad, where scarcity and loyalty force impossible choices inside a working-class Indo-Trinidadian family, a terrain that reviewers recognised as both emotionally exact and socially particular.

In *Love Forms*, Adam widens the geography and deepens the interior stakes: the Trinidad-Venezuela corridor, an adoption shrouded by secrecy, a life rebuilt decades later in London, and the relentless call of a mother-daughter bond.

The *Booker Prize* website describes Dawn, Adam’s protagonist, as a voice that “haunts” with “quiet urgency”; meanwhile, the *Financial Times* underscores how an online adoption forum becomes the hinge for a decades-long search.

What binds Adam’s novels is not just setting, but an atmo-

spheric of moral weather: the pressure exerted by class, the legacies of migration, and the way love persists where institutions fail. These are not postcard-sanitised optics of our Caribbean; they are textured, plural, and sometimes harsh worlds that are rendered with writerly crafting and a deeper care.

Kimberly Wallace’s recent feature in the *Trinidad Express* also humanises Adam, inscribing the writer behind the headlines.

As Adam told Wallace, she frames her process simply: “It’s a long game, at least for me”, while revealing that each novel took five years to complete.

Adam adds a reminder many in our diaspora will recognise: “It’s very difficult for those with jobs and family responsibilities to fit in writing on a daily basis... [but] carve out a weekend where you lock the door and do nothing but write.”

And on the tug of memory across distance, she tells Wallace: “Our childhood lays down these memories that take root and never go away... Even though I’ve lived abroad for so long, Trinidad is still the place that I know in my bones.”

Adam’s own remarks on *Booker’s* website align with that interior compass. She wanted to explore the “deeply mysterious bond between mothers and their children”, and tells us that a text “spoke to her in the language of the Caribbean”, a formulation that captures both the intimacy and the scale of *Love Forms*.

For many in our diaspora, Adam’s story feels like a familiar current. It begins on the islands, gathers force across oceans, and still carries the unmistakable salt and sunlight of our homeland.

She describes Trinidad and Tobago as being “the place I know in my bones”, and that truth will ring clear to anyone here who keeps a piece of the Caribbean alive in their kitchen, their speech, in their celebrations. Her novels remind us that distance does not sever belonging; it can, in fact, deepen the roots that keep us steady here in Canada.

Adam writes against the postcard image so often imposed on our homelands by visitors viewing our homeland in monochrome. In joining the company of Caribbean authors whose writing is layered, complex, and alive with contradictions, she helps re-frame the view away from visitors’ lens of easy clichés.

For our diaspora, there is quiet pride in knowing that someone from our own soil is telling the world what we have always known. That our Caribbean cannot be thickly brush-stroked with swaths of sunlight and placid waves. Instead, we assert that our stories are vast, layered, and enriching; and that they matter.



Claire Adam

Elena and Muriel were as close as sisters could be. During their earlier years, their laughter during games of hide-and-seek echoed through the trees in the wooded areas that surrounded their family’s farm.

After the death of their mother, their dad, Steven, did his best to keep the farm afloat, doubling his duties to toil in the fields while taking on his deceased wife’s administrative responsibilities; but without his wife’s partnership, the farm started to fail.

One day, as Steven stooped to examine the damage to his strawberry crop from aphids, a shadow appeared on the ground beside him.

Help had arrived in the form of a teenager named Adrian. Steven hired him as a farmworker for a day, but Adrian’s contributions impressed his new boss, who asked his helper to stay for a week that stretched into a month, and eventually, Adrian stayed on as a permanent employee, living in a trailer that Steven had provided.

With the fortunes of the farm turned around, Steven increased his helper’s wages and hired domestic help to clean and cook for the family. Adrian had earned his place as an extended family member.

Nineteen-year-old Adrian had fallen instantly in love with Elena, which had made him work harder to remain on the farm. Elena’s heart had skipped a beat at the first sight of Adrian.

Muriel, at 16, also held a secret crush on Adrian but watched from a distance while the older adolescents’ relationship grew with each passing day.

Muriel screamed her way out of a bad dream one night. She sought the comfort of her big sister, but Elena’s side of the bed was empty. Her dad called through the wall between their bedrooms to ask if she was okay. She quickly assured him that she was fine to avoid him coming into the room to check on her well-being.

After her heart had settled, the shock of the cover-up for her sister punched her in the gut. Muriel sat up in bed and stared through the window at Adrian’s trailer. For the first time in their lives, the threat of the broken bond of family trust had reared its



The Supernatural Love and Betrayal

ugly head. Elena had forced her into a precarious and uncomfortable situation of deceit. She was torn between loyalty to her sister and honesty owed to her dad.

Another consideration that weighed heavily on her mind was that since the hiring of Adrian, the farm had become productive once again, which had erased the lines of distress on her dad’s face and provided a higher standard of living for the family.

Muriel was caught in the impossible situation of truth versus family survival. She massaged her throbbing temples, clinging to the hope that her dad’s fondness for Adrian would help to resolve the family predicament in case the affair between the farmhand and Elena was discovered.

A few months later, Steven came rushing into the girls’ room at the crack of dawn. Out of breath, he asked the girls if they knew why Adrian had abandoned

them. He had gone to check on his farmhand, who was usually in the fields before his boss every morning, but found the trailer empty, as if no one had ever occupied it. Adrian had vanished into the same thin air from which he had appeared almost a year earlier.

