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Canada Jetlines to start serving Toronto-Georgetown route

Canada Jetlines has signed a six-month contract with FlyAllways, a Caribbean airline based in Suriname, where FlyAllways will charter Canada Jetlines to provide weekly flights between Toronto and Georgetown, Guyana.

Commencement of flying is expected to start in the later half of 2023 subject to Guyanese government approval.

“We are looking forward to this partnership with FlyAllways. We know that there is a substantial demand for the Toronto/Georgetown market, and we believe FlyAllways, and the Canadian tour operator that they have partnered with, will be successful with the introduction of this route,” said Eddy Doyle, president and CEO Canada Jetlines. “In addition to our regular schedule flying, we have experienced strong demand for charter and ACMI/wet-lease flying, and the flight hours contemplated in this contract will keep one of our aircraft fully utilized.”

In a financial update released last month, the airline noted a “strong demand” for its services in the second quarter of this year as customers utilized its fleet of two Airbus 320 aircraft.

Jetlines completed some 340 charter and ACMI flights since the beginning of 2023 and expects to perform several additional charter flights in the coming months.

It’s found success in signing contracts to provide aircraft and crew to Canadian football teams – notably, the Toronto Argonauts, Ottawa Redblacks and Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

Jetlines also operates flights between Toronto Pearson and Las Vegas, as well as Toronto Pearson to Cancun

The company’s third aircraft is slated to be delivered by the end of July



Ron Soogrim flanked by the President of Skyroute Travel and Equality’s Bhaskar Sharma

2023, pending it meets all conditions.

Last February, the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) green lit several licence applications submitted by Canada Jetlines.

According to a series of Feb. 1 decisions made by the CTA, the carrier will be

allowed to operate scheduled international service to the European community and its member states, as well as Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia.

Canada Jetlines also reports that it recently obtained its foreign Air Operator certificate from the Jamaican government.

Donovan White, Director of Tourism for the Jamaica Tourist Board, recently hinted to Travelweek that lift to Jamaica from the Canadian carrier could be on the way.

Canada Jetlines also reports that Transport Canada has added North Atlantic operations to its certificate that will allow the airline to operate numerous charter flights to Greenland this summer.

Ron Soogrim, who is coordinator of Jetlines’ Guyana operations, said the Guyanese communities in Ontario and elsewhere now have the choice to fly direct to

Guyana with Jetlines.

He said the new carrier will offer friendly unmatched service, hot meals, free Movies and more during the 6 Hour Direct flight to Guyana.

“We are satisfying an important need of the long awaited Canadian Guyanese market to fly their own -- managed by Guyanese and Friends of Guyana,” he said.

Mr. Soogrim is chief coordinator of the Guyana operations, and will be introducing major Cargo operations as well as export facilities.

He noted that the airline will also satisfy the growing eco-tourism business of Guyana.

Soogrim said he happy for the support of the Equality Media Group -- Canada's largest weekly Guyanese - Caribbean Newspaper and Skyroute Travels -- the main wholesale travel agents for the airline.



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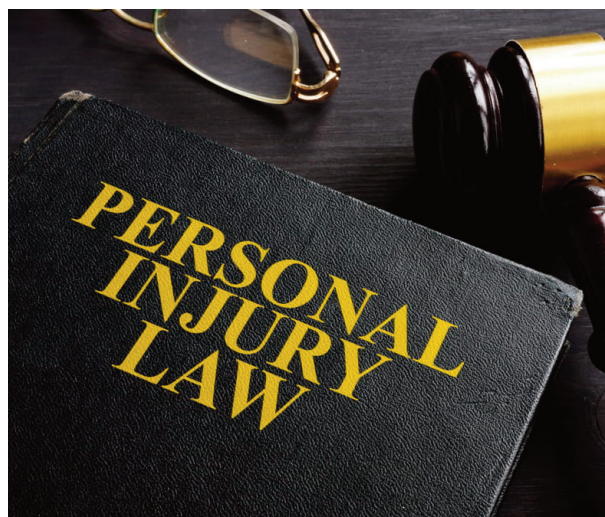
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Ford facing backlash after Auditor General slams Greenbelt plan

By Niraj Sharma
LJI REPORTER

The government of Ontario, led by Premier Doug Ford, is facing intense criticism following a scathing report by the province's auditor general. The report, released on Wednesday, has unveiled that the decision to allow housing development in portions of the protected Greenbelt was heavily influenced by a small group of well-connected developers. This revelation has triggered both political and environmental concerns.

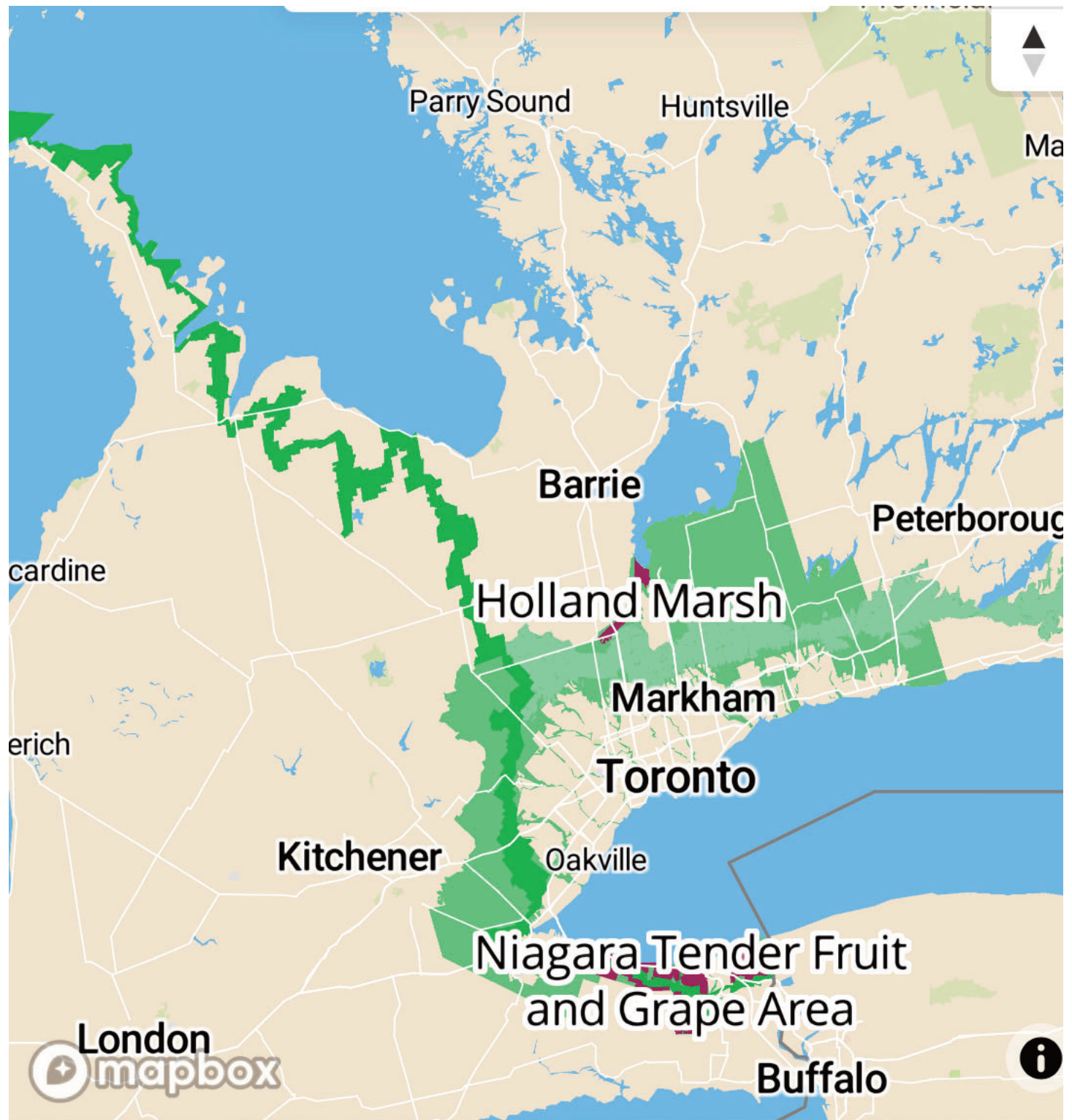
Premier Ford has defended his government's actions by pointing out the housing crisis in Ontario, asserting that the Greenbelt development was a response to the shortage of housing. Critics, however, argue that the government's priorities were skewed and that the decision-making process was flawed.

In response, Ford acknowledged that the process could have been better but stressed the urgency of addressing the housing crisis. He pledged to adopt most of the recommendations put forth by Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk. However, he remained firm in his stance against revisiting the land swaps and undoing the decisions.

Auditor General Lysyk contended that if the government refuses to reconsider the decision, it would imply acceptance of an unfair process. She expressed uncertainty about the possibility of making a different decision at this point but emphasized that the government's future actions would speak louder than their words.

The release of the auditor general's report has prompted all three major political parties in Ontario to exert pressure on the government. The NDP, led by Marit Stiles, demanded immediate action, including recalling the legislature, returning the Greenbelt lands, and the resignation or removal of Housing Minister Steve Clark. The Liberals, represented by interim leader John Fraser, joined the call for Clark's resignation and advocated for halting development in the Greenbelt. The Green Party, led by Mike Schreiner, echoed the demand for Clark's resignation and expressed apprehension about future land swaps.

Experts and advocacy groups have



Map showing the Greenbelt lands throughout southern Ontario

raised environmental concerns about the decision to open up the Greenbelt for housing development. Associate Professor Shoshanna Saxe from the University of Toronto highlighted flaws in the process and the challenges of construction in designated Greenbelt areas. Tim Gray, the executive director of Environmental Defence, called for the return of the land to the Greenbelt and the implementation of protective legislation against future development.

The public's response has been

marked by strong opposition to the government's decision. Environmental Defence, in conjunction with other organizations, called for a comprehensive investigation into the relationship between the government and the development industry. They emphasized the importance of concentrating on housing development within existing towns and

cities rather than encroaching upon farmland and forests.

In light of these concerns and calls to action from various quarters, the Ontario government's approach to handling the backlash and potential repercussions of their decision remains uncertain.

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Something smells in the Greenbelt

To say something smells with the Doug Ford Conservatives deal with Ontario's Greenbelt is putting it mildly.

The province's auditor general last week was a little more direct in her report on the plan by the government to convert large parcels of the protected area to housing. She found many things wrong with it, including the fact that the developers hand-picked by the Ford Government would make a minimum of \$8.6 billion on the housing deal.

Critics say her comments confirm what they thought all along: that select developers who are allegedly contributors to the Conservatives were favoured.

We don't know if that is true. What we do know is that this deal, from the get-go, sounded and smelled fishy. In the rush to build new houses in a market where demand is exceptionally high, Ford and his government opted to pull land from the Greenbelt to meet their lofty goals of building 1.5 million new units. The reason for this, says Doug Ford, is to give the more than 1 million newcomers expected to land in Ontario in the next 10 years the opportunity to buy homes.

He also mentions the many thousands, or millions, of people already here who would like to buy homes, but simply cannot afford to own one in the current market in Ontario.

What isn't as clear in this plan is just how Ford plans to make these new homes affordable. These are not, from what we understand, government housing but private developments. Does the government plan to regulate the prices the developers could charge for these new homes? If so, how?

The other issue is the Greenbelt itself, the most prized agricultural land in the province.

According to davidsuzuki.org, years ago Ontario established a two-million-acre greenbelt of protected farmland and green space, which wraps around the Greater Golden Horseshoe's major towns and cities, including Toronto, Hamilton, Markham and Burlington.

The Greenbelt Plan, along with two other adjoining land-use plans, work together to manage growth, protect the natural environment and support economic development. In the latter category, the greenbelt alone, comprising just over 20 per cent of the region, generates more than \$9 billion

in annual revenue to local economies, producing a bounty of fruits and vegetables, beef, pork, dairy, honey and award-winning wines.

