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After December 3 referendum, Venezuela declares new rules for Essequibo, sends troops to border as President Maduro gives foreign investors in region three months to leave, but...

USA stands firm with Guyana





GUYANA STRONG: Guyanese stood together in a peaceful but strong display of unity last week, as the nation reaffirmed its position in the ongoing border controversy with Venezuela. The display of national unity unfolded across the country leading up to the December 3 Venezuelan referendum on Guyana's Essequibo. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro claimed victory in the referendum, even thouhg less than 9 percent of eligible voters participated in the poll. *Stories inside*

MARTINA'S CAMBIO

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MILITARY SUPPORT: In a significant step towards strengthening bilateral ties between Guyana and Brazil, Chief of Staff Brigadier Omar Khan recently met with Chief of the Joint General Staff of the Brazilian Armed Forces Admiral Renato Rodrigues de Aguiar Freire, and Chief of Strategic Affairs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Brigadier Walcyr Josué de Castilho Araujo. According to a press release from the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), the meeting, held as part of the ongoing efforts to expand strategic relations, underscored the commitment of both nations to foster cooperation in various domains, including defence and strategic affairs."This meeting marks a pivotal moment in the ongoing diplomatic efforts between Guyana and Brazil, reflecting a shared vision for a secure and cooperative future. The Guvana Defence Force remains dedicated to advancing regional collaboration, and contributing to the broader objectives of peace and stability," the GDF said. Brazil "has intensified defensive actions" along its northern border as it monitors the territorial dispute between its neighbors, Guyana and Venezuela, with which it shares borders. "The Ministry of Defense has been monitoring the situation. Defensive actions have been intensified in the northern border region of the country, promoting a greater military presence," the Brazilian military said in a statement.

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EQUALITY NEWS



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Canadian mother, child die after falling off Antigua's Devil's Bridge

A high-level investigation is underway in St. Johns after the death of a Canadian tourist and her son. The 38year-old woman and her five-year-old son drowned at the Devil Bridge.

According to reports from the woman's husband, they had gone to see the sunset at the Devil's Bridge, when his son went close to the edge and got caught by a wave. The man reported to policemen that his son held onto his mother's leg and she too fell into the water.

The man who had to receive counseling on the spot that early morning told authorities that he wanted to return to Canada the same day however they denied the request as investigations were underway.

Meanwhile, the Antigua and Barbuda government has expressed condolences to the family.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne, said he was saddened at the event, "and if there is anything we can do to assist the family, we stand ready to assist."

"But it is a very very tragic situation...and I want to express our sincere sympathy to the family. I feel it as though it was a relative. It is so impactful," he said.

This is the second instance of a tourist death at Devil's Bridge this year.

Devil's Bridge got its name because the rock once resembled a bridge before part of it fell away into the sea.



Devil's Bridge, Antigua, where the Canadian mother and child died

Enslaved people on the island once crossed the bridge and drowned themselves believing that their spirits would live on and they would return one day a free person and not a slave anymore.

This past April, another Canadian

was reported to have died in the same area, with authorities saying in a press release they had found a "Caucasian male in his late sixties" after a 911 caller stated "a tourist fell over Devil's Bridge" on April 8.

At the time, Global Affairs Canada confirmed the death of a Canadian but did not provide details, citing privacy.

Devil's Bridge, located outside the village of Willikies, is a major tourist attraction in Antigua.

Grieving Dad tell Senators to pass Federal gun law

The father of a woman who was fatally shot in October by her former partner is urging senators to pass a federal gun-control bill without delay.

In a letter sent this week to members of the upper chamber, Brian Sweeney says the legislation contains crucial measures that would improve the way police deal with domestic violence cases involving firearms.

"Implementing these measures is urgent," Sweeney says in the letter, made available to The Canadian Press. "The bill is the result of years of advocacy from victims and women's groups, and women have died while the bill has been debated." Sweeney's daughter Angie was shot when her former partner Bobbie Hallaert broke into her home in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., two months ago. Hallaert proceeded to a second home and killed three of his own children and injured another woman, who survived. The gunman then took his own life.

grim day in 1989 when a man with a Ruger Mini-14 killed 14 women at the city's École Polytechnique.

"The 14 victims and my Angie deserve better than our current laws and procedures," Sweeney says. "Three innocent children also paid the price of our failed system."

Police probing the Sault Ste. Marie shootings said late last month they were trying to determine how Hallaert obtained the SKS rifle and .38-calibre revolver seized during their investigation. He did not have a current firearms licence at the time of the shootings.

ySeSouvient, which includes students and graduates of the Montreal engineering school, want to see the bill become law. Conservative MPs and some gun owners have said the legislation is misguided and penalizes lawabiding Canadians.

Members of a Senate committee have been reviewing the bill clause by clause, but it is expected to return to the full upper chamber soon.

"There is no reasonable justifica-

begging you to vote it through as soon as it hits the Senate floor for third reading."

Sweeney expresses anger in his letter that someone with Hallaert's history could have access to guns.

"Domestic violence is an epidemic and governments are not doing enough to prevent it," he writes.

"That's why I promised Angie that I wouldn't stop until the laws in this country are strengthened to stop domestic murders. I especially want to get guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them."

"Angie's death, like that of all victims, leaves behind a trail of broken hearts and broken lives," Sweeney says in the letter.

He planned to be in Montreal on December 6 to help families and survivors mark the anniversary of the

Sault police have confirmed the offender was involved in intimate partner investigations in the past.

The federal bill would usher in new measures to keep firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers, reinforce a freeze on handguns, increase penalties for firearm trafficking and move to curb homemade ghost guns.

The bill also includes a ban on assault-style firearms that fall under a new technical definition. It would apply to such guns designed and manufactured after the bill comes into force.

Gun-control groups such as Pol-

tion to delay the adoption and implementation of these measures." Sweeney says in his letter. "So I am



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Stay the Course, Mr President

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is claiming a victory in the December 3 referendum, in which, figures show, some 2 million people voted overwhelmingly (reportedly 98 percent) in favour of annexing the oil-rich Guyanese territory of Essequibo.

But what Maduro is not saying, but the opposition in Venezuela is taking pains to point out, is that this number only represents less than 9 per cent of the 20 million-plus Venezuelans who were eligible to vote.

The rest decided not to play Maduro's game and stayed away from the poll, a slap in Maduro's face as he tries to use this territorial dispute to shore up political support at home.

The turnout appeared so underwhelming that the Venezuelan government has been widely accused by analysts of falsifying the results, the UK Guardian reports.

Indeed, the major British daily said Maduro's plan to annex Essequibo appears to have backfired -- a position also taken by the renowned broadcaster BBC.

This hasn't stopped Maduro from grandstanding, however, with the Venezuelan President issuing a statement shortly after the referendum ordering foreign companies to leave concessions awarded by Guyana within three months.

Maduro also made several other

Dear Editor,

IN the heart of South America, a peaceful nation stands firmly against a backdrop of a complex and long-standing territorial controversy.

Guyana, known for its serene beauty, rich culture, and the warmth of its people, is now at the centre of a controversial claim over its Essequibo region – a territory constituting two-thirds of the country and increasingly significant owing to its oil-rich potential.

This controversy, rooted in colonial history, has been reignited by a recent referendum in Venezuela, sparking international concern. We're living a real-life David versus Goliath story, standing tall against a mightier nation's covetous gaze on our oilrich and cherished Essequibo.

This struggle we're in, it's like the

pronouncements, including the creation of a new High Commission for the Defense of Essequibo coordinated by Vice President Delcy Rodriguez, activation of debate in the National Assembly for the approval of the Organic Law for the defense of Essequibo, creation of the the Zone of Integral Defense of Essequibo with three areas and 28 sectors of integral development, to be located in Tumeremo; the designation of MG Alexis Rodríguez Cabello as Sole Authority of Essequibo whose political and administrative headquarters will be located in Tumeremo; the publication and dissemination in schools, high schools and universities of the country the new Map of Venezuela that includes Essequibo and the activation of an Integral Social Attention Plan for the entire population of Essequibo that includes a Census and the opening of an Administrative Service for Identification, Migration and Immigration (SAIME) office for the delivery of identification cards to the population based in Tumeremo (located in Venezuela about 100 kilometres west of the Guyana border.)

But the most concerning of all his actions since the December 3 referendum is his announcement Tuesday of the creation of a new military zone that would be in charge of defending Essequibo.

