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# Officials differ on expectation of CARICOM meeting over Essequibo dispute Ali, Maduro come face-to-face

GUYANA and Venezuela seemingly have sharply contrasting expectations of Thursday's leadership talks on the Essequibo dispute due in St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG).

SVG Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves announced the talks on Saturday.

Amid Caricom's concerns to ensure this area remains a zone of peace, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali have each accepted the invitation to talks, although it is unclear if an agenda has been crafted.

While Gonsalves – current chairman of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) – had invited Brazil's President Lula da Silva to chair the Guyana/Venezuela talks, word emerged on Monday that da Silva would be sending a representative, but not attend himself.

Brazilian media house O Tempo reported, "After being invited, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will not attend the meeting between the leaders of Venezuela and Guyana to discuss the territory of Essequibo next Thursday.

"He appointed Celso Amorim, who is the special advisor for international affairs to the Presidency of the Republic, to represent him. The information was confirmed by sources from Palácio do Planalto (President's Office) to O Tempo in Brasília."

While Ali and other Guyanese voices have said the SVG talks must not touch on each country's rival claims to the Essequibo, a senior Venezuelan official said on Monday he expects the talks will result in a shift in Guyana's position from seeking a resolution at the Interna-



**Nicolas Maduro** 

tional Court of Justice (ICJ) to bilateralism under the 1966 Geneva Agreement.

Ali said on Sunday at a national day of prayer, "I have made it very clear that on the issue of the border controversy, Guyana's position is non-negotiable. That is, this is before the ICJ."

Likewise, in an earlier Facebook post on Saturday in response to Gonsalves' invitation to talks in SVG, he said, "President Ali reiterated that Guyana's land boundary is not up for discussion, as it is currently before the ICJ and, when adjudicated, will be fully respected by Guyana.

"The President, on numerous occasions, has made it explicitly clear that the case before the ICJ will not be an issue for bilateral discussions."

Ali's letter of response to Gonsalves referred to "appropriate dialogue" between him and Maduro in the interest of peace. "I will be there in answer to the call by colleague Caricom heads of Government on December 9, 2023, for appropriate dialogue between the leaders of



Irfaan Ali

Venezuela and Guyana to ensure peaceful co-existence, the application and respect for international law and the avoidance of the use or threats of force."

Ali added, "In making that call, Caricom colleagues reasserted that they firmly support Guyana in pursuance of the resolution of its border controversy with Venezuela through the process of the ICJ and urge Venezuela to respect the conservatory measures determined by the ICJ in its recent ruling until a final resolution."

On Monday, Ali's Facebook page posted a statement by former Commonwealth secretary-general and former Guyanese cabinet minister Sir Shridath

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Ramphal.

"It is important that the limits of the talks in St Vincent and the Grenadines are understood.

"False expectations should not be encouraged," Sir Shridath said.

He said that with a perfect understanding that the Essequibo dispute was now before the ICJ, Caricom had urged "an appropriate dialogue" between the two leaders in SVG towards peaceful co-existence. Ramphal said within those parameters, Ali had responded positively to Caricom's call for talks.

Maduro, meanwhile, has stated that he will attend the meeting "with the mandate given to me by the Venezuelan people ... to defend our legitimate rights over Guyana Essequiba."

Maduro made the comments in a letter to PM Gonsalves accepting the invitation to the Caricom meeting.

"Dear Ralph, this meeting will be precisely an opportunity for us to clear up the elements that have aggravated the dispute..." he wrote.

This goes against the spirit of the meeting, which it was said "will not touch on each country's rival claims."

Maduro said that Essequibo must be on the agenda.

"Our main objective is that Guyana comes back to the 1966 Geneva Agreement," he said.

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### **EQUALITY NEWS**



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**THURSDAY DECEMBER 14 2023** 



# **GUYANA MOURNS AS FIVE SOLDIERS PERISH IN HELICOPTER CRASH**

PRESIDENT ALI DECLARES NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION

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**GUYANA REJECTS VENEZUELA'S THREATS, ICJ RULING SUPPORTS GUYANA'S** POSITION

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\$25,000 CASH GRANT BRINGS **CHRISTMAS CHEER TO PENSIONERS** 

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**GUYANA DEFIES VENEZUELA** WITH A "NIGHT OF PATRIOTIC **REFLECTION**"



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#### **EQUALITY NEWS**

## GUYANA MOURN SOLDIERS PERISH

#### -PRESIDENT ALI DECLARES NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION



Deceased: Colonel Michael Shahoud

The nation is in mourning following the tragic helicopter crash on December 6th, 2023, which claimed the lives of five brave soldiers the from Guyana Defence Force (GDF). The incident occurred near the Venezuelan border in the country's rugged interior.

The deceased soldiers are Brigadier (rtd.) Gary Beaton, Colonel Michael Shahoud, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Charles, Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Welcome, and Staff Sergeant Jason Khan. They were on a routine mission en route from Olive Creek to Arau in Region Seven when their Bell 412 helicopter went down in bad weather.

The survivors, Colonel Lieutenant Andio Michael Crawford and Corporal Dwayne Jackson are expected to Ali make a full recovery.

crash is still under the families of the fallen



**Deceased:** Lieutenant Colonel **Michael Charles** 



Deceased: Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Welcome



Deceased: Brigadier (rtd.) **Gary Beaton** 



Deceased: Staff Sergeant Jason Khan

In response to the tragedy, President Ali has declared Sunday, December 10th, 2023, a National Day of Prayer and Reflection. He encouraged all religious organisations to hold services to honour the memory of the fallen soldiers and offer comfort to the grieving families.

"This is a time for us to unite in prayer reflection," and President Ali said. "Let us remember the sacrifices made by these heroes and pray for their families and colleagues."

Flags across the have been nation lowered to half-mast as a gesture of respect for the deceased soldiers.

The news of the outpouring of support for the GDF and the Guyanese from all walks have expressed their condolences and offered their assistance.



The bodies of the five soldiers arriving at the airport

#### **OUTPOURING OF** SUPPORT FOR THE **GDF AND FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS**

Irfaan of President expressed his ke a full recovery. profound grief and The cause of the offered condolences to and

and courage.

made in the line of to duty. "I assure cherished memories crash has sparked an duty, will forever be you the courage shared with their etched in the annals and dedication of loved ones" and in the a testament

Prime Minister said.



The bodies of the five soldiers arriving at the airport

soldiers

investigation, but it soldiers. He noted that Mark Phillips echoed the Vice President "these valiant men president's sentiments, Bharrat Jagdeo in is believed that bad weather may have been a factor. **met their untimely** calling the incident a extending condolences and," while serving the "national tragedy." to the families and

nation with dedication He lauded the deceased colleagues of the fallen for their soldiers urged that they "Their sacrifice, bravery and dedication "find strength in the our history, these soldiers will knowledge that their families of the victims. to be remembered with commitment to duty their courage and the utmost respect has "left an indelible of life, as well as regional devotion," he stated. and gratitude," he mark on the nation." and local partners,

#### **DAY OF PRAYER** AND REFLECTION

**<u>GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST</u>** 





Survivors being taken for treatment



President Dr. Irfaan Ali and former Army, Prime Minister, Brigadier Red't, Mark Phillips and GDF's Chief of Staff, Omar Khan along with family members of the soldiers receive the survivors at the Eugine F Correia International Airport

#### **GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST**

#### **REJECTS VENEZUELA'S THREAT** H HI



President of the Court, Judge Joan E. Donoghue

In a defiant response to Venezuela's recent referendum and threats and world leaders of forceful President Dr. Mohamed its territory.

President Ali, in a live situation, Venezuelan

United Nations action, **alerted** 

The President alerted Irfaan Ali has declared the United Nations his government will not Secretary-General and tolerate any violation of several world leaders about the escalating highlighting broadcast, condemned the potential for regional President President instability.



President Irfaan Ali appearing on BBC

Nicolás Maduro's actions Ali emphasised that the as a "grave threat" to referendum international peace and fundamental principles security. Venezuela's violation of as outlined in the the International Court United Nations (UN) of Justice (ICJ) order.

violates highlighting of international law, and Organisation of

Charter.

Regional and of international peace and security. judgment is issued. partners engaged Having with and international

the They have literally regional **an outlaw nation**. Nothing

American States' (OAS) fundamental justice to ICJ President Joan and and morality, and E. Donoghue, aims to three months to exit the preservation "preserve the status economic zone which international quo" until the final among other actions engaged **declared themselves** welcomed the ICJ's Guyana. verdict and called on they Venezuela to respect

grant investors prompted a briefing for President Ali had foreign diplomats in

#### Guvana objects officially to Venezuela

Further, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Todd expressed Guyana's objection and rejection of the measures during a telephone conversation Venezuelan with of Foreign Minister Affairs, Yvan Gill. Minister Todd reiterated Guyana's commitment to the ongoing judicial process and encouraged Venezuela to participate in the case before the ICJ. The conversation, initiated by the partners, including **do**, **however**, **will** the rule of law. He Venezuelan Ambassador CARICOM, OAS, the **stop Guyana from** emphasised that to Guyana, emphasised to Guyana, emphasised and proceeding with the Venezuela is prohibited the need for respect bilateral discussions with case in the ICJ, or from "annexing or for international law, peace, and security in the region.

#### **Global Awareness** and Support

In addition to these actions, President Ali Despite the ICJ's has taken to major U.S. proceeded to raise awareness about remains supporting Guvana's commitment to a peaceful resolution **F** o **r** e **i** g **n** through legal means and respecting international then law.



CAN CNN SPEAKS WITH GUYANA'S PRES. AS VENEZUELA TRIES LAND GRAB Mohamed Irfaan Ali | Guyanese President

President Irfaan Ali appearing on CNN

Commonwealth, Defence Force is on full alert as a deterrent our territory to be against Venezuelan aggression. development of our allow its development threat," he said. to be hindered by Venezuela's threats.

President Ali remains supports steadfast in pursuing the territorial claim ICJ case, stating that Venezuela's actions will a through legal channels.

Venezuela affecting Court, has rule of law generally, decision,

the United States, Brazil, stop the ICJ from trespassing France, President Ali final Judgment on regardless assured that the Guyana the merits of the case. referendum's outcome. We will not allow potential violated nor the international law

# ICJ

ruling landmark ordering Venezuela "By defying the to cease any actions **rejected** control of its Essequibo

upon the United Kingdom, and ultimately issuing its Guyanese territory," of the

#### Venezuela defies

The President reiterated country to be stymied order on December and international news that Guyana will not by this desperate 1, for both parties to networks, including CNN, refrain from actions CBS News, Al Jazeera, worsening the dispute, and BBC World News, ruling Venezuela Guyana's with the referendum. the border issue and Questions surround the Venezuela's aggressive The ICJ had issued legitimacy of the vote, acts. The international with President Maduro community not deter Guyana from just two days before declaring victory without vigilant, seeking a resolution Venezuela's referendum, clarifying voter turnout.

# Guyana's **Diplomats briefed**

Venezuela international law, the region. The unanimous announced measures to according incorporate Essequibo

# **GUYANA TELLS OIL COMPANIES TO IGNORE**

Essequibo region to Assembly. disregard Venezuelan President defend its sovereignty.

annex Essequibo and by Guyana." authorize Venezuelan

Vice President Dr. extracting crude oil. He ability to provide any that country. Who Bharrat Jagdeo has also proposed a "law in meaningful" assured oil companies defense of Essequibo" to support to the residents he questioned. operating in Guyana's the Venezuelan National of Essequibo, given its

Nicolás press conference at the Venezuela Maduro's demand to Office of the President, focus on addressing protect them and their withdraw within three Dr. Jagdeo dismissed its months. He emphasised these actions as having no before making claims that these companies bearing on international on Guyana's territory. reiterated are legally operating in law. He stated, **"Any "What could he offer** stance that any Guyanese territory and **attempts to explore to the residents of** negotiations regarding that the government will for petroleum by his Essequibo if not the state oil companies more Maduro's ultimatum, or state companies in People are fleeing conducted issued on December our territory will be his country because the ICJ, not through 5th, included plans to seen as an incursion of the disastrous bilateral He

own economic struggles. reassured citizens in the However, during a He emphasised that border communities that internal issues territory. hardships? controversy economic policies he with Venezuela. further **has pursued and the** emphasised oil companies to begin questioned Venezuela's lack of democracy in Maduro's attempt to use

social wants more of that?"

Dr. Jagdeo also should the government would

> The vice president Guyana's Essequibo must be through discussions He that



Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

threats and intimidation the belligerence and would not sway Guyana threatening Guyana from this position. "We could take us back are open to talks to anytime with Maduro discussions that he and his government, wants, then he is but not on that issue. sadly mistaken," Dr **So, if he thinks that** Jagdeo said.

the bilateral

#### **EQUALITY NEWS**

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

## **GUYANA-VENEZUELA TERRITORIAL DISPUTE: US STANDS FIRM WITH GUYANA, URGES PEACEFUL RESOLUTION**

(US) has reaffirmed its and unwavering support for **aggression** Guyana's amid escalating tensions he wrote. with Venezuela over the disputed Essequibo UN SUPPORTS ICJ'S region.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

**Secretary of State** Blinken Antony emphasised this commitment during a telephone conversation with President Irfaan Ali, reiterating the 1899 arbitral award as the basis for the border and urging a peaceful resolution.

**"The** Secretary reiterated that the **United States looks** forward to working closely with Guyana once it assumes its non-permanent seat on the United Security Nations Council in January The two 2024. concluded leaders the call by agreeing upon the importance of maintaining peaceful and a democratic Western Hemisphere," а release issued by the US

State Department noted.



The United States region. Lawlessness should cease. It is President Luiz Inácio Venezuela," authoritarian wrong," **should** said. sovereignty never be tolerated,"

## DECISION

Despite the International Court Justice's of (ICJ) order on December 1, for both parties to refrain from actions that could worsen the dispute, Venezuela has announced measures to incorporate Essequibo. This prompted Guyana to file a complaint with the UN Security Council, seeking sanctions or military intervention to enforce the Court's order Secretariat of the

Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for **UN** Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said he strongly supported the ICJ's ruling and increasingly aggressive urged both parties to behavior of the Maduro comply with the order. regime in Venezuela Guterres also reiterated



Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres

his peaceful solutions for statement noted. international disputes.

