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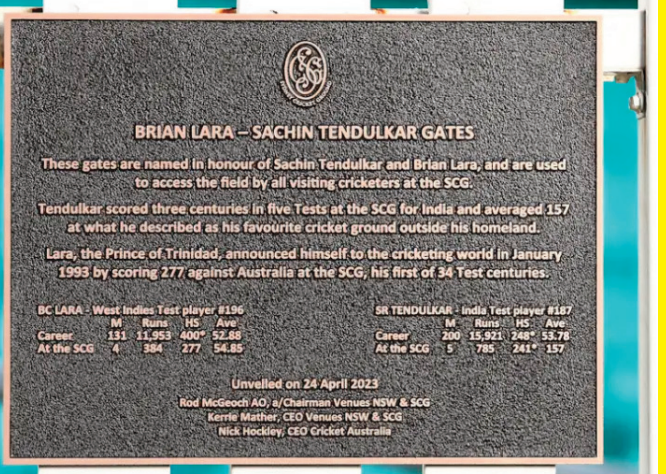


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Starbucks in Guyana

Guyana President Dr. Irfaan Ali has urged Starbucks Guyana to work towards highlighting Guyana's unique products on a global level. The head of state was speaking at the grand opening of Starbucks' flagship location at the Amazonia Mall in East Bank Demerara. Starbucks is known around the world for its coffeehouses, which offer a wide array of coffee beverages, snacks, and pastries; as well as its dedication to sustainability and customer-focused business approach. President Ali noted that while Guyanese will benefit from the introduction of the brand here, the coffee company could benefit from aspects of Guyana's culture. Meanwhile, Happy Birthday to President Ali from Equality News. *Full Starbucks story, Page 23*



BRIAN LARA - SACHIN TENDULKAR GATES

These gates are named in honour of Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara, and are used to access the field by all visiting cricketers at the SCG.

Tendulkar scored three centuries in five Tests at the SCG for India and averaged 157 at what he described as his favourite cricket ground outside his homeland.

Lara, the Prince of Trinidad, announced himself to the cricketing world in January 1993 by scoring 277 against Australia at the SCG, his first of 34 Test centuries.

| BC LARA - West Indies Test player #196 | | | | | SR TENDULKAR - India Test player #187 | | | | |
|--|-----|--------|------|-------|---------------------------------------|-----|--------|------|-------|
| | M | Runs | HS | Ave | | M | Runs | HS | Ave |
| Career | 131 | 11,953 | 400* | 52.88 | Career | 200 | 15,921 | 248* | 55.76 |
| At the SCG | 4 | 384 | 277 | 54.66 | At the SCG | 5 | 785 | 248* | 157 |

Unveiled on 24 April 2023


Rod McGeoch AO, a/Chairman Venues NSW & SCG
Kerrie Mather, CEO Venues NSW & SCG
Nick Hockley, CEO Cricket Australia

GATES OF HONOUR: The Sydney Cricket Ground has unveiled a set of gates named after Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara on Monday. They join Donald Bradman, Alan Davidson and Arthur Morris, all New South Wales (and Australia) legends in being honoured thus at the iconic SCG. April 24 was chosen as the date to unveil the gates to mark Tendulkar's 50th birthday, and also the 30th anniversary of Lara's 277 at the SCG, his first Test century, though that Test was played in January 1993. *Full story on Page 28*



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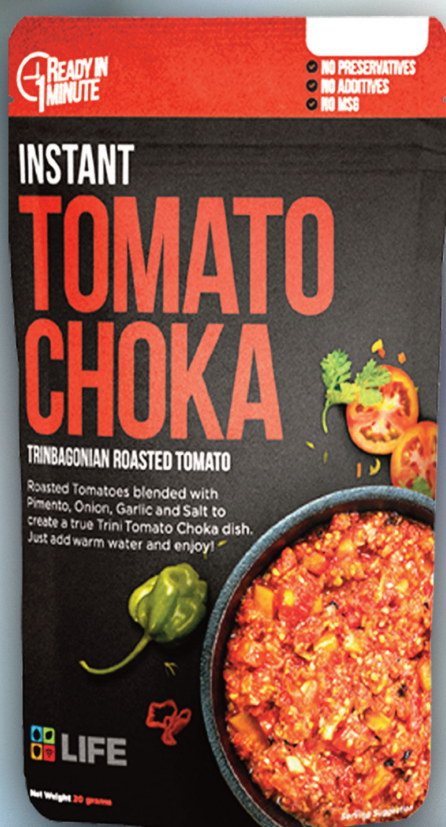
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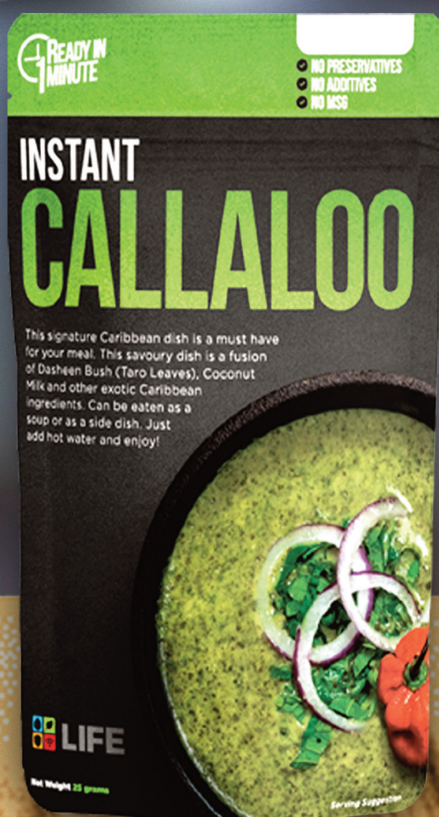


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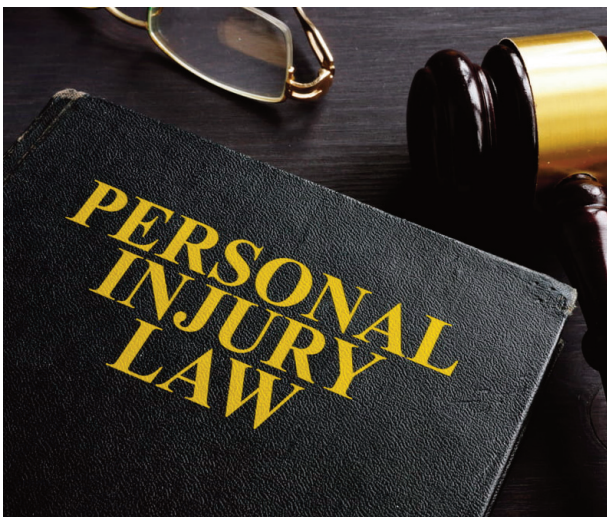
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Ontario companies donate medical equipment

Donations of 2 medical stretchers to Guyana were donated by Techlan Medical Corp., of Mississauga, and 5 wheelchairs by Medical Beauty Care Corp. also in Mississauga, to Guyana recently.

Ms. Grace Joseph, Guyana Consul General (Ag) received the medical equipment on behalf of the Government of Guyana at a ceremony held Wednesday at the Techlan's Headquarters.

President and CEO of Techlan (Medical) Corp., Dr. Anurag Singha, in his presentation, said that he felt connected to Guyana having spent approx 3 months there during the construction of the National Stadium at Diamond, E.B.D. as one of the project engineers sent by the Government of India.

He said he felt obligated to give back and to make a contribution in improving health care in Guyana.

President of Medical Beauty Care Equipments, Akaash Mahajhan also expressed his desire to assist in the improvement of health care in Guyana by donating the 5 wheelchairs.

Guyana's Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony addressed the audience and expressed his gratitude and thanks



L-R: Mukesh Persaud, Techlan's Plant Manager, Dr. Anurag Sinha, Techlan's President & CEO, Mr. Akaash Mahajhan, President of Health & Beauty Medical Corp., Osafo Scott, Guyana's Deputy Consul-General, Grace Joseph, Guyana's Consul-General (Ag), Nutana Singh, Executive Assistant, Guyana Consulate, Mani Singh, Dindyal Ramnarine & Roy Doobay, One Guyana Forum (Canada)

on behalf of the government and the people of Guyana. Anthony also invited the

two Canadian businessmen to visit Guyana and explore the possibilities and

opportunities to expand their respective businesses.

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Long-term care support worker and family face deportation to Nigeria

By Nishad Sharma
LJI REPORTER

She’s a long term health care worker in a country that is in dire need of such skills, yet a 43-year-old widow and mother of three young children says she faces deportation from Canada come Canada Day — July 1.

The woman is claiming threats from her in-laws and personal health risks if the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) carries out its promise to deport the family back to Nigeria on July 1, 2023.

Oluwayemisi Odunlami and her family have been in Canada since 2018 and are living in Vaughan, ON, seeking refugee status. She says she will miss an appointment for cataract eye surgery, scheduled for mid-July if the deportation order is carried-out. The condition of her eyes is one of many other health issues which Odunlami claims she and her children are suffering from.

In an online petition tagged #YemisiNeedsToStay so far signed by 35,413 viewers, the single mom revealed that she was “diagnosed in 2018...with Type 2 diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and osteoarthritis. Anxiety and depression kicked in,” she wrote. “My little kids have also developed sleeping disorders as well.”

Odunlami said she lost her spouse to leukemia on July 15, 2021.

“He was hardworking, loyal, committed, law-abiding and worked with Home Depot until his death,” she told New Canadian Media (NCM).

Odunlami and her husband had gotten married under contentious circumstances. As a result, she says, her in-laws in Nigeria have threatened her if she returns to Nigeria without the body of her late husband.

“There was opposition to my marriage from his family because they are Muslims and I am a Christian,” Odunlami said. Her husband converted to Christianity in order to marry Odunlami, leading to significant backlash from her in-laws, and was one of the reasons why the family had to leave.



Protestors campaign for “Yemu”, as she is known, to stay in Canada

“Nigeria is a no-go area for me. I really do not have anywhere to go in Nigeria,” she said.

While in Canada, Odunlami studied and then worked at a long-term care facility as a personal support worker.

In a desperate plea to CBSA, Odunlami said that sending her and her children back to Nigeria would eventually lead her to an early grave.

“Canada is respected as a humanitarian and caring country that is known for protecting and accepting people in danger,” she said. “Unfortunately, it is not the case here”.

Sarom Rho, an organizer with Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, told NCM that Odunlami is just one out of

about 1.7 million immigrants in Canada who are not permanent residents in Canada.