He backed this up by ordering

We're inspired by Dave Martin's stir-

ring words in "Not One Blade of Grass," a

song that has become more than just lyrics

to us; it's a declaration of our unvielding

stance, a testament to our enduring spirit in

the face of this long-standing and con-

righteousness, our unity unshakeable, our

commitment to our land and people unbreak-

able. The legitimacy of the Venezuelan ref-

erendum, marked by low voter turnout and

allegations of election rigging, casts a

context of reduced participation, potentially reflecting voter apathy or opposition boy-

cotts, raises serious questions. Accusations

of ballot tampering and voter coercion un-

Just like Rama, we stand for justice and

The overwhelming approval rate in a

tentious claim by Venezuela.

shadow over its outcomes.

I stand with Guyana

troops to the area, but it is unclear how large the new military force to be based in Tumeremo would be.

Maduro says he was given a mandate on Sunday to invade Guyana. In response on Tuesday, Brazil's military reinforced its northern border due to rising tensions. Brazil has borders with both countries.

Guyana, meanwhile, has not responded directly to the referendum or to Maduro's posturing. Instead, it has turned to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) by filing a complaint against Venezuela for breaching the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) order, issued on Friday, that Venezuela must not take any action which would modify the situation that currently prevails in the territory in dispute, whereby Guyana administers and exercises control over Essequibo.

Guyana President Irfaan Ali also assured the people of Guyana, as well as the international investors in the country, that they had nothing to fear as the Guyana Defence Force was on full alert, and the country also had the backing of SouthCom, one of the 11 unified combatant commands in the US Department of Defense.

U.S. officials, who have been keeping a close eye on the simmering tensions over Caracas' claim to the Essequibo region, have grown increasingly concerned that Maduro could be preparing for the use of military force on Guyanese territory.

President Ali called the moves by Maduro "reckless" and said his country plans to alert both regional and world leaders of Maduro's attempt to disrupt the peace in the hemisphere.

"It is unfortunate that President Maduro would choose the road of defying an international court order. This speaks volumes about the way in which President Maduro prefers to operate and also points to the fact that he's unconcerned about the peace and security of this region," Ali said.

"We once again call on Venezuela to retract from this reckless, adventurous move and to allow international law and the ruling of the [U.N. court] to guide our action," Ali added.

Maduro, for his part, has dismissed the jurisdiction of the ICJ.

How this will all play out in coming days and weeks is left to be seen, but we believe Ali and his government are on top of things. Indeed, they have international law on their side and have so far refused to be reactive, which is commendable.

We assure President Ali and the Guyanese people that they also have the Diaspora on their side, and we will do whatever it takes to bring a peaceful resolution to this situation.

Stay the course with a steady hand, Mr President.

by the global community, especially given the oil-rich stakes at hand.

In Guyana, our resolve is anchored in the quest for tranquility, guided by the revered International Court of Justice (ICJ). To us, the ICJ is far more than just a judicial entity; it's a beacon of aspiration, a stage where the collective voices and challenges of our nation find recognition and resolution.

Our steadfast leaders are aligning our nation's efforts with the tenets of international law, striving for justice in a world where might often prevails. In this endeavour, we are not isolated; notable nations such as the United States and Britain, and blocs such as the European Union are by our side, affirming our sovereignty.

Their support transcends diplomatic formalities, offering essential backing during these times, particularly in the context of the oil-rich Essequibo region. Now is the moment for the soul of Guyana to unite more robustly than ever. Our fight goes beyond physical confrontation; it's rooted in unity, conviction in our rightful claims, and the strength found in coming together. We aim to be harbingers of harmony and construc-

tive conversations, nurturing mutual comprehension instead of separation.

Our national motto: "One People, One Nation, One Destiny," and our name, "The Land of Many Waters," embody our identity. They are not mere words but reflections of our diverse yet united existence.

These words guide us to stand together, undeterred, and resilient, in the face of this longstanding controversy, upholding our right to live in harmony and to remain an indivisible Guyana. In conclusion, let us unite in prayer and action for a resolution that honours our sovereignty and promotes lasting harmony.

We stand with Guyana, today and always, championing the cause of peace and upholding the sanctity of international law in this complex, tense, and long-standing controversy. Our unity in these trying times is our greatest strength, as we navigate this challenge with resilience and hope for a peaceful future in our beautiful land.

Hindu scriptures once more, where our Prabhu Rama stood against the might of Ravana, triumphing against all odds. It's in our scriptures that we find our strength, our resolve steeled by a deep faith and the unwavering support of the international community. dermine democratic values, and the controversial nature of this referendum invites international skepticism.

This complex and long-standing controversy over the Essequibo region, now intensified, threatens diplomatic relations and regional stability. It underscores the need for a resolution that is recognised and respected

Yours respectfully, Haimdat Sawh



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EQUALITY NEWS THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2023

Guyanese in Canada stand in solidarity with original homeland

GUYANESE turned out in their numbers at the Windies Restaurant in Scarboroug on Sunday, to show their patriotism, as the Guyana Consulate held a "Day of Unity and Patriotism" to support local efforts to preserve the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The event coincided with the rally held at the Guyana National Stadium, where President, Dr Irfaan Ali addressed a mammoth crowd to affirm the nation's position regarding the ongoing border controversy with Venezuela.

Organised by the One Guyana Forum, the occasion attracted Guyanese from all walks of life who were all in unison that "Guyana belongs to Guyanese."

In brief remarks via Zoom, Minister of Public Service, Sonia Parag, thanked the Guyanese at home and Canada for their outpouring of support and solidarity.

The minister emphasised that Guyana will continue to follow a peaceful path and that Essequibo will remain a part of Guyana.

Honorary Consul General Mani Singh, in an emotional address, related the old saying: "It matters not where we roam, there's no place like home."

According to Singh, despite the internal differences among Guyanese, the people of Guyana are known for working together when it comes to defending the nation in every way.

"We are a resolute people and the Venezuelans must understand that all of Guyana belongs to Guyanese. We stand in solidarity with our brothers back home. We will defend our country in a very peaceful way," he said.

The genesis of the border controversy goes back to the 1899 Arbitral Award, a landmark decision that delineated the land boundary between British Guiana (now Guyana) and Venezuela.

Despite the historic arbitration, tensions have persisted, with Venezuela re-



Guyana Consul Mani Singh (centre) with some of the people who turned out at the event at Windies

peatedly challenging the validity of the award.

In 2018, Guyana took a decisive step by approaching the International Court of Justice (ICJ) seeking affirmation of the award's legitimacy.

Venezuela, taking a defiant stance, initially claimed that the ICJ lacked jurisdiction, a contention flatly rejected by the World Court in a crucial ruling in December 2020. The door was thus opened for the ICJ to delve into the case's merits.

Attorney-at-law Selwyn Pieters, in his remarks, said: "Venezuela accepted and honoured the border determined by the 1899 Arbitral Award for more than half a century." In light of Venezuela's heightened aggression over its claim to Guyana's territory, the Attorney-at-law said: "We as Guyanese have to stay woke and stay engaged. This is the time for all Guyanese to support our government in its fight against this existential threat from Venezuela and its President, Nicolas Maduro."

Cricket among Wikipedia's top searches for 2023

Remember what you searched for in 2023? Well, Wikipedia has the receipts.

English Wikipedia raked in more than 84 billion views this year, according to numbers released Tuesday by the Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit behind the free, publicly edited online encyclopedia. And the most popular article was about ChatGPT (yes, the AI chatbot that's seemingly everywhere today).

Since its launch just over a year ago, OpenAI's ChatGPT has skyrocketed into the public's consciousness as the technology makes its way into schools, health care, law and even religious sermons. The chatbot has also contributed to growing debates about the promise and potential dangers of generative AI, much of which is documented on its Wikipedia page.

The second most-read article on Wikipedia in 2023 was the annual list of deaths, which sees high traffic year after year -- taking the .4 and .1 spots in 2022 and 2021, respectively. Individual entries for notable figures who passed away also garnered significant interest this year, including pages for Matthew Perry and Lisa Marie Presley.

Meanwhile, the highly anticipated 2023 Cricket World Cup took third place -- alongside three other cricketrelated entries in Wikipedia's top 25 articles this year, including the Indian Premier League at .4, marking the first time cricket content has made the list since the Wikimedia Foundation started tracking in 2015.

"Barbenheimer," Taylor Swift and more also appeared to sway our 2023 internet-reading habits. Here are this year's top 20 articles on Wikipedia.

