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Events Galore: Our Community Is Thriving!



The St Vincent and the Grenadines Association held its fund-raising gala on October 28. In photo are former Consul General for Grenada, Dawn Francois (at left), and Caribbean Airlines' Nazie Mohammed



The Caribbean Children Foundation held its 23rd anniversary gala on October 28 that saw a sold-out turnout from our thriving community. In photo are Jay Brijpaul (left) with Anjie Brijpaul



The Carican group of writers launched two books on November 5 at Scarborough's Tropical Nights Restaurant. In photo are Harry Persaud (left to right), Jiantee Jagessar, and Ken Ramphal

Diaspora marks Diwali, Hindu Heritage Month

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto - A Diwali celebration was held in Ottawa that saw the raising of a flag with the sacred Aum at Parliament Hill on November 5.

Organised by Member of Parliament for Nepean, Chandra Arya, the Diwali event was part of the wider, national celebration of Hindu Heritage Month, which is in its second year of observance, and is taking place during November.

Following the celebration, Arya posted to Facebook saying the event at Parliament Hill saw a "[great] turnout with participants from Ottawa, Greater Toronto Area, Montréal, and many other places".

Adding that the event was supported by 67 Hindu and Indo-Canadian organisations across Canada, Arya extended his "sincere thanks" to all those who attended, and to the volunteers and artistes who delivered "excellent cultural performances".

Meanwhile, here in the GTA, as our community prepares for the upcoming celebration of Diwali on November 12, greetings have been extended to the diaspora by both the Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana Consulates for the auspicious occasion.



Chandra Arya



Ramsubagh-Mannette



Mani Singh

In a statement to *Indo-Caribbean World*, Acting Consul General at the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate General, Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette said: "...I would like to extend [Diwali] greetings to the readers of *Indo-Caribbean World*. [Diwali] is that celebration of the awakening and awareness of the inner light. The light, within us all, can remove all obstacles, all darkness, and all ignorance."

Ramsubagh-Mannette also declared, "The Festival of [Diwali] has been able to unite the world. Let it be a reminder to all of us that we too should unite for a better Trinidad and Tobago, and become lights to others in our various circles. [Shubh Diwali] to all those who embrace the universal message of [Diwali] - that light will always conquer darkness and good will overcome evil!"

And in a statement from the Guyana Consulate, Honorary Consul Mani Singh said, "Diwali is espe-

cially significant and necessary today, in our troubled world, where there is so much darkness in the form of inequality, discrimination, and social and economic injustice, and, coupled with hate, violence and war. May the light of Diwali remove the darkness from everywhere around the world."

It was also noted that Diwali 2023 is taking place during Hindu Heritage Month. And as Arya remarked earlier this week, such an auspicious occurrence has given celebrations an "added pleasure this year".

The celebration of Hindu Heritage Month now

See Page 5: Hindu Heritage Month



Aum on Parliament Hill

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The Caribbean community was in full and celebratory flight late last month when the Guyana Festival Committee, with the Guyana Consulate General, held its 57th Independence Gala dinner in Etobicoke on October 21. Also hosting a similar celebratory event was the St Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto, under the auspices of the St Vincent and the Grenadines Consulate General, which held its 44th Independence fund-raiser on October 28 in Scarborough. Attending the sold-out Guyana event were (top photo, right) Victor Yacoob (left to right), Malcolm Cho-Kee, Caribbean Airlines' Nazie Mohammed, and Joe Jaglal. In bottom right photo is Director, Canadian Guyana Chamber of Commerce, Winston Kassim (at left), with guests. In the photo at left, also attending the St Vincent and the Grenadines fund-raiser was Nazie Mohammed from Caribbean Airlines, Toronto, which was a sponsor at the similarly sold-out event.

Photos by Romeo Kaseram

Shine the light of Diwali on a dialysis patient

Toronto – With preparations underway in the diaspora for the upcoming celebration of Diwali, Vishnu Mandir and Global Care Outreach have extended greetings to the community on this auspicious celebration.

At the same time, it is also sending out the reminder that fund-raising for the recently concluded TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon will continue until November 13.

As Vishnu Mandir volunteer and Marathon Coordinator Roy Doobay said last week, “We extend Diwali greetings to our

diaspora; and at the same time, we are sending out the reminder that Diwali is also a time to shine the light of giving on those who need dialysis intervention in Guyana.”

Working with McMaster University’s Faculty of Health, Guyana Dialysis & Eye Clinics provides vital support for those with kidney failure and low vision to live longer, healthier and better lives in its medical clinics in Guyana.

Funds go to whoever needs it most, regardless of race, age, religion, or gender. [Click here to visit TWM’s donation site.](#)

T&T entertainer in TO for Unforgettable Parang

Toronto – Trinidad and Tobago entertainer and calypsonian, Edwin Ayoung, more familiarly known as Crazy, will be featured at an Unforgettable Parang Show, which takes place on November 18 at the Mirage Banquet Hall, 1917 Albion Road, Etobicoke.

The event is being put on by GO Events, Stagefront Events, and SKF The Champ.

Attendees who bring a non-perishable food item, or an unwrapped toy for the Toy & Food Drive, will be eligible to win

a door prize. All proceeds from this effort will be donated to CP24 Christmas Wish, and local charities.

Along with Crazy will be a few live bands, Maestre & Friends, LVL Exodus, FTR Stefan Jaxx, with music by DJs Tricky, Flexsonic, JRG, Stutta, and Icon.

Tickets for this event are available at Radica’s Hot & Spicy, Caribbean Flavors, Dreamz Restaurant, and other Caribbean locations.

Call 416-873-8695 or 416-319-2727 for more information.




Bharat Sevashram Sangha Canada Hindu Heritage Inc recently observed Shardiya Navratri, the event taking place during the middle of last month. In a series of observances, Pranav’s devotees engaged in devotional sessions of prayers and worship for nine days. In photo, Pranav’s esteemed leader, Swami Bhajanananda (seated at left), leads devotees in prayer during one of the Navratri sessions. Photo by Ramesh Ramkalawan

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TCCF’s anniversary gala

Toronto – The Caribbean Children Foundation celebrated its 23rd anniversary angel gala to a packed Woodbine Banquet Hall in Etobicoke on October 28.

In what was yet another sold-out event, the evening saw widespread support from the community, and many others, in what TCCF’s president, Jay Brijpaul, has described as the interlocking of moving parts that are philanthropy and charity working together to bring medical support to children in need.

With support from the community, and the work of its committed and dedicated team of volunteers, the TCCF continues to successfully intervene in the lives of many critically ill children in the Caribbean.

Many of children benefiting from the good work by the TCCF are from very poor families that cannot afford critical care in their home countries. Among their life-challenging issues are paediatric cancer and spinal afflictions. As the TCCF has noted, all funds go directly to its recipients; there are no administrative fees, with total accountability and transparency.

In photos, attendees at the gala having a good time; at top, centre, are Jay Brijpaul and Anjie Brijpaul.



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Mani Singh and Tej Singh would like to extend a Happy Diwali to all our clients, family members, and friends. We also wish you all a safe and enjoyable Diwali celebration

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Mulisius Joe brushes up on her painting



Hard at work on the Radcliff home in Clarendon

Local 27, FFTP working to better lives in Jamaica

Toronto – Since its inception, the charity Food for The Poor has built over 36,000 houses in Jamaica. As the group notes, its work is motivated by faith in God in helping those in desperate need, mostly in 17 countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

Working with volunteers, FFTP provides food, secure housing, clean water, healthcare, emergency relief, micro-enterprise projects, and education opportunities, and in so doing, gives those in extreme poverty a chance for a better future.

FFTP's latest build took place late last month in Chapleton, Clarendon, Jamaica. It was a humanitarian effort in collaboration with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Carpenters Local 27, and other volunteers.

Among the Local 27 representatives that travelled to Clarendon were EDI Director, Chris Campbell, along with members Mulisius Joe, Rokhaya Gueye, Clifton Donegal, and Robert Mitchell. Also accompanying the group was Ivan Dawns, business representative with the International Union of Painters & Allied Trades, other union representatives, and volunteers.

One of the key builds undertaken was a residence for Radcliff, a 77-year old single father from Chapleton, Clarendon. He is father to a 19-year-old daughter Joda, and grandfather to three-month old Azaria.

As Local 27's Donegal noted, "[At] Carpenters Local 27 we strongly believe in community, whether local or international, and we especially believe in equity within the community. This is why the EDI Committee of Carpenters Local 27, in collaboration with partners like FFTP, CRC, FFTP, and individual sponsors, [took] this opportunity to help a less fortunate family by building a house for this family in Chapleton, Clarendon."

Donegal also noted that builds such as the one at Clarendon were not new to Local 27's humanitarian outreach.

"We have collaborated with organisations like Helping Hands Canada to build a basic school in Trelawny; Habitat for Humanity under the auspices of President Jimmy and Mrs Carter, building homes in places like Haiti, [in the] US, and Canada," he said.

And it is Local 27's aim to continue in helping unfortunate families with future builds, he declared, adding, "this is what a world with equity should look like".



Campbell presents the house keys to Radcliff



Local 27, volunteers building homes and goodwill



A section of the audience at Parliament Hill on November 5. Facebook photo

Hindu Heritage Month a 'new era'

From Page 1

takes place throughout Canada in November each year following adoption by the Canadian Parliament in 2022 of a motion that was presented by Arya. Adoption meant the start of "a new era" for Hindu Canadians, he said earlier this month.

Arya made this statement during an address delivered to Parliament on November 1 marking the start of the second year of Hindu Heritage Month celebrations.

In his address, Arya noted that "Hindu Heritage Month provides us the opportunity to recognise, preserve, celebrate, and promote our culture and heritage."

Stating that Hindus in Canada number close to one million, he noted that geographical points of origin include South Asia, and "several countries in Africa and the Caribbean, and indeed from all across the world".

"We all have come to our new home, Canada," he declared.

Additionally, "It is important for us to preserve our Hindu culture and heritage in Canada for our future generations."

November 1 also saw a statement being made by Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Kamal Khara.

As she noted, during Hindu Heritage Month Canada honours "the invaluable contributions of Hindu communities across the country, and celebrates the richness of their cultures and languages".

She added, "In Canada, Hindus have been an integral part of Canadian society since 1903. Over the past 120 years, Hindu communities have flourished and grown immensely. They have become increasingly active and prolific, leaving their mark on a number of aspects of Canadian society, from medicine and cutting-edge technology to the arts and thriving businesses."

Also, "As Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, I want to acknowledge the contributions that Hindu communities across the country have made to our social fabric. In Canada, diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice; the two together are what make our country strong. We will always stand up to discrimination and hatred and choose justice and unity."

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Editorial

Hindu Heritage Month

We reproduce below the statement delivered on November 1 by MP Chandra Arya on the celebration of Hindu Heritage Month, which is now taking place for its second year throughout November in Canada.

Arya initiated a private member's motion in the House of Commons in May last year that now sees each November being nationally recognised as Hindu Heritage Month.

His motion was later unanimously passed in the House of Commons on September 29, 2022.

Our community recognises with gratitude that among the many members that seconded the motion was our own Scarborough North's MP Shaun Chen.

As the motion's text declared, "... in the opinion of the House, the government should recognise the contributions that Hindu Canadians have made to the socio-economic development of Canada, and their services to the Canadian society, the richness of Hindu Heritage and its vast contribution to the world of arts and science, astronomy to medicine, and its culture and traditions and the importance of educating and reflecting upon it for our future generations in Canada by declaring November, every year, Hindu Heritage Month."

In his statement on Hindu Heritage Month on November 1, 2023, Arya said:

"Welcome to November – the Hindu Heritage Month in Canada.

"Last year, with the adoption of my motion in the Canadian parliament, a new era began for Hindu Canadians.