This situation, she explained, denies such people access to proper jobs and healthcare and puts them at risk of being exploited by employers.

“Healthcare workers like Yemisi are working in long-term care facilities but are denied healthcare themselves,” Rho said.

“Sixteen months ago, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a promise in his mandate letter to regularise undocu-

mented people. We are calling on PM Trudeau to create an uncapped, regularisation program to grant permanent residence status to all undocumented people. Every day that goes by without that promise being fulfilled, more and more families such as Yemisi’s continue to live in crisis.”

According to the federal government, there are between 20,000 and 500,000 undocumented people in Canada. Rho — who is here on a temporary permit herself — believes that number is likely on the higher end of the spectrum, and that most of these people belong to racialized and marginalized groups.

CBSA declined to answer questions about the case.

However, a letter sent to Odunlami’s lawyer, David Ibeawuchi, and seen by NCM confirms that the CBSA had deferred the family’s initial removal order from Feb. 23, 2023, to July 1, in consideration of her three kids.

“Odunlami has three children. All children are registered in Ontario schools and are attending classes full time,” the letter reads. “The deferral request is granted until July 1st, 2023 to ensure Oluwayemisi Odunlami’s children complete their school year”.

CBSA added that the deferral is a temporary measure and does not exclude Odunlami and her family from the removal process.

The agency expects Odunlami and her family to attend the Immigration and Enforcement Operations Division in Mississauga to finalize the next steps in their removal process.

Rho, said her organization and other migrant-led agencies have so far stopped the deportation of 102,000 Post Graduate Work permit holders.

She believes that all hope is not lost for Odunlami and her family, even as the July 1 date set by immigration authorities fast approaches.

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Visionary leadership

In keeping with his visionary leadership of Guyana, President Irfaan Ali is about to embark on another first for the Caribbean region: the establishment of a vaccine production facility.

And India, a world leader in this sector, has expressed a strong desire to be a part of this initiative.

President Ali said that as part of its efforts to improve healthcare, the Government of Guyana has recognised the need for increased access to life-saving vaccines, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Readers will recall that during Covid-19, Guyana and the rest of the Caribbean basically had to depend solely on the largesse of more developed nations to give them the much needed vaccines.

The pandemic exposed the inequality in the manufacturing, pricing, and distribution of vaccines, as the developed world used their own production facilities to produce the vaccines, and stockpiled them while the developing world waited and begged for some.

India, which has several vaccine production facilities, stepped up to the plate and donated large amounts of

Covid vaccines to the developing world, including Guyana.

Ali said in light of what happened with Covid, he had no intentions of “sitting and waiting” for handouts such another crisis happen.

“We’re going to make the tough decisions and hard calls in the interest of Guyana and the people of Guyana,” the Head of State said.

India has expressed its “firm and strong” desire to be a part of Guyana’s efforts to establish a vaccine production facility for Guyana, similar to BioNTech’s mRNA vaccine factory in Kigali, Rwanda.

India’s Minister of External Affairs Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who was on a visit to Guyana last weekend, said that the bilateral partnership is set to benefit both countries, as Guyana will gain access to India’s vast knowledge and experience in vaccine production, while India will have the opportunity to expand its reach and impact in the global healthcare sector.

As a country with a long history of cooperation with Guyana, India has pledged to provide technical support and expertise to help establish the local

vaccine production facility.

Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo had earlier emphasised that establishing a local vaccine production facility would provide regional security for life-saving vaccines.

“This issue has been a concern for some time, particularly in light of the pandemic. We have been exploring the possibility of achieving regional vaccine security to protect our people,” Dr. Jagdeo had said.

Guyana has begun engaging with researchers and developers to acquire pharmaceutical equity for global public health.

These efforts, Dr. Jagdeo highlighted, are in response to the challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that the global crisis highlighted the importance of not only having access to vaccines, but also ensuring that every region has vaccine security.

“The goal is to ensure future security, as seen during the pandemic. We couldn’t obtain supplies for our people in this part of the world; Africa faced similar issues, which is why there are discussions with Rwanda to pursue the

same course. We cannot rely on the developed world in the future to provide these supplies,” Dr. Jagdeo said.

President Ali said that the establishment of a local vaccine production facility in Guyana is a significant step forward in the country’s efforts to improve healthcare, and strengthen its healthcare infrastructure.

By working together with international partners like India, the government is laying the foundation for a more resilient and sustainable healthcare system that can better serve the needs of its people.

Ali said the vaccine facility was opening a new frontier for Guyana, and it again shows his vision for the country’s -- and the wider Caribbean region’s -- future.

Guyana has begun engaging with researchers and developers to acquire pharmaceutical equity for global public health.

We applaud Ali and his government for doing what is clearly necessary to protect the health of the people of the Caribbean.

Landslide victory projected for the PPP

Dear Editor,

Local Government Elections are some eight weeks away, and candidates filed nominations on Monday.

The People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) that governs at the centre says it has put up candidates in all 80 Local Authority Areas (LAAs) (70 NDCs and 10 Municipalities).

The AFC said it is not contesting LGE 2023. It is not known as yet how many areas the Opposition PNC and independents are contesting. But the official Opposition party says it is contesting in all of its strongholds.

The statement suggests that PNC will not contest in PPP strongholds, giving the party a free pass. And even if the PNC does field candidates, it will be decimated in areas traditionally won by the PPP.

Polling data of surveys conducted

from January to now show defeat is staring in the face of the opposition forces.

There is no support for low key, unknown independents. The PNC is not attracting much support and several prominent individuals once associated with the party as recently as 2021 have crossed over to the ruling PPP.

There is no cross over support towards the PNC, and no voter indicated they will migrate from PPP to PNC.

However, there is a lot of cross over racial support (from PNC) for PPP that enhances its prospect of securing seats traditionally won by PNC.

The PPP is making inroads everywhere in every municipality and stronghold of the PNC. Polling suggests that the PPP will do extremely well in Georgetown, Linden, New Amsterdam and other urban areas.

The incumbent party will run away with the elections, winning more than three quarters of the 80 bodies.

So far, the LGE has been a low key affair. There is hardly any significant PNC presence in any neighbourhood.

There is virtually no election related materials, not even in its strongholds. In contrast, the PPP election paraphernalia are overwhelmingly on display, swarming entire neighbourhoods including PNC strongholds.

The PNC campaign comes across as insufficiently funded, uncoordinated, and lacking focus, and appears divided as prominent MPs and former stalwarts are not part of the LGE campaign.

Supporters of the PNC blame the parlous state of affairs of the opposition party on the leadership of Aubrey Norton. Also, voters have nothing compli-

mentary to say about the PNC and its leadership.

In contrast with the PNC, the PPP comes across as very united and organized, and flush with funds. It has been successful in attracting several cross over candidates in NDCs that PNC won in the last two LGEs.

In addition, President, Dr. Irfaan Ali’s leadership has been praised, and he has been credited for bringing people together and spreading development work all over the country as against what occurred during the tenure of the coalition.

The ruling party has also been praised for focusing on economic recovery after the devastating consequences of COVID-19.

Yours respectfully,
Vishnu Bisram

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Opposition question Doug Ford’s plan for spa at Ontario Place

By Niraj Sharma
LJI REPORTER

Ontario Place, long a jewel in the crown of the province, will soon be largely in private hands.

That’s because the Doug Ford Government has reportedly signed a 95 year lease with a Norwegian company to own and operate a private spa on the site.

Opposition MPPs questioned the Ford government on Monday about the long-term contract it has reportedly signed.

Ontario NDP Leader Marit Stiles demanded details of the contract with Therme Canada in the Ontario legislature during question period. The European company has said it will build a private spa and water park at Ontario Place.

The questioning came after Global News published a story saying the province has signed a 95-year lease with the company.

According to the Global News report, the company agreed to a "cost-sharing deal" in which it will maintain the property for the length of the contract. CBC has not independently veri-



Plans for Ontario Place includes a private luxury spa and a water park that will be operated on a long term lease

fied details of the lease agreement.

Stiles said she wonders what the government is hiding by refusing to provide details.

"This government is committing to a backroom, 95-year lease with absolutely no details," Stiles said.

"This government failed to show Ontarians what value this deal has for

the people of this province. They've failed to produce the contracts. They've failed to provide the business case. When will this government come clean about this backroom deal?"

Infrastructure Minister Kinga Surma responded but declined to confirm the length of the lease. Surma said the land will continue to be owned by

Ontarians.

"The government is entering into a long-term lease, but Mr. Speaker, we cannot ignore the fact that they will be providing \$500 million worth of capital investment on the site, including 12 acres(about five hectares) of land," Surma said.

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The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

Guyana and India Relations

By Joel Bhagwandin

Guyana is well positioned to lead a regional integration agenda aimed at strengthening South-South cooperation within the continent and regionally within a global context.

Over the years, the Indian Government has supported Guyana on several fronts. One notable contribution from the Indian Government, for example, was financial support to construct the National Stadium at Providence. Indeed, there are many other ways in which historically Guyana received support from the Indian government as well as the many Indian owned enterprises operating in Guyana for decades. Considering that India is a global leader in agriculture and technology, Guyana can benefit from India's expertise to bolster its own food security agenda and ICT transformation. This can be achieved by not only partnering with Government at the bilateral level, but through private sector partnership as well where meaningful synergies can be developed and capacity building for the Guyanese private sector.

In a conference paper by this author presented at the "West Institute International Academic Conference on Business, Economics and Social Sciences" in September 2020, Guyana's economic transformation in becoming a geopolitical importance in the Caribbean and South America was highlighted. The author sought to present a compelling case of whether Guyana can become transformative within the region, viz-à-viz, an enhanced framework that would foster deeper regional economic integration of South America and the Caribbean with the rest of the world. This notion is

premised against the backdrop of its arguably geopolitically potent location, its emerging petroleum industry, coupled with the increasing global interests in Guyana. The paper analyzed the causation and drivers of these determinants and concludes that with good political leadership and governance, Guyana can move from being an under-developed country to a 'developed' economy thus becoming a strategic geopolitically important country because at the margin western hemisphere oil supply is crucial, and because a Brazilian corridor to the sea is important. In these respects, it is contended that Guyana can play a pivotal role that fosters greater regional and continental integration of the Caribbean and South America, respectively—within the global economy.

With this background in mind, nearly two and half years later, the President Irfaan Ali led Administration is ambitiously, assiduously, and aggressively working to position Guyana within this very context—that is, as a geopolitically and strategically important country in the Caribbean and South America.