1. ChatGPT: 49,490,406

pageviews

2. Deaths in 2023: 42,666,860 pageviews

3. 2023 Cricket World Cup: 38,171,653 pageviews

4. Indian Premier League: 32,012,810 pageviews

5. Oppenheimer (film): 28,348,248 pageviews

6. Cricket World Cup: 25,961,417 pageviews

7. J. Robert Oppenheimer: 25,672,469 pageviews

8. Jawan (film): 21,791,126 pageviews

9. 2023 Indian Premier League: 20,694,974 pageviews

10. Pathaan (film): 19,932,509

pageviews

11. The Last of Us (TV series): 19,791,789 pageviews 12. Taylor Swift, 19,418,385: pageviews 13. Barbie (film): 18,051,077 pageviews 14. Cristiano Ronaldo: 17,492,537 pageviews 15. Lionel Messi: 16,623,630 pageviews 16. Premier League: 16,604,669 pageviews 17. Matthew Perry: 16,454,666 pageviews 18. United States: 16,240,461 pageviews 19. Elon Musk: 14,370,395 pageviews 20. Avatar: The Way of Water: 14,303,116 pageviews

THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2023

EQUALITY NEWS

US: Guyana, Venezuela border issue cannot be settled by referendum

HE United States has affirmed that the border controversy between Venezuela and Guyana cannot be settled through a popular vote, following Venezuela's recent contentious referendum on Guyana's Essequibo region.

During a press briefing on Monday, Matthew Miller, the spokesperson for the US Department of State, reiterated the United States' commitment to a peaceful resolution of the territorial controversy between the two South American nations.

"I will say that we support a peaceful resolution of the border dispute [controversy] between Venezuela and Guyana. The 1899 award determined the land boundary between Venezuela and Guyana should be respected unless or until the parties come to a new agreement or a competent legal body decides otherwise," Miller said at the briefing.

Last Friday, the International

Court of Justice (ICJ) issued "binding" orders on Venezuela to "refrain" from taking any actions that would threaten Guyana's sovereignty over the Essequibo territory.

In the ruling, the court ordered that, pending the decision of the substantive case, Venezuela shall refrain from taking any action that would modify the situation that currently prevails over the territory, which Guyana administers and exercises control over.

As an additional measure, the court also ordered that "both parties refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute [controversy] before the court or make it more difficult to resolve."

Guyana had approached the World Court seeking the preservation and protection of its right to the territory awarded to it by way of the 1899 Award, pending the court's determination of the validity of that Award.



Spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State, Matthew Miller

The ICJ president pointed out in the ruling that the court, in its 2020 judgement, had said that a land boundary controversy exists between the two parties.

The World Court pointed out that it observed that the territory which forms the object of that controversy was awarded to British Guiana in the 1899 Award. The Court also reaffirmed that it has jurisdiction to hear the substantive case.

Despite mounting calls for the Venezuelan administration to abide by international law, the Spanish-speaking country continued full speed ahead with its referendum on December 3.

In response, Miller urged both Venezuela and Guyana to continue land boundary between then British Guiana (now Guyana) and Venezuela.

Despite historical arbitration, tensions persisted, leading Guyana to approach the ICJ in 2018, seeking affirmation of the award's legitimacy.

The ICJ's provisional measures are binding on the parties involved. Under the UN Charter, all states are solemnly bound to comply with the court's orders, which can be enforced by the UN Security Council.

The substantive case, which highlights the historical context and the 1899 Arbitral Award, remains before the World Court.

Guyana has reached out to the international community to call attention to Venezuela's actions that are com-



PATRIOTISM: Attorney General & Minister of Legal Affairs Hon. Mohabir Anil Nandlall S.C M.P is pictured speaking at Day of Prayers, Reflection & Patriotism - Diaspora Engagement in Queens, New York & Update on the Guyana -Venezuela Controversy. Ambassadors, Mr Sam Hinds, Mrs Carolyn Rodrigues & Mr Carl Greenidge, also spoke. seeking a peaceful resolution.

"We would urge Venezuela and Guyana to continue to seek a peaceful resolution of their dispute. This is not something that will be settled by a referendum," Miller said.

The genesis of the controversy dates back to the 1899 Arbitral Award, a landmark decision that delineated the pletely outside the norm of the Rule of Law, and which present a real threat to the peace and security of the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

Guyana enjoys the full, principled and unequivocal support of CARI-COM, the Commonwealth and other partners from around the world.



89% of Venezuelans turn back on Maduro's referendum – BBC

Venezuelans who turned out to vote in a referendum on the status of the oil-rich Essequibo have overwhelmingly backed Venezuela's territorial claim, but the opposition in that oil-rich country has poured cold water on the exercise- estimating that about two million people voted out of a total of 20.7M eligible voters.

More than 95% approved establishing a new Venezuelan state in the territory known as Essequibo, officials said, according to the BBC. Guyana, and British Guiana before it, have administered Essequibo for over a century. The referendum has ratcheted up tensions between the two neighbours.

Critics of the Venezuelan president, Nicolás Maduro, say he called the nonbinding referendum to whip up nationalist fervour and distract from calls for free and fair elections to be held. President Maduro, who has been in power since 2013, had urged people to turn out en masse and vote "five times 'yes'" to the five questions his government had posed on the status of Essequibo.

Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro described the result as a great victory but critics have queried the turnout

The 159,500-sq-km (61,600square-mile) region makes up two thirds of the total of the land currently controlled by Guyana. Venezuela has long maintained that a decision taken in 1899 by an international arbitral tribunal to award it to Britain, the colonial power which at the time ruled over Guyana, was unfair. The matter is currently before the International Court of Justice, although Venezuela has disputed the international court's authority to rule on the matter. In the referendum, the Venezuelan government asked voters to back its stance on the controversy. The most controversial question was the fifth, which asked Venezuelans if they agreed with "the creation of the Guayana Esequiba state" and its "incorporation into the map of Venezuelan territory".



President Nicolas Maduro saw only 2 million voters out of 20 million vote in referendum

many people would follow the government's call to turn out. Elvis Amoroso, the head of the National Electoral Coun-

questions, the 10.5M votes only equated to two million voters.

Opposition media also reported cil and a close ally of President Maduro, that polling stations had been very quiet said that 10.5M votes had been cast throughout the day, casting doubt on the something he described as "historic" in claims of the government that turn-out the country of 20.7M eligible voters. had been high. The referendum came at What Mr. Amoroso did not say was a time of heightened tension between how many voters took part in the refer-Guyana and Venezuela after the 2015 endum, a detail opposition politicians discovery of oil in the waters off Esseseized on. Henrique Capriles, who lost quibo's coast by US oil giant ExxonMoto Mr. Maduro in the 2013 presidential bil. Tensions increased further in election, suggested that considering that September this year, when Guyana held voters were asked to respond to five an auction at which oil companies bid

for exploration licences in Essequibo waters. Guyanese citizens formed human chains on Sunday to show their support for Essequibo remaining under the control of their government. Guyana's president reassured them in an address broadcast on Facebook, saying that "there is nothing to fear" and that his government would defend the country's borders. The International Court of Justice has warned Venezuela not to take any action that may alter the status quo in Essequibo.

Electoral officials said 95.9% of voters cast a "yes" vote to that question. Guyana has denounced the proposal as an attempt at annexation and President Irfaan Ali has accused his Venezuelan counterpart of fomenting conflict by calling for the referendum. President Maduro hailed the results as "an overwhelming victory". "We have taken the first steps of a new historic stage in the struggle for what belongs to us, to recover what the liberators left us," he said.

The overwhelming support shown by voters had been widely expected as Venezuela's claim of sovereignty over Essequibo has very broad support in the country. This is reflected in the fact that there was no campaign for a "no" vote. What analysts were keen to see was how

Referendum a failure: Jagdeo

The Government of Guyana (GoG) believes that the consultative referendum held by the Venezuelan government on December 3, 2023, which seeks to annex this nation's Essequibo region was nothing short of a "resounding failure".

Emphasising this was Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, during a live interview in Dubai, with BBC News on Monday. The former Head of State told the British news agency that while the world was expectant of a "yes vote" on the referendum, it turned out to be a failure, since the Nicolas Maduro-led government hardly saw the participation of its people. "We believe it is a resounding failure for the Maduro government considering only half of the total eligible voters turned out, and then, of the half that turned out, not 100 percent voted in

favour of a yes vote, so less than half of the eligible voters voted in favour of the issues, the questions posed there," the VP reasoned.