Muriel’s side glance at her sister’s blood-drained face aroused her suspicion. Elena had seemed distracted recently. She had hardly studied and had started missing classes. Muriel had awakened many nights to Elena’s fidgeting and caught her sister’s bloodshot eyes staring at the ceiling in the middle of the night. Muriel suspected that Elena was torn between facing her father’s wrath for having an illegitimate child or performing an illegal abortion that could result in jail time. Elena chose the latter and ended up bleeding to death behind the barn. Muriel, instead of feeling sad at the loss of her sister, experienced numbness and felt devoid of emotions.

Her pace as a writer, five years for each book, is a quiet challenge to the hurried tempo lived in our diasporic lives, where worth is often checkmarked with speed, output, and paychecks.

Adam’s method shows another way: that our work, our art, and even our healing, can take the time they need so the plot germinates, blossoms, and then produces fruit. That there is value in the slow nurturing of a narrative into fruition.

In *Love Forms*, Adam stitches together a story that moves among Trinidad, Venezuela, and the UK, a geography that echoes the tangled routes of so many families in our diaspora in the GTA, where loved ones are scattered across borders yet remain bound through care, memory, and faith.

At the novel’s heart is a mother’s decades-long search for the child she gave up, an echo of the ways we, too, here in the diaspora, are searching for pieces of ourselves across time and place, through conversations, photographs, and half-remembered stories.

What matters for us as readers here in the diaspora is how this lineage refracts back home. In book clubs across the GTA, Adam’s work can sit alongside Earl Lovelace and V.S. Naipaul, not as mimicry, but as a contemporary arm of that tradition. Here, Trinidad and Tobago’s social textures are positioned within modern London plots; where a mother’s voice of longing intersects across continents, oceans, and time zones.

The *Booker* longlist will keep *Love Forms* visible through the season, drawing fresh readers to *Golden Child*, and with them, new conversations about Trinidad and Tobago on an international stage.

But beyond the news hook is the quieter influence: writers in our diaspora in our nurses, teachers, our cultural ambassadors, who will recognise in Adam a workable structure for their own stories. Here a physics student can become a novelist; a migrant can write about a homeland so it breathes on the page; a book can take five years from start to finish, and then make it to the top of the charts.

Adam’s success is surely hers to savour. However, at the same time, its success also belongs to our diaspora, where we can look into its pages and see our lives mirrored with dignity; it speaks with a similar voice for families for whom separation does not end with unbridgeable distances; and to our Caribbean region that is insistent on voicing its complexities beyond superficial touristic narratives of sand and surf.

From the Port-of-Spain bus terminus to transit centres in Peel, Scarborough, and other sites of confluence and outward mobility, the journey Adam’s novels trace is one that our diaspora knows only too well in love of family that crosses black waters, memory that refuses to be blanketed with silence, and narratives sturdy enough to contain both.



Kamil Ali

When authorities made a welfare check on the farm after the girls’ schools reported their absences without explanation, they found a disturbing scene that they had to piece together based on Muriel’s bizarre explanations. Facts were interlaced with fantasy, woven by a thread of psychotic imaginings of a young paraplegic girl who lived alone on the farm.

According to Muriel, when her mom died from cancer, she had lost the only true person who had dedicated her life to her after the accident that had left her lower body paralysed. She had harboured an inner hate and blamed her sister for her injuries, even though she was the one who pulled the accelerator lever to make the tractor go faster, after convincing Elena to illegally drive the farm vehicle that hit a mound of earth and flipped over. Muriel resented the fact that while the tractor had pinned her to the ground, Elena had walked away without a scratch.

Muriel had seethed with rage after sitting on her bed at night and witnessing Elena visiting Adrian in his trailer for romantic midnight trysts. She had hated her father for hiring the handsome farmhand, knowing that he had an attractive daughter of the same age.

Authorities shook their heads, confused by the discoveries that did not make sense. Adrian and Elena were buried together in a shallow grave in the woods, their bodies riddled with stab wounds that appeared to be the cause of their deaths. Steven had died several days before, pinned by the tractor that had flipped over for no apparent reason.

Unseen entities hurled detectives away from Muriel, injuring them, which forced the government to abandon her. They posted signs outside the farm warning trespassers that they could lose their lives if they ventured onto the unholy ground.

Logics could not explain how a paraplegic teenager had taken deadly revenge on the people that her twisted mind believed had wronged her. Muriel snarled with an evil grin, daring anyone to challenge her.



Last year's Independence Parade in Trinidad and Tobago

Independence Parade cancelled, Day of Prayer instead

– Trinidad and Tobago will forego its traditional Independence Day parade and fireworks this year, and will instead observe a National Day of Prayer and Reflection. The decision follows security advice amid an ongoing State of Emergency, with government leaders stressing both fiscal prudence and the need to safeguard national stability.

Port-of-Spain – The government of Trinidad and Tobago has cancelled the 2025 Independence Day Parade and State-sponsored fireworks, citing national security concerns under the ongoing state of emergency, and will instead mark the August 31 holiday with a National Day of Prayer and Reflection.

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Homeland Security on August 15, the government explained that intelligence gathered under the State of Emergency (SoE), declared on July 18, pointed to heightened risks associated with mass gatherings. The SoE, extended for three months, followed reports of criminal gangs preparing a hit list targeting public officials.

The ministry said, “After careful deliberation on intelligence arising out of the state of emergency, the government has taken the decision to replace the annual Independence Day Parade and Official Functions with a National Day of Prayer and Reflection. The National Day of Prayer and Reflection will bring together citizens of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, of all faiths and backgrounds, to unite and to seek guidance and strength during this challenging time, as well as to reflect on where we are as a nation and the way forward.”