#### UNITED KINGDOM **BACKS GUYANA**

The United Kingdom has also expressed their firm support for Guyana. Foreign Secretary David Cameron

**OAS CALLS FOR URGENT MEETING** General The



General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro

Organization of American **States** (OAS) Luis Almagro has expressed grave concern about the towards Guyana. In a statement the OAS highlighted the of seriousness the situation, emphasising potential the for instability. regional **"The** Venezuelan dictatorship adopting is jurisdictional actions in matters of defense, nationality, administration and economics in clear violation of the jurisdiction and territorial integrity commitment to of another State," the

The OAS called for a meeting of the OAS Permanent Council soon as possible as possible discuss to measures to mitigate the crisis and explore

- Call Mary

Cameroon Lula da Silva has urged stated.

South American the trade bloc Mercosur to host mediation efforts leaders, tensions. In a tweet, Lula between Guyana and engage with the issue, more war," he said. stating that "Mercosur cannot stay away from the issue."

"I suggest that **CELAC fellow current** president can discuss the issue with both parties: Guyana and from the Freedom and

LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS CONDEMN **VENEZUELA** 

A joint statement

Lula Democracy Group, comprising prominent He also offered to former Latin American condemned address the escalating and facilitate peace talks V e n e z u e l a 's "undemocratic, emphasised the need Venezuela. "We do not unilateral attempt" for Mercosur to actively want and do not need to resolve the territorial claims. The group urged the international community to condemn Venezuela's behaviour and demand a fair, free, and transparent electoral process in the country.

#### **US MILITARY CONDUCTS FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN GUYANA, UNDERSCORING STRONG SECURITY** PARTNERSHIP



U.S. Army 1st SFAB working alongside the GDF to provide training to increase military readiness in response to security threats

This

collaboration

military

The United States ongoing threats towards in Guyana. (US) Embassy Georgetown on December 7, announced that the extends beyond the current US Southern Command exercise, as the GDF and (USSOUTHCOM) the USArmy's 1st Security flight Force Assistance Brigade conducting is operations within Guyana. (SFAB) recently met to This exercise serves to enhance preparedness and strengthen the security tackle security challenges. partnership between the Their discussions focused US and Guvana and bolster on joint efforts, including regional cooperation.

The Embassy to e m p h a s i s e d readiness and response USSOUTHCOM's ongoing capabilities. collaboration with the Guyana Defence Force to advising and assisting (GDF) across various partner nations, has areas, including disaster conducted preparedness, aerial and training exercises with maritime security, and the GDF since 2022, counter-transnational significantly enhancing crime initiatives. Their their statement reiterated the operational abilities. SFAB US's commitment to being Advisors expressed their a reliable security partner commitment to further for Guyana and promoting deepen the partnership, regional cooperation and while Lieutenant Colonel interoperability. Notably, flight began in the wake of the recent training for Venezuela's referendum the Medical Corps and vote, underscoring the 4 Engineers Battalion. heightened focus regional security. Chief of importance of knowledge Staff of the GDF recently transfer offered by the held talks with US military SFAB, equipping Guyanese officials, along with other forces with crucial modern global security forces, security skills. Brazilian in light of Venezuela's

#### **BRAZIL BEEFS UP** BORDER SECURITY AMIDST TENSIONS **OVER ESSEQUIBO** REGION

Meanwhile, in response to escalating between tensions Venezuela and Guyana over the disputed Essequibo region, Brazil has announced the deployment of additional military personnel and armoured vehicles to its northern border. This move signifies Brazil's commitment to maintaining stability and security in the region.

Following Venezuela's recent referendum approving the annexation of Essequibo, Brazil's Ministry of Defense confirmed to international news outlets that the mobilisation of fourwheel drive Guaicuru armoured vehicles and an increased troop presence in Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima state. This city borders both Venezuela and Guyana, making it a strategic location for monitoring the situation. The upgraded 18th Mechanised Cavalry Regiment will see its force grow to 600 soldiers, tasked with enhancing border security and conducting heightened surveillance to prevent any surprises. military source Α underscored to Reuters, Brazil's determination to prevent either Venezuela or Guyana from using its territory to their advantage.

6



**US Congressman** Hakeem Jefferies

**US Congressman** Hakeem Jefferies, in a tweet, noted that Venezuela's actions "are deeply disturbing." "I stand with the Biden administration in calling on Venezuela respect the to territorial integrity of Guyana," he wrote.

Jefferies also noted that peace and stability in South America and the Western Hemisphere are critical to America's maintained in the unilateral actions. "It



United Kingdom Foreign Secretary David Cameron

stated that the border controversy with Venezuela was settled national security. "The in 1899 and called for rule of law must be an end to Venezuela's

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

solutions that respect international law and regional stability.

MERCOSUR URGED **TO ADDRESS** CRISIS

numerous tactical and Andy Pompey, GDF Staff these Officer, acknowledged operations the immense value of on He emphasised the

strategic planning sessions

The SFAB, dedicated

improve



trajectory its upward climb, with economic indicators. the IMF expressing strong support for the powerhouse government's economic 2023,

Guyana's economic initiatives, highlighting continues a range of impressive Economic

Highlights management in its the report noted that implemented in 2022 volatile recent report. The IMF Guyana's real GDP is and 2023 that have prices. mission, which visited expected to grow at a successfully brought Guyana in September staggering average of inflation under control, IMF commends the the establishment of acknowledged 20% per year from 2024 ensuring the positive impact of to 2028, solidifying its stability. government policies and position as an economic

GUYANA SHI 

powerhouse. While oil is too, that a major driver, the report banking system is well- development noted that non-oil GDP capitalised and showing maintaining is also set to experience continued improvement, discipline. steady growth at 5.5%, further strengthening fueled by investments the financial landscape. infrastructure, in education, and other critical Moreover, from oil and construction with potential for even fiscal balance by 2028, picture of Guyana's are supporting growth in higher growth due to ensuring the services and supplies new oil discoveries, economic sustainability. the report and sectors, highlighted.

Taming inflation

from government's initiatives climate change, and government's efforts to sustainability, positions

The IMF reported using

Favourable Outlook The IMF anticipates responsible sectors. continued spillovers prosperity for Guyana, to lead to a zero overall report paints a bright robust public investments. However, oil wealth the report acknowledges The IMF praised the potential risks from applauded

> Further, expansionary governance

The report noted Carbon that the government's Strategy (LCDS) and commitment economic management is expected

commodity manage its oil wealth the country for continued transparently the responsibly economic government's balanced the Natural Resource approach to fiscal policy, Fund (NRF), and its bodies,

Guyana's measures to support and credited Guyana's while dedication to combating fiscal climate change through initiatives like the Low Development to carbon credit sales fiscal receives.

Overall, the IMF's long-term economic future. The government's Wise management of commitment to sound economic management, The IMF also coupled with its focus the on diversification and and success and prosperity in through the years to come.

# \$25,000 CASH GRANT BRINGS CHRISTMAS CHEER TO PENSIONERS

Distribution of the government's one-off cash grant of \$25,000 pensioners is for underway, bringing much-needed financial relief to thousands of senior citizens. The distribution is happening across the country, with beneficiaries expressing their gratitude for the timely support.

Several pensioners along the East Coast corridor, including Cove and John, Enmore, Buxton. Melanie, Beterverwagting, and shared their positive experiences with the Department of Public Information (DPI).

Carlton Kato, a recipient, said the grant would be helpful during the holiday season. "This



One-off cash grant distribution process

**will definitely help** expressed with delight. me with Christmas Satvadai Singh, beneficiary, shopping," he another

echoed the sentiment. "I am feeling very happy," she said. "This will allow me to buy groceries and other necessities. Thank you to the president for this initiative."

Monica Wills plans to invest the grant in her business. "I am grateful," she stated. "I will use this money to buy more supplies and grow my business. Hopefully, we will receive an even bigger grant next year."

Lall Baichu, a stroke patient, expressed his heartfelt appreciation for the grant. "I am that many pensioners us to buy extra food truly thankful," he were eagerly awaiting and bring joy to our said. "This is a great the grant to prepare families during the help, especially for Christmas. "This holidays." for someone in my comes at the perfect condition."



One-off cash grant distribution process

Ket Singh shared smile. "It will allow time," he said with a

#### **OVER 66,000 PUBLIC SERVANTS, TEACHERS,** AND OTHERS TO RECEIVE SALARY INCREASES AND BONUSES

the

The for public servants, broadcast include: teachers, members disciplined • 6.5% of the services, constitutional office holders, and government pensioners. These measures aim to improve the lives of over 66,000 Guyanese workers and inject over \$9 billion into the economy.

The key points of the announcement made by Senior Minister in the Office of the President

government with Responsibility for has announced a series Finance, Dr Ashni Singh of financial benefits announced during a live • **One-month** 

> across-theboard salary **increase** for all public servants, teachers. members of the disciplined services, constitutional office holders, and government pensioners. This increase is retroactive and is expected to • \$25,000 put \$7.5 billion in additional disposable

into income economy.

taxfree bonus for 12.000 members of the disciplined services. This bonus will also be extended. the Guyana Defence implemented by the Force (GDF). This will government workers.

to public servants, salary teachers.

civilians working for top of other measures Master/Mistress. inject an additional August 2020 to improve the government remains time, \$1.5 billion into the lives of Guyanese committed to ensuring wellbeing the hands of these workers, including a that all categories prosperity for all 7% one-off salary increase in 2021, continuously improved expressed. bonus to be paid an 8% retroactive standard of living,

members for graduate teachers, for the future. "Even of the disciplined an increase in the as we face these services, staff of Remote Areas Incentive **unprecedented** semi-autonomous (RAI) for hinterland challenges of our agencies, and public teachers, and duty-free **time**, **we remain** enterprises. **we remain** focused on who hold a substantive the task of advancing for the first time, to These benefits come on appointment as a Senior and accelerating our

in December 2023 salary increase in 2022, better opportunities.

adjustments and brighter prospects development agenda Finance Singh a live aimed at realising in since broadcast stated that the shortest possible improved and across-the-board of workers enjoy a Guyanese," he further

# **RESIDENT ALI CHALLENGES COP28 MBRACE INCLUSION FOR NET-ZERO SUCCESS**



President Dr Irfaan Ali and Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo with His Majesty, King Charles III and former **UK Prime Minister** 

President, Irfaan Ali issued a bold and solidarity. challenge to the United Nations Climate Change framed by two camps inclusive approach or including the dirty risk jeopardising the coal, and the other very goal of achieving insisting on complete net-zero emissions.

summit, Ali argued that the provide the energy current "doctrinaire" our world needs to approach, often pits developed and developing nations leader believes net-zero against each other, is is achievable, but it not only ineffective, requires a multi-pronged but also harmful to the approach that goes world's most vulnerable beyond simply reducing populations.

protects not just the privileged emphasised, requires **for** rebuilding

Dr. relationships on trust

"If COP28 is Conference of Parties - one demanding no (COP28): adopt a more cuts to fossil fuels, fossil fuel elimination In his powerful – then we'll fail address to global **again,**" President Ali leaders at the Dubai warned. "We'll neither President achieve net-zero nor which grow and prosper."

The Guyanese fossil fuel production. He called for a This includes removing paradigm shift, urging a major polluters from the "reset and reflection" supply chain, protecting on how to tackle climate existing forests, and change in a way that investing in renewable everyone, energy sources.

"We must few. This reset, he eliminate subsidies harmful global industries,

incentivise scale energy address **development**," efforts; and President Ali emphasised. need to deforestation land while

**large-** developing countries. projects. **renewable** Developed nations must adoption, fulfill their financial finally turn climate onthesidelines of COP28, energy commitments to support promises demands, and developing nations in reality," President Ali Guyana's success in accelerate technology their climate action declared. "We must implementing market-

(3) promoting & Climate Leaders'



President Irfaan Ali with the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

#### sustainable management."

Only such inclusive an and approach can world effectively tackle balance economic growth climate change, food with and energy crises, and responsibility. achieve true sustainable 2008, it has been a development, President global leader in Low Ali added.

He outlined three key Strategies priorities for COP28: (1) maintaining one of the Orderly and affordable lowest transition away from rates and storing over excessive fossil fuel 19.5 gigatons of carbon This requires dioxide. use. global cooperation and ensuring nations have access to forest-carbon for this transition;

(2)climate

forest Partnership (FCLP), is leading the charge on through this front.

Guyana itself is a comprehensive shining example of how the a developing nation can environmental Since Carbon Development (LCDS), deforestation

The country developing also pioneering revenue that supports development. Accessible indigenous communities finance for and funds over 500

**"COP28** halt and reverse based mechanisms and Protecting global forest loss by incentives to drive forest "We tropical forests and 2030. This is a third conservation, reducing reduce promoting sustainable of the solution to and land use. Guyana, as a keeping 1.5 degrees degradation, co-chair of the Forest alive, and finance is key."

#### **MARKET-BASED MECHANISMS** AND INCENTIVES **KEY TO FOREST CONSERVATION**

financing and forest forest conservation. With incentives, President, Dr. Bharrat strong commitment to Jagdeo, touted Guyana's sustainable land use, expanded LCDS 2030 Guyana stands poised

the British Broadcasting must Corporation (BBC) News into Dr. Jagdeo highlighted the country's carbon footprint.

He said Guyana's groundbreaking agreement with Hess Corporation, which saw the company purchase high-quality carbon credits for a minimum of US\$750 million, demonstrates Echoing President the potential of market-Ali's call for climate based approaches to Vice its vast intact forests and



President Irfaan Ali interacted with a number of world leaders and other high-level officials on the sidelines

is as a viable solution to earn a to promoting forest revenue from carbon while credits, market preservation the necessary resources ecosystem, generating ensuring people-centred to both environmental In an interview with development.

significant contributing protection and economic

**GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST** 

# EU LAUDS GUYANA FOR COMMENDABLE PROGRESS IN VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT - AIDE MÉMOIRE INKED

The Ministry of and potential benefits. require concerted

Natural Resources has (EU) under its Voluntary **ensuring the effective** Partnership Agreement implementation integral part of the Forest minister remarked. Law and Enforcement Governance and Trade the (FLEGT) action plan.