To this end, since assuming office, the Government embarked on a mission to rebuild Guyana's international credibility and image, position the country as an attractive investment destination, and has been tirelessly working to deepen and reinvigorate Guyana's diplomatic relations with all of its diplomatic allies across the globe and regionally.

This article focuses on the Guyana/India relations—focusing on how the two countries stand to benefit economically.

Paraphrasing India's External Af-

fairs Minister at the round table discussion forum yesterday, April 23, 2023, while the two countries shared a long-standing bilateral relationship with each other, there has been a rejuvenated effort in deepening ties between the two countries, especially on the economic front.

Over the years, the Indian Government has supported Guyana on several fronts. One notable contribution from the Indian Government, for example, was financial support to construct the National Stadium at Providence. Indeed, there are many other ways in which historically Guyana received support from the Indian government as well as the many Indian owned enterprises operating in Guyana for decades.

With respect to international trade between the two countries, India enjoys a trade balance surplus with Guyana. In this regard, for the fiscal year (FY) ended December 2022, imports from India amounted to US\$62.2m, representing 1.7% of total imports, while exports to India amounted to US\$1.6 million, giving rise to a trade balance deficit for Guyana with India.

Moving forward, reference was made to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two countries outlining focus areas that the two countries are mutually pursuing. Chiefly, India is particularly interested to purchase Guyana's crude oil. According to U.S Energy Information Administration, India was the third-largest energy consumer in the world after China and the United States in 2021, and the second most populous country, with 1.4 billion people. India's energy needs continue to grow as a result of population growth and modernization. In fact, India is the

fastest growing major economies, recording close to 9% GDP growth in 2021.

Although India has made considerable headway with energy reform and continues to focus on greater energy security, infrastructure development and market liberalization. India's government continues to face challenges to meet the country's growing energy demand, including securing affordable energy supplies and attracting investment for upstream projects and transmission infrastructure. Therein lies the opportunity for Guyana to become a major supplier to meet India's energy needs in the medium term as production are expected to be ramped up to over 1 million barrels per day by the end of the decade. Already, Guyana's Vice President has signaled that any deal in this regard between the two countries, will be premised on commercial terms.

Considering that India is a global leader in agriculture and technology, Guyana can benefit from India's expertise to bolster its own food security agenda and ICT transformation.

This can be achieved by not only partnering with Government at the bilateral level, but through private sector partnership as well where meaningful synergies can be developed and capacity building for the Guyanese private sector.

3. Conclusion

Against the foregoing, Guyana is well positioned to lead a regional integration agenda aimed at strengthening South-South cooperation within the continent and regionally within a global context.

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.



Joel Bhagwandin

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Zero-tolerance approach to children on Guyana’s streets

THE Ministry of Human Services and Social Security will be cracking down on parents who neglect their children, resulting in their being exposed to the dangers that lurk on the roadways.

Subject minister, Dr. Vindhya Persaud is urging parents to take their responsibility seriously.

Due to the many child-neglect cases being tackled by the ministry, Minister Persaud explained that additional consultations are being held with parents to address the social scourge.

“On the streets, we’ve been working with children, picking them up. We’ve managed to remove over 40 of those children... This year, we are going to have zero tolerance for children on the streets,” the minister emphasised.

The Child Care and Protection Agency (CCPA) primarily deals with these matters, and has recognised that in many instances, children have guardians.

“We have found that 99 per cent of those children have homes, have parents, and they are on the streets for one reason or the other. We want the parents to understand that this is not to



Dr. Vindhya Persaud

punish you, but this is to make you recognise you have a duty to your children, and you should be cognisant of that,” Dr. Persaud stated.

This social issue is being tackled through the ‘Street Light’ initiative, which was launched last September. The initiative comprises officers

from both the CCPA and the Guyana Police Force patrolling communities across the country to ensure children are kept off the streets.

India to fund small Caribbean businesses

India’s Minister of External Affairs, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, has proposed funding for small and medium-scale enterprises in the Caribbean and suggested supporting individual projects of up to a value of a million dollars on a grant basis and creating a partner group in India to provide machinery, technology, and training.

“What we’d like to do is to create a partner group in India and see whether our capability which will include the supply of machinery, technology, training – if we can get really viable project offers from your side, we would be very happy to look at that,” Dr Jaishankar told the Fourth CARICOM-India Ministerial Meeting at the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters on Friday last.

The Foreign Minister, who concluded his four-day visit to Guyana on Sunday, also highlighted the importance of health security and proposed a regional hub for low-cost generics from USFDA-approved plants in India.

The minister explained that India has a domestic initiative for cost-effective generics, which could benefit low-income consumers globally.

“If you feel that is of interest, we are creating a system for low-cost generics to be available to your people. We would like to create a regional hub for that. All of these would come from USFDA-approved plants of which currently we have about 600 in India,” he said.

Dr Jaishankar emphasised India’s willingness to support and partner with the countries in the CARICOM region and globally to tackle pressing

global issues.

During his meeting with CARICOM’s Secretary General, Dr. Carla Natalie Barnett and her team, the Foreign Minister exchanged views for intensifying India-CARICOM ties in traditional, as well as, new areas of co-operation. He also congratulated Dr Barnett on the 50 years of CARICOM.

The Indian Minister also co-chaired the fourth India-CARICOM Ministerial meeting with Jamaican Foreign Minister, Kamina Smith at the CARICOM HQ in Georgetown.

According to a press release from the Indian High Commission in Guyana, the meeting of Foreign Ministers has been seen as another meaningful step towards institutionalising the high-level engagements between India and the CARICOM nations. It follows the establishment of the CARICOM-India Joint Commission in 2015, the resumption of ministerial meetings, and the first CARICOM-India Summit-Level Meeting in 2019.

“These engagements have given impetus to the relationship and provided policy guidance for future CARICOM-India interactions and are seen as another step towards strengthening relations.

The meeting discussed how the strategic partnership can advance the Region’s priorities, such as climate change, agriculture and energy. The solidarity and support from India are seen to contribute towards regional integration objectives including agriculture, ICT, climate change and disaster risk management,” the release noted.

According to the High Commission, the minis-

ters discussed the wide-ranging sectoral co-operation, including in trade and economy; agriculture and food security; health and pharma; energy and renewables; infrastructure, ICT and eGovernance; development partnership and capacity building; higher education; culture and P2P domains.

They also exchanged views on vital issues of climate change & disaster resilience; countering terrorism; reformed multilateralism and closer co-operation at multilateral forums. They also agreed on follow-up steps, including holding the second Joint Commission Meeting this year.

It was noted that Dr Jaishankar underlined the pressing global issues, including COVID-19, climate events, debt and trade stress, and food and energy security during the fourth India-CARICOM ministerial meeting.

“COVID, increasing intensity and frequency of climate events, the debt and trade stress situations that many of us find ourselves in and food and energy security concerns are really pressing issues where it is important for us to sit down and discuss.”

India, which currently chairs the G20, is keen on supporting countries not on the table through the ‘Voice of Global South’ process, he added.

“This year we have the privilege of chairing the G20 and my PM is very clear that we (should) be there not just for ourselves but also for the countries who are not on the G20 table. Therefore, we did a round of consultations on what we call the Voice of Global South process,” Dr Jaishankar said.

‘Heirs of Slavery’ launched in London to engage CARICOM on reparations

A new group of UK citizens whose ancestors profited from British enslavement in Guyana and other British colonies and the industries that depended on it, on Monday launched a new entity promising new possibilities for reparations and atonement for Guyana and other Caribbean nations that experienced slavery.

Descendants of some of the most prominent names in the history of British slavery, they officially launched “Heirs of Slavery” and called on the British government to begin long-requested talks on reconciliation and reparative justice for descendants of the 3.1 million enslaved African people transported across the Atlantic by Britain.

Authors, journalists, businesspeople and a direct descendant of the Victorian Prime Minister, William Gladstone are among the members of a new group set up to support campaigns to address “the ongoing consequences of this crime against humanity.”

“British slavery was legal, industrialised and based entirely on race,” said Alex Renton, one member of the group.

He continued: “Britain has never apologised for it, and its after effects still harm people’s lives in Britain as well as in the Caribbean countries where our ancestors made money.”

The group also includes David Lascelles (the Earl of Harewood), retired social worker Rosemary Harrison, businessman Charles Gladstone, the former BBC correspondent Laura Trevelyan, author and publisher Richard Atkinson, retired schoolteacher Robin Wedderburn, film director John Dower and journalist Alex Renton (son of a former Conservative cabinet minister).

Members of the group have publicly acknowledged that their “ancestors’ wealth was, in part, derived from plantations worked by enslaved Africans, and for whom the slave-owners received compensation at British slavery’s abolition in the 1830s.”

Harrison’s ancestor was a slave-owner and Attorney General in Jamaica in the late 18th century.

“We encourage the hundreds of thousands of people in Britain with similar family histories to explore and acknowledge them.

“Until the painful legacy of slavery is recognised by the descendants of those who profited from it, there can never be healing,” Richard Atkinson said.

“I joined this group in an attempt to begin to address the appalling ills visited on so many people by my ancestor John Gladstone,” said Charles Gladstone, whose family also owned slave plantations in Guyana and opened the way for Indentureship of



Indian labourers to replace freed slaves after Abolition.

The group and their families have all made private donations to tackle poverty, poor education and other issues affecting the descendants of the enslaved in Britain and Caribbean countries.

“This group wants to move beyond personal donations, which can never be enough,” said Rosemary Harrison.

“We wish to offer our energy and support to the existing movements, led by CARICOM and others, that are seeking reparative justice from the European nations and the institutions that were enriched by the industries dependent on enslaved African people.”

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries whose people endured slavery and its aftermath are now calling for the former colonial powers to invest in their health and education systems, and many are also pushing for debt cancellation.

Meanwhile, the group is in conversation with other British citizens descended from the enslaved of the Caribbean countries, and who experience racism, poverty and inequality that derives from it.

“I would like to listen and learn from the descendants of the enslaved to find out what would best help them in their lives today.

“Please tell us how apology and repair, led by the British nation, should

work,” Robin Wedderburn said.

“Those of us in this group share a dark history, one that we are endeavouring to be open about in the hope of encouraging dialogue, friendship and reconciliation between all the people whose lives have been affected.

“We urge other people with a similar history, both individuals and institutions, to join us in speaking out,” David Lascelles said.

