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Cricket to Conquer Cancer cheque: (left to right) are Dhaman Kissoon, Jordan Harding, Ashni Ramsammy, Aaron Johnson, Rizwan Mohammed, Ingleton Liburd, and Robin Ramsammy. Photos by Ramesh Ramkalawan



Award time: (left to right) are Ashni Ramsammy, Woodbine Banquet Hall's Syed Marzuk and Gurdeep Dass, Dhaman Kissoon, and Toronto Police Service's Ronald Taverner.

Rotary Club of Brampton Flower City spreads Christmas cheer, makes spirits bright

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto – The Rotary Club of Brampton Flower City lit up the spirit of generosity and giving at its Christmas event, *Making Spirits Bright*, held at the Woodbine Banquet Hall in Etobicoke on November 23. With \$10,000 in donations to two critical healthcare initiatives, the evening underscored the

club's unwavering commitment to making a difference in the community while celebrating the joy of the season.

As part of the festivities, the club honoured Woodbine Banquet Hall with a plaque recognising its steadfast support and hospitality over the years. Woodbine's General Manager, Syed Marzuk, described the honour as a testament to

the venue's dedication to community engagement and excellence.

"Being recognised by the Rotary Club of Brampton Flower City for its great work is a huge honour for Woodbine Banquet Hall," Marzuk said. "This award shows the hall's commitment to providing excellent service, being involved in the

See Page 5: Brampton Rotary Club

Modi's monumental visit anchors history, heritage

— The Indian Arrival Memorial Monument in Guyana is an enduring symbol of remembrance, bridging India and Guyana's shared journey from indentureship to empowerment. Modi's visit reaffirms this legacy's enduring agency, and the bonds that are being strengthened across generations and continents.

Georgetown – In the tranquillity of Georgetown's Monument Gardens, the Indian Arrival Memorial Monument stood steadfast on November 21, a ship anchored and at rest in history after the turbulence of its many long journeys, along with other vessels, across the *kala pani*.

It was on this day last month, and inside this space of tranquility and tribute, that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived to pay homage to this enduring symbol of resilience.

Framed by the replica of the S.S. *Whitby*, which first carried Indian indentured labourers to British Guiana, Modi's visit honoured the sacrifices of over 239,000 immigrants, celebrated the legacy they forged, and reaffirmed the enduring ties between India and Guyana.



PM Modi bows before the replica of the S.S. *Whitby*

in 1853 aboard the S.S. *Adelaide*, and his great-grandmother, Radhah Chum, following in 1860 aboard the S.S. *Colgrain*.

And so, the occasion on this ground of tranquillity and symbolism was an enriching convergence of history, legacy, and intergenerational futurity, made possible through Ramsaran's pivotal role in establishing the IAMM and other

Accompanied by Ashook Ramsaran, the driving force behind this monumental tribute, and his grandson Jaden, a sixth-generation descendant, the moment bridged past and present in a gesture of unity, remembrance, and connectivity to the future.

Modi's visit to the monument, organised by the Indian Commemoration Trust and the Indian Commission in Guyana, underscored the shared heritage and enduring ties between India and Guyana.

Modi was welcomed at the monument by Ramsaran, who is President of the Indian Diaspora Council International. His own family history mirrors the indentureship journey, with great-grandfather, Poorye Bhookhul, arriving

See Page 15: PM Narendra Modi

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Toronto's Mayor Olivia Chow (centre) with members of the Caribbean Consular Corps

Mayor Chow, Consular Corps meet for talks

- In a meeting at Toronto's City Hall, Mayor Olivia Chow and the Caribbean Consular Corps explored fresh opportunities for collaboration, tackling shared challenges, and strengthening the bonds that connect the city to our vibrant Caribbean diaspora.

Toronto - Toronto's Mayor Olivia Chow hosted a pivotal Roundtable Meeting with the Caribbean Consular Corps and Caricom representatives at City Hall on November 27. The session, facilitated by the City of Toronto's Chief of Protocol and External Relations, Aretha Phillip, marked a significant step in fostering collaboration between Toronto and the Caribbean nations with consulates in the city.

The roundtable featured an open exchange of ideas centred on strengthening cultural, economic, and developmental ties. Mayor Chow outlined her administration's policies and ongoing initiatives impacting Toronto's Caribbean diaspora, a key demographic that has helped shape the city's multicultural identity. More than 200,000 Jamaicans alone call Toronto home, underscoring the city's deep-rooted connections with the Caribbean.

Key topics discussed included trade and investment opportunities, climate change adaptation and resilience, border security - particularly the movement of firearms - conflict resolution, and youth rehabilitation.

Additionally, concerns specific to Caribbean nationals living in the GTA were addressed. Mayor Chow emphasised her commitment to supporting cultural identity, economic growth, and climate action partnerships, calling for holistic development to benefit both communities.

"Toronto has a deep and long relationship with communities throughout the Caribbean," Mayor Chow's office noted in a statement following the meeting. "It was a pleasure meeting with the representatives from various members of [Caricom]... at City Hall and discussing how we can continue strengthening those bonds."



Barbados' Consulate General in Toronto held its annual flag-raising ceremony at Mel Lastman Square on November 30 to mark this nation's 58th year of Independence. A reception followed at the North York Civic Center. Events of the day saw a citizenship recognition ceremony for new Barbadian citizens, and the screening of a video highlighting the recent renewable vehicle fuel innovation by local scientists at The UWI, Cave Hill Campus. Facebook photo



Toronto's Mayor Olivia Chow meets with the Guyana Consulate in Toronto's Honorary Consul Mani Singh

The meeting also highlighted mutual interests in enhancing travel, tourism, and education linkages.

Jamaica's Consul General in Toronto, Kurt Davis, underscored the vibrant travel and business ecosystem between Jamaica and Toronto, while the Consulate General of Jamaica committed to increasing collaboration with local officials to serve the diaspora better.

Grenada's Consul General, Gerry Hopkin, brought a personal touch to the event by presenting Mayor Chow with a *Golden Jubilee Anniversary of Independence Commemorative Magazine* and a *Pure Grenada - The Spice of the Caribbean Notebook* as tokens of appreciation. Grenada's developmental and security priorities also featured prominently in discussions.

Consul General Fitzgerald Huggins of St Vincent and the Grenadines served as the primary spokesperson for the Caribbean Consular Corps, with other Consuls General providing insights on shared goals.

Honorary Consul at the Guyana Consulate General, Mani Singh, engaged Mayor Chow in one-on-one discussions, during which he promoted Guyana and extended an invitation for her to visit the country in 2025.

In closing, Trinidad and Tobago's Consul General, Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette, delivered a heartfelt vote of thanks on behalf of the assembled Consuls General.

The Caribbean Consular Corps in Toronto represents Antigua-Barbuda, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and The Bahamas. The group is a vital link between the Caribbean region and Toronto, ensuring that the voices and concerns of Caribbean nationals are heard in municipal governance.

The roundtable concluded with a commitment to holding follow-up meetings to refine and implement the initiatives discussed. These collaborations aim to foster a more inclusive and prosperous future for the Caribbean diaspora and Toronto, reflecting the shared values and ambitions of both communities.

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June Straker and Feroza (centre); and late founder Rasheed (in photo at right)



MP for Scarborough North Shaun Chen with Shane Suepaul



Kenny Dayal receives his well-deserved award from Feroza



Yolanda Russell receives the Vision award from Feroza

T&T 50 Plus Seniors honour service, celebrate legacy and community

— The T&T 50 Plus Seniors Association hosted a celebration that honoured the legacy of its founder while applauding the tireless efforts of its members; the event was a testament to the power of connection and the enduring impact of service.

Scarborough – The Trinidad and Tobago 50 Plus Seniors Association of Canada marked a moment of celebration and recognition on November 24, when the group hosted its third annual brunch and inaugural Founders Awards presentation at the Peter and Paul Banquet Hall in Scarborough.

The event, steeped in gratitude and reflection, highlighted the contributions of members who embody the association's vision of dignity, respect, and independence for seniors.

The Founders Awards were introduced by Feroza Sultan-Khan, a past president of the association, in memory of her late husband, Rasheed Sultan-Khan. The awards pay homage to Rasheed's legacy as the founder of the association, established in February 1996, and his unwavering dedication to empowering seniors.

Addressing the attendees, Feroza reflected on her husband's pivotal role in shaping the association, and emphasised the enduring values he championed.

As she noted, in his final years, he was incredibly happy to see the association grow vibrant under the guidance of various executive members. She also expressed gratitude for the continued support from members after his passing.

The event was graced by a stellar array of distinguished guests, including Shaun Chen, Member of Parliament for Scarborough North; Councillor Michael Thompson, representing Scarborough Centre; and Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette, Acting Consul General at the Consulate General for Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto. The presence of these luminaries underscored the significance of the association's contributions to the community, and highlighted its role as a vital support network for seniors.

The Founders Awards recognised members whose efforts align with the association's core values, as outlined in its constitution. The awards were divided into three categories, each reflecting a pillar of the organisation's mission.

Its Vision Award recognises a member who exemplifies the ideals of enabling seniors to live with dignity and respect while experiencing the full expression of their independence, personhood, and potential. This honour was presented to Yolanda Russell, whose dedication has inspired her peers to lead fulfilling lives marked by respect and self-worth.

Next was the Promoting and Sharing Award, which is aimed at celebrating program committee members who foster social engagement and educational activities for seniors. This award was bestowed on June Straker. Her commitment to organising enriching programs and lectures has brought the association's vision to life.

And there was the Providing Assistance, Information, and Social Activities Award, which is reserved for executive committee members. Copping this accolade was Kenny Dayal, whose efforts in these areas have propelled the association forward.

While Feroza's heartfelt presentation celebrated the awardees, at the same time it also honoured her late husband for his life-long contributions.

The awards reflect the values, ethics, and spirit of the association, she declared, affirming the commitment to fostering a vibrant and supportive environment for seniors.

As the event concluded, Feroza expressed her gratitude to the association's members for their unwavering love and support, emphasising how their collective efforts keep the founder's vision alive.

The Trinidad and Tobago 50 Plus Seniors Association continues to play a pivotal role in empowering seniors through social activities, information-sharing, and mutual support. This year's brunch and awards ceremony reinforced the organisation's enduring mission to uplift its members and foster a sense of community, paving the way for future initiatives that reflect the association's guiding principles.

With the inaugural Founders Awards now established, the association has created a tradition that honours its past while inspiring its future, ensuring that Rasheed's legacy remains a guiding light for hope and service in the years ahead.



The well-attended event was energised and celebratory. Photos by Morrison Mungal



Councillor Michael Thompson (centre) and Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette (right)



Attendees at the T&T 50 Plus event enjoying a tasty dinner during the celebration



One Guyana Forum (Canada), the WhatsApp chat group, hosted its second annual Dinner and Dance Christmas Party, in collaboration with Windies Restaurant, KNG Entertainment, and El Dorado Rum, on November 30. The evening saw the Guyanese diaspora and friends sharing the spirit of celebration and camaraderie. Among the luminaries attending the stellar event were Mohamed Osman Ali and Bibi Shariman Ali, parents of Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali, and Grace Joseph, who represented the Guyana Consulate General in Toronto. The evening also saw recognition of outstanding individuals, and ended with the festiveness and energy concomitant with the season and its enduring spirit of community and celebration. Photos by Sharon Chandar.



Ottawa announces GST/HST tax break, rebate

Ottawa – The Canadian government has introduced a two-month GST/HST tax exemption and a new rebate for working Canadians, aiming to ease household expenses during the holiday season.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland outlined these measures, emphasising their potential to provide meaningful relief to families across the country.

Starting December 14, 2024, and running until February 15, 2025, a wide range of goods and services will be exempt from GST/HST. This includes prepared foods such as vegetable trays, pre-made meals, and sandwiches, as well as restaurant meals for dine-in, takeout, or delivery.

Also, snacks, including chips, candy, and granola bars, will also qualify, alongside beer, wine, cider, and pre-mixed alcoholic beverages with less than seven percent alcohol content.

Other items covered under the exemption include children's clothing, footwear, car seats, diapers, toys, books, print newspapers, puzzles, and Christmas trees.

The government estimates that families spending \$2,000 on these items during the tax-free period will save between \$100 and \$260, depending on their province. In provinces with harmonised sales tax, such as Ontario, these savings will be at the higher end of the scale.

In addition to the tax break, the government is launching the Working Canadians Rebate. This initiative will provide a one-time payment of \$250 to Canadians who earned up to \$150,000 in 2023 and meet specific eligibility criteria. Payments will begin in spring 2025 and are expected to benefit approximately 18.7 million Canadians.

"Our government can't set prices, but we can give Canadians more money back in their pocket," said Prime Minister Trudeau.

He added, "With a tax break for all Canadians

and the Working Canadians Rebate, we're making sure you can buy the things you need and save for the things you want."

The government framed the measures as part of its broader commitment to making life more affordable for Canadians.

Freeland noted that inflation has stabilised at two percent and interest rates have been cut four times this year, but acknowledged that many families still face financial pressures.

"This is about helping you celebrate with family and friends and start 2025 with a little extra money in your bank account," she said.

The announcement builds on other government programs aimed at supporting Canadian families.

The National School Food Program, for example, is set to provide meals for up to 400,000 more children annually, saving participating families an average of \$800 per year.

The Canada Child Benefit continues to provide significant financial support, with eligible families receiving up to \$8,000 per child in 2024-2025.

Additionally, the Canada-wide \$10-a-day child care system is reducing fees for regulated child care, saving families up to \$14,300 per child annually. The Canadian Dental Care Plan also offers relief, saving families approximately \$730 per year for children under 18 in eligible households.

These new measures, combined with ongoing programs, reflect the government's efforts to alleviate the cost-of-living challenges facing Canadians.

By providing both immediate relief through the GST/HST exemption and longer-term support through the Working Canadians Rebate, the government aims to address the needs of middle-class families and help them navigate financial pressures during the holiday season and beyond.



Justin Trudeau

Brampton Rotary Club brightens lives

From Page 1

community, and making a positive difference."

The heart of the evening was the club's presentation of a cheque to the William Osler Foundation for \$5,000. So far, the Foundation has received \$20,000 as part of the \$25,000 commitment made by this Rotary Club.

Another cheque was presented to Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation for \$5,000, part of the \$25,000 committed to the Cricket to Conquer Cancer initiative at Princess Margaret. To date, the club has donated more than \$8,000 to the cause.

Representing the PMCF, John Harding thanked the club for its partnership with the Cricket to Conquer Cancer initiative. He also mentioned the club was the first community partner to come on board.

Speaking to the presentation to the PMCF, club President Ashni Ramsammy said, "It is with great pride that I announce our first installment of \$5,000 to The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundations new signature event, Cricket to Conquer Cancer. This contribution reflects our unwavering commitment to one of Rotary's most vital areas of focus: fighting disease."

She added, "Together, we are investing in the health of communities by ensuring that we do our part as community leaders by propelling cancer research here in Canada and around the world. This is just the beginning of a journey towards a world free from the fear of cancer."

Ramsammy also highlighted the club's numerous initiatives over the past year, which have impacted health, education, and social welfare in the community.

The evening also celebrated the club's steady growth, with membership increasing by 30 per-

cent over the past two years. This momentum was further bolstered with the induction of a new member during the event.

Rotary District Governor Sohail Naseer and his wife Rubina attended the celebration, despite it being his birthday. Naseer commended the club for its remarkable work in fostering positive change and improving lives in the community.

The festive evening drew over 350 guests and featured cultural performances that brought warmth and cheer to the gathering. Renuka, a violinist of Trinidadian heritage, delivered a mesmerising performance on the strings, while the steelpan duo Suzette and Jeff added a lively and energetic Caribbean flair.