"Hindu Heritage month provides us the opportunity to recognise, preserve, celebrate and promote our culture and heritage.

"Hindus are close to one million strong in Canada. We have come to this wonderful country from all across the world.

"We have come from all countries in South Asia, several countries in Africa and [the] Caribbean, and indeed from all across the world.

"We all have come to our new home, Canada.

"It is important for us to preserve our Hindu culture and heritage in Canada for our future generations.

"Hindu Canadians are the most peaceful, highly educated, and hardworking community, and hence a successful community.

"We have significantly contributed and continue to do so for the socio-economic development of Canada.

"We have immensely enriched Canada's multicultural fabric.

"Hindus have an ancient, magnificent, and robust inheritance, which they have received from numerous sources: our wisdom traditions, our religious rites and rituals, our literature, the many arts and crafts, our elders, our fairs and festivals, and above all from the many *samskaras* or sacraments in our home.

"That heritage not only gives us a *drishti* or world view, but it defines our *purusharthas* or aims of life and equally defines our *sanskriti* or culture.

"In short, the Hindu heritage defines our *dharma*.

"The Hindu heritage does not restrict itself to matters religious, but we have a strong aesthetic foundation which leads to a celebration of *saundarya*, or what is beautiful.

"We celebrate the beautiful in our lived lives through stories and paintings, song and dance, colour and cuisine, festivals and family events.

"Though the ancient Hindu heritage is alive and growing, it freely adapts to any society or civilisation, and also gives to whoever it comes in contact with.

"So, for us Hindu-Canadians, Canada is a comforting and embracing home away from home.

"So, let us all celebrate and share our rich culture and heritage this Hindu Heritage Month."

It is auspicious that our community's celebration of Diwali this year is also being marked during Hindu Heritage Month. As we take this opportunity to thank Arya for his good work, at the same time we extend Happy Diwali greetings to our diaspora, and to all of Canada.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of this publication.
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Diwali shone a light on need for govt reform

First of Two Parts

The melancholy from earlier sunsets has arrived. Dark evenings prevail across Canada as we inch closer to the coldness of winter. However, this changeover of the seasons is an appropriate setting for Diwali – the festival of lights!

Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists across the world will soon celebrate the triumph of good over evil. Another season, Diwali, is now upon us.

This is a joyful time, with its bright *diyas* and holiday lights, family gatherings and *pujas*; and of course, tasty foods and sweet treats.

Despite the darkness outside, this very special observance will light up our homes within.

For many, Diwali is an auspicious period, a time to look forward and pray for a brighter future. The occasion is also a time of reflection and appreciation of what we have and what we accomplished.

This Diwali is the first anniversary of the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association's 'Respect Diwali' campaign. As we reflect during this period, I personally contemplate the important work we achieved through this campaign, and the lessons that were learned.

Last year, Ontario's municipal elections were held on Monday, October 24. The date is prescribed by the Municipal Elections Act, which states that "[voting] day in a regular election is the fourth Monday in October".

However, this was also the date set for Diwali 2022.

Working in politics for close to 20 years, I immediately identified that this would be an issue.

Diwali is typically observed in the evening, and coincides with the typical period when voters go to cast ballots on Election Day, which is usually after work.

My immediate reaction was that I knew I preferred to be with my family on that evening, and that it would preclude me from actively voting on Election Day; that I would not be able to be involved with campaign activities in support of a preferred candidate.

This dilemma would not be unique to me, as many Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists in Ontario would also prefer to be in their homes, temples, mandirs, or gurdwaras, holding gatherings and conducting prayer services. The option of standing in line to vote would be far less appealing.

For this reason, the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association provided a recommendation to the provincial government to amend the election date. A simple ask that would only need a legislative amendment for this instance.

Previously working in a legislative office at Queen's Park, and communicating with Members of Provincial Parliament on this issue, I knew firsthand that it would be feasible.

A precedent was already in place: in 2007 the Ontario government moved the preset election date from October 4 to October 10 because of a conflict with the Jewish holiday of *Shemini Atzeret*, in which some members of the Orthodox



Ryan Singh

Jewish community would be unable to vote.

When the original amendment was proposed for a week later to October 11, the former Chief Election Officer, John Hollins, was concerned it could infringe on the then-upcoming *Eid al-Fitr* holiday, which marked the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and that date was purposely avoided as well.

In their wisdom, the government opted to not only move the date of the election, but they switched it from the prescribed Thursday (legislated date for provincial election in Ontario) to a Wednesday.

This was precedent-setting, as the provincial government opted to accommodate Jewish and Muslim Ontarians, ensuring that there would be reduced limitations for citizens to vote.

So why couldn't the current provincial government not provide similar foresight and a willingness to ensure there were limited barriers for the approximately one million South Asians, Indo-Caribbean, and Indo-diasporic citizens to vote on election day? We simply will never know.

Despite the popularity of our petition, ongoing advocacy, and national media coverage, the government opted not to even consider changing the date.

Although we weren't successful in our efforts, we demonstrated that our community would speak up on issues impacting us, and that we should not be treated as second-class citizens. Access to democracy, including no barriers to voting on Election Day, are an essential part of being Canadian.

A common response that we should opt to use advance polls not only was admission there were limitations caused by the conflicting date, but it also suggested we should not have the entirety of the campaign period to make informed decisions about whom we were voting for in the election.

Briefly, many voters should hear from candidates, understand the issues, and receive all the appropriate information to make an informed choice. This is especially critical in a municipal election, where voters are not voting for political parties or their leaders, but instead are selecting local candidates for multiple offices, such as mayor, councillor, and school board trustees.

Simply suggesting that Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists should vote in the advance polls subjected us to a shortened electoral period. It was a recommendation that immediately segregated the community from our peers in other communities. This is why we remained steadfast that the best solution would be to amend the date of the election.

Our efforts to change the election date were not successful. However, the work we did laid the foundation for a discussion that was long overdue. While Diwali brings light into our homes, at the same time it also brought light to a prevailing issue in Ontario.

Moving forward, we must take the right steps to ensure that no one voter should be conflicted with major religious or cultural observances, and their right to vote.

Run from chores when Ma tucked in her 'ghanghari'!

Diwali was a time of year when my grandmother rolled up her sleeves, and in the words of family members who still speak her language, and whenever we gather to recall the old days and its ways via our nostalgic lens, "*When Ma also hitched up that ghanghari, wuk dun start!!*"

Lise Winer, in her *Dictionary of the English/Creole of Trinidad & Tobago: On Historical Principles*, describes a *ghangri*, also, *ghangra*, *gangre*, or *ghanghri*, as a traditional Indian woman's long skirt with pleats; it gathered at the waist with a drawstring, and in my grandmother's case, was tied together at the side with an easy slipknot.

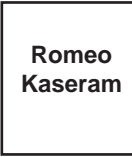
Winer also tells us via a quoted source, that on the reverse journey across the *kala pani*, this skirt was generally found in the north of India, in Punjab, and parts of the United Provinces.

I recall Ma's *ghanghari* for its voluminous folds, within which I would try to unsuccessfully hide from the cruel questions from adults, all of whom were gossips and knowledgeable about my early troubles in life; and so, instead of offering succour, they chose to needle Ma with seemingly playful jabs, then sat back and savoured her discomfort.

While Ma's *ghanghari* did not suffice to hide a cruelly assailed child, today I note that my youthful impulse to reflexively seek out protection from my petite but mighty protector, was particularly reliant on her indiscriminating mouth, a no-holds-barred propensity for colourful language, and her admirable and extensive vocabulary, which was delivered in fluent Hindi.

Perhaps, thankfully, while I don't speak Hindi, no doubt I would have been made to unlearn via spousal insistence that acquired ability on how to similarly wield Ma's broad brushstrokes, with which she swept through our entire village population using wide, encompassing, but highly-detailed swaths.

"Who didn't pass in the rush, well, Ma forget," a surviving,



sagely relative maintains in the subjunctive today.

Now looking back at these moments, in what is becoming a lengthening tunnel of light down the perspective of many decades, perhaps my reflex to seek out shelter among the folds of her *ghanghari* from the lightning storms deployed by mischievous adult tongues, was somewhat to do with refuge, but more to do with my grandmother grasping her skirt and spreading it outwards whenever I was attacked.

Perhaps it was Ma deploying that defensive technique in the wild where plumage is spread outwards to falsely extend body size to confuse a predator.

And there is this interpretation: extending her skirt outwards was a mother hen's reflex; it was a protective uplift of the wings and feathers inviting her chick to shelter from an inclement, and insensitive, dangerous world.

Perhaps a starting point to unpack the compression of these behaviours across the decades is a recent insight I had, which in hindsight, came with a revelation from family members, who back then, having read the tea leaves, knew early o'clock that the positioning of my grandmother's clothes were indicators of what was coming down the pipeline in our household.

"When Ma roll up her sleeves, and tuck in that *ghanghari*, we all scatter like cockroaches in a fowl coop!"

So revealed that sagely relative; and right away I understood, after decades of quiet observation, why this relative always disappears whenever it comes around to the family ponying-up to pay a restaurant bill.

The scamper of relatives meant I was the last child left standing, a tiny pair of hands that helped Ma *leelay* the floors and the fireside; together, we swept, washed walls, and bonded for life.

Come Diwali, I recall Ma's hard life, and her industry; and I thank her for being a haven, and for the little *diya* she lit in me.

Sahota announces \$114M housing investment for Brampton

Brampton – The government announced a housing investment of \$114 million through the Housing Accelerator Fund late last month in a move that is aimed at fast tracking over 3,150 new housing units over the next three years.

The announcement was made by MP Ruby Sahota alongside the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Housing Minister Sean Fraser, and fellow Liberal colleagues.

The work will help the construction of more than 24,000 homes over the next decade, and help meet the demand in Brampton, the government stated in a release.

“We need to build more homes, faster,” said Trudeau.

He added, “That means working with Mayors that want to cut red tape and help change the way we build homes in this country. It is what [the] announcement in Brampton is all about. By investing in programs like the Housing Accelerator Fund, we’re building the foundation for a more stable, affordable, and prosperous life for millions of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.”

With a rapidly increasing population growth rate, the City of Brampton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada, and this agreement aims to eliminate barriers to build more affordable homes in Brampton and faster.

The investment will benefit hundreds of middle-class families in Brampton who are facing expensive housing costs by providing them with affordable rental housing units by May 2024, which is the anticipated completion date.

“Federal initiatives like the Housing Accelerator fund are crucial to encourage collaboration among municipalities to find innovative solutions to faster and more affordable housing,” Sahota said.

She added, “This is a significant investment for Brampton residents, and hundreds of middle-class families will benefit from this investment. We are committed to making life more affordable for Canadians, and that begins with innovative housing solutions like this one.”



Sahota (second from left) with Trudeau (centre), Fraser second from right, and Brampton Mayor Brown on the right with the Federal Brampton Caucus



Sahota (third from right) with Trudeau (third from left), Brown at centre, Fraser at right, and members of the Federal Brampton Caucus

The funding will allow for high-density development near the city’s urban centres, boulevards, and major public transit stations. Brampton has also committed to permitting four residential units and four storeys within 800 metres of transit,

which covers the vast majority of the city.

These initiatives are going to significantly improve the way housing is built in one of Canada’s fastest growing municipalities.

Said Brampton’s Mayor, Patrick Brown: “The City of Brampton is a committed partner in the solution for more affordable housing for residents. We are thankful for the government of Canada’s continued partnership and investment in our community, including [the] announcement of \$114 million through the Housing Accelerator Fund with a goal of creating more than 24,000 homes over the next decade, through the City’s new Official Plan, Housing Strategy and Action Plan, and Municipal Housing Pledge.”

Additionally, “This growth will be supported sustainably and strategically, focusing on higher-density development near transit corridors to ensure that while we’re meeting the needs of residents, we’re also reducing barriers to the development of housing in key areas of the City further spurring new incentive programs for affordable housing.”