Laura Trevelyan related: “After so long, the reparatory justice movement is gaining momentum in Europe. Whether it’s the Dutch government, the Church of England, or the British Royal Family, the enduring and painful legacy of slavery is finally starting to be acknowledged by those who benefited from it.”

Heirs of Slavery’s launch follows last year’s launch of a private Caribbean reparations repair initiative by Digicel’s Chairman Denis O’Brien, also aimed at cross-Atlantic cooperation in spreading the reparations message across the UK and the Caribbean.

Both entities have been reaching out to the CARICOM Reparations Commission (CRC) and are united in inviting UK families to join their lead, and seek and find ways and means of apology and atonement, for reparations for slavery.

Heirs of Slavery members say they have been receiving positive responses and inquiries from other families in the UK and the CARICOM

region, who have also indicated willingness to follow suit and make amends in the CARICOM nations where their ancestors benefitted and grew rich from slavery.

The group has followed the lead of the Trevelyan family, which owned several estates and one thousand slaves in Grenada, where Laura Trevelyan made a personal donation of one thousand pounds (sterling) – proceeds from her retirement at the BBC, where she was a presenter for 30 years.

The ex-BBC presenter and members of her family travelled to Grenada in on February 27, where seven members signed a formal apology— also previously signed by over 100 members—and Laura’s US\$100,000 was used to establish a family fund that she and other members also pledged to continue to contribute to.

The Trevelyan family’s formal apology and atonement were delivered to and accepted by the Government of Grenada through Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell, who attended the ceremony and accepted on behalf of Cabinet members present and the government and people of Grenada.

“Heirs of Slavery” have their eyes on similar private initiatives and have also pledged to work with other families and like entities, in the UK and the Caribbean, to fulfil their quest to apologise and atone for their ancestors.

US\$100M luxury hotel & casino being built in Berbice

IN keeping with the rapid growth of Guyana’s economy, the Sheriff Group of Companies will be investing some US\$100 million in Palmyra, Berbice, to construct a 150-room hotel and casino.

“The construction of a luxury hotel and casino will have all the modern amenities of first-world countries,” a statement from the Sheriff Group of Companies said on Sunday.

Construction of the state-of-the-art facility is slated to commence next week and is expected to be completed by December, 2024. A home away from home is what the luxury hotel and casino aim to grant. The company believes that this investment will not only aid Guyanese but also the local tourism sector.

The massive investment from the Sheriff Group of Companies comes on the heels of the construction of a 150-room Sheriff General Hospital, also at Palmyra, which will be a specialty hospital that will perform heart surger-

ies, eye surgeries and cancer treatment, among other medical procedures. The procedures that will be done at the new hospital will also complement those at the other hospitals.

It is the company’s intention to open the enterprise in phases, so that the people in Berbice can be employed and, most importantly, Berbicians can be given world-class healthcare services at an affordable rate without the hassle of travelling to Georgetown.

“These investments will result in the creation of hundreds of new jobs for the residents of Berbice,” the statement noted.

Earlier this year, Ameir Ahmad, proprietor of the Sheriff security firm, explained that the Sheriff Group of Companies will also erect a business/shopping centre of 500,000 sq ft. This will allow businesses to rent the space for both short and long term, also at Palmyra.



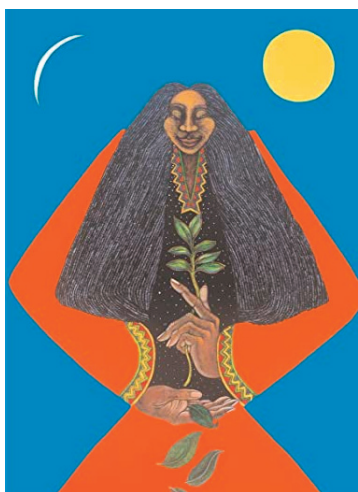
A model of the US\$100M luxury hotel & casino

He also added that Sheriff Security has acquired a one-acre plot of land (50,000 sq. ft.), which will be converted into headquarters for the Sheriff Security Service.

“We are investing a large chunk

of our budget that was supposed to be for the next five years, but we have decided to put a large portion into Berbice. We are taking a lot of risk in Berbice and hope that the Berbicians will support us,” he said.

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New Guyana ferry to open export market to T&T, wider Caribbean

THE newly commissioned MV MA Lisha can journey from Region One (Barima-Waini) to Trinidad and Tobago in just 15 hours and other Caribbean countries, opening opportunities for the export of “high-value” agriculture and fish products.

President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, on Sunday, stated that this new vessel, commonly referred to as the ‘North West ferry’, is set to have a major impact on the business community in Region One. It will allow for not just faster transport time of their products and produce but will also see a significant reduction in transport costs.

The Head of State made these remarks at the commissioning of the vessel at the Demerara Sugar Terminal at Ramp Road, Georgetown in the presence of visiting Indian Minister of External Affairs, Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and other officials.

The vessel, named after the native Warrau language meaning friendship, will ply the Barima-Waini/Georgetown route. It was built by the Indian company Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited and has special features to mitigate challenges faced by travellers.

The vessel has 10×10 containers that can carry a large quantity of produce, reducing the price of goods. The boat can carry 276 passengers, 18 crew members, and 14 sedan-type vehicles along with two trucks.

With these features, President Ali explained that they have already begun preparing for upgrades to the Morawhanna and Kumaka Stellings located in Region One.

The Head-of-State added that as the country transitions to becoming the food capital of the region, one of the



The MV Ma Lisha — can travel to T&T and the wider Caricom area

greatest hindrances to this reality is its transportation system. He added that the vessel will only take 15 hours from Region One to Trinidad and will create a niche between the two counties.

“Region One alone has the capacity to produce all the cassava, eddoes, sweet potatoes, yams, turmeric, ginger, and cage culture fish that the entire Trinidad and Tobago can utilise,” President Ali said.

He added, “This is an opportunity

now to open up new discourse with India on building on this project to the next project – that is the replacement of the fleet here – but, more importantly, making use of this opportunity of trade between Region One, Trinidad, and the rest of CARICOM.”

Having the transportation part of the “link” fixed, the President said that the next step is investing in the processing aspect for export. With the direct flight to the United Kingdom, President Ali added that this will now open up a new market for these products, which are “high value” in demand overseas.

Against this backdrop, the President said that the vessel is not only about transportation but also a macro policy of positioning Guyana as a “mainstay in the regional food market.” He added that MV Kimbia and MV Barima, which service Region One, have incurred a current operating cost of almost \$12 million every month. Thus, the new vessel will not only be more fuel-efficient but also cut the travel time in half.

“This vessel has 60 per cent of that cost of the current operating fuel costs. This vessel is estimated to use substantially less fuel than the Kimbia. So, the operating costs of this vessel will also reduce the operating costs for the Transport and Harbour Department. This will improve efficiency and reliability and reduce our cost centre while at the same time bringing a higher level of service to the people of these regions,” Dr. Ali said.

The government has begun prep-

ping upgrades to Morawhanna and Kumaka Stellings where the vessel will dock. Those upgrades are expected to cost approximately \$784 million and \$1.9 billion, respectively.

Also speaking at the event was Dr. Jaishankar, who emphasised that his country is a committed partner to Guyana’s development.

“Our partnership today extends to a variety of fields from development, co-operation and training to capacity building, health, education.”

The new vessel will have an online booking platform and Wi-Fi services onboard that will cater to the expanding, modernising and improving of ferry services. Additionally, the 70-metre-long beam will have seating as comfortable as business class on an airline, with air conditioning and ample leg room.

This will provide a comfortable and safe travel experience for women, senior citizens, pregnant mothers, and children.

The VIP cabins also provide an opportunity for persons to travel with their cars and SUVs to the Northwest District. The MV MA Lisha has a front-loading/ offloading ramp which can accommodate easy loading and discharging of cargo at ports she will call on. The vessel also has a side-boarding capacity.

A total of 19 navigational, mechanical and auxiliary staff of the Transport and Harbours Department were trained in India during 2022 and earlier this year, to operate the new ferry vessel.

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India’s Foreign Minister: ‘Guyana poised to enter new era’

THE relationship between India and Guyana has always been pleasant and healthy, and it has grown stronger over the years through bilateral interactions marked by high-level exchange visits.

With the arrival of Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, India’s Minister of External Affairs, who has stated that the bond will extend, it is anticipated that this ever-expanding friendship will reach greater depths.

Dr. Jaishankar asserted that while India and many other nations have excellent relations, the relationship with Guyana is deeper. He concluded his four-day visit to Guyana on Sunday and told an India Diaspora Reception on Sunday night at the Marriott Hotel that he returns to his home country with an even “bigger agenda” than he anticipated.

The Foreign Minister also highlighted that Guyana’s transformation is being witnessed globally as the country is “poised to enter a new era...”

He explained that India and Guyana are looking at prospects to refresh the existing relationship. In addition, the Indian Minister stated that with new partnerships and connections between Guyana and India, great things may be anticipated in every sector.

He reiterated that the relationship between Guyana and India aims to enhance both Guyanese and Indian lives. He committed to the true definition of foreign policy, noting that goal is to not only let the people’s voices be heard but also to propose solutions to better their lives through reshaping the governing process.

Owing to the drastic effects of COVID-19 pandemic, the Foreign Minister said he has constantly asked himself “...What can we do to in terms of our partnerships?”

He added that even though COVID-19 might not occur again in the future, everyone must be ready to deal with catastrophes of any kind. As a result, he stated that efforts are needed to enhance the global economy in the areas of food security, health preparation, and health security, etc.

Meanwhile, Guyana’s Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo thanked the Indian government for “breathing energy into this relationship.”

He also discussed the numerous partnerships with Guyana and India, including recent agricultural projects. Additionally, Dr. Jagdeo said that because Guyana is now an oil producer, the economic balance must be maintained to prevent the devastating “Dutch Disease.”

He reaffirmed that Guyana is liberalising its economy and welcomes foreign investment. Additionally, the Vice President praised the Indian Foreign Minister’s efforts and described his willingness to co-operate as “fruitful.”



Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, India's Minister of External Affairs. on stage with other Indian and Guyana officials



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Cricketers leading India/Guyana Chamber of Commerce

AN India/Guyana Chamber of Commerce (IGCC) was launched on Saturday at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre during the opening ceremony of a business roundtable event hosted as part of the visit by India's External Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar to Guyana.

