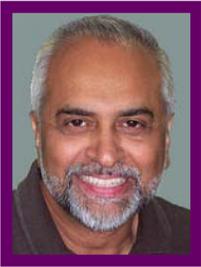


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Ashok Dhillon has 40 years of front-line business experience in Canada and International markets. He has founded and led companies in construction and international power development.

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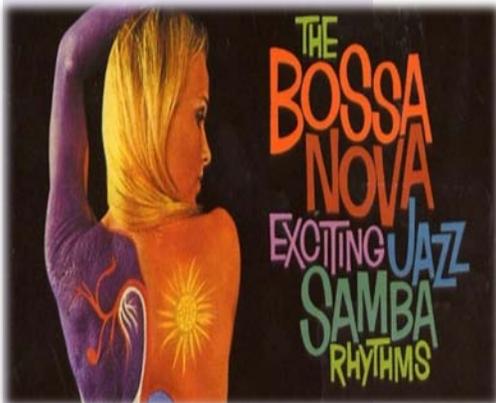
We Cry For You - BRAZIL



At a time when Brazil should be at the zenith of understandable national pride, hosting the FIFA World Cup (2014), and two years later hosting the summer Olympics (2016), and using the two highest profile global events to boost its reputation and profile in the World as an emerging political and economic power, it stumbles badly and lacerates its international reputation by the unpreparedness for the World Cup games, combined with the rise in violence in the protests against its Government's proposed spending on those games. The rest of the World had thought that the World Cup in Brazil was the dream scenario, but up to now, its unpreparedness is being touted as a nightmare. And because just about everyone loves Brazil, we cry for you in your time of tribulation and self inflicted damage.

Compared to most of the other countries of the World, with all their strengths and weaknesses in whatever the field, for most of the citizens of the World, the perception of Brazil is pure magic. And the reputation is well deserved, as by and large Brazil *is* magical.

Decades ago, its pulsating sambas and its lilting bossa nova songs such as 'Desafinado' and 'The Girl From Ipanema', caught the imagination and passion of the music world until the sounds became ubiquitous and instantly recognizable to the global public. The world of American jazz and pop embraced the exotic Brazilian rhythms and melodies, until they became standards for all the jazz and swing giants, such as Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, and of course one of the greatest proponents of popular Brazilian bossa nova tunes, the legendary saxophonist Stan Getz. The Brazilian music has long pervaded the global consciousness and not a day goes by that some radio station is not playing one of those iconic tunes, and those listening are not humming them.



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Its 'Carnival' is known as the 'Greatest Party in the World' for which Brazil shuts down for a week and parties non-stop day and night. During 'Carnival' the World renowned parade in RIO showcasing the 'Rio Samba Schools', is certainly the most awe inspiring, spectacular visual display of human festivities. The samba school competition and parade is truly a sight to behold, and puts Brazil easily in the number one spot in the World for such celebrations.

Similarly, in a general sense, the people of Brazil caught the imagination of the rest of the World as being one of the most beautiful, sexy, friendly, accepting and tolerant of all peoples. A people that are relaxed, love to party, love the beach, beer, and the smallest bikinis (*did not invent, but made famous the 'thong bikini'*). The Brazilian's love of life made the rest of the world love them, and one is hard pressed, outside of Brazil, to find anyone that doesn't love the idea of Brazil, and the warmth and zest for life.



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Brazil's is also known for its other most famous landmark 'the Amazon'. And while the Amazon basin (*some 7,000,000 sq. kms*) is shared by eight (8) other South American countries, Peru, Columbia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana, approximately 60% of the Amazon basin is in Brazil. The Amazon rain forest is more than half the rain forests of the rest of the World, and contains greater bio-diversity of plant, insect and animal life than anywhere else in the World. Its importance to the bio-diversity and over-all health of the ecology of the planet cannot be overstated. The Brazilian rain forest is called the lungs of the World, and its botanical treasure trove has tremendous medicinal potential for humanity, and is still largely unexplored.

Like the rest of Brazil, its "Amazonas" is in a word - 'exotic'. With all its many appeals, it's no wonder that the rest of the World is enamored with Brazil, its people and its natural wonders. And then, as if that wasn't enough, there is Brazilian 'futebol'! Many countries of the World are passionate about 'football', in Brazil it is akin to a religion.



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There are many great football nations in the World, particularly, England, European countries and Latin/South America countries, where arguably football is the most passionately followed popular sport. And many of these countries have produced great football players that are World famous.

Argentina is a country that has made a name for its self by producing football legends such as the great Diego Maradona, and the more recent Lionel Messi, recognized by the current football world as one of the absolute best.

