### **Proudly the largest weekly Caribbean Newspaper in Canada for 40 years**

# ECUSALIST MAINTAINING THE PERFECT BALANCE SERVING, CARIBBEAN, EAST ASIANS, GUYANESE, JAMAICANS, TRINIS AND MORE. 416 759 6397

MARTINA'S CAMRIO

19 Hinck Street, Robbstown, Georgetown, Guyana
Best rates for US, Pounds Sterling, Canadian, Euro, TT, EC and B'dos
Tel: 226-1933

Email: martinascambio@gmail.com, martinarbacchus6223621@gmail.com www.facebook.com/pages/martina-cambio





**INDIAN & HAKKA CUISINE** 

Thursday January 4 2024. Volume 42, Issue #01 www.equalitynews.ca. For advertising, call 647-216-2359

T&T's 5th Prime Minister was first Indo-Trinidadian to hold top post

## Basdeo Panday 1933-2024

"If you see me and a lion fighting, don't feel sorry for me, feel sorry for the lion."

Those were the famous fighting words of former Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Basdeo Panday and so he lived his life.

As the world celebrated the first day of the new year on Monday, Panday passed away at 90 and, according to his daughter, Mickela, he died with his boots on.

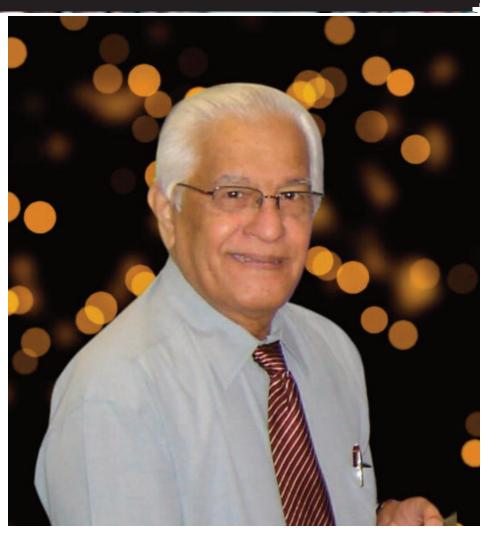
Mickela, a former Oropouche West MP and the only child to follow in her father's political footsteps, shared with the nation via a Facebook post last night that her father had died. She wrote:

"With deep sorrow, we would like to share that our loving husband and father, Basdeo Panday, passed away on 1st January 2024, surrounded by his family.

In life and death he was a fighter. He passed with his boots on, keeping everybody around him on their toes with his wit and humour.

He will live on in all of us, remembered as a wonderful husband, father, grandfather, leader, and friend.

He was an inspiration to his family and everybody that knew him.



We will continue to celebrate his life and treasure the time we were able to spend with him."

Panday was married to Oma Panday. He had four daughters: Niala, Mickela, Nicola and Vastala. Niala was born to his first wife, Norma Panday, who died in 1981.

Panday had suffered heart issues, undergoing triple bypass surgery in

1989 and an angioplasty procedure in 1995.

On December 14, 2023, his family issued a statement regarding his health.

They said that, after consultation with his doctors in Trinidad and Tobago, Panday travelled to the US to investigate medical concerns about his health.

### **MARTINA'S CAMBIO**

19 Hinck Street, Robbstown, Georgetown, Guyana Best rates for US, Pounds Sterling, Canadian, Euro. TT. EC and B'dos

Tel: 226-1933

Email: martinascambio@gmail.com, martinarbacchus6223621@gmail.com www.facebook.com/pages/martina-cambio





Take back control and master your credit score with our real-time, Al powered credit tools. Make more informed financial decisions and choose better value products. No more surprises. Own Your

Financial Future Patricia Giankas

+1 (416) 560 4924 (Toronto ) +1 (855) 927 3628 (Florida)

See our ad on Page 3





## Vishal Sharma Personal Injury Lawyer

24/7 Direct Line 647-972-4440 sharma@vsharmalaw.ca. www.vsharmalaw.ca



### Unbeatable low fares to Montego Bay

Toronto - Montego Bay: \$199 one-way\* Montego Bay - Toronto: \$189 one-way\*

Book Now on Jetlines.com, or Contact Your Favourite Travel Agent!

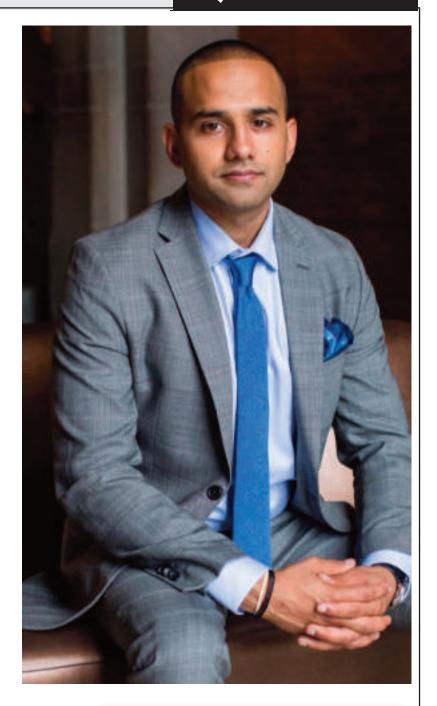




# VISHAL SHARMA Personal Injury Lawyer

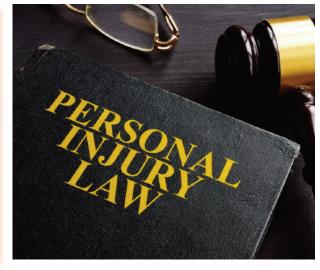
### **NO FEES UNLESS WE SETTLE YOUR CLAIM**

A lawyer who gets to know you, so he can represent you. When you're looking for the best possible result, you need an attorney who knows every detail about you and your case. Sharma Law takes the time to get to know each and every client, so we're in the best position to represent you and your family when it matters most. Backed by proven results and experience at Ontario's highest levels of court, Sharma Law specializes in Personal Injury Law.



### **Personal Injury**

Injuries caused by the negligence of others can be physically, emotionally, and financially devastating for victims and their families. If you've been injured, you need a personal injury lawyer who knows how to fight for the compensation you deserve.



### **Injury Claims**

Motor Vehicle Accident Claims, At-Fault Accident Claims, Not At-Fault Accident Claims, Catastrophic Injury Claims, Slip and Falls, Trip and Falls, Dog Bites, Long Term Disability and Short Term Disability.

### **OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU**

We are committed to achieving successful results for every client and case. We accomplish this by providing exceptional legal advice and strategies based on a thorough understanding of your case and your desired outcomes. FREE CONSULTATION AND CLAIM REVIEW. CHECK OUT OUR GOOGLE REVIEWS

Available for in-person visits at your home or hospital, anywhere in Ontario. Video Conference and Office meetings available.

24/7 Direct Line 647-972-4440 sharma@vsharmalaw.ca www.vsharmalaw.ca



PO Box 334-12275 Woodbine Ave, Unit 206, Gormley, Ont, L0H 1G0 501 East Kennedy Blvd, Unit 15-139, Tampa, Florida, 33602



mycreditz.com

# Bingo!

Your current score is 640

You can increase your score by 110 points within 90 days!

### O Low Impact

#### Hard inquiries (Past Year)

Number of times creditors have made enquiries on your profile in the past year



#### **Derogatory Matrix**

Collections, tax lines, bankruptcies or civil judgements on your report

### 15 Low Impact

#### **Total Hard inquiries**

Number of times creditors have made enquiries on your profile since the day you've established your credit history



#### **Credit Card Use**

How much credit your're using compared to your total limits

### 29<sub>Yrs</sub> Low Impact

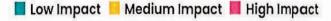
#### **Credit Age**

Age of your open accounts



#### **Payment History**

Number of Late payments made in the last 4 years



#### **Now Lets Get to Action** Make a payment for Make a payment for Don't make any late \$1,294.65 on or before \$1,294.65 on or before payments the next 12 09 Nov 2023 months 09 Oct 2023 03 04 02 Lets **Lets Take** the First Keep Going! Step Please, Clear your Don't apply for any new balance as much as credit possible



Funeral & Reception Centre

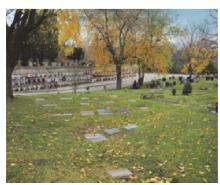
A non-denominational Cemetery, Mausoleum, Funeral & Reception Centre providing affordable options for your final arrangements.



You can now have all your wishes met at one location.









Funeral Services | Memorial Services | Life Celebrations | Visitations and Receptions | Pre-Arrangements

Burials | On-site Crematorium | Pre-planning Payment Plans Available



Westminster Cemetery, Mausoleum, Funeral & Reception Centre 5826 Bathurst Street, North York, ON M2R 1Y6

416.665.2015 | www.westminstercemetery.ca

Operated by Park Lawn Limited Partnership, Owned by Park Lawn Corporation

# Feds call on municipalities to 'step up' housing plans

By Nishad Sharma

LJI REPORTER

The western Ontario city of London has become the first recipient of money from the federal government's \$4-billion Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF).

The city is receiving \$74 million from the fund to build 2,000 housing units over the next three years, Housing Minister Sean Fraser and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announced in London last week.

The fund, first introduced in the last federal budget, is aimed at helping municipalities build more homes through measures like speeding up the approval of building permits and changing zoning regulations.

Trudeau said Wednesday London's approach is "absolutely visionary" and encouraged other cities to step up with their plans. This includes creating a digital system to speed up building permits.

"So based on [London Mayor Josh Morgan]'s success and the announcement we're making right now, I want to challenge other mayors right across the country to step up with their proposals too," Trudeau said.

The Housing Accelerator Fund application window for municipalities with more than 10,000 people closed on August 18.

Earlier on Wednesday, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation released a new report, projecting a 3.5-million home supply gap if home-building remains "business as usual" between now and 2030.

When asked about this report, both Trudeau and Fraser pointed to programs like the Rapid Housing Initiative and said they would have more to announce in the coming days.

While Fraser said there are a wide



variety of factors for why home prices are rapidly increasing, he singled out municipal zoning policies, specifically around densification and building near transit hubs.

The minister said these are points he brought to Mayor Morgan when going over London's accelerator application.

"You can do more to legalize hous- is expected to be one of the main issues

ing. Because communities across this country in many instances make it illegal to build the kinds of homes that will solve the housing crisis," Fraser said.

Fraser added that he encouraged London to amend bylaws to allow for a builder to erect four units on a piece of land in order to increase housing supply.

Amid higher interest rates, housing

facing parliamentarians as they return to Ottawa on Monday.

Pierre Poilievre and the Conservatives saw a major surge in support according to several pollsters this summer. Much of this has been attributed to a focus on housing and the cost of living crisis in Conservative messaging.

## Niagara police recover missing bag with \$5K inside

Niagara police are thanking a member of the public for returning a bag of stolen money.

Earlier last week, authorities said a man who was shopping inside the Welland Walmart set his bag down and mistakenly left it behind — along with \$5,000 inside of it.

Investigators released several photos of two suspects they believed to be responsible for taking the bag.

On Dec. 28, a man showed up at the police station in Welland with the missing bag and money. He told police that the women were Mexican nationals who were temporarily staying with him.

After he caught wind of the investigation, he found the missing bag in his home and decided to turn it in.

Authorities are thanking the man for his honesty and integrity in returning the bag.

At this time, police say there are no outstanding warrants for either of the women involved in the matter.

Police say the money will remain in their custody while they arrange to

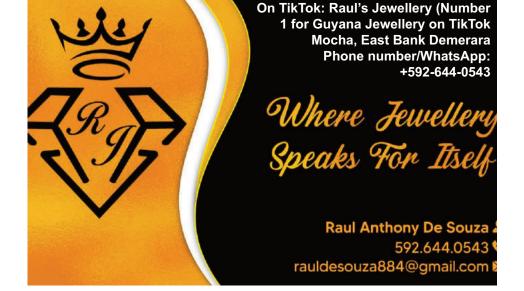
return it to its rightful owner.

In-store video surveillance captured the moment that two women came across the bag, went through it and carried it off as if it were their own.

Using money from the bag, they made several purchases with the cash.

Images show the two women leaving the store with a cart full of items, including a flatscreen television before leaving the area.







### **EDITORIAL & OPINIONS**

## Remembering the Silver Fox

As the world began 2024 with hopes held high, the people of Trinidad and Tobago were greeted with sad news.

They learned that their Silver Fox, Basdeo Panday, the man who was arguably the best Prime Minister of the twin-island nation, breathed his last on January 1.

According to his family, Panday was his typical self up to the end, keeping them all laughing at his witty comments until he could no more.

Panday, known as the Silver Fox for his acerbic wit and his ability to outmaneuver his political opponents both on the campaign trail and in parliament, was 90 years old.

The son of "bound coolies" (contracted workers on the sugar estates), he was born in 1933, just 16 years after the end of indentureship.

According to journalist Ken Ali, quoting Basdeo's brother Subhas, parents Sookchand and Krishendaye Panday were illiterate workers who endured hardship that was typical of the era.

Subhas said that that adversity impacted Panday throughout his life, and explains why he struggled for a better deal for sugar workers and, as Prime Minister, introduced pro-working class measures

Panday also did symbolic things to

identify with common people, Subhas said.

They included placing cane cutter Dora Bridgemohan and religious leader Barbara Burke -- who heads the Spiritual baptist movement in the twin-island state -- in the Senate.

"He wanted the country to know anyone could aspire to high office," Subhas recalled.