Meanwhile, DJ Kwe kept the atmosphere vibrant, ensuring that the holiday spirit resonated throughout the event.

Woodbine Banquet Hall was also celebrated for its role in enabling such meaningful events in our community.

Reflecting on the award, Marzuk stated, "This recognition also celebrates the hard work, effort, and dedication of all our amazing staff, making it a proud achievement for everyone at Woodbine Banquet Hall."

He also singled out eminent lawyer and community stalwart, Dhaman Kissoon, for his endless support in working together with Woodbine to achieve such stellar results.

At the same time, Marzuk also noted Woodbine's burgeoning role in hosting premier community events such as the Canada Guyana Chamber of Commerce, and The Caribbean Children Foundation, which recently concluded successful galas at its Etobicoke location.

"We wouldn't be here without everyone's support," Marzuk concluded.



MPP for Scarborough North and Minister for Seniors and Accessibility Raymond Cho announces funding for Seniors Community Grants

Govt launches Seniors Community Grant

Toronto – The Ontario government has announced the launch of the 2025-2026 Seniors Community Grant Program, encouraging community groups and non-profit organisations to apply for funding to support initiatives that enhance the lives of Ontarians aged 55 and older.

The program provides grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000 for projects that help seniors remain independent, safe, and connected to their communities. Since 2018, over \$34 million has been invested, funding more than 1,800 grassroots initiatives that foster health, community engagement, and social connections for older adults.

"Our government is committed to improving the well-being of Ontario's seniors by providing learning opportunities and social and physical activities in their communities," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "That's why we're proud to sup-

port the Seniors Community Grant Program, which gives so many people the opportunity to learn new skills, socialise, and take part in community life."

The 2025-2026 program will prioritise projects that encourage seniors to stay active and socially connected through activities like physical fitness sessions and social engagements.

It also seeks initiatives that develop technology and digital solutions to support seniors' access to services and programs, while promoting health prevention and awareness resources to enhance their well-being.

Seniors are Ontario's fastest-growing demographic, making these investments critical for ensuring they have the support needed to thrive. Organisations interested in applying for a grant must submit their applications through [Transfer Payment Ontario](#) by 5 p.m. on January 16, 2025.

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Editorial

Our CGCC's pivotal role

Guyana stands at historical crossroads – a nation propelled by an oil and gas boom yet equally determined to diversify its economy and engage meaningfully on the global stage. This transformation, nurtured by visionary governance and strategic international partnerships, has drawn the Canada Guyana Chamber of Commerce (CGCC) into a pivotal role, bridging Canadian investors to Guyana's burgeoning potential while fostering broader global collaboration.

The CGCC's November 30 Information Session in Scarborough, led by its Managing Director Fareed Amin, encapsulates its mission to illuminate Guyana's economic renaissance. The CGCC leadership's enthusiasm underscores the remarkable opportunities within Guyana's non-oil sectors, which have recorded impressive growth – construction surging by 43.7 percent and agriculture registering double-digit increases in fisheries and rice production.

As Amin has told *Indo-Caribbean World*, Guyana's trajectory extends far beyond hydrocarbons. Investments in infrastructure, hospitality, and agriculture, among others, reflect a comprehensive ecosystem of industries blossoming alongside oil and gas. From private investors to institutional players, the CGCC serves as a vital conduit for channeling capital into Guyana's dynamic landscape, ensuring sustained, equitable, and diversified growth.

Adding depth to this transformation is Guyana's growing partnership with India, exemplified by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent State visit. Over three days of substantive talks with Ali, ten Memoranda of Understanding were signed, spanning energy, agriculture, healthcare, digital technology, and defence. This collaboration underscores the complementarity of India's technological expertise and Guyana's resource-rich landscape.

Modi aptly articulated the broad scope of this collaboration, stating, "From energy to enterprise, Ayurveda to agriculture, infrastructure to innovation, healthcare to human resources, and data to development." This comprehensive vision resonates with Guyana's aspirations to enhance governance, improve efficiency, and create an inclusive framework for economic participation.

Energy remains a cornerstone of the Guyana-India partnership, with agreements to deepen cooperation in hydrocarbons, renewable energy, and sustainable practices. Agriculture, long a backbone of Guyana's economy, is also receiving renewed focus through this alliance. Precision agriculture, climate resilience, and digital public infrastructure are central to efforts to support smallholder farmers and enhance food security. These initiatives mirror the broader goal of diversifying Guyana's economy while addressing global challenges like climate change.

Healthcare, another critical area, benefits from India's prominence as a pharmaceutical leader. Collaboration in telemedicine, capacity building, and training underscores a commitment to advancing public health outcomes and creating a sustainable healthcare framework.

As these partnerships unfold between India and Guyana, the CGCC stands at the nexus of opportunity, bridging Canadian and global investors with Guyana's burgeoning potential. The establishment of the Guyana-India Chamber of Commerce provides a vital platform for intensifying private sector collaboration, further amplifying our home-grown CGCC's role in driving Guyana's global integration.

This moment is nothing short of transformative – a convergence of bold vision, strategic partnerships, and robust economic growth. For Toronto's diaspora and Canadian investors, the CGCC offers not just a pathway for participation, but an invitation to help shape the trajectory of Guyana as a nation on the rise.

In this new chapter, Guyana embodies a model of resilience and ambition, supported by partners like India, and catalysed by our own CGCC's commitment to its success.

As Amin aptly told *Indo-Caribbean World*, "The potential in Guyana has not yet been fully internalised." With each investment and collaboration, this potential moves closer to realisation, offering a compelling narrative of progress, prosperity, and shared purpose.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of this publication.
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Website: www.indocaribbeanworld.com

Call to support the Dhal and Rice food drive

December has arrived. Time for the holidays, festive cheer, and of course in any Caribbean household... plenty of food! There is no way out of this one – a Caribbean Christmas is defined by food, and each visit to family and friends concludes with members leaving and carrying bowls of food.

Food is sustenance, and food is comfort; food can conjure good memories, and it provides joy. Unfortunately, this joy and comfort have become unattainable for many across Canada. Many households, more than ever before, are struggling to provide the essentials, and the holidays have been redefined for many.

In March 2024, Food Banks Canada announced that it achieved more than two million visits. This is nearly double the monthly visits five years ago in March 2019, and six percent above last year's record-breaking figure.

Among these alarming figures is the fact that one-third of food bank clients were children. This is a trend that has held steady; however, in 2024 it totalled nearly 700,000 monthly visits.

And approximately one in five visiting food banks, or 18 percent, were employed. Nearly 70 percent lived in market rent housing. This means that despite having stable employment, access to food has become dramatically unattainable for many.

In Canada's seventh-most populous municipality, Mississauga, food insecurity has officially been declared an emergency.

Mississauga's City Council passed a motion acknowledging an increasing number of residents who lack regular access to sufficient quantities of safe and nutritious food ideas.

According to a recent report by Food Banks Mississauga, the city of 716,000 people has the fastest-growing rate of food bank usage in Ontario, with one in 13 residents, or eight percent of the population, having visited one between June 2023 and May 2024.

Comparatively, five years ago, just one in 37 Mississauga residents accessed a food bank. From June 2023 to May 2024, food banks in Mississauga recorded more than 420,000 visits, which represent an almost 80 percent year-over-year increase.

According to Statistics Canada and Food Bank Canada, a quarter of all Canadian residents need support from a local community food program.

In an effort to provide a "tax holiday", the Federal government has introduced a two-month GST relief on several food products. The extensive list of food products on this list is an



Ryan Singh

admission that we are in deeply tough times. However, this relief will still not be enough, and this holiday season, many Canadians will spend more time in the lines outside food banks.

And the impacts of food security are becoming increasingly severe, disproportionately affecting diverse communities across the country. Food insecurity for those who belong to a racialised group was 20.7 percent in 2022, an increase of 3.9 percentage points from 2021.

Among the three largest racialised groups in Canada, the rate of food insecurity was 31.9 percent for Black Canadians, 17.6 percent for South Asian Canadians, and 13.4 percent for Chinese Canadians.

As food banks are on the brink of a crisis, those in privileged positions must try to find opportunities to give back and support our neighbours who are struggling.

The reality of donating pasta, tomato sauce, canned soups, or common pre-packaged food are nice gestures, and will support many. However, we must realise that food banks serve all people from all communities.

For the third year in a row, the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association has teamed up with other community organisations to host the *Dhal and Rice: Indo-Caribbean Food Drive*.

This food drive aims to mobilise the Indo-Caribbean community in the Greater Toronto Area to give back and think of sharing the joy of culturally appropriate food ideas.

With approximately 30 donation drop-off locations across the GTA, and one in Southwest Ontario, we are asking the community to support each other by donating ingredients from our community.

This holiday season, many of us enjoy the variety of flavours of recipes from back home, we should do what we can to ensure that others can also have that same experience.

We are calling the community to open their pantries, or visit their local West Indian grocery stores and be generous. Items like chow mein, turmeric, geera, masala, cassareep, Milo/Ovaltine, dhal (lentils), peas and beans, and channa/chickpeas will go a long way to ensure many Caribbean households can have culturally appropriate food at the table this holiday season.

These are tough times, we are struggling, but as a community, we can come together to help each other. [See display on Page 11].

Small gesture of humanity opens up possibilities

In the thatched village where I grew up among sugar cane fields creeping towards our huts, I discovered my first escape hatch into another world. It was not in the town's bustling streets with its rickety buses, or in the bamboo groves where I fished, hidden away from my grandmother's stern eyes.

It was in a modest library in the nearby town where I was growing up. To journey there was a donkey-cart adventure in itself, a rambling, unsteady trek marked by pot holed, gravel roads, youthful grit, and my deep desire to quench a growing thirst I could not yet name.

The library was a small structure, its heavy doors and windows fortified with thick iron bars, the red brick walls resolute against the nearby squalor of stray dogs scrounging among discarded broadsheets used by the butcher as wrapping paper.

Despite the unappealing appearance, the library offered an allure I could barely resist. Like everything else in that time of Empire, it carried its marks of structural scarcity with imperial impenetrability. There was the pocket system – two tiny envelopes that dictated how many books I was allowed to borrow.

Held in sweaty hands as I eagerly eyed the sparse bookshelves, it felt like a cruel constraint to a boy, who jolted on a donkey cart all the way there, was hungering to discover the world beyond village life now that he was reading chapter books.

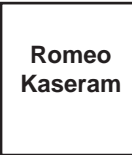
Of course, the number of books were limited, with its cloth covers moth-eaten and stained, and the pages dog-eared and thumb-worn by hands like mine hungering for stories that opened up wider vistas than were visible from the precarious perch on a swaying cart drawn by an oppressed beast of burden.

I will always remember my first encounter with the librarian. She was the gatekeeper of this precious but worn trove; the very chair she sat on creaked with a venerable authority that seemed rooted like the aged shelves, and archaeological like the layers of hardening dust accumulating on the mouldy window sills.

But I was no compliant borrower. Unschooled at that time in my youth about the world and its hierarchies of power, control, and domination, and insistently driven by my burgeoning love for books, I challenged this veritable gatekeeper of a librarian.

A mere two pockets were not enough, I argued with incipient lawyerly insistence. My dear Goliath of a librarian strained forward with curiosity to look down her spectacles, and over the far edge of her desk, at this tiny David. Whatever she saw arrested her reflex to wag the stern forefinger of denial.

Instead, her hard expression softened; and in that moment,



something quickly catapulted between the two of us. Perhaps she saw unyielding resolve in my youthful eyes; perhaps since she was a librarian, she read deep into the index of yearning in a young boy, who, in the face of overwhelming limitations, still dared to dream. The light of understanding flickered across her eyes before she smiled, and a ray of light broke through, lighting up a path between us.

"Two more pockets then," she said, her voice slipping off the edge of her polished mahogany desk like a quiet benediction. It was a concession, the smallest of acts after measuring up my boyish height. But the moment felt monumental.

In that moment, I learned that power, even the rigid authority of colonial structures, could be bent by compassion. That act of generosity planted a seed of hope in me. Today, it has flourished, so that I know imperial structures could be overthrown, and new worlds forged.

I took four books that day, among them James Otis Kahler's *Toby Tyler; or, Ten Weeks with a Circus*. Devouring it was a revelation; in it, a narrative of adventure and independence unfolded as a boy broke free from oppression to join a circus.

For me, growing up amidst mud huts and sugarcane fields, *Toby Tyler* was a lifeline to a reality that seemed impossibly distant. Yet it painted imagery of possibility and exploration; where dreams could become imaginatively unshackled from the chains of colonial lack to walk along a tightrope of potential.

But reading *Toby Tyler* was not without its poignant ironies. In it I could nourish my imagination by feasting on its rich narrative, but I knew closing the book meant returning to hunger and lack. To wake up the next morning after reluctantly closing the book the night before was to confront a world where chickens scratched laboriously for nourishment in the hard, dry earth. That while I could read about Toby Tyler's world, it was always out of reach, from the first word in the opening chapter, to the final full stop that concluded its heady narrative.

Yet, the librarian's act of bending the rules stayed with me. It taught me that even within the rigidity of power, there is room for humanity to intervene. Her decision to grant me those additional pockets was more than an act of kindness – it was a quiet defiance of the structures that sought to contain my curiosity.

In that moment, she opened a crack in a window, through which I glimpsed agency – that even in a world hemmed in by scarcity wrought by an extractive Empire, small rebellions could create profound change, and open up humane possibilities.

Let us fix Guyana’s national archives

Dear Editor,

Congratulations are in order to the government and people of Guyana, and all who participated in the historical visit of India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a few weeks he travelled to Africa, South America including two days in Guyana, where he met with leaders of Caricom countries.

In his many speeches he encouraged Guyanese to visit the ancient land of the Rishis. Every Guyanese inspired by his presence have a reason to visit India. It could be female cricketers for training; those interested in business; but mostly those with a spiritual yearning to take a special dip in the holy rivers.

A significant number also have a keen interest in tracing their own history, but cannot do so unless the records of the family



Captain Michael Charles

can be obtained from the archives in Guyana. This group includes those residing outside Guyana, which has the largest diaspora at 36.4 percent as of 2020, according to a UN population Division.

A significant number of these Guyanese have been trying to trace and visit the actual villages in India where their ancestors left from 1838 to 1917. The few who have been able to do this are fortunate, and rarer still are those who have developed a continuing relationship, and return regularly to assist the poor in those villages.

Those who recently visited the Archives in Guyana indicate that the condition of the records needs to be preserved from further decay. One set is readable; another needs a special machine to make them readable; and another set is beyond repair, with this

Modi emphasised our connections

Dear Editor,

Wrapping up his two-day event-packed visit to Guyana, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Indo Guyanese community at the National Cultural Centre. Ironically, the centre was built by the PNC in 1972 using monies expropriated by Burnham from the “Indian Repatriation Fund”.

In his entire speech Modi emphasised the connections with Indian culture.

Said Modi: “First of all, I want to thank President Irfaan Ali for joining us. I am deeply touched by the love and affection given to me since my arrival. I thank President Ali for opening the doors of his home to me. I thank his family for their warmth and kindness. The spirit of hospitality (*atithi*) is at the heart of our culture. I could feel that, over the last two days. With President Ali and his grandmother (Nanie), we also planted a tree.”

On the Order of Excellence that he received, Modi said, “This is an honour to 1.4 billion Indians. It is the recognition of the three *lakh* (300,000) strong Indo-Guyanese community and their contributions to the development of Guyana.”

Modi recollected his visit to Guyana in August 2000, in which Swami Aksharananda and I had been involved. He took time to visit us at Saraswati Vidya Niketan earlier, where he displayed a remarkable recollection of the details of that visit, and the one to the Enmore Martyr’s Monument.