Guyana had approached the World Court last month seeking protective orders that would effectively halt parts of the vote, aimed at paving the way for Venezuela to annex the Essequibo region. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Friday ordered Venezuela not to take any action that would alter Guyana's control over its Essequibo region, but did not specifically ban Venezuela from holding its referendum. Jagdeo in his comments to the BBC told viewers that the move by the Venezuelan President was a distraction to the problems that grapple that nation.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2023

EQUALITY NEWS

Guyana's Ali receives Barbados' highest national award

RECOGNISED for his leadership in regional cooperation, Guyana's President, Dr. Irfaan Ali was conferred with Barbados' highest honour, the Order of Freedom of Barbados.

The Guyanese of Head-of-State is among several honorees who will receive the island's highest national award in celebration of its independence.

He is being recognised for his "strong commitment to enhanced cooperation and collaboration to achieve regional integration and to foster deeper social and economic partnerships, particularly in relation to food and nutrition security and for the upliftment of the people of Barbados and the region."

Since assuming presidential office back in 2020, President Ali has been a bold voice in championing enhanced collaboration among Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nations.

President Ali is lead Head of Government with responsibility for Agriculture in CARICOM and over the past



Guyana's Irfaan Ali with Barbados' Mia Mottley

three years, President Ali has established food-import bill. While the award is not a citizen of Barbados. Rwanda's several strategies to increase food pro- mostly given to Barbadians, it can be President Paul Kagame, is also among duction and reduce the region's hefty given to a distinguished person who is the list of Independence Day honorees.

US SouthCom sets up field hospital in Guyana

PRIME Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, who is performing the functions of President, attended a handing over ceremony of a US\$1.124 million deployable multipurpose field hospital, facilitated through the United States Government-Southern Command (US-SOUTHCOM) to the Civil Defence Commission (CDC), on Thursday, at Playfield, Base Camp Ayanganna.

In his remarks, the Acting Head of State expressed the Government of Guyana's appreciation for the donation, which he described as a form of continued support in the area of security cooperation with the aim to boost resilience of disaster preparedness.

He acknowledged the invaluable role of SOUTHCOM in identifying and addressing the capability gaps in humanitarian assistance and disaster management, particularly after hosting



Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, who is performing the functions of President, attended a handing over ceremony of a US\$1.124 million deployable multi-purpose field hospital

the recent TRADEWINDS exercise.

"This is not just about disaster, this is about contributing to the development of Guyana. Our deepest appreciation to SOUTHCOM and to the Government and people of the United States of America for this donation, and for being with us as we continue on this path of security cooperation that will only lead to the improvement of the lives and livelihood of the people of Guyana," the Prime Minister said.

The present commander of SOUTHCOM, General Richardson, was also commended for the ongoing engagement and dedication in delivering on identified needs to bridge capability gaps in Guyana, citing previous collaborations such as the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at Base

Camp Stevenson, a DRM facility in Region Nine and the expected establishment of a EOC/Warehouse complex at Mahdia in Region Eight.

Highlighting the importance of the field hospital, Prime Minister Phillips who holds responsibility for disaster management in Guyana, outlined the donations' role in advancing Guyana's implementation of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) strategy.

"This facility here will help us to greatly advance in our implementation of comprehensive disaster management in Guyana, making us more effective and more able to bring relief to the people."

During the handing over ceremony, US Ambassador to Guyana,

Nicole D. Theriot said: "As Guyana works to improve its emergency disaster response in the near and long-term, the United States government is committed to supporting the people of

Guyana and to strengthening our partnership".

The handing-over ceremony also featured an incident simulation exercise.



Climate objectives will only be achieved through realistic solutions

ALTHOUGH discussions on climate change have been happening for decades, practical solutions to address the challenges brought on by the phenomena have been lacking and its only through realistic solutions can global targets be achieved, President, Dr. Irfaan Ali has said.

The Guyanese Head-of-State in his address to world leaders at this year's 28th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in Dubai on Friday, said that for far too long the climate debate has been dominated by the past.

"I did not come here to restate the climate challenges the world faces. Instead, I want to urge us all to reflect on how we can meet these challenges.

"We need to recognise that climate action cannot be to the detriment of the world's developing countries and poorest people," President Ali added.

Some 170 world leaders are attending this year's COP in Dubai to solidify strategies to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, an international treaty which covers climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance.

"COP 28 will not achieve the desired objectives of definitively putting our planet on a net zero trajectory, if we continue to address this matter in a doc-



Guyana President Dr Irfaan Ali with other leaders at COP28

trinarian way, ignoring the current realities," he said.

Ultimately, the goal of leaders and other stakeholders at COP is to establish definitive solutions which will see the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) released into the earth's atmosphere being balanced by the amount removed; this is what is commonly referred to as net zero.

To reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, many things are needed. These include switching to energy sources or materials that emit less carbon, often from high carbon-emitting fossil fuels and by counteracting any carbon that is emitted.

President Ali posited that a clear balance is what needs to be established.

"I believe that net zero by 2050 as a target can only be achieved by a combination of measures that include," Dr. Ali said.

He added: "A reduction in the fossil fuel production and the removal of large polluters out of the supply chain."

The Guyanese Head of State believes through measures, leaders can confront climate change, energy and food crises to achieve sustainable goals.

Thus leaders must debate on establishing just, orderly and affordable solutions to transition away from excessive fossil fuel and make climate finance accessible for the developing world.

"If the debate at COP 28 is framed by two camps: One calling for no cuts in fossil fuel production, including the most polluting form such as coal, and the other saying that the only solution to net zero is an end to fossil fuel production, then we will fail once again to achieve a viable outcome, and not to give our world the energy it needs to grow and prosper," President Ali told world leaders.





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THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2023 EQUALITY NEWS Guyana could earn billions by protecting forests: Jagdeo

MAINTAINING that forests are central to tackling climate change and must be coupled with robust efforts and not just philanthropy, Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, on Saturday said Guyana could earn, at a minimum, US\$2.5 billion more in the next 10 years.

12

Guyana recently earned US\$750 million for protecting its forest, according to Dr Jagdeo, who was speaking at the World Climate Action Summit in Dubai under the theme "Protecting Nature for Climate, Lives, and Livelihoods."

He shared the stage with the Presidents of Indonesia and Ghana and also speaking at the event were Brazilian President Lula Da Silva and French President Emmanuel Macron, among others.

After listing the four elements that are vital in preserving all forests, Dr Jagdeo highlighted the strides that Guyana has been making such as the integration of forests into a national development strategy, making Indigenous people and those who live in the forests apart of the solution to climate change and identifying a revenue stream for an alternate use of the forests.

He said: "... In Guyana's case, we've been [keeping] our forests intact; 86 per cent of the country is covered with forests. We have one of the lowest deforestation rates," adding that the government has recently been able to certify the entire forests certified at the jurisdictional scale through the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART).

The Vice President also outlined



Guyana Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo and President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

that implementation of the national carbon-credits programme, which is already seeing rapid implementation at the village level.

In February 2023, Amerindian communities received the first allocation from the sale of carbon credits in their dedicated village bank accounts. Subsequent to this, villages identified priority areas of investments in village plans that were developed by the villages themselves.

Dr. Jagdeo also highlighted that capacity is being developed to effectively manage projects that are being provided by supporting leaders with the task of developing their communities and providing them with the tools necessary to assure sustainability and effective management of their projects.

He also outlined how the funds would be allocated, explaining that 15 per cent of the total would go towards Amerindian villages and communities and that the remaining 85 per cent would be used mainly for efforts to adapt to climate change.

The world's first TREES credits were notably awarded to Guyana by the ART in December 2022. It was the first time a nation had received carbon credits created especially for the voluntary and compliant carbon markets for effectively preventing the loss and degradation of forests, a procedure known as jurisdictional REDD+, which was a significant milestone.

Guyana received 33.47 million TREES credits from ART for the fiveyear period between 2016 and 2020 after the Board of Directors of ART approved the project and concluded an independent evaluation and verification process. This made it possible for Hess Corporation and the Guyana government to reach a historic deal in which the oil giants decided to buy one-third of all Guyana's credits both issued and projected—up until 2030.