The Housing Accelerator Fund is helping cut red tape and fast track the construction of at least 100,000 new homes for Canadians across the country

By providing this funding, local municipalities are encouraged to think ambitiously, which could include accelerating project time-lines, allowing increased housing density, and encouraging affordable housing units to fill major housing gaps.

According to the release, the government of Canada is making life more affordable for Canadians – and housing is key to that work.

It added, “Our plan to double the rate of housing construction over the next decade will help build the housing supply we need. We will continue to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to keep building more homes for Canadians, faster, and make life more affordable.”



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Chandra Arya

Congrats ICW on Ottawa recognition

Dear Editor,
On behalf of our team at Canadian Superbilt Shutters and John's Speciality Blinds, we extend our most heartfelt congratulations to *Indo-Caribbean World* on its prestigious recognition by **MP Chandra Arya in the House of Commons on October 3.**

This recognition honours *ICW's* commitment to educating our diaspora and the community at large in numerous categories, including current affairs, sports, and politics.

ICW's commitment to integrity and quality

Time for all Guyanese to stand as one

Dear Editor
As Guyanese people we do have our differences. Yet, through thick and thin, we have managed to not only survive, but to also be on the verge of dramatic forward movement.

Whatever these 83,000 square miles have given us, we have made the most out of it. This is despite centuries of conquest, slavery, Indentureship, colonial rule, imperial interference, the toxic dramas of the Cold War, and the gyrating vicissitudes of a world economic order defined by structural inequality between the North and South.

These 83,000 square miles are not only the material source of all we are as a people, but also as the symbolic referent of ancestral courage, fortitude, national unity, and a future that will be the product of our own choosing.

Nowhere does this apply more than to the great Guyanese citizens of Morawhanna, Mabaruma, Juanita, Arakaka, Port Kaituma, Muruwawe Village, Awarabati, Paruima Mission, Baramita, Arau Village, Arawi, and Kikan.

And given the rapacious territorial greed of Venezuelan leader, Nicolás Maduro, and his cohort of generals and politicians that are responsible for a failed State, the people of the Essequibo Coast from Hackney, Charity, Dartmouth, Anna Regina, Queenstown, and all the way down to Supenaam, are also resolved to stand strong against the Bolivarian aggression.

So are the folks of Wakenaam, Hogg Island, Leguan, and then across the massive mouth of the Essequibo River to Parika, and down to the Boeraserie Creek.

I was up the Pomeroon River at Wakapou last month, and can tell you that the people of the hinterland areas are proud of their Guyanese heritage and history. They want nothing to do with the failed State that is being run by Maduro and his generals.

What the people of Guyana should know is that despite their massive oil reserves, Maduro, Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, and president of the National Assembly Jorge Rodríguez, are bent on using Essequibo, which is integral and indivisible part of Guyana, as a political scapegoat for electoral reasons.

of news has encouraged me to advertise on its front page for over 25 years and going.

Your character traits including determination, high work ethics, as well as kindness, compassion and humility have made it a pleasure to work with you throughout these years.

What a great recognition of *ICW's* steadfast dedication to build up this small publication to its current status of excellence and inclusiveness.

Congratulations again!
John Persaud, Toronto, via email.

Maduro's United Socialist Party of Venezuela has mismanaged his country's economic and political affairs so badly that now he must rely on creating a foreign enemy to help him survive. The Opposition parties in Venezuela have also caved in to territorial bullying.

Venezuela has 300 billion barrels of proven oil reserves. This is against Guyana's 11 billion barrels. Yet Maduro, Vice President Rodríguez, and president of the National Assembly Jorge Rodríguez are so "Big Eye" that they want ours.



Mark Phillips

The sad thing is that despite having 30 times our reserves, we are producing more oil than Venezuela. Why is that so? The answer is simple – Maduro, Vice President Rodríguez, and Jorge Rodríguez are world-class incompetents who spent decades promising things to the Venezuelan people, but failing to deliver. Even worse, what they did give away, they could not afford.

The Bolivarian Revolution has been run into the ground by this trio who believe that ideology and free giveaways can substitute for an economy based on solid management of macro-economic fundamentals.

The Bolivarian Revolution has no one remotely competent to our own President Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Prime Minister Mark Phillips, Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, or Senior Minister in the Office of the President Responsible for Finance, Ashni Singh.

These four stalwarts, along with a superbly qualified Cabinet, would make Venezuela into an economic miracle if they had access to 300 billion barrels of oil!

[Now is...] the time for Guyanese from across the country to stand together against Venezuelan aggression. This includes the dozens of critics who live off division and distrust, and who might be tempted to use Venezuela's drive for territorial robbery for their own domestic political gains.

To date, we have managed to stand as one. Let us consolidate this conjuncture of threat against our national sovereignty to forge a way forward.

Let us defend Guyana from Morawhanna to the Boeraserie, and against all enemies, domestic, and foreign.

Dr Randy Persaud, Guyana, via email.

T&T must take road to sustainability

Dear Editor,
What distinguishes developed nations from Trinidad and Tobago in terms of sustainability is the fundamental context within which they operate. Developed countries have a clear and integrated commitment to sustainability as an intrinsic part of their societal fabric.

Whenever I visit developed nations, I can't help but reflect on the beauty of Trinidad and Tobago and feel a profound sadness about our limited focus on sustainability. In developed countries, sustainability initiatives are conspicuous, ranging from immaculate streets to responsible waste management and eco-friendly practices. Without transformative changes, our islands' natural beauty will continue to wane.

One of the most evident indicators of sustainability in developed nations is the cleanliness of their streets and public spaces. The absence of litter and debris reflects not only a dedication to maintaining a clean and healthy environment, but also the effectiveness of education systems in raising awareness about the perils of poor hygiene. The simple presence of strategically located garbage and recycling bins that are routinely emptied encourages citizens to dispose of waste responsibly.

In stark contrast, many parts of Trinidad and Tobago lack recycling bins, and the importance of recycling is frequently underestimated or even dismissed as an unnecessary burden. To compound matters, our largest supermarket

chain recently terminated plastic bottle collection sites in their stores.

Another stark contrast in sustainability is the use of plastic bags. In developed nations, single-use plastic bags are a rare sight, while our nation grapples with excessive plastic bag usage, which not only contaminates the environment, but also poses grave threats to wildlife and marine ecosystems. It is high time we acknowledge the dire consequences of such practices, and take action to reduce our reliance on disposable plastics.

The gap between our nation and the developed world in terms of sustainability is a cause for concern, necessitating immediate action. Achievable goals such as clean streets, responsible waste management, and reduced plastic use lie before us.

The key lies in adopting a clear sense of purpose and understanding the consequences of our actions.


Until our leadership wholeheartedly commits to making sustainability accessible and transparent, we will continue to confront challenges where rules are flouted, and substantive progress remains elusive.

The time has come for a comprehensive reset: a journey toward a more sustainable and responsible future for our beloved nation. However, a transformative shift will not materialise under what can only be described as "Ketchup and Mustard leadership".

Dennise Demming, Trinidad and Tobago, via email.



Plastic pollution in T&T

**RE/GUYANA**

GUYANA PROPERTY MATTERS

Selling Property in Guyana

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Transforming agriculture in Guyana's oil-based economy

Guyana has been making concerted efforts to promote agriculture to counterbalance the dominance of its oil sector. So far, its success has been limited.

The government recognises that it cannot ignore the development of agriculture, which is not only the country's largest employer, but also provides much-needed food security for Guyana, as well as the Caribbean.

It is also recognised that oil is a depletable resource whose price is subject to the vagaries of the world market, whereas agriculture sustains the livelihood of a significant portion of the population, especially the rural poor. It is also a source of foreign income – a potential that has never been fully exploited.

The importance of developing agriculture was stressed at the recent Agri Investment Forum and Expo held in Georgetown from October 20 to October 22, where Guyana has been pushing agriculture in co-ordination with its Caribbean counterparts to achieve the region's goal of reducing agriculture imports by 25 percent by 2025.

When addressing the expo, Guyana's Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha said "the future of agriculture hinges on the critical importance of investments in the sector, which is the key to unlocking its vast potential".

He emphasised that the "forum represents not just a meeting of minds but a profound commitment to the future of agriculture in the Caribbean... a future that hinges on the critical importance of investment."

He added "investments in agriculture are investments in the very bedrock of our nations. They are the seed of growth [and] the fruit for innovation."

When addressing the expo, Vice President Bharat Jagdeo called on Caribbean leaders to channel significant investments into critical areas such as infrastructure, innovation, technology, and of equal importance, to enact supportive legislation and fiscal incentives for key players within the agricultural industry.

Jagdeo lamented the embarrassingly paltry sums allocated to the agriculture sector in individual Caribbean countries, which he said are insufficient to catapult agriculture into a flourishing and viable industry.

He emphasised that agriculture deserves fiscal policies and incentives that are on par with those enjoyed by thriving industries like tourism. He firmly believes that agriculture must receive comparable fiscal support, even though it does not contribute significantly to the region's GDP.

In a call to action, Jagdeo urged the implementation of vital laws and regulations, which are currently lacking, to create a conducive environment for the agriculture sector to prosper. He also called for international funding to counteract climate change.

Incidentally, Guyana has the greatest potential in agriculture amongst its Caribbean counterparts. The country also has the unexploited potential to become the food bowl of the Caribbean.

Putting aside Guyana's two largest traditional agricultural industries – rice and sugar, which is struggling – Guyana has only in recent years commenced making diligent efforts to support agriculture. It has in the past failed to exploit the opportunity to diversify the

agricultural base. The impact of a variety of small-scale initiatives is infinitesimal on the economy, although these initiatives provide fodder for the government to show that growth in the agriculture sector is surging.

The country's on-off focus on non-traditional agriculture for the past four decades has not benefitted from the level of commitment required to support its growth. In spite of sporadic efforts, production in non-traditional crops has on average been declining.

There is, therefore, no doubt that it makes strategic sense to emphasise non-traditional agriculture, but success will be dependent on the extent of the government's commitment, and the existence of a comprehensive plan to guide the sector's development. All that various governments have delivered in past years has been cheap commitments.

Past experience shows there has been weak integration of implementation efforts, resulting in sporadic ventures that have engendered limited success. In fact, over time there have been more failures than successes in a broad spectrum of agri-businesses, ranging from processing facilities to livestock development.

Although Guyana has the physical resources to ensure success in non-traditional agriculture and related agri-businesses, it would be prudent not to ignore the reasons for failure of similar ventures in the past.

For instance, consistency in the supply or output of the sectors have always been problematic. Crops tend to be affected by the vagaries of weather and diseases, which have led to manufacturing downtime, and consequently supply/demand shortfalls. This has had a negative impact on exports, whereby contractual supply arrangements were not fulfilled; as well as resulting in inefficient domestic plant operations, where they exist.

This problem has been compounded by scale of operations that has not allowed for sufficient output for exports or agro-processing. For example, in the case of agro-processing, plants have not had sufficient inputs to operate efficiently on a large scale.

It is also necessary to improve coordination of farm-to-factory supply, and establish a formal mechanism to ensure that processes put in place actually work. It is easy to argue that some mechanisms exist, but whether they work effectively remain questionable.

In addition, Guyanese have a preference for foreign goods, which ultimately limits the expansion of domestic industries. In as much as foreign imports can force local industries to be competitive, if local industries are not given some form of protection to develop as part of a feasible business strategy, they will not prosper.

One important aspect of the government's strategy that has not been emphasised is the potential to build around established industries – such as rice and sugar, taking into account the availability of inputs.

Evidently, backward and forward linkages between the base and satellite industries can provide a competitive advantage, and offer greater control over the growth of the offshoot of the traditional industries. Such a strategy would also be beneficial because the country would be able to maximise the use of its existing skills in established industries.