Said Modi: “I have great memories of visiting your wonderful country over two decades ago. At that time, I held no official position. I came to Guyana as a traveller, full of curiosity. Now, I have returned to this land of many rivers as the Prime Minister of India. A lot of things have changed between then and now. But the love and affection of my Guyanese brothers and sisters remain the same! My experience has reaffirmed – you can take an Indian out of India, but you cannot take India out of an Indian.”

He also spoke about his visit to the Monument Gardens in Georgetown, saying: “Today, I visited the Indian Arrival Monument. It brings to life, the long and difficult journey of your ancestors nearly two centuries ago. They came from different parts of India. They brought with them different cultures, languages and traditions. Over time, they made this new land their home. Today, these languages, stories and traditions are part of the rich cul-



PM Narendra Modi

ture of Guyana.” He added, “I salute the spirit of the Indo-Guyanese community. You fought for freedom and democracy. You have worked to make Guyana one of the fastest growing economies. From humble beginnings you have risen to the top. Shri Cheddi Jagan used to say: ‘It matters not what a person is born, but who they choose to be’. He also lived these words. The son of a family of labourers, he went on to become a leader of global stature.”

Addressing Guyana’s leaders, Modi stated, “President Irfaan Ali, VP Bharrat Jagdeo, former President Donald Ramotar, they are all Ambassadors of the Indo-Guyanese community. Joseph Ruhoman, one of the earliest

Indo-Guyanese intellectuals, Ramcharitar Lalla, one of the first Indo-Guyanese poets, Shana Yardan, the renowned woman poet. Many such Indo-Guyanese made an impact on academics and arts, music and medicine.” He added, “Our commonalities provide a strong foundation to our friendship. Three things, in particular, connect India and Guyana deeply. Culture, cuisine, and cricket! Just a couple of weeks ago, I am sure you all celebrated Diwali. And in a few months, when India celebrates Holi, Guyana will celebrate Phagwa!”

Also, “This year, the Diwali was special as Ram Lalla (the icon of the Baby Shri Ram) returned to Ayodhya after 500 years. People in India remember that the holy water and *shilas* (bricks) from Guyana were also sent to build the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Despite being oceans apart, your cultural connection with Mother India is strong.”

I was among those who had taken several bricks to India in 1997.

Modi continued, “I could feel this when I visited the Arya Samaj Monument and Saraswati Vidya Niketan School earlier today. Both India and Guyana are proud of our rich and diverse culture. We see diversity as something to be celebrated, not just accommodated. Our countries are showing how cultural diversity is our strength. Wherever people of India go, they take one important thing along with them. The food! The Indo-Guyanese community also has a unique food tradition, which has both Indian and Guyanese elements. I am aware that Dhal Puri is popular here! The seven-curry meal that I had at President Ali’s home was delicious. It will remain a fond memory for me.”

Ravi Dev, Guyana, via email.



The Walter Rodney Archives

number increasing each year.

It is equally appropriate to salute Guyana’s government and the armed forces for recognition of the contribution that our national hero, pilot extraordinaire, legend, and friend Captain Michael Charles made to country.

Captain Charles voluntarily shared his life, knowledge, and skills with all Guyanese and the world. Also, he was one of the few who could through his late great grandfather, Moses Rampershad (1897-1999), trace his history to Varanasi (also known as Kashi, formerly Benares), one of the oldest and holiest cities in the world.

PM Modi happens to be the representative for this district, and has been elected three times from this constituency. As recently as October he inaugurated numerous developments projects in the area, including sports projects and airports. Our local hero thus shared something in common with an international leader much respected by his global counterparts.

Last year the Guyana media published let-


ters by writers interested in getting the records of indentured servants digitised, as it has been done in Suriname and Mauritius. Guyana received about 239,000 indentured workers from India, second only to Mauritius.

It is difficult to explain why in a country where 40 percent can trace their ancestry to India cannot put this subject on the front burner, and treat with the respect it deserves. There are regular outreach meetings with government ministers where it can be discussed. There are weekly press conferences where only oil and gas seems to matter.

Where are all the investigative reporters in the media who should ask about the broken promises going back as far as 1992 to preserve and make these records available?

Hopefully the authors of the book on Guyana’s late hero would find space for his connection to Varanasi, and that by the next anniversary many can sit at a computer anywhere in the world, and like him trace their villages of origin in India.

Ramnarine Sahadeo, Toronto, via email.



GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

Selling Property in Guyana

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Trinidad and Tobago's Parliament in session

TT govt undeserving of a pay increase

Dear Editor,

My father Eric Albert Deane received the Trinity Cross (Silver) when he was alive. It was awarded for meritorious service to the government of Trinidad and Tobago. This came about because of his strict upbringing and respect for the people he met and served.

I am the third of his three sons and I was brought up in a similar manner. Always be truthful and respect everyone. Due to this upbringing, I report on any and all things I see that are irregular.

The members of Parliament are the servants of the people. In short, they are hired by us, the population. In any business it is the employer who decides if a raise in salary is merited, not the employee. Therefore, salaries of the parliamentarians should not be decided by the Salaries Review Commission.

We have seen this government award its members of Parliament an increase before they started working, and is now doing the same thing before their term in office is completed. Do they merit this increase? In my opinion they do not.

They have improved their personal assets while in office, which is not allowed in any other country, and the population suffers.

Pensioners are eking out an existence on (TT) \$3,500 and Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley shamelessly thinks that (TT) \$57,000 a month is not enough. What is enough for you, sir?

The Minister of Youth Development and National Service has been ineffective. Proof is in the increasing number of youth involved in gangs. The Minister of National Security has failed miserably; no need to elaborate.

The Minister of Health has mandated the use of dangerous artificial sweeteners with no thought of the adverse effects of such an action. Let us not mention the Covid-19 pandemic mismanagement.

The Minister of Tourism should take a trip to Chacacabana and see the way the area has been neglected from Mucurapo to the sentry gate. The Minister of Education never saw the teacher holding the placard which read, "We want we money now". Is that teacher still employed?

I can go on and on, but I believe I have made my point.

This entire government has been a total failure and should be fired, not given an increase. This is my stand as one of their employers.

Richard Deane, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.

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Guyana sowing seeds to resolve own, regional food security future

Food security remains a burning issue for Guyana's President Irfaan Ali. So much so that he published a book titled *Achieving Global Food Security: The Caribbean Experience and Beyond*, which highlighted the urgent need to address and solve the pressing food crisis issue in the Caribbean.

While Ali's passion for food security is commendable, the reality of resolving food security requires more action than written words. Barring endless talks about food security in the region, there has never been any real political commitment – beyond the boardroom – to push agriculture at a regional level.

As the largest food producer in the region, Guyana's food imports continue to rise. Food prices also continue to rise, making them unaffordable to a large cross-section of the population.

Notwithstanding, Guyana continues to make efforts to increase food production. Last month, the government embarked on a project to expand the use of shade houses and introduce hydroponics farms to grow high value as well as traditional food crops.

While Guyana has an abundance of agricultural land – extremes of too much water or too much heat – has resulted in the government resorting to more innovative cultivation methods to boost production.

Although shade houses have been used by farmers in recent years, hydroponics is new. The government plans to establish a model hydroponics farm at the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute.

With hydroponics, water, nutrients, and oxygen are provided directly to the roots of plant, without the requirement for soil. This method allows for year-round cultivation, thereby reducing the nation's vulnerability to seasonal fluctuations in food production.

Shade houses, on the other hand, are designed to create controlled growing environments, protecting crops from harsh weather conditions and pests, thus boosting productivity and crop quality. So far, this initiative has enabled farmers to achieve higher yields and maintain consistent production regardless of seasonal fluctuations, according to the government.

The government claims that one of the most significant impacts of shade houses is the extension of growing seasons, allowing farmers to produce a variety of crops year-round. This has not only increased the availability of fresh produce, but it has also enhanced the livelihoods of farmers by providing continuous income streams. The controlled environment of shade houses also reduces the incidence of pests and diseases, ensuring healthier crops and reducing the need for chemical pesticides.

This innovative approach marks a substantial shift towards modernising agriculture, ensuring food security, and promoting sustainable farming practices. To ensure the success of its new initiatives, the government has invested in extensive training and support programs for farmers. Workshops, technical assistance, and collaborations with international agricultural experts have been pivotal in equipping farmers with the necessary skills and knowledge to maximise the benefits of shade houses.

While Guyana takes steps to enhance food security in the region, the problem of food insecurity has reached crisis proportions. Although this issue has been at the top of the regional agenda for many years now, conditions continue to get worse instead of better – raising concerns that sufficient attention is not being paid by regional leaders to alleviate it.

According to a survey conducted by Caricom and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in 2022, it was estimated that 2.8 million people or nearly 40 percent of the population in the English-speaking Caribbean are food insecure. That is 72 percent higher when compared to April 2020, and likely much higher today.

The results of the survey, according to Caricom, demonstrate deteriorating food consumption and diets with 25 percent of respondents eating less preferred foods, 30 percent skipping meals or eating less than usual, and five percent going an entire day without eating.

The regional body noted that high food prices continue to affect people's ability to afford a nutritious diet, with 93 percent of respondents reporting higher prices for food compared to 59 percent in April 2020. It stated that the ongoing crisis in Ukraine is expected to create an even deeper impact on the cost of basic goods and services in the Caribbean.

As it noted, "In the short to medium term, it is increasing pressure on governments to identify solutions to ensure families can meet their essential needs. Innovation in agri-food systems and regional supply chains, coupled with continued support to the most vulnerable households, will be essential to improving the resilience of regional food systems so that prices can be kept as stable as possible."

Another report by the United Nations, Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2022, found that the Latin American and Caribbean region has the highest cost for a healthy diet compared to the rest of the world. It noted that 52 percent of the people in the Caribbean cannot afford a healthy diet.

Commenting on the findings of the report, Mario Lubetkin, FAO Assistant Director and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean stated that "there is no individual policy that can solve this problem independently. National and regional coordination mechanisms need to be strengthened to respond to hunger and malnutrition."

As the region's largest food producer, Guyana is ideally positioned to fulfill the region's food demand. Long regarded as the "food bowl of the Caribbean", the country is now seeking to put the infrastructure in place to achieve this goal. Incidentally, Guyana currently holds lead responsibility for agriculture, agricultural diversification, and food security in Caricom.

In recent years, Guyana has increased its focus on agriculture, recognising that its potential to feed the Caribbean can only materialise if there is domestic as well as regional commitment to develop the largely neglected sector. As a result, it has been wooing its Caribbean counterparts, as well as international investors, to assist it with developing agriculture with the intent of achieving regional food security, but there has been little interest among its counterparts.



Dwarka Lakhan



Irfaan Ali



Zulfikar Mustapha

Ali has in the past bemoaned the fact that a number of Caricom member states have been merely giving lip service to the need for a reduction in the regional food bill. He cited the need to dismantle non-tariff barriers such as laws, regulations, and procedures impeding the regional trade in agricultural produce and products.

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

Other constraints to agricultural development include the region's vulnerability to natural disasters caused by climate change, which has resulted in extensive damage to infrastructure, property and agricultural production. At the same time, food and nutrition insecurity have been aggravated by increasing rates of poverty in the region, coupled with high levels of income inequality.

For now, there is no doubt that there is ample commitment on "paper" to develop agriculture in the region, but success beyond the boardroom table has been fleeting. Past experience shows that there has been weak integration of implementation efforts across the region.

On the other hand, at a regional level, Caribbean countries have been largely focused on developing the more "glamorous" service sectors at the expense of "dirty" agriculture. Part of the reason is because tourism has been the mainstay of several of these economies.

Currently, an average of about 60 percent of the region's food is imported, with imports as high as 80 percent in some countries. Even in Guyana, almost 50 percent of food is imported.

The annual regional food import bill is in the range of (US) \$6 billion.

As a matter of fact, the Caribbean has been traditionally over-reliant on expensive imported foods. The World Bank estimates that between 80-90 percent of all food consumed in the region comes from abroad, and only three Caribbean countries – Guyana, Belize and Haiti – produce more than 50 percent of their own food. The region's food bill is now in the tune of (US) \$7 billion.

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

Currently, Guyana which has the potential to become the food basket of the region has been unable to meet its own demand for food. In spite of its potential, Guyana's household food import bill has increased more than four-fold since the turn of the century – growing from (G) \$10 billion in 2000 to more than (G) \$45 billion at the end of 2020. According to the country's Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, Guyana produces 59 percent of the food for local consumption, which means that it imports 41 percent of its food.

It would, therefore, be prudent for Guyana to resolve its own food security issues and set an example for its Caribbean counterparts. Otherwise, Ali's resolve on food security would become empty words.

...

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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Hindu Federation hosts Hindu Heritage Month celebrations

– Canada's Hindu community unites for a vibrant celebration of culture, youth collaboration, and heritage, honouring achievements and fostering tradition.

Toronto – In an historic celebration of Hindu Heritage Month this November, the Hindu Federation hosted its largest event to date at the Brampton Triveni Mandir, drawing over 500 attendees and showcasing the contributions of Hindus to Canada's cultural, economic, and political landscape.

The event featured prominent addresses, cultural performances, and recognition of exceptional achievements within the community.

MP Chandra Arya, who played a pivotal role in the federal proclamation of Hindu Heritage Month in 2022, delivered a stirring address. He highlighted the invaluable contributions of Hindus to Canada's multicultural identity, and underscored the urgent need to preserve their rich cultural heritage. His remarks intersected seamlessly with the event's motifs of celebration, collaboration, and tradition.

Among the many highlights of the evening was the honouring of Vishnu Mandir's leader, Dr Budhendraauth Doobay, who was awarded the Member of the Order of Canada in July this year. The recognition ceremony included a special *puja* in his honour, followed by Dr Doobay's impassioned speech on the importance of steadfastly upholding and celebrating Hindu culture and heritage. His presence, message, and humour were warmly received by the audience.

The program, hosted at the Brampton Triveni Mandir, began in the Prayer Hall with traditional Hindu rituals, including a *Ganeshji puja*, *Shanti path*, group meditation, and *Kirtan* singing. It later transitioned to the auditorium, where cultural and youth-led performances highlighted the celebration.

The event featured high-quality collaborative singing, a *tabla* presentation, and captivating *Bharatnatyam* and *Kathak* dance performances. The youth played a significant role in the celebration, with presentations from the Hindu Students Council members at the University of Toronto, OCAD University, and the University of Waterloo.

Messages from Hindu leaders added to the depth and vibrancy of the event, reinforcing the focus on intergenerational collaboration.

Representatives from a wide range of Hindu Federation member organisations participated in the celebration, reflecting



Left to right are Swami Bhajananda, Pt Yudhisthir Dhanraj, MP Chandra Arya, Dr Budhendraauth Doobay, and Pt Roopnauth Sharma



Dr Doobay (centre) is honoured at the event

the breadth and diversity of our community.

Participating organisations included BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Brampton Triveni Mandir, Datta Yoga Centre, Devi Mandir (Pickering), Maha Rudra Dev Mandir, Mississauga Ram Mandir, Nityanand Meditation Academy, Pranav Ashram, Radha Krishna Mandir, Rameshwar Mandir, and Vishnu Mandir.

The month of November was first proclaimed as Hindu Heritage Month in Ontario in 2016 through a Private Member's Bill sponsored by the late Joe Dickson, Liberal MPP for Ajax/Pickering; and at the Federal level by a corresponding Bill, which was sponsored by Arya, Liberal MP for Nepean, Ontario. This unifying initiative led to November being proclaimed as Hindu Heritage Month in 2022.

Since then, the Hindu Federation has celebrated Hindu Heritage Month annually, even pivoting to virtual events during the Covid-19 pandemic via Zoom and Livestream.