Businessman and former national cricketer Ramnaresh Sarwan, owner of Amazonia Mall in Guyana, has been selected as the Chamber's President, while another former national cricketer-turned-businessman, Steven Jacobs is one of the Senior Vice-Presidents. Jacobs is also a contractor, and the owner of Jacobs Jewellery and Pawnshop.

Alongside them are Lead Director and Chairman of John Fernandes Limited David Fernandes (Senior Vice-President); Chairman of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) Kalamazad Ibrahim (Vice President); Managing Director of Opulent Consulting Inc. Shaleeza Shaw (Treasurer); Founder and President of Texila American University Consortium Saju Bhaskar (Secretary); and Operations Director of Ekaa Hrim, Earth Resources Management Sreebala Kumar (Secretary).

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Sarwan said he was honoured to be selected as the inaugural President of this new body.

Officials at the launch of the new India/Guyana Chamber of Commerce

"I'm really excited about this. Given where Guyana is headed, and the history that we have shared together with India, having a relationship with India provides a link for a lot more businesses to know about Guyana. We just want to ensure that every Guyanese is opened to as many opportunities, and also give the businesses in India opportunities as well," Sarwan related.

He noted that discussions about the formation of the Chamber have only been ongoing for a short period of time, and so, the executives will be putting in much work over the next few months to finalise the Chamber's structure and operations.

"It's been just a few weeks that we started really and truly putting things together; we're still working on finalising some things, but we thought it would've been a great opportunity to do it while the Minister from India is here. But we're still in the process of doing some work," Sarwan noted.

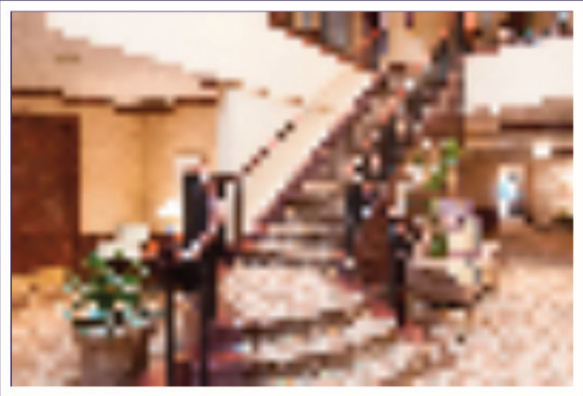
The Chamber is on a mission to serve regional businesses in India and Guyana through advocacy, economic development, connectivity, culture and education, and promoting trade and investment among the businesses.



President of the India/Guyana Chamber of Commerce, Ramnaresh Sarwan; India's External Minister, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar; Senior VP of the Chamber, Steven Jacobs

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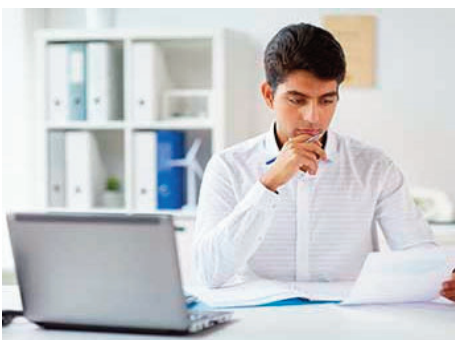
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Milestone EU Co-operation agreement tabled in parliament

MINISTER of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat, on Monday, successfully tabled the Guyana-European Union (EU) Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement or (VPA) in the National Assembly.

This will pave the way for greater co-operation and increase market access and market share with the European Union (EU).

The VPA was then signed in December 2022 in Montreal, Canada by Minister Vickram Bharrat, and finally ratified Monday.

In November 2022, the Natural Resources Minister at COP27 in Egypt signed a Forest Partnership Agreement with the EU for €5 million to support sustainable livelihood in forest-based communities.

The agreement was formally handed to President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali in March of this year. Guyana is the first country to sign both the VPA and a Forest Partnership Agreement.

In 2012, a stakeholder-supported policy decision was taken by the Government of Guyana to enter into formal negotiations with the EU on developing a VPA.

The terms of the VPA were negotiated through a collaborative process between Guyana and the EU, during which both parties shared the goal of fostering good forest governance and addressing illegality.

The VPA aims to support governance reform and strengthen enforcement activities in Guyana with commitments to improve transparency,



Minister Bharrat tables milestone EU co-operation agreement in Parliament

accountability, legislative clarity and other aspects of governance.

When a nation becomes a VPA Partner Country, it can issue FLEGT licenses to its exporters under national FLEGT Licensing Schemes based on a Legality Assurance System (LAS) for agreed timber products destined for the EU.

This system, which is rolled out at the national level, ensures that only legally produced timber products are exported to the EU.

To begin issuing FLEGT licenses

as required by the VPA, Guyana is building on existing national initiatives like its Wood Tracking System (WTS) to develop a robust timber legality assurance also known as the Guyana Timber Legality System (GTLAS).

Guyana also has a series of VPA Annexes which describe the practical components for implementing the core commitments in the VPA in detail.

Annexes provide information on the country's laws that Guyana will use to monitor the agreement, timber products covered under the agreement and

other requirements.

It will also guarantee new donor revenue streams to support the implementation phase. However, local VPA ministries/ agencies must also budget annually to ensure that any gaps in their internal systems are identified and rectified.

The other VPA countries are the Central African Republic; Ivory Coast; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Gabon; Ghana; Guyana; Honduras; Laos; Liberia; Malaysia; Myanmar; the Republic of Congo and Vietnam.

NRF deposits reach \$78B in first quarter

GUYANA saw deposits totalling US\$377.14 million (GUY\$78.631 billion) from profit oil and royalty being placed into the National Resources Fund (NRF) from January to March of this year.

Royalties accounted for US\$57.591 million (G\$12.008 billion), while the remaining sum came from four profit-oil deposits from January 3 to March 20.

The first deposit from profit oil was \$17.224 billion, while deposits of \$15.653 billion, \$17.149 billion and \$15.599 billion were subsequently made on January 23, February 16, and March 20.

In keeping with the provisions of Section 33(2) of the NRF Act, the Ministry of Finance laid the details of the deposits before the National Assembly on Monday.

The profit-oil receipts are from Guyana's lifts of crude oil earned as profit, while the royalties are paid on a quarterly basis.



This brought the NRF balance to US\$1.447 billion after the NRF ended 2022 with a balance of US\$1.27 billion. The government, earlier this year, transferred US\$200 million (GY\$41.6

billion) from the NRF to the Consolidated Fund to fund the national development agenda.

As part of the Budget 2023 process, parliamentary approval was

granted for a total of US\$1.002 billion to be transferred from the NRF during the fiscal year 2023.



Shah Rukh Khan and son Aryan Khan

Aryan Khan makes directional debut starring (who else) SRK

Aryan Khan has finally made his directorial debut with an ad film featuring the announcement of his new streetwear brand. The ad also features his superstar father Shah Rukh Khan.

In the video, Aryan is seen working on coming up with a perfect logo for his new clothing line. However, he soon gets frustrated and throws the chalk away and strikes a line through the board with a red paint. Later, SRK is seen entering the frame who notices the board. After looking at it for a while, he picks up the paint brush and slashes another line across the red paint on the board to make it look like a cross mark. Thus forming the logo of

the brand.

The ad marks Aryan’s first venture as a director in Bollywood. Unlike his superstar father, the star son has no plans of venturing into acting. Instead, he wanted to be behind the camera and work as a filmmaker. The 25-year-old has already written his first web series and will soon begin its direction.

Meanwhile, Shah Rukh is currently shooting for Rajkumar Hirani's 'Dunki' in Kashmir. The film also stars Taapsee Pannu in the lead role. Apart from this, SRK also has Atlee's 'Jawan' and Siddharth Anand's 'Tiger VS Pathaan' in his pipeline.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): With so many changes taking place in your world at the moment you may feel a bit insecure but today’s Mars-Mercury link will give you reasons to believe that life isn’t so bad after all. Your mind creates your reality, so be positive at all times.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): If you keep things simple as the new week begins you won’t have too many problems, and certainly none that you are unable to deal with. However, with Mercury moving retrograde through your sign you must focus on facts rather than wishful thinking.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): The message of the stars today is that you have to get rid of something you no longer need. You know what that something is and on a deep inner level you know that no matter how attached to it you may be it’s time to let it go.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): At times today it may feel as if you are throwing yourself against a brick wall, so inflexible is the opposition to your plans in certain quarters. Has it not occurred to you that from where other people sit you look like the inflexible one? Give it some thought.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Force yourself to do something exciting as the new week begins, something that ignites the spark inside you that has been burning a little low of late. Once you get moving your lust for life will soon reappear. Don’t lose it so easily next time.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): You may be powerless to stop changes you don’t understand but that may not be such a bad thing. According to the planets if you embrace what takes place this week you will find you quite enjoy it and may even be able to profit from it.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Before you lock horns with a rival on the work front try searching for ways that your differences can be resolved without a head-on collision. There are some battles you cannot win and this may be one of them, so look for a compromise solution.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You are not the sort to apologize for things you’ve said or done and that’s good because if you admit you got something wrong you will never hear the last of it. Stand by your opinions today, even though you may not entirely believe them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): The more you allow yourself to worry about your cashflow situation the less likely it is you will find a solution. Focus on something that has nothing to do with money and, when you least expect it, the answer to your problem will pop into your head.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): If you are finding it hard to be cheerful at the moment you could do worse than seek out a friend who always seems able to make you smile. Once they’ve got you laughing again life will look a lot better than it did just a few hours before.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): You don’t have to be aggressive. You don’t have to win at all costs. The message of the stars today is that you will gain more in the long-term if you tone down your competitive instincts. Look for ways to co-operate with those you think of as rivals.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): The winds of change are blowing strongly and if you are smart you will use them to help you move faster. Don’t listen to those who say you are traveling in the wrong direction. Whichever way you go you will end up where you most need to be.

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Starbucks opening showcases investment opportunity in Guyana

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali has urged the Starbucks Guyana team, through collaboration with the local private sector, to work towards highlighting Guyana’s unique products on a global level.

The Head of State was speaking at the grand opening of Starbucks’ flagship location at the Amazonia Mall, Providence, East Bank Demerara.

Starbucks is known around the world for its coffeehouses, which offer a wide array of coffee beverages, snacks, and pastries, as well as its dedication to sustainability and customer-focused business approach.

President Ali said that while Guyanese will benefit from introduction of the brand here, the brand could stand to benefit from aspects of Guyana’s culture.