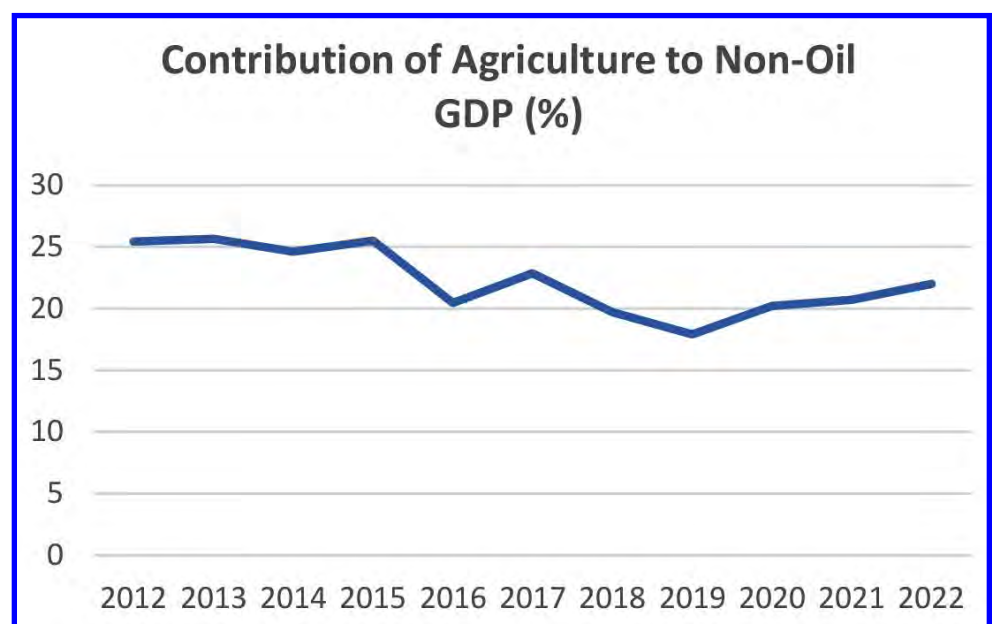
On the other hand, if the principal inputs for a specific target segment are imported, then control over output and cost of production can be restrictive – based on supply and prices of



Dwarka Lakhan



Zulfikar Mustapha



raw materials.

In recent years, foreign investors have been wooed to the agricultural sector, but interest has been lukewarm.

Arguably, in recent years the government has made some headway in these areas, but sustaining its achievements remains a challenge. Apparently, small successes have been dramatised, giving a false sense of success. For now, there needs to be a measurable, well-coordinated effort to support the diversification of the sector, and to track its success.

For instance, in his address to the expo Mustapha noted that the country is now experiencing unprecedented growth in the livestock sector, as well as in traditional crops including rice, sugar, fruits and vegetables, among others.

"For the first time in our country, we are witnessing a revolution in new crops. We have seen massive investments in corn and soya

production... Very shortly, bio-fortified rice will become a variety for farmers to plant. These are monumental achievements for us in the agriculture sector. That is the way we have been planning and moving this sector," he emphasised.

For now, under-supply of basic agricultural produce, high prices, and increasing food imports are all indicative of the limited success of agriculture. Plus, the sector's contribution to non-oil GDP growth has been volatile, and is still below what it was a decade ago.

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

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Diwali graphic: Creative-hat freepik

T&T MP meets with diaspora, speaks to collaboration, synergies

By Romeo Kaseram
LJI Reporter

Toronto – Collaboration and synergies with entities abroad were among the emergent themes that featured prominently in discussions that were held by Trinidad and Tobago's Opposition Member of Parliament Rushton Paray following an unofficial visit to Toronto last month.

Paray met with members of the Trinidad and Tobago diaspora during his visit. He also paid courtesy calls to Brampton's Mayor Patrick Brown, and to Vice President of Research & International, Dr Charmaine Dean, at the University of Waterloo.

Speaking with *Indo-Caribbean World*, Paray stated that among the immediate and notable takeaways from his extensive interactions in the GTA was how informed and plugged-in the diaspora was about events in the homeland.

"They are concerned about what is happening back in Trinidad and Tobago," he said.

As Paray stated, conversations with the diaspora about Trinidad and Tobago were frequently "interwoven" with expressions about its "gradual deterioration of infrastructure; there were also complaints about the lack of water, road, and crime".

Sifting the positives out of these commentaries, Paray declared that a takeaway from the discussions was how these voices of concern that were expressed abroad could be deployed for the benefit of the homeland.

These "diaspora voices contributing back to Trinidad and Tobago can open opportunities where a government can create interlocking conversations" for collaboration, and synergistic national growth and development, he said.

Paray also recalled the achievements of the People's Partnership during its administration of the government of Trinidad and Tobago. As he stated, then Trinidad and Tobago commanded "a space that was global; we had a robust economy; we were in a good regional and international space".

However, a comparative today with where Trinidad and Tobago has arrived reveals that the country has "collapsed down



Paray with Waterloo's Charmaine Dean



Paray with Mayor Patrick Brown



Nelisha Paray with diaspora members



Vishwesh Sharma (left) with the Parays

the ladder".

"With the change of government, we have lost eminence," he declared, adding, "As a nation, Trinidad and Tobago is not being vociferous enough."

It was a reference made within the context of some of the contemporary and major issues now facing Caricom. Prominent among the issue is the region being impacted by the foreboding and existential threats of climate change, decarbonisation, and a reduction of fossil fuel use.

As he noted, the region is being "asked to pay a share for an issue that we did not cause". He added, "With sound leadership, Caricom needs to be demanding compensation."

Paray also spoke to other significant issues being faced by the region, among them transnational crime, illicit drug trafficking, and illegal arms being imported into the Caribbean. And he noted with concern the ongoing deterioration of the politi-

cal, social, and economic conditions in Haiti, which he described as Caricom's "weakest link".

In what was an expression of lamentation, Paray also noted that there has been a decline in the quality of leadership from the present government of Trinidad and Tobago.

With a loss of ascendancy in Trinidad and Tobago's historical leadership within the region, he noted the vacuum was being filled by Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley, and Guyana's President, Dr Irfaan Ali.

Said Paray: "As a nation, Trinidad and Tobago is not being vociferous. We have lost our standing in the region, and our partners are looking elsewhere for that leadership."

In his meeting in Brampton with Brown, Paray said he acknowledged the substantial diasporic population from Trinidad and Tobago that is resident in Brampton and its surrounding communities.

At the same time, he underscored the importance of fostering close ties, and exploring shared interests between Brampton and Trinidad and Tobago. Talks also touched on potential opportunities for collaboration between Trinidad and Tobago and Brampton that included trade, economics, and cultural exchange.

Also, during his meeting with Dean, further collaboration and the potential for synergistic exchanges were explored in the strengthening of educational ties between Trinidad and Tobago and the University of Waterloo.

A Professor in the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science at the university, Dean is also a distinguished academic, with heritage links to Trinidad and Tobago.

In a release following their meeting, Paray stated discussions touched on "enhancing mutually beneficial relationships between [Trinidad and Tobago's] nationals and the diaspora community."

Among the critical topics explored were reinforcing parent and student support systems, and fostering stronger collaborations between Trinidad and Tobago's tertiary institutions and the University of Waterloo.

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Jamaican police officers on patrol in downtown Kingston

Jamaicans cite crime as major concern

Kingston – A majority of Jamaicans cite crime as a red flag for the nation's economic outlook, even as business leaders and consumers are confident in the economy's stability.

These were among the notable findings in the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Business & Consumer Indices for the third quarter of 2023. Released last week, the report was themed 'Business in a Crime-Free Environment', the *Jamaica Observer* reported.

"One of the key factors that is depressing the level of confidence that consumers have in the economy and amongst the business sector is the level of crime," stated pollster Don Anderson.

He is also chief executive officer of Market Research Services Limited, which conducted the poll and assessed the data.

The poll saw responses collected from 635 consumers, with input from over 100 firms across various sectors between June and September 2023.

In a comparative analysis of the third quarter of 2022 and 2023, the consumer confidence index dropped slightly to 159.9 points from 160.3 points, while business confidence improved slightly to 140 points, moving from 137 points.

"Nearly six out of every ten consumers interviewed, 58 percent cited crime as the number one problem facing Jamaica at this time," Anderson revealed.

Forty-three percent of all the businesses that were interviewed said crime and violence were the number one issue that needed to be addressed urgently. Also, a significant number of businesses believed that the crime situation would worsen over the next 12 months.

Sixty percent of consumers who cited crime as the top issue also felt the crime would get worse over the next 12 months, while 11 percent felt it would get better.

Among the key solutions outlined by consumers to address the issue of crime were 34 percent of consumers that suggested providing more jobs for young people; 30 percent wanted provisions of more programmes for the unemployed; and 29 percent recommended having more stringent penalties and fines for crimes.

Also, another 29 percent said measures were needed to clamp down on corruption; 27 percent said better-paying jobs be provided for youth; and 26 percent suggested a return to capital punishment.

Businesses also recommended better policing, more jobs for young people, more stringent penalties and fines for crimes, and a clampdown on corruption.

Consumers also cited unemployment, poverty, corruption, favouritism, and an unstable foreign exchange market as all contributing to the erosion of consumer confidence in the next 12 months.

Also, there was no movement in the number of consumers who believed business conditions would get better in 12 months. However, more

people felt business conditions would worsen in 12 months, or approximately 51.8 percent of consumers compared to 40.9 percent in 2022.

While the Consumer Confidence Index for current economic conditions witnessed a slight uptick, both current and expected job prospects showed a consistent downward trend.

Current job availability dropped by 3.1 percent, while expected job opportunities fell by 2.1 percent.

Expected job prospects also witnessed a decline from 35.2 percent in 2022 to 25.7 percent in the third quarter of 2023.

"Consumers are no more positive about their own situation than they were a year ago," Anderson highlighted.

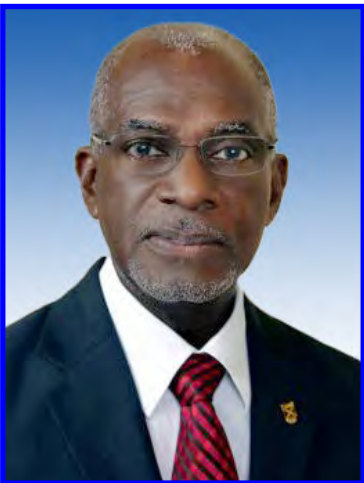
However, businesses expressed cautious optimism about improved conditions in the next 12 months, with 51 percent maintaining a positive outlook.

Also, businesses reported mixed profit expectations, with 25 percent anticipating better-than-expected profits, while 61 percent expected business as usual.

Notably, the number of those expecting worse profits declined to 13.4 percent, marking an improvement from 18.6 percent in the previous year.

"In the third quarter of 2022, 55 percent expected the economy to get better. The significant fall to 41.1 percent in the third quarter of 2023 signals a significant change, with fewer businesses expecting the economy to improve," Anderson remarked.

However, 21 percent of businesses said conditions would worsen in 12 months. In addition to crime, businesses also added a lack of incentives, the migration of skilled workers, and a lack of production to their list of reasons for a dip in confidence within the next 12 months.



Don Anderson



Ask Jay...

Please send your questions to
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THE PERFECT STORM IS BREWING AND CAN TOPPLE THE HOUSING MARKET

Imagine this: homeowners are in a tight spot, dealing with hefty mortgages and sky-high interest rates. When the pandemic hit, lots of folks went for those seemingly sweet low variable rates. Fast forward to today, and guess what? The monthly mortgage payment is turning into a real headache. Even those who went for the stability of fixed rates are feeling the pinch when it's time to renew. It's like everyone is on the same wobbly boat. To top it off, living costs are soaring, but incomes? Well, they're more like a slow drip than a steady flow. Brace yourself for the financial storm – there's a recession on the horizon.

