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Thursday April 13 2023. Volume 41, Issue #15 www.equalitynews.ca. For advertising, call 647-216-2359



FPSO arrives

Guyana's third Floating, Production, Storage, and Offloading (FPSO) vessel Prosperity, has made her way to the country's shores and joins the Liza Destiny and Liza Unity FPSOs, which are currently producing more than 380,000 barrels of oil per day. This new vessel, the largest of the three, is anticipated to push daily production to more than 560,000 barrels by year's end. Installation campaigns are ongoing with development drilling underway to support Prosperity's commissioning later in 2024. *Full story on Page 21*



NY AG MEETS DIASPORA: New York State Attorney General Letitia James took time out of her busy schedule to meet with a small group of Guyanese in the diaspora in Richmond Hill Queens on April 5. Just the day prior to this meeting the Attorney General was at the forefront dealing with an historic judicial indictment in New York City where former President Donald Trump was being indicted on 34 felony charges. James stated that she is committed to creating pathways going forward in working with the community and the Guyana Government



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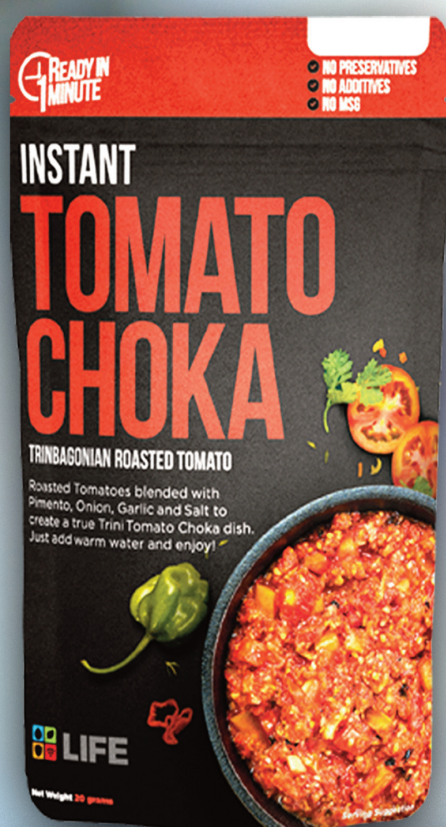
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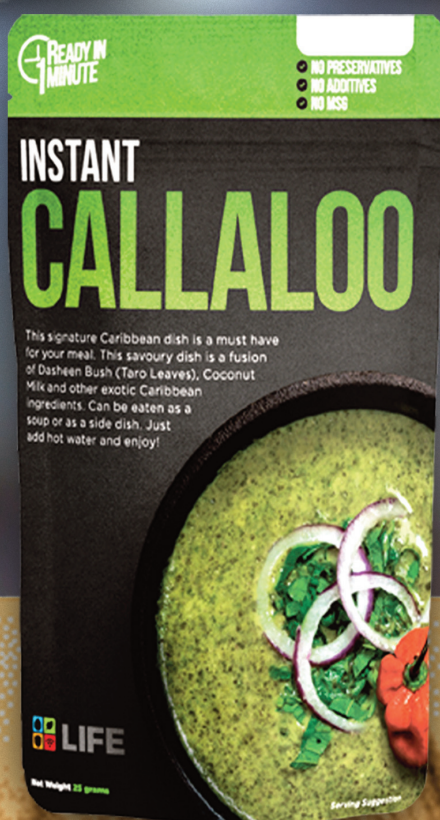


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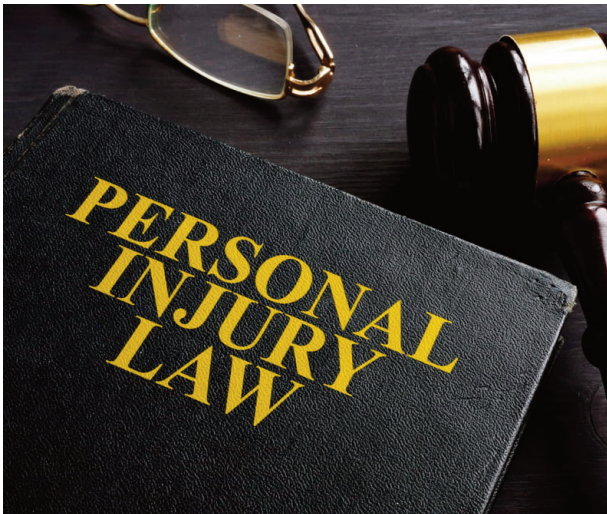
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Bahamas celebrates 50th independence

By Bevan Springer

This summer, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas will celebrate its 50th birthday, and tourism stakeholders are leaving no stone unturned in ensuring visitors are aware of the year-long calendar of events that have been put in place.

The milestone, officially recognized on July 10, 2023, will showcase the country's culture and heritage, and presents an opportunity for the Bahamas to drive tourism growth.

Latia Duncombe, Director General of Tourism, Investments and Aviation, recently shared that her deputy prime minister has set a total visitor arrivals goal of 20 percent more than the 2019 banner year of 7.25 million and she believes that the Bahamas can achieve those numbers this year.

"The expectation is to make sure that the visitors have an enriched, rewarding experience and they continue to return to the Bahamas," she commented.

The Ministry team, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation I. Chester Cooper, is off to Dallas, Austin and Houston, Texas this week as part of the "Bringing the Bahamas to You" Global

Tour to promote the latest tourism offerings and developments and connect with industry leaders, partners, and media.

"With statistics showing an increase in international travel among Texans, now is the time for Texas residents to choose the Bahamas for their short-haul vacations this summer and beyond," said the Deputy Prime Minister. "We want the Bahamas to be the initial stamp in first-time traveler's passports, but we also look forward to welcoming back our repeat visitors who continue to choose us for their Caribbean vacation."

The upcoming golden jubilee celebrations will include exciting events, including the National Family Island Sailing Regatta, the 50th on Bay Street Festival, and Bahama Rock, a celebration of Bahamian music.

John Pinder, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation, said, "The history is rich, the people are rich with culture, and we want to showcase that to the world. And this is the best time to do it, in our 50th anniversary."

The Ministry will also head to Los Angeles, California and Atlanta, Georgia this summer, as part of the Global Tour, with plans to visit the United Kingdom



Latia Duncombe, Director General of Tourism, Investments and Aviation

in the fall.

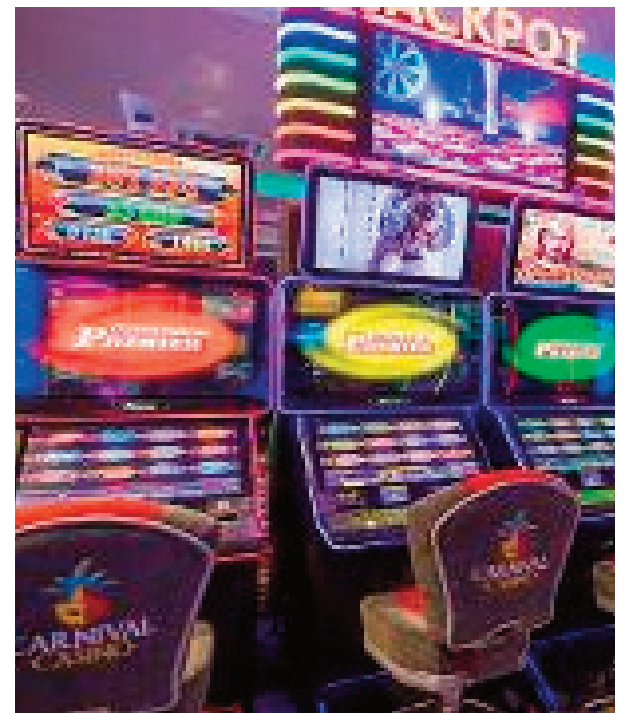
For visitors traveling to the Bahamas, one of the newest accommodations options is Margaritaville Beach Resort Nassau, located on a gorgeous stretch of beach in downtown Nassau.

The resort offers beautifully appointed oceanfront rooms with unobstructed views of crystal clear Bahamian waters, an expansive water park, a spa and wellness center, and more than a

dozen food and beverage options.

Nassau's hotspots, such as the Straw Market, Arawak Cay or "Fish Fry", shopping and dining, are all within easy walking distance, and guests can also take advantage of the neighboring ICONS Sports Bar featuring karaoke, bowling, billiards, virtual reality sports, and a private movie theater.

For more information on the independence celebrations, visit <https://cele>



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Cops crack major cross-border gun trafficking ring: 42 arrested

By Nishad Sharma
LJI REPORTER

The availability of guns on the streets of Canada’s major cities just hit a major barrier, with one of the largest cross-border busts in history.

Reports state that forty-two people are facing more than 400 criminal charges following a year-long international gun trafficking investigation.

Seated before 80 of the 173 guns seized, police officials from Toronto Police Service, York Regional Police, Durham Regional Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, Canada Border Services Agency, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives outlined their individual roles in the investigation, which also resulted in the seizure of a large quantity of illegal narcotics, cash, and ammunition.

Dubbed Project Moneypenny, the probe was launched last March by the Toronto Police Service's Integrated Gun & Gang Task Force – Firearms Enforcement Unit with the assistance of the Toronto Drug Squad and Intelligence Services.

Officials from Toronto Police Service, York Regional Police, Durham Regional Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, Canada Border Services Agency, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives sit before 80 of the 173 guns seized in a cross-border investigation dubbed Project Moneypenny.

Officials from Toronto Police Service, York Regional Police, Durham Regional Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, Canada Border Services Agency, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives sit before 80 of the 173 guns seized in a cross-border investigation dubbed Project Moneypenny.

In July 2022, York Regional Police’s Guns, Gangs and Drug Enforcement Unit launched a similar investigation called Project Zorro.

Police said during the initial phases of both projects undercover officers successfully purchased quantities of fen-



Some of the guns seized by joint police and border security forces

tanyl and cocaine, as well as 25 illegal guns, from “identified persons.”

Investigators said most of the illicit firearms seized from both investigations came from the United States. However, several were also domestically sourced.

Last September, with the help of Criminal Intelligence Services Ontario and Firearms Analysis and Training Enforcement, police merged the two cases to “maximize the potential for a positive investigative outcome.”