The signing ceremony momentum was held at the Guyana the Resources Vickram Bharrat.

M i n i s t e r joint Bharrat the government's significant contributions of the license and

**"The JMRC, being efforts** signed an Aide Mémoire the overseeing body, parties involved," he with the European Union plays a crucial role in emphasised. (VPA), which is an the agreement," the urged Emphasising operationalise maintaining Assurance of implementation Forestry Commission and phase, Minister Bharrat was officiated by Natural underscored the need to government's dedication Minister adhere to the established to promoting legal and timelines outlined in the sustainable implementation reiterated framework.

**"These timelines** the FLEGT VPA's role in unwavering commitment **are critical to the** advancing the forestry totheVPA, highlighting its successful issuance sector.

from all

Moreover of Minister Bharrat stakeholders collaboratively to the importance Guyana Timber Legality System during (GTLAS), considered the cornerstone of the VPA.

Reinforcing the forestry practices. Minister Bharrat underscored

EU Ambassador to



Minister Vickram Bharrat and Ambassador of the European Union to Guyana, Rene Van Nes at the signing

Guyana, Rene Van Nes, to announced that Guyana allocated resources. will receive increased **Initially**, the funding resources as a result of its was 2.5 million euros; commendable progress however, this has implementing the been increased to in VPA. 3.8 million euros,"

"In recognition of Ambassador Van Nes your positive strides stated at the JMRC in implementing the meeting. VPA, we have decided

provide Guyana and its local counterparts with access to an Information Technology system, enabling real-time monitoring of forestry procedures.

The VPA will that timber ensure from Guyana complies with EU standards and adheres to best practices in sustainable forest management.

Negotiations for the FLEGT VPA commenced in 2009, followed by formal negotiations in 2012. The agreement was eventually ratified and signed in early 2023.

He further elaborated

enhance

the

## **MOBILE MULTI-PURPOSE SHELTER** ENHANCES DISASTER RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

The Civil Defence Commission (CDC)'s ability to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to natural disasters was significantly bolstered with the donation of a US\$1.1 million mobile multi-purpose shelter. state-of-the-art This facility will enhance emergency operations and provide critical care to those affected by this facility will have **facility in bringing** with Guyana's efforts to disasters.

The donation was preparedness the United Assistance Deployed Logix, a rapid assistance. deployment product manufacturer.

Prime Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark working significant



Attendees had the opportunity to witness an incident simulation

"I Phillips, lauded the **with the Ministry of** Georgetown. impact Health to utilise this

on the CDC's disaster **humanitarian** build a comprehensive and **assistance to those** disaster made possible through response capacity. He in far-flung areas framework in accordance States emphasised the shelter's of Guyana. We can with the Caribbean Southern Command's mobile nature, enabling **deploy this facility** Disaster Humanitarian it to reach remote in areas that lack Management Program, areas, and provide **hospitals**, **providing** (CDEMA) strategy. in collaboration with much-needed medical treatment to a substantial number significantly advance envision of individuals," the our implementation the Civil Defence Prime Minister stated of Minister **C** o m m i s s i o n during a ceremony held at disaster management closely Base Camp Ayanganna, in Guyana, making us

patient capacity а of 40, can serve as a command post, sleep/ housing unit, and more. It can be equipped with generators to provide self-sustaining power surgeries and for other emergency room procedures, ensuring effective patient care and operational planning. This donation aligns

management Emergency Agency

"This facility will comprehensive more effective and The shelter, with capable of providing

Attendees had the opportunity to witness an incident simulation relief to the people. States government CDEMA's strategy remains committed

relief, and post- our mitigation," the Prime Together, Minister added.

US Ambassador to commitment tangible manifestation **people**," she pledged. of the strong partnership Guyana, continued collaboration and other attendees and support.

"As its disaster response scenario. in the near and long term, the United

emphasizes pre- to supporting the disaster training, risk people of Guyana assessment, disaster and strengthening exceptional disaster recovery and partnership. we can uphold our to Guyana, Nicole Theriot, improving the lives said the facility is a of the Guyanese

Following the between the US and ceremony, the Prime fostering Minister, Ambassador, observed an incident Guyana simulation, showcasing strives to enhance the shelter's capabilities emergency in a disaster response

# **GUYANA SECURES \$550M FROM IDB FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has approved a new Country Strategy with Guyana for 2023 through 2026, pledging an indicative lending pipeline of US\$550 million. The new strategy is centered on improving the well-being of the Guyanese population, will and support economic Guyana's transformation by fostering more investment and employment.

Climate

IACHR DEL



The new strategy is centered on improving the well-being of the Guyanese population

in Guvana said.

EGATION VISITS GUYA

environmental witness sustainability, and **current** strengthening gender **boom**," and diversity are cross- Solorzano Salazar, the and, cutting themes of the IDB's strategy.

"It is a unique, gives once-in-a-lifetime to innovative and to change, opportunity to sustainable solutions collaboration

Guyana's that can help improve resource the quality of public Lorena and social services ultimately, representative **people's lives.**" "It

He said the IDB **momentum** Group is committed deepening its with

Guyana, and ensuring objectives. that its interventions are meaningful and resources from other impactful.

"As a long- Group's standing Forever **development** and the forthcoming partner to Guyana, Programme for the at the IDB Group we Caribbean to strengthen remain committed Guyana's actions in to deepening our areas such as regional collaboration integration, and ensuring our security, and climate interventions meaningful and impactful," added.

Guyana to Carbon Strategy and meeting society stakeholders. decarbonisation its

Guyana will leverage facilities like the IDB Amazonia Programme food **are** change.

The Country Salazar Strategy is the result of an inclusive process of The new strategy sustained dialogue and also provides support engagement with the on Government of Guyana implementing its Low and consultation with a Development wide cross-section of civil



**KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED** 

Prime Brigadier (Ret'd), Mark Minister on Camp Street. engagement

The Margarette May Macaulay technical Advisor, Specialist Policies). Communications Official, training on the Inter-

Minister, Ana Paula Suarez.

In briefing the Acting Phillips, met with a visiting Head of State on their visit, Prime delegation from the Inter- Commissioner Macaulay Phillips Human Rights (IACHR), represents a vital element commitments IACHR initiated in representatives were led by 2023. Since then, the **you that we have a** also President, Commissioner Commission has pursued **constitution** – **the** the and included Second Vice- trips focused on best - and enshrined in policy areas - climate President Commissioner practices and evaluating **our constitution is** security, energy security Roberta Clarke; Senior human rights challenges the respect for rights and food security. Caribbean from governmental and of all majorities and Affairs, Paul Spencer; civil society lenses. The **minorities** (Technical objectives are to establish Guyanese society. Cooperation and Public cooperation agreements, Wendy prioritise ratifying rights we practice no acts of Communication Singh, and Press and instruments and deliver discrimination".

American framework. In his approach of all citizens equally. He rights. January stated: "I can assure cooperation Guyana Constitution prioritisation of three key the the in

The

Minister outlined remarks, the administration's Minister comprehensive policies underscored and strategies pertaining American Commission on outlined that the visit Guyana's constitutional to the foundational pillars to of inclusiveness and nonat the Office of the Prime of the IACHR's regional safeguarding the rights discrimination across all

> Emphasis was placed on Government's

He also discussed policies and efforts to bridge the "As a Government, divide of Information Technology with Prime education and e-health.



Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd), Mark Phillips with the delegation from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

visit will accelerated progress 1. across the outlined areas to bring Guyana's Christopher Arif Bulkan institutions and policies will soon become the up to date with the latest first Guyanese member human rights standards appointed to the IACHR and best practices.

The Prime Minister delegation engagements stated that the IACHR's in Guyana ran from galvanise November 28 to December

Additionally, Dr in January 2024.

The broader IACHR

#### **EQUALITY NEWS**

**KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED** 

# BRITISH INVESTORS FLOCK TO GUYANA, LURED BY BOOMING ECONOMY AND STRONG UK TIES

British are increasingly setting chance," their sights on Guvana. recognising the nation's "It economy, **vision**, flourishing and business-friendly and a government enthusiastically are not merely driven by climate. This heightened that interest was palpable at a recent reception held at the British High Commissioner's residence in honour of a visiting British trade mission.

This marks the third trade mission from the United Kingdom (UK) to Guyana since the current administration assumed office in 2020. Notably, trade between the two countries has witnessed a significant surge during this period, solidifying deepening their economic ties.

"Guyana is open for business," declared We've Commerce, Walrond. Addressing the she the fostering to

**"This** of

Minister Walrond emphasised. Commissioner stems

British from Guyana, Jane Miller, **dedication**, echoed this sentiment, that British investors understands promoting

investors **doesn't happen by** between the two nations. machinery in even the High remotest corners of the to country.

Miller emphasised Guyana's short-term gains. They're



Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce Oneidge Walrond and Chris Bennett, Managing Director of the Caribbean Council

to **position** immense how Guyana within the potential global Guyana's Minister of the confidence of expounded Tourism, Industry and investors, and they're welcoming Oneidge eager to participate." environment and the growing interest among Managing Director of Guyana She gathering, highlighted the success awaiting underscored of previous UK trade investors. government's missions, with 50% of unwavering commitment participating businesses **proud to be bringing** facilitated an forging partnerships, the British brand 60 meetings with environment conducive and establishing thriving to Guyana," Miller local private sector these trade missions and unlocked to business growth. ventures in Guyana. This, declared. She pointed representatives, with a genuine avenues for busi kind sheasserted, is testament to the long-standing fostering

and earned British brands.

"We'reimmensely **momentum** to the burgeoning trust presence of

investment committed to forging She Guyana's on the development, aligning business perfectly with British explore the Guyanese expressed market.

British beneficial collaboration. driving



British High Commissioner to Guyana, Jane Miller delivering remarks

The delegation, results," encompassing a diverse stated. "And construction materials **previous** providers and reduction and pollution or the long-term partnerships, prevention, reflects the with economy. enduring appeal of and contributing to vast scope of potential counterparts." sustainable partnerships.

the of the delegation and improvements in UKfurther plethora of opportunities British businesses to the Caribbean Council, with direct flights and about the mission's now operational. These The trade mission potential to yield tangible advancements around outcomes.

"We mutually **commitment** concrete

I'm range of sectors, from thrilled to say that missions and heavy equipment haveborne fruit. Over suppliers to financiers 50% of participating of **companies** have equipment for poverty secured partnerships contracts Guyanese Bennett also

Bennett

Chris Bennett, head lauded the significant connectivity, optimism a weekly cargo service have streamlined costs, approach reduced transit times, new genuine avenues for businesses to in both nations.

goal of further reducing it **partnership** to 5%.

"Bv with local suppliers our greenhouse and businesses, we acreage, resulting in create a robust supply the commissioning chain that stimulates of this three-acre economic collaboration This ensures resources are utilised Dr. efficiently. Through commended the job creation, skill initiative, highlighting development knowledge transfer, regional 25 by 2025 goals, we as a company in which Caricom aims to strive to strengthen reduce food imports by the workforce and 25% by 2025.



Advisor to the that Minister of Agriculture, Richard Blair, and its alignment with the "I want to take opportunity commend General **Plympton** Farms, Newrest Guyana initiative. Offshore Guyana's local I believe it's a very in nearby communities, **p r o g r a m m e** promoting imports," Dr. Blair stated. Offshore SBM several of the United Sustainable Goals its sustainable **Offshore's** development ambitions.



SBMOffshoreGuyana has commissioned a three-acre greenhouse at Plympton Farms under the Green Farms Initiative, marking a significant milestone in the company's efforts to promote local food production, and reduce reliance on imports.



10

The Green Farms Initiative is a tripartite agreement between SBM Offshore Guyana, Plympton Farms, and Newrest Guyana, а local catering company. SBM Offshore Guyana provided financial and advisory support for the construction of the greenhouse, which Plympton's utilises proprietary design and cutting-edge hydroponics technology.

The project aims reduce imported to produce used onboard the Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessels operating offshore Guyana and SBM Offshore Guyana's

The greenhouse covering three acres of land was officially commissioned by Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Richard Blair and stakeholders from SBM Offshore Guyana and Plympton Farms

onshore offices by healthv providing and nutritious meals prepared by Newrest Guyana. The greenhouse will cultivate a variety of produce, including broccoli, zucchini, bell peppers, cauliflower, and chili peppers.

Prior to the project, 85% of the produce used onboard the FPSOs was sourced from local farmers, while 15% was Through imported. this collaboration, the import quantity has been reduced to 10%, with the



The massive greenhouse utilises cutting-edge hydroponic technology to maximise production in a sustainable manner

empower individuals to accomplish their this goals," SBM Offshore to Guyana's Manager, Martin Cheong SBM [Offshore] and remarked.

In line with SBM for this content drive, Plympton good initiative, very Farms has employed essential, very aligned over 20 Guyanese living with the government's contributing to job **in** creation and stability in **displacement in food** Dora and other areas.

Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Plympton Farms, Kapil Guyana has adopted Mohabir. expressed his gratitude to SBM Nation's Offshore Guyana for its Development support, stating, "Over (SDGs) as a framework the last three years, for **SBM** 

#### **THURSDAY DECEMBER 14 2023**

#### <u>GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST</u>

## **GUYANA STRENGTHENS** BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH US AND FRANCE



Guyana and United States engage in discussions to strengthen bilateral relations

in productive discussions such with both the United multilateral of crucial issues.

Guyana's Secretary, explored D.C. Persaud, avenues for enhanced

security, as States (US), and France food and energy security, interest to promote the to strengthen bilateral and climate change. mandate of the Security relations, and foster Additionally, a Guyana Council in maintaining collaboration on a range delegation led by Foreign international peace and Persaud security. Secretary In meetings with engaged in a policy senior officials from dialogue with the US on Secretary the White House and United Nations Security was the State Department, Council (UNSC) matters by officials from the Foreign at the Department of Permanent Robert State in Washington, of Guyana, including This

dialogue built upon the technical consultation held in Georgetown earlier in November, aimed at deepening understanding of each country's priorities on UNSC matters. The two sides exchanged views on various thematic and regional agenda items on the Security Council. Guyana's priorities identified for its tenure on the Council, including food and climate security, Haiti, and Colombia, were also Guyana has engaged cooperation in areas discussed. Both sides agreed to coordinate relations, on areas of common

Foreign Persaud accompanied Mission Permanent Guyana's policy Representative Carolyn matters, and Guyana's for its tenure on the 2025.