However, the Growth Plan for the Greenbelt allows smarter urban growth in the region through more efficient use of available land — which in turn reduces the amount and cost of infrastructure and supports public transit. A recent report by urban planning group the Neptis Foundation found urban expansion has slowed since plans were implemented. From 1991 to 2001, the footprint of Toronto and surrounding suburbs grew by 26 per cent to accommodate about 1.1 million new residents. Between 2001 and 2011 it expanded by just 10 per cent to accommodate roughly the same number of newcomers.

So, this appears to justify the Ford government's housing plan by taking a chunk of the prized Greenbelt to meet housing goals.

Conservationists, cities and citizens have pushed back against losing farmland, wetlands and wildlife habitat, as 15 separate parcels of land totalling 7,400 acres will be removed from the Greenbelt.

Part of the problem is that the sale

of the Greenbelt lands was done without public consultation. In her report, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk has found that the Progressive Conservatives failed to consider expert opinions, while also neglecting to fully explain "the potential environmental implications of proposed legislative or policy changes, or how public consultation affected the decision-making."

She noted that 92 per cent of the land that was ultimately removed from the Greenbelt in 2022 was identified by developers who stand to make billions of dollars from the changes.

And that is key to many of the critics' complaints about the process. They claim it opens the door to many questions about just how these developers were approved, and whether or not they are connected in some way to the Ford government.

At the end of the day, as we said earlier, this smells. And we believe Doug Ford and his government should clear the air quickly on this deal, or stand down on it.

As it stands, the public is left with many more questions than answers, leaving us to wonder about the stink.

Dr Roger Luncheon was a champion of democracy

Dear Editor,

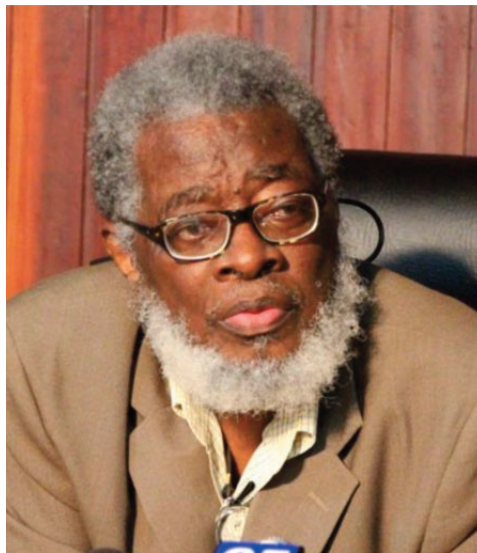
NEWS of Dr. Roger Luncheon's passing is very sad for the PPP and for Guyana. The masses of the working poor have also lost a great champion.

The greatness of his contribution to national life is when Guyana was in the grips of an oppressive dictatorship, and people were beaten into submission to Burnham's paramourcy of the PNC party, Dr. Luncheon was on the side of the people, giving strong support alongside Dr. Cheddi Jagan.

He stood up for Guyana and for the restoration of democracy when it mattered most, when champions were few, and many were too scared to speak out.

When democracy needed advocates, he was there. When the struggle needed diverse, united voices, especially from the Afro-Guyanese community, Dr. Luncheon was not afraid to step up and make the personal sacrifice that entailed.

When the struggling working masses needed hope, Dr. Luncheon was there with the Jagans. Dr. Luncheon was active in the struggle for democracy at a time when the PPP had no soup to give.



Dr Roger Luncheon

I have never heard of anyone complaining that Dr. Luncheon was corrupt or was a bribe taker, as people usually complain about our politicians. That's very honourable and worthy of celebration. President Ramotar's letter has confirmed that as well as Mr. Trotman's tribute.

Dr. Luncheon has certainly earned a place on Democracy's Hall of Fame in Guyana, and has etched his name indelibly as one who believes the PPP party should never lose its mass-based character and focus on the working poor.

Maybe the PPP should create some kind of Public Service Award named after Dr. Luncheon to inspire the younger comrades.

Thank you, Dr. Luncheon, for all you did for Guyana. You made us proud. You have served well and faithfully. You have enriched us all. A grateful nation salutes your long commitment and labour of love serving the people of Guyana. Thanks to you and your family. May you rest in peace!

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jerry Jailall

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Ontario elementary, secondary teachers to hold strike votes

By Nishad Sharma
LJI REPORTER

Ontario's public elementary school educators are edging closer to a potential strike, as the teachers' union declared its intention on Monday to seek a strike mandate through member voting.

At the annual general assembly of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the union's president addressed the membership, revealing that the union had presented proposals on several critical matters: special education, class sizes, school violence, and salaries that adjust for inflation. In response, she conveyed that the government's engagement had been lacking and its proposals amounted to reductions in pay, benefits, and working conditions.

In a passionate speech, Karen Brown, the union president, stated, "We have arrived at a tipping point. ETFO's and our members' patience has been exhausted. It's time for us to push the government into genuine negotiations at the bargaining table."

Brown shared that ETFO would begin organizing meetings in mid-September to conduct centralized votes on



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario head Karen Brown

the prospect of a strike. She expressed her conviction that the sentiment among the union's 83,000 members was unified in conveying a strong message to the government: the present situation is untenable.

The Ontario Secondary School

Teachers' Federation also disclosed its intention to conduct strike votes during the upcoming autumn season.

A confidential memo sent by the union to its members and obtained by The Canadian Press criticized the government's lack of enthusiasm for sub-

stantial negotiations and the dearth of progress made thus far.

The memo asserted, "The time has long passed for the government to approach negotiations with a willingness to establish an agreement that secures a top-notch education system for Ontario's students."

Highlighting the unity and determination among the members, the union stated, "A decisive strike mandate will underscore our commitment to attaining equitable and favorable terms for both our educators and students."

Education Minister Stephen Lecce, however, expressed criticism towards the unions' actions, contending that they had rebuffed the opportunity for private mediation to achieve resolutions.

In a statement, he remarked, "Threatening a potential strike and raising concerns for parents and students just weeks ahead of the school year is an unwarranted and inequitable approach."

Concurrently, the union representing educators within the French public school system conveyed its focus on negotiating an optimal agreement while expressing frustration over the sluggish pace of the process.

ACG stages One Guyana Festival in Vaughn



The Association of Concerned Guyanese ACG held a One Guyana Festival on the 12th August, 2023 at the Polish Park in Vaughn, it was well attended by Guyanese and Caribbean citizens the Festival also featured the 50th anniversary of the ACG this year.

There were many activities to keep the patrons busy and entertained for the day inclusive of the duck curry competition, face painting, games for the kids, singing and dancing, lots of Guyanese cuisine were there to share amongst themselves.

The picnic was well attended and everyone had a joyful time in mingling, meeting new friends and sharing our One Guyana mantra .



Members of the organization were elated to see how our Guyanese brothers and sisters shared our rich diverse culture and traditions.

There is a Gala planned for November to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the ACG.

More information will be forthcoming on the 50th Anniversary activities of the ACG.

Big thank you to all the participants, volunteers, contributors and all those that help in some way or the other towards making the One Guyana Festival a big success.

The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

The AFC's proposed amendments to the Petroleum Bill



Joel Bhagwandin

Shadow minister of oil and gas, David Patterson, had proposed several amendments to the Petroleum Activities bill in the National Assembly, all of which were rejected by the government. As such, the bill was passed by the National Assembly with no further amendments. These proposals, however, have been the subject of public dialogue by several stakeholders and media entities.

Proposed Amendments

1. The Opposition MP proposed a formula ranging from a minimum of 60-40 and not higher than 70-30 percent production sharing to be included in the Petroleum Activities Bill.

It appears that this is in relation to the cost recovery ceiling of not less than 60%-70% based on my interpretation on how it was reported in the media. It can be argued that this is an inconsequential proposal given that the new model PSA has already catered for this wherein the cost recovery ceiling is capped at 65% down from 75%. Additionally, the cost recovery ceiling forms part of the fiscal framework which is prescribed as part of the terms and conditions in the Production Sharing Agreement (PSA). The reason why it is not included in the Petroleum law itself is because it is the law that would give effect to the PSA and vice versa.

In that regard, section 12 of the Petroleum Activities bill establishes that "the Minister may enter into an agreement, not inconsistent with the Act, with a company for –

a) The grant of a license or permit pursuant to section 6;

b) The conditions to be included in a license or permit granted or renewed under this Act;

c) Any matter incidental to or connected with paragraphs (a) and (b)

Also, section 33 establishes that "where an application is made under section 32 (1) for a petroleum production license, the Minister may grant the license, on such conditions as the Minister determines are necessary to give effect to this Act". The conditions referred thereto are those conditions established pursuant to the revised Production Sharing Agreement (PSA). In so doing, it gives the government the flexibility to change the fiscal terms and conditions, inter alia, the PSA without having to amend the legislation through the National Assembly.

2. The Opposition proposed to block operators from recouping their exploration costs by restricting comingling exploration with production

costs. It goes onto to state that a strict separation shall be maintained between exploration and production activities, costs, and revenues. No revenue from production activities can be charged to exploration activities.

This proposal ignores completely

The government is on record signaling its intention to establish a Petroleum Commission to regulate the industry

the standard accounting rules in petroleum activities. It reflects the lack of understanding of the nature of the industry as well. There are four broad categories of costs in the petroleum industry, namely, exploration, development, production, and operating costs. The exploration and development costs are the costs incurred to first discover whether there is crude oil in commercial quantities in an oil field, and the development costs are those costs incurred to prepare the field for production. The cost for the FPSOs, for instance, is part of the development costs. So, both exploration and development costs would be considered the capital expenditure (CAPEX), or the investment needed to bring an oil field into production. Bearing in mind that it takes about fifteen to twenty years to explore, discover and develop an oil field before production commences, provided that the oil field is found to be commercially viable.

With that in mind, the oil companies, like any other normal business, must recover their invested capital (exploration and development costs). In this respect, the invested capital can only be recovered from the revenue generated from the production activities wherein the crude oil is extracted and monetized. So, to propose that oil companies must not recover their exploration costs from the revenues from the production activities, is effectively to propose that oil companies must not recover a significant portion of their invested capital. Such a proposal, if made into law, would not attract any oil companies in the market, and would drive away current interests.

3. "Should the Cabinet grant the Minister approval to conduct direct negotiations, the Minister is required to seek the approval of the National Assembly before issuing the license".

This provision seems to cater for

country-to-country collaboration as the government had already disclosed their intention to explore this in the future. To this end, one would recall that the Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo had indicated that the government reserved a few oil blocks for government-to-

government partnerships /collaboration in the future.

In my view, it is not necessary to subject the terms and conditions originating out of a direct negotiation between two governments, or any direct negotiation to parliamentary approval. Based on my understanding of the Guyana Constitution, this would be regarded a function of the Executive Branch of Government and not the Legislature/National Assembly. Therefore, it may be deemed a violation of the Constitution should the National Assembly make any law (s) that confers or transfers a function of the Executive to the National Assembly, unless the Constitution is amended accordingly pursuant to the procedures prescribed therein to so do.

Petroleum Commission

The government is on record signaling its intention to establish a Petroleum Commission to regulate the industry. There is no requirement at this stage for the Petroleum Activities bill / Act to address the Petroleum Commission, because any such Commission would require a separate piece of legislation for its establishment.

There are also some practical concerns to consider that may be the likely reasons why it has not yet been put in place. My take on this is that the government need to establish the pre-requisite framework first. This includes a new modern petroleum law, the up-

dated PSAs, the Local Content Act, which is in place, strengthening the capacity of other agencies such as the GRA, EPA, GGMC, and the Ministry.

That said, before a Petroleum Commission is established, I believe that the above pre-requisites must be met, and more importantly, is that the government need to build the requisite technical capacity of its human resources. As it is right now, the country does not have all of the technical human resources as yet. This would take some time to develop. In the meanwhile, the Ministry is carrying out the regulatory functions with the aid of international firms and consultants. And in so doing, the government is building out capacity simultaneously through knowledge transfer, training, and development.

With that in mind, now is not the right time for the Petroleum Commission, therefore, this should be pursued in the medium term.

