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NEWS RELEASE – FROM THE SVG INDIAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION- INDIAN HERITAGE DAY OCTOBER 7TH 2022

The President, members of the Executive and the Indian community of SVG and the Diaspora will commemorate INDIAN HERITAGE DAY on Friday October 7th 2022.

Indian Heritage Day received recognition on March 26th 2007, on the recommendation of then Minister of Culture Hon. Rene Baptiste; the Parliament, with full support, passed an Act declaring June 1st Indian Arrival Day and October 7th Indian Heritage Day.

History tells us that following the abolition of slavery in 1838, there was a shortage of labour as many of the newly freed slaves refused to work on the estates. Between the years 1861 and 1880, eight (8) ships arrived from India bringing a total of 2,474 Indians. They lived on twenty three (23) estates in St Vincent.

Prior to arriving in St Vincent their homeland India had fine cities, splendid buildings, temples and untold riches. But India was taken over by a foreign country Britain, and millions of people suffered greatly until their Independence in 1947.

Some of the persons who were brought to the Caribbean from India were kidnapped, lied to, forced to leave their homeland, due to famines and other hardships, while others were promised good wages, proper accommodation and a comfortable life in a new country.

Their journey on the ships from India to St Vincent, which lasted months, was terrible and conditions on the estates to which they were assigned were harsh. They worked long hours in the hot sun, under deplorable conditions, received low wages or none at all. Other amenities that were promised to them were not provided, and they suffered immensely on the estates.

They bore their suffering until on October 7th 1882, fifty (50) barefooted Indians from Argyle estate laid down their cutlasses and hoes and marched all the way to Kingstown in defiance of the estate manager Mr Mc Kenzie and the laws of St Vincent to take their grievances directly to the Lieutenant Governor.

On their way to Kingstown, seven (7) miles away, they were joined by more Indians from Calder, M Pleasant, Stubbs, Diamond, Ratho Mill, Golden Vale, Harmony Hall, Carapan, Happy Vale, Belair, and Arnos Vale.

This march by labourers was the first of its kind in the history of Kingstown, which was overrun by protesters, who were all Indians. It was also the first recorded protest march by workers in the capital. Protests by estate workers in the form of strikes and riots on the estates were held before this, but this was the first in Kingstown. The Indians made their voices heard and new relations between estate and Government authorities were established.

The SVG Indian Heritage Foundation recognizes the struggles, sacrifice, hard work and dedication of our ancestors. We cherish and preserve the legacy they have left us; their off springs, and we continue to build on the foundation they laid.

The mandate of the SVG Indian Heritage Foundation is “to represent the interest of the East Indian community of SVG and those in the Diaspora. It aims to instil a greater sense of pride in our heritage and culture. It seeks to create opportunities for Indo-Vincentians to learn more about, and preserve their history, to create and strengthen relationships, and to improve all other aspects of the Indian community.”

This year a special feature has been added to Indian Heritage Day., as we continue to record the stories of Outstanding Indians in the Diaspora. We are pleased to present a 3rd set of interviews. Eight will be presented during the months of October and November, one each week, starting with:

Dr Gideon Lewis, USA, Dr Rudi Bailey, USA, Shawn Bullock, Canada, Peter Moore, USA, Sydney Bacchus, U.K. Elva Nanton, U.K.

Work is also being done to place the ships' lists on the website, so anyone with some information can check their ancestors' records.

We also encourage you to trace your ancestry through the various sites. You will be amazed and deeply touched by your findings.

Happy Indian Heritage Day 2022!!!!

To all our friends and supporters, please also join us as we commemorate this historical day by wearing something Indian and eating some Indian food on Friday October 7th 2022.

Share your photos /videos of your outfits and food with us by sending them to Mr Colvin Harry, PRO of the SVGIHF at:

colvinharry@yahoo.co.uk

WhatsApp 1 784 530 9864.

Thanking you.

Yours truly,

Junior Bacchus

President of the SVG Indian Heritage Foundation

President Junior Bacchus, First Vice President Dave Baptiste, Secretary Luann Hadaway, Vice President Culture Denzil Bacchus, Vice President Regional Coordinator Elliot Thomas, Assistant Secretary Anna Insanalli, Treasurer Cheryl Rodriguez, PRO Colvin Harry