Let us take a stroll down memory lane to the late 1980s – a time when the housing market had a familiar vibe to what we're experiencing now. Back then, interest rates were on a steady climb, creating a buzz of excitement among first-time home buyers. Predictably, prices soared. Fast forward to 2023, and our interest rates have more than doubled since the pandemic lows, causing a similar surge in house prices. The dream of owning a home still burns bright among first-time buyers, but the reality is a bit harsh – they're finding it tough to afford. Consequently, many are putting their home-search on pause. It's like a gentle domino effect – the moment a first-time buyer secures a home, a seller is ready to snag another. So, hold tight, because as the market adjusts, we're in for an interesting ride.

In my role as a realtor, I've been witnessing a real three-pronged challenge: soaring interest rates, dwindling affordability, and a cloud of uncertainty that seems to be growing. Just the other day, I sat down with a lovely retired couple whose monthly income danced around \$2,350. They've got a mortgage of \$175,000, but with the recent interest rate spike, their monthly payment went from \$1,090 to a hefty \$1,866. Add in the rising property taxes, insurance, and utility bills, and you've got a recipe for some serious financial tightrope walking.

It's not just them, though – many families out there are feeling the pinch. As September rolled in, we saw a 12 percent dip in sales compared to August. At the same time, fresh properties on the market shot up by a whopping 32 percent. Crunching the numbers, the sales to new listing ratio (SNLR) for September hit 28.6 percent, pointing right at a buyer's market. In real estate lingo, a balanced market usually swings between 40-60 percent, and anything above 60 percent is a seller's playground. If this trend keeps grooving into October, we might just be on the brink of a full-on recession.

Here's the scoop: more folks – 20 percent more – are feeling the squeeze financially. According to Equifax, the delinquency rate soared by 26.3 percent in the last year. Now, check this out – 71 percent of homeowners with a home equity line of credit (HELOC) missed payments compared to the same time last year. It's a bit of a financial jigsaw puzzle, but it helps paint a picture of what some folks are going through.

Quick tip for first-time buyers and investors: keep your eyes wide open, great deals are on the horizon. Prep with a pre-approved mortgage and stash some cash for the perfect moment. Sellers dig certainty, especially in a market dip – they might just nod at a lower price if you bring an offer without financial conditions. Homeowners on the brink of mortgage trouble, explore options before selling; renting a room can help financially, but privacy takes a hit. It's a market dance, find your rhythm!

Good news ahead! This recession will be brief and gentle. By mid-2024, interest rates will drop, and with a growing population and high rental demand, homes will stay popular among first-time buyers and investors. Towards the end of this year, home sales may dip, leading to lower prices. Around early 2024, prices could drop by about six percent, offering buyers a chance to strike a fair deal without the bidding wars. Some areas might see prices fall, while others stay steady. Get ready for positive changes!

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The Indelible Red Stain
By Dr Mohan Ragbeer

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

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



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Epic Entertainment and Tropical TV holds successful Diwali gala, pageant show

Toronto – Epic Entertainment and Tropical TV hosted a Grand Diwali Gala/Pageant Show at the Noor Convention Center in Brampton on October 28.

It was a sold-out event that featured the best of the best that Guyana has to offer: Devindra Pooran and Vanita Willie, and of course the one and only Guyana Baboo, Terry Gajraj.

Devindra Pooran from New York took the crowd through yester-year film songs that captivated the audience with the music and songs we all recall with so much fondness. In addition, as the back-up singer for the upcoming movie *Brown Sugar Too Bitter For Me Pt 2* – all in keeping with the trailer that was also aired during the program.

Vanita, better known as Powah Gyal from Guyana, had the crowd on its feet with every note she sang, blending the local past and current renditions from not only Guyana, but also from Trinidad and Tobago.

But Terry Gajraj, The Guyana Baboo, stole the night, both with the young and old. His melodious and charismatic rendition even had the relatives of Guyana’s President Dr Irfaan Ali clapping along in accompaniment.

Also present at the event were representatives from the Guyana Consulate, who brought Diwali greetings.

Brampton’s City Councillor Rod Power from Mayor Patrick Brown’s office was also in attendance to deliver Diwali greetings, and to thank Rajmini and Chalisa Ram for their contributions to the community, and for the work they do to add to the tapestry that is Brampton.

Representatives of MPP Brampton, Ragbhir Chauhan, echoed similar sentiments and greetings.

It was wonderful to see temples in the GTA come together for this extravagant pageant and show. Among them were the Valmiki Ashram, Shiva Ganesh Mandir, Satya Joyti Mandir, Shree Harinarain Mandir, Shri Krishna Sudama Mandir, Maha Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, Dharma Cultural Centre, and Shiva Mandir.

Many thanks to all of the spiritual leaders that helped to make this show a success. Among them were Pandit Manny Mahabir, Pandit Nandalall Mathura, Pandit Vishnu Persaud Mishra, Pandit Raam, Pandit Inderdeo, Pandit Jageshwar Sharma, Pandit Vishnu Simbhu, Pandit Mohan Maharaj, Pandit Deo, and Imam Habeeb Alli from the Islamic community.

The delicious all-inclusive three-course buffet prepared by Tropical Escape Restaurant & Lounge was thoroughly enjoyed



Lotus Funeral Home’s Kamal Bhardwaj (third from right) with Rajmini Ram (centre), Terry Gajraj (fourth from right), with pundits and guests at the Diwali gala and pageant



Terry Gajraj



Devindra Pooran

by the attendees.
The main highlight of the evening was the beauty pageant crowning of Shashti Samaroo as Diya Diva’s Miss Diwali 2023.
The five contestants graced the stage with their beauty, poise, and talent. Needless to say, the judges had a difficult

time. Oftentimes it was a close call, but at the end of the night the crowning glory of the night was Shashti – Diya Diva’s Miss Diwali 2023.
Special thanks to all the sponsors who made the evening possible, from the organisers of the event.

Happy Diwali

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Social media not utopia, but we can use it for a better world

By Dhanpaul Narine

Click on 'like' and share the 'live.' Communication, these days, is done on a device. The more outrageous the content, the greater the viewership. One out of every seven persons is on social media. It's a new world with a jumbled vocabulary. It causes mayhem and confusion, and feels like Babel.

We are surrounded by screens but the reality is that we are disconnected and unglamorous. Our fingers are busy in the online world as we get dumb on smart devices. We have a front seat in an auditorium that is baying for blood, and we rip reputations to build platforms on social media. We get more daring to secure the 'likes' and 'shares' to meet quotas, and couldn't care less who we hurt in the process.

It appears we are more interested in sharing the 'live,' rather than in sharing things that would uplift each other. There are social influencers who peddle hate for ratings, but with hate comes irreparable damage where nobody wins.

Nostalgia is not so long ago. There was a time when families had dinner at the table, and with intelligent conversations. Life was beautiful; things were fresh; and furniture was made to last. We borrowed books from the library and read them. And we could pass the social studies, science, math, and reading tests. We were composed and connected to primary relationships. Intimacy had depth, a meaning, and a purpose.

But in a world of chatbots, metaverse, and artificial intelligence, they are becoming a thing of the past. Face-to face is replaced by face-to-phones, or screens. Have we become selfish and robotic?

What does it take to move from care-less to caring? How do we "go placidly amid the noise and hate" to a peaceful existence? When can we leave this cauldron of confusion, and enter into the cathedral of love and empathy?

Selfishness, or the pre-occupation with oneself, is as old as society itself. There is no doubt that a level of individualism is necessary for survival. Some philosophers have argued that selfishness is not so bad, as every person "seeks good unto himself".

Thomas Hobbes sees self-interest as a human motivation. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with wanting to stay alive, be healthy, and to eat well.

Adam Smith's views of self-interest and Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection have been the sweeping currents that influenced our thinking about individualism.

Richard Dawkins, and others, have expanded on the ideas of gene theory, but there is disagreement as to the evolutionary logic between selfishness and groupishness.



Depression has often been attributed to selfishness, but many studies have shown that depression is more related to chemistry than character.

Nobel-prize winning economist Paul Krugman argues that people care first about themselves, and may feel antipathy, for example, to act in the interest of the greater good.

It has been suggested that the selfish society is as a result of inequality. The global evidence shows that many believe the rich are getting richer

because they have been more selfish in life. The thinking is that selfish people are more likely to exploit legal and illegal ways to get rich. Redistribution from rich to the poor is not usually the norm, nor is the selfish rich seen as promoting the interests of the poor.

The world has shrunk in recent years. The global village is flooded with information. Memes, hashtags and avatars, drop box, and miles of sockets, have brought the world under a canopy of curated and filtered infographics. The advantage is that staying connected has created change. The Arab Spring, Me Too Movement, and Black Lives Matter are all part of social media activism with a purpose, giving a voice to the voiceless. It is said that the many platforms make it possible for people to stay in touch.

But social media is also driving us bonkers. We spend an average of four hours a day on smart devices, mostly alone, but are we feeding ourselves with quality information? Recently, in an effort to report the news first, Meta inadvertently labeled a group as "terrorists". The post was removed hours later, but the damage was already done.

In 2014, researchers at Oxford University found that online users do not see themselves as part of a community, and that people are more interested in buying rather than in sharing things. Another study at the University of North Florida found that there has been a rise in narcissism, as opposed to empathy in certain groups.

It is argued that mindless and mechanical use of social media does not extend the frontier of knowledge. It is consumption without creation. It is insipid and anti-social. It is virtual distance, the purposeless use of technology.

We become addicted to scrolling, but do not produce captivating or absorbing content of our own. Checking our phones constantly is addictive, especially if we feel that we are missing out on the latest trends.

Are teenagers growing up too fast in cyberland? The plethora of social media platforms would tend to support this view. A 2019 survey found that over 36 percent of high school students have been cyber-bullied.

In many instances, individual privacy is a lost cause. One's entire life is played out on social media, from the good to the ridiculous. The impersonal messages are in the form of texts, memes, and emojis, and the true meaning is lost. In the old days there would be a physical presence. Care, thoughtfulness, and quality time are neglected in the impulsive world to constantly check messages. There are countless cases of broken relationships and marriages because of social media.

But does it have to be that way? We don't have to discard social media. The idea is to use it to foster well-being. Is it possible to build a community of empathy online?

One suggestion is to use tools such as Skype, and other video platforms for conversations, as opposed to the anonymous and faceless interactions that promote rudeness. Reading and sharing stories in online book clubs can also be a good way. [Here is an excellent site to view material.](#) Here, you will find unique stories of people from different countries that are about culture and survival, and far from Babylonian.

Posting messages that would enhance kindness and well-being is a good start, and active usage is to be encouraged. The message should be: the likes and shares are secondary. The Internet should be used to inform and educate, and for affirmations that would let us walk in the park, breathe freely, and listen to the birds.

HAPPY Diwali AND BANDI CHHOR DIVAS!

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Poem for Rabia: Ambitious, experimental, beautifully realised

A *Poem for Rabia* – A play by Nikki Shaffeeullah
A review by Ramabai Espinet

What a fascinating exercise in storytelling! Nikki Shaffeeullah's play is riveting, moving, and intense, telling a story of migration, indenture, struggle, and triumph over the course of two hundred years, 1853-2053.

It runs for two hours plus at the **Tarragon Theatre** in Toronto, supported by Nightwood Theatre and Under Current Creations. That it has made its mark upon the city of Toronto is without question. Most performances are sold out, the talk-back sessions have been lively occasions for audience response and reaction, and a panel discussion on November 5, featured not only Shaffeeullah, but two other artists – Premika Leo (choreographer, actor, and musician) and Kama La Mackerel



Nikki Shaffeeullah

(writer, visual artist and performer) – all activists and descendants of indenture, talking about their own arts' practices.