Police said that this joint investigation, which was further expanded to include Durham Regional Police Service, the OPP, the US Bureau of Alcohol To-

bacco, Firearms and Explosives and Canada Border Services Agency, focused on dismantling the gun smuggling network and identifying and prosecuting those responsible for running and enabling it.

In total, investigators seized 86 firearms (75 handguns, 11 long guns) in the GTA, 87 firearms in Illinois, 45 over-capacity magazines, 1,454 rounds of ammunition, three auto switches, three sets of body armour and approximately 1.5 kilos of fentanyl/carfentanil with an es-

timated street value of \$300,000, as well as 1.8 kilos of cocaine with a street value of approximately \$190,000 and \$184,000 in cash.

Police also arrested 42 people between November 2022 and March 2023 following the execution of 49 search warrants in Toronto, Peel Region and Durham Region.

Police allege that the accused were also selling narcotics, including fentanyl, carfentanil and cocaine.

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Focus on agriculture

Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali continues to lead the charge for food security in the Caribbean region, and we commend him for his consistency in seeking the interests of his fellow residents in the archipelago in making sure they can feed themselves.

This, of course, is even more important given the threat of climate change to small nations, where floods routinely devastate agricultural outputs.

His warning also comes as the region braces for what is expected to be yet another very active hurricane season in 2023.

Ali reinforced his commitment to food security earlier this week when he addressed regional leaders, telling them that at least US\$7.5 billion in investments would be required for the region to achieve its '25 by 2025' target in a very conservative manner. The initiative entails lowering the region's larger food-import bill by 25 per cent by 2025.

According to Dr. Ali, it is crucial for leaders to prioritize agriculture and food production in order to take the Caribbean where it wants to be.

His comments come as countries in the region continue to battle extreme weather conditions and its effect on

local agriculture as they attempt to feed their people. He also stressed the need for international financial institutions to help the region financially by investing in agriculture.

President Ali related that there are sufficient studies on the region to inform decisions made by financial institutions such as the World Bank to take action and work alongside Caribbean nations to eliminate food insecurity.

According to the President: "We took a full analysis of every single country, looked at the competitive environment in every country and we sought to identify low hanging fruits, medium term strategies and long term strategies."

The reason for this is not only to eliminate hunger, but to also refocus food production and agriculture as serious economic activities while dealing with different obstacles and constraints that impact the sector.

"If you look at some of the recent headlines on food security in the region, it's a really a telling story," Dr. Ali said, noting: "It is important for us to know that if we don't take action now — and we are taking action — and we don't make the necessary adjustments in our budgetary allocation for

agriculture and food production, and prioritize agriculture we are going to face a catastrophe in the region."

Those actions must be supported by technology so as to create an agriculture sector that is climate resilient.

Dr Ali has consistently put his money where his mouth is on this score, having used the oil and gas windfall in his own country to put infrastructure in place to ensure the reliable movement of food products from his country's farms in the interior to the markets, for both local needs and for export.

He told his fellow leaders about a variety of strategic measures he implemented to help Guyana become self-sufficient in food production and a net exporter of food in the region. He also addressed the path towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of ending hunger.

"Now on a global scale, if we are to achieve the SDG, productivity must increase by 28 per cent," he added, noting that this goal requires the employment and utilization of technology.

President Ali said Guyana has already started taking steps to enhance productivity and increase production, including working closely with other

Caribbean nations to develop innovative plans to increase food production. Among the initiatives rolled out so far is the new aquaculture project geared at increasing the production of prawns and tilapia.

Guyana has also partnered with neighbouring Barbados to establish a food terminal to both help the island become self sufficient with food as well as to take advantage of the island's proximity to major markets for export.

It is refreshing to see a Caribbean leader put such focus on food security, after years of neglect across the wider region of the agriculture sector. That it comes from Guyana, the bread basket of the region, is a key factor.

We trust that the international financial community takes note, and step up to the plate to play their part in securing the Caribbean's food supply.

It's not just the region that will benefit, but the world, as a thriving agriculture industry in a tropical region with year-round growing opportunities like the Caribbean would also mean a steady food supply to the rest of the world.

Good job, Dr Ali.

People who act on principles do not delay

Dear Editor,

People who act on principles do not delay; they act once it becomes apparent that one is being asked to do/say something that goes against their principles/beliefs/mores.

Paul Slowe said: "September 16, 2020, I had a meeting with President Mohammed Irfaan Ali at the Office of the President... The only persons in that meeting were the President and I. During the course of the meeting the President made certain inappropriate requests." (S.N 9.04.23)

Mr. Slowe, however, did not make mention of anything "inappropriate" until the May 31, 2021, a full 257 days later.

Paul would have us believe he is

Slowe by name and slow by nature; however, when Slowe was charged on May 19, 2021, with conspiracy to commit fraud, Slowe acted with alacrity and made the allegation against the President within 12 days.

In a classic jailhouse move used by hardened criminals, familiar to many Guyanese who have been the victims of criminals and are often surprised to find themselves facing charges for assault after valiantly fighting in self-defense with home-intruding bandits, Slowe made a counter-accusation to muddy the waters surrounding his charge.

Editor, had Slowe made any public statement before his criminal conspiracy to commit fraud charge, I

would have given them credence despite his alignment with the People's National Congress as a 'Security Advisor' during the 2015 electoral campaign; however, it has been my experience that men of principle understand that any delay suggests complicity.

Slowe's opportunistically timed version of a one-on-one conversation (cannot be proved or disproved) suggests desperation and deceit; nothing more, nothing less.

Yours sincerely,
Robin Singh

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Publisher: Bhaskar Sharma

Equalitygroup@rogers.com

Editor: Nishad Sharma

Annual subscription: \$104.00 (including postage)

Funded by the Government of Canada

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Equality News is the largest weekly newspaper serving Guyanese and Caribbean readers in Canada.

Contributors: Niraj Sharma, Freddie Kissoon,

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Expanded cell phone, 911 service on TTC coming, says Rogers

By Niraj Sharma
LJI REPORTER

After being concerned about their ability to get help in the likely event of an incident happening on Toronto's subway system, riders are set to get some relief after telecom giant Rogers Communications has said it will expand access to 911 on the TTC as part of a larger plan to bring 5G to the entire subway system.

In a news release Monday night, Rogers said it has entered into an agreement to acquire the Canadian operations of Australia-based BAI Communications, which has had exclusive rights to build a wireless network for the TTC since 2012.

Rogers said it plans to offer "full 5G connectivity services" to the TTC over time but bringing in wireless service will take about two years to complete due to the "limited overnight construction windows available."

Rogers said it wants to ensure access to 911 across the subway system, regardless of a rider's service provider. Currently, TTC customers with any mobile provider can call 911 only where the cellular network exists, such as on sta-

tion platforms, concourses, and about 25 per cent of the tunnels.

The announcement comes after a string of violent incidents on the TTC network in recent months. The wireless, cable and media company said it will work to "address gaps in the busiest and most critical sections" of the subway system.

"We know safety is top of mind for Torontonians. Residents and visitors expect wireless connectivity when they're travelling on the TTC's subway system," Ron McKenzie, Rogers' chief technology and information officer, said.

The release did not address whether customers of other telecom companies would be able to access the 5G network.

In a tweet, the TTC said it is working to finalize the terms of a new contract with Rogers that will "facilitate their multi-year network expansion plan."

In 2012, BAI was awarded a \$25-million contract by the TTC to build and operate its public WiFi and cellular network. However, Freedom Mobile was the only telecom company to sign on to provide coverage to its customers through BAI's infrastructure, meaning



most mobile customers have little to no service along the subway line.

BAI eventually stopped building any further network infrastructure as the effort became not financially viable, said Daniel Tsai, a lecturer in technology, law and business at the University of Toronto.

Tsai told CBC Radio's Metro Morning one of the "big three" telecoms — Rogers, Bell and Telus — providing wireless service throughout the TTC network is "long overdue and something that should have happened a long time ago."

"I think this exposes sort of the driving force behind the big three. A lot of the time it comes down to money, and they just didn't see the economics here as being worthwhile. But now the safety issue has pushed this to the forefront."

Tsai said the move by Rogers could be an effort to offset "reputational damage" from last July's countrywide service outage and the telecom giant's recent takeover of Shaw Communications Inc.

Several candidates running to be mayor in the upcoming June byelection released statements saying that, if elected, they would use their authority to try to ensure wireless service is available to all TTC users, regardless of their provider.

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Economist Bhagwandin responds to Elson Low's claims

By Joel Bhagwandin

Reference is made to a letter authored by the Economic Advisor to the Leader of the Opposition that was published in the Kaieteur News edition of April 10, 2023, with the caption "Elson Low responds to Jagdeo". From the tone of the letter, it would appear that the author was offended by some of the remarks about him by the Vice President. And in reacting to this, he felt the need to highlight his notable academic accomplishments. Congratulations!

Suffice it to state, however, qualifications and competence do not always correlate. The Vice President did not question his academic credentials, per se, instead he highlighted the poor quality of economic advice he's been providing to the Leader of the Opposition.

For the sake of argument, let's examine the merits and demerits—and the technical robustness of a few proposals put forward by the learned economic advisor to the Leader of the Opposition over the last two years.

Windfall Tax Proposed by Elson Low

Following the introduction of a "windfall" tax on oil and gas companies in the United Kingdom (UK) on the back of soaring oil prices earlier this year, the Political Opposition and others have been advocating for similar to be implemented in Guyana.

JB's Commentary

It is critical that one seeks an understanding and appreciation for the current situation in the United Kingdom, the precedence and justification for the measure and more importantly the fiscal regime for the oil and gas sector in the United Kingdom. While it is always good to examine comparatively these issues across other countries in the world with a view to apply similar policies in the home country, context is particularly important. Within this framework, the situational contexts are often times fundamentally different, hence, not pragmatically applicable.

The fiscal regime applied to the oil and gas sector in the United Kingdom prior to the introduction of the windfall tax (energy profits levy) in May 2022, comprised of three elements, namely (1) ring fence corporation tax (RFCT), (2) petroleum revenue tax (PRT), and (3) supplementary charge (SC). It is worthwhile to highlight that the UK's fiscal

regime is designed with a number of 'built-in' incentives. For example, the 25% tax levy or windfall tax includes an additional investment allowance of 80% that can be claimed at the point of investment. Overall, the tax relief companies receive from qualifying expenditure in the UK has nearly doubled from 46p for every £1 to 91p for every £1. Put differently, for every US\$1 billion invested in the UK oil and gas industry, the oil companies receive US\$912.5 million in tax relief under the new (current) scheme.