Other proposed amendments by the opposition include training fees per well of US\$1.5 million annually and that the cost recovery audits should be concluded within nine months. However, the new PSAs addressed these, wherein US\$1 million is required for training annually though not per well. It is unclear what is the opposition's justification for the "per well" model, considering that there may be dry wells. With respect to the audit, the new PSA provide for 24 months for the cost oil audit to be concluded, which is reasonable. The opposition's proposal of nine months would be insufficient given that there needs to be adequate amount of time to cater for disputes that may arise, which may have to be arbitrated, as in the case with the current audit.

Joel Bhagwandin, MSc., is the Director of Financial Advisory, Market Intelligence, and Analytics at SphereX Professional Services Inc. He can be reached at jbhagwandin@spherexgy.com.

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Statistics show crime down, but more work needed regionally: Ali

RECENT statistics produced by the local authorities in Guyana have shown a decline in serious crime, and this is credited to the government's increased support for the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and community policing efforts.

In an invited comment to reporters on the sidelines of an event on Thursday, President Dr. Irfaan Ali said that the statistics are factual.

Last month, it was reported that the police recorded a 12.6 per cent decline for the first quarter of 2023.

"The statistics, based on all the reports, shows that crime is on the decline in Guyana," the president said in his response to comments on the crime situation by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) and the United States (US) Embassy.

"There has been a tremendous decline," President Ali maintained.

He said that the travel advisory is nothing new, and Guyanese travelling to the US are also on the alert of the frequent occurrence of serious crimes there.

"One of the problems the US is faced with today is the massive shootings in public places; in schools, in malls... And a lot of people who are travelling to the US; even Guyanese, tell me sometimes that they are worried that they could be in the wrong place at the wrong time," Dr. Ali said.

He added: "Many Guyanese have children in those schools, and sometimes I worry for them too."

However, he acknowledged that Guyana and the Caribbean are faced with their own challenges, and a holistic approach is needed to trace the source of the region's crime problem.

"In Guyana, one crime is too



Guns continue to be a problem for every country in the Caribbean region, said President Ali

much for us, and we have made it clear to CARICOM that we have to address the guns in the region, and go to the source problem, as to where the guns are coming from," the Head of State said.

Guyana has been working closely with the US in the area of crime and security, Dr. Ali said. "We are engaging the US and many stakeholders as im-

portant strategic partners. The US has been working with us on the issue of security, national security and the issue of drug trafficking.

"We have had massive collaborations; there has never been such an extensive collaboration between the US and Guyana in terms of our security sector."

He continued: "We are working in

a very holistic way; we are building out the infrastructure for the Police Force, and we are giving them more tools and equipment; more vehicles."

The government, he added, has also been working to boost the manpower of the police, and modernise the way policing is done across the country.

New Bill provides for better oil sector management

THE landmark Petroleum Activities Bill was passed by the National Assembly in the early hours of Thursday morning.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resource, this momentous development heralds a new era for the nation's petroleum sector, characterised by modernised regulations, and transparent governance.

The new legislation repeals and replaces the outdated Petroleum Exploration and Production Act of 1986, positioning Guyana on the path towards responsible, accountable, and modern petroleum management.

A key highlight of the new Act is the provision for cross-border unitisation. This innovative measure empowers the minister with responsibility for petroleum, following consultation with the Cabinet, to engage in constructive discussions with neighbouring States regarding petroleum reservoirs that extend into their territories.

This collaborative approach ensures the efficient and equitable development of shared petroleum resources, while strengthening diplomatic ties.

With a strong commitment to environmental protection, the Act also introduces the provision for licensees to apply for a geological storage licence for carbon dioxide.

This forward-thinking inclusion empowers licensees to explore potential carbon dioxide storage sites specified in their licences, develop underground storage facilities, and undertake operations incidental to carbon dioxide storage.

This vital addition is a significant stride towards sustainable energy practices that address climate change concerns.

In alignment with the principles of transparency and accountability upheld by the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government, the legislation prohibits government officials, Mem-

bers of Parliament and their family members from acquiring or holding any legal, equitable, or beneficial interest in a petroleum licence granted under the new Act.

This prohibition is a crucial step towards preventing conflicts of interest, and fostering a level playing field for all stakeholders.

During the Bill's deliberations, a document which was passed in full, Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat remarked: "This Bill underwent rigorous consultations since we took office in August of 2020. A robust regulatory framework is essential to ensure the prudent and sustainable management of our country's petroleum sector.

"The Petroleum Activities Bill, a modern piece of legislation, is a testament to our commitment to judiciously manage the sector for the benefit of this generation and the generations to come, and is entirely in alignment with good governance mechanisms outlined in the

PPP/C's Manifesto."

Importantly, too, this new legislation will synergise with the 2022 Guyana Licensing Round, which offers 14 oil blocks for an open and competitive auction, and which continues to garner substantial regional and global interest, underscoring Guyana's emergence as a key player in the international petroleum arena.

The accompanying model Production Sharing Agreements (PSA), documents that were publicly published earlier this year, will feature enhanced fiscal terms that strike a balance between government revenue and contractor interests.

[This approach retains Guyana's competitive edge, while promoting fair revenue sharing. The passage of the Petroleum Activities Bill marks a defining moment in Guyana's journey towards a responsible and sustainable petroleum sector.

Brazil's Lula unveils \$350 billion 'growth acceleration' plan

THE "growth acceleration" plan launched by Brazil on Friday foresees 1.7 trillion reais (\$347.5 billion) in investments that will rely increasingly on public-private partnerships, while driving a new ecological transition plan, the government said.

The programme, known as PAC, revisits an initiative that President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva first introduced in 2007 during his earlier term in office to raise investments in energy, logistics, and urban and social infrastructure.

It was later expanded under his successor, former President Dilma Rousseff. Critics say it incurred excessive spending, exacerbating Brazil's fiscal crisis, while failing to bring fundamental advances in infrastructure.

This time Lula's government says the plan will follow a path marked by stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors, with more than 1.3 trillion reais estimated to be disbursed by 2026.

"This PAC is different from the other ones. The state will stimulate PPPs," Lula's Chief of Staff Rui Costa said at the launch of the program in Rio de Janeiro. He added there would be "fiscal and environmental responsibility" while looking after social needs.

"It's time we buried the idea that social responsibility is fiscal irresponsibility," he said.

According to the government, 371 billion reais – or 22 per cent of the total – are set to be invested by the federal government, while state-owned firms such as oil giant Petrobras (PETR4.SA) would inject 343 billion.

The private sector is seen investing a total 612 billion reais. The government did not immediately detail the fiscal im-



A general view of the Copacabana beach during Independence Day celebrations, in Rio de Janeiro

pact of the initiative, or give a specific time frame for the plan.

Even though the plan includes several projects in the oil and gas sector led by Petrobras, and investment in the pre-salt offshore oilfields, Lula's team emphasised its environmental goals and announced an "ecological transition plan."

Lula has staked his international reputation on reversing environmental

back-sliding under his far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro, when Amazon deforestation soared. Yet Lula is under pressure to deliver much-needed growth to poor, under-developed regions and he wants Petrobras to be an engine of growth.

The PAC does not include funding for paving of the BR-319 highway through pristine parts of the Amazon rainforest that the Bolsonaro govern-

ment planned and environmentalists warn would cause irreversible damage.

Finance Minister Fernando Haddad said the ecological plan would be focused on establishing a regulated carbon credit market, issuing sustainable sovereign bonds and reformulating a climate fund that aims to bring down emissions.

"We'll accelerate growth in our country and help stop degradation of our planet," Haddad said in a speech.

CoI formed to bring thorough probe of Mahdia

THREE months after a devastating fire claimed the lives of 20 children who were housed at the Mahdia Secondary School dormitory in Region Eight (Potaro-Siparuni), a Commission of Inquiry (CoI) to examine the circumstances around the incident was on Thursday officially established.

The CoI will be chaired by Retired Army Chief of Staff Major-General Joe Singh. He will be supported by the Chairman of the National Tshao Council Derrick John and head of the University of Guyana's Law Department, attorney-at-law Kim Kyte-Thomas.

The trio took their oath of office before acting Chief Magistrate, Sherdel Isaacs-Marcus, in the presence of President, Dr. Irfaan Ali and Education Minister Priya Manickchand at the Office of the President.

Attorney Javed Shaddick has been appointed the Secretary of the Commission and took his oath of office also.

President Ali, during his remarks at

the swearing-in ceremony, said that the CoI now marks a crucial step towards understanding the circumstances that led to the deadly fire and paves the way for healing.

"My intention as President is to ensure a balanced, impartial and thorough examination of the causes of the fire and related issues.

"The CoI represents a crucial step towards understanding and healing, it is also intended to derive lessons to improve safety and ensure that such a tragedy never re-occurs," the Head of State affirmed.

According to the President, the Terms of Reference (ToRs) crafted will guide the commissioners and give them the leeway to make recommendations on existing plans and policies established by the government in relation to facilities established for children, women and vulnerable groups.

Dr. Ali said: "The Terms of Reference bestowed upon this commission have been crafted with the intent of

granting the latitude for a comprehensive examination, and for us also to look at lessons and to look at strategies as we move forward as a country."

"I've consistently made clear that the Government of Guyana is accountable to the people of Guyana and everything must be in keeping with this commitment," he added.

Acknowledging that the tragedy plunged the entire nation into mourning, President Ali said that it was imperative that those directly affected were given the time and space to grieve.

He said that the government saw it fit to not rush establishment of the CoI to avoid "aggravating" the existing trauma of those grieving and recovering.

"We recognised the need to give the affected families the time and space to grieve and heal; thus it was imperative to allow for a suitable period to elapse, considering the emotional impact on the families and the broader community."

"As such, I did not deem it neces-

sary to rush headlong into an inquiry which can run the risk of aggravating the immediate trauma being experienced by the grieving families," Dr. Ali said.

He related that the government has been providing constant care to the relatives of those who passed, and the survivors.

"We must understand that decision-making has a direct impact, psychological impact, emotional impact, economic impact; and you ought to make decisions that cross the multifaceted nature of the circumstance that you're making that decision to address, and I believe today there is a point where the commission can conduct this work in a much comfortable environment," Dr. Ali said.

The commissioners will visit Region Eight as part of their inquiry; a traditional Patamona ceremony will also be held at the site where the inferno occurred before the CoI proceeds.

Ghanaian officials extend invitation to train Guyanese for oil and gas sector

CHIEF Executive Officer of Ghana's Petroleum Commission Egbert Faibille Jnr on Thursday extended an invitation to have persons from Guyana trained in the oil and gas sector.

Faibille extended the invitation during a panel discussion as part of the Ghana-Guyana Local Content Conference hosted by the Ghana Chamber of Commerce – Guyana.

At the time, the four-person panel was discussing promotion of local workforce development in the oil and gas sector in both countries.

Sharing Ghana's experiences in this regard, Faibille stated that Ghana has regulations in place so as to ensure that corporations operating in the oil and gas sector train Ghanaians to participate in the sector.

As he spoke about the various training programmes in which persons in the country have participated, he extended an invitation to Guyana to send youths to Ghana to study at technical and vocational institutes to gain the necessary qualifications to work offshore.

He stated that when these workers return to Guyana, they will be snapped up after having received these technical certifications.

Meanwhile, as the panellists discussed the upskilling of persons to further promote the development of the local workforce, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Guyana, Professor Paloma Mohamed-Martin stated that



From left: Nora Wahab, Professor Suresh Narine, Egbert Faibille Jnr and Professor Paloma Mohamed-Martin were on the panel that discussed the promotion of local workforce development

over time the university has introduced several new programmes that were not on the books before.

Against this backdrop, she added that the university will launch a marine programme in about a month's time and she noted that lots of work have to

be done on that front in the sector.

The Vice-Chancellor further added that the University of Guyana is also rolling out a new course that has to do with infrastructure, construction and design.

Further, she noted that while there

is an increasing need for engineers, the university is doubling the size of laboratories, even as she revealed that they have moved from 150 persons passing through the engineering programme each year to about 350.