One of the play's strengths is its refusal to foreground any of the three tales featured here: three stories at hundred-year intervals, 1853, 1953, and 2053, told simultaneously and connected by fabulist intersectional cuts that collide, repeat, and skirt around each other's singular histories, while acknowledging fully the continuum of

their context, and keeping this firmly lodged in the audience's view.

An ambitious enterprise, bold, experimental, and beautifully realised. It works. This run (October 17-November 12, 2023) is the World Premiere, but one senses that there may be more reiterations to come, and that this talented playwright is already chewing on further recalibrations. The structure of the play lends itself to such possibilities, and one cannot but anticipate them.

This is a tale of three queer women who share the same bloodline, the arc of descent running from Rabia (1853 in India) to Betty (Guyana in 1953), and Zahra (Toronto in 2053). Queerness and indenture are both essential to the characters' psyches, but are treated as unremarkable, while the separate incidents of their daily circumstances wind through complex ethical and political dilemmas requiring urgent choices.

An important note about this piece of theatre is that there is no lag. The pacing is spot on, credit due to the sharp, often witty writing of Shaffeeullah, but also the directing by Donna-Michelle St Bernard and Clare Preuss.

The scene-stealer from beginning to end is the stunning portrait of Rabia, played by Adele Noronha, an actor from

Vancouver. The character is finely wrought, a woman of substance, independent, experienced, and in charge of her own destiny. She seeks solitude on the ship and finds it; she also composes poetry. Her transactional sexual episode with Farooq is handled with humour and compassion – a nod here to the historical reality of the many widows abandoned by their husbands' families, and forced into similar circumstances, and forming a significant number of the indentured.

Rabia's fulsomeness comes into being through the script, but is realised deeply by Noronha's nuanced performance, her control of gesture, body language, and verbal dexterity. The complexity of her character is further augmented by the clearly marked caste divisions between herself and her lover, a Brahmin woman whose presence on the ship of indenture seems to be a privileged one.

From her narrative, we glean that Rabia is a poet, sharing her poems with this woman, her intimate. Rabia's rage at the theft of her creations, her vulnerability to the blandishments of this high-caste woman, the delicate lines drawn between what she wants and what will never be available to her, and her eventual acceptance of her fate come together to create a truly moving personality.

Betty's story in 1953 British Guiana is perhaps the most familiar in terms of its history. Perhaps this might have been the most difficult tale to extricate from the vitriol and bloodshed surrounding it, and the racial riots that have become the stuff of legend for Guyanese people, but the stark complicity and betrayal of the colonial powers is clear.

Nonetheless, names such as Cheddi Jagan are used as referential points, almost, and the politics of that period remain obscure. A few experimental touches are used here, such as the several differing versions of a confrontational scenario – interesting, exciting too. Yet this tale is the vaguest in terms of the action – one perceives the activism, the subversion, the nationalist agenda – but one is left groping towards a cohesive whole.

2053, the futuristic moment of possibility is promising. Familiar too because the political issues selected are also contemporary ones. An imagined society with no prisons, no punishment. Utopia? No such thing. Defunding the police chatter is still in the background, prisons have been abolished, but activ-

ists are needed more than ever for reasons that are not too clear.

The moment of freedom occurs at the level of intimacy, the full expression of same-sex love, the need for excess, fear in the face of the looming responsibility of parenthood – multiple issues arise. The character, Zahra, seems at times overcome by a sense that it is all too much, but what is too much (the catastrophic present, the weight of history, an existential sense of despair) remains unknown.

Gender binaries have collapsed, and there is an atmosphere in the 2053 episodes that the fluidity of gender dynamics, the promise of earlier, more embattled periods of struggle for this kind of change, has been achieved. The fraught problems of everyday living though, are still vexingly present, and struggle is a necessity, but life goes on.

A word must be said about the extraordinary set. The designer, Sonja Rainey, worked miracles with the utility of the fairly plain structure – wood and water, the suggestion of concrete, the sparseness of colour. A ship sailing across the *Kala Pani*, a colonial office, a house, a room, a ship's deck, and always water and a wall. The famous Guyanese Sea Wall. Such an economical use of space – clean and exact in defining the desired illusion.

The non-linear structure of this play is well-executed, everything occurring simultaneously, a method of dramatising parallel events that we are now seeing played out as a trope of simultaneity, especially since *Everything, Everywhere, All At Once*. A storytelling method that is

well-suited to this epic spanning 200 years.

Nikki Shaffeeullah tells us, in the playwright's note, that this play has been in the works for many years, beginning when a mentor suggested that she write a play about Guyana.

"I tried and I couldn't. A place is a setting, not a story," she says.

Then she took part in an Arrivals Legacy Project, exploring with other artists the stories of their ancestors. This set her on a path of exploration, which took many years and many forms of research: archives, conversations, and "trips to motherlands".

The result of that artistic journey is this really accomplished play.

Shaffeeullah sums up: "I thought about how history repeats itself. I thought about how a series of places, when collaged together, can start to tell a story."



There are lots of forces, dangers rattling our planet nowadays

For whom the bell tolls? It tolls for thee! No man is an island. "There will be wars and rumours of wars," says the Bible. It also states, "He who lives by the sword will die by the sword".

Many peace treaties have been made over 3,500 years of recorded history. It seems that mankind has an inclination to war. The world news today is a classic example of the same. Be it in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, or elsewhere, nations are living in fear and suspicion of their neighbours.

There are armament wars, cold wars, economic wars, ideological wars, and propaganda to match. Canada also has a history of war, although in modern times it has been seen as a "peacekeeper" around the world.

How do wars start? What is normal behaviour for humans? Is health normal for humans? One can be healthy on the outside, but can be suffering from an unknown illness. Such is war. The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Peace is considered positive because it is good. Many marriages may start off good, but may get "derailed" over time. Is there anything such as "a just war"? Philosophers say the State exists for the sake of peace. It is a political and social entity. Except maybe for "Amazon warriors", most individuals would like to live in a peaceful environment.

A State should not exist for waging war, or use peace as a "breathing space" for more wars. A State is supposed to go to war for achieving a just and honorable peace. There is a moral obligation for individuals, and every citizen of every nation to work for peace. This is easier said than done. There is a branch

of psychology called "individual differences" that sometimes gets in the way.

Some see "peace" as conquest of those who resist us. Some seek peace by waging war, but no one seeks war by making peace! Peace itself has different "conditions". Most want "peace" that suits them better. They want "peace" more to their conditions, whatever they may be!

This is not usually a lasting peace. It is the kind of peace like you see in *The Godfather* movie, "I'll make you an offer you cannot refuse". If you refuse, you die!

True peace brings harmony and lasting happiness. A fragile peace is no peace at all. A family broken cannot last. A society divided cannot stand.

Can there be a "just" war? It may be necessary for a society to wage war to recover its rights. Philosophers claim some conditions are necessary for a "just" war. They include the authority of the person who commands the war. It is not the business of a private individual to start a war.

Dictators and would-be dictators will disagree, seeing power resides in them as individuals. Those in authority must represent "the common good".

Vladimir Putin in Russia, Donald Trump in the US, and Adolf Hitler in Germany can hardly be said to represent the "common good".

A "just cause" is required for war. A "just war" cannot be described as one simply for inflicting harm, for vengeance, or be the fever of revolt, the lust for power, and such like: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", it says in the Bible.



Bernard Heydorn

Thirdly, it is necessary for the parties to have "a rightful intention" and they intend the advancement of the common good, or the avoidance of evil. Criminal "gang" wars, for example, cannot be considered as "just" wars.

Overall, a "just" war should have lawful authority, just cause, right intention, and right use of means.

War in itself is a physical evil; it becomes a moral evil only when there is injustice on the part of the one using the force. Ancient philosophers such as St Augustine, St Thomas, and modern ones like Austin Fagothey S.J. (Society of Jesus), have examined the issue of war in depth.

The rules of war may have changed over the years, as wars have evolved. The manner of fighting, the weapons, and the nature of war have changed. Questions arise as to different types of wars – civil wars, revolts, breakaway wars, religious wars, neighbourhood wars, defensive wars, commercial wars, "cold wars", and the like. Pacifism in itself cannot guarantee peace.

The rules of war are a set of International Standards that can and cannot be done during armed conflict. The rules of war are universal, ratified by 196 countries. If the rules of war are broken there are legal consequences called "war crimes". The impact of war crimes on women, children, and innocent parties are brought to light. Collateral damage can be devastating. A "just war", perhaps like good medicine, must do good even though difficult to swallow! Does the end justify the means?

The destruction, waste, scars, mentally and physically, and the effects of wars, are often devastating. "Give peace a chance!" as John Lennon sings. For whom the bell tolls? It tolls for thee.

If the creeks don't rise and the sun still shines, I'll be talking to you.

T&T mourns passing of business magnate, philanthropist

Port-of-Spain – The Bhagwansingh’s Group of Companies and the business community in Trinidad and Tobago are in mourning following the passing of Helen Bhagwansingh, a leader, pioneer, and philanthropist. She died on October 30 after ailing for some time.

Fondly called ‘Mrs B’, the group closed all businesses following her passing. In a release, the company stated it was now difficult to imagine a world without its charismatic leader.

Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley paid tribute to Bhagwansingh, describing her as a “stalwart” of Trinidad and Tobago.

“Mrs Bhagwansingh was a strong woman who made a name for herself as a business magnate holding her own and even taking the lead in very many areas which hitherto were the preserve of men. She was an inspiration to many and a philanthropist who believed in her country. On behalf of my family and the government of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend my deepest condolences to the family and associates of a great lady who made us proud when we needed a heroine,” Rowley wrote on Facebook.

Bhagwansingh celebrated her 83rd birthday on October 7 with pomp, style, and merriment with a party at her Valsayn home with friends, family, and loved ones. The celebration saw performances by calypsonian Crazy, and the First Citizens Dragon Boys Tassa Band, among others.

Bhagwansingh was last seen by the public in July, when she visited a company business in La Romaine that had been destroyed by fire. She was assisted from her car to a wheelchair to then watch the billowing smoke.

The University of the West Indies also issued a media release last week stating that Bhagwansingh’s contributions were not limited to the realm of business and as a dedicated philanthropist. As it stated, she also had a vision for a healthier and more informed Trinidad and Tobago.

Bhagwansingh’s generosity also led to the establishment of the Diabetes Education Research and Prevention Institute at



Helen Bhagwansingh

The UWI, with an investment of (TT) \$5 million to ensure future generations are equipped with knowledge and resources to combat this prevalent health challenge, The UWI said.

The UWI’s Principal Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine stated Bhagwansingh “did not just dominate the business world, but she was also a shining example of what one can achieve with determination, and a genuine desire to uplift others”.

She also noted that Bhagwansingh understood the role of The UWI in the community, and the value of its research and education. Consequently, her contributions were immeasurable.

“We mourn the loss of such an impactful figure; but her legacy will indubitably live on,” Antoine declared.

Born on October 7, 1940, Bhagwansingh was the daughter of Daniel and Vilna Ramoutarsingh. She was the eldest of four children, and was followed by her siblings, Jack, Rajpaul, and Betty, all of whom were educated at Grants Presbyterian School in San Fernando.

The Ramoutarsingh family lived first at Union Road, and then Main Road, Marabella.

Daniel ran a successful hardware establishment in San Fernando, and from an early age his four children helped him out at the store after school. At age 11, he took Helen out of school, and placed her in charge of the bicycle repair department of his business, which she handled very efficiently.

She later went on to turn Ramoutarsingh’s Hardware into a family dynasty.

She married Hubert Bhagwansingh in 1959. At the time, he was a radio technician with International Air Radio at Piarco. The newly-married couple then moved to their recently constructed residence at Valsayn, just next to the Drive-In Cinema.