Successful at primary school to the point where he graduated for one of the nation's most prestigious high schools, Panday was unable to attend, as his parents could not afford to send him.

Eventually, he went to high school after a relative came up with the necessary funds.

After graduation, he worked in the cocoa fields and then became a school teacher. He, however, had a love for law and got a job clerking for a local magistrate, Noor Hassanali -- who would eventually become President of T&T.

(Interestingly, it was not Panday who appointed Hassanali to the post in 1987, but ANR Robinson, the man to whom Panday deferred leadership of the NAR and helped become Prime Minister in 1986.)

Panday then went to London where he read law and graduated from the prestigious University of London with a degree in politics, philosophy and economics. He then landed a PhD scholarship to study in India, but before he could go, travelled back to Trinidad to spend time with his mother, and it was while there he was encouraged to get into local politics.

The rest, you might think, is history, but any look at Panday's life will not be complete without looking at the influence he had on the labour movement in the country, especially the sugar workers. It was there he found his political voice, and this was the platform from which he jumped into national politics.

Panday was also an actor, taking part in many local productions and other shows in England, and also in three movies – The Prophet of Kandahar, Man in the Middle, and Nine Hours to Rama.

He became the 5th Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in 1995, and went on to distinguish himself as a political leader.

Panday never truly bowed out of politics, even after he was unceremoniously booted out of office in 2000 after the national vote resulted in a 17-17 tie between the country's two major parties.

In a move still considered highly irregular in countries that follow the Westminster style of government, the

incumbent Panday was forced out of office by ANR Robinson, then the country's President, in favour of the opposition leader, Patrick Manning.

But the Silver Fox never stayed out of public life, and would often comment on national issues he saw as important, right up to the very end of his life.

As we remember him today, we look back on his life as a man who had enormous influence on the Caribbean region both in labour and in politics. Indeed, we dare say that it was Panday who fought for and achieved better for workers in all of the Caribbean countries that were part of the sugar industry.

Locally, he became his country's first Prime Minister of East Indian descent, paving the way for others to follow

We"il leave the final words of this tribute to his brother Subhas:

"We came from poverty and he never forgot the poor and common people. Our early years were hard and he devoted his entire life in the service of the people. He spent his life elevating others."

Indeed.

Rest in peace, Mr Panday. You were a champion of the people. To quote you, "If you see me and a lion fighting, don't feel sorry for me, feel sorry for the lion."

### **Basdeo Panday: Hail to the Chief**

Dear Editor,
Our country has truly lost one of
the greatest sons of our soil, a man
whose life service to Trinidad and Tobago was nothing short of trailblazing,
inspiring and heroic.

For my part, I have lost my political guru and mentor, the man who personally inspired me to pursue a career in politics, and a dear lifelong friend.

Basdeo Panday's life itself is a story of incredible greatness and inspirational heroism—a poor, rural, Indo-Trinidadian boy, consigned to social and economic marginalisation, defying and overcoming every single obstacle to study law in the UK and then become one of T&T's greatest trade unionists, politicians, prime ministers, and perhaps the greatest patriot in our nation's history.

Mr Panday and I first met back in the 1970s, at a function at my late brother's (Justice Lloyd Gopeesingh's) home. Mr Panday and Lloyd were legal colleagues then. In 1993, as a then member of the NAR, Mr Panday invited me to work alongside him and the UNC, to help him achieve his lifelong dream of national unity.

From 1994-95, I assisted him in forming the National Unity Platform, which saw the UNC winning 17 seats (from its previous 13) in the 1995 general elections, and Mr Panday's historic achievement of becoming the first Indo-Trinidadian prime minister.

Thereafter, from 1997-2001, I had the immense honour and privilege of serving under his pioneering UNC government in various portfolios in education and health, memorably as chairman of two RHAs, senator and acting minister of Integrated Planning and Development. From 2002-2007, in Opposition, I served as a senator and then Caroni East MP from 2007-2010, at Mr Panday's behest.

As prime minister of T&T, Basdeo Panday ran one of the best governments

in this country's and region's history. His pioneering policies and initiatives ensured one of the best economic and social periods that T&T has ever lived through

Basdeo Panday was indeed my political guru. I called him "Chief" all my political life, in acknowledgement of the fact that all that I have learnt in my 30 years of politics is due to his inspirational living example, his lessons, teachings, wisdom, actions, his great vision for a truly united country of equality and justice, and his undeniable ability to beat all odds, to overcome all struggles and simply shine on.

He always taught us, his mentees and most devoted supporters, the most important credentials of life in politics, which he easily summed up in three rules: "Don't ever tell a lie, because it comes back to haunt you. Do what your conscience and heart tells you. And always do what is right."

On his 90th birthday last year,

when I called him to wish him the happiest of birthdays, always the wise teacher, Mr Panday gave me his unending advice and wisdom—telling me to not let regrets of the past haunt me and to move on in peace.

Today, as our nation mourns the death of this truly great man, and as I grieve his passing, I take inspiration in his legacy, aptly encapsulated in the words of Leo Tolstoy, who once said:

"There is something in the human spirit that will survive and prevail. There is a tiny and brilliant light burning in the heart of man that will not go out, no matter how dark the world becomes."

May Basdeo Panday's great light inspire us for generations to come.

ter of Integrated Planning and Develop- important credentials of life in politics, ment. From 2002-2007, in Opposition, I which he easily summed up in three served as a senator and then Caroni East rules: "Don't ever tell a lie, because it his truly great soul rest in eternal peace.

**Dr Tim Gopeesingh**Former MP and Minister



Publisher: Bhaskar Sharma Equalitygroup@rogers.com Editor: Nishad Sharma

Annual subscription: \$104.00 (including postage)

Funded by the Government of Canada



Equality News is the largest weekly newspaper serving Guyanese and Caribbean readers in Canada.

Contributors: Niraj Sharma, Freddie Kissoon,

Donald Ramotar, Cliff Rajkumar, Dr Kumar Mahabir, Dr Vishnu Bisram For advertising in Ontario or nationally, call Marie Sharma 416-759-2359 or 647 -216 2359

View Equality News every week online (ads included)

### www.equalitynews.ca

Equality News International is published by Equality News Incorporated.

104-1920 Ellesmere Road - MB# 234, Toronto, Ontario M1H 3G1

Tel: 416-759-6397, Fax: 416-759-5359, Email: EqualityGroup@rogers.com

# Singh calls for more tolerance in New Year amidst rise in hate

By Niraj Sharma

LJI REPORTER

Jagmeet Singh, the Federal New Democrat Leader, emphasizes that Canadians can and should strive for improvement as hate crimes surge during the Israel-Hamas conflict.

In an interview with The Canadian Press at the year's end, Singh advocates for a space where individuals can express their fears, concerns, and political views without inciting hateful behavior.

Having recently spoken to Jewish and Muslim Canadians alarmed by the

rise in hate-motivated violence, Singh stresses the importance of fostering an environment of respect, allowing people to embrace their identities without fear.

Drawing from his own experiences of being bullied as a child for wearing a turban, Singh empathizes with the challenges of staying true to one's beliefs in the face of hatred.

The heightened fear stems from the Israel-Hamas conflict, with Hamas militants causing casualties in Israel and an Israeli military response resulting in significant loss of life in the Gaza Strip.



**Federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh** 

# Health Canada flags 'serious' risks of unauthorized sexual enhancement products

By Nishadj Sharma LJI REPORTER

Over the past year, numerous pills claiming to enhance sexual performance have been removed from the Canadian market, raising concerns about the health risks associated with unauthorized products continually finding their way onto shelves.

Between March and December 2023, Health Canada confiscated 206 unauthorized sexual enhancement products from stores in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia, as per a public advisory updated on Dec. 27. Health Canada has consistently issued advisories over the years, cautioning Canadians about products that may pose "serious health risks." The flagged drugs were found to contain or were labeled to contain hazardous ingredients.

Most recently seized pills contained prescription drugs like tadalafil, sildenafil, levodopa, prasterone, and yohimbe, substances that should only be used under the supervision of a health-care provider. The market for these products, particularly appealing to younger men, capitalizes on the notion that performance-enhancing drugs can promise sexual prowess, erectility, and virility, according to John Oliffe, a professor and Canadian research chair in men's health promotion at the University of British Columbia.

The packaging of these products often taps into men's desire to feel more attractive and competitive, creating an "opportunistic" market where individuals can acquire them without a prescription or consultation, Oliffe explained.

Health Canada was asked for additional information on how these unauthorized products enter the market and efforts to curb their sales and promotion, but no response was received by the time of publication.



Yohimbe is the extract from a bark of the Yohimbe tree and can cause other health risks

Unauthorized sexual enhancement products, by definition, have not undergone assessment by Health Canada for safety, effectiveness, and quality. Prescription drugs commonly found in these products can lead to various adverse health outcomes, including dizziness, headache, indigestion, hearing loss, facial flushing, and abnormal vision.

Yohimbine, derived from yohimbe bark extract, found in some of these products, can cause nausea, tremors, anxiety, dizziness, headache, sleep disorders, and increased blood pressure and heart rate. Health Canada emphasizes that there is no guarantee of the product's content or safety in unauthorized sexual enhancement products.

While authorized sexual enhancement products, such as Viagra, exist in Canada, some erectile dysfunction medications are available online. Oliffe advises caution and consulting a doctor before taking such drugs, emphasizing the complexity of pharmacology.

Health Canada recommends verifying a product's authorization for sale by checking for an eight-digit drug identification number, a natural product number (NPN), or a homeopathic drug number (DIN-HM). The product label should include all medicinal ingredients, recommended use and dose, along with any health warnings. A searchable database for authorized drug products is also available on the Health Canada website.

### The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

# Stop comparing Ali with Burnham over Venezuelan claim



Joel Bhagwandin

Since Retired Rear Admiral Dr. Gary Best, who is a former Chief of Staff, seems to know so much about L.F.S Burnham and his handling of the border situation, can he say why L.F.S Burnham was on the CIA's payroll? At the time when Burnham signed the 1966 Geneva Agreement, he was on the CIA payroll, according to documented evidence (cited from the Memorandum for the Treasury Committee, Washington, dated May 28, 1969). Further, in June 1970, "the 40 Committee (the successor to the 303 Committee) decided to extend the covert assistance to Burnham's political party at the same US\$5,000 per month level for another year". This means that even after gaining independence in 1966, Burnham remained on the CIA's payroll...As such, can the distinguished former Chief of Staff shed some light on this, and while at it, tell us who's interest Burnham signed the 1966 Geneva Agreement... Was it really in the best national interest of Guyana at the time?

Earlier last month, Retired Rear Admiral Dr. Gary Best had appeared on a program hosted by the Guyana Business Journal (GBJ), sharing his professional views on the Guyana / Venezuela border situation [controversy]. Here, he made some very important points, some of which I concurred. Particularly, the one that stood out to me was his argument where he posited that since the matter is now before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the 1966 Geneva Agreement, that Venezuela has misrepresented, has since expired.

Subsequently, I have observed the former Chief of Staff's authorship of several articles on the border issue; but with an apparent trend leaning towards a certain political path. This approach, I hasten to register my unreservedly strong disagreement with the former Chief of Staff. In this regard, he attempted to compare and contrast the manner in which the border issue between Guyana and Venezuela was handled in the past under the late L.F.S Burnham, former Prime Minister of British Guyana, as opposed to the current leadership exhibited by His Excellency, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. This, in

my humble and respectful view, is not helpful in the current premises, nor does it derive any value. Rather, it could cause more harm than good, nationally.

For the sake of demonstrating what I mean, hereunder is how the political debate could unfold, which it appears is what the former Chief of Staff is trying to stimulate, i.e., he's trying to "bait" the Government, particularly the Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo into a public debate.

In his Op-Ed carried in the Demerara Waves (today) December 31, 2023, the author wrote: "...the Geneva Agreement of February 1966 is an agreement between Venezuela and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland over the frontier with British Guiana "to resolve the controversy over the frontier between Venezuela and British Guiana."

It was signed by Michael Stewart, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for the United Kingdom and by Ignacio Iribarren Borges, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, the principal signatories, and by then Prime Minister Forbes Burnham as the representative of British Guiana. Secondly, as Prime Minister of a colony, matters of foreign affairs, defence and finance are usually under the control of the colonial power. *In this case, the United Kingdom. Then* Prime Minister Burnham had no control over the affairs of the colony of British Guiana. This nuanced difference is critical to a full understanding of the extant issue. That accounts for "under whose authority he (Burnham) signed the Geneva Agreement", and 'whether he (Burnham) consulted with the people of our country", which is in contrast to President Ali who is the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, as opposed to then Prime Minister Burnham who was the Prime Minister of the colony of British Guiana. These two positions are incomparable. However, Prime Minister Burnham in keeping with his unparalleled interest in protecting the territorial integrity of our great nation, ensured that the clauses in the Geneva Agreement would protect Guyana from any territorial dispute being raised by

Venezuela by guaranteeing no reference to any territorial dispute within the Geneva Agreement".

