

Cheddi Jagan commemorative stamps launched at Ministry of the Presidency

By [Staff Writer](#) May 3, 2018

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A month and two weeks after the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre (CJRC) had anticipated launching stamps to mark the 100th birth anniversary of the late President, Dr Cheddi Jagan, the First Day Covers and stamps were launched yesterday at a simple ceremony at the Ministry of the Presidency.

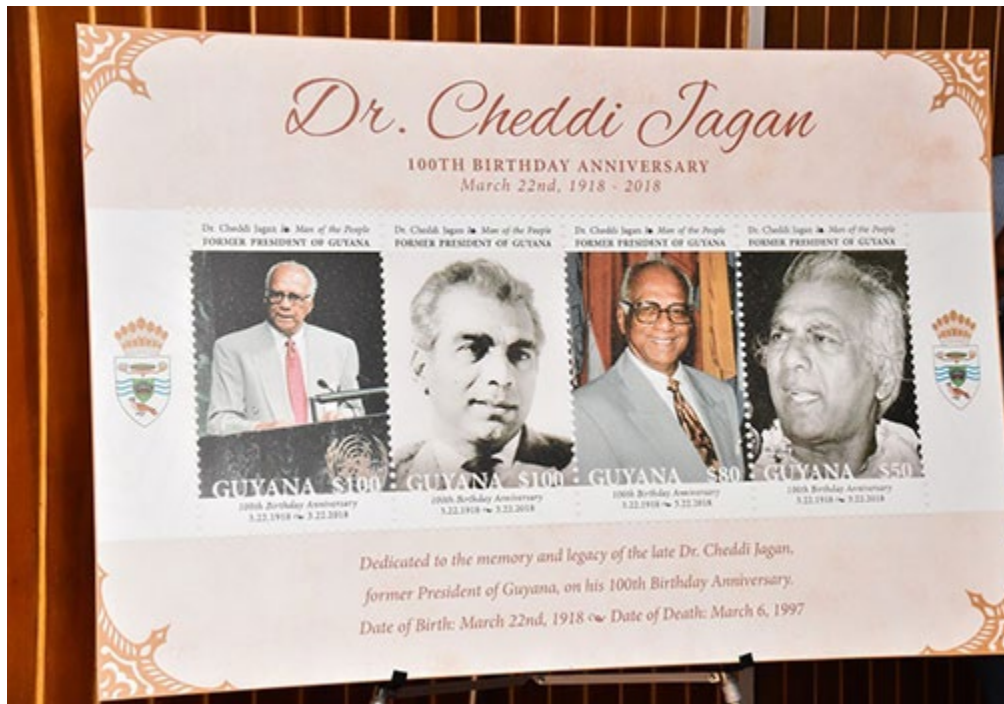
The event took place in the presence of Jagan's sister, Dr Barbara Jagan-Fries and her daughter Dr Dionne Fries, and his nephew Dr Kyle Jagan, board Chairman of the Guyana Post Office Corporation (GPOC) Reverend Murtland Massiah and Post Master General Karen Browne, staff members of the CJRC and representatives of the local philatelic society.

No Government minister was present at the event. The event was scheduled on a day that Cabinet was meeting and this will be seen in some quarters as a slight to Jagan and a deliberate act. Minister of State Joseph Harmon did leave yesterday's Cabinet meeting for talks with a prospective investor.

The event was presided over by Jagan's former aide-de-camp, Colonel Francis Abraham, who said the late president was one of the main architects of "our national liberation struggles and someone who was in the forefront of Guyana's independence."

Noting that the CJRC initiated the process with the GPOC to have the stamps produced to mark the centenary on March 22, he said, unfortunately, it was not launched then as intended but yesterday's event was no less significant.

It was always Government's position, he said, that Jagan should be honoured in recognition of his life of national service and for his personal sacrifices. Jagan's centennial had approached without the APNU+AFC government making any arrangements for its observance prior to the CJRC plans.



It was decided, Abraham said, "that the launch of the stamp would not merely be a postal event, but one that would have the approval of the National Awards Committee as these stamps are indeed national symbols."

It was also decided, he said, that the launch would be done at the Ministry of the Presidency where Jagan served as the third Executive President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and was Commander in Chief of the armed forces until his death.

On a personal note, Abraham said, for the time he served Jagan, he "witnessed first-hand his humbleness, dedication and unswerving commitment to the development of Guyana."

The initial launch was postponed, the CJRC had alleged, because of political interference, and Public Telecommunications Minister Cathy Hughes had referred Stabroek News to the Ministry of the Presidency for comment on the issue when she was contacted.

The Ministry of the Presidency in a subsequent statement had said that national symbols would be announced shortly to commemorate the lives of both Jagan and the late President Arthur Chung. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of both former Presidents.

The statement quoted President David Granger as saying that the Cabinet had decided that commemorative stamps, which are national symbols, must adhere to national criteria and that such symbols “must not be used for private, partisan or political messages, but ought to be used for national purposes.”

The statement had said the national symbols to celebrate their lives would be set “within the context of set criteria for honouring eminent Guyanese.”

Massiah, in brief comments said, the occasion was a “defining” one befitting Jagan who was placed by the Creator in Guyana at a time of national struggles and the nation should “remain eternally grateful that Dr Jagan was born in Guyana.”

Meanwhile, chairman of the CJRC board of directors, Hydar Ally gave a brief historical overview of Jagan’s life.

Ally said it was Jagan’s resolve to free “his people from the yoke of colonialism and poverty that really distinguished him from others of his time.” For many, he said, “he is regarded as the Father of the Nation.”

A highly respected statesman, he said, Jagan’s call for a New Global Human Order was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Author of several books, including *The USA in South America*, *The Caribbean Revolution and the West On Trial*, he said, the CJRC was committed to preserving and promoting Jagan’s rich legacy.

It was against that background, Ally said, the CJRC approached Government to have the stamps to honour Jagan’s birth anniversary. Collectors’ items are, he said, “an excellent way to connect with people not only in Guyana but further afield.”

The limited edition stamps are available at the cost of \$50, \$80 and \$100.

The Ministry of the Presidency in a statement yesterday said that despite claims to the contrary made by the Leader of the Opposition, Bharrat Jagdeo, he, along with members of the Opposition, including Zulfikar Mustapha, Ally, Indra Chandarpal, Komal Chand and Neil Kumar were invited to the ceremony by the CJRC as part of the agreement where they would be provided with printed invitations by the Ministry of the Presidency and would in turn issue those invitations to their invitee list. The CJRC in turn provided that list of invitees to the Ministry of the Presidency on April 30, 2018 to ensure their smooth access to the venue, the statement added.

Jagan was born on March 22, 1918 at Port Mourant to sugar workers, he had his secondary education at Queen’s College. In 1942, he gained a degree in dental surgery from the Northwestern University Dental School in Chicago, USA and simultaneously a bachelor’s of science degree from the Central YMCA College. On August 5, 1943, he married Janet Rosenberg. He was father of two children, Joey and Nadira.

On his return to then British Guiana, Jagan spearheaded the formation of the Political Affairs Committee, the forerunner to the PPP which was founded on January 1, 1950. In 1953, from April to October, he headed the "short-lived elected government." He headed the second and third elected PPP governments during the 1957 to 1964 periods. From 1964 to 1992 he served as the Leader of the Opposition until October 5, when he was elected the country's third Executive President.