



# ANTHONY N. SABGA AWARDS E-NEWS



THE  
ANTHONY N. SABGA  
CARIBBEAN AWARDS  
FOR EXCELLENCE

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## *Science and salvation: Laureates at work*



*Prof Paul Teelucksingh (2011)*



*Prof Patrick Hosein (2015)*



*Prof Suresh Narine (2015)*

As our Eminent Persons Panel enters its deliberations this weekend to determine the laureates for 2017, we are pleased to present in this issue of E-News the achievements of three of our already-named laureates in their various fields of endeavour: computer science and engineering, medical research, and material science, or more specifically science-driven agricultural commercial activities.

The three stories focus on the activities of science laureates: two of the most recent (2015), Profs Patrick Hosein of Trinidad & Tobago, and Suresh Narine of Guyana; and Paul Teelucksingh of Trinidad & Tobago (2011).

These men have fully vindicated the belief of

their country committees and the EPP that they had their major achievements still ahead of them. Their projects include the formation of the English-speaking Caribbean's first "Think Tank" in Trinidad; the continuing transformation and growth of the Guyanese economy through science, as new sustainable agri-products are created for export; and finally the launch of a public health initiative focused on the prevalence of diabetes in Trinidad & Tobago.

We remind laureates that part of our mandate is to continue to support and publicise your work, and we hope you share with us new projects, new achievements, and enterprises, so we might assist in their dissemination. Knowledge is useless unless it's shared.



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## *Paul Teelucksingh and Diabetes in Trinidad & Tobago*



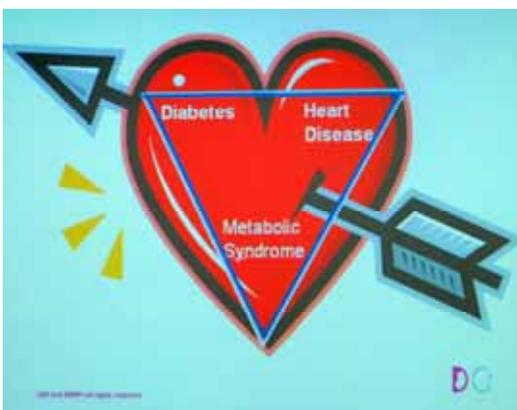
Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions in Trinidad & Tobago, said Prof Paul Teelucksingh, and complicates 20 percent of pregnancies here. He was speaking at the launch of the newly created Health in Pregnancy Trinidad & Tobago computer app (HiPTT), and the DO IT! campaign, last week.

The app will be hosted on Microsoft's Azure cloud platform and will provide real-time data for patients, doctors and researchers. It marks a

quantum leap in the collection of data and their availability to patients and researchers. Patients can receive information on their cell phones as text messages or images on smart phones.

The initiative was a result of a collaboration between Prof Teelucksingh's research project the Diabetes Education, Research, and Prevention Institute, (DERPI), and several partner agencies including Microsoft, Cariri, the Rotary Club, the National Gas Company, the Community Chest, Caribbean ICT Research Programme, and the 2001 Carpet House.

Prof Teelucksingh is the ANSA Caribbean Awards 2011 Science & Technology Laureate. He is medical doctor and Professor of Medicine at UWI, Mt Hope.



## *Suresh Narine and The Guyana Experiment*



The problem with tourism, says Prof Suresh Narine, is that its benefits do not accrue to the community. One exception is the Macushi model, designed by Sydney Allicock (ANSA Laureate, 2010). But the norm is countries like Barbados, Jamaica, St Lucia and Tobago.

Prof Narine is

proposing that the solution lies in science. Three recent projects in Guyana, steered by the Institute of Applied Science (IAST), of which Narine is director, have seen commercially produced food and personal care products for local consumption and export to the Caribbean and North America.

One item is produced in a fully vertically integrated operation which makes sun-dried tomatoes and salad dressing called Pakaraima Flavours, for their origin on the slopes of the Pakaraima mountains. The other item is the Morning Glory brand of rice-based cereals and food products. A factory to commercially produce the rice-based products is set to open this year.

Away from food agriculture is the Rupunini Essences product line, the active ingredients of which are the oil extract of the crabwood tree and the essential oils from lemongrass. The crabwood oil is



known for its anti-viral, emollient, insect repelling, anti-bacterial and salubrious qualities.

It is being marketed locally, regionally and internationally as the Luxury Personal Care Brand, The Rupunini Essence. It includes personal care items like sanitisers, cleansers, and beauty oils. These highly marketable products have a strong environmental sustainability component. The profits from their sale curtails logging activity so as to ensure a sustainable supply of the all-important crabwood oil. This will assist in curtailing deforestation and encourage environmental stewardship by the communities.

In addition to using science, the IAST is also teaching it to Guyanese, educating them in technology, basic chemistry and production methods, quality control, marketing, business plan-creation, and accounting, to service the small industries its graduates are setting up throughout the country. It takes 15 trainees at a time, and so far has graduated about 30, who pass on the knowledge in their communities.



## *TTLab: The Caribbean's first Think Tank*



An essential component to development in any society is innovation. This has been a major focus of Trinidadian computer scientist Prof Patrick Hoesin's career and advocacy.

A MIT scholar, Prof Hosein worked with some of the major players in the field in the early days of the Internet and cellular communications technology: Bell Labs, AT&T and Hua Wei. He has several patents registered via these companies, and his work is integral to their products.

When he returned home to the University

of the West Indies, St Augustine, he realized the resources allocated and attitudes to innovation were not the ones he knew. When he saw one student whose talents were being wasted in the Computer Science department, he decided to act. He offered the student a salary to do nothing but research to see whether he could produce a publishable paper in three months. The student produced four papers in a year and TT Lab (<http://lab.tt/>) was born.

Today, a little over a year later, TTLAB has 19 fellows and has produced 15 peer-reviewed papers. This is a phenomenal output by any standard for a startup institution. Another remarkable thing about TT Lab is that it is funded entirely by Prof Hosein's company TTNIC (Trinidad & Tobago Network Information Centre), which manages the domain name .tt.

The design and functioning of the enterprise is also markedly different from the Caribbean approach. TTLAB has no offices, no bureaucracy, and no physical location. Its fellows are selected by Hosein on the basis of talent and research potential. Once accepted they are given grants and sent to do their research on their own time, in their own space, and at their own speed. Scholarships are also given to postgraduate students.

The results have been encouraging.

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