In a comparative analysis conducted by this author, it was clearly shown that the economic situation and the fiscal regime for the oil and gas industry in the UK are completely different when compared to Guyana altogether. In fact, the comparative assessment revealed that Guyana's fiscal regime allows for a relatively higher Government take even when the 25% windfall tax is applied to the fiscal regime as in the UK—that is to say, should the UK's fiscal regime be applied to Guyana. The oil and gas revenue contributes just about 2.5% of Government's total revenue in the UK while in Guyana the (NRF withdrawal) accounts for 40% total revenue based projections for FY 2023.

Notably, the windfall tax was introduced in the UK because the fiscal regime over the years would have undergone several changes aimed at making the industry more competitive and to attract new investments in the industry. For example, the PRT was reduced from 50% in 1993 to 0% in 2016.

Moreover, the windfall tax was implemented in the UK, in particular, to help restore fiscal stability which was weakened following the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Opposition's proposal to subsidize fuel imports

The Economic Advisor to the Opposition Leader had proposed to the Government to subsidize fuel importers to ease the high-cost burdens owing to rising fuel prices. He also proposed that the Government should subsidize the electricity bills for the vulnerable.

JB's Commentary

The opposition's economic advisor failed to perform any analysis to justify and/or inform the aforesaid recommendation as stated above and demonstrate the feasibility of both options. In the case



Joel Bhagwandin

of the second option, to subsidize electricity for the vulnerable, the Government has already subsidized electricity for the entire country and not just the vulnerable. In this regard, though the fuel cost for power generation has increased substantially, the Government did not increase the electricity rates which means that this increased cost has been absorbed by the power company, which is effectively a subsidy from the Government.

To further understand this level of increase, about 20% of the country's total fuel import bill accounts for electricity generation. Prior to the rising fuel prices, with no substantial increase in demand, the country's total fuel import bill stood at about US\$500 million of which approximately US\$100 million accounts for electricity generation for the country. Following the rising fuel price, the total import bill increased to a whopping US\$823 million, representing a 65% increase. As such, fuel import for electricity generation would have amounted to US\$165 million, representing an increase of 65% or US\$65 million. Of note, this additional cost burden was not passed onto the consumers which means that the Government has already subsidized electricity for the entire country.

The same argument / analysis would be applicable to another of opposition's proposal where their economic advisor suggested that the Government should take the increase earnings from the higher price on Guyana's share of crude oil and provide subsidies to the vulnerable. Again, while Guyana bene-

fited from the higher price on its share of crude oil, this increase was more than offset with the increased cost for the fuel import bill of the country by over US\$300 million or 65% - from US\$500 million to US\$823 million.

With respect to subsidizing fuel importers, the reduction of the excise tax on fuel imports from 50% to 0%, resulted in an annual foregone revenue to the treasury of nearly \$20 billion.

Other Commentary

Incidentally, at the time of writing this letter, I had already written another article (two days ago) which was sent to the media in which the undersigned dealt specifically with a more recent proposal by the opposition economic advisor. This is in relation to his assertion to "intellectually space out" future oil and gas developments.

Concluding Remarks

Editor, the foregoing is just a few demonstration of the unsound advice that the economic advisor provides to the Leader of the Opposition. For an important portfolio of this nature, the economic advisor needs to delve beyond the usual surface level analysis to perform much more in-depth and rigorous analysis to inform his economic policy advice to the Leader of the Opposition.

Nevertheless, I have no doubt that he is a brilliant, young, and upcoming economist and public policy expert within his political party. About the Author

Joel Bhagwandin is a financial professional and entrepreneur with more than fifteen years' experience in the financial sector; corporate finance; financial management and risk; consulting, and academia. He is actively engaged in providing insights and analyses on a range of public policy, economic and finance issues in Guyana for the past 6+ years. He has authored more than 300 articles covering a variety of thematic areas. Joel has also written extensively on the oil and gas sector including financial and economic analyses of the PSA and detailed forecast analyses, etc. Academically, Joel is the holder of an MSc. in business management with a specialism in banking and finance from Edinburgh Napier University. He is currently pursuing his second and third masters: 1) MBA (Finance) (Top-up) through Edinburgh Napier University, and 2) MSc. in Finance (Economic Policy) through the University of London.

‘You cannot bully people into trusting you’ – President Ali on propaganda

TO build a society that moves into a modern era, political trust must be created. However, that trust must be generated under ethical values and elements of integrity, and cannot be formed through unapologetic, overt attempts to subvert democracy.

This was the sentiments of President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, who on Thursday issued a video statement on social media to once again shoot down the political opposition’s continuous attempt to use propaganda centred on race and ethnicity as a weapon.

While reiterating the government’s willingness to work with the political opposition, he said they will refuse to do so in an antagonistic environment where goodwill is not reciprocated.

“Many people today talk about building trust and bridging the divide and helping to advance our country. But there are some truths that we cannot escape. If you look at how some people approach this whole issue of building trust and creating harmony in our country, it is worrying,” the President noted.

“To say that we want to create social harmony, we want a united society, and that good could have only come about through rigged elections and could have only come about through an attempt to steal elections, that is not the way you build modern society. That is not the way you build a democratic society. You have to earn trust. You cannot bully your way into gaining the trust of people.”

The President noted that political trust incorporates justice, adherence to the democratic norms, which cannot be alternated at whims and fancies, as he pointed to the behaviour of the main political opposition, the People’s National Congress Reform (PNC/R), now coalesced into the A Partnership for National Unity (APNU).

He noted that for trust between the government and the opposition to be created and nurtured, the APNU must first make right the grave wrong that it brought on the Guyanese people when it dragged out the 2020 elections for five antagonising months, and failed in its attempts to rig the country’s those elections.

Even in the face of all of that, it was pointed out that the opposition continues to attempt to establish itself as standing for democracy, unity and harmony.

President Ali accused the opposition of trying to demonstrate values that are not supported by their own behaviour and action, noting that healing requires an acceptance of guilt.

“You cannot turn on and off your democratic values as you wish and say that, oh, we are champions of democracy. And it’s like a switch you’re turning off and on. Democracy is what we



Guyana President Dr Irfaan Ali

live every day, what you breathe every day, what you project every day. You cannot be serious about freedom, human rights, justice, fairness and democracy when you try to nakedly steal the elections. No, it doesn’t happen that way,” the President said.

Whether the opposition atones or not, the government has committed to placing its focus on developing Guyana with or without the APNU’s support.

This is evident through the government’s continued efforts to go directly into communities to get a first-hand understanding of people’s concerns and issues, and work with them to craft solutions.

“What keeps me up at night is the welfare of the people of this country. Not the rhetoric, not the propaganda,

not the hate speeches, not the negativity which some people are bent on promoting and the disinterest in the development agenda for our country, in the transformation of our country,” Dr. Ali said.

“We are building a Guyana in which all of us would be proud and an economy in 2030 that will be far different. That will be relevant, competitive, one that will ensure the survival of all of us as a people and our country as a state. This is what keeps me up at night. This is where I put my energy.”

The government’s continuous show of willingness to work with people all across Guyana, in every community, in every region, more than anything has been defeating the opposition race rhetoric. Nonetheless, the

President said the opposition continues to clutch at whatever straws it can.

However, with citizens of all races continuing to see past the opposition’s smoke screen, embracing the government’s policy of development and unity, the political opposition has taken it a step further by attacking citizens directly.

With many Afro-Guyanese embracing the government’s development agenda and defeating the opposition’s race rhetoric, Afro-Guyanese supporters of the government often receive the ire of the political opposition and its supporters.

The President denounced the ridicule often meted out to Afro-Guyanese supporters of the government.

Guyana filed most cases before CCJ

The Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) last week released its annual report for the August 1, 2021, to July 31, 2022, judicial year; and Guyana has again accounted for the majority of cases filed in the regional tribunal’s Appellate Jurisdiction.

For the period under review, the CCJ sat 39 times. These sittings comprised five case management conferences (CMCs), 19 hearings, and 15 judgement deliveries.

Of the 28 total cases filed, 16 were from Guyana and six each from Barbados and Belize. No case was filed by Dominica. This total comprised 14 notices of appeal and 14 applications for special leave. Fifty-seven per cent of the matters were civil, while 43 per cent were criminal.

“There was a 32% decrease in new matters filed for the reporting period of 1 August 2021 – 31 July 2022 compared to the previous year, with six cases from Barbados, six cases from Belize, and 16 cases from Guyana. There were no new

cases from Dominica,” the report highlighted.

In its Appellate Jurisdiction, the CCJ is the final court of appeal for criminal and civil matters for the above-named Caribbean Community (Caricom) member states.

St Lucia acceded to the CCJ’s Appellate Jurisdiction last month.

Moreover, in the August 1, 2021, to July 31, 2022, judicial year, one matter was filed in the court’s Original Jurisdiction by Antigua and Barbuda. In the previous year, one matter each was filed by Antigua and Barbuda and Belize and two by Trinidad and Tobago.

According to the CCJ’s Annual Report, this is a 75% decrease in new matters filed for the reporting period of 1 August 2021 – 31 July 2022 compared to the previous year.

Year after year, the CCJ continues to urge other Caricom member states to sign on to its Appellate Jurisdiction instead of using the United Kingdom’s Privy Council.

Ministry of Agriculture supports Inland Fisheries & Acquaculture

Guyana's Ministry of Agriculture- Fisheries Department in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme is hosting a two-day Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Support Project validation exercise for the Proposed Regulatory Changes to the Fisheries Act (2002) and the Aquaculture Framework Bill.

Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha on Tuesday said the workshop, being held at the Herdmanston Lodge, Georgetown, is significant and will help to advance the government's food security agenda.

"We will be having here for the next two days proposals to enhance our aquaculture system to meet legislation for aquaculture and inland Fisheries... When you look at our legislation now, it only caters for marine fishing or marine fisheries. And I think it's very important because when you look at our country today, we are seeing the rapid transformation that is taking place in our agriculture sector", he noted.