“Guyana is known to be very unique. It is a market that Starbucks will soon realise is separate and apart from any other market globally. We are known to be the best in what we do. We are known to be in niche markets. We are known to separate ourselves based on our own appreciation of what we offer,” Dr Ali boasted.

He said while much of the world is enchanted with coffee, the likes of Arabica, Ethiopian coffee, Colombian coffee and otherwise, Guyana is home to a rare, fruity and floral type of coffee that is smoky in taste.

“Grown in the Pomeroon, niche, unique, and set aside from all others. Classic, only for the best of coffee drinkers and markets. I welcome you, then, Starbucks, to the land of Liberia, and I hope that in your brand, this unique coffee will be sold, and this unique coffee will be grown in commercial scale.

“With your support, this coffee that only one per cent of the coffee market can enjoy because of its rareness, can be shared with the rest of the world, from Guyana. This is a project that I would challenge Starbucks Guyana to work with us on,” Dr Ali shared.

He expressed hope that expatriates would be able to experience the ‘one per cent rarity’ in Guyana through Starbucks, noting that the introduction of Guyana’s coffee would enable the franchise to set itself apart in the world market.

Meanwhile, Dr Ali noted that the introduction of the global coffee franchise has once again demonstrated the country’s potential as a booming market of opportunities.

Starbucks is not the only global brand that has recently taken interest in the country, with a number of food, energy, and other companies bringing their services to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

“The recognition from a global brand shows that not being part of this market is not being part of the action, not being part of the forward trajectory that various investors are following. And that



Starbucks first Guyana location is at the Amazonia Mall

is a very important message. Starbucks doesn’t just pick itself up and go to just any market. They follow the development of countries. They follow the requirements of the market. And I’m sure that they would understand that the nature of the consumer coming into Guyana is also changing rapidly.”

He noted that the Starbucks location at the Amazonia Mall puts it in a prime location to benefit from the economic activities taking place in the area.

The café is located in close proximity to the Guyana National Stadium, and massive housing areas where a number of expatriates reside and persons working in the rapidly expanding oil and gas sector.

President Ali said the area is also representative of the network of infrastructure that the government is building to create a more efficient connection system to bring communities and people closer.

“Vision and action are not guesswork. It is not work by accident. It is work structured and targeted to the achievement of particular results. And I am sure that as Guyana becomes a stronger and stronger economy, many more global brands will be here. And I’m sure that many North American brands will be here, but the brands that are coming must be able to incorporate our local private sector, and be able to engage our local private sector. That is what is going to make the brand resilient, successful and sustainable,” Dr Ali expressed.

Meanwhile, President Ali highlighted the unique partnership that exists between Guyana and Trinidad,

especially in areas of business and trade. The two countries have enjoyed a long-standing partnership that has seen Guyana benefitting from opportunities made possible through Trinidadian brands purchasing the rights to certain franchises.

“That is something I admire about this partnership. Sometime last year, I met two regional partners from Trinidad and Guyana, coming together to bring the brand here. Our phase of development... arguably is way behind what took place in Trinidad. As a result, Prestige [Holdings] and other companies in Trinidad were able to buy off the franchises for most global brands for Guyana, Suriname, and many countries in the region,” the president expressed.

He urged the local private sector not to view the purchase of large fran-

chises by Trinidad and the integration of such brands into the country as competition, but rather as an opportunity for partnership and a push to improve local standards.

“We have to improve. We have to get better. We have to make our own brand and our own system more efficient. That is what is key... global brands have a tendency of pushing local brands to up their game, and their standards. This is what will help us to develop world-class products and standards, just like our coffee. So, I see this as an important investment for the services industry, a greater vote of confidence in Guyana, the economy, and where we’re going.”

The president also encouraged Starbucks to include Guyana’s ‘second-to-none’ pastries and snacks in its menu.



Commonwealth finance ministers call for reform of financial sector

Finance ministers from various Commonwealth countries have called for a systemic reform of the global financial architecture to enhance access to development financing for vulnerable countries.

Their collective call for reform came at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers High-Level Working Group Meeting in Washington D.C. on April 14, 2023.

At the inaugural Commonwealth Finance Ministers High-Level Working Group Meeting held on the margins of the 2023 World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meetings, finance ministers discussed national fiscal policies, measures for financial sustainability, eligibility criteria for development finance and potential reforms required for a more equitable financial architecture.

In their call, ministers stressed that any reforms must increase funding and consider the realities of vulnerability when allocating support to help vulnerable countries invest in resilience and achieve sustainable development.

In her opening remarks, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC said: “Our world faces overlapping, interlinked and accelerating economic, security and environmental challenges. They entwine and accelerate to amplify ex-

isting inequalities, threatening stability, resilience and development prospects.”

“The need for ambitious, systemic change has never been greater. As the Commonwealth family, representing one-third of humanity, we are joining forces to call for reform of the global financial system to deliver an architecture that is multi-dimensional, fit-for-purpose and adaptive to emerging and existing challenges, with a view to building long-term resilience and achieving sustainable development,” she added.

She continued: “To create meaningful change, the global financial system must take into account the realities of vulnerability when allocating support to developing countries.”

In this regard, Secretary-General Scotland highlighted that the Commonwealth’s Universal Vulnerability Index provides a solid basis to better target support for those who need it the most.

Delivering a keynote address at the working group meeting, the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon Mia Mottley, said: “One sure thing is that the status quo is not working for us. The continued discriminatory treatment between the global north and the global south really cannot continue, especially in a poly-crisis ... The time is now for action and to ensure that the global financial system is fit for purpose.”



Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley

The working group meeting also gave ministers an opportunity to focus on the urgent need to influence the global financial architecture, which is still underpinned by fiscal rules and conditions deemed unfit to meet the needs of the current global economic landscape and overlapping challenges.

Eligibility criteria for accessing concessional finance are based on sole metrics of gross national income (GNI)

per capita, which mostly disregards national vulnerabilities. However, recent overlapping crises have exposed and provided evidence of countries’ susceptibility to external shocks. The traditional rules and governing conditions for access to international development finance are no longer relevant in this era of interlocked and overlapping crises.

The Commonwealth Secretariat paper entitled ‘Fiscal Policy Options for Resilient and Sustainable Development’ considers the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities and socio-economic development challenges faced by countries and recommends several fiscal and policy reforms to facilitate more resilient and sustainable development outcomes.

Speaking at the meeting, Dr Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, said: “Collaboration among Commonwealth countries [through this group] would enable knowledge exchange, and facilitate data sharing, research and toolkits, including use of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices to monitor and accelerate progress on sustainable investing toward enabling an environmentally responsible economy and society, together with protecting our planet.”

The ministers agreed for India to be the chair and Nigeria to be the deputy chair of the Finance Ministers Working Group for a Commonwealth Call for Reform of the Global Financial Architecture.

CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

Africans killed in SKN boat mishap

The three West Africans killed in last month’s migrant boat accident near St Kitts and Nevis have been identified as Derick Anga Azia, Verdo Mofor and Zeta Bertrand.

Police confirmed the identities of the two men and woman, who are from the Republic of Cameroon, Monday.

Autopsies done on their bodies last week confirmed they died from mechanical asphyxia due to drowning.

Azia, Mofor and Bertrand were part of a group of 32 people who sailed from Urlings, Antigua on a stolen fishing boat en route to the US Virgin Islands on March 27.

Early on March 28, the boat encountered difficulties and capsized while travelling through rough waters about twelve nautical miles south of Conaree, St Kitts.

Seventeen of the 32 passengers were rescued alive.

A vessel, which is believed to be the stolen fishing boat, was found near Puerto Rico earlier this month with one body onboard.

Grenada PM off to United Arab Emirates

Prime Minister of Grenada Dickon Mitchell traveled to Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), on Monday ahead of a series of meetings that seek to explore poten-

tial opportunities for the development of Grenada’s Citizenship by Investment (CBI) Program.

The Prime Minister will be accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade & Export Development, Joseph Andall; and Deputy Chairman of the CBI Committee, Deon Moses.

The delegation is scheduled to return on Sunday, April 30, 2023.

Lennox Andrews, Minister for Economic Development, Planning, Tourism, ICT, Creative Economy, Agriculture and Lands, Fisheries & Cooperatives, has been appointed Acting Prime Minister in the absence of Prime Minister Mitchell.



Dickson Mitchell

Rose named as JA’s Deputy Director of Tourism for The Americas

The Jamaica Tourist Board has announced that it has appointed Philip Rose to serve as its Deputy Director of Tourism (Ag.), Americas, with responsibility for the U.S., Caribbean, and Latin America effective as of April 1, 2023.

“Philip Rose has a long history working in tourism to promote brand Jamaica,” said the Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Minister of Tourism, Jamaica.

“Throughout the years, he has proven himself to be a visionary leader whose numerous successes have helped to elevate and maintain Jamaica’s status as one of the world’s top tourism destinations, particularly from North America. It was therefore a natural fit for him step into this key role,” he added.

Most recently, Mr. Rose served as Regional Director for the Jamaica Tourist Board in the U.S. responsible for overseeing sales and marketing in the Northeast. This region delivers the largest share of visitor arrivals to the island.

He has previously held senior-level positions within the organization including Regional Director of Canada, during which time the country recorded its highest visitor arrivals to Jamaica. Known as a global connector with long-standing relationships and for his keen ability to identify and leverage marketplace trends and data, his digital expertise led him to pioneer the Jamaica Tourist Board’s use of social media as a marketing tool during its early inception.

“We are truly fortunate to welcome Philip Rose to this post, as he is a champion of Jamaica’s tourism with outstanding qualifications and a well-established track record of excellence,” said Donovan White, Director of Tourism, Jamaica Tourist Board.

“The strategic direction, proficiency and foresight he provides have been invaluable to growing arrivals and we are fully confident that he will continue to be a driving force for tourism to Jamaica in his new position.”

“It’s an honor for me to accept this appointment within the Jamaica Tourist Board, who first recruited me from the hospitality sector over 20 years ago,” said Mr. Rose. “I have always been passionate about selling and marketing travel to Jamaica as well as aligning strategies and tactics to meet objectives and targets, so I look forward to doing so in an expanded capacity with this promotion,” he continued.

Rose grew up in the tourism and hospitality industry, having worked in city hotels and beach resorts across Jamaica since his first summer job at 14



Phillip Rose: was regional director of the Jamaica Tourist Board in the USA

years old. Upon his recruitment by the Jamaica Tourist Board, he has thrived in different roles in the U.S. and Canada and has been promoted in

every position he has held. Philip has lived and studied tourism in Jamaica, Canada, U.S., Singapore, and Italy and has been a featured guest lecturer on

tourism in various universities in the U.S. and Canada.