Caricom committed to fight against AIDS

OFFICIALS from the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARI-COM) Headquarters in Turkeyen, Georgetown, have acknowledged the importance of civil society and local communities in delivering HIV services and information, such as testing, prevention, and treatment, throughout Latin America and the Caribbean on World AIDS Day. The Deputy Secretary-General of CARICOM, Dr. Armstrong Alexis, stated in his remarks on Friday at the organisation's headquarters that the significance of this year's theme, "Let Communities Lead," lies in its emphasis on the importance of community involvement in improving the lives of AIDS-affected individuals. "The 2023 observance of World AIDS Day is happening at the critical junction of public health within our region. We have seen our communities, particularly civil society, play an integral role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many lives were saved, thanks to the effort of our national AIDS programmes, which strategically collaborated with community-based or-

ganisations and groups to reach the most vulnerable with lifesaving HIV medications during the mandated COVID-19 lockdowns," Dr. Armstrong explained.

He continued, "From this experience, our region now has several best practices that could be applied to other public health initiatives, but the key to this approach is the central involvement of communities; hence, the theme for this year's World AIDS Day could not have been more appropriate. Civil society has worked hand in hand with the Ministry of Public Health and the national AIDS programme to ensure that vulnerable populations receive HIV prevention, treatment, and care, and most recently to ensure the continuum of care during the pandemic." Dr. Armstrong further added that the mantra of 'leaving no one behind' actively described a strategic approach to the region's HIV response, which is characterised by the unique relationship that is formed between the government and civil society organisations, along with other peers in the field.



tional day to remember all those important people who we have lost and to reflect on the valuable contributions they made along the journey. It is also a day to think about actions, to act, and to talk about the important work that still needs to be done in our communities."

Finally, according to the Pan America Health Organisation (PAHO), in order to achieve an undetectable viral load and break the chain of transmission, communities must be given the tools they need to create their own plans and reach the people who need them the most with education, HIV self-testing, antiretrovirals as a preventive measure (known as PrEP), and treatment. According to them, "We are on the home stretch when it comes to ending AIDS as a public health challenge, but we will only achieve this goal if we empower the most affected communities that are being left behind," Luisa Cabal, Regional Director of UNAIDS for Latin America and the Caribbean, said. "Community leadership is essential in all HIV plans and programmes, which must also have financing and protective regulations for their operation."

"Today we can proudly we can

Dr Armstrong Alexis

proudly reflect on the progress made because of the successful collaboration and the tremendous work done by our civil society partners," he added.

Meanwhile, the representative from the Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (CRN+), Jason Shepherd, also encouraged the community to play their part in eradicating the stigma that is attached to HIV and AIDS.

According to him, "It is an emo-

THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2023

Diaspora assured that Guyana has international support in border spat

GUYANA'S Permanent Represen- Guyanese people. tative to the United Nations (UN), Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett and Attorney-General, Anil Nandlall, S.C., have reassured the Guyanese diaspora of global support in the face of Venezuela's controversial referendum.

The officials were at the time speaking at a diaspora engagement in Richmond Hill, Queens, New York, on Sunday, while Venezuelan voters went to the polls to cast ballots on five questions, one of which seeks to annex Guyana's resource-rich Essequibo region.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Friday issued "binding" orders on Venezuela to "refrain" from taking any action that would threaten Guyana's sovereignty over the Essequibo territory.

Expressing understanding for the concerns of those with relatives back home, Rodrigues-Birkett stated, "Guyana is not alone."

"I know that some of you are worried if not uneasy because you have relatives back home and what will happen if this referendum is passed today. But let me say this to you, have no fear," she told the audience.

She underscored the significant backing from regional and international allies, including CARICOM, the Commonwealth, and numerous peace-loving nations.

Highlighting the collective stance for international law, she affirmed that Guyana has widespread support and urged citizens not to worry about the potential outcomes of the referendum.

Addressing the economic challenges faced by Venezuela, Rodrigues-Birkett emphasised that despite its difficulties, the country would not be permitted to violate international law.

She assured the Guyanese diaspora that the government is committed to protecting the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This commitment, she said, holds steadfast even as

Meanwhile, Nandlall said that government remains unwavering to its commitment until this matter is put to rest and urged the Guyanese not to worry.

"Guyanese are worried and are apprehensive across the globe...because Guyana is facing what is described as an existential threat. It is facing the most fundamental challenge that it has ever faced from its birth as an independent nation on the 26th of May 1966," the Minister of Legal Affairs said.



Guyana Attorney General Anil Nandlall



Guyana awaits the final judgment of the court.

The ambassador highlighted the unity among Guyanese people across various spectrums, including race, religion, politics, and regions.

Despite occasional differences, she stressed that Guyanese are united in their conviction that Essequibo belongs to Guyana.

Rodrigues-Birkett also emphasised the unchanging nature of Guyana, regardless of the outcome of the referendum, adding, "Guyana's size, shape, or shine will not change. We will defend our Essequibo."

Throughout her address, the ambassador reiterated the government's dedication to defending Essequibo and the collective determination of the

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Guyana to champion action on sustainable **biodiversity for Commonwealth**

GUYANA will champion the Commonwealth Living Lands Action Group on sustainable green cover and biodiversity, committing itself to lead coordiefforts across the nated 56 Commonwealth member countries.

The announcement comes after a Commonwealth event in Dubai on December 3, 2023, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28).

During the event, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched a new implementation framework to facilitate coordinated action among the 56 Commonwealth countries on land, biodiversity and climate challenges, directly impacting a quarter of the world's land area.

The launch comes after extensive consultations with Commonwealth countries since the adoption of the Living Lands Charter last year.

Speakers, including Prime Minister Robert Abela of Malta and Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), expressed their support for the framework during the event.

Speaking at the event, Prime Minister Abela said: "The world is experiencing a planetary crisis, addressing



Guyana will champion the Commonwealth Living Green Lands Group

climate change, protecting biodiversity, and nurturing ecological restoration of our land has become an urgent priority for all Commonwealth members.

"We are here to renew our commitment to work together towards the same through the Living Lands Charter. We hope that our experience inspires Commonwealth countries facing similar tough challenges."

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland KC, said: "Our Commonwealth encompasses a quarter of the world's land area and is home to a third of the world's mega-biodiverse countries. More than 400 endemic species are found in our small island states.

"The impact of climate change is increasingly severe across our countries. Food insecurity is increasing. Soil is depleting. The sheer scale of these challenges compels us to lead with bold action."

She added: "With this implementation framework, we are taking a giant leap forward. It will leverage the combined strength of the Commonwealth through thematic action working groups - learning from each other and spurring one another on towards systems change and a better future for all."

The framework takes a systemwide approach towards implementing the Living Lands Charter through five thematic action areas: climate-resilient agriculture for food security; soil and water conservation; sustainable green cover and biodiversity; carbon neutral and climate-resilient livestock rearing and animal husbandry; and indigenous and local people for climate-resilient development.

Countries have stepped forward to lead on priority areas of action: Guyana will champion action on sustainable green cover and biodiversity; Kenya will lead action on climate-resilient agriculture for food security; and Malta will spearhead the conservation of soil and water.

Within each thematic area, the Commonwealth will offer extensive support to countries to achieve their commitments.

This support entails mobilising resources for implementation, conducting analyses for policymaking, facilitating institutional governance, offering capacity-building assistance, and generating knowledge for member countries.

The implementation framework has been developed in response to a mandate from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in June 2022.











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A sea of unity witnessed across Guyana in response to Venezuela

GUYANESE stood together in a peaceful but strong display of unity last week, as the nation reaffirmed its position in the ongoing border controversy with Venezuela.

The display of national unity unfolded across the country leading up to the December 3 Venezuelan referendum on Guyana's Essequibo.

While the Government of Venezuela conducted its referendum which included questions that threaten Guyana's territorial integrity, Guyanese maintained the position of peace and commitment to the Rule of Law but stood together to debunk Venezuela's unfounded actions.

In Region Two, the Anna Regina car park became a symbol of tranquility and optimism, with religious leaders offering prayers and President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali delivering a passionate speech. Against a backdrop of a faint drizzles, President Ali reassured the nation of its firm commitment to the Rule of Law, emphasising the collective strength of the Guyanese people.

"We are all together under the one banner of humanity, and we are all together under the one banner of Guyanese. Whether we are from Essequibo, Berbice, or Demerara, we are cemented together under that one beautiful concept that we are Guyanese," President Ali said.

The President highlighted the resilience of Guyanese, expressing confidence that the nation would face and overcome any challenges.

"Essequibo belongs to Guyana, and it belongs to every single Guyanese," he asserted, emphasising the nation's foundation of truth, honour, and dignity.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, echoed sentiments of national pride and unity, emphasising the peaceful display of patriotism. and unity, and we intend to keep it that way, with our president's leadership and our people standing with him."