Minister Mustapha said the government is working to modernise the fisheries sector bringing it in line with acceptable standards and best practices internationally.

"So, we are trying to expand, diversify, and modernise it to make it more resilient and competitive," the minister said while addressing the participants of the workshop.

The initiative aims to propose changes based on a review that has been conducted highlighting the need for an aquaculture framework to be developed.



Minister of Agriculture Zulkifar Mustapha

Minister Mustapha stated that the proposed amendments emanating from the workshop will form part of the work of the Attorney General's Chambers. The Cabinet has already set up a sub-committee to look at various aspects of changing the legislation.

The proposed amendments are

geared towards creating a robust and comprehensive legal framework for sustainable development. The draft documents are the result of previous stakeholders' engagements, which covered Regions One to Six and Nine, with technical assistance from the FAO and SWM.

While inland fisheries may not contribute as much to the economy as marine fisheries, their regulation is critical to prevent overfishing, illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, and the protection of species such as the Arapaima, sport fishes, and other food fish species.

UK diaspora urged to support 'One Guyana'

The Government of Guyana has embarked on a Diaspora outreach in the United Kingdom as of Monday 10th April 2023.

This is following a visit made by His Excellency President Irfaan Ali who visited the UK last year and met with members of the Guyanese Diaspora.

This is the first physical outreach post-pandemic by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, who has otherwise been engaging the Diaspora in the UK virtually during the pandemic period.

Leading the team is Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud who is also supported by Head of the Diaspora Unit, Rosalinda Rasul.

At the first engagement held at the Guyana High Commission in London, on Monday, the Foreign Secretary addressed scores of Guyanese and spoke extensively of the role of the Diaspora in Guyana's development and about supporting President Irfaan Ali's One Guyana initiative and his plans for the creation of a modern Guyana that will benefit all Guyanese.

To this end, Mr. Persaud informed the gathering



Persaud addressing the Diaspora

of their importance in fostering greater networks and diplomacy to advance Guyana's development and advocating for the country's interest at the international level, the role they can play in leading self-driven initiatives in areas that interest them and sharing their knowledge, skills, and networks to further develop Guyana.

The Foreign Secretary also updated the Diaspora on many of the government's development plans relating to infrastructure, climate change, the Low Carbon Development Strategy, health, education, and customer service improvements for the public and Diaspora. The latter included the single window project and various other projects that the government will be implementing to enhance the ease of doing business and improve public sector efficiency.

Head of the Diaspora Unit, Rosalinda Rasul, outlined the role of the Diaspora Unit since the government reinstituted it.

She updated the overseas-based Guyanese how the Unit has been involved in advancing the interests of the Diaspora from all parts of the globe and shared upcoming initiatives that the Unit will be implementing to further enhance engagements with them in the areas of skills transfer, Diaspora diplomacy and Diaspora Direct Investments. Ms. Rasul further indicated that one of her objectives on this outreach is to meet more of the second and third generation Guyanese to engage them in the role they can play in Guyana's development.

Indian construction company setting up new office in Guyana

The Shapoorji Pallonji Group, the Indian conglomerate that built the Providence Stadium on the East Bank of Demerara (EBD), is set to make a return to Guyana more than a decade after it completed its sole project here.

In fact, the company hopes to set up a local office to position itself for business opportunities in Guyana and other neighbouring countries.

This is according to the company's Advisor on Group Finance and Special Projects, S Kuppuswamy, who spoke to the News Room during a recent media familiarisation visit to India.

Kuppuswamy said the decision to establish an office in Guyana emerged after talks with Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali and Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo. Both leaders visited India earlier this year and urged the company to return to Guyana.

"... so we felt that we should take a lot of interest in setting up a representative office and exploring opportunities there," he said.

Through support from the Government of India in the mid-2000s, the Shapoorji Pallonji Group was contracted to build the Providence Stadium that allowed Guyana to host matches for the 2007 ICC Cricket World Cup.

That 15,000-seat facility is currently the largest stadium in Guyana.

But since undertaking that project, the company has not executed any other projects here.

Still, its interest in re-entering the Guyana market has been growing due to the number of business opportunities here. The News Room understands that company was among those that bid for the contract to construct the new Demerara Harbour crossing.

But the conglomerate is not only interested in infrastructure projects.

"Now that Guyana has oil, there is a lot of potential for FPSOs [Floating Production Storage and Offloading vessels] which we are the best in

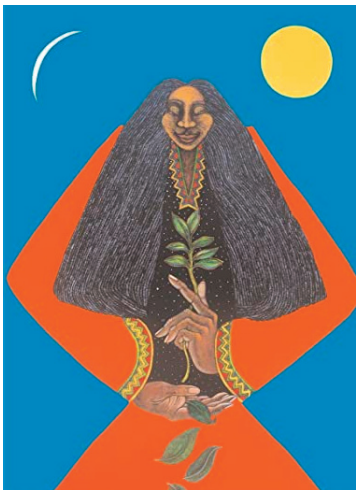


the India in and we could probably look at exploring opportunities in that sector apart from infrastructure," Kuppuswamy said.

Three FPSOs, or oil platforms, are currently in the Stabroek Block offshore Guyana. They were all built by SBM Offshore, a Dutch-based group of companies.

Kuppuswamy, however, believes that the Indian company has valuable experience and expertise it can offer Guyana.

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Angostura records \$1B profit

Trinidadian spirits producer Angostura has recorded revenue of more than \$1 billion.

This after two years impacted by Covid-19, during which time Angostura Holdings Ltd reinforced its investment to support future growth of its international business and the local market's full reopening in fiscal 2022, chairman Terrence Bharath said in his statement on the group's financial results for the year ended December 31, 2022.

"As a result, we are proud to report the achievement of revenue of \$1.03 billion for the year ended December 31, 2022, which represents growth of 11.8 per cent over the prior year," he said. "This historic achievement of crossing the one-billion-dollar revenue mark is a remarkable one in the local manufacturing sector and represents the highest recorded sales in the history of the company."

He said international markets drove 60 per cent of revenue growth, primarily due to increased demand for Angostura Bitters in North America and EMEAA (Europe, Middle-East, Africa and Asia).



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Four Points Sheraton Hotel on track for 2024 completion

WITH works on the foundation 80 per cent complete, the 172-room Four Points by Sheraton–Marriott Hotel is scheduled to open its doors in the third quarter of 2024.

Following the completion of preliminary works at the Houston, East Bank Demerara site just off the new four-lane highway, steel beams will soon be erected, paving the way for further construction.

The company undertaking this project, Caribbean Green Building Inc., envisages increased economic activities and opportunities with the new four-lane road.

“The site is strategically located in downtown Georgetown, 15 minutes from the Ogle International Airport on the eastside lane of a new road bypass between Eccles and Mandela Avenue.

“Once completed the hotel will feature, a restaurant, two bars, an outdoor pool, as well as 16,000-square feet of meeting space and 25,000-square feet of retail area,” the company added in its project scope.

The project is led by Tama Investments LLC and has an estimated cost of US\$33.3 million which will be financed by 50 per cent Debt/ Equity, including an approximate US\$12 million senior loan with a 12-year tenor from IDB Invest.

The hotel’s operator will be EuroBuilding Hotel Group, an established hotel operator with several properties around the region.

Four Points represents an upper-midscale brand within the Marriott International umbrella and will seek EDGE Certification highlighting many sustainability features.

Additionally, there will be integrated walk-in showers, 55-inch flat-panel televisions and in-room refrigerators.

When outside of their rooms,



An artist’s rendering of the Four Points Hotel

guests will be able to relax in the lobby, which would be focused on an elevated evening experience with special seating options to work or relax.

An extension of the lobby, the Bistro Terrace, will feature a community fire pit and upgraded outdoor seating area.

Apart from those features, there are also plans to establish spacious meeting spaces and a convention centre, to meet market demands. There are also plans to have 1,000 square feet of space for cardio, stretching and strength activities; this would be supplemented by an out-

door pool and tennis court.

Within a month of the government being in office, expressions of interest were sent out for internationally branded hotels to be built in the country.

Since then, there have already been sod-turning exercises and ongoing construction for a number of new hotels, with two having taken place close to the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA).

The aim, according to local authorities, is to have at least 2,000 hotel rooms available for visitors and to accompany the anticipated growth in the

local economy.

President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, had said that moving forward and embracing this potential growth and development would require transition, not just physically, but also in the way people act, think, celebrate Guyana and conduct business.

“We have to transition to create the transformation we want. It is not only physical, it is the human transformation, the way of thinking, acting, celebration of country, the way we do business and organisational culture. It has to be incorporated into every aspect of our lives.”

Woman who threatened President Ali is in custody

KIM Ali, a 59-year-old woman of Diamond, East Bank Demerara, is in police custody after making alleged death threats against President, Dr. Irfaan Ali in a now-viral video.

The incident reportedly occurred at the Diamond Market Tarmac in the presence of vendors, on Sunday.

According to reports, Kim used racial slurs and made derogatory remarks against the man who videoed the purported threats.

The video has attracted a lot of attention on social media, with over 2,000 views on Tik Tok alone.

In the video, Kim said: “The President needs to be assassinated.” These words have been taken very seriously and have resulted in the woman being taken into custody at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) headquarters.

This incident has sparked conversations, and many have spoken out against her actions, noting that it is unacceptable and cannot be condoned.

This is not the first time such threats have been made.

In June 2022, amidst protest actions calling for justice for Quindon Bacchus who was purportedly killed by a police officer, one of the protestors was filmed threatening to harm the President.

Further, in December 2022, a Nigerian national stormed State House, which is the official residence of the President and his family, and attempted to murder a Presidential Guard, while discharging a loaded firearm during the brazen attack.

Bethel Ikena Chimezie is currently on remand for the crime.