StKitts parents urged to vaccinate their children against polio

Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew has called on parents of young children on St Kitts and Nevis to ensure they are vaccinated against preventable viruses such as polio and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).

Drew, who is also the minister of health, made the plea as he kicked off the annual Vaccination and Immunization Week (VWA) under the theme: “Get up-to-date. #EachVaccineCounts”.

“Vaccines are safe and save lives! In St Kitts and Nevis, all vaccines offered under the national EPI program have been procured through Pan American Health Organization’s (PAHO) revolving Fund. Vaccines purchased through this route meet internationally recommended quality, safety, and efficacy standards for their development, manufacture, transportation, and control,” he said.

“The Ministry of Health is appealing to parents to do all in their power to ensure that their infants and children are vaccinated according to schedule. Infants are at the highest risk for contracting communicable diseases since their immune system is not fully developed at birth.”

Drew said the Americas America’s is facing new measles outbreaks after it was declared measles-free in 2016. While



two people in Peru and the United States tested positive for polio recently.

He stated many children in the region are susceptible to becoming infected with MMR since they did not receive their vaccines in 2020 and 2021.

“In 2022, in Saint Kitts and Nevis, the MMR1 coverage rate was 95 per cent and the MMR2 coverage rate was 93 per cent. The

aim of the public health team is to target the defaulters during this VWA campaign to increase the coverage rate to 95 per cent and above. The measles and polio vaccines are essential for the protection of our children and loved ones,” the PM said.

Vaccine week runs from April 22 to 29.

This year, St Kitts and Nevis’s VWA campaign will focus on:

- Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV): re-sensitization of the public about its benefits in protecting individuals and loved ones.
- Locating and immunizing those persons who were difficult to reach and failed to receive vaccines in 2022.
- Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine: sensitizing farmers about the importance of this vaccine for their healthy living.

US urges Suriname to sign Los Angeles Declaration on Migration

The United States is urging Suriname to join 21 countries in the region that are supportive of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration, according to a US spokeswoman.

Launched at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles, California in June 2022, the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection aims to mobilize the entire region for bold action on migration issues in the region.

“We know that not all migrants enter the United States and other countries through regular routes, so we see visa requirements as an important step in addressing irregular migration,” the US embassy spokeswoman told the de Ware Tijd newspaper.

Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation Minister, Albert Ramdin acknowledged that the Dutch-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country had been unable to sign the declaration in June last year noting that the Chandrikapersad “Chan” Santokhi government first wanted to study the accord carefully and make a proper evaluation.

He said this has now been done and Suriname will also support the declaration and the objectives contained therein.



The US embassy official said Washington supports safe, orderly and humane migration through reciprocal and multilateral diplomacy and targeted capacity-building programmes. These include regular labor migration pathways that promote paid work and access to formal labor markets and ensure migrant worker protection during the recruitment and employment process.

The US also remains vigilant for human trafficking and smuggling and possible terrorist threats, both in the region and around the world.

“It is important to screen migrants to determine if they could be victims of trafficking and to support victims of trafficking. We are working with our partners to deter terrorist threats and ensure the security of the United States,”

the US embassy official said.

Last week, Suriname announced that it will reintroduce visa requirements for 21 countries from May 1 after an evaluation showed that citizens of those countries have widely abused the visa-free regime.

To address migration concerns and potential criminal or terrorist threats, the US Embassy said it is working closely with Suriname on a range of programs to improve security, share information and humanely manage migration, along with regional partners such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), CARICOM and the Security Initiative for the Caribbean Basin.

Last month, the US embassy in Guyana warned of a security threat against US interests in that country and the US spokeswoman said security here remains a high priority.

“The US State Department has no higher priority than the safety and security of US citizens travelling and living abroad. US embassies periodically publish information on the security environment and travel guidelines to inform US citizens. There has been no recent adjustment in such information and advice with regard to Suriname,” said the spokeswoman.

Harry Belafonte passes at age 96

Popular Caribbean-American singer, actor, and activist Harry Belafonte has died following congestive heart failure, according to reports.

He was 96.

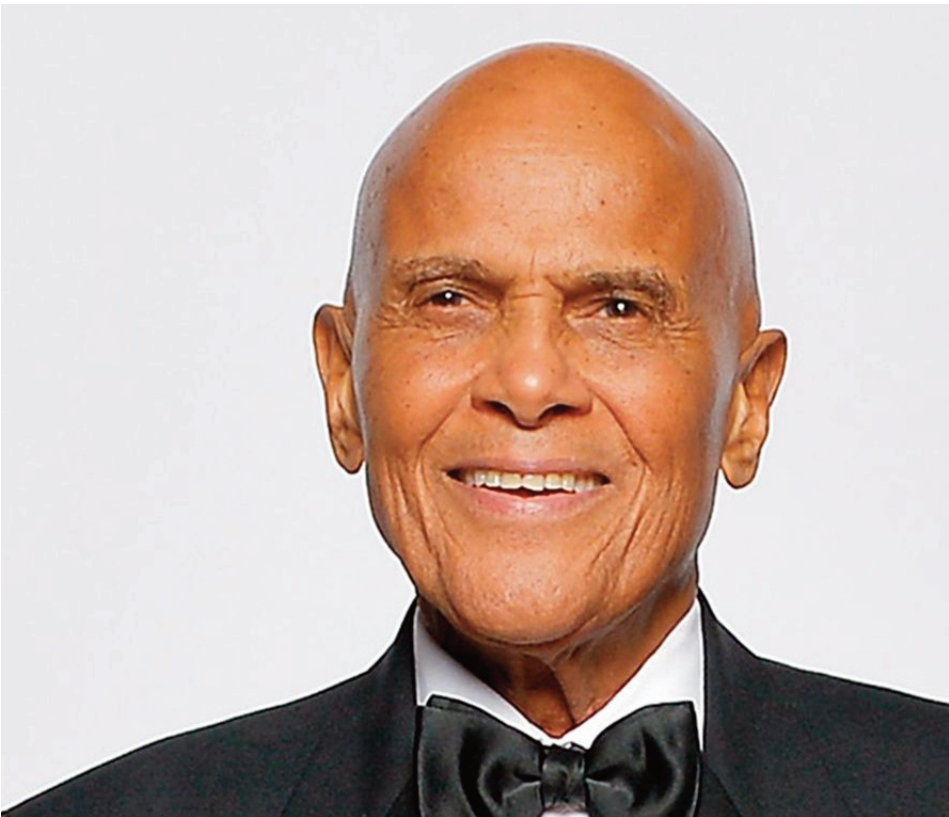
Belafonte spent his life advocating for several causes in addition to

(The Banana Boat Song), winning a Tony Award for acting, and appearing in numerous feature films.

He backed several civil rights movements for Black Americans in the 1960s, campaigned anti-poverty, anti-apartheid, and anti-AIDS campaigns like



singing international songs like Day-O Africa, and supported politicians like



Harry Belafonte: popularised Calypso in the mainstream

Fidel Castro of Cuba and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela.

Belafonte was born in working-class Harlem, New York, in 1927.

He spent his early years in Jamaica and returned to New York for high school but struggled with dyslexia and dropped out in his early teens.

He worked in markets and the city’s garment district and then signed up for the US Navy aged 17 in March 1944, working as a munitions loader at a base in New Jersey.

Execution-style murders rock South Trinidad; teenager among victims

Trinidad Police are on the scene of a triple murder in Penal, where an 18-year-old is among the victims.

Investigation is also under way into a separate murder which claimed the life of Adesh Heeralal, 28, at Wilson Road, Clarke Road, Penal.

It is not yet certain whether the two incidents are linked.

In the latest incident, at Charlo Village, Penal, several hours ago, three men were reportedly called out of their home by people purporting to be police and each was shot in the head.

A video in circulation shows the three men – Anand Kumar, 42, Kishore Kumar, 18, and Rolly Hosein, 26 – lying face down in pools of blood.

An interim police report said around 4 am on Tuesday, the three were all asleep at their Mathura Street home, with other family members.

They were awakened by a loud knock on their front door and a voice saying, "Police, open the door."

Before they could answer the summons, the door was broken down and a person wearing mask and a tactical uniform, with a bulletproof vest with the marking "police," entered.

The "police" asked for all the men living there to come outside.

The three victims were ordered out of the house and made to lie face down



Police investigators at the scene of a murder in South Trinidad

on the ground. Several gunshots were heard shortly after.

The suspect and another man dressed in dark clothing escaped on foot.

In a separate incident around 8.35 pm, on Monday, Heeralal, a linesman, was also called out of his home, by someone he knew by an alias. As he got

to the front of the house, shots were heard.

His common-law-wife Morteé Bridgemohan told the police Heeralal ran a short distance before he collapsed. He was taken to the Siparia health facility by his father, but was pronounced dead at 9.01 pm.

South Western Divisional CSI officers PCs Moreno and Telesford found two spent 9 mm casings, one projectile and a Samsung cellphone.

The body was removed to the mortuary of the San Fernando General Hospital, pending an autopsy at the Forensic Science Centre, St James.

Sexual exploitation at Tobago hotel

WHILE awarding almost \$4 million to a hotel manager for wrongful dismissal, Trinidad High Court judge Justice Frank Seepersad said the claimant should "hang his head in shame" for having facilitated the sexual exploitation of many young women hired at the Coco Reef Hotel in Tobago and for facilitating acts of prostitution.

The claimant also allegedly performed obeah rituals and assisted in hiding earnings from the notice of the authorities.

In a strongly-worded ruling delivered on Monday, the judge ordered that details of the case be sent to the police to investigate whether the claimant and/or a defendant had committed any criminal offence.

The claimant was Eric Feniet, represented by attorneys T Bharath, D Bharath and M Narinesingh, and the defendants were Bella Forms Resorts Ltd trading as Coco Reef Resort (first defendant) and John Jefferis (second defendant) both represented by M George and S Lawrence.

According to the claimant's facts, Feniet was employed at the hotel in 1995 to upgrade its food and beverage department, then became department manager, department director, hotel assistant general manager, and finally hotel general manager in 2002 until his dismissal in 2020. Working from age 26 to 51, he had no written contract but relied upon his

good relationship with Jefferis who initially was sole proprietor of the company until his wife took over upon his deteriorating mental health.

Feniet handled "numerous personal affairs" for Jefferis and they shared a position of trust and confidence.