The unity displayed last week reflects a collective spirit of patriotism and resilience among the Guyanese people in the face of external challenges.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), on Friday, ordered that pending the decision of the substantive case regarding the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award, Venezuela shall refrain from taking any action that would modify the situation that currently prevails over the territory in dispute, which Guyana administers and exercises control over.



The Circle of Unity formed in Region One on December 3

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He reassured the populace, stating, "We may have our differences, but at the end of the day, we are One People, One Nation, and One Destiny, and we will always be proud of that."

Regional leaders across the country echoed similar sentiments, commending the bravery and commitment displayed by citizens.

Regional Chairman of Region One, Brentol Ashley, described the events as a "tremendous success" and emphasised the unity that prevailed throughout the region.

He said, "Our people displayed a true sense of bravery and commitment towards defending their nation, and we saw how patriotic they were. It was a calm and beautiful day, filled with love OGDEN Funeral Homes



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IMF: Guyana economy triples in size since 2019, grows 62.3 percent

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its 2023 Article IV Consultation report published on Monday has commended the Government of Guyana for its economic management, including the implementation of policies and initiatives geared at transforming Guyana's economy.

The findings were published following an official IMF mission visit to Guyana in September. The IMF, in its findings, has highlighted that Guyana's real GDP is expected to continue to grow rapidly, adding that Guyana achieved the highest real GDP growth in the world in 2022 - 62.3 per cent.

The Guyanese economy has tripled in size since the start of oil extraction (end-2019), from one of the lowest GDP per capita in Latin America and the Caribbean in the early nineties.

It is estimated that Guyana's economy should record a 38.4 per cent real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate this year, while the country's growth should continue with an expansion of an expected 26.6 per cent in 2024.

Oil production is growing, with a third oil field - Payara - coming online, and growth in the non-oil sector is supported by the implementation of a fastpaced public investment programme focused on providing transportation, housing, and flood management infrastructure, and raising human capital. Moreover, spinoffs from oil and construction are supporting growth in the services and supplies sectors.

Meanwhile, in relation to inflationary pressures, the IMF noted that the government introduced a suite of measures in 2022 and 2023, which has contributed to a decline in the inflation rate in 2023. The external current account recorded a large surplus in 2022, of 23.8 per cent of GDP, and another large surplus is expected in 2023. The IMF reported, too, that banks in Guyana are well capitalised, and continue to improve their loan portfolios.

Guyana is poised for continued rapid expansion, with on average growth of 20 per cent per year during 2024-28. IMF projects that non-oil GDP growth will be sustained at 5.5 per cent, as the government continues its plans to address the country's developmental needs.

foundation for more trade'. cent and debt service to revenue exceed-Guyana's favourable outlook, IMF ing 100 percent to bring us to a point notes, is accompanied by upside and where our debt to GDP ratio was about downside risks. On the upside, addi-60 percent and that is before we started tional oil discoveries would continue to producing oil". improve growth prospects.

The NRF Act, amended in 2021, Growth in the construction sector, enhanced transparency and accountabilalongside strong public investment ity of the use of oil revenues. The IMF could support higher than expected highlighted that governance of the NRF short-term non-oil growth but may also was strengthened in 2022 with the aplead to inflationary pressures and the pointment of three critical bodies: the appreciation of the real exchange rate. NRF Board of Directors, the Public Ac-Furthermore, the IMF highlighted that countability and Oversight Committee, adverse climate shocks, and volatile and the Investment Committee. The commodity prices have the potential to year 2022 was also the first year that oil revenues were transferred from the NRF negatively impact the economy. The IMF reported that Governto the national budget. In addition, noment's current expansionary fiscal poltification of all receipts is published.

This process continued in 2023. progress in implementing the recommendations of the 2019 Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The IMF noted that the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act was modernised and approved by parliament in August 2023, improving the regulation of exploration and production of oil, and further paves the way for developing the oil and gas industry. Further, a new Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) has been designed, which will increase the government's share of oil profits. The IMF highlighted that Guyana has made significant progress on climate actions, with Guyana becoming a world leader in forest conservation and supporting global climate change mitigation.

cessfully reestablished the Low-Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), combining the utilisation of natural resources in a sustainable manner to combat climate change with the monetisation of these efforts.

In 2022, after being awarded the first jurisdiction scale certification of carbon credits, Guyana sold 37.5 million carbon credits for US\$750 million, to be paid during 2022-2032 (a third of the credits Guyana will receive over 2016-30), one of the largest transactions in the world. The LCDS allows for the utilisation of these funds for flood management, diversification of the energy matrix, and the provision of resources for Amerindian communities.

The IMF supports the Govern-The Government also made ment's enhancement of the LCDS to



Recently, at the IMF and World Bank Annual 2023 Meetings in Marrakesh, Morocco, Senior Finance Minister Dr. Ashni Singh said: "[The government] is using this period to make the strategic investments that are necessary to ensure that in the medium to longer term Guyana is not an economy that is solely dependent on oil. We want to make sure that we have a growing, globally competitive non-oil economy so we are using this period to invest in things like infrastructure to improve connectivity with our neighbours, increase the economic space in which we are operating, and therefore lay the

propriately balanced by monetary policy.

icy stance is appropriate, given the

country's development needs and is ap-

The IMF commended Government's commitment to fiscal discipline, which allows for a balanced growth path, with the moderation of fiscal impulses over the medium-term projected to achieve a zero overall fiscal balance by 2028. This will allow for an expansion of the economy without creating macroeconomic imbalances.

At the meetings in Marrakesh, Dr. Singh had explained that "we come from a time when Guyana was once one of the most heavily indebted poor countries in the world. There was a time when Guyana's debt to GDP ratio was more than 600 percent and it took hard work to get us from where we were as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) with debt to GDP exceeding 600 per-

The Government of Guyana suc-

LCDS 2030, launched in July 2022, which expands the focus of nature conservation to include biodiversity conservation, watershed management, and the ocean economy, both for protection and by receiving payments for these efforts.

The Government of Guyana's intention is to continue to manage the economy in a prudent, sustainable manner to continue the success through among other approaches, creating a successful diversified non-oil economy.

IMF Article IV missions are undertaken as part of regular (usually annual) consultations under Article IV of the IMF's Articles of Agreement, in the context of a request to use IMF resources, as part of discussions of staff monitored programs, or as part of other staff monitoring of economic developments.

Guyana's 'foremost' diplomat Rudy Insanally dead at 87

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Samuel Rudolph Insanally passed away on November 27. He was 87 years old.

President Irfaan Ali in confirming his death last evening described him as "one of Guyana's foremost diplomats and a distinguished international statesman.

"Dr Insanally's diplomatic acumen and leadership have earned him, deservedly, the gratitude of our nation. As Guyana's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2001 to 2008, Dr Insanally advanced Guyana's national interest on the international stage. His was a life dedicated to diplomacy and particularly for advocating the cause of small states," the President said in his statement.

He recalled that the United Nations was Insanally's second home. Known better as Dr Rudy Insanally, President Ali recalled that he had the honour of serving as the President of the United Nations General Assembly and was for many years Guyana's Permanent Representative to the world's foremost multilateral institution.

"These and his tireless exertions in numerous other ambassadorial positions distinguish him as a diplomat par excellence," the Head of State said.

In 2017, Insanally launched his third book The Guyanese Culture — Fusion or Diffusion? In the 20 chapters and 200 pages he traced the evolution of Guyanese culture from the days of colonialism and slavery to the present time and examined the harm done by slavery and indentureship to our nation's psyche, highlighting the way in which the colonial policy of 'divide and rule' was used to gain support from the two main ethnic groups: African and Indian Guyanese.

In the book, he cited the past 50 years of sovereignty marred by social instability and violence and concluded that the possibility of any further cultural integration appeared remote unless "the ghosts of slavery and indentureship are exorcised from the society." Writing in a letter in Stabroek News in August of last year, E B John chronicled that Insanally was educated at Queen's College, Guyana; the University College of the West Indies, London; the University of Paris and the University of Brussels. His main areas of study were Modern Languages and International Relations. He was also the recipient of Fellowships in diplomacy granted by the United Nations and the Government of Canada. He subsequently taught French and Spanish at Kingston College, Jamaica; Queen's College, Guyana and at the University of Guyana before starting his diplomatic career. Insanally served as counsellor at the Guyana Embassy in Washington, USA from 1966 to 1969. In 1970, he was appointed Chargé D'affaires in Caracas, Venezuela. In 1972, he was transferred to



Dr Insnally addressing the National Assembly during his time as Minister of Foreign Affairs

the Permanent Mission of Guyana to the United 'Nations as Deputy Permanent representative.' He was involved in negotiations for the Second Development Decade Strategy. From 1972 to 1978, he was ambassador to Venezuela, with concurrent accreditation to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. In 1978, he was posted as Permanent Representative to the European Economic Community in Brussels. Elected Chairman of the Sugar Sub-Committee of the ACP-EEC negotiations on several occasions, he was later Chairman of the Trade Sub-Committee for the negotiation of a protocol to provide for the enlargement of the community. He was also appointed 'special rapporteur' for the Joint ACP-EEC Assembly on the implementation of the Lomé Convention.