This year's record-breaking celebration at the auspicious Brampton's Triveni Mandir underscored the enduring vitality, unity, and contributions of the Hindu community in Canada, reaffirming its integral role in shaping the nation's multicultural identity.



Swami Bhajananda welcomes MP Arya



Hindu Federation's Sam Persaud (centre) with the ensemble of youth at the celebration



The intergenerational event was notable for participation by the youngsters

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Contentious COP29 ends with mixed reactions

– Amid rising climate stakes, the Baku summit delivered a contentious finance pact, leaving nations divided on its adequacy and impact.

Baku, Azerbaijan – The 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, ended with a mix of achievements, frustrations, and lingering questions about global commitment to combating climate change.

Negotiators finalised the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) in the early hours of November 24, after two days of overtime negotiations. The agreement commits developed nations to mobilise (US) \$300 billion annually by 2035 to help developing countries tackle climate impacts and transition to cleaner energy. While some hailed it as a breakthrough, others criticised it as woefully inadequate.

The NCQG triples the previous (US) \$100 billion annual finance goal set in 2009, with an overarching aim of scaling up climate financing to (US) \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035 through public and private sources.

Other milestones include agreements on carbon markets, transparent climate reporting, and adaptation measures, marking progress in areas that had stymied previous conferences.

“This new finance goal is an insurance policy for humanity, amid worsening climate impacts hitting every country,” said Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change.

He added, “But like any insurance policy – it only works – if premiums are paid in full, and on time. Promises must be kept, to protect billions of lives.”

Stiell also highlighted the benefits of clean energy investments, stating, “It will keep the clean energy boom growing, helping all countries to share in its huge benefits: more jobs, stronger growth, cheaper and cleaner energy for all.”

The conference also built on earlier gains, including the Loss and Damage Fund established at COP27 and the agreement at COP28 to transition away from fossil fuels.

Despite these advances, the (US) \$300 billion goal sparked sharp criticism from developing nations and climate advocates.

Chandni Raina, India’s lead negotiator, expressed her country’s discontent, saying, “The Global South is being pushed to transit to no-carbon pathways even at the cost of our growth.” She described the agreement as a token gesture that left much of the burden on developing nations to mobilise additional funds.

Arunabha Ghosh, CEO of the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water, dismissed the deal as “a fig leaf for inaction,” adding, “With the world needing over (US) \$1.3 trillion in climate finance by 2030, the (US) \$300 billion goal by

2035, without a clear indication of what constitutes this finance, is a hollow gesture.”

Writing in *Time* last week, Justin Worland noted that the agreement fell short of the (US) \$1 trillion annual public finance demanded by many developing nations. At the same time, he highlighted the deep divisions over the deal, and the lack of language on cutting fossil fuel emissions.

Despite this, Worland acknowledged the significance of reaching an agreement at all, given the challenging geopolitical climate.

“In the end, negotiators assessed that an imperfect deal is better than no deal,” he wrote.

Meanwhile, for small island states and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the agreement represented both progress and profound disappointment.

Cedric Schuster, Chair Minister of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), criticised the “woeful lack of direction to achieve the necessary ambition to meet the 1.5°C goal.”

Tina Stege, Marshall Islands climate envoy, accused fossil fuel interests of obstructing progress, stating, “We have seen the very worst of political opportunism here at this COP, playing games with the lives of the world’s most vulnerable people.”

In the Caribbean region, Antigua and Barbuda’s climate ambassador, Ruleta Camacho-Thomas, described the funding increase as “very little”, acknowledging the need for developing nations to take drastic actions, including walking out of negotiations, to have their voices heard.

The NCQG also calls for (US) \$1.3 trillion in annual finance from “all actors”, including private sector investment. However, skepticism about the private sector’s willingness to engage in Global South projects remained high.

As Worland noted, “Private sector investors simply don’t need to look to the Global South to earn a return, leaving them with limited incentives to engage.”

Despite the contentious outcomes, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged nations to build on COP29’s progress, stating, “I had hoped for a more ambitious outcome – on both finance and mitigation. But this agreement provides a base on which to build. Commitments must quickly become cash.”

With COP30 set to take place in Belém, Brazil, many view it as an opportunity to address the gaps left by COP29 and push for more ambitious climate actions.

Ilan Zugman of 350.org called on Brazil to demonstrate leadership, saying, “It’s a chance to course correct... towards a just renewable energy transition.”



Simon Stiell



Antonio Guterres



Chandni Raina

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Pickering
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T-F: 9 AM to 8 PM
Sat: 9 AM to 7 PM
Sun: 10 AM to 5 PM

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Pickering
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Sat: 10 PM – 2 AM

DamFoods
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Ajax
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Ajax Crematorium & Visitation Centre
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Suriname's President Chandrikapersad Santokhi

Suriname pivots at promise, progress

– Sharing its oil royalties and reflecting on its 49th Independence anniversary, Suriname faces a pivotal moment of promise and challenge as it charts a path toward unity and progress.

Paramaribo – Suriname’s government has unveiled an ambitious initiative to share the wealth of its burgeoning oil sector with every citizen, a move designed to usher in a new era of economic equity and national development, the *Caribbean Media Corporation* has reported.

As the Dutch-speaking Caribbean nation commemorates the 49th anniversary of its Independence, the promise of shared oil royalties, framed against the backdrop of historical reflection and political discourse, underscores this nation’s aspirations and challenges.

Suriname’s President Chandrikapersad Santokhi last week announced the creation of the “Royalties for Everyone” (RVI) initiative, offering every Surinamese national a financial stake in the nation’s energy future.

He explained, “The RVI instrument means that every Surinamese, who lives in our country, receives a savings note, worth (US) \$750, with an annual interest of seven percent.”

The funds will be drawn from the royalties generated by Block 58, a significant offshore oil field.

Santokhi clarified that payments will commence only after oil from Block 58 is sold and royalties are collected.

“The RVI is listed in US dollars, so that it is stable in value. The payment will be made in Surinamese dollars,” he stated.

This initiative is closely tied to the GranMorgu oil development project, led by TotalEnergies in partnership with APA Corporation and Staatsolie, Suriname’s national oil company.

GranMorgu is expected to produce 220,000 barrels of oil per day by 2028, with recoverable reserves exceeding 750 million barrels. Staatsolie is poised to participate with up to a 20 percent stake, solidifying its role in the nation’s economic transformation.

Santokhi expressed optimism about the potential for Suriname’s oil sector to create opportunities, stating, “We must now translate that positive impact into opportunities for our own people. There are opportunities for our entrepreneurs, our youth to shape the future of Suriname with the right education and training.”

Meanwhile, on November 25, Suriname marked its 49th anniversary of Independence from the Netherlands, an occasion that brought both celebration and introspection.

In a statement commemorating the occasion, Santokhi’s Progressive Reform Party (VHP) highlighted his government’s strides in mending ties with the Netherlands, and laying the groundwork for future prosperity.

The VHP declared, “Fortunately, after the inauguration of the Santokhi government in 2020, a turnaround has occurred in the relationship between Suriname and the Netherlands. Politically, the relationship between both countries is good. We are now two equal countries, and sovereignty is the symbol of national independence.”

The party pointed to the transformative potential of the energy sector, noting, “With oil and gas production in 2028, Suriname is taking big steps forward. We are at the crossroads to bring prosperity and well-being to the population so that they no longer have to live in poverty.”

However, not all voices struck a harmonious tone. The National Party of Suriname (NPS), a former coalition partner, critiqued the current administration’s policies, stating, “Insufficient cooperation and questionable actions within the government have forced the Green party to leave the government. The observation was and still is that the current government policy does not serve the general interest.”

Looking ahead, the NPS emphasised the importance of learning from the past: “As the country enters its 50th year of Independence, an important phase will be entered to learn from the mistakes of the past 49 years, and in which corrective action must be taken.”

It also underscored the need for unity, declaring, “Let us work on what unites us and not what divides us.”

Meanwhile, the main opposition National Democratic Party (NDP) reflected on the enduring challenges of colonial legacies.

It noted, “After centuries of colonial rule by the Netherlands, our country still bears the heavy legacy of division, imposed by a divide and rule policy that hinders our development.”

The NDP lamented the social and economic scars of colonialism, stating, “The Netherlands, unlike other colonial powers, was known for deliberately sowing divisions between population groups in its colonies. This divide and rule strategy was intended to weaken resistance and strengthen the power of the coloniser. Unfortunately, we still feel the aftermath of this to this day in the form of social tensions and structural inequality.”

Noting that “divide and rule left deep wounds”, the NDP stated it was important to recognise the Netherlands used this tactic not only in Suriname, but elsewhere, such as in South Africa.

“This was a subtle but destructive form of divide and rule that left deep wounds. Our struggle for Independence and the subsequent process of decolonisation was not only a struggle against colonial rule, but also against the divide and rule practices that have sought to divide our country,” it stated.

“Today, 49 years after our Independence, it is time to reiterate that working towards the creation of ‘One Nation with One Destiny’ is essential for our future. The recovery of our country depends on our collective efforts to advance racial, social, and economic equality,” the NDP declared.

It added that the 49th Independence anniversary should be used “to reflect on our past, but above all to focus on a future of cooperation, peace and progress.”

“The lessons of our history, both in Suriname and abroad, should encourage us to continue building our beloved country stronger, wiser and united,” the NDP’s statement concluded.



Ask Jay...

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

FINANCIAL STRAIN WILL CAUSE MORTGAGE DEBTS TO REACH THE ALTITUDES NOTED IN 2012 AND 2015 IN THE GTA

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) predicts that mortgage arrears will increase within six to 12 months. Homeowners who locked in their mortgage rates when they were low are up for renewal, and their mortgage payments will likely double. CMHC also states that house prices are dropping, and Canada’s economic forecast is poor. These two factors are red flags indicating that many homeowners cannot keep up with their mortgage payments.

It is estimated that over 1.05 million mortgage borrowers will renew their mortgages at much higher rates in 2025. The labour market will see slower job growth and higher unemployment levels. Due to the high cost of living and economic uncertainties, many homeowners may have to sell their homes when the real estate market is brimming with falling property prices.

Due to recent immigration changes, the rental market is suffering, but the cost of rent is lowering. In addition, thousands of newly-built condos have been added to the swelling rental inventory, which is good news for tenants. If they are not locked into a lease agreement, tenants can renegotiate with the landlord, or move to cheaper rental accommodations. While this news is good for tenants, owners hoping to subsidise their mortgage payment with rental income are feeling the pain. Walking on thin ice takes little to go under, but let us look for solid ground.

If you cannot afford the next month’s mortgage, then call your lender immediately to discuss your options. Many homeowners ignore this step, and with every month passing, the financial load becomes heavier and the ice thinner.

If you have sufficient equity in your home, it is better to consolidate high-interest debts, such as credit cards and second mortgages, with your current mortgage. This option allows you to make one monthly payment at a much lower mortgage rate, enhancing your cash flow.

If your income situation is short-term, you can ask your lender to defer your mortgage payment until your financial outlook improves. Most lenders will grant this option if there is enough equity in the home, and proof that you will need the help for a little while. If your lender defers your mortgage payment, it will not affect your credit.

The next option is to extend the remaining years on your mortgage payment back to the traditional 25 years. Most mortgages are spread out, so you can pay them off in 25 years. With each payment, a more significant portion of the monthly payment goes towards reducing the principal. Since you have a reduced principal, the lender can recalculate your monthly payment based on a new 25-year amortisation. While this will lower your monthly payment, you will pay more interest because you now borrow longer.

Consider selling if you are at the point where you are borrowing money from your acquaintances to stay afloat. The longer you wait, the more your equity will be deleted. Consider downsizing to an affordable accommodation. If you do not want to downsize, consider selling your home and buying a similar-sized home for a lower price away from the GTA.

If your mortgage is up for renewal, it is easier to shop around for better rates by engaging a mortgage broker since they would have access to more lenders. If you change lenders, you must pay a lawyer to discharge the current mortgage and register the new mortgage, and you can negotiate this cost with the new lender.

Shelter is costly, whether you are a homeowner or a tenant, but it is better to be on the homeowner’s side unless you are a senior citizen who is house-rich and cash-poor. In the GTA, it is almost impossible to balance your budget, especially those who rely on retirement income. You can sell your home, freeing up your money and live affluently.

Enjoy the fruits of your labour instead of enjoying them and then labouring to pay for it. Make a budget where 50 percent of your monthly pay cheque goes toward your home, ten percent for savings, and the remainder for everything else. With this formula, you will prosper, but be careful not to lend money to anyone. You could lose the money and the relationship as well.

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Remembering Dan Dhanasar Samaroo: A legacy of love, compassion, and dedication

With great love and gratitude, we celebrate the life of Dan, who passed away on Nov 18, 2024, at the age of 79. Dan was a devoted husband to Bea, loving father to Indi and Wendy, grandfather to Dalton, brother to Doris, Sugie, Johnny, Khemraj, Dhanraj, Amarnat and Jean.

His kindness, warmth, and positive spirit touched the lives of everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Born on November 19, 1944, in Berbice, Guyana, to parents Etwaria and Sumaroo Basanta, Dan spent his life giving to others with a selflessness that inspired all those who met him.

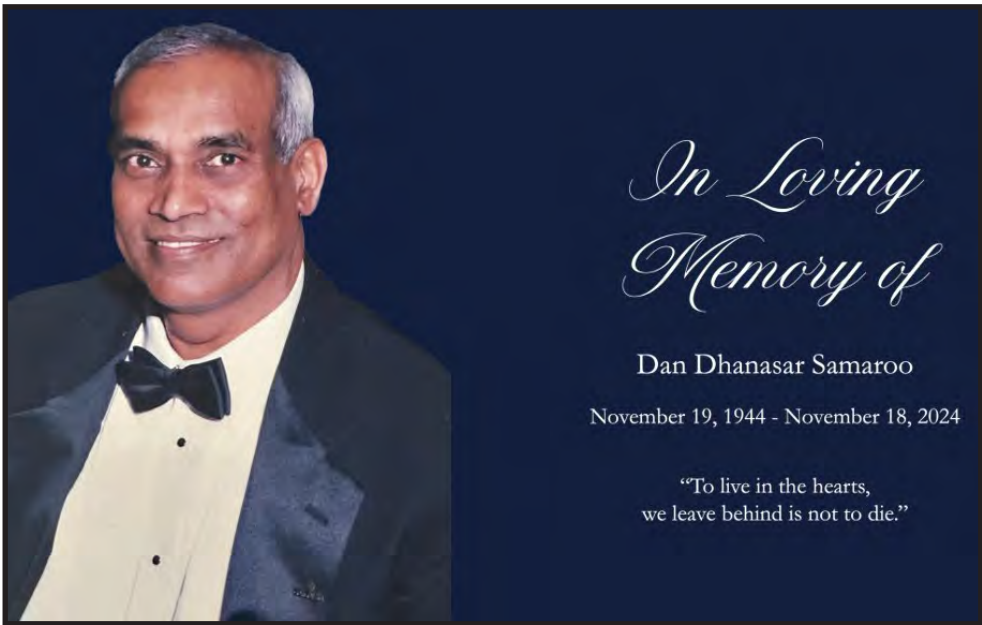
Whether it was through being an amazing husband, father, brother, uncle, friend, mentor, colleague, or the multitude other roles he played, his impact will be forever felt in the

hearts of his family and friends. He will also be remembered as being a passionate educator who nurtured the minds of many in our family and community.

Dan migrated to Montreal, Canada, in 1967 at the age of 23. He earned an Honours degree in Economics from Concordia University, and later completed his Master of Business Administration in Boston.

Dan enjoyed a highly successful career at Domtar, where he held several executive positions before launching his own technology business in 1985. Known for his professionalism and leadership, Dan was well-liked and respected by his colleagues.

