

## WOMEN'S DAY

Be yourself and work hard, women are advised

ALLISHA GAYAPERSAD

### Never give up on your dreams

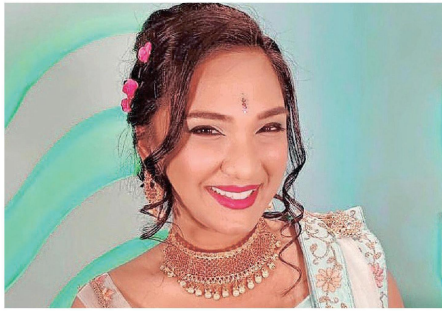
TAMASHA KHANYI  
tamasha.khanyi@ini.co.za

ALLISHA Gayapersad believes women are capable of doing anything they want. "I believe you can take on the hardest battles in life with a smile if you have determination, discipline, commitment and courage."

Born and raised in Merebank, Durban, the 25-year-old is a television presenter on *Sadhana*, a Hindu TV series that airs on SABC 3 on Sundays at 7.30am.

Gayapersad is also the production co-ordinator at African Lotus Productions and a freelance content producer for Cordova Media.

"On the sidelines, I choreograph and



perform dances for different occasions, and I am an MC for events," she said.

Gayapersad is a former news anchor for the community radio station, Hindvani. She said her love for presenting started with a passion for film and television.

"At a young age, I started dancing

as a hobby. This grew into my liking for the camera. I would always tell my sister that I wanted to be on TV."

This led her to pursue a BA degree in media and cultural studies, and drama and performance studies from UKZN. She has a BA Honours degree in media studies from Unisa.

Gayapersad said she lived by a quote of former US first lady Michelle Obama: "There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish."

Gayapersad said: "Women have a reputation for downplaying their own strengths, and that has to change because being a woman is a strength by itself."

"Strive to reach your goal. Never give up on your dreams no matter the obstacles, because it is only when you put action towards your vision that you reap the benefits."

Gayapersad said she was inspired by actress Nora Fatchi.

"She is popularly known for her work in the Indian film industry and has taken entertainment to greater heights. Nora also presents a blend of diverse cultures and embraces her Moroccan roots."

"She infuses the Afro style of dance from places such as Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana, with Bollywood dance. Likewise, I also embrace my roots."

Gayapersad encouraged young women to find strength in their individuality.

"Be yourself in everything you do. Become a voice that speaks for the well-being of others. Believe in yourself because you can achieve everything your heart and mind desire. And remember that rejection is merely a redirection".



QUARRAISHA ABDOOL-KARIM

### Hard work will get you there

NEESHA MAHARAJ  
neesha.maharaj@ini.co.za

ONE of the world's most highly regarded scientists, Professor Quarraisha Abdoool-Karim, believes women should use Women's Month as a time for reflection and celebration.

"It's a time for celebrating the progress we have made in the past year globally, nationally, within our institutions and personally. But it is also a time to take stock and prioritise the next set of issues that we need to be addressing," said Abdoool-Karim.

She is the associate scientific director of the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa (Caprisa), which is dedicated to research aimed at HIV prevention.

Abdoool-Karim said while she believed the government had done a lot to empower women since democracy, more needed to be done.

"Women have been empowered in terms of political representation, science and technology, and sports and recreation, but there is a lot more that remains to be done. Changing gender norms in society requires each of us to play a role."

If she had the power to exercise change in society, Abdoool-Karim said she would address the gender-power dynamics that intersected with race and poverty.

She believed everyone had a role to play in nurturing and supporting positive gender norms so that every woman could reach her full potential.

For her, inspiration does not come from one person. She said several people had supported her, from her grandparents, parents and teachers to her mentors, husband, children and friends.

Abdoool-Karim has received many accolades for her contributions to science. She received honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Johannesburg (2017) and Stellenbosch University (2020).

She is a Living Legend for the City of Durban, an accolade bestowed by the city on citizens who have made an exemplary contribution to increasing the profile of the city nationally and internationally.

DEVI RAJAB

### Unite beyond race, class

NEESHA MAHARAJ  
neesha.maharaj@ini.co.za

WHILE South Africa has progressive laws for empowering and protecting its women, in practical terms women are not able to access this protection, says Dr Devi Rajab, a psychologist.

"We can see this in so many ways in their daily lives from the unacceptably high numbers of women who are subjected to gender-based violence to physical and emotional abuse, and secondary victimisation when they attempt to report these abuses."

"It also extends to the lack of proper economic and financial support for women, who alone support families on small to no income," Rajab said.

She said it was also concerning that women were still victimised in the workplace, where they earned less than men.

Rajab said creative thinking was



needed to ensure women were empowered in meaningful ways so that the quality of their lives would improve.

She, however, believed the commemoration of Women's Day and Women's Month was a futile exercise which did not address the real issue of oppression.

"To many, it seems like a fun day without much thought, and it seems to provide an opportunity for men to feel that in acknowledging this day, they have absolved their duty and obligations

towards women," said Rajab.

She said it was vital to address economic disparity by focusing on poverty, and educating society on equality between men and women.

Rajab's message to women was: "They need to unite beyond race, class, ethnicity and religion. This means that women have to step over these artificial boundaries towards creating a powerful force to truly liberate as full citizens of South Africa."

VANESSA TEDDER

### Live in your truth

CHARLENE SOMDUTH  
charlene.somduth@ini.co.za

VANESSA Tedder believes that the world loves the idea of a strong woman until she stands up and speaks out.

Tedder, 45, a mother of three, studied Journalism after matriculating from Kharavastan Secondary School. She has since left the industry and is the co-owner of an antique business.

"It's a women-owned and run business. I may have quit journalism, but I have never stopped being a journalist," said Tedder, who wrote *The Selfish Shoggo* and *Beaten Not Broken*.