Kim Ali as seen on the now viral video

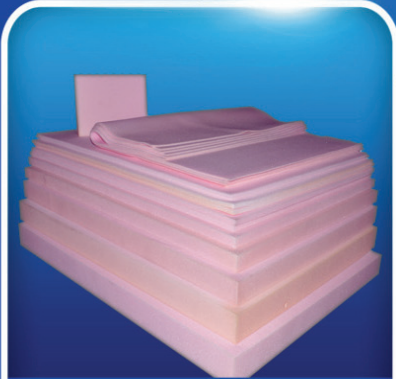


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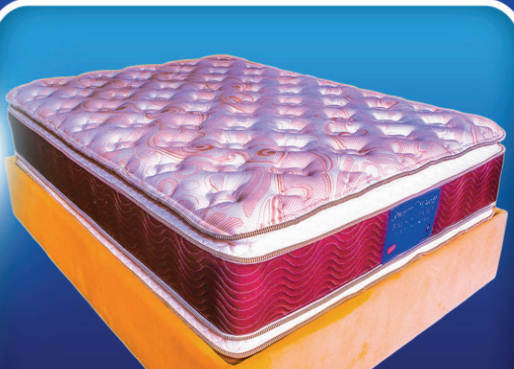
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Technology being leveraged to create resilient health sector

WITH Guyana’s healthcare sector currently undergoing rapid transformation, Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony has said that authorities here are leveraging technology and improving training methods to deal with the current challenges.

Dr. Anthony made these remarks during a virtual dialogue hosted by the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) on strengthening primary healthcare to build resilient systems.

Regarding the current state of primary healthcare in Guyana, Dr. Anthony told the virtual meeting that when persons are diagnosed with conditions that cannot be dealt with at that level, they are moved to district hospitals or regional facilities for the required care.

He added that there are also referral hospitals which are currently being enhanced even as plans are progressing to build 12 new hospitals, which will help to make the referral process seamless.

Similarly, with laboratory services, the Health Minister said that services that cannot be conducted at the primary healthcare level are done at the regional level and the results are sent back to those facilities.

As such, he noted that authorities are leveraging the use of technology to ensure that other services like X-ray or CT scans can be interpreted at the regional level and then sent back to the respective communities.

“So these are ways in which we are trying to leverage technology... the system is quite integrated,” Dr. Anthony said.

Meanwhile, he noted that one of the biggest challenges that the ministry is working to tackle and which has also been challenging in the Caribbean/Latin American region, is the loss of healthcare workers.

He said: “If we are going to be able to adequately provide personnel at the primary healthcare level, we have to come up with strategies [for] not only training but how do we retain people and be able to disperse them in different parts of our country.”

According to Dr. Anthony, they

have noticed that in the region, there has been active recruitment of healthcare personnel and this continues to pose a challenge to the level of care being provided.

Just last week, he disclosed that very soon, a registered nursing programme will be rolled out to train some 3,000 persons in three years to fight this challenge.

At the time, he had said that they will open this programme to the general public and qualified persons who are interested.

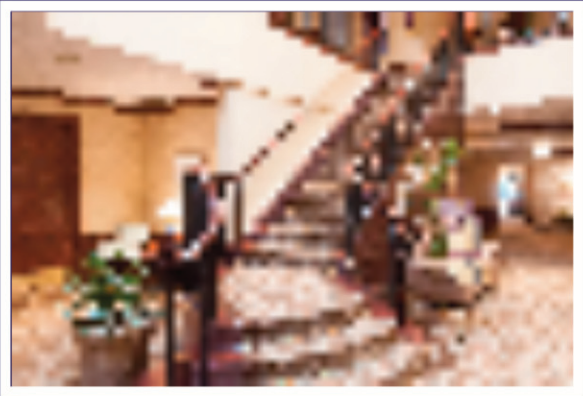
The ministry is hoping to train 1,000 persons this year.



Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony

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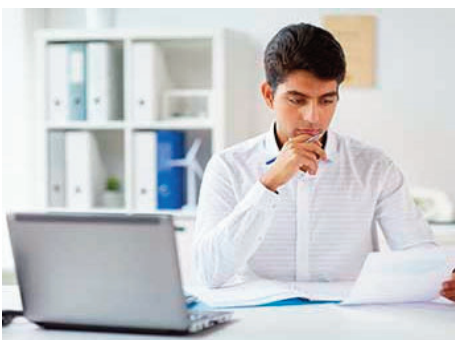
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ExxonMobil Guyana announces arrival of Prosperity FPSO

ExxonMobil Guyana on Tuesday announced the arrival of the Prosperity Floating, Production, Storage, and Off-loading (FPSO) vessel in Guyana waters. Production from Payara is expected to begin later this year.

Constructed by SBM Offshore, the Prosperity will develop the Payara field in the offshore Stabroek block. It has an initial production capacity of around 220,000 barrels of oil per day and an overall storage volume of two million barrels.

“The arrival of the Prosperity FPSO is a testament to the strong partnership between ExxonMobil Guyana, the government of Guyana, our co-venturers and the many suppliers that support our operations. We are excited to contribute to Guyana’s energy future and create lasting opportunities for the nation’s growth and prosperity,” said ExxonMobil Guyana Production Manager Mike Ryan. The Prosperity FPSO joins the Liza Destiny and Liza Unity FPSOs, which are currently producing more than 380,000 barrels per day. Production from the Prosperity vessel is expected to



The FPSO vessel Prosperity on its arrival in Georgetown

push daily production to some 600,000 barrels a day in 2024.

Installation campaigns are ongoing and development drilling is underway to support Prosperity’s start-up later this year.

Over \$1B invested in Region 9 for housing




Jason Mclean being presented his Agreement of Sale by Collin Croal

Guyana’s Ministry of Housing and Water, Central Housing and Planning Authority commenced processing Agreements of Sale for the initial 150 allottees of the Tract ‘CHPA’ Housing Scheme in Lethem, Region Nine, on Saturday.

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, who was present at the activity, stated that the process is a critical stage since it gives beneficiaries legal ownership of their land, and they can now anticipate receiving their Certificate of Title, which can be used to obtain financing from banks to construct their dream homes.

Permanent Secretary, Andre Ally; Mayor of Lethem, John Macedo; and Deputy Mayor, Debra King were also at the exercise, held at the Regional Housing Office in Lethem. The new housing development at Tract CHPA, commonly known as Poke Bridge, has been allocated to some 543 residents. Of this, 400 allottees have been able to access their land as infrastructure works in the area, including access roads, progress.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

MARKET REPRESENTATION SERVICES FOR THE GUYANA TOURISM AUTHORITY IN MARKETS - NORTH AMERICA (USA and CANADA)

The Guyana Tourism Authority is seeking proposals from experienced agencies for Market Representation Services for a period of twenty-four (24) months in the following markets:

- North America (USA and Canada)

Proposals for each market must be treated separately. The goals of this proposal are to:

- Continue raising awareness of Guyana as nature, adventure and culturally-based sustainable destination on the global market
- Increase leisure and business travel from source and investment markets
- Generate sales and investment opportunities for local business
- Support collaboration and information sharing between stakeholders

The full Call for Proposal for each market can be downloaded from <https://bit.ly/3ZRLKLZ>. Proposals should include the company’s profile, capabilities and experience in providing such services.

Inquiries are welcomed up to and including noon of **March 28, 2023**, to Mrs Annarie Secharan, Senior Manager of Destination Marketing, Guyana Tourism Authority at annarie@guyanatourism.com and copy to Ms Liloutie Mangra, Senior Manager of Finance, Guyana Tourism Authority at liloutie@guyanatourism.com. The GTA would appreciate it if you would inform the Managers by e-mail:

1. Acknowledge receipt of this notice of invitation
2. Whether or not you will be submitting a proposal

Proposals shall be submitted no later than **April 6, 2023 at 09:00h** to the address and specifications listed in the RFP.

For more information, contact the Guyana Tourism Authority at +592 219 0094-6. Visit our official website: www.guyanatourism.com or follow us on @DiscoverGuyana on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).



Oreity Zinta and her children

Preity on paparazzi harassment: My children are not part of the package

In recent years, incidents of harassment of celebrities by paparazzi and fans in India have been on the rise. Many celebrities have spoken out about the constant intrusion of privacy and the lack of respect for boundaries. One such incident involved Bollywood actress Preity Zinta, who recently took to social media to express her concerns about the safety of her children.

Preity Zinta shares two harrowing experiences of harassment and invasion of privacy; says, “My children are not part of a package deal”

Preity Zinta shares two harrowing experiences of harassment and invasion of privacy; says, “My children are not part of a package deal”

For the unversed, on Saturday afternoon, Zinta spoke about an incident where a woman tried to take a picture of her daughter Gia without permission and then proceeded to pick her up and planted “a big wet” kiss next to her mouth. Another incident involved a physically challenged man harassing Preity for money and getting aggressive when he did not receive what he wanted. In her caption, the actress mentioned that in both cases, the paparazzi present did not intervene or help in any way, but instead filmed the incidents and laughed.

“I think it’s high time people realise that I’m a human being first, then a mom & then a celebrity. I also don’t need to apologise for my success...”



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): You won’t want to stay in one place for any length of time over the coming week, so let your wanderlust lead you and expect to discover some amazing new places. Someone you meet on your travels will become a really good friend, and maybe something more.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): It’s not all about dollars and cents, so even if you are inclined to get out into the world and earn some extra cash this week don’t lose sight of what is really important. No amount of money can ever replace a made-in-heaven relationship.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Venus, planet of harmony, moves into your sign this week, so even though you have been under a lot of pressure at home and at work you should start feeling a bit more relaxed. Don’t get too relaxed though. Tune in but don’t drop out completely.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): The more you help other people over the next few days the more the universe will help you. You may be eager to make your mark on the world but you are not in the least bit selfish, so put your own needs on hold for a while.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Put friends first this week and don’t worry if that leaves less time for all those interesting activities you had been planning. The more you interact with other people the more likely it is you will discover some interesting new possibilities in life.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): Who you know will be as important as what you know this week, so make sure you make a good impression when in the company of employers and senior colleagues. Impress them with the depth of your knowledge – and your wit as well, of course.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Get out into the world and have as much fun as is humanly possible. With Venus, your ruler, about to move into the most enterprising area of your chart you won’t let anything hold you back, certainly not the ridiculous fear of making a fool of yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You may find yourself attracted this week to someone who is as different to you personality-wise as it is possible to get. You do have something in common though, your taste for adventure. Be careful you don’t lead each other astray!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Affairs of the heart will be under positive stars over the next few days, especially when Venus, planet of affection, moves into your opposite sign on Tuesday. Don’t skimp on telling loved ones how deeply you care for them – and don’t be embarrassed either.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): The harder you have been pushing yourself in recent weeks the more essential it is that you now slow down. Cosmic activity in the wellbeing area of your chart will encourage you to relax and let life come to you for a change. You need a break.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): You may not be the sort to wear your heart on your sleeve but when Venus moves into the most dynamic area of your chart in midweek you won’t be able to help yourself and others will be surprised by your passion – and you’ll be amazed!