Rodrigues-Birkett United Nations on the Council. Both agreed that Guyana and the in New York and the countries reaffirmed the France should seek to Guyana Embassy in importance of respect work together, consult, Washington, including for international law, and share notes on not Ambassador Hinds. The US team of all member states also many of the critical comprising experts of consistent with the issues facing the global

to mandate for its tenure Council, and it was Samuel and the sovereignty just priority areas but



The meeting with Mohamed Bouabdallah, Head of Political Affairs Department, United Nations Directorate, French Foreign Ministry

the Department of State United Nations Charter. community was led by Ambassador Michele Bureau of International aggressive Organisation Affairs.

In meeting with Department, Nations Directorate, controversy. French Foreign Ministry, Foreign Persaud discussed also Security

Sisson, provided to the French conflict, Assistant Secretary of the side on Venezuela's invasion of Ukraine, and France reiterated its a separate full support and need the interconnectedness Mr. for respect of the of peacebuilding and Mohamed Bouabdallah, International Court of peacekeeping. Head of Political Affairs Justice mechanism in

> Secretary the Foreign Secretary June 6 to serve for two Council Guyana's priority areas 1, 2024, to December 31,

including An update was the Israel-Palestinian Russia's postures. the crisis in Haiti.

They also agreed on

Guvana was elected a United addressing the border non-permanent member of the United Nations During the meeting, Security Council on highlighted years effective January

#### NA'S GROWT **SKILLED HUM** 4

Guyana's economic expansion skilled workers and for 30th celebration held in Indar stated.

rapid Georgetown, Guyana. is driving up demand provider of machinery by 59.5% in 2023, a MACORP's across various sectors, was praised for its compared to the global and urged its expansion according to Minister in contribution to the average of the Ministry of Public country's development Minister Indar expressed the nation's human Works, Deodat Indar. boom. "You provide confidence that Guyana capital. This aligns Minister Indar made the machinery, so you will these remarks at the are one-quarter of the projection, even reaching priority to empower Machinery Corporation mix of the resources triple-digit growth rates. and equip citizens with of Guyana's (MACORP) needed to build out anniversary **the country**," Minister the importance of support Guyana's growth

MACORP, a leading is projected to grow Indar equipment, remarkable achievement training surpass human

Guyana's economy development, Minister commended engineer programme 2.3%. to further strengthen this with the government's Recognising the necessary skills to resource trajectory.



MACORP's 30th anniversary celebration was held at the Marriott Hotel, Kingston, Georgetown

event also that The featured the presentation exemplary of awards to businesses throughout the year.

demonstrated service

## **GUYANA PRIORITISES SAFETY** AMIDST AVIATION SECTOR BOOM

critical role in facilitating from the same period in trade, particularly in 2022. Minister Edghill terms of cargo value. anticipates that

the

Guyana's aviation sector is experiencing remarkable growth. but the government remains unwavering in its commitment to safety. This emphasis was reiterated during the National Aviation Safety Seminar, where Minister Public Works, of Bishop Juan Edghill, underscored the three pillars of aviation safety: training. monitoring, and proper management.



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill addressing the national aviation safety seminar

"In all the growth Edghill declared. "We place regulations, of the aviation sector, and experience [government] have [and] strong we are a shining light Guyana welcomed of Guyana, safety been able by way monitoring. I will in this part of the 149,020 passengers in remains our number of professional dare say that with world." one priority," Minister training, to put in proper management Aviation plays a 2023, a 16.2% increase

international to 9,797 metric tonnes, observed in 2019. up from 9,354 metric tonnes in 2021.

(CJIA), passengers in 2021. Guvana welcomed 2021.

In 2022, Guyana's total number of arrivals will freight surpass the previous traffic increased by 4.7% record of 314,727 visitors

country's The commendable strides in International safety compliance were passenger traffic to and highlighted by Director from Guyana also surged General of Guyana Civil by 77.9%, reaching 71, 564 Aviation Authority, Lt. passengers in 2022. Col (Ret'd) Egbert Field. At the Cheddi Jagan Guyana achieved a 77% International Airport compliance rate in ICAO international assessments in 2020, passenger traffic grew by and was ranked number 77.5% in 2022 to a total one among the 35 states of 657,249 passengers of Latin America, North compared to 370,187 America, South America, and the Caribbean in

<u>GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST</u>

#### KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

## **CLOSE TO 1800 TEACHERS GRADUATE FROM CPCE**



Minister Priya Manickchand with some of the teachers who graduated from CPCE

а Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) achievement only teacher training country. With this from CPCE's

milestone for Guyana's graduating class of percentage of trained education sector, the teachers in the Caribbean. teachers has increased This celebrated the graduation with the Ministry of teachers in classrooms of 1,796 teachers. This Education's overarching are either trained or in marks the largest cohort goal of having 100% training. of teachers to ever trained teachers in

remarkable college, and the largest recent graduation, the significant from 65% to 79%, aligns indicating that 99.5% of

The graduating class graduate from Guyana's classrooms across the comprises 477 teachers Early



Some of the teachers who graduated from CPCE

Childhood Programme, and 240 fields." from the Secondary Pre-

Prime the feature address, tangible emphasising the crucial such as in to to education from opportunities. nursery to university, elevate the overall graduates, quality of education, of Education Priya

Education and equip students Manickchand urged them Programme, 841 from with the skills needed to leverage their training the Primary Education for success in the job and make a profound Programme, 238 from market, especially in impact on the lives of the Secondary Academic technical and tertiary their students. She also

Vocational Programme. government's unwavering demonstrating Minister commitment to fostering significant role women Mark Phillips delivered quality education through play in shaping Guyana's enhancing role of trained teachers educational facilities, Noella Joseph implored nurturing future expanding the use of ICT the newly generations. "We have in education, improving teachers to set ambitious goals TVET facilities, and professionalism, enhance access increasing scholarship dedication as

Addressing

highlighted that 87% of He reaffirmed the the graduates are women, the initiatives educational landscape.

CPCE's Principal trained embody and thev embark on their journey the to educate and inspire Minister Guyana's youth.

# SOD TURNED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF UG'S MEDICAL SCIENCES BUILDING

On November 25, 2023, a sod-turning ceremony was held to markthecommencement of construction for a new building for the University of Guyana's College of Medical Sciences. The US\$4.5 million project, which is being funded by the World Bank, is expected to be completed in 15 months.

The modern facility will be equipped with a lecture theatre which will accommodate 200 anatomy, biochemistry, laboratories including haematology and Priya those dealing with skills, research.



A model of the US\$4.5 million facility that will be constructed at the University of Guyana

commitment

Senior

He revealed that site

community.

Siparuta.

medical students be Health works towards accommodated more transforming Guyana's comfortably, but with the health sector. He added expansion of the college, that with the admission more eligible students of more students into who are interested in the College of Medical pursuing a medical Sciences, there will be degree will be able to more medically trained join the programme. She persons entering the said that this will provide healthcare system. opportunity an to enhance services within of Guyana's hinterland communities Chancellor, Professor as it will allow more Paloma doctors to be trained Martin, noted that the each year.

In her remarks, part of the Ministry's of Health Dr. Anthony She further expressed students, and several histopathology, Minister of Education efforts to enhance the stated that the project gratitude Manickchand education sector. She is a welcomed one commencement. stated that this is noted that not only will as the Ministry of

> ensuring the school's built with funds from inclusion in the region's the 2024 National Budget partnership provides proposal. This initiative aligns access, a valuable tool with the government's for to the unwavering

The University Vice Mohammed project underwent a Similarly, Minister lengthy design process. for its

Guyana-Norway residents with internet education and belief information. Dr. Singh more President, Dr. Ashni their own communities, take advantage of the Singh, recently assured eliminating the need Guyana Online Academy scholarship programme, expanding educational **depend** opportunities. completion, the school will serve both Orealla and neighbouring Singh emphasised. "You a boost. A \$195 million should have access upgrade project for the road link is underway. has further improving for the

#### **OREALLA'S DREAM OF A SECONDARY** SCHOOL CLOSER TO REALITY



Site for new Orealla secondary school being identified

Amerindian its dream of having a actively identifying a secured. The community of Orealla secondary school right suitable location for the Executive in Region Six is one in its own backyard. new school, fulfilling Narindra step closer to realising The government is President Ali's 2022 has been tasked with in education. An ICT hub

that all secondary-

Minister aged children deserve encouraged in the Office of the quality education in youths and residents to Orealla residents that the for them to travel long of Learning (GOAL) project is well underway. distances to the coast.

"A good quality further selection is already in secondary education their progress, and upon shouldn't Funding for the to it right at your Orealla to Kwakwani

project is also being doorstep." Orealla Regional Öfficer already benefited from accessibility Persaud government investments community.

# **GUYANA STANDS UNITED:** NATIONWIDE CIRCLE OF UNITY IN RESPONSE TO VENEZUELA'S ESSEQUIBO CLAIMS









n a remarkable of

patriotism and togetherness, Guyanese of unity" exercise on December 3, in response to Venezuela's claim to the Essequibo region.

This event served as a stance: belongs to Guyana.

Field, Essequibo Coast. Sport, Charles Ramson.

Meanwhile, with communities in solidarity.

Minister Housing and Water, awareness campaign Collin Croal, joined has been underway, forces with residents ensuring all Guyanese **neighbours**," in Kamwatta. Wauna. are informed about Mabaruma, and White the border controversy Water (Region One), while Minister within stance on the issue. the Ministry of Public community leaders from Vergenoegen to the Boerasirie Bridge. Similar unfolded across the safeguard country, with Minister borders and the safety of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai, Minister of Human firmly asserted that Services and Social Guyana stood on the

Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Home Affairs, Robeson Benn, and many others across the nation joined actively participating hands in a "circle in the "circle of unity" activities in their had garnered. respective areas.

Even in the heart referendum seeking of Georgetown, at support for its baseless the Square of the Revolution, scores of Guyanese stood united nationwide with key government figures, including the powerful message of Minister of Health, Guyana's unwavering Dr Frank Anthony; Works, Bishop Juan President Irfaan Edghill; Minister Ali led the charge, of Labour, Joseph personally addressing Hamilton; and Minister He acknowledged residents in Cotton of Culture, Youth and the global scrutiny

This various regions, uniting government's comprehensive strategy a symbolic gesture of to counter Venezuela's claims. Over the past of few weeks, an extensive and the country's firm

Works, Deodat Indar, live morning address, have to determine led a march alongside reassured the nation within that there was nothing to fear. He emphasised government's the scenes relentless efforts to Guyana's of its people. President Ali

"right side of the law," underscoring the country's strong legal position and the overwhelming international support it

"The level of patriotism, the love and unity and togetherness is something that we must take forward from this challenge," the president declared. He emphasised that this collective spirit should Essequibo Minister of Public become an inherent part of Guyana's identity, a natural response system.

Venezuela was now nationwide under, attributing it government ministers response was just to Guyana's effective fanned out across one piece of the international outreach. He urged Venezuela to demonstrate maturity and responsibility, allowing the rule of law to prevail and refraining from reckless actions.

"We are your President Ali reminded Venezuela."Longafter this controversy, we will live together President Ali, in his as neighbours. You vourself





whether you want to be part of a system that runs afoul with international law... based on the support getting we're internationally."



## EQUALITY NEWS



14



Janet Naidu with Honorary Consul Mani Singh and others

# Author Janet Naidu gets 2023 **Pakaraima Literary Award**

Author Janet Naidu was presented with the Pakaraima Literary Award 2023 at the Pakaraima Writers Christmas social held on December 10th, 2023 in recognition of her poetry and writings, and for the formation of the Pakaraima Writers Association in 2005.

Honorary Consul, Mr. Mani Singh

brought inspirational greetings and delivered an informative address about the Guyana-Venezuela controversy.

It was also a day of remembrance and prayers for our fallen soldiers, families and friends and all, at this time of mourning in this great loss.

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MORIGAGE ALLIANCE

# Former Guyana Appeal Court Judge Nandram Kissoon passes

Retired Court of Appeal Judge, Justice Nandram Kissoon passed away in Guyana on Saturday evening at the age of 81 years.

Reports are that Justice Kissoon had recently undergone a surgery overseas, which was successful, however, he succumbed while recovering from the operation.

Justice Kissoon was born in 1942 at Plantation Clonbrook on the East Coast of Demerara and grew up at Bee Hive, where he continued to reside up until his passing. He was one of 12 children.

He attended the Anns Grove RC School and completed his General Certificate of Education (GCE) at the Indian Education Trust (now Richard Ishmael Secondary School). Upon completing school, Kissoon worked as a teacher at the Mahaica and Clonbrook schools.

In 1965, he left Guyana to study law at the Inner Temple in London, England. He then commenced what would be an illustrious career in the legal fraternity with his return to Guyana in 1969. Kissoon started off working at the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Chambers and a couple



Justice (Retired) Nandram Kissoon — passes at age 81

of years later, he moved over to the Attorney General (AG) Chambers.

He subsequently left the public service to practice privately both in the criminal and civil courts. Kissoon returned to the public service when he was appointed a Puisne Judge in 1987 and later moved up to the Court of Appeal, where he served until his retirement.

At the time of his death, the retired Judge was serving on the Guyana Public Service Appellate Tribunal. He was appointed Chairman of the PSAT back in 2017 under the previous Administration and was reappointed in November 2020 by President Dr Irfaan Ali. Outside of his professional career, Kissoon has been described as a "phenomenal humanitarian."

His contributions include scholarships to students to pursue their academic goals as well as donations to rebuild Hindu temples across the country. He was also very fond of farming, growing his own crops and having livestock.

Justice Kissoon was married with one child. However, his has played a fatherly role to his siblings and nieces and nephews – many of whom are also of the legal fraternity including State Solicitor at the AG Chambers, Prithima Kissoon; High Court Judge, Justice Sandil Kissoon, and renowned Attorney-at-Law, Devindra Kissoon.