Traveling was one of Dan's greatest passions, and he fulfilled his dream of visiting every destination on his bucket list around the globe. He had a deep appreciation for exploring diverse



cultures and connecting with people from all walks of life, all while remaining deeply proud of his own roots and heritage. These adventures were made even more meaningful as he shared them with Bea, his beloved wife and partner of 58 wonderful years.

Throughout his life, Dan cherished time with family and friends. We are grateful for the love, compassion, and joy that Dan shared with the world, and we take comfort in knowing that his memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

The love, kindness, and joy that he shared with each of us will continue to live on in our hearts, in the stories we tell, and in the ways we carry forward the lessons he taught us.

We will continue to honour his legacy by living out the values of kindness, perseverance, and love that he instilled in all of us.

The family wishes to express their heartfelt gratitude for the outpouring of love and sup-

“I will choose you over and over and over again, without a pause, without a doubt, in a heartbeat in any universe for my husband.”

Bea Samaroo

port during this difficult time. Dan and Bea were married for 58 years; it was a beautiful love story from the beginning to the very end; Dan passed away holding her hand.



In memory of Krishna Boodram: A legacy of generosity, entrepreneurship, and family

Successful restaurant owner & entrepreneur, husband, father and friend to many, Krishna Boodram, has passed away at the age of 65. He passed away in his beloved country, Trinidad & Tobago on October 12, 2024. His funeral and cremation took place in Trinidad on October 19.

Krishna was a pillar in the Caribbean and Trinidadian community in the GTA, with a special love for Scarborough.

He opened *The Roti Place* in 1993 (which later was renamed *D’Pavilion Restaurant and Lounge*), and he went from being an accountant and real estate agent to building two successful restaurants, including *Club Sandos*, which was a popular and important Trinidadian-diasporic landmark in Toronto for over ten years.

Krishna's focus was always to amplify, support and promote Caribbean and Trinidadian culture and community, from fetes and curry duck competitions to hosting politicians & chutney and soca stars.

After closing *Club Sandos* in 2006, he focused on expanding *The Roti Place* into a budding restaurant and lounge, which became *D’Pavilion*. There was no shortage of projects that Krishna took on – from owning and operating Sunsonics cricket team and a nail salon, to sponsoring Mas Camps, and supporting new business entrepreneurs from the community.

He retired in 2021 after over 30 years of serving the Caribbean Toronto community.

He then decided to take up permanent residency in his beloved homeland of Trinidad and Tobago, and was there until his passing on October 12.

Krishna was born in Marabella, Trinidad on March 5, 1959, the middle child of a large family that made the trip to Canada in the 1970s.

He was no stranger to hard work from his early days – he hit the ground running when settling in Hamilton, Ontario, and graduated from Mohawk and George Brown College. In his last few years he enjoyed his life as a grandfather, and living in his favourite place, Maracas Valley in Trinidad.

He is survived by wife Sakina; three daughters: Aruna, Anjali, and Anisha; son-in-laws Prashanth and Kris; daughter-in-law, Alicia; and his favourite people, his grandchildren, Ayla and Surya. Additionally, he leaves behind his large extended family of siblings, nieces, nephews, and many, many friends whom he considered family.

Krishna will be remembered for his legacy in Toronto as a great contributor to Caribbean culture, night-life and community, his unwavering love for Trinidad and Tobago, his sharp mind and generous spirit, and his sense of adventure. His impact on so many is everlasting, and his legacy will continue to grow through his many accolades, his children, and grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life and Memorial took place on November 23 in Toronto.

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Cultural Indian Attire

How our Indo-Guyanese legacy has helped to transform Guyana

By Dhanpaul Narine

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Guyana has brought into focus the presence of Indians in Guyana, and the Caribbean. His meetings and speeches were beamed live on Indian television and social media. Many in India learned for the first time about Indentureship and the Indian presence in Guyana, which began over 180 years ago.

If you took a plane from JFK Airport in New York to Calcutta, the chances are you would be exhausted by the time you get there. On May 5, 1838, the history of the Caribbean changed dramatically as 396 East Indians landed on the shores of British Guiana. This was no joyride and there was no time for niceties.

The journey from Calcutta to British Guiana was fraught with hardships, and like the slave ships of an earlier era, there were deaths on the way. The two ships that landed in British Guiana were the *Whitby* and the *Hesperus*. Their cargo was to usher in a new form of slavery that changed the complexion of the colony.

Why were East Indians brought to British Guiana? The answer is not complicated. Slavery was abolished in 1834 by an Act in the British Parliament. This meant that freed Blacks refused to work on the plantations. But there were those that still believed in the supremacy of sugar. This crop had filled the coffers of the planter class. They refused to accept the fact that the estates would lie abandoned. Money and extravagance had to be kept up at all costs.

If sugar were to be enthroned again, it would have to be done with new labour. Indentureship then was the revival, or the second coming, of the sugar industry in the Caribbean. The task was to find a suitable labour supply that would fill the shoes of the slaves, but without the severity of the conditions of the plantations. India was already sending workers to Mauritius, and the system appeared to be working. The argument was that a similar policy could perhaps be employed for British Guiana.

It was left to John Gladstone to articulate this policy. He was the owner of Plantation Vreed-en-Hoop. In 1836, while recuperating from an injury, he sent off a letter to the British East India Company. Gladstone requested that consideration be given to sending indentured labourers to Demerara in British Guiana. His request was approved and the floodgates were opened for East Indians to be transported to the Caribbean.

What was the journey like? According to many accounts, the journey from India to the colonies was long, harsh, and brutal. Dr Leila Sarup points out that in the first four years of Indentureship to Mauritius, people in Calcutta and London had begun to criticise the East India Company "for the callous way the emigrants were treated on board ships and in the Mauritius". The voyage to British Guiana, and the Caribbean, was longer and the cruelty was no less. In an effort to deaden the senses, a plentiful supply of opium was on board.

During the years 1838 to 1917, our ancestral footprints were



A rendering of the *S.S. Hesperus* (at left) and the *S.S. Whitby*, arriving in Georgetown in 1838.

imprinted in many countries. The records show that Indians went to British Guiana in 1838, and they were in other countries as follows: Trinidad (1845); Martinique (1853); French Guiana (1854); Guadeloupe (1854); Grenada (1857); Belize (1859); St Lucia (1859); St Vincent (1861); St Croix (1863); and Suriname (1873).

According to the statistics, British Guiana had the largest number of emigrants. During the period (1838 to 1917), British Guiana received 238,909 Indians. The other countries received as follows: Trinidad, 143,939; Jamaica, 37,027; St Vincent, 2,472; Grenada, 3,200; Belize, 3,000; St Lucia, 4,354; Suriname, 34,304; St Croix, 3,221; Martinique, 25,509; Guadeloupe, 42,326; and French Guiana, 8,500.

What were the terms and conditions of settlement? The period of service was for five years for male emigrants and three years for females. The work that had to be done was in "connection with the cultivation of the soil or the manufacture of the produce in any plantation".

The labourers were required to work every day, except Sundays, and authorised holidays, while the allotted time was nine hours per day "inclusive of half an hour for rest and refreshment". The payment given was hardly in keeping with the prevailing rate. They were paid one shilling and a halfpenny, "that was equivalent to twelve annas and six pie for each day's work".

One of the conditions of Indentureship was repatriation. This means that the figures cited would be decreased by about 25 percent, as a result of Indians returning to India, after their period of Indentureship. Once they arrived, labourers were deployed to various plantations, and they included Wakenaam, Albion, Schoonard, Vergenoegen, Leonora, and others.

The planters did everything within their power to separate Blacks from Indians and carved out settlements for both groups. The signs of this separation are evident today, as certain villages in Guyana are populated predominantly by certain ethnic groups. Life on the plantations was regimented. There were numerous reports of cruelty carried out by the overseers, managers, and others.

The regimented lifestyle, and the cruelty of the planters, led to resentment among Indians. This resulted in strikes, revolts, riots, and rebellions, and they were put down with brutal

efficiency. In fact, conditions on the estates were so poor that Commissions of Enquiry were set up to find out how the quality of life could be improved. The De Voeux Commission found that conditions were woefully inadequate, and that more could be done to improve life on the estates.

By 1900, it was clear to some advocates that Indentureship had to go. There were calls in India as well for the system to be abolished, and Mahatma Gandhi was among them. The system officially came to an end in 1917.

The end of Indentureship saw a highly stratified society in British Guiana. Over 50,000 Indians had taken up the offer of the planters and had returned to India. But the majority stayed and had to compete in a society in which the odds were stacked against them.

It was found that while they owned small plots of land, Indians could not move up in society for a number of reasons. They were not Christians, and, as a result, could not hold jobs in the government sector. In addition, in the 1920s, Indians had little access to education and their daughters were married at an early age. There were not many schools that were established to teach Indian children. Indians lived in the estates and were not exposed to an urban lifestyle, and the ideas of change, that this may have brought about.

Africans, on the other hand, had a head start in the economy. They were Christians, had worked as security personnel on the plantations, and held jobs in the civil service. Their levels of educational attainment were much higher than Indians'. In the two decades after Indentureship, the economic and social status of Indians was in a state of limbo. But perhaps the greatest setback was how East Indians perceived themselves.

In the 1930s, the Moyne Commission visited British Guiana and concluded that East Indians did not regard themselves as full-fledged citizens of the country. They hoped that one day they would be repatriated to India. It was not until the 1940s when East Indians began to seriously realise that British Guiana was home, and that education, and property ownership, were avenues to social mobility. In 1947, Indians, Blacks, and other groups began to agitate for political change.

The formation of political parties and the emergence of Dr Cheddi Jagan as a trade unionist and political leader, set the stage for change. The ensuing years would see East Indians becoming part of a tumultuous struggle in Guyana. This would include access to political power, the struggle to hold on to power, the prevalence of racial politics, and racial disturbances, and a psychological assault that would last for years.

But throughout it all, East Indians have been resilient. They have fed the Caribbean, have celebrated the achievements of education and learning, and have contributed immensely to the economy. These will be discussed later, but there can be no doubt our ancestral footprints have worn well, and they will continue to leave an impact wherever hard work, thrift, and initiative, are prized.

PM Narendra Modi's historic monument tribute bridges India and Guyana

From Page 1

memorials to commemorate our Indentureship journey.

The IAMM was unveiled in 2013 to mark the 175th anniversary of the arrival of the *S.S. Whitby*. Ramsaran was pivotal in the project, working closely with the government of India to secure funding, overseeing its design, and writing the inscription.

Addressing Modi during the visit, Ramsaran emphasised the monument's significance, stating: "... [Thank] you for visiting this Indian Arrival Memorial Monument, which is meaningful to us as descendants of Indian indentured labourers who arrived in this country beginning in 1838," Ramsaran said.

He noted, "It is a replica of the Kolkata Memorial, which I collaborated with the government of India to design, construct, and unveil in 2011 in Kolkata. It is a memorial tribute by India to the hundreds of thousands of Indian indentured labourers who were transported to British colonies during the period 1834 through 1920 after the end of slavery of Africans."

Ramsaran highlighted the significance of the memorials in both Guyana and Kolkata, which he described as "meaningful markers of our journey from India to Guyana and beyond".

He added, "I am honoured that you share our interest in our history with deep roots in India and grateful that you acknowledge our shared heritage, history, and culture, thereby strengthening the inherent bonds between India and Guyana, in particular Indo-Guyanese."

Ramsaran's efforts in realising these projects have earned him international recognition, including the *Pravasi Bharatiya Samman* Award, India's highest honour for overseas Indians.

Modi laid flowers at the base of the monument, planted a commemorative tree, and examined replicas of the *logies* where indentured labourers lived.

Speaking later at Guyana's National Cultural Centre, he described his visit to the IAMM as a deeply moving encounter.

"Today, I visited the India Arrival Monument. It has been a



India's PM Narendra Modi greets Jayden Ramsaran (left); grandfather Ashook is at centre in photo

profoundly moving experience. It brings to life, the long and difficult journey of your ancestors nearly two centuries ago. This connects the past with the present in the most heartfelt way," Modi said.

He spoke to the intersection of the IAMM with the resilience of the Indo-Guyanese community, stating, "It is a fitting tribute to the unyielding spirit of the countless Indians who embarked on a journey to these shores generations ago, carrying with them their culture, values and dreams. They came from different parts of India. They brought with them different cultures, languages and traditions. Over time, they made this new land

their home. Today, these languages, stories and traditions are part of the rich culture of Guyana."

He added, "I salute the spirit of the Indo-Guyanese community. You fought for freedom and democracy. You have worked to make Guyana one of the fastest growing economies. From humble beginnings you have risen to the top."

And quoting the late, former President Dr Cheddi Jagan, Modi stated, "It matters not what a person is born, but who they choose to be." He also lived these words. The son of a family of labourers, he went on to become a leader of global stature."

At the same time, Modi praised emergent leaders from the diaspora who made, and are making, stellar contributions as Indo-Guyanese in the Caribbean and further abroad.

"President Irfaan Ali, Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, former President Donald Ramotar, they are all Ambassadors of the Indo-Guyanese community. Joseph Ruhomon, one of the earliest Indo-Guyanese intellectuals, Ramcharitar Lalla, one of the first Indo-Guyanese poets, Shana Yarden, the renowned woman poet, Many such Indo-Guyanese made an impact on academics and arts, music, and medicine," Modi remarked.

The IAMM is part of a broader story of resilience, extending to its counterpart in Kolkata, unveiled in 2011 at the Kidderpore Demerara Depot, where ships like the *S.S. Whitby* embarked.

Modi's visit was a poignant reminder of the shared heritage between India and Guyana. Honouring the sacrifices of the past, the IAMM also celebrates the contributions of the Indo-Guyanese community to Guyana's modern development.

With words of gratitude at the IAMM's site of tranquillity, even as it resonated with its antecedents of history and a hope for the future, Modi acknowledged Ramsaran's efforts, saying, "I am happy to be here and thank you for your role in all of this. The government of India is grateful for all you are doing for the Indian diaspora and for these memorials."

Romeo Kaseram – An LJI Report

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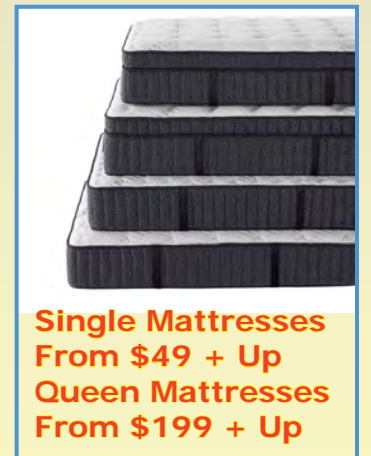


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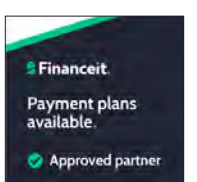
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Literary trailblazer Rupnarain honoured by Pakaraima Writers

– Pakaraima Writers Association celebrates a cultural stalwart and prolific author's enduring contributions to our diaspora's literature

Toronto – In an inspiring celebration of literary achievement, Guyanese-born Canadian author Richard Rupnarain was honoured with the 2024 Pakaraima Literary Award. The award, presented during the Pakaraima Writers Association's Christmas gathering on November 24 in Toronto, highlighted Rupnarain's extraordinary journey as a writer and his profound impact on Caribbean literature and religious thought.

Born in Guyana, Richard Rupnarain's passion for storytelling and devotion to faith have been the hallmarks of a career that spans decades and continents. He immigrated to Canada in 1987, bringing with him a wealth of experiences and a deep-seated love for writing.