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): It’s time to let a loved one know that whatever has come between you in recent weeks must now be left behind. In the greater scheme of things your dispute is of no real importance, so why let it spoil an otherwise excellent relationship?

PSYCHIC READER FORTUNE TELLER

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Guyana welcomes ICJ ruling rejecting Venezuelan border claim

Guyana welcomed the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the ongoing border dispute with Venezuela with both the government and the opposition saying they remain confident that the Hague-based court will confirm the country’s longstanding international boundary dispute with its South American neighbour.

The ICJ, by a vote of 14 to one, on Thursday rejected the preliminary objection by Venezuela to Guyana’s application for the upholding of the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award settling the boundaries between the two countries.

The decision read by Judge Joan E. Donoghue, President of the Court, means that the court now proceed to address the substantive application by Georgetown regarding the validity of the award.

The ICJ rejected Venezuela’s argument that the United Kingdom, as Guyana’s colonial power, should have been a party to the proceedings.

“The court concludes that the Geneva agreement specifies particular roles for Guyana and Venezuela, and that its provisions including Article eight, do not provide a role for the United Kingdom in choosing or in participating in the means of settlement of the dispute, pursuant to Article four,” the ICJ ruled.

“The Court concludes that, by virtue of being a party to the Geneva Agreement, the United Kingdom accepted that the dispute between Guyana and Venezuela could be settled by one of the means set out in Article 33 of the



ICJ rejected Venezuela’s claim about the validity of the 1899 border award with Guyana

Charter of the United Nations, and that it would have no role in that procedure. Under these circumstances, the Court considers that the Monetary Gold principle does not come into play in this case.

“It follows that even if the Court, in its Judgment on the merits, were called to pronounce on certain conduct attributable to the United Kingdom, which cannot be determined at present, this would not preclude the Court from exercising its jurisdiction, which is based on the application of the Geneva Agreement. The preliminary objection raised by Venezuela must therefore be rejected,” it added.

Jamaica’s murder rate drops by 22 percent

Jamaica police are reporting a 22 per cent decline in major crimes at the end of March 2023, when compared to the corresponding period last year, with the authorities indicating that murders had declined by 21 per cent.

Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson, told a virtual news conference that shootings had declined by 13 per cent; rapes, 47 per cent; robberies, 32 per cent and break-ins, 11 per cent.

Figures released by the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) show that there were 303 murders as compared with 382 for the same period ending March last year. There were 354 shootings as against 291 last year

“We, however, continue to see a shift in the attribution of murders with the reduction in the gang-related murders relative to interpersonal conflict. As at March 31, gang conflicts accounted for 67 per cent of these murders, interpersonal conflicts accounted for 22 per cent, while four per cent occurred in the furtherance of other criminal activities, and seven per cent are still being determined,” he said.

He said the JCF would continue to partner with key agencies as well as provide the requisite support to enable its members to carry out their duties efficiently.

“As we continue to resource the Force, implement our policing plan and work closer with the communities, we have no doubt that people will begin to feel safe.

“It is not lost on us that the support from the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) and other key partners has been integral in achieving these results. We expect to continue to impact crime and violence while we remain committed to all of the other community support activities,” Anderson said.

He urged Jamaicans to continue working with the police and provide information to rid their communities of criminals.

“We have been seeing encouraging signs that communities are less willing



Jamaica police commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson

to accept criminals in their midst. The strategy of our commanders and their teams to be closer to their communities and build relationships is working. We do not regard these efforts as an event but as an ongoing part of our policing plan,” he said.

Island-wide blackout results in losses for Barbadian businesses

The islandwide power outage in Barbados which happened just after 11 a.m. on Tuesday proved to be costly for the businesses based in Bridgetown.

For many of them, the outage is estimated to have lasted around between two to three hours but did not compromise the products on sale. However CS Pharmacy, which is located on Lower Broad Street, estimates losses to be at least \$1 000 during the outage.

“Everything is computerised and digital so all the systems were down and after they came back we had to re-boot everything,” CEO Cranston Browne said. “Thankfully it only took about five minutes for it all to be back online. I can’t guess exactly how much money would have been lost because of it but on a day like today in the business we are in, I think you may be looking at \$1000-\$2000.”

Assistant Retail Manager at Collins Limited, Michael Matthews, also cited the proximity to payday as the reason why they would also feel a financial hit. Their power was restored around 2:20 p.m.

Matthews said “I don’t know how much we’d have lost because every day is different but we will lose money on

that for sure. The start of the month is very busy. Most people get paid at the end of the month so a lot of people do their shopping around that time.”

Hair salon Paradise Beauty displayed some ingenuity to keep business going during their busy period by asking staff to use the flashlights on their mobile devices.

“For security reasons we had to close the doors, but we were letting customers in by the twos and threes at a time and used the lights on our phones in order to facilitate them,” said manager Sherry-Ann Barker. “That would have obviously affected sales but otherwise it was okay.”

Barker said that in future they will be considering the purchase of a generator in order to avoid being affected by circumstances like this.

Manager Director of Woolworth, Martin Bryan, said they were not impacted in the same manner as their backup generator ensured they could continue operating their cash registers as well as maintain visibility in the store. However, up until the electricity came back management was discussing if a lack of comfort for customers meant they should close the store.

“We were coming towards the



Some businesses like this pharmacy stayed open during blackout

thinking that we would have to close because the air conditioning was not on so that was the decision we were going to come to when it came back. The impact on shopping comfort, as well as staff, because obviously with the AC units off, it would have been a bit hot and stuffy in here,” Bryan said.

By 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Barbados Light & Power announced they had safely restored 75% of their customers affected by the outage and by 5:15 p.m. all were back online, although some customers in St James complained of outages later in the night.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Grenada teachers get a 13% salary increase

The Grenada Union of Teachers (GUT) says an estimated 1 800 teachers employed by the government will be receiving a 13 per cent increase in salary for the period 2023 to 2025.

The new collective agreement was signed Wednesday and witnessed by Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell, who used the occasion to thank members of the teaching profession for the role they are playing in society.

“Having a formal education system is fundamental to a civilized society for our growth and development, and in the absence of teachers, that simply cannot happen,” said Mitchell, who is also the Finance Minister.

“I think it’s a fundamental difference that teachers play, no amount of money, no amount of fringe benefits can truly show the appreciation for that.

“Too often industrial relations are characterised by strife and we have to get to the point where we can have healthy differences. We can debate, we can disagree but we have to find a way where we can recognise that the teachers are members of the GUT but the teachers are ultimately our staff. They are the staff of the state, and so ultimately, we have an

obligation to be as fair as we can for them,” he said.

GUT President, Jude Bartholomew, described the signing as historic, noting that it is the only time in recent memory that a new collective agreement was being signed within a four-month period.

“Historically, the Grenada Union of Teachers and other unions most of the time had to march on the streets, go through the labour commissioner or commission a process for mediation and other things for salary increase. We note this time, we place on record, that this a historic moment that we appreciate and recognise,” he said.

He said that the new agreement did not cover everything that was initially requested.

“We may never be able to get all that you really want and hope to, but at the same time when you come together and negotiate, we can come to a common understanding when you are at a very good place,” he said.

Bartholomew said that for the 2023 to 2024 period, teachers would receive a four per cent increase and five per cent for the year 2025. He said the fringe benefits in the new agreement will also result

in an increase in financial compensation for extracurricular work, including the marking of School-Based Assessment scripts

The Government Negotiating Team is yet to conclude negotiations with the other four other unions that represent other public sector workers.

Simpson-Miller admitted to hospital

Former Jamaica Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller has been admitted to hospital for “non-emergency care”, the main opposition People’s National Party (PNP) confirmed on Friday.

In a brief statement, the party did not give any details regarding Simpson-Miller’s health, but said that the 77 year-old former government and party leader “is doing well and is being supported by a capable medical team and her loved ones.

“On behalf of her family, the PNP expresses sincere gratitude for your prayers and well wishes, as we pray for good health and a speedy recovery for our dear Sister P,” it added.

Simpson-Miller, who was elected to Parliament in 1976, became the country’s



Portia Simpson-Miller

first female prime minister in March 2006 to September 2007 and again from 5 January 2012 to 3 March 2016.

She served as PNP leader from 2005 to 2017 and the Leader of the Opposition twice, from 2007 to 2012 and from 2016 to 2017.

Caribbean health ministers renew focus on primary healthcare

Caribbean Community (Caricom) health ministers joined their counterparts from the Americas in discussing ways to strengthen and transform health systems in the region, using the primary healthcare approach to face current challenges and prepare for future health emergencies.

The “Health for all: Strengthening primary healthcare to build resilient systems,” meeting was also attended by the director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, and formed part of the World Health Day commemorations to honor the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 75th anniversary of its creation.

Dr. Barbosa highlighted some of the achievements in primary care in the Americas over the past decades, including an increase in life expectancy, the eradication of endemic transmission of measles, rubella and congenital rubella, and a reduction in infant mortality.

Despite this progress, however, PAHO said low levels of investment, fragmented health systems and limited response capacity at the first level of care “mean that barriers to access health remain, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable.”

Guyana’s Health Minister, Dr. Frank Anthony, said “We recognize that primary health care is the foundation of our healthcare system.

“That’s why we’re placing so much emphasis on the development of primary health care, to give people access, to ensure people have an expanded range of services they can get and also to bring it as close as possible to their communities so they can benefit from all of these services,” he added.

Dr Barbosa said the COVID-19 pandemic has also “exposed, exacerbated, and created structural health system challenges” that have further deepened inequalities and affected response capacity and results in the field of public health.

“We aspire to develop and achieve health systems that have the capacity to prepare for and respond effectively to an emergency, maintain basic functions when a crisis occurs, and reorganize and transform if conditions require.”

The PAHO director also highlighted that expanding primary health care is key to addressing the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), particularly given that 240 million people currently live with a chronic condition in the Americas.

To ensure a focus on primary health care, he urged countries to strengthen the stewardship of health authorities, the governance of health systems, improve social empowerment, and develop inte-



Health Ministers to discuss ways to strengthen and transform health systems

grated health services focused on primary care.