Readers would recall that Mr.
Rawle Lucas had taken a similar stance as Dr. Gary Best in his recent essay, to which I had responded to Mr. Lucas.
See my response here for ease of reference:

https://www.guyanastandard.com/2023/ 12/19/pres-ali-did-not-jeopardize-thejudicial-process-for-border-controversy-case-with-venezuela/. Both Best and Lucas took issue with the usage of the term "dispute" to describe the border "controversy" between the two neighboring countries in the Argyle Declaration. They have both failed to recognize, however, that the term "dispute" was transposed from the ICJ's provisional rulings. It is the ICJ that described the matter as a "dispute". According to some legal luminaries, the reason for this is because a Court of Law does not settle "controversies", they settle "disputes". Notwithstanding, consecutive Governments of Guyana have always avoided describing the issue as a dispute, which remains the case to date. In other words, from Guyana's perspective, there is no dispute over the border because it was settled, inter alia, the 1899 Arbitral Award. Hence, it is an absolute waste of time and ludicrous, in my view, on the part of both authors' in their apparent quest to prove that Burnham was the smartest and that only he (Burnham) had properly protected Guyana's interest—versus—the current Government. If they (Best and Lucas) really want to go down that road, well even Burnham's intellectualism can be challenged. Because it was Burnham, whom the former Chief of Staff claimed ensured that he used the term "controversy" in the 1966 Geneva Agreement instead of "dispute". But of recent, a group of local attorneys posited that the term "controversy" should not have been used. Interestingly, their (the attorneys) reasoning is far more sensible, and I dare say superior than whatever Burnham's rationale was at that time. That is, owing to the fact that the border was settled via the 1899 Arbitral award which was accepted, recognized, and

adhered to by both countries up until 1962; and that since 1962 to now, more than 60 years have elapsed, yet Venezuela has failed to produce a single shred of evidence to support their claims. Therefore, the controversy as it is being referred to, is really not a controversy, but a "baseless, unfounded claim" to Guyana's territory by Venezuela. It is a "claim" not

Consequently, it is rather unfortunate that the "disciples" of Burnham within the PNC, to this day are still referencing him (a dead man) because of his supposed "intellectual prowess". In so doing, they have failed to recognize that it is counterproductive.

a controversy!

More so, it is a slap in the face of other former and current leaders of the PNC. For example, why does no one associated with the PNC ever talk about the late Mr. Desmond Hoyte in the manner they refer to the late L.F.S Burnham? Is it because Hoyte was perhaps the best President the PNC produced and because he departed from the Burnham ideologies? Why do they not refer to and acknowledge Mr. Robert Corbin, another former PNC's Opposition Leader who brought a different type of leadership, that the PNC never appreciated. And more importantly, why are they undermining the current Leader of the Opposition, Aubrey Norton?

Against this background, the likes of Dr. Best et.al need to stop this facade. It's not helpful to the national cause, for the reasons as illustrated herein.

If the Burnham's disciples would like, we can debate Burnham's Prime Ministership and his Presidency. There are volumes of academic literature documenting Burnham's leadership style, and his modus-operandi—characterized as transforming his personal interests into becoming superior to that of the national interests, such that his personal interests evolved into the national interests. So, let's not get into that debate and stop this nonsensical comparing and contrasting for no good reason. Stop it!



GROUP OF COMPANIES
Put Guyana First

1 & 2 MUDLOT WATER STREET, KINGSTON, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA. TEL: 592- 226-5513-4 | 226-5314-5 | 226-4113 FAX: 592- 226-5517 | 223-7421

Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO

## Here are some new laws and rules in Ontario in 2024

By Akim Shazad

LJI REPORTER

Ontario is ushering in several changes in the coming year that could impact both your finances and business operations. Here are some key updates to be aware of:

Optional Direct Compensation Property Damage (DCPD) Coverage for Motorists:

Starting in January, drivers will have the choice to opt out of DCPD coverage, which shields car owners from collision-related vehicle damage costs if they are not at fault. While the change aims to offer more consumer options, experts caution that forgoing this coverage could leave drivers responsible for vehicle repairs or losses.

New Regulations for Temp Agencies:

Effective July 1, legislation prohibits companies from using unlicensed staffing agencies. Temporary help agencies and recruiters are required to obtain licenses, including undergoing background checks. Violations may result in substantial fines, reaching up to \$50,000 or a lifetime ban from operating in Ontario.

Extension of Gas and Fuel Tax Rate Cuts:

Ontario's reduced gas and fuel tax rates, cutting prices by approximately 5.7 cents per litre, will continue until June 30, 2024. The Progressive Conservatives estimate that this tax cut has saved the average household \$260 an-

Safe Arrival Program for Child-Care Operators:

Child-care operators in Ontario must establish a policy for cases where a child does not arrive or is not picked up as expected, aiming to prevent incidents such as children being left in hot cars. This initiative follows a tragic incident in 2022, prompting a petition for such programs.

Pay Increases for Early Childhood

The minimum wage for early childhood educators in licensed child-



It will cost you more to buy vaping products in 2024 as taxes increase

care centers will rise to \$23.86 an hour, aligning with Ontario's strategy to retain staff as part of the plan for \$10-a-day child care. After 2024, the wage floor will continue to increase, reaching \$25.86 in 2026.

Minimum Wage Increase in October 2024:

tario will see an increase in October 2024. Last year, the Doug Ford government raised the minimum wage by a full dollar, from \$15.50 to \$16.55.

Expanded Cannabis Retail Operations:

In 2024, Ontario will raise the cap on the number of storefronts a cannabis While the exact amount is yet to be operator can manage from 75 to 150. milliliters and \$2 per 10 milliliters bedetermined, the minimum wage in On- Stand-alone stores must still maintain a yond that. This doubles the existing fed-

distance of at least 150 meters from schools.

Provincial Duty on Vaping Products:

Vaping product prices in Ontario may rise due to a new provincial duty, with manufacturers and importers paying \$2 per two milliliters for the first 10 eral duty rates.

Streamlined Certification for Tow Operators:

Starting January 1, the province will be responsible for certifying tow operators, drivers, and vehicle storage operators. Certification involves meeting training, insurance, and vehicle safety standards, along with undergoing a criminal record check. This certification exempts individuals from municipal business licensing by-laws. New customer rights will also be introduced, allowing consent for tow services, choosing tow destinations, and establishing rules for accessing and paying for towed vehicles.



# New year means new tax measures for all Canadians

By Nishad Sharma

LJI REPORTER

In 2024, Canadians can expect the implementation of new tax measures, along with adjustments to existing ones, set to impact the financial landscape. Despite the breadth of changes, tax experts predict that the majority of individuals will experience only minor effects unless they fall into the high-income bracket

Among the forthcoming alterations are modifications to GST/HST exemptions, the removal of deductions for select short-term rentals, the introduction of alternative minimum tax rates, and adjustments to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions.

The elimination of certain deductions for short-term rentals, initially announced in the Fall Economic Statement, became effective on January 1. The federal government rationalized this move by citing the misuse of nearly 19,000 homes in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver for short-term rentals in 2020, hindering their availability for permanent housing. To encourage the return of such units to the long-term rental market, some municipalities imposed bans, and the federal government is now revoking income tax deductions for expenses related to short-term rentals in banned areas.

In an effort to enhance affordability for Canadians seeking mental health services, the government is removing GST/HST from "professional services rendered by psychotherapists and counselling therapists." However, this initiative comes with a projected cost of \$64 million in lost revenue over five years, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer

Additionally, the federal govern-



Experts are concerned whether there are enough charging stations in Canada to meet the surge in demand

ment aims to stimulate housing development by excluding GST from the construction of new rental apartments, extending this initiative to new co-op rental housing. Meanwhile, starting in the upcoming year, a second level of CPP contributions will be collected to fulfill the commitment to boost CPP payments to retirees, resulting in an annual increase of \$302 for both employees and employers.

The changes also involve adjustments to the CPP income ceiling, with

the introduction of a second earnings ceiling of \$73,200 in 2024. Self-employed individuals will be impacted as they are required to cover both the employer and employee portions of CPP contributions.

The alternative minimum tax rate, designed to prevent high-income taxpayers from disproportionately lowering their tax bills, is undergoing significant changes. Although not yet passed into law, the government plans to increase the alternative minimum taxable income

amount to \$173,000, with a corresponding rise in the tax rate on income above that threshold to 20.5 percent. While targeted at high-income earners, there is a potential impact on ordinary Canadians, especially if they experience a temporary increase in annual income due to factors like selling assets.

In essence, these tax measures reflect the government's effort to balance social objectives, economic incentives, and revenue considerations.

## Antibiotics resistance a growing concern

As the season for coughs and colds returns, medical experts have a reminder: antibiotics aren't a go-to treatment for common viral respiratory infections.

"I think that a lot of people are in the habit of still seeking antibiotics if they're finding that their illness is prolonged or more severe, just in case," said Dr. Lynora Saxinger, an infectious diseases specialist at the University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton.

Overprescribing — including at a patient's request — and misuse of antibiotics is fuelling antibiotic resistance, a global health threat, giving rise to superbugs that can't be treated by first-line antibiotics.

Saxinger says patients who are prescribed an antibiotic for an illness the drugs don't treat can be given a false perception of their effectiveness.

"They get a prescription, it's for a virus, but they start to get better shortly after because they've just peaked in their illness while this whole process was going on," she told Dr. Brian Goldman, host of The Dose podcast.

"So there's also a learned behaviour where people associate getting better with having had an antibiotic prescription."

he risk of antibiotic resistance is increasing year over year and affecting patients in hospital on a daily basis, according to infectious diseases physician Dr. Jerome Leis.

"We have, for example, patients who have an infection that, because of resistance, now requires an intravenous course of antibiotics rather than pills, or now requires a second-line antibiotic that not only is less effective, but has increased risks to the patient," said Leis, medical director of infection prevention and control at Sunnybrook Health Sciences in Toronto.

In certain cases where antibiotics are no longer an option, doctors are turning to surgical methods to control infections, he added.

In 2018, one-quarter of bacterial infections were resistant to a first-line antibiotic used to treat them, and nearly 15 people died due to resistant infections, according to a 2019 report by the Council of Canadian Academies. The same report predicts resistance rates will rise to 40 per cent by 2050.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control says at least 28 per cent of the antibiotics prescribed by doctors are considered unnecessary and contribute to superbugs.

But proper stewardship of the potentially life-saving drugs — using them only when prescribed, for the bacterial infections they treat — can help ensure they remain effective. In June, the Public Health Agency of Canada released a five-year, pan-Canadian plan to combat antibiotic resistance.

Dr. Daniel Flanders, a pediatrician in Toronto, says he works hard to prescribe antibiotics only when necessary, but acknowledges that there's a balance between practising antibiotic stewardship and providing good service to patients.

"I think we need to get better and better at communicating reasons why we might choose not to treat someone's child or someone's infection with antibiotics," he said.

# 'No plan to take offensive action against Venezuela': Jagdeo

IN the midst of comments from Venezuela over the British offshore patrol vessel, HMS Trent, set to dock in Guyana's waters, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has sought to reassure the international community that Guyana has no intentions of taking "offensive action" against the Bolivarian Republic.

During a press conference, on Thursday, Jagdeo highlighted the defensive nature of Guyana's measures, highlighting their routine and planned nature.

He underscored that the primary objective of the visit was to bolster Guyana's security apparatus in a defensive capacity, clarifying that there are no intentions to launch attacks on any nation, including Venezuela.

The General Secretary referenced recent discussions between Presidents Dr. Irfaan Ali and Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro at the Argyle International Airport in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, where there was a commitment to peace.

The meeting was facilitated by the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph Gonsalves, and was observed by Brazil, CARICOM, and a UN Under-Secretary-General.

"The President [Dr. Irfaan Ali] has been in touch with Prime Minister Gonsalves on this matter. He's made it clear that we support the Argyle declaration in letter and spirit that nothing that we did in the past or will do in the future is to harm or will affect Venezuela and the territory of Venezuela," Dr. Jagdeo said.

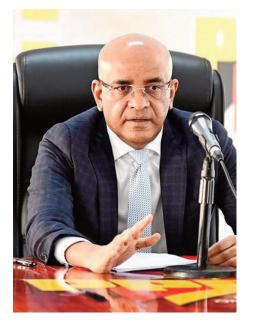
The Argyle Declaration, issued by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on December 14, 2023, emphasised the commitment to a zone of peace, rejecting aggression or the threat of force against any member state.

Jagdeo explained that joint military engagement between Guyana and the United Kingdom (UK) aimed to promote capacity building is routine and has long been planned.

"These measures, a lot of these measures were long planned and they're routine and they're part of our building a defensive capability. Nothing that we do or have done has threatened Venezuela. We don't plan on invading Venezuela, President Maduro knows this, and he needs not to have any worry about that," Dr. Jagdeo said.

He also related that assurances were provided to President Maduro during discussions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Guyana remains committed to diplomatic solutions and the rule of law.

"Now, we don't have any plan to take 'offensive action' against



**Bharrat Jagdeo** 

Venezuela. Whatever we do here has been routine and has been long planned. And it's part of our building a defensive capability in Guyana, not necessarily to fight wars but to police better our exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and our territorial integrity and sovereignty," Dr. Jagdeo affirmed.

Jagdeo's statements came in response to comments by Venezuela over the British offshore patrol vessel, HMS Trent. The Bolivarian Republic said that

it views the vessel's presence as provocative, raising questions about potential threats to its sovereignty, despite the fact that it is customary for nations to deploy resources to partner nations to conduct similar capacity building exercises. However, to address Venezuela's comments, Jagdeo clarified: "No, the President has not asked the British vessel to move away from what was a planned activity and we see as routine which has no offensive intent against Venezuela."

Vincentian Prime Minister Gonsalves, serving as an interlocutor between Guyana and Venezuela, during a recent radio programme, shared insights into the situation.

Gonsalves clarified the vessel's purpose, stating: "This is a vessel which comes into the region and comes here sometimes too [to] deal with helping to interdict drugs, deal with trafficking in persons, search and rescue. It has very limited, as I understand it, very limited military capacity."