Long before digital platforms such as Amazon made publishing more accessible, Rupnarain faced the struggles common to emerging writers. In 1994, his persistence bore fruit with the publication of his first booklet of stories. This milestone marked the beginning of a prolific literary career that includes collections such as *Cool Shade: Tales from the Diaspora*, *Choke and Rob: Tales from the Diaspora*, and *Bramdeo and Juliet: An Interracial Love Story in Guyana's Turbulent 60s*, *Bartica*.

Rupnarain's works, which often explore themes of identity, community, and history, continue to resonate with readers across the diaspora. His most recent novel, *Susanna: Unsung Heroine of the 1823 Demerara Slave Rebellion*, is a fictionalised tribute to the heroism of individuals during a pivotal moment in Guyana's history.

In addition to his contributions to literature, Rupnarain has authored more than 120 books on theology, prophecy, and personal growth. Titles such as *Handwriting on the Wall: Studies with Daniel 1-6*, and *Towards a Strong Self-Esteem: Keys to Rebuilding Confidence*, reflect his commitment to exploring transformative themes through a spiritual lens.

Rupnarain's literary journey is deeply intertwined with the Pakaraima Writers Association, a forum that has become a cornerstone of our community's literary culture in Canada. Established in 2005 by poet, community leader, and former group president, Janet Naidu, the association was created to address the lack of spaces for Caribbean writers to connect, share, and navigate the complexities of publishing.

Rupnarain, a founding member of the group, served as the association's Vice President during its early years, playing a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community among writers.

Pakaraima's achievements over the years have been marked by its commitment to nurturing talent and celebrating the diversity of Caribbean voices. Past recipients of the Pakaraima Literary Award include luminaries such as Ian McDonald, Ramabai Espinet, Peter Jailall, and Naidu, making Rupnarain's inclusion in this esteemed group a testament to his enduring contributions.

The 2024 award ceremony was both a celebration of Rupnarain's achievements and a showcase of the rich literary traditions upheld by the Pakaraima Writers Association.



At the Pakaraima event were (left to right), Ken Puddicombe, Peter Jailall, Janet Naidu, Sandra Rupnarain, Richard Rupnarain, Lisa Freemantle, Shirley Najhram, and Lal Balkaran

Chaired by the association's current president, Lisa Freemantle, the event featured readings, reflections, and a lively exchange of ideas. Freemantle, herself a poet and composer, shared selections from her work and expressed gratitude to all attendees for their contributions.

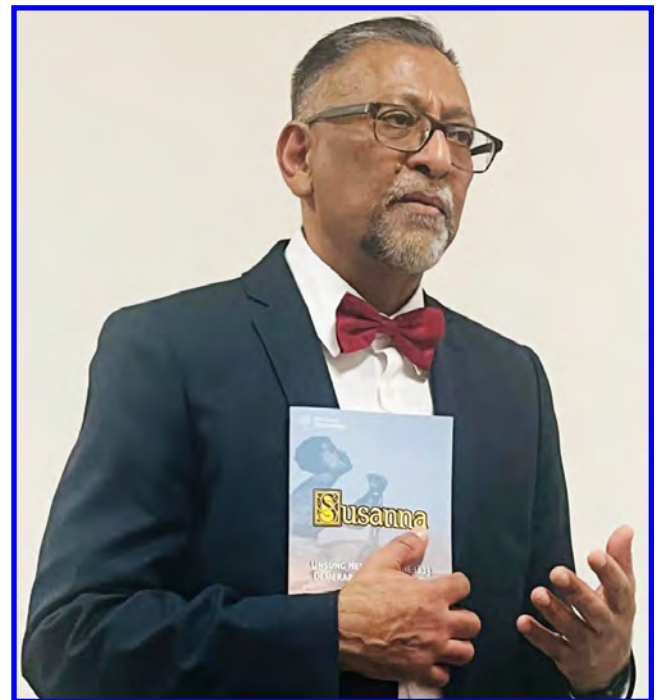
Naidu, who presented the award to Rupnarain, highlighted his dedication to both the association and the broader literary community. Her reading from her latest poetry collection, *River Crossing*, added a poignant touch to the proceedings. Other highlights included readings by Peter Jailall and Kenneth Puddicombe, as well as presentations by Lal Balkaran on his projects exploring Guyanese authors and financial literacy.

Rupnarain captivated the audience with excerpts from *Chalkdust in My Eyes: Tales from the Diaspora* and his novel *Susanna*, showcasing his gift for blending humour, history, and cultural insight. The event also served as a platform for children's author Shirley Najhram and others to share their work, underscoring the diversity of voices within the association.

Rupnarain's journey from an accountant by profession to a full-time pastor and prolific writer is a testament to his resilience and versatility. After immigrating to Canada, he pursued theological studies at Tyndale University in Toronto, earning a Master's degree and ordination from both the Assemblies of God and the Church of God (Canada). His deep faith has been a constant thread throughout his life, informing much of his writing and community service.

Accompanied by wife Sandra, and surrounded by family, friends, and peers, Rupnarain's moment of recognition was both a celebration of his accomplishments and an affirmation of his impact. As the recipient of the 2024 Pakaraima Literary Award, he joins a distinguished group of authors who are shaping our diasporic voices through literature and cultural heritage.

The event concluded with warm congratulations and a sense of collective pride, as Rupnarain's journey inspired attendees to reflect on the power of storytelling to bridge communities and preserve cultural legacies. His work, deeply rooted in both his Guyanese origins and his Canadian experience, continues to enrich the literary and spiritual landscapes of the diaspora.



Richard Rupnarain



Rupnarain (second, left) with his award; also (left to right) are Naidu, Freemantle, and Najhram

New book explores Hosay as a cultural journey across continents

– Sat Balkaransingh's latest book unveils the rich history of Muharram's journey from Iraq to India and to the Caribbean. Blending narrative and photos, it explores the evolution of tradition, artistry, and an enduring legacy.

A new book, *Hosay Caribbean: Tadjahs on Wheels (Mobile Mausoleums of Muharram)*, authored by Sat Balkaransingh, is being added to our expanding library of Caribbean literature. The book explores the intricate layers of tradition and cultural syncretism that have shaped the ritual commemoration of Muharram. Using narrative and photos, the book traces the Karbala story of embryonic Islam in Iraq, its movement to Iran, and later brought to India by Mughal/Mongol invaders.

Extensively researched and documented, this new book on this aspect of our Caribbean culture captures Hosay's or Muharram's history from South East Asia and India from where it travelled to the Caribbean, commencing the 1840s.

In Guyana (then British Guiana) it was called 'Tadjah' and in Suriname, 'Tazia'. Belize refers to the event as 'Who-Seh-Meh-Seh'. Jamaican phonetics further changed it to 'Hussy' or 'Hasay' or 'Ossai', the 'H' not being pronounced.

Over the generations this commemorative event of annual street pageantry has been a feature of Caribbean tradition. It was also commemorated briefly in New York by the Caribbean diaspora.

Hosay Caribbean revisits the little-known, or forgotten, history of the Massacre of East Indians in Trinidad on October 30,

1884, during their Hosay procession to immerse their Tadjahs in the sea, west of San Fernando. Having developed into an Indian, rather than Islamic event in Trinidad, the militia of the colonial authorities shot into the thousands of participants at point blank range. Many died immediately; hundreds were injured or maimed.

The book also traces the music of Hosay, the *marsiya*s and *nauhas*, the varying rhythms of the *tassa* drums; sometimes thundering, then haunting, then with pathos, as processions move annually from the seventh to ninth of Muharram, in the dead of night, and on the tenth day, the day of Ashura.

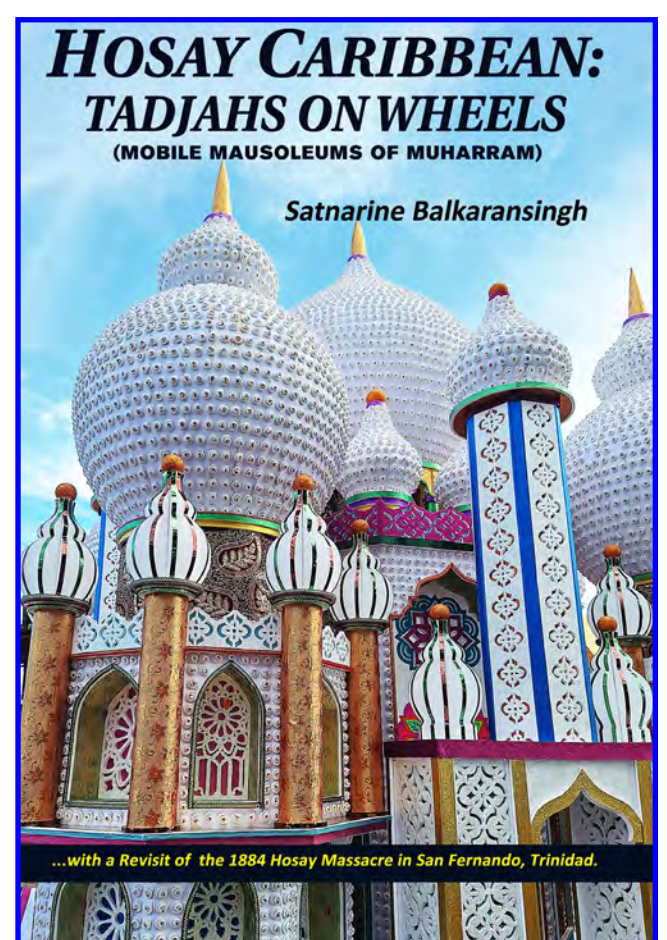
In Trinidad the drums beat out their own stories of battle, of valour, of death and pain, as they accompany the mobile, glittering Tadjahs (Mausoleums) and flags in Cedros and with additional spectacular 'Moons' in St James's street processions. Today Hosay has become a syncretic, multicultural event.

These annual experiences provide epiphany to some of its adherents, even to first-timers. Mysticism and catharsis are served up with street foods as part of this annual Caribbean cultural event. It is now an integral part of our performing and performative tradition.

Sat Balkaransingh, economist, performing artist, and cultural historian, researching the tradition over a 30 year period, has documented the multiple aspects of this annual ritual which was commemorated earlier in Guyana and Suriname – today it no longer exists in these nations. However, it currently exists in India, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad.



Sat Balkaransingh





Photos by Hinano Beekhoof

Christmas cheer Trini style



The Consulate General of Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto hosted its annual Christmas Open House on November 28 in a celebration filled with the warmth of camaraderie, the joy of Christmas music, and the richness of Trinidad and Tobago's cultural traditions.

The festive Meet & Greet was a resounding success, bringing together members of the diaspora to share good food, lively fellowship, and the unmistakable cheer of the holiday season.

Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette expressed gratitude for the remarkable turnout, sharing her team's "warm appreciation" for the success of the event.

"This festive gathering was meant to be an opportunity to share the spirit of the season, connect with our community, and celebrate our shared traditions. Your participation and goodwill helped us achieve just that! We were truly amazed by the turnout and hope everyone who attended enjoyed the music, food, and laughter among friends old and new."

The sparkle and festivity of the evening were enhanced even more, and made special by guest appearances from Trinidadian entertainers Gervail 'Jr Lee' Lemo and Jean Paul, whose performances added a vibrant and authentic touch of good Trini cheer to the celebration.



The United West Indian Trinbago Association held its fund-raiser Parang event on November 30 at the Twilight Family Restaurant in Scarborough. The evening saw top performances by Toronto's parang band Los Amigos, with appearances by Terrence Sweeny, and the Mystic Rhythm Tassa band. Music was hosted by DJ Arnel, and SKF The Champ. Come December 14, UniTnT will be hosting its second annual Kids' Christmas Party for one to nine year old kids. This event is under the patronage of the Consulate General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto. In photos, attendees celebrate the season to good food and pulsating music. *Photos by Russell Lutchman.*





At the launch are author Nasser Khan (left to right), Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette, and Larry Gomes. Photos by Russell Lutchman

Adoring fans celebrate cricket's Mr Dependable

Cricketing legend Larry Gomes, affectionately known as “Mr Dependable”, drew a record turnout of adoring fans at the Consulate General of Trinidad and Tobago in Toronto on November 29 for the launch of his book, *Larry Gomes, Mr. Dependable: My Life in Cricket*. The 330-page book is authored by Nasser Khan, and chronicles Gomes’ storied career and the glory days of West Indies cricket, inspiring nostalgia and admiration among attendees.

The event was held under the auspices of the Consulate General in Toronto and Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette. It attracted a capacity audience, including Gomes, his family, and relatives, alongside a distinguished gathering of Consuls General from Guyana, Barbados, St Lucia, and St Vincent.

Toronto cricketers, their coaches, and other notable guests also attended to pay tribute to the cricketing hero who now resides in Toronto.

Speaking at the launch, Khan shared the significance of Gomes’ contributions to cricket and his enduring legacy.

“Through the pages of this book, readers will be captivated and inspired by a sense of nostalgia for the West Indies glory days. The West Indies cricket fraternity should be proud of this unassuming, reserved cricket superstar who through determination and an unrelenting work ethic, rose to become an international cricket hero,” Khan told the rapt audience.

Gomes’ career statistics underscore his impact on the game, with 12,982 First-Class runs, 3,171 Test runs, and 1,415 ODI runs. His versatile prowess also saw him take 107 First-Class wickets, with 77 First-Class catches sticking in his hands, alongside numerous Test and ODI accomplishments.

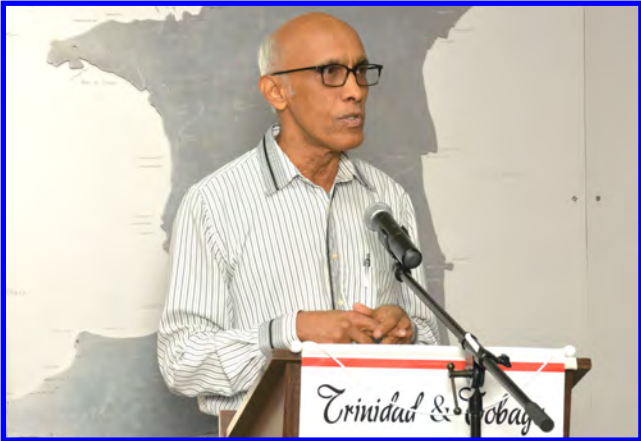
A standout chapter in the book, *Blood Money, I Can’t Do It!* offers readers an intimate glimpse into his personal integrity and challenges during his playing days.

The book features forewords by Trinidad and Tobago’s Minister of Education, Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly; Minister of Sport and Community Development, Shamfa Cudjoe; and cricketing icons Sir Clive Lloyd, Deryck Murray, and Michael Holding.

Launched earlier at the Larry Gomes Stadium in Gomes’ hometown of Arima in Trinidad, the event also saw a large turnout of adoring hometown fans who showered love on their legendary Hilary ‘Larry’ Angelo Gomes and his family.

The Toronto event added another chapter to Gomes’ celebrated legacy, uniting cricket enthusiasts and the Caribbean diaspora in a moment of shared pride and reflection. Gomes’ contributions to cricket and his embodiment of dedication and humility continue to resonate, making Mr Dependable a testament to his remarkable journey.

Copies of the book can be obtained by calling or texting **905-783-0215**.



How Bollywood empowered our diaspora from resistance to agency

An Ongoing Series On Our Caribbean Diaspora
A Local Journalism Initiative
Movie Night Comes to a Town in Guyana

It is 1960, and the hum of a projector fills the humid air under a makeshift rental tent in New Amsterdam, Guyana. Since we are in the Land of Many Waters, just beyond the tent frogs are chirping in rhythmic cadence, and from the waterways and canals, squadrons of mosquitoes are arriving in waves in lethal, predatory formation.

But this all goes unnoticed by the audience sitting on uncomfortable fold-up, wooden chairs. Entire families are ensconced under the brown canvas tent. Here mothers are spoon-feeding young children from bowls of *dhal*, in which broken pieces *roti* soaking for a soupy, delectable infusion.