The court heard Jefferis relied on Feniet to handle "matters of a personal nature," apart from resort business, including getting him female company and doing obeah.

"These included caring for the second defendant's wives whilst at the resort, securing 'personal assistants' for the second defendant, arranging female 'companionship' for the second defendant, performing 'obeah' rituals for the second defendant, using his foreign bank account for under the radar transfers of US funds, and collecting cash payments from certain guests which were not put on the books."

"The claimant brazenly testified that he arranged escorts for the second defendant and he recruited young, unmarried Indian and African women as personal assistants for the second defendant and these women were expected to have sex with him.

"He also performed bizarre and unorthodox rituals at the second defendant's behest and used various French bank accounts to transfer money to Cuba for the second defendant." Feniet operated as

Jefferis' personal butler and facilitated all the arrangements when the second defendant's wives and mistresses stayed at the resort.

"The claimant, shockingly, facilitated despicable practices where women were possibly exploited and placed in vulnerable situations as they sought employment.

"He also arranged for escorts in a country where prostitution is illegal."

Seepersad strongly chided this conduct. "This court feels compelled to register its dismay, outrage and alarm over the various admissions advanced by the claimant, under oath, as he testified that he arranged escorts for the second defendant and hired young unmarried female personal assistants for the second defendant and that these young women were expected to have sex with the second defendant.

"In this jurisdiction prostitution is illegal and it is also an offence to 'hire' out women to engage in prostitution."

Seepersad said the behaviour of Feniet and Jefferis in hiring females for sexual activities with Jefferis may have contravened the Sexual Offences Act.

"By his own admission, the claimant, a foreigner to our shores, hired young unmarried personal assistants, who, as part of their employment, had to have sex with the second defendant.

"These alarming admissions cannot

be left unaddressed. Our nation's women must be cherished, protected and they must be treated with dignity and respect.

"Women are not and cannot be viewed as the 'play things' of wealthy, powerful or influential men and this society must reject their objectification and desist from gender discrimination, gender inequity and female exploitation."

Seepersad vowed firm action against Feniet.

"The claimant should hang his head in shame as in furtherance of his insular concerns and agenda, he may have facilitated the violation of many young women. This type of behaviour is despicable and in the circumstances, this court directs that this judgement, the proceedings filed, the witness statements and the transcript of the trial, shall be forwarded by the Registrar of the Supreme Court to the Commissioner of Police, within 30 days of the date of this judgement, for investigation so as to determine whether the claimant and/or the second defendant committed any criminal offence or offences."

Feniet said he was promised US\$1,500,000 for death or incapacitation, earnings of US\$500,000 and US\$1,000,000, plus a piece of land worth \$1.6 million. for his work. He said he was dismissed upon Jefferis' wife taking charge, on alleged grounds of misconduct and financial impropriety.

Lara, Tendulkar immortalized at Sydney Cricket Ground

The names of cricket legends Brian Lara (West Indies) and Sachin Tendulkar (India) have been immortalized with a set of gates named after them at the world-renowned Sydney Cricket Ground in Australia.

Cricket Australia announced on Monday that the names of the legendary pair were inscribed on the gates that visiting teams use to access the field of play. It's now called the Lara-Tendulkar Gates.

Cricket Australia chose April 24 as the date to unveil the gates to mark Tendulkar's 50th birthday. This date also signifies the 30th anniversary of Lara's 277 runs at the venue, his first Test century, achieved in January 1993.

Lara paid tribute to the gesture by reposting Tendulkar's Instagram post, which thanked the Sydney Cricket

Ground for the auspicious recognition.

"Such a special honour at one of my favourite grounds in the world. Having my name there along with my friend Brian Lara is one of the best gifts we could've got," Tendulkar wrote, while Lara reposted the same.

According to cricinfo.com, Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley said, "Their feats will no doubt be an inspiration to not only visiting international teams, but all players fortunate enough to walk onto the hallowed turf of the Sydney Cricket Ground, for generations to come.

"This is a fitting and timely gesture by the SCG to recognise Sachin and Brian as two legends of the international game with exceptional records at the SCG.



Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara: name on Sydney Grounds

Emerging players face official Windies Test

If one had stumbled into the Coolidge Cricket Ground, which is near the airport in Antigua, any time

between Wednesday and Friday last week and was not aware of the reason for the cricket match that was in

progress, one could have been forgiven for believing it was a game between two club teams.

Only it wasn't! This game was between Test-match "probables" and the young emerging cricketers from the West Indies Cricket Academy.

The quality of the cricket was low. The WI cricket selectors must have been hugely disappointed at the performances, especially the team they called Team Headley (TH).

What was discouraging to observe was the attitude of some of the players on show for TH. This game was in preparation for a Test series, but some of the participants gave the impression that they couldn't care less.

They are, in effect, trial matches for a cricketer to prove that he deserves to be in the top drawer. Trial matches are an excellent way for players to reveal their strength of character. It is tough, for the main reason that one is not representing any entity, except oneself.

However, this in itself, is what makes it difficult. Then again, playing for oneself in the game of cricket is also contributing as part of a team.

For instance, a batsman cannot bat alone, but has to bat in pairs, for running between the wickets and to be able to plan against different types of bowlers; that makes for a team effort. A bowler needs to have competent fieldsmen, including a wicketkeeper, to take the catches and prevent runs off his bowling; to run out opposing batsmen; to stump batsmen who venture out of their crease in order to gain an advantage on the bowler. All these are instances of a team game.

As an individual, one has to per-

form. Plus, the selectors are looking to the player, and him alone, to check the mentality he possesses. He can't exist in a vacuum.

Hence it is exciting to know that the prize at the end of one's achievement is to play representative cricket for one's country.

What was noticeable last week in the TH vs Academy game was the lack of enthusiasm that spawned a shortage of energy, with some senior players strolling around the field, showing no purpose in their fielding. At least four players on the TH side did not seem interested in cricket at all. It was almost as if they believed that the academy could not provide them with any competition and their lack of interest was obvious.

Cricketers with that disposition have no right on a cricket field, especially to impress at the highest level.

A couple of players were chatting with the umpires constantly and interfering with the batsmen.

Outstanding on the first day was the TH captain, Joshua Da Silva. He entered the contest with his team's score at 43 for four wickets. With the discipline of the Test player he is, he slowly ensured he wouldn't be dismissed early. After settling in, having grown accustomed to the pitch, he gradually played some very pleasing strokes on both sides of the wicket, expressing to other batsmen on his team how one addresses an inning when the team is in trouble. His 136 not out was a brilliant knock, accompanied by the skilful 54 of Akeem Jordan, who batted to suit the occasion. Those were standouts.

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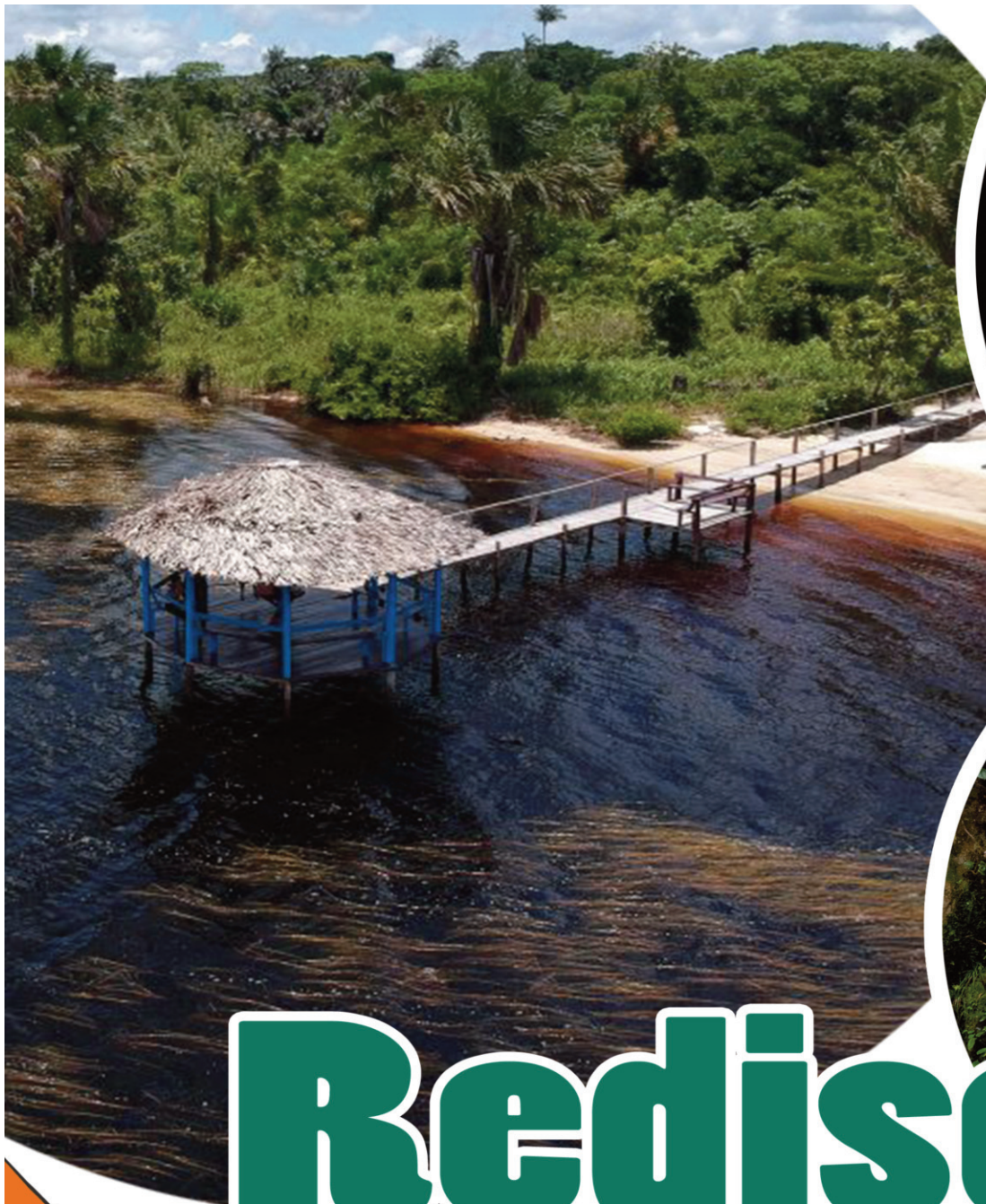
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