Brazil has produced Pele, considered almost unanimously as the world's best football player of all time. And behind Pele are numerous Brazilian players that are legends, and internationally known household names like Garrincha, Zico, Socrates, Romario, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Junior, Kaka, and now the legendary Neymar, to name a few. No nation on Earth has produced the number of great players, or achieved the status in the game of football, that Brazil has.



Overall Brazil has won the most World Cups (*five times*) and is generally considered the best football nation on Earth. Beyond that, the Brazilian style of play makes it the World's most favorite football team to watch.

The Brazilian style elevates football's required technical and athletic skills from being merely very 'skillful' to an art form. It is our observation that pressed to differentiate between Brazilian style of playing and the other countries' style, we would opine that Brazilians play football as if for the love of playing itself, while the other teams play to try and win the game. And that is why when watching the Brazilians play it can be a tremendously frustrating experience, at times, as they seem to lose sight of the fact in an international game, that they are playing a competitive game and that they do need to focus, and score, and try to win.

At those times the Brazilian players seem to be lost in the joy of playing with the ball, each other, and the other team members, without the focus towards scoring a goal. In those times they have, maddeningly, lost to inferior teams. But, and it's a big 'but!' at those times they have also displayed some of the most sublime football ever seen. Football that was elevated from the ruthless

We Cry For You - BRAZIL

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physicality and calculated efficiency of a competitive sport, to a ballet like beauty, where for moments time seem to stand still as a Brazilian player, with the football, danced, twirled and dribbled across the field, and in their losing of the particular game, still managed to elevate the game of football to something more than just a sport.



That is why when Brazil won the right to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup, it was not only the Brazilians who rejoiced, but so did the rest of the football watching World. The World Cup being held in Brazil was the closest thing to football heaven that the World could come to. But instead of riding the wave of global expectations to football heaven, Brazil is so far, solidly on the road to perdition.

It would seem, that the generally somnolent Brazilian public, usually willing to ignore the misdeeds of a generally corrupt and inefficient government, has awoken suddenly, with the shock of seeing the sheer scale of proposed government spending on the preparations for World Cup (*estimated to be over \$13 Billion*) when the public has been plagued with so many fundamental problems, such as entrenched corruption, sprawling poverty of the favelas, widespread and increasing crime, lack of security, deteriorating economic fundamentals, better educational opportunities, affordable health care, adequate transportation, roads etc.



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Over the recent years the expectations of the Brazilians had risen with their economy, and Brazil was the one member of 'BRIC' that seemed to grow with a dogged determination in 2013, in the face of the global recession that substantially slowed China, Russia and India. But that growth curtailed sharply towards the end of last year, and in the first quarter of this year, and the hopes of the Brazilian people faded with the ever worsening economic indicators and the rising problems.

The anger demonstrated by the protests, focused on the Government plans to spend tens of Billions of dollars of public money in building the infrastructure required to host the World Cup in 2014, and the Summer Olympics in 2016 (*estimated to cost another \$18 Billion*). The realization that the Government was going to find and spend over \$30 Billion in preparation for the games, when entrenched problems afflicting the ordinary Brazilian had gone unattended, ignited a maelstrom of rage and anger that was wide spread, and quickly turned violent. The conditions in Brazil have continued to deteriorate to the point that literally days before the first game of the World Cup most of the preparations are hopelessly behind schedule (*not unlike some other nations who have been hosts, but much worse*). Brazil probably will never catch up, and the atmosphere and the anticipation of the greatest World Cup, EVER, has been damaged to a large degree. Hopefully it can recover as the games progress, especially if the Brazilian team is in top form.

Like people of all nations, Brazilians had rejoiced when their country had won the right to host the World Cup in 2014. Then, like most others in such a situation, they couldn't believe their luck when in addition to the World Cup, Brazil won the right to host the Summer Olympics in 2016. Such good fortune, considering how competitively countries vie for the privilege to host just one of such events, seemed to confirm Brazil's emergence as a rising nation, whose time had come.

That is why the current situation in Brazil is so tragic. Instead of highlighting and showcasing Brazil in the best light possible as they were certainly intended to do, these games and all the problems afflicting the preparations for them, and the protests against them, is doing the opposite, portraying Brazil in the worst possible light. Apart from the incredulity of watching Brazilians protest against the most famous football games being held in their country, one is further shocked by the sheer scale of incompetence displayed by the preparations for these games. And, as our collective image of Brazil is sullied by the potential disaster unfolding daily, we cannot but cry for Brazil as it shatters its global image and shows us its uglier side, which we never wanted to see. We love its former image too much.