Justice Sandil Kissoon described his uncle as a fatherly figure who was always there for every family member.

"He was there at every juncture, at every hour of the day whether called upon or not. He volunteered his assistance in every form and the word 'no' does not exist in his vocabulary. [He had] tremendous patience, resilience and courage... He was simply oldschool," Justice Sandil Kissoon said.

# **Maduro has departed from Chavez**

#### **By Donald Ramotar**

The controversy created by Venezuela on the Guyana/ Venezuela border is taking another angle mainly by progressive left-wing forces in the region and even further afield. They are falling for a clever ploy by President Maduro to deliberately mislead them and to garner some support since he is very isolated on the issue.

To do so President Maduro is trying to create the impression that this issue has to do with the presence of the oil giant Exxon Mobil in Guyana. This is, however, very far from the truth. When that award was made Venezuela celebrated it as a great victory. They had good reasons to celebrate because they got most of the territory and the area where they had the strongest demand, that is the whole of the Orinoco River and basin. They were very satisfied with this, and they regarded the border as fixed forever.

They never raised any issue for more than sixty years.

However, in 1962, at the time when Guyana was expected to become independent Venezuela raised a claim to the Essequibo region, a land mass that makes up 2/3 of Guyana's territory. work on the matter. That lasted until 1970 without any result. That led to the Port of Spain Protocol which put the matter in deep freeze for twelve years.

From 1982 discussions between the two parties continued, sometimes it involved the UN Secretary General. This lasted until 1989 when, with the assistance of the Secretary General, the Good Offices process began.

That lasted well into this century. However, no resolution occurred. In the meantime, political parties in Venezuela began to use this issue as a mobilizing tool to garner support of the world. The real reason cannot be Exxon Mobil because Guyana awarded prospecting license to Exxon before Chavez came to power. It was never an issue with Chavez.

Indeed, Chavez had a broader vision for Latin America and the Caribbean. He was a firm advocate of integration and for keeping foreign forces out of the region. That Latin America and the Caribbean must be a zone of peace.

Maduro's behavior is defeating, indeed burying the vision of the late great President Chavez.

His actions are clearly desperate moves. His party has lost a lot of support in Venezuela and the probability of him winning is less than 50%. The referendum which he hoped to have helped him mobilize people was a flop. Maduro's desperation is pushing him on an irrational path. He should be aware that no country in the Americas wants to have instability and therefore would do anything to prevent it. Unlike Chavez, Maduro is opening the door for external intervention in the region. Moreover, instead of integrating the region as Chavez and Lula wanted, he is objectively dividing the continent by his opportunistic claim on our border.

The issue with Venezuela began long before any oil production in Guyana.

Very briefly Venezuela, backed by the US began to make some noise about the border in the mid-19th century. This was when the US was moving to put out the European Colonial power from the Americas. This policy was expressed in the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed by President James Monroe during an address to Congress on December 2, 1823, exactly two hundred years ago.

The US resorted to force in expelling the Spanish from Cuba, Puerto Rico etc. Their relations with Britain became very strained with the United Kingdom in relation to British Guiana's western border, which at that time was at the Orinoco River.

The UK and U.S./ Venezuela decided to settle the issue by way or arbitration in the late 1890s. An award was made in 1899.

It was at a time when the US had entered into our politics and was pushing the British to suspend the constitution. To do so they instigated riots in the country. Most likely Venezuela's action was a part of that campaign because they were making that claim without a shred of evidence. The cry then was "no more Cubas".

Just before Independence in 1966 the British, the then Government of British Guiana and Venezuela decided to sign an agreement in Geneva to handle the matter and not to stop the British from granting Independence to Guyana.

The agreement was that Guyana and Venezuela would have resolved the matter diplomatically. If they could not, then they would take the issue to the United Nations Secretary General to choose a measure or measures to bring the controversy to an end.

The first attempt began in 1966. A mixed Commission was established to

Venezuelan masses at election time. It was used so much and with great effect, by the right wing parties in particular.

This lasted until President Chavez came to power in Venezuela on February 2, 1999

At first Chavez believed in the Venezuelan claim. However, as president he seems to have studied the issue in detail and came to the conclusion that it was a manipulation. On more than one occasion President Chavez expressed the view that the issue was instigated from outside and was not a real problem.

That was the position of his party when he was in control. It is logical to conclude that Maduro, who was one of his closest comrades, must have been of the same view.

If that is the case, then we must examine why did President Maduro change his mind.

The answer cannot be oil because Venezuela has the largest reserve in the This is a very far cry from Chavez's vision! Indeed, it is a downright betrayal of the great man's aspirations for our region. To couch the issue today in terms of left and right politics is misleading at best!

Donald Ramotar is a former President of Guyana

#### **<u>GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST</u>**

#### KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

# GUYANA DEFIES VENEZUELA WITH A "NIGHT OF PATRIOTIC REFLECTION"



Thousands of Guyanese stood united at the Guyana National Stadium, at Providence their voices echoing with patriotism and defiance against Venezuela's claims. Songs, dances, and poetry resonated through the night, a powerful response to the illegal attempts to seize two-thirds of their nation.

President Irfaan Ali, commander-in-chief and the heart of this resistance, addressed the crowd with unwavering conviction. He assured Guyanese that he would stand with them, "**at the front**, **by your side**," no matter the difficulty.

"Regardlessofthecircumstances, how difficult it is, how easy it is, how burdensome it is, how dangerous it is, you will never see me away from you," the president said.

He observed that his love for Guyana burns bright, making it an honour to face these challenges head-on.

President Ali had a clear message for Venezuela and its leader, Nicolás Maduro: **"Essequibo belongs to Guyana, and our borders were set fully and finally in 1899."** No amount of propaganda or lies, he declared, would shake their resolve or disrupt their lives.

Diplomacy, however, remains Guyana's first line of defence. President Ali spoke of reassuring international partners, confident that Guyana stood **"on the right side of the law,"** supported by the world. He emphasised messages of peace and positivity, refusing to stoop to Venezuela's aggressive rhetoric.

He acknowledged the reality of their shared future: "Guyana and Venezuela are neighbours, and will remain neighbours." He urged Venezuela to respond with the same respect and dignity that Guyana had shown, for the sake of their future coexistence.

This "Night of Patriotic Reflection" was more than just a cultural showcase. It was a testament to Guyana's unwavering spirit. It was a nation united, voices raised in defiance, hearts filled with love for their land and their leader. It was a message to Venezuela, loud and clear: Guyana will not back down.













#### **<u>GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST</u>**







**EQUALITY NEWS** 

# DFN Danforth Food Market We're simply the best West Indian store in town.



18

# Delicious Jamaican Dish



#### **THURSDAY DECEMBER 14 2023**

#### KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

# **GUYANA'S SCHOOLS UNITE IN DEFENCE OF SOVEREIGNTY**

<image>

Guyana is pulling out all the stops to instill national pride and awareness about the ongoing border controversy with Venezuela. Schools across the country are buzzing with activities, from flag colouring in nurseries to patriotic songs in primary schools, all aimed at fostering a deep sense of belonging among the younger generation.

Education Minister Priya Manickchand explained during the 'Guyana Dialogue' programme that the activities are about instilling pride, allegiance, and a love for the nation.

She said that the goal is to ensure that the nation's children understand that Essequibo is a part of us.

The government isn't just focusing on the young ones. Border communities are being actively

Guyana is pulling out all the engaged through sensitisation sessions, and even public and private sector organisations are joining the effort.

"It's more than just holding hands," Minister Manickchand emphasised. "It's a powerful message of love, solidarity, and a united front against any threats to our land."

However, Minister Manickchand also cautioned against misinformation and fearmongering, particularly on social media. "We must reject those who spread false information and create panic," she declared.

Guyana, she reminded everyone, has always viewed Venezuela as a friend. "We've shared a history of good relations," she said. "This is why many countries find it easy to support us now."









HOSORORO NURSERY SCHOOL





## Exxon responds to Venezuela's 3 month deadline to leave Essequibo

# 'We're not going anywhere'

GLOBAL oil giant ExxonMobil has maintained that operations in Guyana will continue amid Venezuela's aggression to assert claims to the country's Essequibo region.

"We are not going anywhere, our focus remains on developing the resources efficiently and responsibly, per our agreement with the Guyanese government," the oil giant said in a brief statement on Monday.

Last week, ExxonMobil's Chief Executive Officer, Darren Woods said that Guyana isn't standing alone.

Woods, during an interview on CNBC, said while the controversy is between the two nations, Guyana is supported by many international partners and has engaged the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

"I'm not sure Guyana is standing on its own. We have all seen what happens when nations' sovereignties are challenged and unilateral actions are taken. The world and the outside communities have grown pretty sensitive to that, so my expectations are there is broader support in the international community to make sure that the right process is followed [to] resolve this dispute [controversy]," he said.

Following a controversial referendum held in Venezuela, the Nicolas Maduro government had intensified its aggression and its claims, despite an order from the ICJ to refrain from any action that will cause unease or change the status quo.

Maduro, despite contradictory reports, declared a resounding victory, claiming that millions of Venezuelans voted in support of the Bolivarian state's claims to the Essequibo region, an area which accounts for two-thirds of Guyana's territory and is rich in oil, gold and other resources.

When questioned about Exxon-Mobil's position, Woods said: "From our perspective, we know what we have to do, need to do in the country, to develop those resources economically, environmentally responsibly and do what we have been contracted to do."

Maintaining that Guyana has the

was elected to do, which is bettering the lives of all Guyanese.

"We're focused on the economy; we're not taking our eyes off of the economy," the Vice-President firmly said.

The 2023 International Monetary Fund (IMF) report revealed that Guyana's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to continue its rapid growth. Guyana achieved the highest real GDP growth in the world in 2022 – 62.3 per cent.

Guyana's economy has tripled in size since the start of oil extraction (end of 2019). In the early 90s it had one of the lowest GDPs per capita in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is estimated that Guyana's economy could record a 38.4 per cent real GDP growth this year, and grow another 26.6 per cent in 2024.



ExxonMobil's Chief Executive Officer Darren Woods

# Our Family Caring for Yours

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2

right to pursue development in every inch of its territory, Vice-President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo has said that the evolution of the nation's economy will not stop.

"If we pause any of our development, Maduro succeeds. Maduro has no right in international law to tell the people of Guyana, [a] sovereign country, how to pursue its affairs. And that is why we are forging ahead with our development in all 83,000 square miles," he said, during a press conference at the Office of the President on Thursday.

Dr. Jagdeo further said that his government will not become "paralysed" and fall prey to the Bolivarian Republic's tactics.

He affirmed that attention will not be diverted from what his government





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#### **GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST**

#### KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

**EQUALITY NEWS** 

# HOUSING SECTOR TO RECEIVE MAJOR BOOST WITH \$40B INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TENDERED FOR 2024

Housing and Water Minister Collin Croal has announced a major investment in the housing sector, with \$40 billion earmarked for infrastructure projects in 2024. This proactive approach will enable early commencement of the projects, ensuring they stay on track for completion ahead of schedule.

Among the works tendered are infrastructure projects at Cornelia Ida, Phase Two, West Coast Demerara (Region Three); Good Hope Block E and F, Phase One and Two; Lusignan Phase One and Two; Nonpareil and Enterprise (Phase Two); and Two Friends Phase One and Two, East Bank Demerara (Region Four).

In Region Five, infrastructure development projects will be carried out in Block 'A' Waterloo, West Coast Berbice, Region Five, while Amelia's Ward Phase Four (Squatting and Residential Area), and Fitz Hope in Linden (Region 10) will benefit from similar projects.

Additionally, tenders are also out for the procurement of conductors, singlephase transformers, and electrical line hardware materials to complete the installation of electrical networks in housing areas.

Bidding for the The projects will follow the these National Competitive Bidding (NCB) process, individuals who were as Procurement Act 2003, these areas to access and is open to all eligible their lands. The blocks



An aerial view of one of the housing developments in Region Three

This year, contracts valued \$56.8 billion were signed for the execution of infrastructure works including roads, bridges, culverts, and electrical networks across Regions Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, and Ten.

#### 5,300 ALLOTTEES **TO SOON GAIN ACCESS TO** LANDS IN GREAT **DIAMOND, GROVE**

Minister Croal recently inspected new housing developments along the East Bank of Demerara to assess the progress of ongoing infrastructure works. Accompanied by а team of engineers and contractors, Minister Croal visited six blocks – four in Great Diamond and two in Golden Grove where infrastructure development is valued at \$17.1 billion.

The completion of infrastructure works will enable 5,300 outlined in the allocated house lots in



An aerial view of one of the housing developments in Region Three

include Block Three the East Bank Demerara Block One with 1,200 Authority has been lots, Block Seven with warned against exceeding 600 lots, and Blocks Nine the 'buffer zone' by the and 13 in Golden Grove.

Minister expressed satisfaction Authority (NDIA), Lionel with the pace of work, and assured residents that they would be able to commence identifying their house lots by the end of the year. While some utility works, such as electricity installation, will extend into the new year, the majority of the infrastructure is almost complete.

Minister Croal also highlighted that the government has exhausted all the lands available for housing on works are ongoing

Chairman of the National Croal Drainage and Irrigation Wordsworth.



that

lands soon.

approximately

these housing schemes,

Another area in Great Diamond where infrastructure

#### 5,000 INDIVIDUALS **TO ACCESS HOUSE** LOTS IN REGION **THREE HOUSING SCHEMES**

conducted an inspection to be able to complete of infrastructure projects in March," the minister at several new housing said developments in Region Leonora Phase Two, construction Stewartville, Meten- houses. Meer-Zorg, and

"All persons in De Kenderen can be shown their lots...In terms of Meten-Meer-Zorg, we are looking at February to be able to start showing Minister Croal, also persons their lots and

In Leonora, the Three including at ongoing infrastructure Leonora/Groenveldt, works cater to the of Several De homes are currently construction, under and another set will commence construction soon.

Despite some contractors encountering challenges in accessing the lands and facing difficulties sourcing construction materials, Minister Croal stated that the works are progressing smoothly. However, he has emphasised the need for the timely completion of Great Diamond with 541 and that the Central Kenderen, West Coast the projects, as allottees residential house lots, Housing and Planning Demerara. He explained are eagerly awaiting access to their lands to 5,000 residential house start constructing their lots were allocated in homes.