Tech alliance for oil and gas monitoring

A STRATEGIC joint venture (JV) agreement was signed between West Coast Gas Ghana, a major player in monitoring and nomination services in the oil and gas industry, and e-Magic Inc, a well-known company for its advanced digital twins solutions.

This collaboration, between a 100-per cent Ghanaian-owned international company and e-Magic, owned by Canada-based Guyanese, Tony Harris, marks a significant milestone in the world of technology-driven solutions for the oil and gas sector.

The agreement was signed at the Ghana-Guyana Local Content and Capacity Building Conference, organised by the Ghana Chamber of Commerce Guyana and held at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown, Guyana.

The JV is a realisation of the vision

laid out in the strategic partnership agreement signed by the two countries in December 2021 and it brings together the deep technical knowledge and international experience of both e-Magic Inc and West Coast Gas Ghana.

The President of e-Magic, Lindenborn Tony Harris, is a respected expert in the development of software, who set up the company in Toronto in 1998 with Eugene Woo.

The JV is a significant boost for Guyana's local content policy as it represents a competitive, combined force of proven expertise with local participation for the delivery of a cutting-edge technological solution, which will allow the Government of Guyana to independently monitor the production of hydrocarbons from its oil and gas fields.

Their solution would enable the

Government of Guyana (GoG) to have (i) direct and independent oversight within the natural resources sectors; and (ii) real time data enabling GoG to build its own review capability. The Local Content Act of 2021 does not even include this service as one of the 40 captured under the law, making the JV unique.

The capital for the joint operations will be funded by West Coast Gas Ghana, and the Guyanese company will be responsible, among other things, for the recruitment of nearly all the staff. The JV will also see their combined technical and technological capabilities contributing to building a robust local content participation in the project. At least 75 per cent of senior management of the JV company will be Guyanese and over 90 per cent of the staff to be

employed by the joint venture will also be Guyanese.

The Private Sector Partners will also be responsible for providing technical and operational training to the Guyanese employees so they will be equipped with all the necessary knowledge and skills ready for when the project commences operation.

The two Private Sector Partners have, through their respective areas of expertise and businesses, implemented large-scale projects for governments in Africa and other parts of the world across these segments, providing turn-key designed solutions in the energy and technology sectors with built-in finance keys to governments to ensure that states receive, in a transparent and accountable manner, their due benefits from natural resources.



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Artificial island adds 44 acres of land to Guyana's coastline

IN just under eight months, the M.V Galileo Galilei, hailed as the largest dredger to ever arrive in the Demerara River, has delivered on its mission.

According to a press release, the M.V Galileo Galilei, owned and operated by the Jan De Nul Group, NRG Holdings' joint venture partner, was deployed last year to the project site.

The vessel's key mission was the sand key reclamation phase of the project. During this phase, the dredger cleared the existing area and began the process of adding reclaimed material for the creation of an artificial island, where the new terminal will be situated.

During its deployment in Guyana, it helped maintain the channel, and it has added more than 44 acres of land to Guyana's coastline.

The Vreed-en-Hoop Shorebase Inc. (VESHI) has completed the 200-metre quay wall construction, and works are now focused on fitting fenders and bollards, excavation in front of the quay wall, pavement, electrical and lighting, buildings, and utilities.

The VESHI has also recently advertised for more local service providers, as it moves closer to the December completion date.

"The company is now receiving information for the potential engagement of between 30-90 services. The VESHI is actively seeking local companies in its request for foundational and facility management services for its shore base in Region Three and additional services in Region Four," the release stated.



The artificial island being created by adding reclaimed material to the coastline

\$500M nursing school for Essequibo Coast

THE Guyana Ministry of Health will be spending \$500 million on the construction of a nursing school in Region Two, Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony has disclosed.

Speaking at a graduation ceremony held for persons who recently completed the pharmacy assistant programme, he said that currently a tender is out for construction of the building.

He said that the building will be located in the compound of the Suddie Public Hospital and will provide training programmes for all categories of health workers.

"So, you will be getting a new nursing school and when we build the nursing school it will not be just for nurses, it will be a training facility for all these categories of workers ... whether its pharmacy assistants, medexes or multi-tech, the building will host all this," Dr Anthony said.

He added that the building will be equipped with simulation laboratories to facilitate training for the different categories.



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony

"We want to see development here and it is going to happen. We also need people to take this seriously [and] join the health field," Dr An-

thony said.

Additionally, Minister Anthony said that more persons need to be trained to work in the health sector

and he called on young people in particular to take up a career in the nursing field.

While emphasising the need for more nurses in Region Two, he used the opportunity to urge young people to start studying.

He also said that if persons have an interest in nursing but do not have the required Maths and English grades to enter the programme, then they can do a remedial course.

Dr. Anthony said that the Ministry of Health has tons of opportunities for young people and young people should grab them.

Persons who participated in the pharmacy programme had related that the lack of classroom space and access to laptops were among their challenges.

However, the health minister said that construction of the new nursing school will rectify these challenges and ensure that there is a more comfortable and conducive environment for learning.

Guyana gov't eyes tapping the Diaspora to meet skilled labour shortage

THE government is mulling the establishment of a National Labour Committee to address the shortage of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour in Guyana, as the country develops rapidly.

Although at the proposal stage, the establishment of a central committee, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, has been identified as a viable solution to addressing the shortage which has caused concern, especially in Guyana's oil and gas sector.

This was the consensus at the follow-up Multi-Stakeholders Meeting on Guyana's Labour Needs, held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, on Monday.

The forum, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation's Diaspora Unit, brought together key stakeholders from government and private sector agencies to address challenges faced by the labour market and to craft a national response to address the labour shortage in the country in the short, long and medium terms.

Foreign Secretary, Robert Persaud said the country's accelerated approach to development can be stymied by a lack of adequate labour.

He outlined that a proactive approach is necessary, in addition, to tapping into the diaspora.

"There is so much that we can do in encouraging, networking and reaching out to the global diaspora, but we cannot wait forever for them to be responsive, because these projects cannot sit and wait for us to find these Guyanese. So, we have to be creative and innovative," he said.

The previous meeting identified several key factors that contribute to the labour shortage, such as skills mismatched in the labour market, and cultural rigidity.

While the government continues to invest heavily in training to equip the local workforce with the necessary skills to meet industry demands, partnership with the private sector to develop a more comprehensive approach to bridging the gap was seen as necessary.

So, the National Labour Committee was identified as a deliberate and holistic solution, since this unit would be tasked to receive information on the demand and supply of labour in all sectors.

Head of the Diaspora Unit, Rosalinda Rasul, who facilitated the discussion, said the discord in relation to training with little insight into the needs and plans of companies and sectors has been taken into consideration.

Given that both the private and

public sectors make up the demand for labour, their labour needs would be shared with the unit. Based on this information, the unit will assist the companies, ministries or contractors in sourcing the required labour.

The proposed model for this committee features five components, namely, scouting, matching, foreign workers, communication, and manpower surveys.

The unit would deploy scouts to every community to ascertain how many persons are looking for jobs, as well as their requisite skill sets, and compile this data. Based on that data-



Robert Persaud

base, the matching process would see the connection of persons with the relevant skill set with the entity, contractor, or ministry that requires it.

To address any gaps, foreign workers would be engaged, as the unit would be tapping into other countries through diplomatic missions or otherwise to see where labour can be sourced.

"Communication is also important because a lot of the gaps are created because of a lack of information floating around, so we would have a subsection that is strictly responsible for creating content," she said.

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Construction of sluice at Highbury to commence this year

Agriculture Minister, Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha on Saturday revealed that his ministry through the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) will commence construction of a sluice at Highbury on the East Bank of the Berbice River.

The minister made this disclosure during a meeting with residents and farmers from Korthberaad and other surrounding communities who expressed that there was an urgent need for the drainage and irrigation structure as many of them are constantly affected by flooding.

Minister Mustapha said that although he could not give a time frame on when the project would commence as it was not budgeted for, he assured farmers that it would be before the end of the year.

“The farmers spoke about the sluice. I want to assure you that it will start this year. I can’t say if we’ll be able to complete it because it wasn’t on the programme for this year, but we’ll start it. I’ll engage the NDIA to draft the bills and the do the design and we’ll see how soon we can get it done. The engineer said that it will cost roughly \$30 million, so we’ll make funds available to see how we can get it done,” he noted.

While responding to requests for land clearing for agriculture and clearing of drains, Minister Mustapha said that those works have to be done in a systematic way. He advised that a committee comprising representatives from the various communities as well as engineers from the NDIA and regional officials be formed to develop a programme to guide the works.

On two other occasions, Minister Mustapha also met with farmers and residents from Albion and Auchlyne to discuss issues faced and advances made to develop the sector over the last three years.

While at Auchlyne, Minister Mustapha told the farmers that budgetary allocations for the agriculture sector have increased over the past three years to ensure farmers benefit from improved infrastructure such as drainage channels, pump stations, sluices, dams, and farm-to-market roads.

“In less than three years, this government has fulfilled almost all the promises made to the people of this country when we went to the election. As it relates to the agriculture sector, we’ve increased budgetary allocation by 150% from 2020 to now so that more funds can be made available to help our farmers. Only recently we went to the Parliament for funds to commence construction of massive drainage and irrigation structures similar to the Hope Canal. We’ll build one in Region Six because as many of you



Minister Mustapha meets with residents of Korthberaad

are aware over the years, our farmers have suffered a lot as a result of flooding. I also want to let you know that for the first time in history, we are discussing at a regional level, setting up farmers’ insurance so that you can be compensated if you are devastated by flooding,” the minister explained.

Meanwhile, at Albion, Minister Mustapha distributed several pieces of farming tools and implements to approximately sixty farmers valuing

some \$1,000,000. This, he noted, formed part of the overall developmental agenda for the sector as the government moves towards equipping farmers in order to expand their productive capacities. While addressing the gathering, Minister Mustapha said that agriculture remains one of the most important sectors in the country as it ensures food and nutrition security. As such, the minister said that the government will continue to assist farmers

with inputs to develop their production and the sector as a whole. He said that Guyana is now leading the agriculture agenda in CARICOM and that the government was working to assist every farmer with upping their production.

Farmers present walked away with small farming tools such as water pumps, spray cans, shovels, cutlasses, forks, and files as well as inputs such as seeds.

\$500M approved for road maintenance countrywide

The National Assembly last week approved \$500 million to execute maintenance works across the country.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, said that these works represent the prioritising of the safety of road users.

This amount forms part of the \$33.3 billion allocated to the public works ministry from the over \$61 billion supplementary funding.

Of this amount, \$25 billion was allocated to construct/rehabilitate community roads, \$2.57 billion for works at Kingston Goods Wharf, Kumaka and Port Kaituma Stellings, \$2.1 billion to construct the Wismar Bridge, \$1.5 billion to construct/rehabilitate hinterland roads, \$1 billion for urban roads, \$600 million for sea and river defence works, \$568.7 million for works on the Demerara Harbour Bridge, \$230.59 million for the Transport and Harbours Department, \$79 million for the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. to subsidise travel, and \$32.7 million for emergency works on Supenaam Stelling.

The minister, responding to questions posed by opposition members during the consideration of Financial

Paper No. 3 at a previous sitting of the National Assembly, explained that a portion of this amount will go towards maintenance works along the East Bank corridor, stretching from the Houston bypass to the Cheddi Jagan International Airport.

This work will be undertaken by the ministry’s Special Projects Unit.

“If we continue to have significant encumbrances on the shoulders of roads that are not being drained, water can’t get off when there is rainfall, people are blocking drains, and the rest of it, we will have deterioration of roads. We have to do weeding and cleaning, and the removal of shrubs and grass and the excess waste and garbage that is dumped at the shoulders and drains. It is under this programme that we do those kinds of works,” he said. For the year, a significant amount of work has already been done in this regard, enabling the smooth flow of traffic. The budgetary allocation for the maintenance of roads was some \$2.7 billion, and this supplementary amount of \$500 million will cater to an expanded work programme.

Cuba to help Guyana boost honey production

CUBA is known for its large-scale production of honey and Guyana is looking to leverage the island-nation's expertise to boost production here.

