

Getting into the Bollywood groove



By Brock Weir

Our forebears may have come to Canada at different times, and in different vessels, but we're all in the same boat now.

That is the message shared with the community by members of the York Regional Police and representatives from various community groups on Saturday at a special celebration kicking off Asian Heritage Month.

Over 200 people, including dignitaries such as Michael Chan, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Newmarket-Aurora MP Lois Brown, and representatives from multiple Asian communities filled the atrium of the YRP's headquarters on Don Hillock Drive for a colourful display of drums, a lion dance, tai chi, and a burst of Bollywood.

While it was an occasion to celebrate Asian Canadian trailblazers within the police force, it was also a solemn occasion to remember unfortunate cases from Canada's past which were a far cry from the day's theme of communities working together.

The upcoming 100th anniversary of Komagata Maru incident, which turned away over 350 immigrants seeking a new life on the Pacific Coast, as well as the Chinese Head Tax and the internment of Japanese Canadians were paid particular attention.

"We came to this country for two reasons: one, to have a better life, and to build this nation together," said Gobinder Randhawa of Gursikh Sabha Canada. "Someone said we all came at different times in different boats, but now we are all in the same boat. We have to work together. I think when we celebrate a month like this, we like to understand each other, each other's values and cultures so we respect each other better and we work together better."

Added York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe: "These opportunities for collaborative growth and learning about the communities we serve have proven valuable time and again. In celebrating this year's event, we also recognize the daily contributions made by many members of our police service of Asian heritage or past and present civilian and sworn. I am so proud that so many YRP members continue to serve as role models to youth considering a career in policing in a vibrant and cosmopolitan community."

"In showcasing and celebrating Canadians of Asian heritage, we all recognize that even though we formally celebrate Asian Heritage in the month of May, each and every day presents opportunities for reflection and acknowledgement of the many unique legacies of Asian Canadians that have been and continue to be a significant part of building our great nation - the Nation of Canada."