In 1993, according to John, Insanally was elected President of the 48th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, became chairman of the Group of 77 and chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the South Summit. From 1994 to 2001, he served as Chancellor of the University of Guyana and as Guyana's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2001 to 2008. Subsequently, he was appointed an Advisor to the President on Foreign Affairs. He was the recipient of the Golden Arrow of Achievement (1986), the Cacique Crown of Honour (1980) and the Order of Roraima (1995).



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THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2023

EQUALITY NEWS



Rashmika Mandanna had described a viral deepfake video of herself as "extremely scary"

Indian actress warns about deepfake videos after she's a victim

Indian actress Rashmika Mandanna, who was recently targeted with a deepfake video, has urged people to not share such material.

She particularly urged young women to speak up if somebody bullied them with such material.

Ms Mandanna shared the message weeks after a deepfake video about her went viral on social media.

The star's face was morphed onto an Instagram video posted by a British-Indian woman.

She had described the incident as "extremely scary" at the time.

On Monday, the actress, 27, said the support from her film industry colleagues made her realise

that sharing of such videos shouldn't be normalised.

"It [the support] made me feel safe, and secure," she told the media on Monday.

"So I want to tell all girls out there that this is not normal. When something is affecting you, you don't have to keep quiet."

In a statement on X (formerly Twitter) soon after her deepfake went viral, Ms Mandanna wrote, "If this happened to me when I was in school or college, I genuinely can't imagine how could I ever tackle this." The actor said she was grateful for the support of her family and friends and called for the issue to be addressed with urgency "before more of us are affected by such identity theft".





ARIES (March 21 - April 20): The more the so-called experts tell you what is right and what is wrong the more you will need to look at the evidence yourself and make up your own mind. Just because they are experts does not mean they don't have an agenda.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): You may think that your latest idea is the best thing since sliced bread but if you are expecting to be showered with praise you may be disappointed. Yes, it's a good idea, but is it a genuinely great idea? Maybe you are over-dramatizing its importance.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): You must not allow your mind to be sidetracked by minor details over the next 24 hours, because you could easily miss out on something huge while focusing on something tiny. The bigger picture is what's important, and what a great picture it is.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): What occurs today will bring a smile to your face and also distract you enough to help you forget what has been worrying you for several weeks. With creative activities under excellent stars this is an especially good time to develop your artistic talents.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Other people's problems have taken up a lot of energy in recent days and now you need to back off a bit and make some space for yourself so you can replenish your physical, mental and emotional reserves. They are running dangerously low.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): If a colleague or business partner says something about you today that simply isn't true you must not let them get away with it. Challenge them to back up their claims with facts and, if they can't, demand a public apology. Your reputation depends on it.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You may have a few things to complain about today but why waste your time and energy on matters that you probably can't do much about? Instead, act as if everything in your world is running smoothly and you are the happiest you have ever been.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You may feel that if you take a risk, or two or three, they will pay off, maybe in a big way. Go ahead and follow your hunches, by all means, but don't advertise what you are doing, just in case you get it wrong!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): You don't need to apply an extreme solution to an issue that should really be quite simple to resolve. If the only tool you possess is a hammer then every minor problem is going to look like a nail. Try employing a more subtle approach today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): You know better than to chase after things you can never have but a friend seems determined to reach for something that is clearly too far away. Gently point out to them that they could be heading for a fall, then stand back so they don't fall on you!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): You may be a creature of logic but if your inner voice speaks to you today you must listen to it. On the career front especially your instincts will be finely tuned to what colleagues and employers are up to, and you may be able to profit from it.

- * Work
- * Money
- * Love
- * Court Case
- * Depression
- * Enemy
- * Drinking
 - * Visa
 - * Jealousy
 - * Children
- * Health
- * Marriage
- * Divorce
- * Lucky Number * Husband-wife



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PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): The message of the stars today Pisces is that you are worrying for no good reason and must trust where the universe is taking you. Your life is unfolding according to a cosmic design, so relax into your fate and enjoy all the good things it brings.

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Six police officers acquitted of murder of 3 in South Trinidad

Trinidad and Tobago's Commissioner of Police Erla Harewood-Christopher has issued a response following the acquittal of six police officers involved in the Barrackpore murders of 2011.

Commissioner Harewood-Christopher addressed the public on Friday, acknowledging the nature of the case.

She emphasized that the actions of the police officers had undergone thorough scrutiny, and they had been subject to the due process of law.

Harewood-Christopher pointed out that the circumstances surrounding this case are representative of the inherent occupational hazards faced by police officers.

As part of the administration's commitment to preventing similar incidents, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) has been actively working to develop and implement a Use of Force Policy.

This policy is intended to provide guidelines and oversight to police officers during their operations.

Additionally, the full deployment of body-worn cameras is seen as an effective measure to regulate officers' conduct and provide valuable evidence in assessing the adequacy and appropriateness of police actions.

Expressing her deep condolences and regret, the Commissioner of Police acknowledged the tragic loss of life in



One of the accused officers celebrates his victory at the courts with his lawyers

this incident

Harewood-Christopher urged officers to enhance their proficiency in adhering to Standard Operating Procedures, emphasizing the importance of preventing such heartbreaking incidents in the future.

The tragic incident occurred on July 22, 2011. The victims, identified as 20-year-old Abigail Johnson of St Mary's Village, Moruga, 27-year-old Alana Duncan of Duncan Village, San Fernando, and 29-year-old Kerron Eccles of St Mary's Village, Moruga were shot and killed by police officers.

The officers, in their defense, claimed that they had been fired upon first.

St Kitts and Nevis citizens urged to unite in fight against crime

In a recent address to the nation, Premier and Opposition Leader Mark Brantley of St Kitts and Nevis issued a heartfelt plea for the active involvement of all residents in the ongoing battle against rising crime rates in the Caribbean nation.

Brantley's impassioned plea comes in the wake of the 27th and 28th murders recorded in 2023, casting a grim shadow over the once tranquil islands of St Kitts and Nevis. During a press conference held to address the nation's growing concerns, Brantley emphasized that each resident bears a shared responsibility in combating the surge in criminal activities.



He lamented that St Kitts and Nevis faces a unique challenge, with some members of the community unwilling to assist the police while simultaneously demanding more action from them.

Brantley firmly declared, "So crime is our problem," and urged citizens not to turn a blind eye, as crime can eventually impact everyone's doorstep.

He urged citizens to play an active role in assisting the local law enforcement agencies.

Brantley stressed that a significant portion of the nation's criminal elements are products of their own homes and neighborhoods. He firmly asserted that acknowledging this shared responsibility is essential to curbing the rising tide of crime.

While acknowledging that both the police and government have their share of accountability for the crime

Opposition leader Mark Brantley

situation, Brantley made it clear that lawbreakers cannot be apprehended without the crucial assistance of citizens. He underscored that the public's willingness to provide information to law enforcement is pivotal in addressing the issue effectively.

Addressing a common sentiment among the population, Brantley noted, "A lot of people say: 'Let the police go and do their work'. But when they see crime they are not willing to share information with the police as if the police are superhuman, and so by some process of discernment, the police will automatically know who commits the crime."

He emphasized the importance of citizens actively engaging with the authorities to combat crime effectively.

Brantley reminded the public that nations worldwide depend on their populations to actively participate in the fight against crime. In his address, Brantley acknowledged the government's initiatives, such as the "Peace Program," designed to encourage at-risk residents to veer away from a life of crime.

However, he pointed out that violence tends to surge when these programs conclude, as they often do not address the underlying causes of criminal behavior.

He called upon Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew to initiate dialogues across party lines to collectively address the grave issue at hand.

Brantley stressed the importance of political unity, stating that it sends a powerful message to criminals that their actions will not be tolerated on the islands of St Kitts and Nevis.