“The leadership role of National Health Authorities is undeniable,” added Dr Barbosa, thanking the ministers for participating in the dialogue.

He said countries must now invest in “creating, strengthening, and institutionalizing spaces for social participation where people can learn, participate, get involved, and hold health leaders and systems accountable to address collective needs.

“Achieving universal health in our region requires our joint effort and collaboration. From the Pan American Health Organization, we reiterate our commitment to provide all our technical capacity to support member-states in achieving this objective,” he added.

Former Bahamas PM questioned by cops on Covid-19 program

Former Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis says he has been interviewed by the police as part of an extensive criminal investigation into his administration’s coronavirus (COVID-19) food assistance program.

Minnis, who left office in September 2021 after his Free National Movement government lost the general election, told the Tribune newspaper that three senior officers had earlier this year interviewed him for over an hour.

He said police gave him the option to be questioned at a police station or at a neutral location, but that he chose a neutral location in the company of his lawyer.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Leamond Deleveaux, has since confirmed that more than 75 people have so far been interviewed as the probe continues even as he insisted that Minnis is not a suspect.

“He was seen as a witness. He provided us with information but he is not a suspect and he was seen only because he was the Prime Minister at the time,” said Deleveaux.

The Phillip Davis-led government has said in the past that the food program lacked proper oversight.

“It would appear that the Davis administration, because of its poor governance and lack of agenda for this country, is looking for deflection from its governance and tax spend,”

Minnis told the Tribune newspaper.

“Let it be known that I will not be used nor will I be a deflection. And if the police want to question me again, they can call me at any time.

“I was not disturbed at all because I knew that throughout my governance I was very transparent and honest with the Bahamian people and if we face a similar disaster, I will ensure again the Bahamian people receive the necessary tools and equipment for their survival,” Minnis added.

Last month, Davis accused an unnamed non-profit organization of going on a spending spree, buying two high-end trucks and boats with public funds that were meant to provide food assistance during the pandemic.

But Hubert Minnis praised the program and the person who headed the initiative, Susan Larson.

“They utilized the services of NGOs and ensured that individuals throughout the length and breadth of The Bahamas were provided with food at a time when it was needed most.

“People received the food in an orderly and humane fashion as opposed to what was seen throughout other countries of the world where there was mass demonstrations and unrest for food. I am proud of that grouping.”

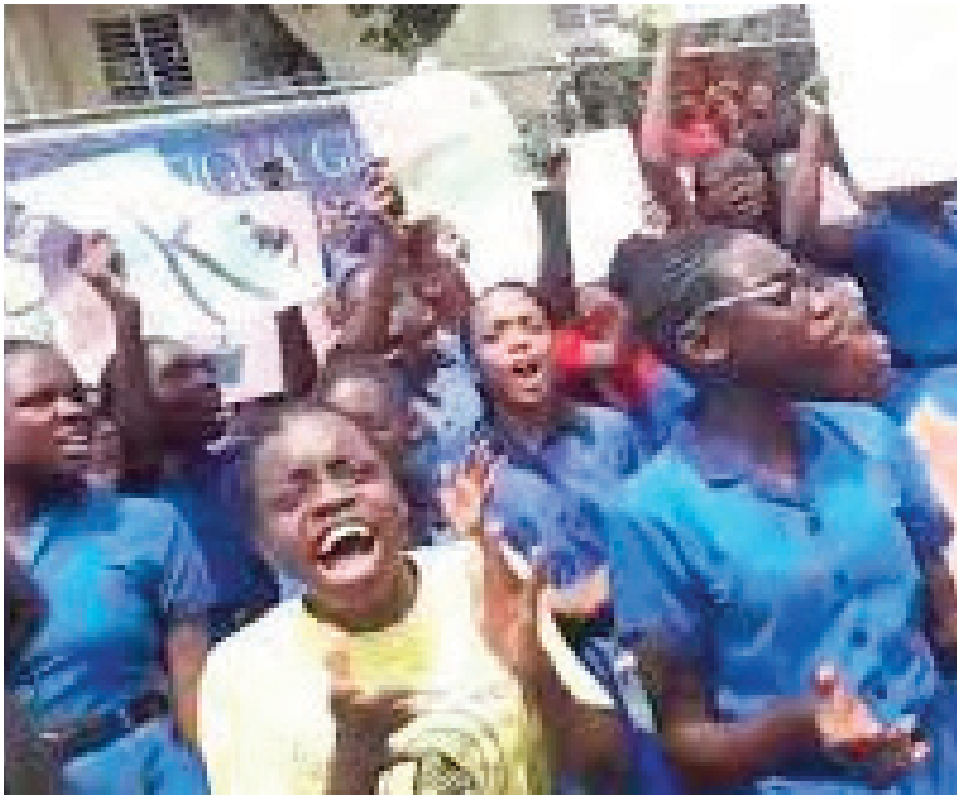
Teacher strike forces Antigua gov- ernment to extend Easter vacation

The Antigua and Barbuda government says it has taken a decision to extend the Easter vacation after indicating it had received correspondence from the union representing teachers of its intention to “engage in industrial action starting April 14, 2023”.

“In light of this and because children cannot be left unsupervised or under-supervised, particularly at this time of immense challenge with antisocial behaviour among young people, the Ministry of Education has taken a decision to extend the Easter Vacation by four days, resorting to the traditional two weeks,” the ministry said in a statement.

It said this will allow additional time for the “Ministry to work closely with the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers (A&BUT) and other agencies to arrive at an acceptable position.

“The Ministry of Education, Sports and Creative Industries remains committed to working with the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers to ensuring that learning environments are healthy, safe and conducive to learning and that all teachers receive their due worth,” the statement added.



Union for Antigua teachers has given notice of strike action

The ministry listed several grievances, including, the upgrading of school teachers, school security, fencing, as outlined by the A&BUT detailing what it said had been “the progress made to date” by the relevant authorities.

The ministry said that Cabinet of-

ficials, a team from Lands and Surveys, and other stakeholders will meet with the union on Tuesday to further discuss the issue of security.

It said also that 326 teachers have been upgraded and that “most of that number have received their upgrade instruments and corresponding remunera-

tion”.

But it acknowledged that 53 upgrade instruments remain uncollected at the Ministry by teachers and that three persons were outside of the upper time limit of the Cabinet decision and will be addressed in the new cohort for upgrades.

“The Ministry is trouble-shooting the data for approximately 15 teachers who have indicated issues with their upgrades. Although most of the upgraded teachers have received payments, a few are outstanding as the Treasury continues to make payments as resources allow,” the ministry said, adding that it continues to work with the Establishment Department and the Treasury to ensure that all outstanding teachers are upgraded and paid.

[In keeping with a previous agreement, the Special Upgrades Committee, comprising of representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Establishment Department, the Ministry of Education and the Antigua and Barbuda Union of Teachers will reconvene on 17th April, 2023...to address retroactive payment,” the minister added.

Charles III supports probe into crown’s slave ties

King Charles III for the first time has signaled support for research into the British monarchy’s ties to slavery after a document showed an ancestor with shares in a slave-trading company, a Buckingham Palace spokesperson said Thursday.

Charles takes the issue “profoundly seriously” and academics will be given access to the royal collection and archives, the palace said.

The statement was in response to an article in The Guardian newspaper that revealed a document showing that the deputy governor of the slave-trading Royal African Company transferred 1,000 pounds of shares in the business to King William III in 1689.

The newspaper reported on the document as part of a series of stories on royal wealth and finances, as well as the monarchy’s connection to slavery.

Charles ascended to the throne last year after the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II. His coronation is planned for May 6.

Charles and his eldest son, Prince William, have expressed their sorrow over slavery but haven’t acknowledged the crown’s connections to the trade.

The king has said he’s trying to



King Charles III: takes the issue of the Monarch’s ties to slavery “profoundly seriously”

deepen his understanding of “slavery’s enduring impact” that runs deep in the Commonwealth, an international grouping of countries made up mostly of former British colonies.

During a ceremony that marked

Barbados becoming a republic two years ago, Charles referred to “the darkest days of our past and the appalling atrocity of slavery, which forever stains our history.” English settlers used African slaves to turn the

island into a wealthy sugar colony.

The research into the monarchy’s ties to slavery is co-sponsored by Historic Royal Palaces and Manchester University and is expected to be completed by 2026.

Mottley among Caribbean leaders for ‘State of the Black World Conference’

Former Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson is among several Caribbean leaders who will speak at a major Black conference in the United States later this month, the advocacy group organizing the event has announced.

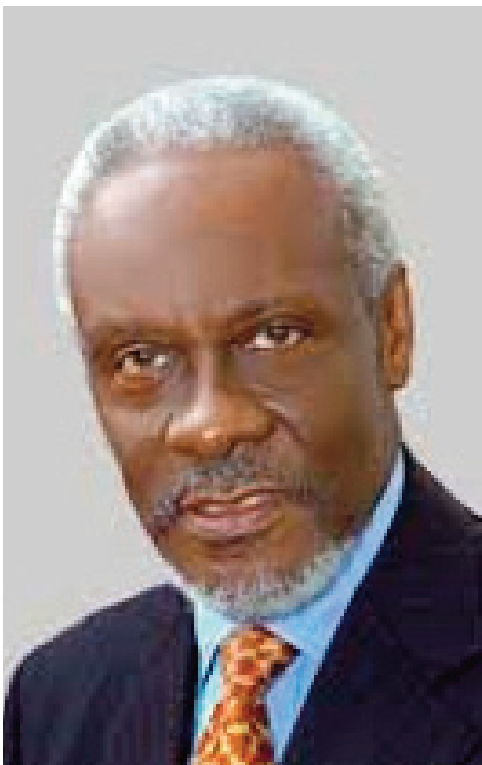
Don Rojas, the Vincentian-born director of communications and international relations for the Institute of the Black World 21st Century, said the prime ministers of Barbados and Grenada, will also feature at the State of the Black World Conference V in Baltimore, Maryland from April 19-23.

Rojas, a former press secretary for slain Grenada Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, said Patterson will deliver a keynote address on the opening day focusing on “the mission to transform post-colonial societies in the Caribbean and Africa and to enhance democracy and development in those parts of the Black world.”