This was according to President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, during a media engagement following bilateral talks with the Cuban Head of State, Miguel Díaz-Canel, at the recently concluded European Union (EU)-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit in Brussels, Belgium.

"Cuba has also extended support for us in building the honey industry; you know they have tremendous capabilities in the honey industry," Dr. Ali said.

Meanwhile, President Ali noted that Guyana's food security efforts have been taking the world by storm, and several international stakeholders have signalled their interest in collaborating.

"Our leadership on food is being recognised and we are looking at ways we can gather and collaborate on the issue of food security," the Head of State said.

According to a recent article published in the Bee Culture -The Magazine of American Beekeeping, Cuba produced more than 10,500 tonnes of honey in 2021.

Figures provided by the publication stated that there are a total of about 500 organic beekeepers in the country.

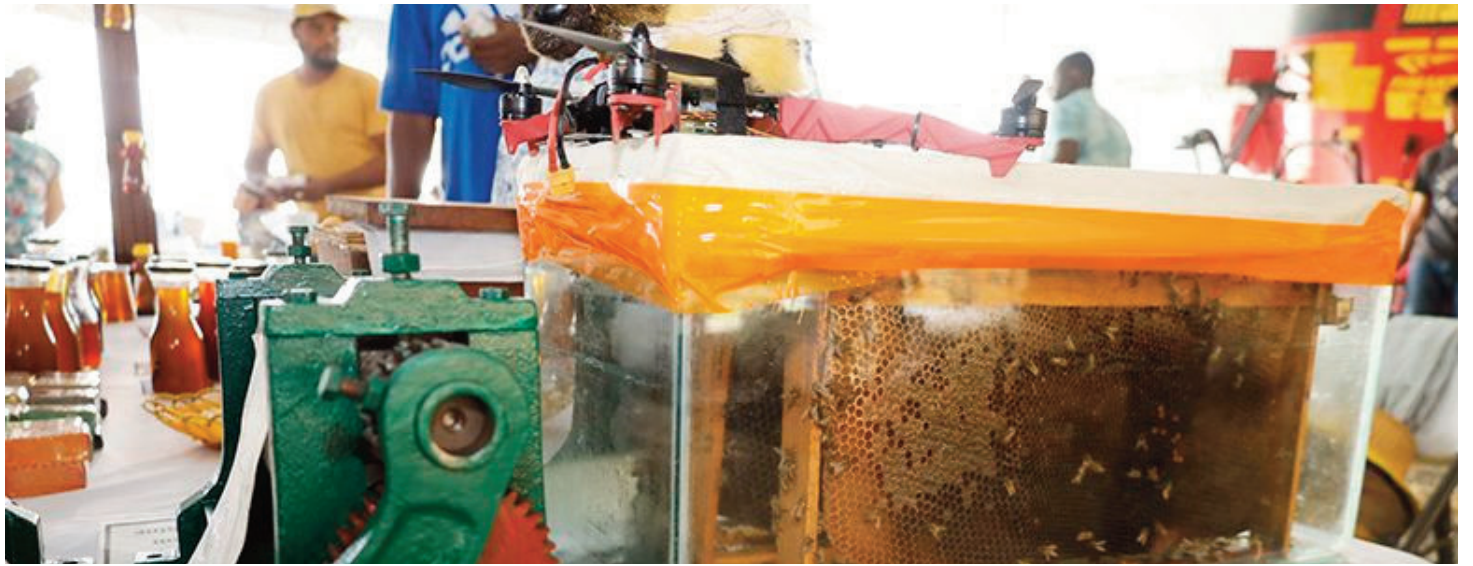
Supported by the government, Cuba's honey-making industry has continued to grow, with record exports of 8,500 tonnes in 2021, mainly destined for markets in Western Europe, Canada, Japan, the Bahamas, and Martinique.

Meanwhile, the global honey market size is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.2 per cent from 2022 to 2030, and expanding Guyana's honey industry is high on the government's agricultural development agenda.

In 2022, Guyana produced over 3,700 gallons of honey and the Ministry of Agriculture here has vowed to support bee farmers.

Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, in a report earlier this year, said that the ministry, through the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA), has been working to develop the industry, especially in the hinterland communities.

"The GLDA was tasked with developing a comprehensive plan for the industry and has commenced working with new and existing beekeepers so that they can either establish or expand their operations. This will continue in 2023," Mustapha said.

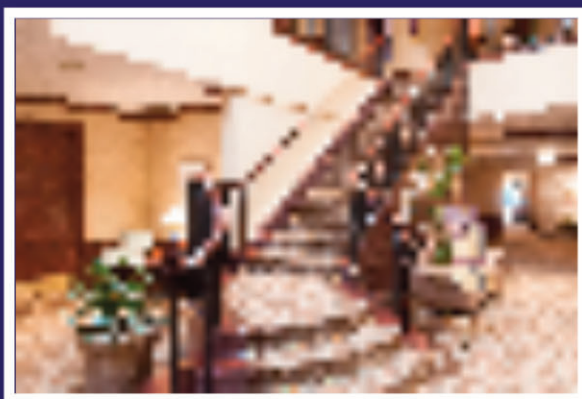


A model hive on display at the inaugural Agri Investment Forum and Expo last May

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Private investors encouraged to support Guyana's infrastructural enhancement

THE government is welcoming private investment in public infrastructure as it contributes to the administration's vision of transforming Guyana with the recent economic expansion.

In the past, public infrastructure has always been viewed as the government's responsibility, but now there have been many investments by private companies in the sector.

And, according to Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh institutions like IDB Invest can play a meaningful role in the local developmental push.

Dr. Singh was at the time speaking at an engagement held with IDB Invest and private sector entities some weeks ago, where he also alluded to investments in public infrastructure, healthcare, and educational services.

"There was a time when we would have thought that schools and hospitals were government business, we have in the room today private providers of educational services, providers of healthcare services and we welcome this," the senior minister expressed.

In April, a multimillion-dollar private hospital was commissioned by President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali at Leonora.



This luxury development in Mahaica is a prime opportunity for private investors, says Guyana government

The medical institution brings healthcare access closer to those residing in Region Three and complements the government's commitment to increasing access to quality healthcare.

This is just one example where private investments are being pumped into

public infrastructure.

Minister Singh also alluded to the many opportunities found in Guyana's economic landscape, in which private companies can flourish.

"We're at a particular moment now in Guyana when in every single sector

of economic endeavour, there are opportunities for growth and expansion," he explained.

Minister Singh also reiterated the call to the local private sector to capitalise on the many opportunities available. (DPI)

Construction of 210 modern homes underway at LBI

THE government has commenced the construction of 210 young professional homes at the La Bonne Intention (LBI) Housing Scheme, East Coast Demerara.

The homes come in two styles — the single flat unit (bungalow) and the two-storey, similar to those constructed at Prospect and Providence on the East Bank of Demerara.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues said over 100 single-flat units and 100 two-storey units are being constructed.

She disclosed that the construction of the homes is progressing smoothly, emphasising that the project is part of the government's affordable housing programme, which allows individuals the opportunity to own homes in wholesome communities.

"By constructing homes within these communities, people will move in faster... So, that will help with the overall plan that we have, to help people to move into communities and to occupy these areas faster," Minister Rodrigues told the Department of Public Information (DPI) in a recent inter-

view.

Additionally, the minister stated that the government is also looking to construct homes targeting low-income earners along the East Coast. Efforts are underway to identify a suitable area for the housing project.

"We want to do a similar type of development like we have at Diamond, where we have about 250 low-income homes... I think it's necessary here on the East Coast," she explained.

Minister Rodrigues reiterated that these initiatives will increase occupancy in housing developments, as well as encourage individuals who were allocated house lots in the communities to occupy their lands.

As part of the government's turnkey initiative, over 1,500 homes are currently under construction in communities including LBI, Providence, Prospect, Great Diamond, Cummings Lodge, Hampshire/Williamsburg, Ordinance/Fortlands, and Amelia's Ward.

These homes are at different stages of completion, with some already handed over to families. (DPI)



One of the houses being made available to young professionals

New ecosystem being created to facilitate Guyana's expansion

OPPORTUNITIES for investment in Guyana are abundant, and officials here are creating an enabling environment through shared interest and collaborations with multinational states.

This was according to President, Dr. Irfaan Ali during a recent visit to the Dominican Republic, where he sat down with Mercado Media Network following discussions and the signing of several collaborative memoranda of understanding (MoU) with President, Luis Abinader.

“The work by President Luis and myself has been going on for a number of months, and we are setting the stage for massive collaboration between the two private sectors,” Dr. Ali said during his interview with the DR press.

Last week, Dr. Ali led a high-level delegation of the private sector and government officials to meet with his counterpart, President Abinader at the DR's National Palace, where agreements for the oil and gas industry, the establishment of an oil refinery, a petrochemical plant, and a study for participation in Guyana's Oil Exploration Block were signed by the countries' respective representatives.

Agreements were also signed to enhance the two nations' agriculture, tourism and trade sectors.

Underscoring the importance of governments creating an enabling environment, Dr Ali said it is imperative that leaders send the right signals and build trust and confidence among private sector bodies.

Dr. Ali reminded of Guyana's growth trajectory and the potential the country has for diverse investments.

“Our oil is estimated at 11 billion barrels reserve now; by 2027, we will be producing 1.2 million barrels per day... those are massive expansions, so there is tremendous excitement and energy in the country,” he said.

He added that Guyana's infrastructure is currently being rebuilt, referencing the ongoing construction of several new road networks and hotels in the country.

Dr. Ali said that investments are also being made to improve the country's health and education delivery.

“We are creating an entirely new ecosystem to support the expansion of our country. We are looking to position Guyana as a leader in the world in energy, food and climate,” the Head of State said.

Speaking further on the country's partnership with multinational nations, he reminded that Guyana is among first countries to enter into an end-user agreement on carbon credits with international oil co-operation, HESS.

He added that Guyana is creating a business environment in which pri-



President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader

private sectors can co-operate and conduct business in an efficient and enabling environment.

“Foreign investors are treated equally as local investors. In many other countries, there is a disparity between the treatment of foreign investment and local investors. In Guyana's case, foreign investors are treated

equally with local investors, but what we are looking at here is to create a new model, a model where foreign investors are local investors because of the way they partner with the private sector.

“So, we want to create a partnership for growth and development. That is why we have the private sector

meeting together and collaborating,” Dr. Ali said.

He added: “We have a strong history working with multinationals and, you know, our credentials are very strong. At this time, one of the best destinations for your investment is Guyana.”



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Lisa Manoban: K-Pop star of Indian origin has been seen dating Frederic Arnault of LVMH

Indian rapper linked in romantic relationship with world's richest heir

BLACKPINK rapper Lisa Manoban (born in Thailand as Pranpriya Manobal to Indian parents) is apparently dating the scion of LVMH Frederic Arnault. The rumours began after the two were seen together at a private lounge of the Los Angeles airport. Lisa Manoban is one of the most popular K-Pop artistes globally. It is said that the two met in the US when Lisa boarded a private jet sent by Frederic Arnault after the show in New Jersey. The other girls apparently travelled together to Las Vegas for the show at the Allegiant Stadium. The news has create furore on social media. Sadly, many have resorted to calling the rapper names and even slut-shaming her.

But the majority of her solo fans and Blackpink ones are in solidarity. Lisa Manoban just posted some pictures from a vacation. She could be seen in a green bikini. Geraldine Guyot, the sister-in-law of Frederic Arnault shared pics from her Greece getaway with her husband, Alexandre Arnault. Fans believe the two couples enjoyed together. Fans asked Geraldine to share some clicks of Lisa Manoban and her alleged beau, Frederic Arnault. It is even claimed that people saw them lunching together at a restaurant in Paris.

Arnault, 28, is the third son of billionaire Bernard Arnault, the world's second richest man and boss of fashion conglomerate LVMH.

Ranbir a toxic husband?

Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor are always in the news. Last evening, Ranbir Kapoor got called out as a toxic husband after the actress revealed that he did not like her wearing makeup. She said whenever she wore some bright colour, he would tell her to wipe it off. This did not go down well with some netizens. Today, she did an Insta AMA session with her fans. The actress was asked about what she loved most about Ranbir Kapoor. She said he was her happiest space, and she could be her most authentic true self with the Animal superstar.