One contractor and individuals will was summoned to a begin accessing their meeting since his work impeding was the progress of three others. Minister Croal said mechanisms will need to be established to ensure those contractors can access the lots.

> Some \$21 billion in infrastructure works are being executed in housing schemes in Region Three. This is in addition to the Schoonord to Crane Four-lane Road, where \$8.6 billion in works are currently underway.

#### **HUNDREDS OF GUYANESE EMPLOYED THROUGH NATIONAL JOB BANK INITIATIVE**

A total of 863 persons have been employed gainfully through the Ministry of Labour's National Job Bank initiative within the past three years.

Minister Joseph Hamilton noted that this is part of government's the efforts to ensure Guyanese are provided employment with opportunities through several interventions.

The job



A national job fair organised with the goal of increasing employment for Guyanese

established in prospective employee can search and apply for was March 2022 to tackle upload their credentials job openings on the bank unemployment. Any and certificates, and free online platform.

Similarly, employers can Recruitment network with possible Manpower employees the national job bank. host seminars, career This undertaking has fairs, and training also considered the programmes, necessity for companies other initiatives, and thousands of job ensure that job seekers seekers to communicate are also equipped to with each other without function effectively in the interference of third the work environment. parties.

Hamilton stressed.

Meanwhile, the ministry's Central

and Agency through (CRMA) continues to among to

Additionally, "What we know, outreach events are held and what I can say is in several communities that there are enough across Guyana to enable vacancies available in unemployed individuals Guyana for persons to easily access the unit's who want to be database and receive employed," Minister referrals to organisations that are hiring.

#### **GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST**

# **GRDB'S LAB RECERTIFIED**

Development (GRDB) Laboratory Domestic at La Bonne Intention (GDP). He commended these goals, emphasising the quality that they (LBI) on the East Coast the progress made in the of Demerara has been the agriculture sector, laboratory testing, and re-certified by Guyana National Bureau all set goals have been ensuring high yields. of Standards (GNBS), met. achievement that an will further enhance the we will be seeing, Madanlall quality of rice produced at the end of this expressed locally.

Delivering Minister highlighted in promoting Mustapha stated. plays production, rice а

The Guyana Rice major contributor to acknowledged Board's the country's Gross re-certification's or the faith they have the emphasising that nearly experimentation

period an increase about the benefits the re-certification. the in production. But laboratory's certification feature address at the more importantly, will bring. certification ceremony, we will see the Mustapha, targets that were set product the in our budget being exported to many maintained crucial role the facility achieved," Minister other The

Product contribution to achieving in us since we meet importance

"This year again the Board of Directors, team for consistently

"It allows our certified to date, they to of the has because minister confidence level that to

the those countries have of **need**," Ramraj noted.

Executive Director in (ag) of the GNBS, Al Donovan Fraser, GRDB's Chairman of commended the GRDB Ramraj, maintaining the required optimism standards and achieving

"From the time GRDB was first be have continuously their countries certification. GRDB certification maintain



One of the certificates being handed over by a GNBS representative to GRDB's Quality Control Manager, Marsha Hohenkirk

its accredited.

even that's an achievable continued though they are milestone," the GNBS And director said.

**KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED** 

# **GUYANA'S RICE INDUSTRY THRIVES DESPITE ELNINO**



Rice packaged and ready to be exported to other countries

sector, particularly the challenging El Niño experiencing rice industry, is defying weather the odds, and continuing currently

Guyana's agriculture to flourish despite the that

the country. In fact, **our** remarkable increase in surpassed them." its rice production since the year began, according attributed Zulfikar Mustapha.

of our economy," to enhance the industry's global market. Minister Development (GRDB) in La Bonne Intention, zinc. Guyana has the Mustapha we've conditions most of the year, gripping we've not only met launch, the Ministry of

The Mustapha efficiency and yield. for variety.

Prior to the official its rice sector.

production Agriculture conducted well-structured plans the nation has seen a targets, but even trial runs in Regions and Three and Six. According we've implemented, Minister to Minister Mustapha, we've seen the GRDB this cultivating this type of assisting places like to Agriculture Minister surplus to the GRDB's rice will not only lead Trinidad and Tobago, renewed focus and to increased yields for which recently saw "Rice remains implementation of farmers, but also attract their rice industry one of the mainstays cutting-edge measures preferential prices in the falter," the Minister

declared during a recent One such initiative is highlighting Guyana's role in helping that event at the Guyana Rice the recent launch of a advanced rice industry country get its rice Board novel bio-fortified rice compared to its regional production back on headquarters variety enriched with counterparts, Minister track. And across East Coast Demerara. honour of being the first announced that the see more and more "Despite the El Niño Caribbean nation to have nation is now extending a requests pouring in **been** access to this innovative helping hand to Trinidad to the GRDB." and Tobago in reviving

programmes explained. "The GRDB Furthermore, is playing a crucial proudly the Caribbean, you'll

"Thanks to the

## **MMA SCHEME GEARS UP FOR RECORD** -BREAKING RICE HARVEST IN 2024

The Mahaicony-Abary way." (MMA) scheme is setting its sights on record- years have witnessed on proper irrigation and breaking rice production a for the first crop of 2024. transformation for MMA This ambitious goal farmers. They received a burden of high land The MMA scheme is fueled by concrete staggering 31,659 bags of rental costs, Minister is also about to embark investments. in the region. At the recent MMA- plans, vivid picture of the for Guyana. achievements and transformative paving the way for possibilities. **"This** scheme instrumental committed providing necessary

Mahaica- every step of the breaking

The past three reach, but it hinges increased Recognising

acreage leading to higher cultivation is within profits for farmers, income, ultimately, remarkable and sufficient water." cheaper prices for the **consumers**."



These developmental committee,

ADA open day, Minister Mustapha emphasised, document of Agriculture, Zulfikar are crucial steps towards proposed Mustapha painted a achieving food security This document will be leafy vegetables.

plans even more exciting seeking their approval to (GRDB) has pledged its three million bags of Guyana this historic harvest. Minister revealed plans needed changes. He assured farmers, to develop a whopping is 20,000 acres of new towards addressing land Hohenkirk, stated, "The For the 2024 first crop, Sugar boosting agricultural "We can work with approved land leases to output, productivity, landless farmers to were handed over to closely with MMA-and growth in ensure they have farmers on the spot. ADA to enhance 5,000-acre the sector. We're access to this valuable Minister to resource," he declared. reiterated, "Our goal improve the lives of second crop. the "For the support first crop, record- production

and fertiliser and 11,688 bags Mustapha announced on a initiatives being rolled of seed paddy, directly a beacon of hope. revolution. Soon, a stateout to empower farmers impacting their yields. Chairman of the land of-the-art hydroponics Minister Bishop, is finalising a engaging presented to President The future holds Ali and the Cabinet, Development The implement these much- unwavering

As a tangible step Manager, 2024 is to bring down MMA farmers." costs,

hydroponics Andrew farm will be operational, hundreds outlining of young people in solutions. producing high-quality,

> Board support. Quality



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha handing over a lease to a farmer

The Guyana Rice acres of rice cultivated showcase of agricultural per crop, yielding over diversity. The New Marketing paddy, the MMA scheme Corporation, Control is a powerhouse of School of Agriculture, Marsha agricultural production. GuyDrones, Corporation, in land within the scheme. access challenges, 12 GRDB will continue an impressive 95,000 University of Guyana, collaborate acres have already been and National the prepared, marking a Agricultural Research increase and Extension Institute Mustapha rice production and compared to the 2023 (NAREI) all presented a range of agricultural day products and expertise.

Guyana

Guyana

The open With over 100,000 witnessed a vibrant

#### **ECCLES- DIAMOND FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY** TO OPEN SOON



The Eccles Haags Bosch roundabout recently commissioned

news Good of Bank Eccles to Diamond inaugurated the Eccles/ Water, Collin Croal.

#### "[The road] will be week of December," the minister announced.

This \$13.3 billion beyond the Eccles Dumpsite Bee Dam, Craig. Road to Diamond, and covers 9.4 kilometers of reinforced concrete road with over 30 bridges and two roundabouts.

planned Initially for Great Diamond, the project was expanded to Diamond Housing explained Scheme, considerable benefits for EBD four-lane highway residents in the area. The from Diamond to Buzz 18 months to complete.

This constructed marks the completion for the project includes the Ministry of Public rehabilitated the EBD road project, revetment works at Buzz

residents of the East Eccles) opening last construction. Demerara vear at a cost of \$2.6 (EBD)! The long-awaited billion. President Ali Minister Croal stated four-lane highway is set Haags Bosch roundabout Road, which is connected to officially open this in September this year, to the Eccles/Haags month, as announced by connecting Georgetown, Minister of Housing and Ogle, Eccles and Peter's which Hall.

opened by the second stop there. Minister the Mandela Avenue Croal has confirmed that Highway, will extend the project will continue from the Windsor Estate Diamond, project stretches from extending towards Buzz the EBD Public Road.

#### \$11B CONTRACT **AWARDED FOR DIAMOND TO BUZZ BEE DAM FOUR-**LANE ROAD

Minister Croal that the **commence** offering contracts for the new construction, awarded to Bee Dam, Craig were Road is one of the main 12 different contractors already awarded to 12 connectivity points for in December 2021, took different contractors, the Ogle, East Coast and work is expected to Demerara (ECD) newly commence shortly. The EBD roads which are highway \$11 billion earmarked being executed through of the second phase of two contracts for major Works.

for (Mandela Avenue to are critical to the road

Additionally, that the Eccles Industrial Bosch roundabout connects the already completed But the plans don't Eccles thoroughfare to junction all the way to

"As you know, that road is in a bad state...We are currently contracts for those and the mobilisation will be paid in the coming weeks and works for that will even before Christmas," he said.

The Eccles Industrial to

This is a major with the first phase Bee Dam. These works infrastructure project Street, Tan Tin Street, Amerindian

people of by transportation reducing congestion.

#### **IMPROVED ROADS** IN STRATHSPEY **BRING RELIEF TO** RESIDENTS

Meanwhile, residents of Strathspey, ECD, are finally experiencing the benefits of upgraded roads in their community, thanks to the Ministry of Public Works' Special Projects Unit (SPU).

The rehabilitation of the roads in Strathspev follows a commitment made by Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo during a community engagement meeting. Residents had raised concerns about the poor condition of the roads, which were making it difficult for them to travel to work, school, other essential and services.

The SPU technical signing team conducted an evaluation of the roads in November, and found that the asphalt surface had significantly deteriorated. They of light scarification of the existing surface, followed by placing and compacting of crushed exposed bases, and asphalt concrete.

The newly include Mohan Street, contractors. Arjune Street, Betty

that will benefit the and Dwarka Singh Street Pauline Sukhai, Guyana in Area G Strathspey. Permanent Secretary of improving The completed roads are the Ministry of Public and part of the government's Works, Vladim Persaud, traffic efforts to foster economic led the charge during activity and improve a recent outreach to the lives of residents the region. Minister nationwide.

of the Residents Strathspey are pleased commitment with the condition of hinterland development,

and Sukhai emphasised government's to



Two of the contractors from Region Eight that signed road maintenance contracts

the new roads and say highlighting that they have made a \$6.5 billion has been significant in their lives. They road maintenance this are thankful to the year alone. This brings government for the work the total investment that has been done.

#### **REGION EIGHT GETS MAJOR ROAD UPGRADE** WITH \$100M INVESTMENT

Further, residents of valuable recommended a process Region Eight in Guyana's hinterland have reason to rejoice as the Ministry of benefits circulate within Public Works has signed the villages themselves. contracts exceeding \$100 She further commended aggregates in areas with million for significant the shift from centralised road improvements. This processes to on-site the final application of timely infrastructural cash payments project will see over 40 contractors, simplifying roads in various villages roads rehabilitated by local expediting payments to

Minister Affairs,

that difference allocated for hinterland from 2020 to present to a staggering \$12 billion.

In a bid to empower communities, local Sukhai Minister urged contractors to hire villagers for the roadworks. This creates employment opportunities and ensures the project's for procedures and workers.

#### DISCUSSIONS AT ADVANCED STAGE FOR GUYANA-**SURINAME CORENTYNE RIVER BRIDGE PROJECT**

Discussions Suriname the construction of **our** according to Senior **done** Finance significant strengthen the bilateral **Suriname.**" and trading relationship the between

"We are at an Nedam and the Chinese- maintenance. between Guyana and **advanced stage of** owned China Road and regarding **discussions** Surinamese (CRBC), the Corentyne River **counterparts**," proposals to construct impact on both bridge have reached Minister Singh stated. the bridge. The project Guyana and Suriname, an advanced stage, "We have already will be undertaken fostering a Minister, international tender, Finance, Operate, and regional Dr. Ashni Singh. This and we have received Maintain project **bids**. The **bids** are model through a Public- transportation will not only enhance **currently under an** Private transportation evaluation process arrangement. infrastructure, but also in partnership with successful bidder will South Drain in Suriname

two companies, the Dutch construction, financing, of 100 years. neighbouring countries. engineering firm Ballast operation,

with Bridge **public** under the Design, Build, growth, strengthening (DBFOM) and be responsible In October 2023, two the bridge's design, Guyana, with a lifespan and

Corentyne The Corporation River Bridge is expected submitted to have a profound economic integration, improving links. Partnership The bridge will span the The Corentyne River from for to Moleson Creek in



The building of the Corentyne River Bridge, is being undertaken by the governments of Guyana and Suriname

## SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS MADE IN REDUCING **MOTHER-TO-CHILD HIV TRANSMISSION**



Director of Primary Health Care, Dr Ertenisa Hamilton

significant in reducing mother- 2022. to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV, with that the health ministry ante in the prevention the MTCT rate in 2022 is working to integrate and treatment of HIV recorded at 1.1 per cent, HIV care and treatment in keeping with the compared to 2.2 per cent into the primary UNAIDS goal of ending in 2021.