The statement also confirmed that no State-sponsored fireworks would take place. Instead, permits will be granted solely for “silent” fireworks at private displays. Homeland Security Minister Roger Alexander said the decision reflected both security needs and concerns about noise pollution, which affects vulnerable groups, animals, and the elderly.

“We have seen it fit at this time not to burden the public purse with that type of sponsorship when we could use it at this time to further conduct operations, which will further disrupt the organised crime syndicate,” Alexander stated.

He added, “So, in other words, when UNC wins, the animals

won, the elderly [won], the unborn children won, the newborn babies won, and those who are sick and afflicted lying in bed, they too won.”

Legal Affairs Minister Saddam Hosein emphasised the fiscal rationale for the cancellations, noting that resources would be redirected to law enforcement.

“We are using the savings from these functions to help with the fight against crime,” he said, estimating the savings to “amount to millions.”

He also linked the cancellations to broader economic pressures: “As you know, the government is now saddled with a nine-billion dollar deficit... Those are matters that we have looked at and we have believed, as a government, that we can use those funds and channel it towards law enforcement to conduct further operations in order to handicap the criminals.”



Saddam Hosein

The government reminded citizens that there was precedent for suspending the Independence Day Parade, as it was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year’s commemoration, the 63rd anniversary of Independence, will instead be marked by prayer and reflection.

Hosein said the decision followed guidance from security experts, who advised against concentrating the nation’s leadership, judiciary, and protective services in a single gathering.

“The government’s national security advice is that the gathering of the President, and all government and Opposition members, members of the Judiciary, together with a large contingent of the marine, land and air assets of the Defence Force and the TTPS, in one location would be unwise at this time,” he explained.

The Ministry of Homeland Security underscored that this year’s observance would prioritise national unity and resilience. Citizens were urged to use the day for safe, reflective, and community-oriented activities.

“The government of Trinidad and Tobago acknowledges the significance of the Independence Day Parade to the nation’s heritage and assures citizens that these adjustments are made in the interest of national security and the collective well-being of the people of Trinidad and Tobago,” the statement said.

Govt ban on fireworks seen as caring, compassionate for vulnerable groups, animals

– The cancellation of Trinidad and Tobago’s Independence Day fireworks has been hailed by disability and animal welfare groups, who say the decision represents a compassionate and inclusive step that protects vulnerable communities while promoting public safety. Both organisations urged citizens to support the shift toward silent fireworks.

Port-of-Spain – The Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA) has welcomed the government’s cancellation of the State-sponsored Independence Day fireworks, describing it as “a crucial step in safeguarding the rights, dignity and wellbeing of people who are blind and visually impaired”.

In a statement on August 16, the association applauded the government’s August 15 announcement, which confirmed that no national fireworks or military parade would be held this year. Instead, permits will only be issued for “silent” fireworks for private displays.

“For people who are blind, sound is one of the primary tools used for orientation, safety, and independence,” the TTBWA explained, adding, “Sudden, uncontrolled and excessive noise

from fireworks creates disorientation, anxiety, and heightened vulnerability. In some cases, it can result in dangerous situations, such as difficulty navigating in public spaces, triggering trauma, or causing confusion that puts blind persons at risk of accidents.”

The group noted that, unlike sighted persons, blind and visually impaired individuals cannot rely on visual cues to determine the source or direction of loud sounds. This leaves them feeling unsafe and exposed when fireworks erupt unexpectedly in residential areas.

The TTBWA said the government’s decision aligned with global World Health Organisation standards, and reflected a recognition that “true independence must include accessibility, safety, and protection for all”.

The association also urged nationals to embrace the silent alternative and to respect the law, saying it stood ready to continue working with the government and civil society partners to advance policies improving the lives of persons who are blind, visually impaired, and living with disabilities.

Meanwhile, the National Animal Control Committee (NACC), Trinidad and Tobago’s largest coalition of animal wel-

US human rights report finds no major changes

– The United States’ 2024 Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Trinidad and Tobago has described a stable environment with no significant changes in the past year. While praising government accountability and protections for freedoms, the report highlighted lingering concerns over pretrial detention, labour oversight, and gaps in refugee protection.

Port-of-Spain – Trinidad and Tobago’s human rights environment remained stable in 2024, with no major abuses reported and the government taking steps to hold violators accountable, according to the US State Department’s annual human rights report released on August 12.

The report found no credible evidence of systemic violations, noting the absence of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, or government-led coercion in population control. It confirmed the government generally respected freedoms of expression and the press, backed by an independent media and a functioning democratic system.

Worker rights remained protected under law, but the report cited limitations for certain groups, including members of the defence force, police, firefighters, prison officers, teachers, and domestic workers.

While the government enforced laws on wages, hours, and safety standards, the report said labour inspection capacity was insufficient, particularly in the informal sector, which the Inter-American Development Bank has estimated comprises up to one-third of total employment.

The report raised long standing concerns about lengthy pretrial detention, with detainees often waiting between seven and ten years for trial, at times as long as the maximum sentence for the alleged crime. The backlog was attributed to burdensome preliminary inquiries and limited reliance on plea bargaining.

A parliamentary report to the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality, and Diversity was noted for containing allegations of sexual exploitation of migrants by Coast Guard members at immigration facilities.