Gonsalves, while acknowledging Venezuela's concerns, maintained a diplomatic stance, stating: "The statement was firm, but the statement was not particularly belligerent. I think we will have things like this over the period, as you would expect as an interlocutor."



BUE LIGA

www.tradelogix.ca

EMAIL: <u>SERVICES@TRADELOGIX.CA</u>

PHONE: 416-938-8779

MODEL# BLION-EW1500

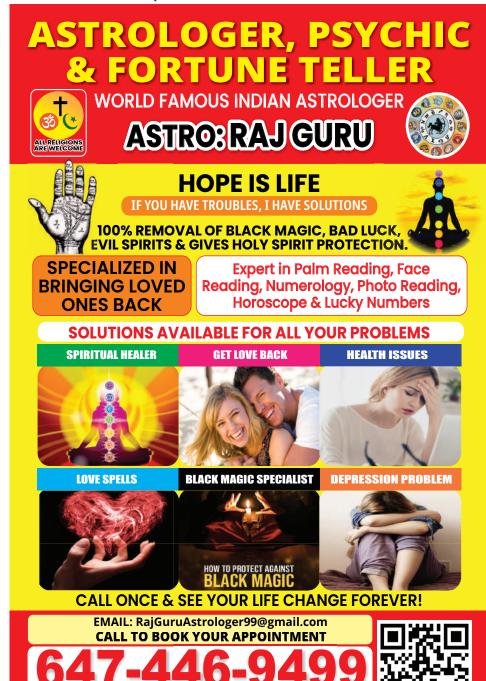












**TOWN CENTRE (KINGSTON & L** 







Zella Lawrence

**Angelique Lawrence** 

Ronika Lawrence

# Deadly Linden fire was deliberately set, says Guyana Fire Services

THE Guyana Fire Service (GFS) has confirmed that the deadly Central Amelia's Ward, Linden fire which claimed the lives of a woman and her two nieces was maliciously set.

The Fire Service wrapped up its investigation into the death of 30-year-old Zella Lawrence, 16-year-old Angelique Lawrence, and eight-year-old Ronika Lawrence.

"Fire Prevention officials were able to determine that the fire was maliciously set by unknown person(s)," the Fire Service said.

The fire occurred around 02:05 hrs on December 25 at Lot 2692, Central Amelia's Ward, Linden.

Firefighters from the Linden Fire lice," GFS said.

Station responded quickly, containing the fire to the building's bottom floor, where a single sofa set was destroyed and four meters of ceiling, along with a large amount of clothing, sustained significant damage.

However, by the time the fire was extinguished, it was discovered that all the occupants of the two-storey building had died.

"The Fire Service would like to once again extend sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of the deceased and to encourage anyone with information that may lead to the arrest of the person or persons responsible for this heinous crime to contact the police." GFS said.



The destroyed house where three people died

## 25 more telemedicine sites to be established

TWENTY-FIVE additional communities in the hinterland and rural areas will benefit from the implementation of the telemedicine programme in their health facilities, signalling the government's aggressive push to ensure that quality, efficient health services are delivered to all.

This was revealed by Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony at the ministry's year-end press conference at Brickdam, Georgetown on Friday.

Telemedicine is a two-way, realtime interactive communication between a patient and healthcare provider at different sites. It is supported by audio and video equipment and integrated medical devices that empower clinicians to evaluate, diagnose and treat patients remotely and is beneficial in Guyana's case.

"Next year, we have identified at least another 25 areas; it might be more because we're working on some streams of funding that might allow us to do more sites," Dr. Anthony disclosed.



The telemedicine programme was officially launched in 2022 with four Amerindian communities in Region Nine piloting the programme. It was later expanded to 25 communities in Regions One, Seven, Eight, Nine and

10 with an allocation of \$1.8 billion in the ministry's \$84.5 billion budget in 2023.

"This has been helping us to reach every remote community and the equipment that we have and the training that we have been giving to the healthcare workers would include them being able to set up the equipment to do ECGs and to also do ultrasound," the health minister further highlighted.

Each telemedicine site will be equipped with the requisite technological devices, which provide Community Health Workers (CHWs) stationed in the respective villages with 24-hour access to specialists from the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC).

These include a digital stethoscope, pulse oximeter, infrared thermometer, blood pressure monitor, mobile ultrasound, and exam cameras among other technological devices that will be used in the delivery of this service.

The implementation of the telemedicine programme forms part of the President Ali-led administration's efforts towards improving Guyana's healthcare system into a world-class system. (DPI)

# Massive 28 per cent increase in sugar production in 2023

WITH an investment of \$8.1 billion in 2023 to advance the revitalisation efforts of the sugar industry, Guyana saw a massive 28 per cent, or 13,155 tonnes, increase in sugar production, as compared to the 47,049 tonnes in 2022.

This was highlighted by Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha during the ministry's year-end review on Saturday. In keeping with the government's promise in 2020, one of the major achievements for sugar was the reopening of the Rose Hall Sugar Estate in September 2023.

The agriculture minister underscored, "Sugar production in 2023, we closed at 60, 204 tonnes, a 28 per cent or 13,155-tonne increase in production when compared to 47,049 tonnes in 2022. The industry was able to replant 52 per cent more lands in 2023, which is a total of 4,020 hectares as compared to 2,640 hectares in 2022."

The government will continue to focus heavily on mechanisation and conversion projects across the industry.

While explaining that the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) is witnessing a decrease in funding due to its robust policies, he said, "We will be seeing less and less dependency from the government in terms of GuySuCo revitalising and bringing itself back to that point that we want it to achieve. We have seen a 22 per cent decrease of funding that we have requested from the government in 2023 as compared to 2022."

Guyana has also witnessed a further 54 per cent of sugar production, which was marketed as packaged sugar in 2023, as compared to 48 per cent in 2022. The government has also commenced the construction of the Albion and Blairmont Packaging Plants to increase the production of value-added packaged sugar.

"We have launched two new value-added packaged brands. One is the Albion Gem, and the other is the Demerara Gold Sugar Stick Sachet," said Minister Mustapha.

To date, the government has employed 4,692 new employees in the sugar industry. The total number of workers in GuySuCo at the end of 2023 is 8,294 persons.

Advertise and survive.
Equality
News delivers clients to your business

Over the next two years, Minister Mustapha said that the government will convert over 5,000 hectares of land to have mechanisation being conducted in terms of harvesting and mechanical loading.

Added to that, he reemphasised, "We are seeing clearly a revitalisation of the sugar industry, and we are seeing more and more people are benefitting."

The government continues to build a strong agricultural sector that will enhance livelihoods as part of its ambitious goal of ensuring food security. (DPI)



Sugar production has increased significantly

www.comfortsleep.gy



comfortsleep49@gmail.com

# Region One becoming major centre for food production: Mustapha

REGION One (Barima-Waini) continues to make significant strides towards becoming a major centre for food production, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha has said.

Having achieved all of the targets set out in the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)'s Manifesto for the agriculture sector, Minister Mustapha said that he is pleased with the overall success and performances within the sector.

During his year-end press conference on Saturday, he said that while the agriculture sector is praised and recognised for the integral role it plays in the production of livestock, cash crops, rice, and sugar, the production of spices in Guyana will be a game changer for the country as well as the region.

He related that although other farmers are cultivating spices in the various regions, the residents of Region One have been significantly concentrating on the production of spices on a large-scale basis, which, according to him, has put the area in a position to be called the 'spice region' of Guyana.

Minister Mustapha said: "Even though we were faced with some challenges, such as El Niňo during 2023, I was pleased that my ministry was able to accomplish all of our Manifesto promises and commitments towards the



Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha

people of Guyana."

In 2023, there was a significant increase in the production of spices, and the delivery of approximately \$30 million in planting materials to farmers from Regions One and Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), who have invested in the cultivation of spices, specifically turmeric, ginger, black pepper, and nutmeg.

"In the other crops also, we have seen a significant increase in ginger production, especially in Region One and some parts of Region Three. To date, we have a total of 250 acres of ginger, which was cultivated between August 2022 and May 2023. Over 216 farmers benefitted from planting materials for turmeric, and we will continue to increase production of the spice as well," Minister Mustapha said.

The agriculture minister further related to the Sunday Chronicle that the Government of Guyana is not just focusing on the coastal plain of the country, but that they are also working to ensure that all Guyanese contribute and play their role in building the food basket of the Caribbean.

"When I took office from the previous administration, the agriculture sector was in a deplorable state; farmers had to take money out of their pockets to buy materials. I am pleased to say that under His Excellency President Ali's leadership, we are ensuring that farmers are given the help that they require to make their lives better.

They are given lands for plants, and grants are facilitated by the government. We are ensuring that plant nurseries are placed in almost every region of Guyana," Minister Mustapha said, adding:

"Going into 2024, we will continue to meet with our farmers to make their lives easier, and I would like to encourage more of our young people to get involved in the sector. The People's Progressive Party/Civic can say in full confidence that we will work with you and see you grow, and together we will once again become the breadbasket of the Caribbean."

Earlier this year, President Ali had revealed during the commissioning of the M.V. Ma Lisha that Region One is capable of producing all the high-value commodities that the 'Twin Islands' may use, such as cage-culture fish, cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, ginger, and turmeric.



We can sell your property for the best price on the market

- PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
- PROPERTY SALES & RENTALS
- REAL ESTATE VALUATION

A Complete Real Estate Service:

- **W** Buying
- **Selling**
- **@ Rentals**
- *<b>⊘* Tax Compliance

Contact: 223-6218, 623-7805, 656-5544

# First ship docks, Friendship Port Facility commissioned

AS Guyana's maritime infrastructure continues to develop, the Friendship Port Facility at Plantation Friendship, East Bank Demerara, welcomed its first ship recently, effectively commissioning the transformative project.

The company's director, Dhaneshwar Shiwram, told the Sunday Chronicle that the construction of a state-of-the-art wharf, mooring facility, and the establishment of a protective revetment was recently completed allowing for docking of ships and vessels within the range of 100 to 150 metres.

He explained that the scope of the project is extensive, with a revetment along the western boundary adjacent to the Demerara River, and fencing to secure the northern, southern, and eastern boundaries.

Inside the compound, there is a reinforced concrete road that facilitates a smooth operation.

"The primary purpose of the wharf facility is to cater to the onloading and offloading of cargo, in addition to serving as a docking point for ships during routine maintenance," Shiwram said.

A noteworthy aspect of the Friendship Port Facility project Shiwram explained is the strategic alignment with the booming oil and gas sector in Guyana.

Recognising the country's emergence as a key player in oil production, he said that the facility aims to play a crucial role in supporting the increased traffic of vessels associated with this vital industry.

Speaking on the potential impact, Shiwram expressed enthusiasm, stating, "We see this project as a great opportunity to serve the fledgling oil and gas sector and the increased traffic of vessels that service the other sector of our economy. Having a project such as this would be beneficial to the country, its government, and the citizens."

He said the MV Atlantic will be a key user of the new facility, utilising it for docking, maintenance, and other essential support services. The vessel, with a maximum draft of 5.5 metres when loaded and 3.5 metres when unloaded, boasts a gross tonnage of 2199.

Further, he noted that in the event that there is no viable candidate for leasing the land and its wharf, the Friendship Port Facility will be opened for business from January 2024.

He said two mobile offices will be installed on the site, and the wharf will be actively used to facilitate the replenishment of goods and services for the company-owned vessel and others. The services provided will include small

maintenance works carried out by vessel personnel, offering a safe berth for ships, and supplying groceries to vessels.

"The company is also looking forward for government and the Craig Good Success NDC to intervene and assist in solving a security gate issue that is affecting progress within the company parameters that also affects achievement of International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) certification," he highlighted.

He explained that the Friendship Port Facility is poised to become a crucial hub for maritime activities, offering a range of services that support the burgeoning demands of the oil sector.



A view of the Friendship Port Facility

# Our Family Caring for Yours

From the flowers on the front lawn to the paintings on the walls, we at Ogden's always consider the comfort and needs of the families that we serve first. We offer services and products that are meaningful and fit comfortably within your budget. Just some of the ways that we as a family care for yours.

Family owned and operated since 1948.



# DFM ]

# anforth Food Market www.danforthfoodmarket.com We're simply the best West Indian store in town.









































**Alcohol Solution** 

50 Sq Ft







121 City View Drive North of Belfield Road, East side of Highway 27 647-547-8188 www.lotusfuneralandcremation.com



Crematorium inside our building!



Seating for more than 500+ guests!



WE CATER TO ALL YOUR CARIBBEAN NEEDS.

All meats halal,

park free environment

**INCLUDING:** 

 Corporate Events • Weddings and other Social Events

Not sure how much food you'll need? WE CAN HELP YOU!

We will suggest the right amount of food to maximize the value of your dollar So you'll have enough food and pay less and have less waste

Full Catering for Hindu religious ceremonies including 7 curry

Delivery to the GTA available 905-949-0663 or email us at

chartiescaribbeancuisine@hotmait.com

3055 Hurontario St. Mississauga, L5A 2G9 www.charliescaribbeancuisine.com

Serving the community for over 30 years you can rest assure that your order will made fresh and with the highest quality ingredients possible.