A hush falls as the first grainy frames of *Mother India* illuminate the screen. The entire audience leans forward as the scratchy, stuttering sound rises in volume with monophonic confidence. Soon the light from the screen illuminates the faces captivated by the stoic figure of Radha, the archetypal matriarch, as her toil in the parched fields begins mirroring similar struggles etched into their own family histories of laborious work in the cane fields.

Decades after *Mother India* hit the silver screen, *Lagaan* (2001), and *RRR* (2022) would similarly make our diaspora lean forward with attentiveness, via DVD players, and lately, through streaming platforms such as *Netflix* and *Prime Video*. A David-versus-Goliath cricket match in *Lagaan* conjures echoes of spirited village games for audiences in Trinidad, while *RRR*'s high-octane action finds resonance in the fiery narratives of good-versus-evil *Ramleela* celebrations in central Trinidad.

These cinematic milestones transcend fiction, offering to us as diasporic audiences a mirror to our own histories of resistance, resilience, and reclamation in a new world thousands of kilometres across the *kala pani* from India.

Bollywood's inadvertent but profound role in shaping Indo-Caribbean consciousness lies in its storytelling, which parallels and amplifies our lived experiences as a diaspora. Drawing on the thinking of Louis Althusser and his concept of ideology, and Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's rhizome theory, this exploration unpacks how *Mother India*, *Lagaan*, and *RRR* continue to connect diasporic communities within a continuum of cultural identity, anti-colonial resistance, and becoming.

...
Mother India and the Matriarch in the Cane Fields

In *Mother India*, Radha's determination to sustain her family despite natural calamities and exploitation embodies resilience and resistance. Her struggles against the oppressive moneylender Sukhilala reflect a broader narrative of colonial and patriarchal oppression. As Vijay Mishra writes, "Radha's refusal to succumb represents the moral fibre of a nation rebuilding itself from the ashes of colonisation."

Mishra is a renowned scholar of diaspora and Bollywood studies. In his essay, *Within Bollywood and the Diaspora: History and Contexts*, he interprets Radha as a symbol of moral integrity and national identity, reflecting the resilience of a nation emerging from colonial rule.

His essay also highlights how the film's themes of sacrifice, endurance, and maternal strength resonate deeply with diasporic audiences, providing a cinematic connection to our cultural heritage. The analysis underscores Bollywood's role in shaping and reflecting the identities of Indo-Caribbeans, and other Indian communities worldwide.

In Guyana, this fictional resilience finds real-life parallels in our fictive figure of Devi, whom we are invoking as a representative matriarch labouring in the sugar cane fields of Essequibo. Like Radha, Devi toils under the sweltering sun, her back bent as she plants rows and rows of ratoons, the cuttings of sugar cane stalks, for the next crop.

Devi's hands, roughened by years of hard work, mirror Radha's in the similarity of their testaments to survival. The moneylender in *Mother India* finds its counterpart in the estate manager, who with a riding whip in hand, and looking down on Devi from his well-fed horse, exploits her and the community through relentless demands for higher yields, lower wages, and additional backbreaking labour in Guyana's sugar cane fields.

One afternoon, Devi pauses to sip collected rainwater from a rudimentary water gourd – the calabash or *gobie* – her eyes scanning the horizon. She see her daughter, Sunita, hurrying to help her meet her daily quota in planting the sharp stalks. As they bend together in unison, pushing the spear-sharp stalks

Imagine a rural village in Guyana, where families gathered under a makeshift tent to the uneven glow of a flickering projector are being tossed on a turbulent sea of emotions, even as they are captivated by Mother India's tale of resilience and woe. Now shift your gaze to a dusty cricket pitch in Penal, south Trinidad, where a bat is being wielded as a weapon of rebellion, much like in the movie *Lagaan*. We then hit the fast forward button, speeding up the tape to land in a living room in Toronto, where the Blockbuster video cassette gives way to the spinning white circle on a high-resolution smart television as Netflix downloads and buffers the high-octane action of *RRR*, which recently electrified our diaspora here in the GTA and further abroad.

Across decades, continents, and technologies, Bollywood has transcended entertainment to become a cultural lifeline, connecting our Indo-Caribbean diaspora to our roots while inspiring resistance, resilience, and reclamation.

Our latest adventure in this ongoing series of articles about our Caribbean diaspora now invites you to explore how three iconic films – *Mother India* (1957), *Lagaan* (2001), and *RRR* (2022) – intersect with our history and identity as Indo-Caribbeans to illuminate and reify our ongoing struggles against colonial legacies.

Through vivid and engaging storytelling in this series, along with the intersection of foundational theories from major thinkers like Louis Althusser and Deleuze and Guattari, we will discover how Bollywood became a connecting bridge between fiction and our lived experience, and how it contributed to empowering us as Indo-Caribbeans to reclaim our narratives and traditions.

Prepare to be entertained, educated, and inspired with this deep dive into the narratives and ideas that connect us as a diaspora across borders, time, and technologies.



into the moist ground, their interaction is rich with an unspoken solidarity.

"One day, we won't need to do this back-breaking work on this estate. We will see to it that your children go to school," Mother Guyana tells daughter Sunita, echoing Radha's quiet defiance.

These real-life moments of toil and turbulence are refracted through the cinematic lens of *Mother India*, where fiction validates lived experiences and reinforces the resilience of matriarchs like Devi, who alongside her daughter, envision a better world, one where they would not trod shoeless among shards of stones broken by the horses' hooves.

It is here where Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses intersects with Devi's and Sunita's lived experiences. Bollywood, functioning as a cultural apparatus, subtly undermines the hegemonic narratives imposed by the colonial powers driving the sugar estate and its oppressive representatives.

In his *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser explains how power is maintained not just through force but by shaping what people believe and accept as normal. He describes two key tools of control: Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA), like the police or military, which use force, and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), like schools, media, and films, which influence ideas and beliefs.

Applying his thinking to Bollywood films such as *Lagaan*, *RRR*, and *Mother India*, we see these movies acting as ISAs by challenging colonial ideas and inspiring resistance. Through their stories, these films help us to see the world differently, offering hope, strength, and a way to push back against systems of control.

By presenting Radha's struggle as one of universal endurance, and as Mishra reinforces in his analysis, Mother India creates a counter-narrative that resonates across geographies, empowering viewers like Devi to see their survival as resistance to oppression and imperialism.

...
Lagaan and the Cricket Match in a Trinidad Village

Forty years after *Mother India*, *Lagaan* pitches the metaphor of resistance into the centre of the cricket field. Set in 1893, the film's villagers challenge their British oppressors to a high-stakes match, using the colonisers' game to fight back against their exploitative taxes.

As the author and scholar Rachel Dwyer notes, "The cricket match in *Lagaan* is not merely a contest; it is an assertion of identity and an act of defiance."

Dwyer is a leading scholar of Indian cinema. She examines *Lagaan* in her book, *Bollywood's India: Hindi Cinema as a Guide to Modern India*, interpreting the film's cricket match as a symbolic assertion of identity and an act of defiance against colonial rule. By engaging in cricket, a colonial sport, the villagers subvert colonial power structures, transforming the game into a platform for anti-colonial resistance.

Her analysis highlights how *Lagaan* reflects broader themes of nationalism and self-assertion in modern India, reinforcing Bollywood's role as a cultural text that challenges historical narratives.

In a fictive exploration, we visit a cricket field in Preysal, a rural village in central Trinidad, where echoes of *Lagaan* find life in a cricket match between the local team, mostly descendants of Indentured labourers, and the elite overseers running the sugar factory. The players from the village gather before the game outside the thatched hut of the captain; meanwhile, the overseers assemble in the shade of a spreading Samaan tree on the manicured grounds of their company houses that are standing tall on whitewashed concrete posts, its wide Demerara windows opened to the cool breeze blowing across kilometres of sugar cane fields.

It is a lovely day for cricket: the sun blazes overhead, casting sharp and lengthy shadows from the stumps onto the yellow dirt of the pitch. The overseers find the humidity challenging, and call for numerous water breaks; they sip orange juice, watching with bemusement as the villagers hold up water gourds to pour streams of rainwater down into their mouths. Whenever the crack of a ball striking willow reverberates for the village team, it draws loud cheers from family members lining the boundary.

The climax arrives when Kumar, a fierce young batsman from the village, faces the best bowler of the elite team for the final ball of the match. The bowler thunders down, hammering the ball into the pitch, attempting to intimidate Kumar with a rising delivery. Anticipating the tactic, Kumar's defiant bat finds the centre to lift the ball over the overseer's head and beyond the boundary.

The villagers erupt in jubilant applause, their cries of joy mingling with the reluctant, disapproving claps from the overseers' wives. In that moment, in the flashing of his blade in the brilliant Trinidad sunshine, Kumar's bat had become a weapon of resistance, much like in *Lagaan*.

Althusser's framework again underscores the subversive potential in moments such as these that strikes back at Empire. Cricket, a tool of colonial ideology, is re-purposed, redirected, and reclaimed as a symbol of resistance by the marginalised estate workers. Like in *Lagaan*, Bollywood amplifies this reclamation, turning Kumar's participation into a subaltern excelling at the Empire's own game of cricket, the emergent metaphor becoming a weapon that challenges systems of power.

...
RRR and the Ramleela Celebration

Where *Mother India* and *Lagaan* root their narratives in historical struggles, *RRR* catapults resistance into a mythic realm. The film reimagines the lives of two revolutionaries, Alluri Sitarama Raju and Komaram Bheem, blending folklore and history into a high-energy spectacle.

As Priya Joshi observes, "RRR fuses the personal and the political, creating a narrative that transcends boundaries of time and geography."

Joshi is a prominent scholar of South Asian literature and culture. She explores *RRR* in the context of postcolonial resistance. In her book, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, See Next Page: Iconic Radha, Bhuvan, Raju*

Iconic Radha, Bhuvan, Raju help shape our Indo-Caribbean identity



From previous page

and the English Novel in India, she argues that RRR reimagines colonial narratives by blending history and mythology, offering a vision of the oppressed as architects of their destiny.

Joshi also highlights how the film not only entertains but also empowers, challenging traditional power structures and enabling marginalised voices to reclaim their stories.

Such a reclamation via fusion of folklore and spectacle finds a striking parallel in the Ramleela celebrations of Trinidad, where the story of Rama's battle against Ravana is enacted with fervent, fiery theatricality.

In the central Trinidad village of Felicity, the staging is elaborate: actors dressed as Rama and Hanuman occupy sacred ground, wielding bamboo bows and wooden swords to the pulsing rhythm of infectious *tassa* drumming. On its final day, the defeat of Ravana in battle, and the symbolic setting of fire to a giant effigy of the evil king, become a communal catharsis, much like the climactic battles of RRR.

At the height of the performance, the village actor playing Hanuman invokes the film's spirit, delivering his lines with a ferocity that mirrors Komaram Bheem's fiery speeches. The audience lined up behind the bamboo perimeter fence, caught in the throes of the drama, cheers with upward, pumping fists as Ravana's effigy burns, the flames symbolising the triumph of good over evil.

These shared moments of elation and catharsis, rooted in both mythology and contemporary cinema, reinforce our collective identity steeped in resilience, reclamation, and agency.

Through Althusser's lens, *Ramleela* and *RRR* serve as cultural practices that resist the ideological dominance of colonial systems. By reinterpreting mythology and history, they create spaces for us to reify and reclaim our narratives.

Technology as a Metaphor for Bollywood's Reach

The projector whirring in a Guyanese village in 1960. The scratched DVDs passed among families in Trinidad in 2001. The buffering white circle at the centre of high-definition television screens streaming *RRR* in Toronto in 2022. Each technological milestone marks Bollywood's evolving ability to connect distant and diasporic audiences to its narratives.

This progression is more than a logistical evolution; it is a metaphor for Bollywood's adaptability. Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome theory aptly describes this phenomenon.

In their landmark text, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari use the rhizome to explain systems that grow and connect in unpredictable, non-linear ways. Unlike a tree with fixed roots, the rhizome spreads out in all directions, creating networks that resist control and hierarchy.

Bollywood works like a rhizome, spreading stories across time and places, linking India to its diaspora in Trinidad,

Guyana, and here in the GTA. Using the rhizome model, we see our three movies connecting us through shared stories of resistance and resilience, helping us rediscover our roots even as we challenge colonial histories.

In this way, Bollywood creates a web of cultural connections among us that continues to grow and inspire. And just as the rhizome spreads laterally, like bamboo and ginger roots, connecting disparate points, Bollywood traverses technological and geographical boundaries, sustaining its relevance across time and space.

These moments of connection – whether through the glow of a noisy projector that occasionally stumbles to cast a segment of the reel burning and curling on the screen, or the immediacy of a streaming service, which sometimes freezes, casting on the screen the looping of its white circle – reinforce our diaspora's ties to our cultural heritage. They also underscore Bollywood's role in challenging the ideological apparatus of colonialism, offering counter-narratives that validate and empower.

Conclusion: A Cinematic Continuum of Agency

Mother India, *Lagaan*, and *RRR* are more than just films; they are milestones on a continuum of storytelling that transforms lived realities into stories of empowerment and agency. These films are more than cultural artifacts – they are beacons for our future defined not by resistance but by self-assertion and self-determination.

From the cane fields and cricket grounds in Albion, Guyana, and from the Ramleela grounds in Felicity, Dow Village, and Oropouche in Trinidad, to our living rooms in Scarborough, Mississauga, and Brampton, these narratives no longer merely reflect our past – they inspire bold steps into our collective future.

They remind us not just of where we came from but of where we are going – with a sense of agency that is now shaping our destiny.

For our Indo-Caribbean diaspora, these films celebrate the shift from reclaiming identity to confidently asserting it. They validate the histories that have shaped us while fueling the imagination of what we can achieve. With each story told and every screen lit, Bollywood now becomes a platform for innovation, creativity, and unyielding self-belief.

As the hum of projectors fades into the background and the digital buzz of streaming screens takes over, the narrative transforms. Whether through Radha's labour, Bhuvan's bat, or Raju and Bheem's battle cries, the message is clear: we are no longer just preserving our heritage – we are shaping our future.

The continuum of agency grows stronger with each new voice, each new story, and each bold step forward, creating a legacy for us that is defined by self-assertion, and the limitless possibilities in our emerging destinations ahead.



THE MOVIES



Nargis as Radha in *Mother India*

Mother India (1957)

Director: Mehboob Khan

Main Actors:

Nargis as Radha

Sunil Dutt as Birju

Raaj Kumar as Shamu

Kanhaiyalal as Sukhilala

Plot Summary: A rural matriarch, Radha, struggles to raise her children while resisting exploitation by a ruthless moneylender, Sukhilala. The film portrays her sacrifices, resilience, and moral fortitude as she battles poverty, natural calamities, and societal pressures. Radha's story becomes a metaphor for India's post-Independence struggle and cultural resilience.



Aamir Khan in *Lagaan*

Lagaan (2001)

Director: Ashutosh Gowariker

Main Actors:

Aamir Khan as Bhuvan

Gracy Singh as Gauri

Paul Blackthorne as Captain Andrew Russell

Rachel Shelley as Elizabeth Russell

Plot Summary: Set in 1893, the farmers in a small village under the oppressive and racist regime of the British Central India Agency, pay a land tax (*lagaan*) despite poverty and an irregular harvest caused by drought. Unable to bear the burden, they ask the king for relief. Captain of the British regiment, Andrew Russell, proposes a match between the villagers and his cricket team. Should the villagers win, they would be exempted from *lagaan* for three years; should they lose, they would pay triple the taxes. Young farmer Bhuvan accepts Russell's wager. With no prior experience of cricket, the villagers led by Bhuvan unite to overcome caste and class division to defeat the British in a symbolic act of resistance.



