

PROFILE of The Week

By Dr. DHANPAUL NARINE

President Obama Sends Message to Guyanese 9/11 Event

But Where Were the Guyanese Government Officials?

The message from President Barack Obama was clear: he sympathized with the Guyanese community on the loss of its 25 nationals at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Guyana's loss, per capita, ranks among the highest for the countries that were affected by the tragedy.

Mr. Obama's message was read by Congressman Gregory Meeks at a 9/11 Memorial event that was held in Queens, New York. If the President of the United States could see it fit to recognize the Guyanese victims and their families why couldn't the Guyana Government? This question was asked by many attendees who wondered why the Guyanese Ambassador to the US, the Consul General to New York, and other officials from the Government were absent.

The absence of recognition by officialdom in Guyana follows a pattern of neglect that may have its genesis long before the World Trade Center tragedy. It is well known that Guyanese politicians treat New York as a money tree and would spare no opportunity to make special trips to New York to collect sums of money for their political and other campaigns.

Once they are installed in office they are never around, not even to say 'thank you.' How many times didn't politicians from Guyana make all sorts of promises to the diaspora? How many times did they not invite you to visit them in Georgetown for constructive engagement?

How many times

did you not take the trouble to visit their offices only to be told that the 'minister has just stepped out' and he or she can't see you? How many times didn't the Heads of State and other Ministers invite you to return to Guyana 'to serve your country' and when you get there they don't know what to do with you?

During each election

but the diaspora would be hard put to point out three of its suggestions that have been incorporated into national policy in Guyana.

It was during one of these note-taking sessions in New York in 2003 that the suggestion

ories of the fallen Guyanese. Both suggestions were described as good and doable but we are still to see a Guyanese Head of State at a 9/11 event in New York.

At the 9/11 Memorial event in Queens in 2016 US Congressman Grego-

Mentis, Astrid Sohan, Sarah Khan, Rudy Bacchus, Amarnauth Latchman, Pamela Boyce, Bhowanie Devi Khemraj, Marcus Neblett and Charles Gregory John.

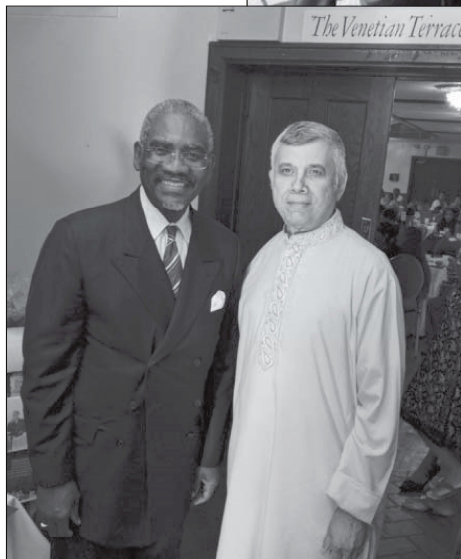
It is to the credit of Indra Seet and her Stars International Band that

Mr. Milan stated that we should stand united while Carl Dash said that we should continue to hold these gatherings in remembrance. Lyn Tiwari, also known as Golin and Ms. Seeta Rai worked at the World Trade Center; they extended best wishes to all the victims and their friends and relatives. Satnam Singh Parhar said that we should reflect on the importance of the day and work for peace.

Congressman Gregory Meeks was introduced by community activist, Mike Duvalle. Mr. Meeks stated that people from all walks of life perished and that there were many



Indra Seet (third from left) was the main organizer of the 9/11 Memorial Service in Queens, New York.



Congressman Gregory Meeks and Dr. Dhanpaul Narine. Mr. Meeks brought a special message from President Obama to the 9/11 Memorial Service.

cycle in Guyana the diaspora would give thousands of dollars to various political parties. The standard response when collecting the cash would be the same, 'Comrades, let us know your concerns and we will take them into consideration.' At question time there is copious note-taking

was made that the Guyanese President should visit Ground Zero. He would pay his respects and meet with the families of the victims as other world leaders were doing. Another suggestion was for the Guyana Government to build a Memorial in Georgetown to honor the mem-

ry Meeks as well as Public Advocate Ms. Leticia James and Assemblyman Mike Miller turned up in person to bring messages while Mayor Bill de Blasio and Governor Andrew Cuomo sent their representatives. Where was the Guyanese Ambassador to the United States or the Consul General to New York? You do not need an invitation to attend your own event!

In the fifteen years that have passed the memories of those that perished remain as fresh as ever. These Guyanese heroes are: Nizam Hafiz, Anette Dataram, brother and sister Ronald and Kamini Singh, Shiv Shankar, Patrick Adams, John Charles, Babita Guman, Sita Sewnarine, Joyce Stanton, Patricia Stanton, Kris Romeo Bishundat of the Pentagon, Vavanah Thompson, Hardai Parbu, Ameen Rasool, Ricknauth Jaggernauth, Shivonne

she has kept up the observances every year. She has invited families and the wider community to keep the memories of the victims alive. The 2016 Memorial Service was no exception. Rahmi Khan began by singing the American anthem beautifully and this was followed by the anthems of India, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Pastor Lionel Etwaroo brought greetings and extended his sympathy to the survivors of the 9/11 tragedy.

There were appropriate songs that were accompanied by the Band and speeches by various dignitaries. Public Advocate Leticia James said that we must not forget those that lost their lives, including the police and firefighters. 'We must continue to pray for those that are ill and ask that the government be responsible and provide help to them,' Ms. James said.

people that made the ultimate sacrifice to go into the building to rescue others. He said, 'I am proud to represent this District because its diversity makes our country work. We have to stand together to show the world that we care. I wish to say to this community that the President of the United States Mr. Barack Obama sends his greetings to this event. He wants us to know that we are stronger together.'

There were also greetings from Governor Cuomo that was read by his Queens representative, Hersh K. Parekh. Governor Cuomo also called for peace and unity. Dr. Dhanpaul Narine said that the watchwords should be respect and tolerance and he congratulated Indra Seet for arranging a wonderful program.