Tedder, who has spoken out about the alleged abuse she endured, said speaking out even after years was the ultimate show of self-respect.

"I could give one piece of advice to my younger self, it would be the same I would give to any other woman, young or old, that you are under no obligation to anyone other than yourself."

She said women needed to know that people would talk one way or the other, and it was not their job to put out those fires.

"Live in your truth and feel the immense release and power of liberation that comes from realising the rules were never made with your interest or well-being at heart."

Living on the sidelines of your own life is non-negotiable.

The truth is something no amount of denial or shame can ever erase, and those who seek to suppress the truth or label you a troublemaker or use vicious words and threats to shut you down do nothing more than elevate that truth."

Tedder added: "The choice to sink or soar, fight or flee, and sometimes small acts of courage and facing fears are often the acts that lead to monumental change, not just in your life."

"Sometimes without you even knowing, it creates a tsunami in the lives of others around you."

"Women are far more capable and powerful than I think we sometimes give ourselves credit for, but somewhere down the line we have allowed ourselves to believe those who instil fear in us because the truth is, only someone who fears your immense strength uses fear and abuse to subjugate you."



CAROL OFORI

### Important to be ambitious

TAMASHA KHANYI  
tamasha.khanyi@ini.co.za

CAROL Ofori is inspired by women from different walks of life, from her sister to a mother catching a taxi with a baby on her back.

"Women humble and inspire me," said Ofori, who was born in Mafikeng, in the North West and raised in Johannesburg.

She is an award-winning radio presenter with a weekday radio show on East Coast Radio.

Ofori moved to Durban with her family in November 2020.

Besides being a mom and a wife, she is also a voice-over artist, TV host, keynote speaker, MC and writer.

She recently released a six-part children's book series, *The African Adventures of Sena and Katlego*, right.

Ofori said it was important for women to be ambitious.

"It doesn't have to be career-oriented. You can be ambitious about your health and well-being, or about being the best mom, sister, daughter or partner. Find something to be ambitious about and be audacious and unapologetic about it."

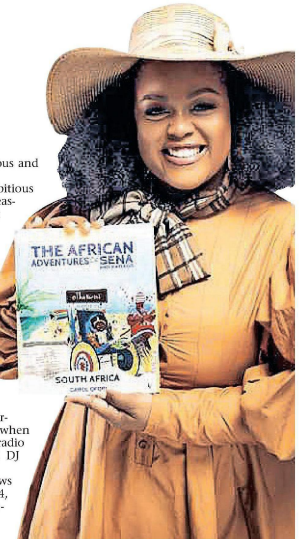
"Women have to be ambitious because if we're not, we're easily boxed in and put against each other. We lose our feet and ourselves. If you are ambitious, you leave no room for doubt."

Ofori has a BA in Journalism from Rand Afrikaans University, now the University of Johannesburg, which she obtained in 2004.

She also has an Honours degree in brand management from Vega School (2013).

Ofori's passion for the airwaves began at university when she worked for the campus radio station as a presenter and DJ manager.

After working as a news anchor for 947 Radio in 2004, she worked as a radio presenter.



RELIGION

### Prayer for rebuilding

ing and respecting the female aspect of the divine is a commanding spiritual principle, which is paramount in our dharma.

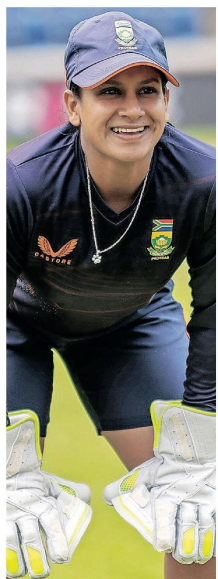
"This translates to a greater awareness that the contribution and the role of women in the domestic, labour, economic, government and all spheres of societal growth is spiritually ordained – as Mother Shakti is the divine enabling energy that was recognised as a catalyst to any aspect of creation in the universe."

"So likewise, we are reminded that recognising, supporting and empowering women among us is the key to

stability and growth in our families and communities, as well as the promotion of the principles of Sanathana Dharma that presents a guidebook for a progressive lifestyle."

The programme includes an invocation prayer, mass devi havan and lunch. Veena Lutchman and Dr Tivana Chellian are the guest speakers.

A Mother Shakti ratha yatra procession will also take place along some of the streets in Tongaat on August 7, from Amen Temple in Belvedere, through Buffelsdale, and to the Sandfield Temple.



TRISHA CHETTY

### Achieve your goals

CHARLENE SOMDUTH  
charlene.somduth@ini.co.za

TRISHA Chetty, a South African cricketer, believes it is important for young women to set goals.

Chetty, 34, of Johannesburg, joined the national team when she was 18 and debuted against Pakistan.

The wicketkeeper and right-hand batsman said: "I feel it's important to set yourself goals and achieve them no matter how difficult it may be. Goals make you stronger as a person. It also keeps you motivated in improving yourself."

She said women should work hard, work smart and take care of themselves to stay healthy and fit.

"I started playing cricket in the backyard with uncles whenever we had a family get-together. As I got older, I developed a passion for the game."

At the age of 7, Chetty played in the boys' division for the KFC Mini Cricket.

She played hardball cricket in primary school at the age of 9 in the under-11 boys' division.

Chetty later played in the under-13 boys' division.

"I only found out about the women's team at the age of 12 when I went for selection in the KZN under-19 girls and women's team."

"I was selected to represent KwaZulu-Natal in the same year. I went to high school and played hardball cricket in the boys' division until the age of 15."

In 2009, Chetty received the Player of the Year award.

"I think it's the dream of every girl who plays sports, to reach the highest level: to play for their country and to one day wear the badge."

"My advice to girls and women would be to believe in themselves."