Rojas noted that Patterson holds the distinction of being the longest serving prime minister in the history of Jamaica.

Currently, he is “Statesman in Residence” at the PJ Patterson Center for Africa-Caribbean advocacy at the University of the West Indies.

The Center coordinates public policy and advocacy in fostering development relations between the Caribbean and Africa, and promotes dialogue at the level of Heads of Government, Rojas said.



Confirmed attendance: PJ Patterson and Mia Mottley

Dr Ron Daniels, convenor of the conference and IBW president, said, “we are honored and delighted to have this prestigious global statesman be engaged with the conference.

“Former Prime Minister Patterson will bring an unprecedented depth of experience, wisdom and guidance to this historic gathering that will help the global Pan-African movement set a course for the rest of the 21st Century,” he added.

Rojas said Patterson is credited with having laid the groundwork for the economic growth of modern Jamaica,

“presiding over massive infrastructure development including the construction of highways, modernization of airports, telecom liberalization and expansion, as well as significant foreign investment inflows to the country’s tourism industry.”

Rojas said the institute has received confirmation that Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley will attend the conference as a special guest in addressing the conference, which is organized around the theme, “Global Africans Rising, Empowerment Reparations and Healing.”

IBW said Mottley has emerged as “a major figure in the Caribbean advo-

cating for stronger ties with the African Union and a global emphasis on reparatory justice with Africa playing a more active role.”

IBW noted that Mottley has called for a global summit on reparations in collaboration with the Caribbean Community Reparations Commission, the African Union, National African American Reparations Commission and reparations commissions from various regions of the Global Black Diaspora.

He also said that Mottley will be presented the IBW Legacy Award at the Global Women’s Leadership Summit at the conference for her “historic role as the first woman Prime Minister of Barbados.

Rojas said Grenada Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell will make a statement during the Opening Session of the Pan African Institute and will deliver a tribute to Bishop at the National/International Town Hall Meeting on “Building the Global Reparations Movement”.

Mitchell will also participate in the Global Black Leaders Summit Breakfast, Rojas said.

“Under the leadership of Maurice Bishop, the Grenada Revolution was an inspiration to progressive Pan Africanists around the world,” Dr. Daniels said. “It is inspiring to know that Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell has called for a National Commemoration honoring the life and legacy of Maurice Bishop this fall.

T&T cop guilty of raping daughter, 9

A High Court judge in Trinidad will on May 3 sentence a police officer who pleaded guilty to a series of charges including having sexual intercourse with his nine-year-old daughter that he also video recorded nearly 13 years ago.

Justice Hayden St Clair Douglas on Thursday accepted the guilty plea on a series of charges, including having sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 14 and remanded the policeman to prison until the date of his sentencing.

The Court heard that the first incident took place in March 2010, after the girl returned home from classes. In June 2010, he raped the child again just after she showered.

The prosecution said from the first occasion until June 2010, the policeman kept having sex with his daughter at least three times a week.

The prosecution said that while the child could not remember if the camcorder was on the dresser on other occasions, she was sure it was there on at least one occasion.

The court heard that on July 14, 2010, while house cleaning, the girl’s mother found a DVD on the floor and when she played it, she first thought she saw her husband having sex with someone who looked like her sister.

However, when she played it the next day she recognized the person as her daughter, who was 12 years old at the time. She made a copy of the DVD and gave one to a friend, who is also a pastor, who also viewed the DVD and made a copy.

The girl’s mother confronted her husband but he remained silent. After threatening to bring her daughter to question her, the accused admitted it was true but said he did not mean to hurt anyone.

The prosecutor said that a friend of the mother gave the DVD to then deputy police commissioner, Raymond Craig who later handed it to investigators.

When the accused turned himself in to police and was shown the contents of the DVD, he said he had nothing to say.



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Nicholas Pooran blazes 62 off 19 balls in IPL thriller

BANGALORE: Lucknow Super Giants grabbed a run off the final ball to beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by one wicket in a high-scoring Indian Premier League game on Monday.

Lucknow reached 213-9 in a nervy final over and overhauled Bangalore's challenging total of 212-2.

Lucknow top the leaderboard with six points from four games. Bangalore slipped to No 7 with one win from three matches.

Needing five off Harshal Patel's last over, Lucknow lost the wickets of Mark Wood and Jaydev Unadkat and needed one run from the final ball with one wicket left.

Patel missed an opportunity to run out Ravi Bishnoi at the non-striker's end which could have thrown the game into the super over but had to bowl the final delivery again. The last-wicket pair of Avesh Khan and Bishnoi scampered for a bye as wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik couldn't gather the ball cleanly.

Lucknow had all but sealed the game on the back of Nicholas Pooran's 19-ball knock of 62 runs that featured

seven sixes and four boundaries. But Pooran's dismissal in the 17th over brought Bangalore back into the game with Lucknow needing 24 runs off the last three overs.

Pooran, who hit this season's fastest half-century off 15 balls, holed out at deep square leg off a high full toss from Mohammed Siraj (3-22).

Siraj and Wayne Parnell (3-41), who was returning after playing his last IPL game in 2014, had put Lucknow on the back foot with their early strikes. But Marcus Stoinis revived the chase with an aggressive 65 off 30 balls and then Pooran's powerful strikes dented Bangalore further as spinner Karn Sharma went for 1-48 off his three overs.

"The way Stoinis and Pooran played, if we have two points today it's because of them," Lucknow skipper Lokesh Rahul said.

Earlier, Bangalore was asked to bat first and their top three batters scored heavily with Faf du Plessis remaining unbeaten on 79 off 46 while Virat Kohli (61 off 44) and Glenn Maxwell (59 off 29) also got rapid half-centuries. Kohli



Nicholas Pooran hits a boundary during the Indian Premier League match

and Du Plessis punished fast bowler Avesh (0-53) before Amit Mishra broke the stand when Kohli was caught at deep

midwicket in the 12th over after adding 96 runs for the first-wicket stand.

Maxwell then smashed six sixes and three boundaries in his rapid knock before he was bowled off the penultimate delivery from Mark Wood.

"Disappointed, I mean obviously they played really well through the middle there but I thought we fought back beautifully," Du Plessis said. "I threw all our weapons we had at them."

Summarised Scores: Royal Challengers Bangalore 212/2 (Faf du Plessis 79 not out, Virat Kohli 61, Glenn Maxwell 59,Amit Mishra 1-18) vs Lucknow Super Giants 213/9 (Marcus Stoinis 65, Nicholas Pooran 62, Mohammed Siraj 3-22).

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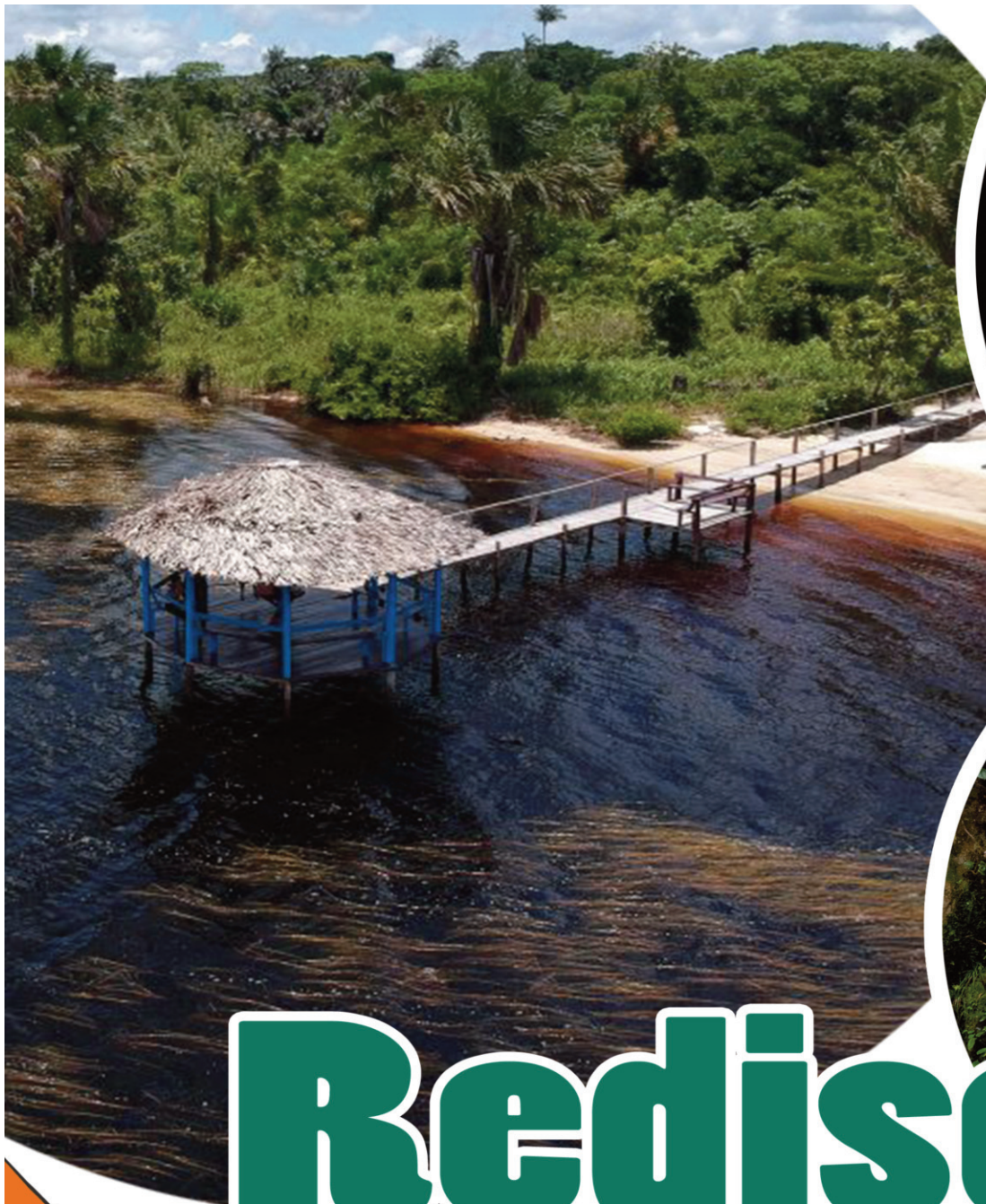
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