Health Care, Dr Ertenisa changed to include the Hamilton said the health measuring of viral load Dr. Frank Anthony, has sector is aiming to during pregnancy, and called for changes to the eliminate MTCT by the laboratory end of 2024. Speaking will be strengthened programme is managed at the World AIDS Day countrywide. Conference at the Arthur Chung Centre (ACCC), Hamilton announced Prophylaxis (PrEP) and 2030. there has been an viral load testing. increase in testing for HIV, surpassing the 95 per cent target for 2021 and 2022. Testing for

Guyana has made male partners also saw progress an 11 per cent increase in

healthcare system. The the disease as a public Director of Primary guidelines will also be health threat by 2030.

Conference working to increase the achieve the UNAIDS Dr uptake of Pre-Exposure target of 95-95-95 by

> **GUYANA AIMS** TO END HIV AS A



Minister of Health addresing the World ÀIDS Day Conference

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT BY 2030**

Meanwhile, the Dr. Hamilton stated ministry is upping the

Minister of Health, services way the national HIV to bridge the gaps that The ministry is also exist in the system, and

"We are confident that if we amplify what we are doing the country. and do it on scale, then we would be able also lamented that an know

2030, that is why HIV programme, the way Dr Anthony stated.

He that an integrated place. approach is needed to condom and promotion of PrEP a public health threat. in high-risk areas across



Dr. Tariq Jagnarine, Programme Manager at the National Aids Programme Secretariat

to achieve many of insufficient these targets before of persons living with linked to treatment and are I'm hoping that we medication, and that persons living with HIV can change the way not enough patients are have recorded viral load that we manage the getting viral load testing. Persons living with years.

that we manage HIV HIV/AIDS have also advantage of the self-

create more impact in Manager at NAPS, Dr. the current status of the services at various levels. Tariq Jagnarine, noted disease as a public health There is also a need that Guyana has an concern. for increased focus on estimated 9,900 people prevention strategies, living with HIV/AIDS, awareness campaigns, and that the disease distribution, needs to be eliminated as

He stated too that 95 per cent of persons The health minister living with HIV/AIDS their status,

number while 75 per cent are accessing care. Thirty per cent of suppression for two

While lauding the services in Guyana," not been taking full significant strides made by Guyana in the battle highlighted testing option put in against the disease, Dr. Jagnarine pointed to the Programme critical need to change



**GUYANA POISED TO EXPAND PEDIATRIC TRANSPLANT SURGERIES** 

Guyana is on the verge of expanding its pediatric kidney transplant capabilities following the groundbreaking success of a kidney transplant performed on sevenyear-old patient Angelica Soamnauth at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). This medical breakthrough marks a significant milestone, paving the way for medical surgeries. enhanced expertise in the field of pediatric transplantation we in Guyana. Anthony, that the team's has demonstrated the **centres** ability to **Caribbean**, country's

our



"We very a collaboration through PAHO (Pan in transplant, we American Organisation) with matching," the health the DTI (Donation minister underscored. TransplantInstitute), which is based in Transplant Surgeon, Dr. Barcelona, over the last several this achievement as a months we have historic milestone in had a lot of people Guyana's medical field. from the transplant institute, the local last year, the team agency, and the defied **Georgetown Hospital** by getting exposure in transplanting an adult Barcelona to some of kidney from the donor, the things we need to the patient's father, put in place. "We don't have though good faced by doctors in the capability right was three kilograms years results. We have carrying out diagnostic now in the country short of the required seen moved from doing testingforkidneydisease, to be able to do that. 20-kilogrammes weight. the Caribbean is feat positions Guvana To this end, Dr. able to do that type to advance its pediatric He highlighted that be fostering closer we can train people renewed hope for young programmes and make sure we have the capability

have of doing it because strong if we want to have a now strong programme Health must be able to do

Vascular and and Kishore Persaud, hailed

Patient Angelica Soamnauth and family with the medical team and Minister Frank Anthony

conduct more of these we have been getting address the challenges extremely "Over the years results. have transplant the adult transplant... and the turnaround time In fact, nobody in During a media conference held at the GPHC, Minister in Guyana. During a media the GPHC, Minister in the transplant transplant," Minister Anthony emphasised. Dr. To this end, Dr. able to do that type to advance its the government will working now where capabilities, renewed hope remarked drastically and in medical fact, I think we are the government will be collaboration with expert in Guyana to do that, patients struggling with achievement one of the transplant procuring equipment institutions to elevate buy the equipment, kidney disease. the and investing in local training in where training programmes to locally.

On October 30 expectations successfully into the child, even the patient

This remarkable transplant offering

# **HEALTH SECTOR GAINS 128 SKILLED PROFESSIONALS**



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony handing over a trophy to an outstanding student

The Ministry of medical lab technicians, Health's Health Sciences environmental Education, graduation the 128 new professionals. pharmacy dental assistants,

health Clinical assistants, X-ray and Technical Training technicians, and Medex Programme celebrated professionals, will be of deployed to various healthcare administrative regions These across Guvana, further graduates, comprising bolstering the nation's assistants, healthcare workforce. During the

graduation at the National Cultural Centre, Dr. Frank **are** Health, Anthony, highlighted the **for you to develop** significant strides being yourself. made in developing **an** Guyana's health **for** ongoing advancements **new** training of doctors grow," development within the term career with the of the programme.

ceremony local health sector.

opportunities advancement. Minister training

Ministry, emphasising "There is a role for the support provided Minister of **all of you, and there** for their professional training on September

These **There's** represent a portion of the encompassing opportunity healthcare professionals you to grow trained by the Ministry components. They also sector. He emphasised and we are adding in its ongoing effort to completed programmes strengthen the health attachments in infrastructure, the whereby you can system. Notably, some invaluable programmes experience. and nurses, and the Anthony stated. He have been decentralised, numerous opportunities encouraged graduates increasing accessibility for professional to consider a long- and expanding the reach

The batch of graduates began their 12, 2022, and underwent graduates comprehensive training clinical, practical, and technical six-week to gain practical

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED



## **MORUCA SUB-DISTRICT TO RECEIVE STATE-OF-THE-ART HOSPITAL**

announcement recently the from Frank Anthony.

Survey and clearing for hospital are

Residents of the complete, paving the past two years, we've Bank (IDB), approved and the Georgetown new facilities," he Moruca sub-district in way for construction to already upgraded the in December 2022. This Public Hospital (GPHC) stated. This commitment Region One can expect a commence in the near Mabaruma and Port loan will support the (Region Four). significant improvement future. This initiative **Kaituma** in their access to aims to enhance the through the Smart the Moruca hospital, further highlighted the reinforced healthcare, with the quality and efficiency Hospital Project, and but construction of a new of healthcare services this new facility will facilities in Kamarang made in state-of-the-art hospital available to the hundreds further enhance our (Region Seven), Kato healthcare set to begin soon. This of residents in the sub- capacity to provide (Region Eight), and within the Barima-Waini initiative implemented came district.

"This new hospital residents." Minister of Health, Dr. will complement the the One," explained Dr. loan from the Inter- the New Amsterdam Region One and have

**hospitals** construction of not just also nearly Anthony. "Over the American Development Hospital (Region Six), even

Dr. top-class significant investments provision of additional top-notch care to the Lethem (Region Nine). Region this year alone. over the past three years Additionally, the loan "We have invested by the government to Funding for this will be utilised for close to \$200 million ensure better access existing healthcare project has been secured upgrades to the Linden in upgrading several to healthcare services site facilities in Region through a US\$97 million Hospital (Region 10), health centers in throughout the country. added some

to improving healthcare Anthony infrastructure is further by the improving transportation for facilities health services, a key

# **GUYANA POISED TO EXPAND PEDIATRIC TRANSPLANT SURGERIES**



approximately 9,000 residents of the riverine areas in Region Three, including the large islands of Wakenaam and Leguan, will benefit from the new river taxi. Previously, the high cost of transporting patients to the coast for medical care posed a major obstacle. This new vessel will significantly reduce travel time and costs, ensuring timely access crucial healthcare to services.



Regions One, Three, Five receive river transport totalling \$23M to improve health services

Three new river essential taxis (boats) have been services. handed over to the Ministry of Health, marking a significant step towards enhancing healthcare access in communities remote across Guyana. These vessels will be deployed to Regions One, Three, Five, serving and thousands of residents who previously faced accessing challenges

#### **REGION ONE**

During the handing over ceremony at the ministry's Central Supply Unit (CSU) in Kingston, Georgetown, Dr. Anil Tulsie, General Medical Officer of Region One, expressed gratitude for the new river taxis, highlighting Erica Forte, Regional the difficulties faced Health

medical by many communities in accessing timely healthcare due to their geographically isolated locations. These vessels will greatly improve the situation by enabling efficient patient transport for emergencies and medical outreaches.

> **REGION THREE** According to Dr. Officer,

#### **REGION FIVE**

Regional Health Officer of the Region Five, emphasised improvement in the taxis: emergency patient 1,200 health around that residents of Moraikobai network over the past outreaches. He stressed and Mora Point along three years, attributed the the Moraikobai River to the government's utilising these vessels will be impacted by the new healthcare services. He to remote communities, river initiative will vessels This revolutionise healthcare the access for these further



Regions One, Three, Five receive river transport totalling \$23M to improve health services

existing

communities, bringing transportation them closer to essential capabilities in remote medical services. regions.

Minister Anthony, Dr. Anthony Dr. Theresa Sarju, a c k n o w l e d g e d emphasised the dual significant purpose of the river transportation transport and medical importance of positively dedication to enhancing to deliver care directly transportation. noted that these new eliminating geographical complement barriers and ensuring fleet, equitable access to strengthening healthcare.

Phillips

stressed

it

just

# **GUYANA DOMINATES CXC AWARDS CEREMONY, TAKING HOME 9 ACCOLADES**

Guyana celebrated a remarkable achievement at the Caribbean Examinations Council's (CXC) annual awards ceremony, held at the National Cultural Centre. The country secured a total of nine awards, recognizing exceptional academic performance across the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) levels.

#### **OUTSTANDING** INDIVIDUAL **PERFORMANCES:**

Alex Muntaz of Anna Regina Secondary School received the highest honours, being named the Most



CSEC and CAPE top performers with their awards

Outstanding CSEC Candidate Overall and the Most Outstanding Technical Vocational • Science Education and Training (TVET) student for the region. Siddiq Gafar of ISA Islamic School excelled in the field of Business, claiming

the Most Outstanding CSEC Business student award.

and Humanities also saw Guyanese students shine, with Abigail Stephanas of Queen's • College receiving the award for Most Outstanding CSEC

Science student and Nailah Rahaman from the same institution being recognized as the Most Outstanding Humanities CSEC student.

At the CAPE level, Naresh Jagnanan of Queen's College swept the top awards.

earning the titles of Most Outstanding CAPE overall Outstanding Business student.

#### INSTITUTIONAL **RECOGNITION:**

Anna Secondary School was awarded the CXC School of the Year, while Queen's College received the CAPE Top School Award. Matthew Dunn of Jamaica York Castle High School was presented with the University of Guyana's Menezes-Rodney Award for

the Most Outstanding

Student in CSEC

History. Prime candidate Mark and Most Education CAPE Priva Studies both significance ceremony, highlighting

how not excellence but also the power of education Regina

transform to Minister Manickchand commended students' and acknowledging support of educators and families in their success.

> This year's ceremony also marked a special occasion, coinciding CXC's with 50th anniversary of service to the Caribbean.

## **OVER 400 MORE GUYANESE BENEFIT FROM PUBLIC SERVICE SCHOLARSHIPS**

The of demonstrate to well-educated and Service a qualified nation by beneficiaries. investing in scholarship programmes to 424 students, to empower individuals significant contributions excel in their chosen whole. fields.

The scholarship Minister at an

Addressing for gathering at the National and training of future encouraged Guyanese students. This Culture Centre, Public public servants, the scholarship unwavering dedication Service Minister Sonia government is ensuring to is evident in the recent Parag emphasised that that Guyana has the opportunity to learn, awarding of scholarships the programme aims to necessary human capital grow, and develop their Guyanese empower Guyanese with to address the challenges skills, emphasising the highlighting the necessary skills and and opportunities that importance of utilising the government's efforts qualifications to make lie ahead. with the necessary skills to their communities, p r o g r a m m e various and qualifications to and the nation as a encompasses a wide and

These scholarships, carefully

and development. By aspirations. the investing in the education

> The range of disciplines, the

Government ceremony held to mark strategy to develop This approach ensures Guyana continues the commencement of a highly competent that the government's its the 2023/2024 batch public sector that can investment in education commitment to fostering of Ministry of Public effectively contribute aligns with the nation's scholarship to the nation's growth development goals and

> Minister Parag the recipients embrace the their knowledge and scholarship expertise to improve sectors contribute to betterment of selected Guyana. "This is not orientation part of the government's ministries and agencies. education but this to my family ... It

is you contributing allowed me to be free nationally to your of the student loan country, to develop process to completely it. It is a great honour focus on having a and distinction to very strong start to serve your country," the remaining three Minister reminded.

Dr. Dhanraj Baljit, beneficiary and recipient opportunity to pursue of the Prime Minister's their tertiary education at Award for the best a variety of institutions, graduating student in the including the University School of Medicine at the of Guyana, University of Guyana, School of Agriculture, shared his personal story Government Technical of how the government's Institute, investment in education enabled him to New achieve his dreams. He Technical recounted the financial Carnegie burden that was lifted Home Economics, Art by the scholarship, Williams allowing him to focus Wendt wholeheartedly on his Engineering studies and ultimately Texila excel in his chosen field. University, Parag based on the needs and just for your own "This was of great Georgetown American recipients were honoured explained, are an integral priorities of various investment in an assistance and relief University.

Parag academic years that I had ahead of me."

The scholarship recent scholarship recipients will have the Guyana Essequibo his Technical Institute, Amsterdam Institute, School of and Harry Aeronautical School, American and the

Minister

Minister

celebrates

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#### SERVICE PUSH RSON **ゴ ( ) OVER 300 PRISONERS** TRAIN

The Guyana Prison management. Service (GPS) has generating through training joinery, animal aquaculture, cake, pastries reconciliation, and anger crime.