When the then owners, McEneaney & Co Ltd, put their cinema up for sale in 1969, Bhagwansingh bought it and ran it successfully for eight years. That same year, her father asked her to fill in for a sick employee at his small branch store at Sea Lots, Port-of-Spain.

At the time, the business comprised a small 20x20 foot galvanised iron shed from which building blocks were being sold. The premises were surrounded by a mangrove swamp and Trinidad’s largest dump.

Over the next two years, with her husband’s help, Bhagwansingh turned the former shed and swamp area into a thriving outlet for Ramoutarsingh’s Hardware.

She later acquired the business from her father, rebranding the business Bhagwansingh’s Hardware, a move that initiated the formation of her own empire.

Happy Diwali

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The Golden Years of Indian Cinema

Heard about Balbir Raj? Try Shashi Kapoor

By Vidur Dindayal

Shashi Kapoor acted on stage at our college in Delhi. He was with the Shakespeareana theatre troupe, which staged the George Bernard Shaw play *Arms and the Man*.

After the play, a relation of Shashi Kapoor met him outside the stage door and called a few of us to meet the actor. We were introduced, shook hands, and left.

He was very nice and cheerful. That was at Hindu College, where I was a student. It was before Shashi Kapoor got married to Jennifer Kendal in 1958.

Shashi Kapoor was the crown prince of Indian films royalty – Grandfather, Prithviraj Kapoor, Uncle Trilok Kapoor, brothers Raj Kapoor and Shammi Kapoor, and following generations. He made his name in Hindi films a bit later.

Shashi – original name Balbir Raj Kapoor, was born in 1938. He started acting in films as a child artiste in the film *Bachpan* in 1945, then in *Aag* in 1948, produced, directed by and starred Raj Kapoor, and was the first film produced by his RK Studios.

Shashi Kapoor acted in 1950 films *Sangram*, and *Samadhi*; in 1951 *Awaara*; and in 1953, *Dana Paani*.

In 1956, Shashi Kapoor and Jennifer Kendal met for the first time in Calcutta, where he was part of the Prithvi Theatre company, and she was a part of Shakespeareana.

Fate brought them together. They fell deeply in love. After getting married, Shashi Kapoor and Jennifer Kendal embarked on a journey together in both the theatre and cinema. Soon, Shashi Kapoor also began to tour with the Shakespeareana Company.

After marriage, Shashi Kapoor started to work as an assistant director in films, where Raj Kapoor was the lead hero.

Shashi Kapoor was a very popular actor in Indian films from the 1960s to the 1980s. His debut as a leading man was in the 1961 film *Dharmputra*. His experience thus far, plus his good looks and charming personality, all made him the star in numerous films for Bombay studios.

He appeared in 116 Hindi films; 61 as the solo lead hero; 55 in multi star-cast films; 21 films as supporting actor; and special appearances in seven films.

Top grossing films were *Waqt*, *Jab Jab Phool Khile*, *Aamne Samne*, *Raja Saab*, *Pyar Ka Mausam*, *Pyar Kiye Jaa*, *Waqt*, *Haseena Maan Jayegi*, *Kanyadaan*, *Abhinetri*, *Sharmeelee*, *Aa Gale Lag Jaa*, *Deewaar*, *Aap Beati*, *Kabhi Kabhie*, *Fakira*, *Shankar Dada*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, *Suhaag*, *Kaala Patthar*, *Chori Mera Kaam*, *Chor Machaye Shor*, *Shaan*, *Swayamvar*, *Do Aur Do Paanch*, *Kranti*, *Namak Halaal*, *Aandhi Toofan*, and *Ilzaam*.

Who can forget the scene for the title song in *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*? Roopa's right cheek was disfigured, and she hid it with her sari. Shashi Kapoor as Rajeev, who hears Roopa's lovely singing and meets her, did not see her disfigured side, and falls in love with her.

Laxmikant-Pyarelal's music won the Filmfare Best Music Director Award. Variations of Lata Mangeshkar's song *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* have been made by various music groups in India and the US.

Shashi Kapoor formed on screen pairs with the leading actresses of the day. Ashok Kumar played a supporting actor in many films with Shashi Kapoor as the lead. He was also regularly cast with the acclaimed actors Sanjeev Kumar and Pran. He was given the role as character artiste in the 1985 film *Alag Alag*,

starring Rajesh Khanna.

He made a popular pairing with Amitabh Bachchan in many films. Particularly famous for his role in *Deewaar*, a film about two brothers on opposing sides of the law, Shashi playing a cop, with one of his lines in the film, *Mere Paas Maa Hai* – “I have mother”, becoming iconic, and today is part of Indian popular culture.

Shashi Kapoor was the second highest paid Hindi film actor, sharing the spot with Dev Anand from 1970 to 1975. Shashi Kapoor was paid more than co-actors Vinod Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Jeetendra, Rishi Kapoor, and Randhir Kapoor in multi-star films.

Shashi Kapoor was the first Indian actor to work extensively in Hollywood films and British films, notably in Merchant Ivory productions. They made English-language films in India aimed at the international market.

Notable actors in their films include Maggie Smith, Madhur Jaffrey, Shashi Kapoor, Jennifer Kendal, Hugh Grant, Anthony Hopkins, Glenn Close, Emma Thompson, Vanessa Redgrave, and Helena Bonham-Carter.

Films like 1965's *Shakespeare Wallah* put this genre on the international map.

Shakespeare Wallah is the story about a travelling family theatre troupe of English actors in India, who stage Shakespeare's plays, amidst decreasing audiences and the rise of Indian cinema. Madhur Jaffrey won the Silver Bear award for Best Actress at the 15th Berlin International Film Festival for her performance.

The music was composed by Satyajit Ray. The film was loosely based on the real-life story of Geoffrey Kendal's family and his travelling Shakespeareana.

International films with Shashi Kapoor include *The Householder*, *Heat and Dust*, *The Deceivers*, *Side Streets*, *Bombay Talkie*, and *Pretty Polly* – story by Noël Coward. Stars in the films include Julie Christie, Pierce Brosnan, Shabana Azmi, Art Malik, Jennifer Kendal, Helen, Hayley Mills, and Trevor Howard.

Shashi and Jennifer were blessed with three children: Kunal, Karan, and Sanjana. Jennifer and Sashi were also instrumental in the rejuvenation of Prithvi Theatre in Mumbai, with the opening of their theatre in the Juhu area in 1978.

In 1978, Shashi Kapoor set up his own production house, which produced films such as *Junoon*, *Kalyug*, *36 Chowringhee Lane*, and others.

In 1991, he produced and directed *Ajooba*, with stars Amitabh Bachchan, Dimple Kapadia, Shammi Kapoor, Dara Singh, and Saeed Jaffery. Nephew Rishi Kapoor was in the lead.

In the movie *36 Chowringhee Lane*, its stars included Jennifer Kendal, her father Geoffrey Kendal, Shashi's daughter Sanjana, and his son Karan.

Jennifer died of cancer in 1984, which shattered him. After losing her, Shashi Kapoor fell into a depression from which he never recovered fully. He continued his contributions to the film industry, but Jennifer's absence left a deep void in his life. He died in December 2017 at the age of 79.

Shashi Kapoor received numerous awards for his spectacular achievements in film. These include in 2011 the Padma Bhushan award from the government of India; the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in May 2015; Best Actor for New Delhi Times (1986); Best Supporting Actor for *Deewaar*; Lifetime Achievement Award, Bengal Film Journalists' Association Awards in 1965 for *Jab Jab Phool Khile* in 1988 for the *New Delhi Times*.



Shashi Kapoor; and with wife Jennifer Kendal



Sonam Kapoor



Anil Kapoor



Kareena Kapoor

The Kapoor dynasty continues, with sightings earlier this week in Mumbai of a few who bear the legacy name.



Ranbir Kapoor



Khushi Kapoor

Mandanna disturbed by online deepfake video

Mumbai – South star Rashmika Mandanna has described the experience as “extremely scary” following misuse of AI technology that created a deepfake video of herself that went viral on social media.

Her comment came after a fact checker posted a deepfake clip, along with the original video of a British-Indian social media personality Zara Patel, and demanded an urgent need for a legal and regulatory framework to deal with the growing phenomenon in India.

Deepfake is a digital method where users replace one person’s likeness convincingly with that of another using emerging AI technology.

Mandanna expressed concern through Instagram, saying she was “really hurt” to see the video.

It shows a woman dressed in black workout onesie inside an elevator. The woman’s face was edited out using AI, with Mandanna’s features then applied onto the image to create a convincing likeness of her.

“I feel really hurt to share this, and have to talk about the deep fake video of me being spread online,” Mandanna said.

She added, “Something like this is honestly extremely scary,

not only for me, but also for each one of us who today is vulnerable to so much harm because of how technology is being misused.”

Mandanna is well-known for roles in films such as Pushpa, Mission Majnu, and the upcoming Animal.

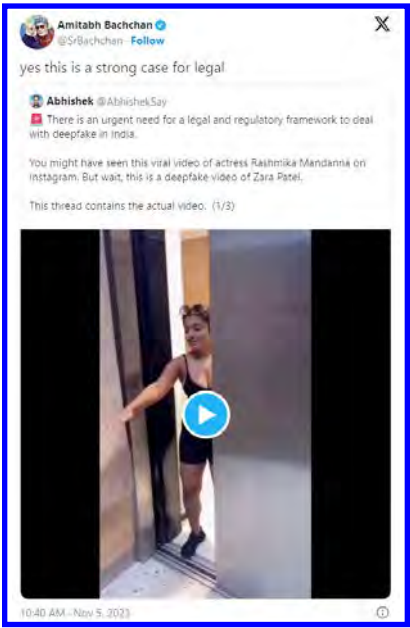
She also noted, “Today as a woman and as an actor, I am thankful for my family, friends and well-wishers who are my protection and support system. But if this happened to me when I was in school or college, I genuinely can’t imagine how could I ever tackle this.”

She concluded, “We need to address this as a community, and with urgency before more of us are affected by such identity.”

One of the first stars to respond to the deepfake video was Amitabh Bachchan, who called for legal action.

Writing in X, formerly Twitter, Bachchan stated, “Yes this is a strong case for legal.”

Bachchan and Mandanna worked together in Goodbye, a family comedy-drama film written and directed by Vikas Bahl and produced by Bahl, Viraj Savant, Ekta Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor. It also stars Neena Gupta, with Sunil Grover, Pavail Gulati, Ashish Vidyarthi, Elli AvrRam, Sahil Mehta, Shivin



Mandanna (left) with Bachchan’s response on X Narang, Shayank Shukla, Abhishekh Khan, and Arun Bali in supporting parts. It was released on October 7, 2022.

Chopra reveals critical acclaim led to more Bollywood movie choices

New Delhi – Priyanka Chopra has revealed it was only after the release of the 2006 film Krrish that she got into the position to pick and choose her projects.

As the Indian Express reported earlier this week, Chopra made the revelation during a conversation with actor Bhumi Pednekar during a masterclass at the 2023 Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival.

Chopra won the Miss World title in 2000, and soon after entered movies with the 2002 Tamil film Thamizhan.

While she made a successful entry into movies, and eventually Bollywood, it was critical acclaim that secured her position as an actress, she said.

When asked about when she came into a position to be able to pick and choose cinema, she replied, “Many, many films later. I think around the first Krrish maybe,

somewhere there. Before that, there was always, ‘Oh my God, what’s the next one I am going to do? What opportunity is going to come to me?’ I picked from what came to me.”

Now she is well underway in pursuing a career in Hollywood.

However, she also told Pednekar, “After the first Krrish, because I had just done Aitraaz as well, I had done work which gave me a solid foundation. I got critical acclaim. I had people telling me that I knew my job, even though I didn’t know that I knew my job. But that was a very clear time when I started seeking work that would challenge me.”

Chopra’s moment of glory arrived when she starred in the Madhur Bhandarkar directorial Fashion, for which she also won a National

in a female-oriented movie, she revealed.