## AW OFFICE

### CHET SHARMA

B.A., B.S.W. (Hons), LL.B. Barrister, Solicitor & Notary Public

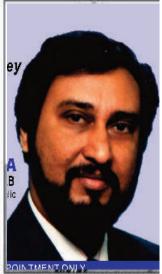
#### **GENERAL PRACTICE**

Immigration Law Criminal Law

Divorce & Family Law

Office: 416-285-1550 Res: 416-284-9191

150 Lawson Road, Toronto ON M1C 2J4



**Chet Sharma** B.A., B.S.W. (Hons), LL.B.

## CHICREADER & FORTUN **ASTRO:** Dayananda



#### **HOPE IS LIFE**

IF YOU HAVE TROUBLES, I HAVE SOLUTIONS 100% REMOVAL OF BLACK MAGIC, **BAD LUCK, EVIL SPIRITS & GIVES** 



**PRIVATE &** CONFIDENTIAL

**ONES BACK** 

Reading, Numerology, Photo Reading, **Horoscope and Lucky Numbers** 

Call Once & See Your Life Change Forever! Specialist in Bringing Loved Ones Back

### **ADS IN EQUALITY WORK!**

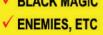


#### **VEDIC SOLUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR**

- ✓ HEALTH PROBLEM
- ✓ MARRIAGE PROBLEM
- ✓ LOVE PROBLEM
- ✓ HUSBAND & WIFE
- ✓ RELATIONSHIPS
- **✓ CHILDREN MISTAKES**
- ✓ EDUCATION PROBLEMS
- ✓ DIVORCE
- ✓ EVIL EYE

√ FAMILY ARGUMENT **FINANCE & BUSINESS** 

- **SEXUAL PROBLEMS**
- **JOB & MONEY PROBLEMS**
- **JEALOUSY & CURSE**
- **VOODU & OBIYA**
- **DARK DREAMS**
- **BLACK MAGIC**





Email: AstroDayananda@gmail.com
CALL AND BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT

MARKHAM RD, SCARBOROUGH, ON M1H 2A4 (INSIDE B4U & PAAN)

## CHARLEY'S CARIBBEAN CUISINE

For all your catering needs

1158 Morningside Ave, Scarborough (at Morningside)

(416) 282-8608

Fabulous authentic Guyanese food. We can't make this for these prices. (Grandma is from Berbice Guyana and knows country Guyanese food - even she will eat it!) Try the dhal puri and okra / shrimp.

### Come savor a savory meal at **Charley's Caribbean Cuisine**







Not sure how much food you need? We'll help you suggest the right amount of food to minimize your cost.

Pork free halal foods. Catering for Hindu releigious events, as well as all Caribbean events





**PARTY TRAYS AVAILABLE!** 

## Six regional hospitals to be operational in Guyana by early 2025

THE foundations have been laid for the country's six new regional hospitals and according to Guyana Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony, the works are expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

Dr Anthony recently explained that these projects are part of the government's plans to upgrade health facilities and add more to the country's stock.

As such, six new regional hospitals are being constructed at Anna Regina, Region Two; De Kinderen, Region Three; Diamond and Enmore, Region Four; Bath, Region Five and Skeldon, Region Six.

Against this backdrop, the minister told members of the media that the foundations for all of these facilities have been completed and infrastructural works will become noticeable in the first quarter of 2024.

"You would see over the next quarter... you would see the infrastructure starting to take shape and [at] all of these six hospitals we are expecting the physical infrastructure to be completed by the end of 2024," he said.

Subsequently, he noted that the equipping of these facilities will be done, thus making the hospitals functional and operational by early 2025.

He noted that these facilities will have 24-hour Accident and Emergency, 24-hour labs, a suite of imaging services including ultrasound, digital X-Ray, and CT scans, along with operation theatres and more.

These six facilities are being constructed through a partnership with China's Sinopharm International and



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony

serve as part of a larger \$37.2 billion initiative that will modernise the regional healthcare system in Guyana.

Meanwhile, the health minister also said that over the past two years the government has done a lot of work on health infrastructure and this year has spent some \$2 billion upgrading 271 health posts and health centres

across the country.

Giving a breakdown, Dr Anthony said that 210 health posts and health centres were upgraded, in addition to 61 accommodation facilities for staff.

As part of these upgrades, the health minister indicated that surgical theatres were added to facilities such as the Diamond Hospital, Aishalton,

Moruca, Mahdia and Mahaicony hospitals, which are all functional.

Further to this, he said: "We are expanding the district hospitals at Kamarang, Port Kaituma, Annai, Karasabai and Sand Creek. So, these projects are on the way [and] by the mid of next year we are hoping they could be completed."

## Bids for electronic health records being evaluated

THE Government of Guyana is currently evaluating bids that were submitted for the provision of a comprehensive electronic health records system here.

Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony made this disclosure during the Ministry of Health's end-of-year press conference, where he noted that throughout the year they have been advancing work in this area.

He said: "This year we have been working on our digital health and we are hoping that by next year we will set up a new department regarding digital health in the ministry."

Added to this, he noted that this will be the ninth programme that will be added to the ministry as he mentioned that quite a number of things have been done on this front.

Dr Anthony added that this year, there have been talks about the integration of a comprehensive electronic health records system and they have had 16 companies so far, bidding to provide this system.

As it is currently, the health minis-



ter noted that evaluators are currently going through those bids to narrow it down to one company with which the ministry will then work to develop the

Earlier in 2023, Adviser to the Minister of Health, Dr Leslie Ramsammy, had said that the government is moving to aggressively transform and digitise the sector.

He noted that moves are being made to transform the sector from a sector that made minimal use of digital technology to one that optimises fully digital technology in improving healthcare in the country.

In June of 2023, Dr Anthony noted that there needs to be a data architecture in place as they are moving in the direction of having electronic health records.

Subsequently the Data Protection Bill of 2023 was presented to the National Assembly and is set to regulate the collection, keeping, processing, use and dissemination of personal data to protect the privacy of individuals concerning their personal data.

# Ali on Veneuzela dispute: We will always be neighbours

REITERATING Guyana's commitment to peace in the ongoing border controversy with Venezuela, President Dr. Irfaan Ali has said that areas of collaboration should be explored as the two nations have many things in common and will always be neighbours.

During a special broadcast programme on Sunday, the Guyanese Head of State spoke about the recent outcome of the meeting he had with his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolas Maduro, and several regional officials.

"I approached the meeting with a clear understanding that Guyana wants first of all peace and stability within this region. We will do everything to ensure that we enjoy peace and stability, the region enjoys peace and stability," President Ali said, while addressing a group of private sector stakeholders.

Over the past months, Guyana's western neighbour had increased its aggressive claims to two-thirds of the country's Essequibo region, a region rich in oil, forestry, and other natural resources.

In December, the two leaders met in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. The meeting was facilitated by the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph Gonsalves, and observed by Brazil, CARICOM, and a UN Under-Secretary-General.

This historic meeting culminated in what is now known as the "Argyle Declaration," an 11-point agreement which addresses matters consequential to the border controversy, including the fact that Guyana stands firm to its position that the substantial case is before the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

"I did not go into the meeting looking at Maduro as someone who is trying to take away two thirds of Guyana. I went to the meeting knowing that I am representing the people of a country, knowing exactly where our position is and knowing that we wanted peace and stability and presenting the case that Guyana is going to continue along the President Ali and President Maduro depath of the ICJ but at the same time we are open to dialogue on all consequential matters," President Ali said.

He maintained that any destabilisation of the peace and stability within the region would not only affect Guyana but all its neighbours.

Guyana is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Any disruption to the peace of this region, President Ali explained could affect the respective economies.

"Brazil for example depends heavily on transportation and logistics. They are one of the major exporters of food and other raw material. They are a major importer of fertilisers and other chemicals," he said.

In fact, President Ali noted that Guyana and Venezuela have the capacity

for collaboration.

"At the end, Guyana and Venezuela will still remain neighbours. We have to work in a collaborative way for the betterment of the region. We have resources that are similar, resources that can be deployed effectively to the energy, security of the region leading to the food security of the region.

Addressing the issue of climate change and these things are all important issues that we have to collaborate on."

Meanwhile, in responding to recent comments from Venezuela regarding the visit of the British offshore patrol vessel, HMS Trent, President Ali maintained that Guyana reserves the right to continue to engage its international partners.

The purpose of HMS Trent's deployment to the Caribbean is primarily to hunt down drug smugglers in the region. The Royal Navy warship usually operates in the Mediterranean and off Africa's west coast as part of a long-term security mission. However, the ship was re-tasked to the Caribbean to clamp down on drug runners.

"We have been working aggressively with our international partners ... we cannot close the door on our international partners. We want our international partners to be actively involved with us in building our capacity, strengthening our institutional system, sharing knowledge, sharing expertise, doing joint exercises and not only aimed at securing our borders but aimed at regional security," he said.

The United Kingdom's (UK)'s decision to send HMS Trent to Guyana is part of a growing effort to show diplomatic support to the country.

During the visit, the crew will conduct joint activities, and provide support in various areas such as tackling piracy, smuggling, protecting fisheries, counterterrorism, providing humanitarian aid, and search-and-rescue operations.

Following the historic meeting,



Flashback: Ali and Maduro in December

clared they will not threaten or use force against one another in any circumstances, including those consequential to any existing controversies between the

They also agreed that any controversies between the two states will be resolved in accordance with international law.

Among other things, Guyana and Venezuela also agreed to continue dialogue on any other pending matters of mutual importance to the two countries, and a commitment was given that both States will refrain, whether by words or deeds, from escalating any conflict or disagreement arising from any controversy between them.

The two nations will also co-operate to avoid incidents on the ground conducive to tension between them. In the event of such an incident, the two states will immediately communicate with one another, CARICOM, CELAC, and the President of Brazil to contain, reverse and prevent its recurrence.

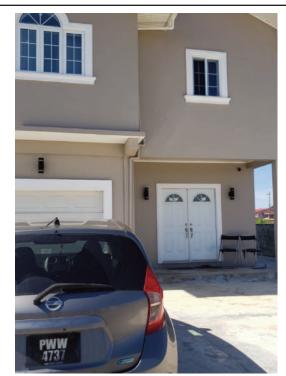
Guyana and Venezuela have agreed to establish immediately a joint commission of the Foreign Ministers and technical persons to address matters as mutually agreed. An update from this joint commission will be submitted to the Presidents of Guyana and Venezuela within three months.

The genesis of the controversy dates back to the 1899 Arbitral Award, a landmark decision that delineated the land boundary between then British Guiana (now Guyana) and Venezuela.

Despite historical arbitration, tensions persisted, leading Guyana to approach the ICJ in 2018, seeking affirmation of the award's legitimacy.

The ICJ's recent provisional measures are binding on the parties involved. Under the UN Charter, all states are solemnly bound to comply with the court's orders, which can be enforced by the UN Security Council.

The substantive case, which highlights the historical context and the 1899 Arbitral Award, remains before the World Court. Guyana enjoys the full, principled and unequivocal support of CARICOM, the Commonwealth and other partners from around the world.



#### Home for sale:

Chesney/Kilroy Corentyne Berbice.

3rd bedroom has ensuite and a walkout private balcony, 3 toilets, central air, 2nd floor laundry room, computerized water filter, automatic gate and garage opener Canadian built, new perkins generator no blackouts ready to move in and start dwelling, concrete yard.

For more information contact via WhatsApp: +592 657 7217 Or call: +1 (905) 595-1813









Anil Kapoor: Amitabh Bachchan was the first to safeguard his identity

# Anil Kapoor tackles identity theft by Artificial Intelligence

Anil Kapoor completed 40 years in Bollywood. On the new year, he briefly commented on his last year's case against AI for unauthorised use of his likeness. Talking to CNN about it, Anil credited Amitabh Bachchan for being the first Bollywood celebrity to safeguard his identity. Anil also highlighted his rights as an actor during the conversation

He said, "You have to protect the bodywork, the kind of person you have, your family and yourself. I didn't take the lead. I think it was Amitabh Bachchan who took the lead in this. I took a step further. Obviously, there's a long way ahead and I'll keep on doing my best, fighting for my rights as a

human being, actor, person, citizen of this country India, as well as the entire planet."

Earlier, Anil won a lawsuit which sought to protect his personality rights with respect to his name, voice, image, likeness, manner of speaking and gestures, and more. Even it included the 'jhakaas' catchphrase. Delhi High Court restrained the misuse of Anil's above-mentioned, for commercial gains.

Justice Prathiba M Singh passed the ex-parte interim order against several websites and platforms on a lawsuit by the actor, alleging unauthorised exploitation of his personality and celebrity rights for commercial use.





ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Something you were tempted to give up on will look a lot more inviting today and you should take that as a sign to carry on with it. By this time next week the cosmic picture will have improved and your attitude will be a lot less defeatist.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Steer clear of other people's disputes and emotional problems over the next 24 hours. There is nothing to be gained by getting involved in dramas you have no way of changing, so keep your distance and let the warring parties sort it out themselves.

**GEMINI (May 22 - June 21):** Mercury, your ruler, ends its retrograde phase today, which should make it easier to persuade colleagues and loved ones to shoulder more of the burden. Both at home and at work you must let others know you are no longer such an easy touch.