She also posted a pic of hers clicked by Ranbir Kapoor. In the pic, we can see her posing in the middle of a safari in Africa. The couple love the wild expanses of the game reserves of Kenya and Tanzania. In the other pic, she is nestled with her head on his shoulders and he softly kisses her head.

Alia Bhatt was also asked about Elvish Yadav. She said the one word, which is on everyone's lips Systummm. Elvish Yadav has become the first wild card to win the show in the history of the game. He got 280 million votes which is a record of sorts. The whole Yadav community, belt of Uttar Pradesh-Haryana and people from political class showed their support. Alia Bhatt's debut Hollywood film Heart Of Stone is now on Netflix. It is a resounding success with terrific viewership numbers. Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt were part of one of the biggest success of



Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor

2022 with Brahmastra. The movie is a landmark one for Bollywood. Alia Bhatt has a number of projects lined up.

The couple will be seen together in Ramayana which will be made by Nitesh Tiwari. Ranbir Kapoor is part of the whole planning process keeping his eye on how it is being visualised. She was seen outside the office of Tiwari some months back. The couple are parents to Raha Kapoor who will be one in November.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Mars, your ruler, makes a perfect link to values planet Venus today, so all your good points will be on display. However, as Mars is still moving retrograde you would be wise to take nothing for granted. Too much confidence could be a bad thing.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): The planets are now urging you to work closely with other people, both in your career and in your private life, but that does not mean you have to agree with everything they say or do. On the contrary, your opposing opinions could work well together.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Don't get carried away with visions of your own brilliance today, because later in the week you could discover that you have missed something of great importance and look really silly because of it. Maybe you're not quite the genius you think you are.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Today's Venus-Mars link will do wonders for your confidence, especially in one-to-one relationships. Business partnerships will profit from a more outgoing approach on your part but don't pretend to be something the world can see you are not.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Your feelings could easily get the better of you today. What does that mean on a practical level? It means you will be inclined to make decisions that are rooted in emotion rather than common sense. Keep your brain switched on, you are going to need it.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): There is a danger today that in your eagerness to get ahead and get the most from every situation you encounter you will overlook the kind of minor details that could have major consequences. Slow down a bit – it's not a sprint to the finish line.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): With Venus, your ruler, on good terms with energy planet Mars today you can sense that you are on the right track and will be arriving at your destination very soon. That may be true but don't leave friends and loved ones behind. They'll enjoy the journey too.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Today's Venus-Mars link will endow you with no end of confidence but as Mars is still going through its retrograde phase you must be ruthlessly realistic when it comes to money matters. Also, try not to make profit your one and only aim.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Ignore anyone who says that you are aiming too high and keep reaching for the stars. There is no limit to what you can accomplish in the early weeks of the new year, so believe in yourself and get out into the world and make big things happen.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): What occurs over the next 24 hours will open your eyes to new possibilities and make you realize just how limited your horizons have been. Get involved in projects that require you to work alongside like-minded people as part of a team – a winning team!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): You must play by the rules today, even if you believe you can get away with cutting corners. Someone of your abilities doesn't need to take liberties, especially when so many of your rivals are clearly leagues below you in terms of talent.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): If there is something you have wanted to do for months or years but lacked the courage to try you will get another opportunity today and this time you must not back out. Yes, of course, it could go wrong but more likely it will be a huge success.

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Dengue claims lives of school children in Guyana

Guyana's health minister Dr Frank Anthony has confirmed that two children succumbed to dengue infections.

The children were ages nine and 11.

Reports are that both children were undergoing treatment in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Georgetown Public Hospital.

The hospital reports that currently, no other children are in critical care due to dengue.

One of the deceased children, a student from a primary school in Region Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), had been battling the infection in the ICU for five days before the unfortunate outcome.

As of the latest data, approximately 3,453 individuals in Guyana have contracted the mosquito-borne illness this year, with 2,169 of these cases still marked as active.

In response to the rising number of infections, local officials have increased efforts to mitigate the spread of the disease.

This includes fogging various areas to reduce the mosquito population and distributing agents that eliminate mosquito larvae.

People are reminded to be vigilant, as dengue symptoms can manifest as high fevers, intense head and body aches, and nausea.

Dengue, transmitted by the female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, is a viral illness with symptoms akin to a severe flu.

In some instances, it can lead to a life-threatening condition known as severe dengue.

Meanwhile, the Trinidad-based Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) is urging regional countries that arboviral diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and Zika are still circulating in the Caribbean.

In a statement, CARPHA said it wanted to emphasize the importance of prevention and control measures to reduce the transmission of these viruses and the agency remains committed to strengthening public health systems for early detection and response to the emergence, re-emergence, and spread of arboviral infections.

"The CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has the capacity and remains ready to test and provide diagnostic confirmation of suspected cases in the region," said CARPHA's executive director, Dr. Joy St. John.

"Member States must maintain a strategic approach to surveillance and sample collection and submission to increase our chances of early identification of infections," she added, encouraging persons to eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites in and around their homes.

CARPHA said given the increase in regional and international travel to the Caribbean and the presence of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which are endemic to this region and transmit dengue,



The *aedes aegypti* mosquito, responsible for the sharing of the dengue virus

chikungunya and Zika, it is urging member states to strengthen routine surveillance for undifferentiated fever in their communities.

CARPHA said it is also critical for the various ministries of health to continue public education campaigns to remind people of the importance of keeping their surroundings free of mosquito breeding sites and avoiding mosquito bites.

It said this involves keeping water drums and barrels tightly covered, and throwing out stagnant water from flower vases, old tires, and other containers.

"Dengue, chikungunya and Zika are associated with moderate to severe health consequences, with young children and/or older age groups at higher risk. Symptoms of Zika include rash, fever, muscle and joint pain, and conjunctivitis.

"Zika has been confirmed as a cause of congenital abnormalities in neonates of women infected with Zika virus during pregnancy and is also a trigger of Guillain-Barré Syndrome," CARPHA said, adding that symptoms of dengue include rash, fever, muscle and joint pain, and nausea, while chikungunya may cause similar symptoms with muscle and joint pain persisting for an extended period.

St Lucia monitoring dengue & Chikungunya cases

Health authorities in St Lucia say they are monitoring alerts from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) regarding the increased incidence of dengue and Chikungunya cases in the Americas including the Caribbean.

They said that the number of dengue cases doubled last year compared with 2021 and that "the same increasing trends were noted with Chikungunya".

In a statement, the Ministry of Health, Wellness, and Elderly Affairs said although the majority of these cases have been reported in South American countries, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which is the vector responsible for the transmission of these diseases, is present in St Lucia.

"Dengue cases continue to be recorded in St Lucia throughout the year, usually peaking between the months of June and November. Since the introduction of the Chikungunya virus in 2014, random cases have been recorded," it said, noting that there have been no recorded cases of the Zika virus disease since the 2016 outbreak.

"Although there has not been a recorded increase in cases of dengue and Chikungunya, the Ministry of Health wishes to reassure the public that the prevention and con-

trol measures have been augmented," it said, adding that both dengue and Chikungunya are viral illnesses spread by the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and, to a lesser extent, *Aedes Albopictus*.

"Both are endemic to St Lucia, meaning that there is continued local transmission which often peaks during and after rainy seasons. The current weather conditions are favorable to mosquito breeding and this means that cases are likely to increase even outside of the rainy season."

The ministry said that the mosquito lives in urban surroundings and breeds mostly in man-made containers. It is a day-time feeder, with peak biting periods in the early morning and in the evening before sunset.

The ministry said signs and symptoms include fever, headache, muscle and joint pain; with the latter being more frequent in chikungunya.

There is no specific treatment for dengue and Chikungunya and management is supportive based on clinical presentation, the ministry said, adding that testing for both diseases is available here and members of the population, who may be experiencing signs and symptoms to seek care at their nearest Wellness Centre.

UAE minister calls for \$\$ to counteract climate change in the Caribbean

At a regional meeting in Barbados on Thursday, the leader of the upcoming U.N. global climate summit emphasized the pressing need for more funds to counteract climate change in the Caribbean.

Sultan al-Jaber, the Minister of Industry for the United Arab Emirates, highlighted the prohibitive costs that have hindered Caribbean island nations from rapidly transitioning to renewable energy.

These Caribbean nations, according to al-Jaber, are enduring some of the most severe climate-related challenges globally.

He conveyed to the Caribbean community that their experience with climate change serves as an early alarm for the world at large.

During an online event, al-Jaber

addressed leaders of the 15-member trade bloc, Caricom, emphasizing the importance of bridging the climate finance gap, especially in anticipation of the COP28 summit set to occur in Dubai this December.

Coinciding with his address, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration revised its forecast for the Atlantic hurricane season.

Citing record sea surface temperatures, the new prediction now leans towards an above-normal season, with an estimated 14 to 21 named storms, including two to five major hurricanes.

This season, which spans from June 1 to November 30, has already seen the formation of five tropical storms, marking an unusually active onset.

Al-Jaber acknowledged the



Sultan al-Jaber

Caribbean's familiarity with the profound human and economic tolls resulting from insufficient climate adaptation and resilience funding.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness

urges Jamaicans to take precautions as hurricane season begins

The Bridgetown initiative: A ray of hope for developing nations

He commended Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley's pioneering efforts with the Bridgetown Initiative, a plan aimed at facilitating developing countries' combat against global warming.

Additionally, this initiative proposes a mechanism for postponing debt payments following disasters. Advocates believe that this approach could potentially unlock \$1 trillion for climate financing.

Adding to the proactive measures, Prime Minister Mottley recently unveiled plans for a legacy fund dedicated to bolstering Barbados' climate change countermeasures.

CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

American nurse, daughter in Haiti freed by kidnappers

Alix Dorsainvil, an American nurse, and her daughter were released on Wednesday after nearly two weeks of captivity in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, as reported by the aid organization El Roi Haiti.

Founded by Dorsainvil's spouse, the Christian group El Roi Haiti has implored the public to respect the privacy of the Dorsainvil family, emphasizing their need to process and heal after this harrowing event.

Expressing immense joy and gratitude, the group confirmed their safe return. However, specifics about the release, including potential ransom payments, remain undisclosed.

Reacting to the news of their freedom, the US State Department emphasized the importance of ensuring the safety and security of American citizens abroad.

They lauded both their Haitian counterparts and US interagency teams for playing pivotal roles in ensuring the duo's release.

According to media reports, armed men had abducted the nurse, originally from New Hampshire, and her daughter last month from a clinic situated in a region of Port-au-Prince dominated by gangs.

Dorsainvil was an active member of the community, dedicating her time and expertise to offer essential services, including medical care and education, to some of Haiti's most underserved populations through El Roi Haiti.

Caribbean braces for more heat

The Caribbean is grappling with soaring temperatures that are anticipated to persist through October, especially during the peak months of August and September.

The Barbados-based Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) shed light on this in its recent heat outlook for the period spanning August 2023 to January 2024.

CariCOF's forecast paints a clear picture: from August to October, the latter half of the Caribbean Heat Season will experience its peak, especially in the Guianas and the Lesser Antilles, with temperatures anticipated to be higher than typical averages.

The region can brace for sustained periods of intense heat both during the day and at night, only expecting a reprieve when temperatures begin to taper off in November.

This sweltering heat wave poses significant risks. Among the predicted repercussions are frequent and potentially severe bouts of heat stress impacting vulnerable individuals and smaller livestock, exacerbated by a combination of escalating temperatures and surging humidity lasting through September.

Music truck crash injures revellers

J'ouvert celebrants of the Nu Vybes Sugar Band in St Kitts and Nevis faced a harrowing ordeal on Tuesday morning when a truck, transporting a large music sound system, veered off course.

Social media platforms were flooded with videos capturing the scene. Passengers were seen frantically disembarking from the music trailer as it lost control and plunged into a ditch.

Five members of Nu Vybes Sugar Band injured

Five people were injured from the incident. They were members of the Nu Vybes Sugar Band.