The report also observed that the government enforced applicable laws against child labour, allowing work only for children aged 14 to 16 in family-related or approved vocational activities. It confirmed that the minimum legal marriage age of 18 was being effectively enforced.

On refugee protection, the report underscored the absence of a national legal framework for granting asylum, with the government relying instead on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to determine refugee status. However, the system did not guarantee protection from deportation, and detained asylum seekers lacked formal registration procedures.

The report added that UNHCR and other observers had limited access to immigration detention centres.

It cited a May 2024 High Court ruling in which a judge overturned the 2017 denial of entry to three Venezuelan women. The judge criticised the immigration division’s lack of policies and proper assessments, urging clearer guidance, training, and the use of special inquiries to ensure fairness.

While no damages were awarded, the annulled orders potentially allowed the women to return.

The report also documented a small but visible increase in antisemitic incidents, including graffiti with swastikas and online hate speech, particularly in reaction to events in the Middle East. The Jewish population in Trinidad and Tobago numbers fewer than 100.

Overall, the report described a stable human rights environment in Trinidad and Tobago.

fare organisations, also praised the decision and urged that the suspension of loud fireworks be made permanent.

“For decades this day has shaken the hearts of all concerned citizens to the terror faced by the animals in our zoo, whose location to the display leaves zookeepers scampering to sedate, secure, and brace for the inevitable chaos that ensues,” the committee said in its August 16 release.

It added, “For years we have heard stories of animals injured or killed, confused trying to escape the explosions.”

The NACC said the adoption of only silent fireworks would better protect vulnerable animals in the future.

During the August 15 announcement, Homeland Security Minister Roger Alexander said the suspension of the fireworks and military parade was guided by national security concerns under the State of Emergency, which was declared on July 18.

“The government will, however, issue permits solely for the sale and use of ‘silent’ fireworks for private displays,” Alexander stated, adding, “This policy aims to limit noise disturbances, particularly for vulnerable persons, pets and their owners whilst also supporting the peace and stability necessary during the SoE.”

How Nadira’s constrained cinematic world echoes our diasporic lives

– Florence Ezekiel, better known as Nadira, became Bollywood’s defining vamp, her haunting debut in *Shree 420* transforming her career into “my Waterloo”, as she later lamented. In our latest series, we explore how one seductive role reshaped industry archetypes, gendered typecasting, and helped to shape our diasporic memory across oceans.

...

By Romeo Kaseram

An LJI Series for Our Caribbean Diaspora

In the dim glow of a cigarette-holder’s ember, Nadira emerged on screen in *Shree 420* (1955) as Maya, the vamp who redefined villainy in Hindi cinema. With a languid eyebrow and poised seductiveness, she lured Raj’s idealism off its moral rails. Yet, in a haunting confession years later, Nadira called this breakthrough moment “my Waterloo”, telling the *Indian Express*, “I took up the role as a challenge, to prove my versatility, and it ruined my career.”

For our Indo-Caribbean families who crowded into cinema halls in Georgetown, Port-of-Spain, or in Paramaribo decades later, that same image became a cultural touchstone of Maya in a fur stole, cigarette-holder in hand, and darkly lit by shady nightclub glamour. She was shorthand for a danger our parents once whispered about: modernity’s lure, its freedoms, and its accompanying depleting costs.

When Nadira reflected on her *Shree 420* role as “my Waterloo,” she was not merely speaking about one performance. She was pointing to a larger construct, the Bollywood vamp, a role as alluring as it was imprisoning.

In the cinematic language of the 1950s and 1960s, the vamp was shorthand for temptation, modernity, and moral transgression. She was the foil to the “good woman”: the heroine who upheld family, duty, and sacrificial love. While the heroine often appeared in saris and sang devotional songs, the vamp smoked cigarettes, sipped cocktails, and swayed to cabaret numbers in shimmering gowns.

Where the heroine embodied the sanctity of the home, the vamp was coded as cosmopolitan, dangerous, and overtly sexual; portrayed as an “other woman” whose allure had to be rejected for the hero to achieve moral resolution.

This division was never neutral. The vamp was a cultural invention that crystallised anxieties of a newly-independent India: anxieties about Westernisation, about women stepping outside traditional boundaries, and about the fragility of morality in an urbanising society.

Nadira’s Maya in *Shree 420* exemplified these qualities. Her glamorous world of clubs and cars stood in stark contrast to Nargis’ Vidya, whose very name meant knowledge and virtue. The narrative’s resolution demanded that Raj Kapoor’s everyman reject Maya’s material seduction to return to Vidya’s cleansing, moral embrace.

For our Caribbean audiences, who consumed these films thousands of miles away in modest movie houses, the binary resonated deeply. The sari-clad heroine represented the endurance of cultural tradition, while the vamp embodied both fear and fascination, echoing our diasporic experience of negotiating modernity in societies that were themselves colonial hybrids.

However, for actresses like Nadira, excelling as the vamp often meant being typecast.

That it “ruined” her career still resonates today with clarity, because once audiences, and many producers, kept seeing her as the woman of danger and desire, few viewers were willing to accept her in a new role, or to recast her as the woman of virtue. Thus, the vamp was not only a cultural archetype; it was an entanglement that reshaped her career, securely binding her in a professional trap.

And yet, paradoxically, the vamp was also one of the most dynamic cinematic spaces for women of the era. Nadira danced, schemed, and owned her sexuality; and she often had the film’s most memorable songs. In conservative societies, whether in India, or in our Caribbean homelands, the vamp offered a vicarious thrill: a way to experience liberation and forbidden glamour on screen, before it was ritually punished or sidelined by the storyline.