**CANCER (June 22 - July 23):** By all means forgive someone who made a silly mistake at your expense but don't forget about it. In similar situations in the future you can and you must watch them closely in case they look like repeating the error, which they most likely will.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Information that comes your way will make it clear that someone you have relied on in the past can no longer be trusted. The reason for the change may or may not be obvious but what is clear is that you need to check everything they say and do.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): As from today it should be easier to convince partners and loved ones that you know what you are talking about. If they are smart they will act on what you tell them. If not, well, they'll get an opportunity to learn from their mistake.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You seem to be remarkably persuasive at the moment and long may it continue. You will know precisely what to say to get people on your side, even people who rarely if ever supported you in the past. Money matters should go well for you too.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You must make sure you know what you are talking about over the next 24 hours. If others get the impression that you are making it up as you go along they won't hesitate to call your bluff and that could be embarrassing if they are correct.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): As mind planet Mercury turns direct in your sign today you will either have a great deal to say for yourself or, conversely, be unwilling to say anything at all. If others are smart they won't interrupt either your speechifying or your silence.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): You appear to have noticed something that those around you have missed and now that Mercury is ending its retrograde phase you can use what you have discovered to get ahead in the world. Only share what you know when it profits you to do so.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Don't let your misgivings about a loved one's plans stop you from supporting them all the way. Even if they have got it wrong the fact that they tried something without relying on you is a very good sign, and next time they will get it right.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): If your sixth sense warns that what someone in authority says today is not completely on the level you must not ignore it. Maybe they are being truthful but the planets indicate there could be something major they are neglecting to tell you.

Our
advertising works!
Try a low cost ad in
Equality News and
reap the benefits of
the only print weekly
newspaper

# First Hindu State Funeral being planned for Basdeo Panday

Former prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago Basdeo Panday will receive a State funeral.

The Panday family has accepted the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's offer of a State funeral, Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley confirmed Tuesday.

It will be the first State funeral conducted under Hindu rites. Panday was the first Hindu to hold the office of prime minister. The last state funeral was that of former prime minister Patrick Manning, which was done under Anglican rites.

The body of Panday, who died in Florida, USA, was expected to be brought back to Trinidad Wednesday night. Implicit in the arrangements for the State funeral is that the cost of this repatriation is being borne by the State.

Among the things entailed in a State funeral are the flying of the flag at half-mast, which began Tuesday, both in Trinidad and Tobago and at missions overseas; military ceremonials, a military honour guard; the official opening of condolence books, one at the Red House, in which the first signature is that of the President, and condolence books at other locations in the country, including the regional corporations and the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) and at overseas missions, with the State taking responsibility for all costs of the funeral. The body normally lies in State in a State funeral, but the Hindu tradition would have to be determined.

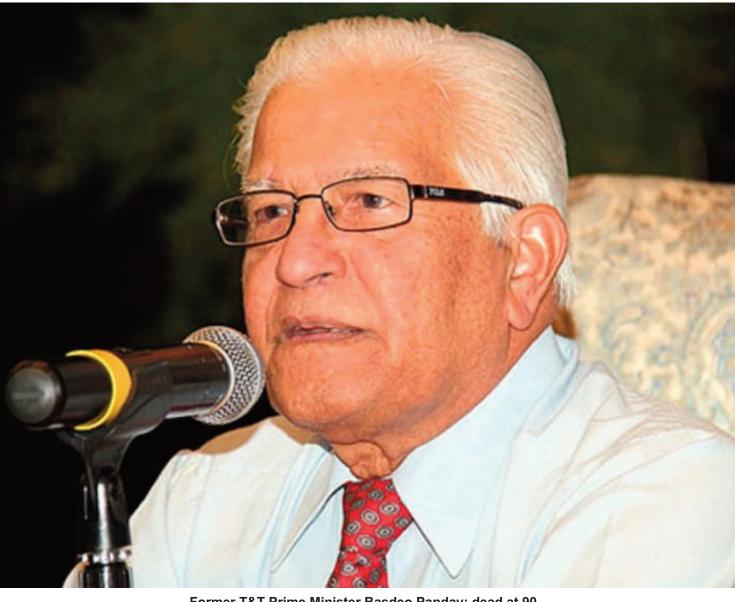
The venue is still being worked out and a date is still to be fixed.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister brushed off criticisms on social media yesterday that his tribute to Panday was "disrespectful" because he failed to mention that Panday was a former prime minister, which some persons on social media deemed to be a "serious omission".

In the remarks. Rowley referred to Panday as an "actor and trade unionist" but never mentioned he was a former Prime Minister.

He wrote: "It is with sadness that I received the news today that the actor, Lawyer, Labour leader and Politician that was Basdeo Panday has passed on.

"This is a man, a citizen, whose impact was felt at every step of the way as he made his mark so indelibly on the people of our nation. Having served the



Former T&T Prime Minister Basdeo Panday: dead at 90

nation for so long and in so many different ways, with such resolve and panache, he can only be recognized as a true believer in this nation and its potential.

"Now that he is no more, we are called upon not just to mourn but to celebrate his life and endeavour to be worthy colleagues of his legacy.

"My condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues."

Asked about this, Rowley said: "There is no issue. I have been in constant communication with Basdeo Panday as a former parliamentary colleague, his wife, his daughter, when I meet them in functions, I greet them with respect. So the minute they needed assistance, they came to the Government and the Government provided the assistance," he said.

Reports are that the Government facilitated the arrangements for Panday to be transported by air ambulance to a Florida hospital, and as part of the

arrangements for him as a former prime minister, the State met the cost of his medical care.

"Basdeo Panday was a former prime minister and he was accorded all the respect and dignity and support from the Cabinet," the Prime Minister said.

Upon news of Panday's death, Rowley assembled a planning committee made up of Ministers Amery Browne, Donna Cox and Symon De Nobriga. Browne is handling the protocol arrangements, "Cox is liaising with the family while Nobriga is ensuring the country is properly informed and up to date," Rowley said.

When contacted Browne said the Government was approaching the funeral arrangements "with maximum sensitivity, with respect for Mr Panday's legacy, as well as the family's wishes and the Hindu rites, in particular.

"This undertaking is being ap-

proached in full respect for the leadership offices that Mr Panday held during his lifetime, including the office of the prime minister," he added.

Asked about venues for the funeral, Browne said venues were being discussed with the family at this time.

"The Panday family has been based in South Trinidad and, therefore, some venues in South Trinidad are being discussed at this time," he said, adding that his ministry has been working very closely with Mickela Panday and the rest of the family, and there will be additional updates.

Panday, 90, died on Sunday evening in Florida where he had been taken in early December. Over the years, Panday underwent a number of heart procedures, including triple bypass surgery and an angioplasty.

He tended to make light of his heart condition, famously saying that if someone saw him and a lion fighting, they should feel sorry for the lion.

## A&B extends recall for passports

In a recent development, Antigua and Barbuda has decided to extend the recall of all machine-readable passports indefinitely.

The move comes as the Prime Minister's Office acknowledges the ongoing impact of global events on the ability of citizens, both within the

country and abroad, to adhere to the previous deadline of December 31, 2023.

The Prime Minister's Office clarified that all citizens of Antigua and Barbuda possessing a Machine-Readable passport can rest assured that their document will remain valid until its expiration. This extension grants travelers more flexibility in light of the prevailing circumstances.

Furthermore, the passport office will continue its commitment to issuing ePassports to new applicants and individuals with expired passports.

To facilitate the transition to

ePassports, which were introduced back in April 2017, the government has made application forms readily available. Interested parties can obtain these forms locally or through Antigua and Barbuda's missions in key international locations such as the USA, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

# **Guyanese-American activist ac**cused of filing false NYPD report

The Guyana Police Force (GPF) has denied accusations made by Guyanese-American political activist Rickford Burke regarding a complaint he allegedly filed with the New York Police Department (NYPD).

Burke claimed that a GPF officer served him with a court summons at his residence last week, prompting his supposed report to the NYPD.

However, the GPF has refuted Burke's claims, stating that there is no record of any such report with the NYPD.

The GPF has released an official statement, asserting that they have reached out to senior officials at the NYPD who confirmed that Burke did not file any complaint against a GPF officer or the process server who delivered legal documents to him in New York.

Despite Burke's public insistence to the contrary, the GPF maintains that there was no wrongdoing in the process of serving these legal documents.

The police force categorizes Burke's allegations as a "fabrication of



Rickford Burke — served with Guyanese summons at his New York residence

untruths" and considers them to be motivated by malice and mischief.

In response to these allegations, the Guyana Police Force has issued a reminder to Burke and others that filing a false police report is illegal.

They underscore their commitment to upholding local and international law in their actions.

Democracy (CGID), an organization headed by Rickford Burke, has fired back at the GPF, accusing them of dishonesty and questioning their credibility.

CGID cited past instances where the GPF had been accused of providing false information.

The organization encouraged Guyanese individuals, both in their The Caribbean Guyana Institute for home country and in the diaspora, to

continue exercising their right to free

Rickford Burke has received a summons to appear in the Vigilance Magistrate's court on March 28th, 2024, in connection with a series of charges.

These charges include incitement of hostility or ill-will on the grounds of race, sedition, inciting public terror, and seditious libel.

#### CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

## Minister alarmed as T&T's birthrate drops

Trinidad and Tobago is facing growing apprehension due to its dwindling birth rate. Health Minister Terrence Deyalsingh has acknowledged that the nation's fertility rate has dipped below the international benchmark.

Minister Devalsingh highlighted a concerning trend where more individuals are opting to postpone parenthood and limit the size of their families.

This shift in family planning choices is seen as a contributing factor to the country's declining birth rate.

The replacement rate, a critical threshold that ensures a country's population remains at its current level, stands at 2.1 births per woman.

However, Trinidad and Tobago is falling short of this benchmark, with a fertility rate of just 1.9. This statistic underscores the gravity of the situation.

Minister Devalsingh emphasized that the declining population is not unique to Trinidad and Tobago but rather part of a broader global trend.

As societies worldwide transition away from agriculture-based economies, the traditional need for arger families to sustain agricultural labor diminshes, aligning with the decreasing birth rates observed globally.

#### **UNICEF** alarmed over Haitian attack on children

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has expressed grave concern over a violent attack on Christmas Day in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince.

The incident, which took place in the Croix de Bouquet district, tragically resulted in the deaths of four individuals, including two young girls under the

UNICEF said four other family members were kidnapped.

This incident is not an isolated case in the troubled neighborhood. Just a week prior, similar attacks were reported, underscoring an escalating pattern of violence.

Reports are that Bruno Maes, the UNICEF Representative in Haiti, highlighted this disturbing trend, noting that between July and September 2023 alone, Haiti experienced 88 serious violations of children's

Among these, 37 incidents resulted in loss of life or injury during armed conflicts.

Haiti's capital is increasingly under the shadow of rampant gang violence. This situation adversely

affects nearly half of the nation's population, with approximately five million people in dire need of humanitarian aid.

The French-speaking Caribbean country is witnessing an alarming rise in major crimes, including homicides and kidnappings, particularly in Port-au-Prince and the Artibonite department.

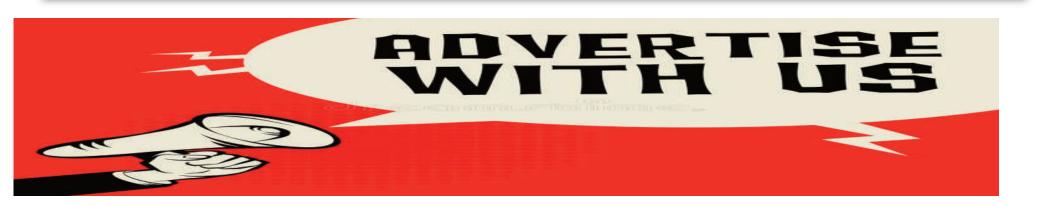
According to reports, the Haitian National Police recorded a shocking increase in homicides, with 1,239 cases reported between July and September 2023.

This figure represents more than double the number recorded in the same period the previous year. Kidnappings have also surged alarmingly, with 701 victims reported, indicating a 244 percent in-

In areas dominated by armed groups, critical institutions such as schools, health facilities, and protection services have not been spared.

These essential services are increasingly becoming targets, adding to the complexities of the crisis.

UNICEF and its partners have consistently advocated for the protection of civilians, especially children and women.



## Ali takes over CARICOM chair, highlights urgency of regional security

Beginning January 1, 2024, Guyana is set to take a significant leadership role in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as President Dr. Irfaan Ali prepares to assume the position of CARICOM Chairman.

This six-month tenure will be pivotal for the region, highlighting Guyana's emerging prominence in Caribbean affairs.

Under President Ali's incoming leadership, there is a strong commitment to furthering CARICOM's strategic priorities.

The focus will be on regional development goals, encompassing a variety of areas, including economic growth, societal well-being, and maintaining peace throughout the Caribbean Community

The emphasis is on harnessing the potential of the New Year to explore and implement targeted programs beneficial to the region.

A key aspect of President Ali's agenda is the enhancement of regional security.

Recognizing the global challenges to peace, CARICOM under Ali's leadership aims to maintain the Caribbean and Latin American regions as Zones of Peace.

The approach involves adhering to international law and resolving border controversies through peaceful and legal means, continuing the efforts made in 2023.

CARICOM is actively working to



Guyana's President Irfaan Ali — new chair of CARICOM

address issues of crime and violence, particularly focusing on the illegal weapons trade through its "War on Guns" campaign.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to ensure peace and stability in member states, notably Haiti, reaffirming the commitment to maintain the region as a Zone of Peace.

Despite challenges such as climate

change, CARICOM member states have shown progress towards reducing the region's food import bill by 25 per cent by 2025.

President Ali highlights the agricultural sector's growth and the need for innovation, stressing the importance of improving regional transportation to support these initiatives.

The outgoing Chairman, Do-

minica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, was commended for his leadership over the past six months.