N.T. Rama Rao Jr., and Ram Charan

RRR (2022)

Director: S.S. Rajamouli

Main Actors:

N.T. Rama Rao Jr. as Komaram Bheem

Ram Charan as Alluri Sitarama Raju

Alia Bhatt as Sita

Ajay Devgn as Venkata Rama Raju

Plot Summary: A fictionalised account of two real-life revolutionaries, Alluri Sitarama Raju and Komaram Bheem, *RRR* is set in 1920s colonial India. The film chronicles their parallel paths to rebellion against British rule, blending historical events with mythological grandeur and high-octane action. Their eventual alliance becomes a symbolic and literal battle against oppression.

Ian Redpath: 1941-2024



Australian legend Redpath passes at 83

– Ian Redpath, one of Australia’s most resilient and respected cricketers, has passed away at 83. A stalwart of the 1960s and 1970s, his career was marked by grit, elegance, and humour, leaving an indelible legacy both on and off the field.

Australian cricket has lost one of its most enduring figures with the passing of Ian Redpath, a tenacious opener whose grit and determination epitomised the golden era of the sport, the international sports media reported earlier this week.

Redpath, who died at 83, played 66 Tests and five ODIs between 1964 and 1976, amassing 4,734 runs at an average of 43.45, including eight centuries. His career, marked by resilience and understated brilliance, was celebrated with his induction into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame in 2023.

Born in Geelong, Redpath made his Test debut against South Africa at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1964, falling heartbreakingly short of a century with a score of 97. Recalling the innings, Redpath shared his humour: “I hit an off-drive for four and there was another one I thought was in the same spot, and I licked my chops. Beautiful follow-through, it was.”

His maiden Test century finally arrived five years later against the West Indies, a composed 132 in the second innings at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

From that point, Redpath’s career surged. Averaging almost 50 in the latter half of his career, he scored five centuries in his final 15 Tests, including three in his farewell series against a formidable West Indies attack led by Michael Holding and Andy Roberts. Reflecting on those matches, Wisden noted: “Although Redpath was at once subjected to plenty of short stuff, he ducked and weaved in his own effective way and went on to complete an important century for Australia and one which underlined the value which he has been to Australia over many years.”

Redpath’s ability to withstand intense pressure earned him admiration from peers and opponents alike. Greg Chappell, who partnered with him during his debut century in 1970, described Redpath as “one of the most courageous batsmen ever to play for Australia” and credited him for an invaluable lesson in the art of Test match batting.

In an era dominated by professional players, Redpath’s career began with a unique distinction: he was the last Australian to play as an amateur. Turning down match fees during the

1963-1964 series allowed him to continue competing in Australian Rules Football. However, he eventually accepted payments, leading to his full-time commitment to cricket.

Upon his induction into the Hall of Fame, Redpath reflected on his journey with humility: “The longevity... I was fortunate enough to play for quite a while. In an era where most chaps retired at 30, I had the good fortune of being able to extend it. I’ve been very fortunate to have done it. It takes your breath away a bit, when I look back on it, I can’t believe I was there.”

Known for his dry humour, Redpath was a master storyteller. One of his most memorable anecdotes involved the rare six he hit at the Melbourne Cricket Ground during a state game for Victoria against Pakistan in 1972.

“I must have had a touch of the sun and I managed to lob one over wide mid-on,” he recounted. “It was where the players sat. It lobbed about two rows from where my wife was sitting. I am out in the middle flexing my muscles, and there she is, looking the other way, talking about an upcoming shopping expedition, and she missed the whole lot.” With characteristic wit, he added, “I thought, ‘I won’t try to repeat that exercise because I will only hit it halfway to the fence.’ I only hit one and she missed it. But oh well, that was her loss.”

Following his retirement from Test cricket, Redpath devoted himself to his antique business in Geelong but could not resist cricket’s call, returning for two seasons with World Series Cricket. He later coached Victoria and remained a key figure in Geelong’s cricketing community for decades.

Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird lauded Redpath’s contributions: “As a fine opening batter, Ian was a mainstay of the national team through one of the great eras of Australian cricket, and beloved by many throughout the world for his courage, impeccable sportsmanship, and wry humour.”

Ian Redpath’s career was a masterclass in determination, skill, and humility. Whether swaying out of the way of bouncers in the pre-helmet era, carrying his bat through an innings in New Zealand in 1974, or charming listeners with tales of his cricketing exploits, he left an indelible mark on Australian cricket.

As Redpath himself said of his journey, “It takes your breath away... I can’t believe I was there.” His legacy, both on and off the field, will continue to inspire generations to come.



Ian Redpath

Royals snap up prodigy Suryavanshi

– At 13, Vaibhav Suryavanshi became the youngest player signed at an IPL auction, joining the Rajasthan Royals for approximately (US) \$133,000. The Bihar prodigy’s rise, marked by stunning domestic performances, signals a thrilling new chapter his cricketing future.

Cricket prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi etched his name in the record books late last month, becoming the youngest player ever to be purchased at an Indian Premier League (IPL) auction, the international sports media have reported.

At just 13 years old, the Bihar-born cricketer was snapped up by the Rajasthan Royals for approximately (US) \$130,000 after a fierce bidding war with the Delhi Capitals during the auction held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, late last month.

According to Wikipedia, Suryavanshi was born on March 27, 2011, and is a left-handed batsman from the village of Tajpur in Bihar, India. He began playing cricket at nine, initially coached by his father. Known as “Kuttappaai” (Tamil for ‘The Little Boy’) in the Rajasthan Royals camp, Suryavanshi’s precocious talent has set him apart on the cricketing stage.

At just 12 years old, Suryavanshi debuted in the Ranji Trophy, playing for Bihar against Mumbai in January 2024. At 12 years and 284 days old, he became the second-youngest cricketer to play for Bihar in the competition, and the fourth youngest in Ranji Trophy history.

His achievements in youth cricket are equally remarkable: he played in the Vinoo Mankad Trophy for Bihar U19, and in September struck

a blistering 58-ball century in a youth Test against Australia U19, becoming the fastest Indian U19 centurion.

Suryavanshi has also represented India B in the 2023 Quadrangular Under-19 series, scoring 177 runs in six innings, including two half-centuries. These feats underline his extraordinary potential, and set the stage for his historic IPL debut.

The Rajasthan Royals are banking on Suryavanshi’s remarkable talent to flourish under their guidance.

“He just came to our trials and we were really happy with what we saw,” said Royals’ head coach Rahul Dravid. “I think has got some really good skills, so we thought it might be a good environment for him to grow in.”

Rajasthan Royals CEO Jake Lush McCrum shared similar enthusiasm: “He’s been to our high-performance centre in Nagpur, he had trials there and really


impressed on the ground. Incredible talent, and, of course, you’ve got to have the confidence so he can step up to the IPL level. Lots of work will go in over the coming months to continue to develop him, but a hell of a talent. We’re really excited to have him as part of the franchise.”

While Suryavanshi’s inclusion stole headlines, Indian stars Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer also made waves at the auction. Batter Shreyas Iyer was bought by Punjab Kings for a staggering \$3.17 million, only for Lucknow Super Giants to break the record moments later by acquiring Rishabh Pant for \$3.20 million.



Vaibhav Suryavanshi

BHSAA & QCAA



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Yastika Bhatia

Now eyes on Chetry with Bhatia injured

– In the light of Yastika Bhatia's injury, all eyes will be on India's new keeper-batter Uma Chetry as she steps into the spotlight, ready to script a promising chapter in her cricketing journey.

India's preparations for the ODI series against Australia faced an unexpected setback as wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia was ruled out due to a wrist injury sustained during the Women's Big Bash League, the cricket website *ESPNcricinfo*, and other international sports media, reported last week.

In her absence, the Indian selectors have called up Uma Chetry, an uncapped player in the ODI format, to fill the void.

Chetry's selection comes on the back of her impressive performances in domestic cricket. The 21-year-old made waves in last month's domestic T20 Challenger Trophy, where she emerged as the second-highest run-scorer. Her tally of 231 runs came at a remarkable strike rate of 154.00, featuring the tournament's only century – a blistering 122 off 71 balls.

Chetry, who has already played four T20Is this year, debuted against South Africa in July. While her international career is still in its infancy, she brings with her the experience of touring Australia with the India A side earlier this year. Although her performances on that tour were modest – scores of 7, 11, 16, 2, and 47 across formats – Chetry's familiarity with Australian conditions could prove valuable.

Bhatia's injury is a significant blow for India. The southpaw was in fine touch during her WBBL stint with the Melbourne Stars,

scoring 154 runs in six matches at a strike rate of 104.76. Despite missing the last three games, she was the second-highest run-scorer for the team.

Unfortunately, the Stars had a forgettable campaign, finishing at the bottom of the table with just two wins in ten matches.



Uma Chetry

Before the WBBL, Bhatia had shown promise in the three-match ODI series against New Zealand at home, scoring 84 runs in three innings. Although she was part of India's T20 World Cup squad earlier this year, she did not get a game, making her absence in the upcoming series even more poignant.

The ODI series against Australia, comprising three matches, is set to begin at the Allan Border Field

in Brisbane tomorrow, with the second game scheduled at the same venue on December 8.

The final clash will take place at the iconic WACA Ground in Perth on December 11.

India will hope that Chetry's attacking prowess, as demonstrated in domestic cricket, can help fill the void left by Bhatia. With a blend of experienced players and promising talents, the team is eager to test its mettle against the formidable Australians.

India Women squad for Australia ODIs

Harmanpreet Kaur (captain), Smriti Mandhana (vice-captain), Priya Punia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Richa Ghosh (wicket-keeper), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Radha Yadav, Titas Sadhu, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, Saima Thakor, Uma Chetry (wicketkeeper).

Kemp recovering with 2025 plan for Ashes

– As England gears up for a pivotal year in women's cricket, Freya Kemp's recovery is being monitored with hopes she can bolster next year's Ashes campaign.

Freya Kemp's potential participation in the Women's Ashes early next year remains on the cards, according to England captain Heather Knight.

Kemp returned home early from the South Africa tour to manage her recovery from a long-term back injury, but her withdrawal is being framed as a precaution rather than a setback.

Kemp showcased her talent in the T20I series in South Africa, claiming two wickets with her left-arm seam and delivering her full quota of overs in England's commanding nine-wicket win in Centurion last month. Her ability to perform at full capacity was seen as a promising sign following two stress fractures in her back over recent years, the first of which kept her from bowling competitively for over a year.



Freya Kemp

"It wasn't originally part of the plan. We were hoping to have her available for all three formats," Knight said. "But with her history of back injuries, she's someone we have to manage carefully and really look after."

Knight expressed disappointment at Kemp's early departure, praising her presence in the squad and potential as a future star.

"We're gutted to lose her. She's a great person to have around the group and a hugely exciting prospect. But the right thing for Freya was to go home, assess her back, and hopefully build towards those

Ashes," she said.

Knight remains optimistic about Kemp's readiness for the Ashes, acknowledging the challenges of managing stress fractures.

"It's a tricky one. You have to be careful with loads, but the fact she played all three T20Is is a good sign. The decision to send her home was based on ensuring she wasn't rushed into the one-dayers or the Test match," she said.

Cricket Schedule

(Matches ALL TIMES LOCAL)

December 4, 2024

Bangladesh tour of WI, 2024
West Indies vs Bangladesh, 2nd Test, Day 5, Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica, 10:00 AM

December 5, 2024

Pakistan tour of Zimbabwe, 2024
Zim. vs Pakistan, 3rd T20I, Queens Sports Club, Bulawayo, 1:30 PM
Sri Lanka tour of South Africa, 2024
SA vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Test, Day 1, St George's Park, Gqeberha, 10:30 AM

December 6, 2024

India tour of Australia, 2024-2025
Australia vs India, 2nd Test, Day 1, Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, 2:30 PM
Sri Lanka tour of South Africa, 2024
SA vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Test, Day 2, St George's Park, Gqeberha, 10:30 AM
England tour of New Zealand, 2024
NZ vs England, 2nd Test, Day 1, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM

December 7, 2024

India tour of Australia, 2024-2025
Australia vs India, 2nd Test, Day 2, Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, 2:30 PM
Sri Lanka tour of South Africa, 2024
SA vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Test, Day 3, St George's Park, Gqeberha, 10:30 AM
England tour of New Zealand, 2024
NZ vs England, 2nd Test, Day 2, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM

December 8, 2024

India tour of Australia, 2024-2025
Australia vs India, 2nd Test, Day 3, Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, 2:30 PM
Sri Lanka tour of South Africa, 2024
SA vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Test, Day 4, St George's Park, Gqeberha, 10:30 AM
Bangladesh tour of WI, 2024

WI vs Bangladesh, 1st ODI, Warner Park, Basseterre, St Kitts, 9:30 AM
England tour of New Zealand, 2024
NZ vs England, 2nd Test, Day 3, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM

December 9, 2024

Sri Lanka tour of South Africa, 2024
SA vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Test, Day 5, St George's Park, Gqeberha, 10:30 AM
England tour of New Zealand, 2024
NZ vs England, 2nd Test, Day 4, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM
India tour of Australia, 2024-2025
Australia vs India, 2nd Test, Day 4, Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, 2:30 PM

December 10, 2024

Pakistan tour of SA, 2024-2025
South Africa vs Pakistan, 1st T20I, Kingsmead, Durban, 6:00 PM
India tour of Australia, 2024-2025
Australia vs India, 2nd Test, Day 5, Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, 2:30 PM
Bangladesh tour of WI, 2024
WI vs Bangladesh, 2nd ODI, Warner Park, Basseterre, St Kitts, 9:30 AM
England tour of New Zealand, 2024
NZ vs England, 2nd Test, Day 5, Basin Reserve, Wellington, 11:00 AM

December 11, 2024

Afghanistan tour Zim., 2024-2025
Zimbabwe vs Afghanistan, 1st T20I, Harare Sports Club, Harare, 1:30 PM

December 12, 2024

Bangladesh tour of WI, 2024
WI vs Bangladesh, 3rd ODI, Warner Park, Basseterre, St Kitts, 9:30 AM

December 13, 2024

Pakistan tour of SA, 2024-2025
South Africa vs Pakistan, 2nd T20I, SuperSport Park, Centurion, 6:00 PM.

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Family Restaurant & Bar

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R.S.V.P. Your Child Name, Gender & Age
By November 25 2024
jollymusician1@hotmail.com / epiccarnival@gmail.com
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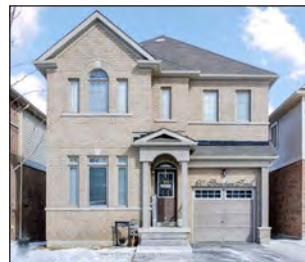
Mississauga For Sale \$740,000

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



Beeton For Sale \$1,139,000

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



Pickering Condo For Rent \$2,800

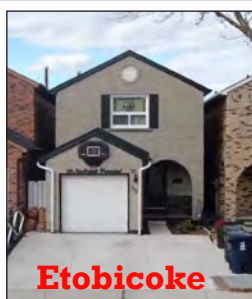
Location! Location! Location! Step into the world of modern elegance with this exquisite 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom home for lease in one of Pickering's new vibrant neighbourhoods. This unit boasts an updated, open-concept living space, perfect for entertaining and relaxation. The kitchen shines with stainless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



For Sale \$999,900

Family Friendly
Neighbourhood,
Walking
Distance
To Schools
& Parks.

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



Etobicoke

Ajax For Sale \$949,000

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



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

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




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CityPointe Heights starting @ High 400s

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



Essa For Lease \$2,995

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



LEASED

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

\$949,000

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

Narrative Condos

**STARTING
FROM LOW \$300s**

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


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