Nadira’s performance in *Shree 420* did not just “ruin” her; it also seared the vamp archetype into cinema’s collective memory, stretching far beyond Bombay to arrive at our doorsteps across the *kala pani*.

Before she became “Nadira”, our well-known screen siren dressed in fur stoles, Western gowns, and moved in the smoky allure of the vamp, she was Florence Ezekiel, born on December 5, 1932, in Baghdad.

Her family belonged to the Baghdadi Jewish community, a mercantile diaspora, which by the early 20th century, had established a strong presence in Bombay (now Mumbai). Seeking better prospects, her parents had moved there while she was still a baby, joining a city already alive with overlapping diasporas.

Bombay was then a city of convergences. Traders and dockworkers arrived with the tides, Baghdadi Jews sought mercantile fortunes, Parsis built industry and philanthropy.



Florence Ezekiel aka Nadira (1932-2006)

And there were our own returnees arriving after indentureship. Bombay’s docks had seen indentured migrants depart for the sugar colonies, and decades later, return scarred and weary. Some of those returnees remained, adding their experiences of hardship and resilience to the city’s cultural texture.

For diaspora readers, this overlap is not academic; it is ancestral. The very ships that carried grandparents and great-grandparents across the *kala pani* to Trinidad, Guyana, or Suriname, made the return trip to dock at these same harbours of departure.

To later sit in a Caribbean cinema and watch Nadira’s image flicker on screen was, in its own way, a closing of our own circle of indentureship.

Florence grew up immersed within this plural landscape. While Jewish dynasties like the Sassoons built mills, libraries, and synagogues, her own family lived modestly, without mercantile cushions.

She attended Catholic school, learned shorthand and typing at the YMCA, and at one point even aspired to join the Church as a nun or pursue medicine. But with her family’s resources stretched thin, these ambitions could not be realised. Survival, instead, led her to cinema, into a world that her community regarded with suspicion; yet it was one that offered livelihood and a strange form of belonging.

Her true break came when Sardar Akhtar, actress and wife of director Mehboob Khan, introduced her to the industry. Cast as a Rajput princess in *Aan* (1952), Florence became “Nadira”.

Aan, India’s first technicolor extravaganza, gave her stature and mystique. Yet it was the post-*Aan* world of *Shree 420* that forever tethered her identity to the vamp.

If *Aan* (1952) introduced Nadira to audiences as a luminous Rajput princess, it was *Shree 420* (1955) that etched her forever into cinema’s collective imagination. In Raj Kapoor’s morality play, she appeared as Maya, the cosmopolitan temptress who personified wealth, allure, and corruption.

Draped in Western gowns, with a cigarette-holder poised between her fingers, Nadira gave one of the most unforgettable entrances in Hindi cinema.

The nightclub sequence with the iconic song *Mud Mud Ke Na Dekh* became shorthand for temptation itself, cementing Nadira as Bollywood’s definitive vamp. Yet this triumph also defined her professional boundaries.

Later, she would confess to the *Indian Express* that in the failed landscape of Napoleonic ambition, she too had met her “Waterloo”, and as she lamented, “it ruined my career.”

By embodying the role too well, she found herself being typecast, rarely considered for the sari-clad heroine, who in those embracing and reaffirming narratives, eventually wins the hero’s heart.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, Nadira’s vamp continued to evolve. In *Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai* (1960), she played Dr Sheila Verma, a sophisticated professional woman whose very presence threatened the heroine’s sanctity. In *Pakeezah* (1972), her aura again carried intensity and otherness, rather than domestic virtue.

Her most celebrated turn came in *Julie* (1975), where she played Margaret, a strict Anglo-Indian mother navigating issues of love and interfaith marriage; it was a performance that earned her the Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Yet even with this win the cultural coding of “outsider” persisted, proof of how Bollywood’s overarching narratives were contributory to circumscribing her quest for a more holistic, embracing screen identity.

As these films circulated in Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname, our Caribbean ancestors consumed Nadira’s vamp with ambivalence. Nadira was glamorous, modern, daring, yet always outside redemption. In our diaspora that was negotiating its own balance between inherited tradition and Western assimilation, Nadira’s roles mirrored familiar tensions.

Jaya Bachchan, Nadira’s co-star in *Ek Nazar* (1972), recalled her power with unfiltered awe, telling the *Indian Express*, “She played a tyrant in *Ek Nazar*. As we shot, I remember becoming actually intimidated by her. Nadiraji was a very powerful actress with an imposing screen presence. She couldn’t play the frail *chumai* kind of girl that audiences liked to see.”

Nadira herself acknowledged how her biggest triumph restricted her, extolling her deepest regret in her exposition to the *Indian Express*, “I took up *Shree 420* for a lark but it became my Waterloo. I took up the role as a challenge, to prove my versatility, and it ruined my career.”

Film historian Tapan K. Ghosh further underscores the archetype’s shifting role, writing in the *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, “When the vamps’ sex appeal became increasingly integrated into the images of heroines, the vamp had to be given a new place in the films’ narrative strategies...”

Also, the *Economic Times* noted her improbable arc, from buying food with her first pay cheque to becoming “one of the highest-paid actresses of her era”. The publication adds she was the first Indian actor to own a Rolls Royce.