Looking ahead, President Ali extends an invitation to all CARICOM Heads of State and Government for the 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference, to be hosted in Georgetown, Guyana, in February 2024.

### Fifth person arrested in Paulwell baby murder

A fifth person has been arrested in the murder case of Jamaican politician Phillip Paulwell's 10-month-old daughter and her mother.

Jamaica's Deputy Commissioner of Police Fitz Bailey made the announcement on Thursday during a press conference.

Bailey did not reveal the identity of the person but confirmed that the suspect is male. He was taken into police custody on Wednesday and is to go through an administrative process.

"We are going to ensure that every person who participated in that crime faces justice," Bailey pledged.

"We are committed to that as an organization. It is one of the most gruesome crimes that we have ever seen and we are going to ensure whoever is responsible, it doesn't matter where they hide.

"The Bible talks about even if you spread your bed in hell or in the utmost part of the sea we are going to find the person and bring them to justice," he warned.

Sarayah Paulwell, the 10-month-old daughter of Phillip Paulwell, and her mother 27-year-old Toshyna Patterson went missing from their home on Gilmour



Toshyna Patterson and baby Paulwell

Drive in St Andrew on September 9.

Police later revealed that the mother and daughter were brutally killed and their bodies burnt and disposed of.

Leoda Bradshaw, the United States Navy Officer said to be the mastermind behind the crime, along with her cousin and co-accused Roland Lloyd Balford, were among four persons arrested and charged in connection with the murder.

Bradshaw, who shares a child with Phillip Paulwell, has been charged with two counts of conspiracy to murder, two counts of conspiracy to kidnapping, two counts of kidnapping, and two counts of murder. Balfour faces similar charges.

Both remain in custody and are to return to court on March 6, 2024.

The other two men who were implicated in the double murder were sentenced last month.

Richard Brown, a 31-year-old graphic artist from Kingston, was sentenced to 30 years in prison on each of the two counts of murder. He was also sentenced to one year and 10 months in prison on each of the two counts of kidnapping of the mother and daughter. The sentences are to be served concurrently and he has been ordered to serve 20 years before he is eligible for parole

Brown's accomplice, Roshane Miller, was sentenced to serve seven years and 10 months for each count of accessory before the fact to murder; two years and 10 months for each count of conspiracy to kidnap; and one year and 10 months for misprision of felony. The sentences are to run concurrently.

# Jamaica reports 7.8 % decrease in murders to lowest since 2020

The Jamaica police high command is reporting a 7.8 reduction in murders last year, with the lowest numbers since 2020.

According to statistics, a total of 1,393 murders were reported, which represents a 7.8 percent decline, or 118 fewer, when compared to the 1,511 people killed in 2022 according to the latest police data.

In 2021, there were 1,474 murders, and 1,323 in 2020.

Shootings and reports of wounding also declined across all police divisions last year, the data showed.

There was a 17.5 percent reduction in rapes as well, according to the police statistics.

The police force is also reporting a total of 780 robberies, representing a 15.3 percent drop from the 921 committed in 2022.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness has called upon fellow Jamaicans to take a stand against crime and violence, while reaffirming his administration's unwavering commitment to implementing measures aimed at combating this pressing issue.

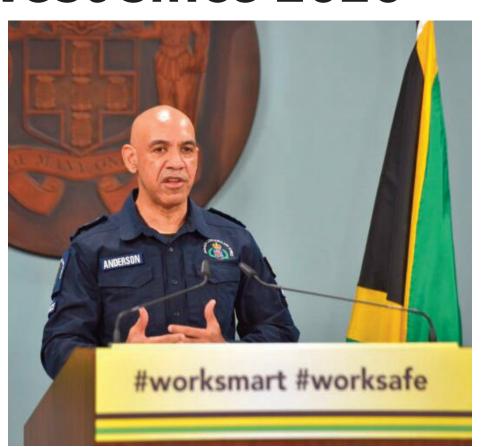
Holness previously shared that his government would persistently pursue strategies to tackle crime head-on.

One of the cornerstones of this approach is a continued investment in enhancing the police force's capacity to investigate and apprehend individuals involved in criminal activities.

Underlining the government's dedication to ensuring public safety, Prime Minister Holness emphasized substantial investments in various facets of law enforcement.

These investments encompassed significant enhancements in the intelligence-gathering capabilities of the police, as well as bolstering their mobility and investigative prowess.

Furthermore, measures have been taken to elevate the police force's commitment to upholding human rights, marking a notable departure from its standing a decade ago.



Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson

### Jamaican tourism pioneer Robert Hendricks has died

A pioneer in Jamaica's tourism industry Robert Hendricks has died.

Hendricks, owner of Caribbean World Vacations, one of the largest destination management companies in Jamaica, died at his home in St. James on December 29. He was 75.

He was ailing for a few months.

Hendricks entered the tourism sector in the late 1970s. He started out as the owner of Lollipop on the Beach in Sandy Bay, Hanover, and then went on to set up Caribbean World Enterprises in St. James.

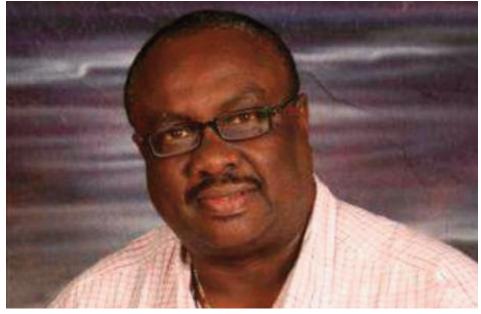
He also partnered in the establishment of the Aquasol Beach Complex in Montego Bay. Years later, he joined the

ground and tour operating company, Tropical Tours in sales and marketing.

In 2020, he was recognized with the Spirit of Independence Award by the St James Municipal Corporation for his outstanding contribution to the tourism sector.

Several tourism stakeholders including Minister of Tourism Ed Bartlett and Opposition Spokesperson on Tourism, Senator Janice Allen, paid tribute to Hendricks for his contributions to the local tourism industry.

Senator Allen expressed her grief, stating, "I am deeply saddened and shocked to learn of Robert's passing. Robert, well known in the industry, par-



Robert Hendricks: passed on December 29 after a short illness



ticularly within the transportation sector, made significant contributions to our tourism product."

Senator Allen noted his numerous contributions to the industry, which notably created many employment opportunities for the people in his parish.

His work with 'Lollipop on the Beach' placed Sandy Bay, Hanover, on the tourism map, as it became a signature attraction and a major employer for the community.

"During this difficult time, our thoughts and heartfelt condolences go out to his family, friends, and colleagues. May his soul rest in eternal peace," stated Allen.

Bartlett, in a release, described Hendricks as one of the pillars of Jamaica's post-independence tourism industry.

"Robert was one of those notable Jamaicans who had an abiding faith in his country and was a firm believer in the contribution tourism could make to its development and the economic life of the people," said Bartlett, noting that Hendricks' contribution to tourism accumulatively spanned over 40 years and that he was a trailblazer in all aspects of the word

"Robert Hendricks was a firm believer in Jamaicans owning a share of the tourism pie and being involved at senior management levels. He demonstrated this as an entrepreneur in the tours, ground transportation, and entertainment subsectors of the industry," the minister recalled.

"He actually revolutionized marketing and sales, pioneering the introduction of tour guides and opening up thinking to different levels of marketing concepts that have been emulated by others in the tourism industry," he added.

Bartlett offered condolences to Hendricks' family and his colleagues.

# T&T CoP: 5% drop in murder rate to 576 in 2023 a 'significant achievement'

WHILE she commended police, stakeholders and the general public for their assistance in combating crime in 2023 to achieve a five per cent reduction in the murder rate, Commissioner of Police (CoP) Erla Harewood-Christopher says she is not satisfied with it.

In her New Year's Day message to Trinidad and Tobago, the top cop said the total number of murders in TT was 576, compared to 605 in 2022.

She called it a "significant achievement" but added, "While a daily homicide count is maintained, there is no statistic that conveys to what extent effective police operations have prevented crime."

She said while a five per cent reduction might be considered small, had the murder rate increased by five per cent, "there (would) be no hesitation in pronouncing an increase.

"Similarly, if there is a decrease of the same magnitude, we should, likewise, be unambiguous in acknowledging that decrease."

However, she sought to make it clear that while the 576 tally was not acceptable, it "certainly is" an improvement.

"This achievement is no indication that I am satisfied or that the TTPS is complacent about the admittedly limited

progress that we have made in 2023.

"In fact, to the contrary, it is my resolve to increase our efforts to develop and implement more innovative strategies that will deliver the results we are targeting in our anti-crime initiatives."

The murder rate decrease, she said, can be credited to detailed planning, clinical implementation and community involvement, which will intensify and be improved upon.

"We are confident that the results are a testament that our strategies are having an impact."

Harewood-Christopher said illegal firearms continue to pose "the gravest threat" to the public as criminals have become more brazen and show no regard for public safety and sanctity of life, including that of children.

Because of this, the police will be "unrelenting" in ridding the country of illegal firearms as each one seized means "multiple lives being saved."

She added that the police's intelligence machinery has been "outstanding" in efforts to reduce transnational crime including human trafficking and child prostitution, as well as dismantling local and regional drug trafficking, among other things.

"I am extremely pleased with the progress we have made in our partner-



**Erla Christopher** 

ships and engagements with our stakeholders, and with the implementation of the several initiatives aimed at building community relationships."

This, she said, will continue in efforts to build public trust.

She said there was no statistic that showed how much worse the crime situation could be in TT if not for police intervention.

"Yet this is an essential effort that consumes a substantial amount of policing resources on a daily basis that goes seemingly unobserved and unappreciated "Understanding the value of this very important work, we will continue to perform it diligently in the interest of the safety and security of all our citizens."

She said she agreed that every life lost was "one life too many" and the police accepted that reducing the homicide rate was "out most urgent mandate and will be our continuing biggest challenge to address in 2024."

The police, she said, believes in continuous improvement and remain committed to getting the job done. This is why, she added, the police was already mobilising resources and "sharply focused on building our capacity and competence to intensify our efforts in order to mount a formidable offence against this national scourge.

"We give the citizens of our beloved country the assurance that the officers of the TTPS will show up for work every day, determined to exert our very best efforts to provide the relief that the public demands and deserves.

"In doing so, we accept your criticism but we also do welcome your support." She invited the public to "be a part of the solution" for 2024.

TT's murder toll for 2024 currently stands at two. A man was shot and killed in Belmont while another was gunned down in Tobago on Monday.

## Kamla's New Year's plan – law and order in T&T

T&T Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar used her New Year's Day message to lay out the UNC's vision and mission for Trinidad and Tobago if it returns to government when the next general election is called. She said this mission begins in 2024.

She began her message by making clear that while she wished all a happy new year, there was nothing to be happy about in reality when one considered "the record" number of murders, home invasions, robberies and other crimes, coupled with a declining economy, new taxes, looming increases in utility rates and an increase in the cost of living.

Pointing to the US Embassy's recent warning to American citizens about travel to TT, and that several communities have been highlighted as danger zones internationally, Persad-Bissessar accused government of giving no assurances to ending illegal drug and gun imports by sealing off "TT's porous borders, improving surveillance, and boosting detection rates."

There are no efforts at improving the inefficient criminal justice system through radical and urgent reform, she

She accused Dr Rowley of hiding from the Opposition, which has been calling for stakeholder-involved crime talks, with him choosing instead to play public relations games with the citizenry.

"At the dawn of 2024, there is no government assurance about a fresh resolve to stamp out criminality and secure our besieged nation. Citizens have been told to fend for themselves.

"I genuinely wish every citizen a happy new year, but I know there can be no happy one unless strategic interventions are urgently implemented to stem the criminality in our land and to fix the broken sectors," Persad-Bissesar said.

#### What UNC will do

The former prime minister said all of TT must work today to improve safety, security, and prosperity for all, if there is to be happiness in the new year and to prevent tomorrow's generation from inheriting a "criminal-run, failed state where the killing of men, women, and children becomes normalised to the point of no return."

She then set out a UNC government's mission.

"I declare today that it is the mission of the UNC to do what this current government is either unwilling or unable to do – restore law, order and prosperity to our great nation."

A safe and prosperous Trinidad and Tobago must be the State's foundation

for its citizens, she said.

"The UNC has been presenting concrete plans and policy alternatives to address our nation's pressing challenges. We are committed to crafting solutions that prioritise the well-being of all citizens, irrespective of background or circumstance."

She then set out the party's objectives:

- \* Passing Stand Your Ground legislation to give right to use lethal force in homes against criminals.
- \* Ensure law-abiding citizens easy access to legal firearms.
- \* Implement judicial and prison reforms, as well as retool the TTPS with modern training, equipment and a competent leadership team.
- \* Bring back Community Comfort Patrols.
- \* Widen funding for educational and training programs including the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme, to ensure youths have access to an education for a better life away from crime.
- \* Eliminate the property tax and other nuisance taxes along with extensive deregulation of the bureaucracy hindering the business sector.
- \* Eliminate unfair and excessively high fines "this Government has imple-

mented to terrorise the population."

- \* Work with the business community and use the full power of the state apparatus to end the scourge of extortion and robberies.
- \* Have an all-of-government approach that accepts addressing crime extends beyond policing and legislative actions.

She said a comprehensive governance component in addressing crime must also encompass social welfare, healthcare, business development, employment opportunities and education.

To further develop effective crimefighting strategies, she said the UNC intends to host public anti-crime consultations in the new year, to which all stakeholders will be invited.