“Fashion was a time when I took that decision. It was right around Krrish that Madhur... and I met. At that time, I was told... ‘You have just done Krrish and Aitraaz, you are having such a moment. Why are you doing [Fashion]?’”

Also, she added she was told, “Girls do female-oriented roles towards the end of their careers to get a National award. You have just started. Why are you doing it? In that era, this was not common. This is early 2005 or 2006... I just didn’t know any better.”

Chopra won the National Film Award for Best Actress for her performance in Fashion. Also during the masterclass with Pednekar, Priyanka said that maybe Madhur Bhandarkar knew what the film would do.

“I loved the script. I loved what Madhur was talking about... We sat with the writers for six months. It was just a passion project. I didn’t know it would become what it did, but I think Madhur... knew,” she said.



Priyanka Chopra

Award. At the time, many people warned her against playing the lead



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Renowned, cherished Bedi helped turn Indian cricket around

Bishan Singh Bedi

September 25, 1946 - October 23, 2023

One of the most renowned and cherished figures in the game of cricket, India's Bishan Singh Bedi, died on October 23 at the age of 77.

Bedi was born in Amritsar, and made his first-class debut for Northern Punjab when he was 15 years old. At 20 he was already playing Test cricket, and right afterwards went on to become one of the famous quartet of great Indian spinners that included Erapalli Prasanna, Srinivasaraghavan Venkataraghavan, and Bhagwat Chandrasekhar.

In 1969 Bedi joined Delhi; a few years later his career with Northamptonshire started in 1972. He was part of the Northamptonshire team which won the 1976 Gillette Cup.

As *The Telegraph* wrote in its obituary on October 28, Bedi's craft as a spinner, and his "achievements as a wicket-taker, allied to a style that was almost romantic in its aesthetic pleasingness, helped to establish India as a Test force for the first time".

He bowled left-arm round the wicket, and was "a master of flight and guile, his aim always to sow doubt in the batsman's mind and entice him into a false stroke with often inviting-looking deliveries", *The Telegraph* stated.

His style was a master class in slow bowling. According to *The Telegraph*, it was a style that "might have looked innocuous, in part because he bowled properly slowly... and sent the ball towards the stumps in a graceful arc".

However, even in those preparatory steps prior to his short run-up was an inherent signal of danger, with "the softness of his tread belying what might be coming next".

Bedi took 1,560 wickets in all of his first-class cricket, which is the highest tally by any Indian player. Before Kapil Dev bowled past him, Bedi held the record as India's leading Test wicket-taker: out of the 67 Tests he played between 1966 and 1979, he claimed 266 wickets at an average of 28.71. Notable among these wickets were the ten taken in a single Test against Australia at Perth in December 1977. His tenure of six seasons with Northamptonshire saw acquisition of 434 wickets, with an economical bowling average of 20.89.

Writing in *The Guardian's* obituary, Peter Mason comes close to an accurate delivery when he describes the nuances implicit in Bedi's fluidity around the wicket.

As Mason writes, "His gentle, effortless run-in and stately,



Bishan Bedi

upright delivery created an exceptionally high, loopy flight to the ball that was often mesmerising in combination with the prodigious turn generated by his fingers."

Mason adds, "One of the finest ever spin bowlers, he gathered 266 wickets in his 67 Test matches for India between 1966 and 1979, and on his retirement was the highest Indian Test wicket-taker. Even now he sits at number eight on the list, behind a set of modern-day bowlers who have mostly played far more games. Perhaps more importantly, he stands fifth among the leading left-arm Test spinners of all time, below only Rangana Herath, Daniel Vettori, Derek Underwood, and Ravindra Jadeja."

The Telegraph also references Bedi's magical action with the ball, stating, "There were times when Bedi cast a spell so powerful that he could induce in [batters] an aversion to risk that amounted to a kind of paralysis."

Two instances of Bedi's wizardry are cited – his match figures of five for 109 in 86 overs against England at Delhi in December 1972; and then there was "an even more astonishing performance in a match against East Africa during the 1975 World Cup, played in England, when he set a record for economy in

one-day cricket, bowling 12 overs with eight maidens, taking one wicket for six runs."

As *The Telegraph* noted, Bedi's best Test bowling performance was the seven for 98, which were taken against Australia at Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1969.

He captained India in 22 Tests, out of which he won six. Among these wins was what *The Telegraph* described as "one of the most heroic of all time".

The win happened in Port-of-Spain in Trinidad at the Queen's Park Oval in April 1976. In this match, India beat West Indies after successfully chasing 403 in the fourth innings. It set a Test record that stood for 27 years.

In that innings, both Sunil Gavaskar and Gundappa Viswanath performed well with the bat, scoring centuries, while Bedi had the satisfaction of dismissing Viv Richards, who had accumulated an enormous total of 177 runs.

However, as *The Telegraph* notes, it was also off the field where Bedi exhibited "the moral principles that would help make him such an outstanding figure in the eyes of both players and public, in India and beyond".

This was evident in the following Test match against the West Indies, which was played at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica. It took place during the historical mid-1970s, which was, as *The Telegraph* notes, the era of West Indies' greatest fast-bowling might. It was also an historical time when the threat of injury from short-pitched deliveries was the source of some disquiet within the game.

"Smarting from defeat in the previous match, West Indies did not hold back, and for Bedi, it was the refusal of Michael Holding, *et al*, to spare India's tail-enders that brought matters to a head, and led him to declare both India innings prematurely," *The Telegraph* noted.

Additionally, "Those decisions handed victory to West Indies, but they allowed Bedi to leave the field with honour intact, and his lesser batsmen protected (including himself, it has to be said). Bedi took similar action two years later in a Test against Pakistan, conceding the match in protest at the bouncers bowled by Sarfraz Nawaz."

Bedi is survived by wife, Anju (*née* Inderjit), daughter Neha, and son Angad; also, another son Gavasinder, and daughter Gillinder, from his previous marriage to Glenith Miles, which ended in divorce.



Happy Diwali



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WBBL players call for DRS, 3rd umpires

A lack of both DRS and third umpires in certain Women's Big Bash League games this season is seeing growing discontentment among players and coaches.

As the cricket website, *ESPNcricinfo* reported late last month, Melbourne Renegades duo Georgia Wareham and Hayley Matthews have both expressed frustration at the current situation. Also, they have both indicated the hope that these measures be implemented permanently in all future games.

There have been several instances in the WBBL season this year where incorrect stumping and run out decisions have affected the outcomes of matches when there were no third umpire available.

Only 24 matches of the 59-game season are full television broadcasts with DRS and third umpire reviews available to the teams and standing officials. The rest of the matches are televised via slimmed-down broadcasts designed for streaming, and do not feature DRS technology or even a third umpire.

In three of those games there have been incorrect stumpings and run outs, which could have easily been overturned with a third umpire in place, including a not out decision that went in favour of Hobart Hurricanes' Lizelle Lee that cost Sydney Thunder dearly.

Cricket Australia have already said they will look at having third umpires in place for every game next year. However, nothing will change this season.

Renegades have not been on the receiving end of any incorrect stumping or run out calls, but they do believe they have received some lbw and caught behind decisions against them in tight games that might have been overturned if DRS were available.

Wareham spoke to the sentiment of the Renegades' group at the current situation.

"I think as a playing group it is pretty frustrating, knowing that those moments in the game are really massive. And that it is sort of changing the way that teams are winning, I guess, and what team wins on the day by those moments," she said.

Additionally, "I think that is what is really frustrating when we can't quite get those decisions right. But I mean, at the end of the day, you can't do much out there. So I guess it is up to the big dogs at the end."

Matthews has been involved with the WBBL from its very early seasons, and has seen the growth of women's franchise leagues globally first-hand in recent years. She believes the WBBL needs to have DRS in all games if it is to maintain its place as the world's premier women's T20 franchise tournament.

As Matthews noted, "I think it would be a great

step. We're obviously seeing all over the world now, in all the franchise competitions you've got DRS, third umpire, and full broadcasts in every single game being played."

She added, "I think WBBL has been the leading tournament for quite some years, and it is the ninth season in. I think I would love to see it being implemented now, and I think that on its own would help raise the standard of the game even more."

Meanwhile, she declared her team was not going to stress about the current situation for the remainder of the season.

Said Matthews, "I think you have just got to try to control the controllables. If we sit and kind of stress about all the things that we aren't able to control, I think it is just going to make us more frustrated at the end of the day. So as batters, try to use our bat as much as possible."



Hayley Matthews

Cricket Schedule

(Matches ALL TIMES LOCAL)

...

ICC World Cup

Wednesday November 8

40th Match (D/N), England vs Netherlands, Pune, 2:00 pm

Thursday November 9

41st Match (D/N), New Zealand vs Sri Lanka, Bengaluru, 2:00 pm

Friday November 10

42nd Match (D/N), Afghanistan vs South Africa, Ahmedabad, 2:00 pm

43rd Match, Aus. vs Ban., Pune, 10:30 am

Saturday November 11

44th Match (D/N), England vs Pakistan, Eden Gardens, 2:00 pm

Sunday November 12

45th Match (D/N), India vs Netherlands, Bengaluru, 2:00 pm

Wednesday November 15

1st Semi-Final (D/N), TBA-TBA, Wankhede, 2:00 pm

Thursday November 16

2nd Semi-Final (2nd vs 3rd), TBC vs TBC, Eden Gardens, Kolkata, 2:00 PM

Sunday November 19

Final, TBC vs TBC, Narendra Modi Stad., Ahmedabad, 2:00 PM

...

Thursday November 23

New Zealand tour of Bangladesh 2023

TBC vs New Zealand, Two-Day Practice Match, Day 1, Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, Sylhet, 9:30 AM

Australia tour of India, 2023

India vs Australia, 1st T20I

Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium, Visakhapatnam, 7:00 PM

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Angus For Sale \$1,688,062

Premium lot with lots of upgrades on a cul-de-sac, 4 bedrooms, open-concept, 3-car garage, g/foyer, parlour/formal dining areas, white kitchen with quartz countertops & island, dining area with walkout to deck, stainless steel appliances, butler pantry, wood beam accents & barn door, living room with built-in gas fireplace, high ceilings, mudroom with garage access, California shutters, primary bedroom with gas fireplace, shiplap, his/her walk-in closets, & a 5-piece ensuite. Second bedroom with 3-piece ensuite & walkout to balcony. Third & 4th bedrooms with Jack & Jill bath, basement with separate entrance with lots of potential. Fenced yard with beautiful trees in backyard. Plus More!



Beeton For Sale \$1,149,000

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.



Port Dover For Sale \$699,990/For Rent \$2,550

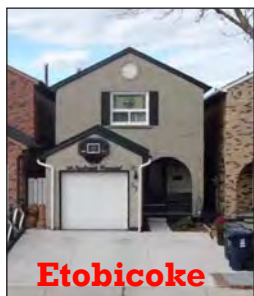
Location! Location! Location! Welcome to this rare & highly-sought-after townhouse bungalow in Port Dover! This home boasts over 1,800 sq ft featuring 3 bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms, convenient main floor living with primary bedroom, ensuite shower, & walk-in closet. Living room features 23-foot high vaulted ceilings. Modern custom kitchen featuring granite countertops & huge eat-in island. Dining & kitchen space perfect for entertainment & family gatherings. Second floor features loft-style family room along with 2 bedrooms & full bathroom. Watch gorgeous sunsets from every bedroom. Close proximity to beaches, trails, vineyards, breweries & fresh farm food. Gorgeous location for nature lovers with close proximity to downtown restaurants & shops.



For Sale \$999,900

Family Friendly Neighbourhood, Walking Distance To Schools & Parks.

SOLD \$350,100 OVER ASKING PRICE



Etobicoke

Oshawa For Sale \$719,990

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



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.

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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