For diaspora critics and audiences, Nadira’s vamp carried layered meaning. In Port-of-Spain or Toronto, she was not only a foil to the heroine, but also a metaphor for cultural boundaries: the seduction and suspicion of modernity, the allure of assimilation, and the certainty of punishment for transgression.

Nadira’s story is not just the tale of an actress typecast in Bombay’s golden age. It is also the story of a cultural archetype that continues to echo for audiences far from the city where she first stood before the cameras.

The vamp, as embodied by Nadira, was never only about glamour or temptation. She was about boundaries: between tradition and modernity, purity and danger, belonging and estrangement.

For our diaspora today, those boundaries remain familiar. In Toronto, London, or New York, our families still sit together to watch these classics that shaped our earlier generations. The sari-clad heroine continues to embody endurance, sacrifice, and cultural preservation. But Nadira’s vamp remains equally present, a reminder of the seductions and dangers of assimilation, the pull of cosmopolitan freedoms, and the costs that may follow.

To live between these narratives is to live between worlds, inside a condition that defines our diasporic experience itself.

In our Caribbean, where Nadira’s films once played in small halls acrid with cigarette smoke and the savoury scent of curry drifting in from the street stalls of street vendors, Nadira was viewed with ambivalence. As children, we gazed wide-eyed at her furs and cocktails, while our parents shifted uneasily in their seats, shaking their heads at the dangers of such a woman.

In those moments, our cinemas became more than entertainment; it became mirrors in which our migrant families rehearsed their own negotiations with modernity, morality, and identity.

Today, as new Bollywood films travel instantly across OTT platforms, the vamp as once conceived has dissolved into heroines who can themselves smoke, drink, and command the frame.

Yet Nadira’s Maya lingers. Her presence reminds us that every liberation comes layered with ambivalence, every glamour with a shadow. For our diaspora, this doubleness is a familiar inheritance: the simultaneous pull of home and away, tradition and change, heroine and vamp.

That to remember Nadira is to remember the doubleness of our own diasporic journeys. She stood on screen as the woman of allure and peril, forever marked as the one who must be rejected so that virtue could prevail. Yet in that rejection, she carved out a space that endures, a counter-narrative that still speaks to us as we navigate lives shaped by both inheritance and possibility.

Between the heroine’s sari and Nadira’s sequined gown lies the terrain many of us still inhabit: negotiating our place in new lands, weighing the pull of tradition against the promise of elsewhere.

In that in-between, Nadira’s legacy lingers, not only as a memory of cinema, but as a mirror for our diaspora’s continuing search for balance, belonging, and ultimately, our own voice.

Architect of Australia's Golden Era, gritty opener, coach Simpson passes

– Bob Simpson, who captained Australia, coached them back to greatness, and carved his place among cricket's finest as a run-machine opener, master slip fielder, and shrewd tactician, passed away on August 16 at the age of 89. His life spanned eras of the game, leaving an enduring imprint on cricket's fabric.

...

Born in Sydney in 1936, Robert Baddeley Simpson would become synonymous with discipline, resilience, and leadership. Making his Test debut against South Africa in 1957, he steadily rose from a promising all-rounder into a resolute opening batter, defining the grit of Australian cricket in the 1960s. His career statistics tell part of the story: 62 Tests, 4,869 runs at 46.81, ten centuries, 27 half-centuries, and 71 wickets with his leg-spin. Yet it was his character and determination that left a deeper mark.

His highest innings came in 1964, when he batted more than 13 hours at Old Trafford, compiling 311 against England. That year he amassed 1,381 runs, a record at the time, and cemented his reputation as a run-maker of substance. His stoicism and stamina ensured that Australia retained the Ashes, and his example became the benchmark for a generation of players.

Alongside Bill Lawry, Simpson forged one of the strongest opening partnerships in Test history. Their 3,596 runs together in 62 innings

set a world record for an opening pair and defined Australia's batting strength of the era. In all, he captained Australia 39 times, first succeeding Richie Benaud in 1964. His leadership was tested again when, at the age of 41, he came out of retirement in 1977 during the turbulence of World Series Cricket to guide a weakened Australian side with dignity and courage.

As a fielder, Simpson was revered. Few slip catchers matched his reliability; his sharp reflexes turned half-chances into dismissals, giving him a second career-defining role beyond his batting. His leg-spin, too, played its part, capped by an eight-wicket haul against India in 1968.

If his playing career made him a stalwart, it was as Australia's first full-time coach that Simpson reshaped the destiny of the national side. Appointed in 1986, at a time when the team was in a prolonged slump, he partnered with Allan Border to instil hard-nosed professionalism.

Border later recalled, "Bob was very adamant about getting everyone on the same page, as far as attitude was concerned. He'd sometimes say, 'Up to midnight is your time. After midnight is cricket's time'. Without having actual curfews, he'd lay down the law."

Discipline, fitness, and fielding drills became hallmarks of his regime. Players who dared to stay out late would be tested until exhaustion on the training field. The method was tough

WI look to rebuild after crisis summit

Port-of-Spain – The future of West Indies cricket dominated discussions at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad in Port-of-Spain on August 10 and 11, where administrators, past greats, and current players gathered to identify solutions for systemic issues hampering the game's progress.

Chief Executive Officer Chris Dehring set the tone by stressing that resurgence requires region-wide collaboration.

"I want to emphasise that Cricket West Indies can't do it alone," he told reporters, noting that much of the production pipeline, such as school and age-group cricket, lies beyond CWI's direct control.