They were rushed to the Alexandra Hospital in Nevis for immediate medical attention following the mishap.

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Jamaican Government pledges continuous support for all citizens

Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness recently emphasized the strides made in his country's economy and underlined the government's unwavering pledge to further serve its people.

He noted that the Jamaican economy is currently stable, with ongoing efforts by the government to introduce programs aimed at benefiting the entirety of the nation.

He was speaking at the Office of the Prime Minister's quarterly press conference on August 3.

Holness shared that last year, the country witnessed an impressive economic growth rate of 5.5 per cent.

After grappling with an inflation spike at 11.8 per cent post-pandemic, he noted that the figures have now settled at approximately 6.2 per cent.

A noteworthy element underscoring the robustness of the economy has been the persistently low unemployment rate, a statistic Holness frequently cites.

Holness underlined that over the recent four years, the Jamaican economy has consistently produced job opportunities.

He emphasized the significance of employment as a gateway to personal in-



Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness

dependence, allowing individuals to access goods, services, and plan for their futures. Holness also spotlighted the government's strategic push in skills development through the HEART/NSTA Trust and enhanced social security schemes.

Among these revamped initiatives are hikes in the minimum wage and

broadened social pension programs.

While the economic indicators are good, Holness acknowledged that challenges persist.

"So yes, our economy is doing well. But this is not to say that there are not challenges, because, for many, there is a sense that they are mere bystanders to this success in the economy," he said.

"Yes, there are many young people who are being employed. But there are also many young persons who are left out of the labor market. They are left out, some of them voluntarily, and some of them are not in the labor market because they just simply don't have the skills and the wherewithal to participate. That is why the Government has invested heavily in the HEART/NSTA to ensure that we can bring particularly our young unskilled workers into the labor force, so that they can get access to the jobs that are being created," he added.

Highlighting a broader vision, Holness emphasized that the government's outlook is not solely anchored on numerical economic metrics.

"At the heart of it, at the core of it, is about how the economy serves people. It serves them through jobs, it serves them by creating the basis for a social safety net system that protects the most vulnerable in the society," he said.

In line with this vision, Holness revealed forthcoming alterations to the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), aiming to identify and assist a greater number of families requiring support.

Bahamian MP charged with rape, assault

Kirk Cornish, a legislator in the Bahamas Government, was remanded on Wednesday when he faced charges consisting of two counts of rape against a 35-year-old woman.

These allegations follow his forced resignation on Tuesday as Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Cornish now faces further legal trouble with two more counts: assault and threats of death against the same victim.

According to the prosecution, the alleged crimes occurred in both Coopers Town, Abaco and Nassau, New Providence.

During his appearance before acting chief magistrate Roberto Reckley, Cornish was not called upon to enter a plea to the allegations.

The legal proceedings were postponed until October 17, with Cornish's attorney Owen Wells expressing a desire for an early trial date. Wells also noted that he would immediately seek bail for his client.

Earlier this year, a police investigation was initiated following a woman's allegations against Cornish.

While Cornish denied the accusations, stating they are false, the independent Director of Public Prosecutions believes there is enough evidence to press charges against him.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Davis expressed his commitment to ensuring continued growth and relief for the North Abaco community, assuring that this incident will not hinder the developmental efforts.

Cornish, on the other hand, was optimistic about the upcoming trial, indicating his confidence that the judicial process will confirm his innocence.



Bahamian MP Kirk Cornish: not called upon to enter a plea

TT opposition gains ground, but local election results in 7-7 tie

AFTER three months of bitter campaigning in the local government elections in Trinidad to woo the votes of the million-plus electorate, the country's two main parties ended up exactly where they had begun, each holding the ground it had won in the 2019 elections – seven corporations each.

Both political leaders declared victory on Monday night minutes after 10 pm, the Prime Minister for the PNM and Kamla Persad-Bissessar for the UNC.

The PNM won seven councils – Port of Spain, San Fernando, Arima, Point Fortin, Diego Martin, San Juan/Laventille and Tunapuna/Piarco.

The UNC retained its seven – Chaguanas, Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo, Mayaro/Rio Claro, Penal/Debe, Princes Town, Siparia and Sangre Grande.

Smaller parties – the NTA (allied to the UNC), PEP, MSJ and PDP – failed to win any seats, although the PEP's tally of votes in the Arima North East seat (in the Arima Borough Council) exceeded the margin by which the PNM edged the UNC to win the seat.

Last night the country was still awaiting exact results on the total number of seats won by each party, including expected recounts for some, plus the vote share won by each party in each corporation, which will be used to calculate the number of aldermen seats allocated to each party.

Some 141 seats were contested by 373 candidates from ten parties plus six independent candidates.

The UNC won an extra seat on the Sangre Grande Regional Corporation, Neil De Silva winning Valencia West, where the UNC now holds six seats to the PNM's two.

It had previously been five-three seats in the UNC's favour in 2019, and



UNC leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar meets with supporters on election night

before that four-four in 2016.

The UNC won an extra seat on the San Fernando City Council, where John Michael Ali Bocas, known as the entertainer "Makamillion," won Marabella West.

Further, the UNC's Sacha Ali won Marabella South/Vistabella, previously held by Marcus Girdharrie, who had defected to the PNM and ran as their candidate.

With a new seat created at the Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation, the UNC increased its tally from a previous five out of six to six out of seven

seats.

The election came after the Privy Council rejected the Prime Minister's extending the terms of councils by a year to allow local government reform, his party's eventual election rallying cry.

In the campaign, the Council for Responsible Political Behaviour chided certain campaign conduct, including Dr Rowley's telling a rival, "Drink your rum and go back to bed," and Persad-Bissessar telling voters to "empty the whole clip" at intruders, which became

a UNC rallying cry.

Speaking of the results at Balisier House, Port of Spain, on election night, Rowley declared, "You have changed nothing."

Rowley said the election results came at a time when the party was "in the middle of its second term," that is, both mid-term and in its second term, alluding to surviving a traditional mid-term dip in popularity which parties often face. He said the PNM was "very happy" with its performance.

American woman gets bail in plot to kill husband

A high court judge in the Bahamas approved a US\$100,000 bail for an American woman, Lindsay Shiver, 36, of Thomasville, Georgia, who is accused of plotting to kill her husband.

Justice Cheryl Grant-Thompson presided over the hearing where Shiver, along with two Bahamian individuals, faced charges of conspiracy to commit murder, levied against them on June 28.

In a concurrent move, the court issued a restraining order between the embattled couple.

Notably, the court proceedings were attended by Lance Peterson, the chief of American Citizen Services at the US Embassy.

It is believed by the prosecu-

tion that the plan to kill Robert Shiver, Lindsay's husband, was set to take place in Abaco on July 16.

This plot reportedly came to light after authorities intercepted a mobile phone during a probe into an unrelated crime in Guana Cay.

Reports are that Robert initiated divorce proceedings, allegedly attributing his decision to an affair he believes Lindsay had with one of her co-conspirators.

Shiver was remanded to the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services after she was unable to post the cash bail of US\$100,000 last Tuesday. Her two co-accused, Terrance Bethel, 28, and Faron Newbold Jr, 29, posted their \$20,000 cash bail.



Tobago leader to Rowley: You're not the boss of this island

INTERIM political leader of the Tobago People's Party (TPP) Farley Augustine told supporters on Sunday night that Dr Rowley is "not the Prime Minister of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA)."

He made the statement while giving the feature address at the launch of the TPP at the Milford Road Layby, Scarborough.

In his address, Augustine re-emphasised his administration's commitment to achieving greater autonomy for the island, saying it was a top priority.

But he lamented that the Tobago autonomy bills were still "languishing" in the Parliament, after being debated more than two years ago.

Augustine regarded autonomy as the "most important element" in facilitating the island's development.

"We cannot do it playing second-class citizens to another group of people," he told supporters, who included former Tobago Organisation of the People political leader Ashworth Jack.

"I love all my Trini family and love my Trini friends. But the same way you (Rowley) have a right to develop your island the way you see fit, I have that right too. And I also want to add, you are not the boss of me nor this island."

Augustine, who urged Rowley to dissolve Parliament and call a general election, added, "Mr Prime Minister, yes, you are the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. But you are not the Prime Minister of the THA."

"As a matter of fact, from the time you reach number one Jerningham Street



Farley Augustine: No apologies to Keith Rowley

(the Assembly Legislature), your authority ends by the gate."

He said despite several efforts over the years to achieve greater autonomy for Tobago, "We can't seem to get there."

"Every cycle, we run around the island with a set of consultations, we write up a document, send it to Trinidad – and then they throw it in the dustbin and we repeat the cycle again."

"Well, something has to move the needle now, and we have to ensure that this time around, the autonomy that we crave, we actually get it."

Augustine said there is a prevailing sentiment among some young people that autonomy is no longer important to his administration.

"But it is if every time you build a road, they will ring EMA (the Environ-

mental Management Authority) to try to stop you, then your autonomy is important. If every time you try to develop the port they will tell you, 'Don't do nothing on the port, we will extend the little jetty,' then your autonomy is important."

"If every time a teacher applies for leave, it have to go down to Trinidad and cyah come back up for years, it is important."

"If every time we go to the Parliament in October for a budget and the most they could give us is \$4.03 from every \$100, then your autonomy is important."

Augustine said Tobagonians must take charge of their resources.

"And that is why I offered no apologies when the Prime Minister's visit to the quarry (Studley Park) was cancelled. Central government eh own that. That is Tobago people own."

The Tobago Self-Government Bill and the Tobago Island Administration Bill were debated in the House of Representatives on June 28 and 29, 2021. The debate reached the committee stage. The motion called for the House to adopt a joint select committee's report on the bills, which required a three-fifths majority for passage.

However, the Opposition walked out of Parliament after Speaker Bridgid Annisette-George granted the Prime Minister an extension of speaking time during the debate. The Opposition and Progressive Democratic Patriots had said at the time the bill did not represent the wishes of Tobagonians.

St Kitts police call on citizens to stay alert

The Royal St Christopher and Nevis Police Force (RSCNPF) of St Kitts & Nevis has urged citizens to stay alert and take preventive measures to avoid falling prey to criminal activities.

This appeal comes in the wake of the recent supermarket heists in the country.

The police force aims to bolster confidence among islanders, assuring them of the police's dedication to addressing the recent surge in robberies.

The RSCNPF has specifically reached out to business owners, advising them to evaluate and strengthen their current security measures.

They have suggested that businesses prioritize cash-handling procedures that emphasize the safety of their employees. Additionally, they stressed the significance of having dependable security arrangements, considering the safety of both employees and assets as crucial.

To enhance security, the RSCNPF has recommended the introduction of burglar alarms and closed-circuit television systems. Such measures, they be-



A suspect is taken into custody following a robbery in Basseterre

lieve, offer a solid defense for both commercial and residential locations.

Furthermore, ensuring adequate and functional lighting, both inside and around properties, has been highlighted as crucial.

This lighting is seen as a dual tool, providing better visibility and acting as

a deterrent against potential criminal activities, whether during business hours or at residences during the night.

In response to the escalating robberies, the RSCNPF has boosted its manpower and investigative resources to better address the situation and bring those responsible to account.

Recent incidents under investigation include two robberies that transpired on August 12th at Ram's Supermarket branches in Camps and Bird Rock.

Initial reports suggest that four individuals, armed, targeted the Camps branch around 6:30 pm, taking a significant amount of money from several cashier points and the vault.

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Sammy wants 'culture change' in West Indies

WEST Indies T20 and 50-over coach Daren Sammy is asking for patience as a "cultural change" is needed to see a turnaround in results.

Sammy was speaking after West Indies defeated India by eight wickets in Florida to seal the five-match T20 series 3-2. It was just one of few bright sparks for West Indies cricket over the past year as results have been tough to come by. West Indies sunk to an all-time low last month, failing to qualify for the ICC World Cup 50-Over tournament for the first time in history.

Last October the T20 team was unable to advance to the main draw of the T20 World Cup after losses to Scotland and Ireland.