Separate graduation provided 311 inmates ceremonies were held with basic income- for the inmates who skillsets completed the training various programmes. Officers in programmes. charge of the four prison The inmates received locations explained that training in carpentry, the goal of the training technology, is to empower the culinary arts, crop and inmates with valuable husbandry, skills that will help them wellness secure good jobs after and success, elementary their release, reducing and the likelihood of them cooking, literacy, family returning to a life of



Some 311 inmates have graduated from training programmes offered by the Guyana Prison Service

(Ag) Nicklon Elliot opportunities to equip emphasised the prison's them with skills and responsibility provide inmates with levels while serving their the necessary skills sentences. Of the \$5.5 for rehabilitation. He billion budgeted in 2023 expressed that as the prison the government has infrastructure continues earmarked \$100 million to develop, more inmates for the training of 1,500 will benefit from these inmates, programmes.

The through the Ministry in preparation of Home Affairs, is their reintegration into committed to providing society.

Director of Prisons inmates with training to improve their literacy optimism for the Prison Service, supporting their rehabilitation and government, social transformation for

#### KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

# BEEF INDUSTRY SET FOR MAJOR BOOST WITH ULTRA-MODERN ABATTOIR

The cattle industry in Guyana is on the cusp of a remarkable transformation. The \$600 million stateof-the-art abattoir in Onverwagt, West Coast Berbice is 80% complete and prepped to be operational within two months.

Funded by the Inter - American development (IDB), Bank this transformative project promises to modernise meat processing, unlock international markets, and empower cattle like never farmers before.

Minister Mustapha recently inspected the facility and was with impressed the



The facility under construction

progress. He envisions this abattoir becoming slash meat imports and an the premier slaughtering significantly boost local conscious hub for conveniently located for had imported 64 hybrid management system. A region.". farmers in Regions Four, breeding bulls in 2022. sedimentation pond will **"This is poised for** their impact. major development for the beef industry," the minister declared.

above simply

This abattoir aims to animals. It embraces environmentally cattle, production. Government with an integrated waste security after filtering, the water with This project goes will be channelled into Lands slaughtering The "waste" will be put Mahaica,

to good use as manure, Abary (MMA) scheme to boosting production in a cyclical, this ambitious initiative. sustainable manner.

Adding excitement, Minister **actively** Mustapha revealed an for the requested imminent Memorandum 1,000 Understanding Minister of (MoU) with Colombia, disclosed. signifying their interest the land through in investing in the lands and survey local cattle industry. will pave the way "We have a major for this promising Colombian investor investment. eager to start with particularly exciting 1,000 cattle for beef because they plan to production," shared. "This bodes plants within the well for our future, area to process dairy nmentally tremendously aiding products directly approach us in achieving food alongside rearing the for the cattle."

farmers in Regions Four, breeding bulls in 2022. sedimentation pond will The ministry is nearing completion, Five, Six, and beyond. This project will amplify capture all waste, and currently collaborating lands being identified, the and and beyond the drainage system. Commission and the industry is on the cusp of

agricultural identify suitable land for "We've received the to the proposal and are searching acres," Mustapha "Securing It's he establish processing

With the abattoir Guyana and international interest Survey spiking, Guyana's cattle Mahaicony, an exciting new chapter.

# ESSEQUIBO COAST TO GET NEW \$286M MAR



The central portion of the Charity Market that was destroyed by fire

of \$286 million for announcement made bv

on the Essequibo Coast Local Government and through a supplementary in Region Two can soon Regional Development, budget. expect a new market, Anand Persaud, during a necessary То finance its construction. This project, the ministry Hardware and General was sought and obtained Supplies. budgetarv Minister additional

With this was awarded to Builders prioritise safety

Construction

slated to begin in early risk of future fires. January 2024 and is expected to be completed is within two months. The government design and plans for the temporarily been finalised.

The new market livelihoods. will boast a modern Persaud urged measuring 152 feet by and assured them that 164 feet. This design aims the contractor 40 out of 83 stalls and funding dollars in losses. The essential is system to minimise the their

underway, will new market have already vendors to ensure they Shaun Choo-Kang, and can continue steel-framed structure vendors to cooperate, meeting with vendors. to provide much-needed work expeditiously to the night of July 6, 2023, relief to vendors affected complete the project and was a devastating event by the previous market have the new market for the Essequibo Coast Residents of Charity within the Ministry of support from parliament fire, which destroyed ready by early next year. community. A thorough the resulted in millions of already begun acquiring Guyana Fire Service following the allocation recent visit to the region. secured, the contract new facility will also such as steel, for the electrical inspectorate by project. incorporating essential vendors were invited fire originated from an measures like a wet riser to a meeting to voice electrical fault. concerns and

suggestions regarding While construction the construction of the the new market complex.

> Permanent Secretary relocate of the ministry, Miguel their Chairperson of Region Minister Two, Vilma De Silva, the were also present at the

The previous market will fire, which occurred on The contractor has investigation by the materials, and the government's Additionally, determined that the

# **MAJOR REHABILITATION FOR EAST RUIMVELDT MARKET**

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development nas



that the construction insufficient security, poor activities may cause, lighting, and unreliable Minister Persaud urged garbage collection. vendors to collaborate with the contractors and acknowledged their workmen to expedite the concerns and pledged to project's He that the short-term would be included in inconvenience will pave the renovation plans the way for long-term and promised them a benefits, including a brush cutter to aid in modernised facility that will attract more customers and City Council will boost business. send persons later boost business. The expressed frustration with the notify them that we

and

Minister completion. address them. He assured emphasised the vendors that lighting market maintaining cleanliness. "The Mayor and vendors to assess the market. their When they come just neglected are already having it the done. They haven't City done anything for Council for inadequate years so we are They getting it done now," highlighted restrictions the minister stressed.

announcea imminent the commencement of major rehabilitative works on the East Ruimveldt Market. This decision follows a site visit by Minister within the ministry, Anand Persaud, who engaged vendors.

was struck by the deplorable of the market and recognising the urgent need for improvement, prioritised has rehabilitation. upcoming will encompass comprehensive overhaul of the market's facilities,

Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Anand Persaud meeting with vendors of the East Ruimveldt Market

Minister Persaud condition its The works а

including repairs, drainage will amenities.

utmost to start it said. sometime next week the following rehabilitation or are in," the minister working environment stated.

Following

structural process, the contractors in time for the busy mobilise to Christmas system upgrades, and commence work so Minister Persaud has the installation of new that the project can be assured vendors that completed as soon as the project will not only "We will try our possible, the minister enhance their working

upcoming provide The week, once the bids are set to transform the community. for vendors, ensuring a acknowledging this significant improvement temporary disruption

season. market's conditions, but also blaming state, employment Mayor works opportunities for the maintenance. W h i l e the on stall improvements.

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## **RUPUNUNI EXPO HIGHLIGHTS VAST OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGION'S GROWTH**

Rupununi's vast savannahs and its nature-based tourism products have the potential to position Guyana as a powerhouse in the tourism industry, thereby growing other sectors in the region and creating additional opportunities.

This is according to Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai, who delivered the feature address at the opening of the 21st Rupununi **Business and Investment** Expo at the Tabatinga Sports Complex.

Tourism is а



Minister Sukhai handing over the cheque to President of the Rupununi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, **Orlando Wong** 

stakeholders must be region, she stated.

One such sector prepared to take on that can reap the Minister Sukhai relayed. lucrative industry, and its development in the benefits from tourism is agriculture, which

is an integral pillar in Guyana's developmental trajectory and key to the nation's economic prosperity.

**"Farmers benefit from ... eco-** Sukhai urged the private tourism development sector and residents of Labour inthisregion. Women to be prepared to take Hamilton said as Guyana can benefit, young advantage of these transforms, including people can benefit opportunities. in the hospitality it. And of course, of our prepared is of ecotourism and nature tourism,"

that next year, work

will commence on a

major canal running

from Johanna to the

sluices,

stations.

upgrades are expected

Atlantic,

the

of

150

and

along with

rehabilitation

approximately

pumps,

between

These

said, stands as a strong **support** partner with the private the majority of the sector, which is why an **population** in this attractive climate for region is made up business is being created of Amerindians and through policies and the successes incentives that will foster the private sector growth.

With opportunities to become **people**," **can** available,

industry if we pay \$1.5 million was handed people to be trained more attention to over to the President in the Rupununi to government Chamber of Commerce development. to and Industry (RCCI), support the growth Orlando Wong, which is personstotakeadvantage an annual contribution of the various training from the ministry.

**"They** The government, she **sector**) **need** our the government.

because of provides enormous additional opportunity for our Minister Minister Sukhai expressed.

Meanwhile, Minister Joseph Region Nine, there is A cheque valuing a need for more young various skillsets complement the

As such, he urged opportunities that have (private been made available by

# BLACK BUSH POLDER TO RECEIVE MAJOR D&I INFRASTRUCTURE **UPGRADES**

The Black Bush Polder area in Region Six is set to undergo significant drainage and irrigation (D&I) infrastructure rehabilitation works in the coming year. This initiative aims to establish an efficient D&I system that will provide substantial relief to rice and cash crop farmers in the region.

Minister Mustapha emphasised the importance of these upgrades during a farmers' meeting held at the Mibicuri Primary School. He highlighted that improved the infrastructure will agricultural enhance productivity, and ensure the sustainability of farming practices in the Black Bush Polder area. response In

Minister Mustapha inspecting #52 drainage system and farmlands

to

and

concerns raised by focus will be on crucial farmers about the low sections in the farming water supply on their areas. farmlands, Minister assured highlighted that the Mustapha them that construction ministry is working will soon begin on the on a programme to internal irrigation canals rehabilitate to improve access to drainage structures in to drainage capacity. The the region. He stated

to significantly increase drainage capacity. Minister Mustapha and a technical team inspected the farmlands and the entire drainage systems Number 52 and Mibicuri

villages to ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide farmers with reliable irrigation while the drainage system is being improved.

The agriculture minister reminded farmers that water management is crucial, especially during the



One of the farmers raising a concern

There are approximately two pumps by the 20,000 acres of land in Canje Creek pumping Black Bush Polder, while **[water]** 28,000 acres of rice Number 52 canal for lands are located along the farmers... So, you the front lands.

Farmers reassured that the here... So, the water government will provide level will increase assistance and technical tremendously." support for their crops and livestock to increase forging ahead with food production, along its plan to construct a with the support needed replica of the Hope canal to upgrade drainage in the region. structures.

Minister Mustapha

dry weather period. stated that, "We have at the will have six pumps were in operation right

Government is also



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh

Orealla village in government reflects Region Six is poised to its commitment transform into a major food security producer of cassava- empowering Amerindian based products thanks communities. to a new \$25 million Senior Minister agro-processing plant. in the Office of the This investment by the President, Dr. Ashni

#### GEARS UP TO BECOME CASSAVA **POWERHOUSE WITH \$25M PROCESSING PLANT**

Singh, made at, and for Orealla, it's I want to read the cassava.

The minister also

several

With cultivation already **based** underway, the processing flour, cassava bread has received \$24 million Orealla is well on plant is expected to be ...," the minister stated. operational by year- A similar plant is funds, a tractor-trailer just that, becoming a end, propelling Orealla's being built in Crabwood combo for agricultural cassava powerhouse operational by yearcassava products beyond Creek, showcasing the development, and even and a model for local markets and onto government's broader a fully-equipped fishing Amerindian community

the Singh even challenged security announcement during the village to ensure incomes through agroa recent solar home Orealla-branded cassava processing. Dr. Singh empowering Orealla and systems distribution in flour, cassareep, and emphasised that these other villages is evident Orealla. He highlighted bread become household facilities are pathways to in Dr. Singh's concluding President Ali's vision for names. "And Toshao, economic independence, remarks: "We want every village to specialise **I am holding you to** and in a product they excel that commitment ... livelihoods. label and see Orealla already witnessed the economy." With the produced cassava- benefits of government agro-processing plant cassava **produced** national shelves. Dr. strategy to boost food boat to support local development.

and rural fishers.

Orealla cassareep, investment. The village and other initiatives,

This focus on improved every single village to be able to develop has a sustainable village from carbon credit its way to achieving

#### **THURSDAY DECEMBER 14 2023**

# DISTRICT 10 CONTINUES WINNING STREAK AT NATIONAL SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS





Dominating the 61st National Schools' Cycling, Championships, competitors. District 10 (Upper has once again with District 11 (North since 2018. consecutive Champion closely behind, securing of Champions title, fourth place with 50 solidifying their longstanding reign and remarkable 20.

was evident across They secured first place competition, performance in various disciplines. running, While they secured a historic moment second place in by claiming the top Swimming,

the Teachers' and 61st championships, their Swimming 71 comfortably placed a

points.

Despite not bringing their total attaining the overall championship wins to a title, other districts also and throwing events. the first time, created to Guyana. Cycling, spot in the Cycling

competition.

Furthermore, overall point total of District 13 celebrated significant win and Track and Field them ahead of their in the Teachers' Championships, A close battle for marking their first Demerara/Kwakwani) second place ensued, victory in this category This cemented its position Georgetown) and success highlights as a powerhouse District 13 (South the dedication and in youth athletics. Georgetown) tying at passion of teachers This year's victory 55 points. District 9 who contribute to the marks their seventh (Rupununi) followed development of young athletes in Guyana.

During the opening Prime Minister Phillips had reiterated the Government of Guyana's commitment narkable 20. achieved noteworthy to improving sporting District 10's prowess victories. District 11 facilities throughout emerged victorious Guyana. He emphasised multiple disciplines. in the Swimming the importance of aligning academic in Track and Field, showcasing talent pursuits with sports to showcasing outstanding in various aquatic produce well-rounded District youth, who can make jumping, 9, participating for valuable contributions













# ESSEQUIBO'S OWNERSHIP AFFIRMED WITH UNVEILING OF LANDMARK SIGN

In a powerful display of national pride and unity, the "Essequibo is We Own" sign was unveiled in Parika, East Bank Essequibo. This bold declaration serves as a strong testament to Guyanese ownership, and unwavering sovereignty over the Essequibo region.

The \$7 million sign stands as a monument to the collective spirit of the Parika community. Its successful completion is a direct result of the combined efforts of local businesses and residents, showcasing the power of unity in action. This commitment to their shared heritage and unwavering belief in their nation's territorial integrity are undeniable.







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