He pointed to "an incredible commercial and national resource gap" compared to other nations, but expressed confidence that unity could "bridge that gap" and return the team "back where we all know it belongs".

The summit brought together the Cricket Strategy & Officiating Committee (CSOC), CWI executives, head coach Daren Sammy, white-ball captain Shai Hope, Test captain Roston Chase, and legends such as Brian Lara, Sir Clive Lloyd, and Sir Vivian Richards.

Their focus spanned youth pathways, domestic competitiveness, international preparation, facilities, coaching education, player retention, and the mental demands of modern cricket.

Director of Cricket Miles Bascombe said the key was acknowledging systemic roots.

"The strategies we implement, we have to look at addressing them across the entirety of our cricket system," he explained, adding that discussions produced "fruitful suggestions and recommendations" now to be shaped into holistic solutions.

Lara described the conversations as frank and action-driven. He observed that while skill once propelled West Indies dominance, "the game has evolved, particularly with technology and analytics. We must now shift our focus towards these areas to find ourselves back to being very competitive".

His later statement urged inclusion of modern-era players such as Chris Gayle, Dwayne

Bravo, and Kieron Pollard, arguing that their proximity to today's generation provides insight into "what drives, distracts, or disillusion the modern West Indian cricketer".

Sir Clive echoed the need for resources to meet coaching staff requirements.

"They were very clear about the things that are needed and why they are needed," he said, warning that the disparity in finances has left West Indies struggling.

"When we were in the ascendancy everybody wanted to play against us, and we became the cash cow for territories like England, Australia and India. Now, we need a better share of the pie," he said.

Committee Chair Enoch Lewis emphasised that the goal was structural reform.

"The goal is to ensure that the committee provides the CWI Board with well thought-out and fundamentally sound recommendations that will move West Indies forward to a place where we can all be proud," he said, noting that some changes would be immediate while others will take longer and require input across the region.

Practical measures highlighted included a high-performance centre, upgraded territorial academies, and an improved coaching certification system. Bascombe confirmed that CWI had temporarily hired a coaching development consultant while a broader upgrade programme is being designed.

Dehring noted that ingrained technical habits often manifest as weaknesses only at international level, underscoring the urgency of better preparation structures from early stages.

Lara underlined the psychological and cultural aspects of reform. "We must recognise that the challenges confronting West Indies cricket extend far beyond inconsistent performances on the field," he said.

He described them as "deeply-rooted in cultural, psychological, and structural shifts that have evolved over the past two decades," calling for "collective wisdom, not isolated intervention".



Bob Simpson

but effective, as Border admitted: "Bob's not everyone's cup of tea, but he was very good for our team."

Under Simpson's stewardship, Australia shocked the cricketing world by winning the 1987 World Cup as outsiders. His tactical reshaping of the One Day side introduced structures previously missing. From there, the Test team surged, winning the 1989 Ashes 4-0 in England and beginning an era of dominance that stretched across the 1990s.

The crowning achievement of his coaching career came in 1995, when Australia finally conquered the West Indies in the Caribbean to claim the unofficial crown as the world's best side. By the time he stepped down in 1996, he had laid the foundation for the golden generation that would dominate world cricket.

Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird called him "one of the greats of Australian cricket", adding, "As a brilliant opening batter, incredible slips fielder and handy spin bowler, Bob was a mainstay of a very strong Australian team in the 1960s, and he became a leader across the game as Australian and New South Wales captain and as a coach."

Baird further reflected: "Bob's decision to come out of retirement to successfully lead the Australian team during the advent of World Series Cricket in 1977 was a wonderful service to the game, and his coaching set the foundation for a golden generation for Australian cricket. On behalf of Cricket Australia, I would like to express my warmest condolences to Bob's family, friends, teammates and all those touched by his vast contribution to cricket."

Bob Simpson was more than his statistics, despite its eminence in the record books. He was a custodian of cricket's traditions, a man of discipline, and a mentor who believed in the virtues of hard work and unity. His fingerprints remain visible in the professionalism of modern Australian cricket and in the memories of those who watched his epic Old Trafford vigil, his sharp slip catches, or lay exhausted on the green turf after his relentless fielding drills.

As a player, captain, and coach, he has left behind a legacy in discipline, resilience, and collective purpose that endures in the Australian teams that follow. For the game of cricket, he leaves not just records, but a pathway to becoming a stalwart in the field.



Brian Lara



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India women chase World Cup dream with past heartbreak, future hope

– India’s women’s cricket team enters the 2025 World Cup with renewed belief, home advantage, and memories of past heartbreak driving them forward, as captain Harmanpreet Kaur and vice-captain Smriti Mandhana lead a confident squad determined to claim a first-ever ODI championship.

With home advantage and surging confidence, India’s women’s cricket team will begin their 2025 World Cup campaign against Sri Lanka on September 30 determined, as captain Harmanpreet Kaur put it, “to break that barrier which all Indian fans and we are waiting for”.

The five-week tournament, staged across Vizag, Indore, Guwahati, Colombo and Mumbai, will conclude on November 2, and offers India their best chance yet at an elusive first global crown.

For Harmanpreet, memories of the near miss at Lord’s in 2017 remain vivid. She recalled how her 171-run demolition of Australia in the semi-final changed her life, admitting that “at the time, I didn’t fully realise what had happened, but when we returned to India after losing the final, the number of people waiting and cheering for us was truly remarkable. That was something very special”.

Yet the heartbreak of falling short remains a motivation as India now turn belief into pursuit of history.