ADVERTISING IN EQUALITY NEWS WORKS. CALL NOW FOR RATES 647-216-2359

# Omar Khan – CWI, players need to find balance for team's good

FORMER TT Red Force and West Indies cricket team manager Omar Khan says the current Cricket West Indies (CWI) administration must find a balance with the Windies players to ensure the best possible teams are represented across the three formats.

Last week, CWI announced a 15man squad to tour Australia for two Test matches from January 17 to 29. As many as seven uncapped players were picked in the squad, with Kyle Mayers, Shai Hope and former West Indies captain Jason Holder all unavailable for the series. TT Red Force captain Darren Bravo rejected CWI's call-up as he is taking a break from the game. CWI lead selector Desmond Haynes said Hope wanted to play more red-ball cricket before returning to the Test arena after a two-year absence. With the 2024 International Cricket Council (ICC) Twenty/20 World Cup six months away, both Holder and Mayers pointed to a preference for the T20 format and opted against the Australia Tests.

"I think this is a communication problem we need to resolve. At the end of the day, you look at the other Testplaying nations and they do not have issues like these," Khan said, pointing to ongoing Test series between India and South Africa, and Australia and Pakistan.

"All of these guys are also T20 players, but they are willing to represent their country in Test cricket too. You have to work out a balance and the (CWI) board has to be able to work out that balance."

Samuel Badree, a two-time T20 World Cup winner with the West Indies, also said CWI needed to address the issue expeditiously.

"It is not the first time players have prioritised T20 cricket ahead of Tests. This is something CWI has dealt with in the past and should expect more of it happening given the proliferation of T20 leagues," Badree said.

"They need to either give more lucrative contracts to secure (the players') services, or perhaps even go the way of England and give multi-year contracts, or unearth more talent to fill the gaps that will no doubt be created."

Khan had two separate stints as the TT Red Force manager from 2003-2007 and 2010-2013, in addition to a mentorship role for the 2023 Regional Super50 tournament. In his second stint with the Red Force, the team won a hat-trick of regional T20 titles from 2011 to 2013.



**Omar Khan** 

The 2013 Red Force team included T20 stars such as Badree, Sunil Narine and former Windies captains Dwayne Bravo and Kieron Pollard. Khan says he understands the heavy pull of T20 leagues around the world, but he also maintains West Indies should be the main priority for the players.

"I understand T20 cricket is where the money is and everybody wants to make money because it is their living. But at the end of the day, they have got to have an appreciation of where they came from. Players came from the West Indies and they represented their countries and then West Indies and that is how they got the recognition to be selected for T20 teams and in T20 franchises around the world."

"It is a communication (issue) and something the board needs to work on to bridge that gap – in terms of the relationship and understanding of what is required from a player who has played because the board has invested money in these players also."

Both Badree and Khan said it is always tough playing Australia at home, and they said experienced players such as captain Kraigg Brathwaite, vice-captain Alzarri Joseph and fast-bowler Kemar Roach will be expected to shoulder most of the burden.

"The players have to ensure they are fit mentally and physically. At the end of the day, it is a great opportunity for these young players to play Test cricket and go out in Australia and make their debut," said Khan, reflecting on a debut century which was scored by 19-year-old Adrian Barath at the Gabba, Brisbane in 2009."



## **Opportunity in Financial Planning, Marketing, Sales and Investments.**

New and growing company seeking people interesting in starting their own business full time or part time.

Free training, coaching and mentoring.

Business presentations Saturdays from 10:00 am to 11:00 am.

Unit 14, 151 Superior Blvd. Mississauga, Ont. L5T – 2L1.

Please call for an appointment.

Daily office hours 9:00 am to 8:00 pm.

### Balbir Bahadursingh. 416 953 6785

balbir.bahadursingh0@gmail.com







## **INJURED? CAR ACCIDENT?**

SLIP AND FALL, ALL TTC ACCIDENTS OR TTC SLIP AND FALL, ALL BUS ACCIDENTS, PEDESTRIAN OR CYCLIST STRUCK BY AUTOMOBILES. VICTIMS OF CRIME.

Talk to us first.

The Accident Injury Law Firm maximizes your

claim and gets you a bigger settlement. No upfront fees and no hidden costs. We don't get paid until you get paid.

For a free consultation in your home, at the hospital or at your office.

Call Richard Mars Hosein at 416-999-3471, Monday - Sunday 9 am - 8 p.m. Over 15 years of excellent service to this community.





# B HALAL MEAT (BAKSH)

EAST & WEST INDIAN GROCERIES 416-261-8564



3160 EGLINTON AVENUE (1 BLOCK WEST OF MARKHAM ROAD)

## The Shame of Gaza

#### by Donald Ramotar

Down the corridors of the centuries future generations would ask of this generation of human beings, what kind of people we were? This question would spring from what is happening in Gaza today. At the time of writing some 22,000 civilians have been killed by the bombing of Israel on the tiny strip of land some twentyone mile long and four miles wide. Some 60,000 are seriously injured. The victims are mainly children and women. These figures change significantly on a daily basis.

More bombs have been dropped there in two months than was dropped in Afghanistan in twenty years; or those dropped in Dresden in Germany or in Japan during the second world war

In addition to the dead and injured the destruction is horrendous. Of the 2.4 million people in the Gaza, 2 million had their homes destroyed by Israel's bombs. Places to bury the dead have run out and people are being put into mass graves.

The Fascist Netanyahu regime is even using food as a weapon. By preventing food and medicine from going into the strip people are starving and diseases are on the rise.

Medical staff at the very few hospitals that can function are forced to do amputation without anesthetic. It is a gruesome situation with one calamity after another.

Apart from the general slaughter that is taking place, Israel's armed forces are doing targeted killings. Doctors, nurses, and emergency health workers are being murdered on a daily basis while hospitals are routinely bombed over and over again to ensure that they are non-functional.

The other group which appears to be a high priority for assassination are Palestinian journalists. At the time of writing more than 105 have died since October 7, 2023. Clearly Israel and its allies do not want the world to see what is happening, therefore, they have resorted to killing journalists in the Gaza while refusing entry to others.

Despite this humanitarian disaster the United States and some European member states have been opposing a cease fire in Gaza. They chose to facilitate the massacre.

More than that those states have been supplying arms to Israel including huge bombs to kill Palestinians. This is even though Israel has the fourth largest army in the world and is very equipped. It is one of the countries that export weapons and military/intelligence technologies such as the Pegasus spy equipment capable of hacking any phone or computer. It is well supplied with ultra-modern weapons from the West mainly Germany and the United States.

Israel has 169,500 active personnel in its army, navy, and paramilitary.



22,000 civilians, including many children, have been killed in Gaza

It has 465,000 reservists.

It possesses 2200 tanks; 540 artillery pieces; 196 F-16; 83 F-13; 30 F-35 airplanes; 142 Helicopters of which 43 are Apache attack gunships; 5 submarines and 49 patrol boats.

It also has a very modern air-defense system known as the Iron Dome and last and most dangerous it has nuclear weapons, which it is threatening to use in Gaza.

Yet the U.S. keeps supplying this army on the grounds that they are fighting a "war". These supplies are in addition to the US \$38 billion in military dispersed annually at U.S \$3.8 billion per year based on an agreement which was signed by President Obama in 2016.

The Palestinians have no army, no tanks, no planes, no helicopters. Whatever missiles they launch they make in a very primitive way in the Gaza, they are kitchen made.

Therefore, it is clear that this is not a war against Hamas, as they disguise it to be. This is a war against the people of Palestine. The main objective is to force the Palestinians off their lands, to ethnically cleanse them from Palestine, by killing or by forced migration. This is naked fascism.

Western powers are having their masks removed by their support for this genocide. All the talk about human rights and freedom of speech lie in pieces in the rubble of Gaza.

All the talk about international law and respect for international institutions have been bulldozed in the bloody streets of Gaza.

Indeed, they have not said anything about the more than 100 UN personnel that have died in the Gaza. No protection for anyone. Israel is defended and act with impurity because of the support from "Western Democracies".

Clearly human lives are not the priority for those states that support Israel. They have lost all moral authority in our troubled world. Their integrity is soaked in the blood of the women and children of Palestine.

The Arab world too has displayed a cowardice and an uncaring attitude towards the industrial scale killings taking place on their doorsteps, that is unprecedented.

Faced with one aircraft carrier which the US placed in the area to threaten them, they have remained with their tails firmly between their legs. One wonders why they spend such huge sums of money buying arms and yet refuse to go to the assis-

tance of an unarmed people.

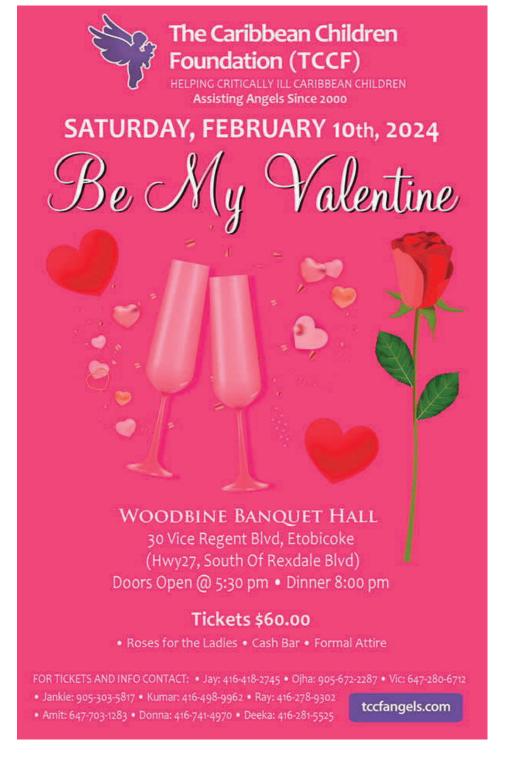
The Palestinians are mainly being helped by non-governmental forces. Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen have provided invaluable solidarity to the besieged residents in Palestine.

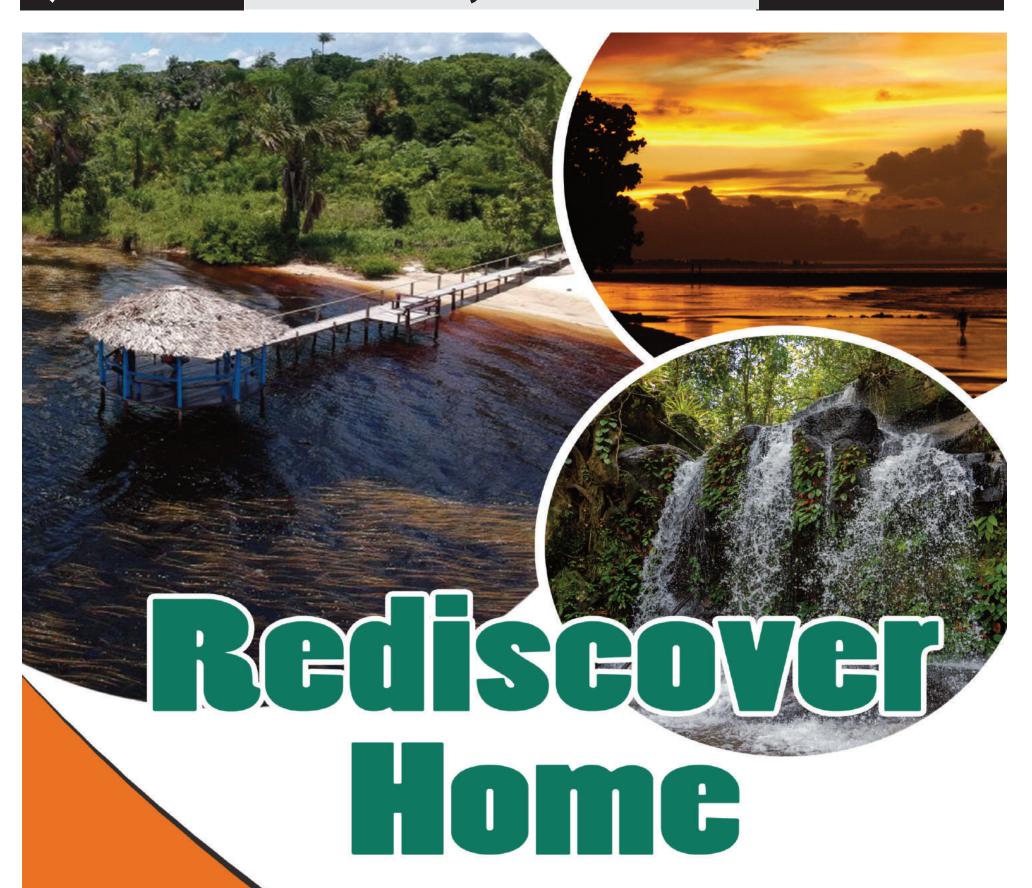
For us in the south our leaders content themselves by occasionally making a statement or two. Some feel that they have no responsibility because the Arab world is not doing much.

The country that is saving our humanity is the Republic of South Africa. From the very beginning this nation and its people have stood up in real solidarity with the Palestinian people. They were among the first to break diplomatic relations with Israel and now they have taken the bold step to take Israeli leaders to the International Criminal Court.

This has given progressive and democratic people the world over hope that our brothers and sisters, our comrades in South Africa are standing up for our common humanity. Future generations will hail these actions of South Africa as one of the only redeeming feature of our generation!

Donald Ramoutar is a former President of Guyana





It is time for a



**VACATION** 

SCAN FOR MORE



A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step!



www.guyanatourism.com