"Obviously myself and (Test coach Andre) Coley just got to the job. This is a lot of work," Sammy said. "We've had meetings with the president (Dr Kishore Shallow), the new director (Miles Bascombe), the CEO (Johnny Grave) on how we could impact change – not only the players, but the system in general.

"Having better facilities for the

guys to train, the preparation, the attitude towards fitness...too many times guys are on the physio table (injured). All of this is the culture shift we need to see happen."

Sammy added, "The general picture is to try to change the culture, the work culture and it involves everybody...things are going to change."

The white-ball coach said it is a work in progress and it will take time. "It will take patience because it will not change overnight, but we are putting measures in place so we could effect change. With two new captains Shai (Hope) and Rovman (Powell, we have to give them time).

"Like I said yesterday, I love Rovman, he is a tactician...I think it is a good partnership (we have) and putting all egos aside and working towards the betterment of the team."

Sammy said the T20 team has quality batsmen, but a wicket-taking bowler is missing. "I think we have the batting. If we put our egos aside and play the situation and have the best man in that sit-



West Indies' T20 coach Darren Sammy

uation representing the team as a batting group, I think we are okay.

"I still feel for us we are still searching for that wicket-taking bowler. We have Alzarri (Joseph), we have Akeal (Hosein)...but when we were strong, yes, we had the power hitters, but we had

(Sunil) Narine, we had (Samuel) Badree, we had guys who could get wickets in the middle."

Sammy said getting wickets in the middle overs on Sunday helped set up the victory.

Powell: WI win a 'victory for the people'

WEST Indies T20 captain Rovman Powell dedicated Sunday's 3-2 T20 International series win over India to the fans, lifting spirits after many lows in West Indies cricket over the past year.

The regional team embarrassingly failed to qualify for the 2023 ICC World Cup 50-over tournament for the first time, and also did not advance to the main draw of the 2022 T20 World Cup.

But fans were left jubilant on Sunday as blazing knocks from opener Brandon King (85 not out) and Nicholas Pooran (47) helped West Indies clinch the five-match series, at the Central Broward Regional Park Stadium in Lauderdale, Florida.

Earlier, the hosts, led by the impressive Romario Shepherd, put in a strong bowling performance to restrict India to 165 or nine. The batsmen then put India to the sword to prevail comfortably by eight wickets, with two overs to spare.

It was all to play for in the fifth T20 as the series was squared 2-2 heading into Sunday's clash.

The T20 series gave the hosts the last laugh after India won the two-match Test series 1-0 and the three-match One Day International series 2-1.

India's tour of the Caribbean and the US ended with Sunday's match.

Powell said, "It is difficult to put words to it. Adjectives are inadequate in describing how we feel. The guys are



Rovman Powell

elated, it is a big series. You mentioned all the stuff that is going on in West Indies cricket so it is a very big series for us to beat India at home.

"Last night after we got defeated badly by the Indians we sat down and had a meeting as a team. We not just playing for ourselves; we are not just playing to put smiles on our faces as players, but we are playing for the people of the Caribbean and they are longing for something nice."


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<p>Headless White Shrimp 无头白虾 21/25.4x6lb/case</p> <p>150.00 case</p>	<p>Large Egg 箱裝大鸡蛋</p> <p>53.99 case</p>	<p>Container S32 容器</p> <p>46.50 case</p>	<p>Container LF-28W 容器</p> <p>28.50 case</p>
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<p>Chilica Hot Chili Sauce 辣椒醬 712g Reg: \$7.99</p> <p>4.99 ea</p>	<p>Royal OX Vietnamese Rice Paper Series 400g 越南特級米紙 Reg: \$3.59</p> <p>1.99 ea</p>	<p>KIM TU THAP Oriental Beef Spices 56.7g 金字塔牛腩調味粉 Reg: \$2.29</p> <p>1.59 ea</p>
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Massive infrastructure works ongoing for 5000+ residential and commercial lands

Infrastructure works are ongoing in several schemes on the East Bank of Demerara, for more than 5,000 low, moderate and middle-income residential house lots and industrial/commercial lots, spanning some 1,700 acres of land.

The works being undertaken amount to some \$19 billion and include access roads, bridges, culverts, water distribution systems and drainage networks. Upon completion, the allottees will be able to access their lands.

On Tuesday, Minister of Housing and Water, Hon. Collin Croal and Deputy Director of Projects at the Central Housing and Planning Authority, Mr. Intakab Indarjeet inspected the projects.

The team first visited Block 1 Great Diamond, where over 1,100 house lots have been allocated. Minister Croal emphasized the strategic location of this area, as it is in close proximity to the Eccles to Great Diamond Highway, which upon completion will provide easier navigation between the East Bank of Demerara and Georgetown.

Meanwhile, for Block 7 Great Diamond (approx. 750 house lots) and Block 11 Golden Grove (approx. 650 house lots), which are situated adjacently, Minister Croal said that the future alignment for the Ogle Bypass Road will be nearby.

At Block 13 Golden Grove, the Minister stated persons who were allocated Block 18 Golden Grove will now



Aerial picture shows a highway being built into EBD

be occupying this area. He explained that the low-lying land at Block 18 posed several challenges, resulting in the delay of infrastructure works. Works at Block 13 are currently progressing, and allottees will soon be able to access the land to construct their homes, while Block 18 is now repurposed into an industrial zone.

The minister also highlighted that

in some schemes challenges with flooding were experienced. The Deputy Director of Projects, Mr. Indarjeet, elaborated that the completion of works is anticipated to effectively address and mitigate flooding concerns in these areas.

Works are also being executed at Block 15 and 17 Golden Grove. Minister Croal conveyed that in Region Four,

land allocations along the East Bank Demerara corridor are currently exhausted and more focus will be placed on allocations in the East Coast Demerara schemes.

Minister Croal also noted the extensive scale of ongoing works throughout the country, to tune of some \$64 billion, including the construction of major highways.

Port Mourant Sugar Estate exceeds 2023 targets

The Guyana Sugar Corporation is pleased to announce that the Albion/Port Mourant Estate has surpassed its weekly production target for the second time since the commencement of the 2nd Crop of 2023 in the week ending August 11, 2023.

The estate recorded increases in its ability to supply canes to the factory as a result of the 70% turnout of harvesters this week vs. a second crop of 2023 turnout of 62%. The workers so far have responded positively to a better-than-expected cane yield in the field, an incentive scheme that is motivating greater productivity, and a stable industrial relations climate.

These factors have enabled the estate to achieve its target for the second time since grinding operations began and will boost the income of workers at Albion Estate, who have worked a minimum of eighty per cent (80%) of the days available for the week the target was achieved. This will earn them an additional day's pay (tax-free) through GuySuCo's Weekly Production Incen-



The Albion/Port Mourant Sugar Estate

tive (WPI) programme.

Albion/Port Mourant Estate's Manager Yudhistira Mana said this achievement was possible due to team work and comradery. "Our success is attributed to our team's unwavering commitment and the implementation of advanced harvesting techniques. Additionally, favourable weather conditions have played a pivotal role in our accomplishments. We are immensely proud of our achievements and look forward to continuing our pursuit of excellence to achieve this crop's target".

The Albion Port Mourant Estate is slated to produce 47% of the expected

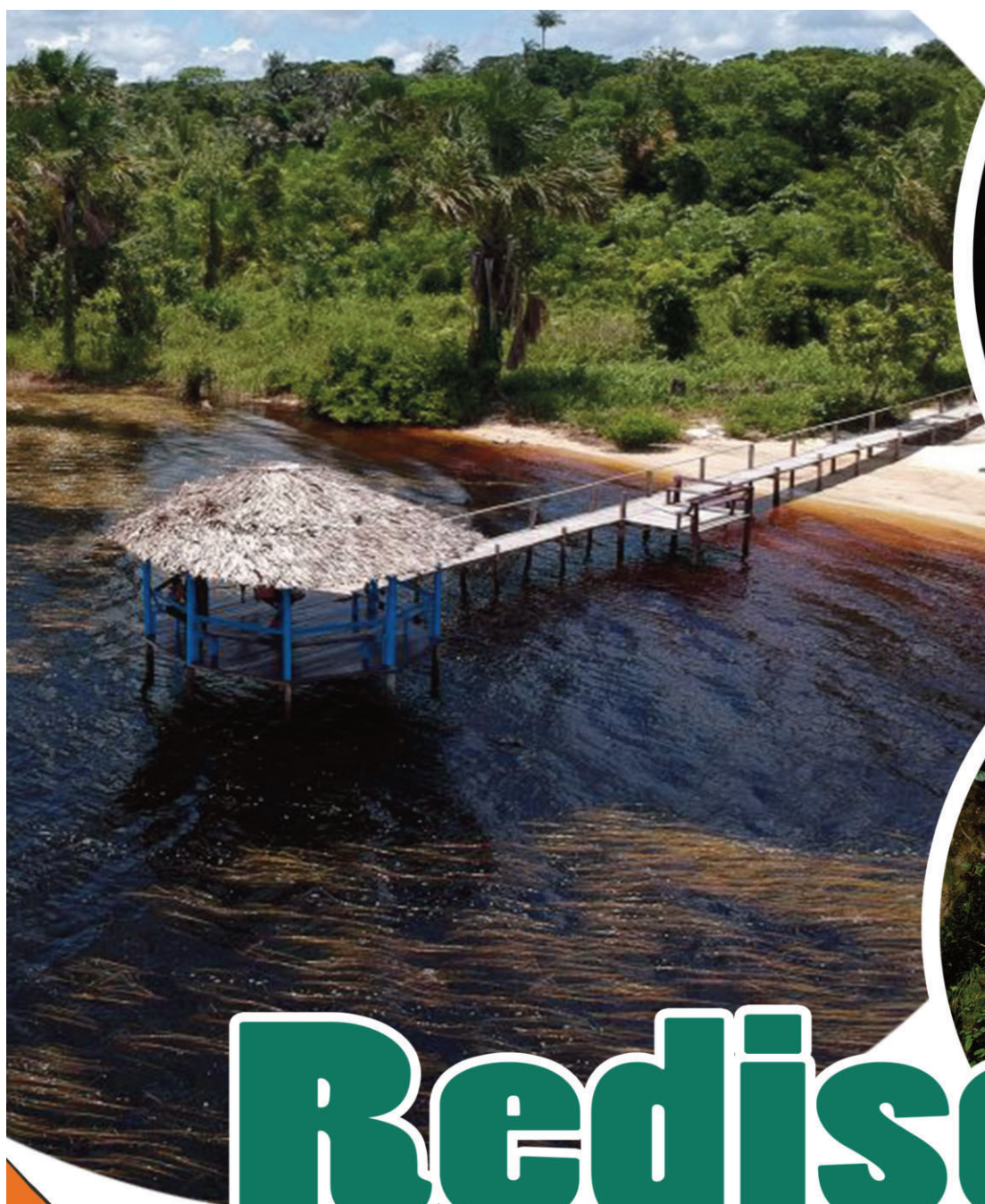
sugar production in this 2nd Crop of 2023 to meet the annual target of 60,858 MT. With Rose Hall Estate commencing grinding operations in late September 2023, this will further strengthen the industry's production capacity.

Mr. Sasenarine Singh, Chief Executive Officer of GuySuCo in congratulating the workers on the Albion/Port Mourant Estate stated "The investment of over \$17 billion in the field and factory during the last three years funded by the Government of Guyana have started to show some of the expected results despite the entire Project to rebuild the largest Estate at Albion was constrained

by the great floods of 2021". The CEO expressed his deep gratitude to the Government of Guyana led by His Excellency President Dr Irfan Ali, the team at the Ministry of Agriculture led by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha, and the entire Board of Directors led by Mr. Madanlall Ramraj for their unwavering support on this rebuilding project.

The CEO further stated that he would like to "thank the workers and management on the Estate for what they have done to firstly overcome the flood crisis of 2021, their efforts to plant the canes in 2022 and which has culminated in the opportunity to now in 2023 harvest better quality canes and produce more the sugar".

The CEO also noted that he, "salutes the workers across the Industry at all Estates, at Headquarters, at the Demerara Sugar Terminal, and all other locations for their continued dedication and commitment which will make all the difference in the objective of the Corporation..."



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