Their preparations this year could scarcely have been stronger. India have won nine of their eleven ODIs, sweeping Ireland 3-0, securing a tri-series in Sri Lanka, and clinching a

Edwards confident about ICC World Cup

– England head coach Charlotte Edwards is confident her side can overcome inconsistency and fielding concerns to challenge for a record-equalling fifth ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup title later this year.

Less than six months into her tenure as England coach, Charlotte Edwards believes her squad remains firmly on course for a serious bid at the ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup, which begins in India on September 30.

Edwards, herself a former World Cup-winning captain, has already seen contrasting performances from her side since replacing Jon Lewis. England began brightly under her guidance with a clean sweep of six white-ball matches against the West Indies, only to falter soon after when India secured victory in both ODI and T20I series on English soil.

Despite the setbacks, Edwards has taken encouragement from the lessons gained. Speaking on the BBC Stumped podcast, she said, “We were massively challenged (against India) and that’s how we want women’s cricket to be. It wasn’t a reality check. We know we can beat India. We are going into a World Cup where we know if we play our best, we can beat any team.”

Much of England’s confidence rests on the proven quality of two world leaders in their disciplines: captain Nat Sciver-Brunt, ranked No. 1 in batting, and left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone, who heads the global bowling rankings. Ecclestone also excelled during the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup earlier in the year, and both are expected to be pivotal in England’s campaign.

Yet Edwards acknowledged that the label of being a “poor fielding side” continues to follow the team.

“It is something we are working on, we know we have that tag now,” she said.

2-1 win over second-ranked England, a result preceded by their first-ever T20I series victory on English soil.

Harmanpreet said the team’s confidence has soared because of the consistency of play: “To be honest, very high, because the amount of cricket we have played in the last couple of years, that has really given us a lot of confidence. And touch wood, the way we are playing [for] the last couple of years, we just want to continue with that.”

She explained that the team was not surprised with the results in England either, since “we knew the kind of preparation we have done... we were only talking about how we can win, how we can improve ourselves”.

Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana has been at the heart of this resurgence, topping the ODI run charts in 2025 with 628 runs at an average of 57.09 and striking at over 107, her most prolific year for six-hitting as well as 12 lofts over the boundary.

Reflecting on her form, she said, “more than my mindset, the work ethics have changed quite a lot in the last two or three years. And because of that, there is a lot of calmness around how I want to go about my cricket”.

Mandhana stressed that this calmness extended to the whole team, as they had become clear about where to work hard and how to build consistency. She also credited the collective environment, noting that “the amount of training we are doing and the efforts we are putting in our training camps that is finally giving us a result and hopefully this World Cup will be very special

She added, “Sometimes I get frustrated because we can drop one catch and we are labelled a bad fielding team, even though we have fielded really well otherwise. I am confident we can get to a place where people are talking really positively about our fielding.”

The team’s build-up has also been shadowed by fitness concerns for former captain Heather Knight, who is recovering from a serious hamstring tendon injury suffered against the West Indies. Knight, who relinquished the captaincy earlier this year after a heavy Ashes defeat in Australia, has undergone months of rehabilitation, but remains optimistic about returning in time.

“That World Cup is what I’m aiming for, it’s what I’ve got my sights set on,” Knight said. She added, “There’s always bumps in the road with rehab but hopefully everything goes smoothly and I can be back early September and get a bit of cricket in before the World Cup. Things are tracking pretty well to hopefully be fit for that. It’s healing well. We’re not going to rush things. It’s a pretty gnarly injury: I ripped off the tendon quite well from the bone, so I have to be a little bit careful coming back”

Knight missed the latter stages of the West Indies series, as well as London Spirit’s defence of The Hundred, and spent two weeks on crutches while avoiding surgery. Reflecting on her transition out of leadership, she admitted, “The Ashes was pretty tough; I was sad that things had ended like that, but the ECB decided they wanted me to have a fresh start, and that was their decision and completely fine. I’m still very motivated to keep playing for England.”

England open their World Cup campaign against South Africa on October 3, with Edwards confident that her blend of experienced performers and a sharpened tactical focus will allow the team to mount a serious challenge for another title.



Harmanpreet Kaur (left) with Smriti Mandhana

for us”.

The squad’s recent triumphs have been buoyed by contributions from emerging players, such as Kranti Goud’s six-wicket haul in the third ODI against England, which Mandhana described as “just amazing” to witness. For her, the way youngsters were being absorbed into the team underscored the harmony and balance that had been missing in earlier campaigns.

The road ahead is not without its tests. Just ten days before the World Cup, India face defending champions and world No. 1 Australia in a three-match home ODI series. Harmanpreet acknowledged the value of that challenge, saying, “whenever we play against Australia, that is always challenging because they are very competitive and you always have to know where you are standing, and what are the areas you need to improve [on] as a team. I

think right before the World Cup, that series is going to give us a lot of clarity”.

Beyond individual preparation, the broader landscape of the women’s game has also shifted. Harmanpreet observed that dominance by a single nation was no longer guaranteed: “Now every team has improved a lot... you don’t know which team is going to be there in the top four.” This unpredictability, she said, was a healthy sign for the sport.

ICC Chairman Jay Shah echoed that optimism, describing the return of the World Cup to India as a “defining moment for the women’s game, setting the stage for a truly world-class tournament that will further elevate the sport’s global stature”.

He underlined that discussions with players past and present were essential in shaping the sport’s future and sustaining its upward momentum.



Charlotte Edwards

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