Caribbean countries at risk from rising sea levels

recent report, which highlights the looming peril facing several Caribbean countries due to the absence of shoreline defenses.

According to the report, these nations may permanently lose at least five percent of their cities to sea-level rises by the close of this century.

The report identifies Kingston (Jamaica), as one of the vulnerable cities in the crosshairs.

Without adequate shoreline defenses, the worst-case scenario of warming could lead to five per cent or more of the following cities succumbing to irreversible inundation: Guayaquil, Ecuador; Barranquilla, Colombia; Santos, Brazil; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Kingston, Jamaica; Cotonou, Benin; Kolkata, India; Perth, Australia; Newcastle, Australia; and Sydney, Australia.

Insights from Human Climate Horizons, a joint initiative between the

A dire warning has been issued in a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Climate Impact Lab (CIL), reveal a distressing trend.

> Over the past two decades, coastal flooding has escalated due to rising sea levels. Consequently, an additional 14 million people worldwide now reside in coastal communities with a one-in-20 annual risk of flooding.

> If global greenhouse gas emissions (SSP2-4.5) continue on their current trajectory, this one-in-20 flood risk could extend to areas inhabited by nearly 73 million individuals by the close of the century.

> The new hyperlocal data maps a fivefold surge in susceptibility to flood damage along densely populated coastlines globally.

> This data platform provides crucial insights into where sea-level rise poses the gravest threat to homes and infrastructure.

The authors of the report emphasize that numerous highly populated cities will confront heightened flood risks by mid-century, compared to a future untouched by climate change.

The study's findings paint a stark picture of mounting peril in low-lying coastal regions across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

This alarming trend has the potential to trigger a regression in human development within coastal communities worldwide.

The report asserts that by 2100, climate change could submerge over 5 per cent of land in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Associate Members of United Nations Regional Commissions, including the Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Turks and Caicos, Tuvalu, and Seychelles.

Under the most extreme scenario of global warming (SSP5-8.5), roughly

160,000 square kilometers of coastal land-equivalent to the territory of Greece or Bangladesh-could be inundated by 2100, compared to a world untouched by climate change.

Notably, this includes the United Arab Emirates, the host of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28) from November 30 to December 12 this year.

The report underscores that concerted efforts to curtail global emissions and limit warming to below two degrees Celsius could safeguard approximately 70,000 square kilometers of vulnerable land, preventing it from succumbing to rising sea levels.

Pedro Conceição, Director of UNDP's Human Development Report Office, warns that the consequences of rising sea levels threaten to undo decades of human development progress in densely populated coastal zones housing one in seven people worldwide.

CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

US pastor jailed for exploiting Caribbean kids

A pastor in Wisconsin, United States, who stands accused of sexually exploiting children from Venezuela and Cuba, on Monday received a federal prison sentence of 15 years.

He is Cory Herthel, who served at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Green Bay.

The 40-year-old pled guilty in August to one count of attempted sexual exploitation of a child.

According to court documents, reports indicate that the church reached out to the FBI in May, informing them that they had received information about Herthel engaging in the exchange of sexually explicit videos with a 15-year-old in Venezuela.

As per prosecutors and court records, Herthel admitted to encountering the child, who was begging on the streets in Ecuador, and maintained communication with the child even after the child and his mother returned to their home country of Venezuela.

Trini charged with murder in Grenada

A 20-year-old machine operator from Trinidad and Tobago was arrested and charged with capital murder in Grenada.

Isreal Farrel has been remanded to His Majesty's Prison following his court appearance.

He was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department in Grenada.

He stands accused of capital murder in connection to the death of Delvon Thomas, a resident of Carriacou.

Apart from the capital murder charge, Farrel has been charged with four counts of attempted capital murder.

These charges stem from two separate shooting

His next court appearance is scheduled for December 19, 2023.

US tourist dies while visiting The Bahamas

A 61-year-old American tourist died while snorkeling in Castaway Cay, Abaco, in the Bahamas.

The tragic event marks the fourth cruise ship passenger to pass away suddenly in Bahamian waters this month.

Reports are that the man, a resident of Warminster, Pennsylvania, embarked on a snorkeling adventure when he encountered breathing difficulties.

Despite the administration of CPR by lifeguards, the man remained unresponsive.

It is further reported that he was taken to the cruise ship, where the ship's doctor examined him

During this correspondence, they exchanged sexually explicit videos.

Furthermore, investigators also learned that Herthel was allegedly exchanging sexually explicit videos with two children in Cuba.

It is also reported that he was in a sexual relationship with one of the children and was sending money to the other.

incidents that shook the communities of Mt Egmont and Woburn in St George.

These incidents, occurring on August 14 and November 20 of 2023, have also led to charges of illegal firearm and ammunition possession against Farrel.

Farrel appeared at the St George's Magistrate's Court on Wednesday and was remanded to His Majesty's Prisons.

and pronounced him dead.

Authorities have said that an autopsy will be conducted to determine the cause of death.

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Accused in Paulwell murder case to re-appear in court in March

Leoda Bradshaw and Roland Balfour, the other two people accused in the murder of Jamaican Parliamentarian Phillip Paulwell's 10-month-old daughter and her mother, have been remanded until early 2024.

On Friday, a Supreme Court Judge ordered the two to return to court on March 6, 2024.

During Friday's hearing, the court was informed that the prosecution's case file is incomplete. According to reports, the forensic material, forensic certificate and statements from investigators were not on file. When the two make their next court appearance, it is expected that all outstanding documents will be available and disclosed to the defense team.

Judge Vinnette Graham-Allen ordered that on or before January 31, the statements from investigators should be submitted. The forensic material and certificate were ordered to be submitted on or before February 29.

Bradshaw and Balfour were charged with murder and other offences in relation to the abduction and killing of 27-year-old Toshyna Patterson and her 10-month-old daughter Sarayah Paulwell in September.

Bradshaw, who shares a child with Phillip Paulwell, has been charged with two counts of conspiracy to murder, two counts of conspiracy to kidnapping, two counts of kidnapping, and two counts of murder. Balfour, the cousin of Bradshaw, faces similar charges.



The other two men that were implicated in the double murder were sentenced last month.

Richard Brown, a 31-year-old graphic artist from Kingston, was sentenced to 30 years in prison on each of the two counts of murder for the killing of baby Sarayah and her mother.

Toshyna Patterson and baby Paulwell

He was also sentenced to one year and 10 months in prison on each of the two counts of kidnapping of the mother and daughter. The sentences are to be served concurrently and he has been ordered to serve 20 years before he is eligible for parole.

Miller, was sentenced to serve seven years and 10 months for each count of accessory before the fact to murder; two years and 10 months for each count of conspiracy to kidnap; and one year and 10 months for misprision of felony. The sentences are to run concurrently.

Brown's accomplice, Roshane

Jamaica ranked among safest countries in world

Jamaica is the safest country in the Caribbean and among the safest countries in the world, according to respected international analytics firm Gallup Inc in its 2023 Global Law and Order Report.

An article by Breaking Travel News, regarded as a top source for travel and tourism news, reported that Gallup has placed Jamaica in a category with countries like New Zealand, Costa Rica and Cyprus.



"The report gauges people's sense of personal security and their own experiences with crime and law enforcement. Results are based on nationally representative, probability-based samples among adult populations, aged 15 and older, in 141 countries and territories throughout 2022," the BTN published.

Topping the list was Tajikistand's score of 96 out of 100 to lead the countries, followed by Finland and Iceland, both tied on 92.

The United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom all finished on 83 points.

Jamaica, which scored 75 points, was ranked the safest countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Jamaica was followed by Puerto Rico on 74, Brazil on 73, Argentina 70; Mexico and Venezuela tied on 66; the Dominican Republic 64, Peru 61 and Ecuador 59.

Cruise ship makes a stop in Montego Bay

Breaking Travel News said when it contacted Delano Seiveright, senior advisor and strategist in Jamaica's Ministry of Tourism, he declined to comment extensively on the report, but said, "The safety of every Jamaican and every visitor matters greatly. Notably, the

crime rates against visitors remains extremely low, hovering at around 0.01 per cent and already our visitor numbers are double digit percentages ahead of 2019 and 2022. Jamaica is abuzz like never before and millions have visited over the years without incident."

Barbados' PM calls for methane regulation at COP28

In an address at the COP28 climate to rising global temperatures. talks in Dubai, the Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, emphasized the urgent need for global action on methane regulation.

Highlighting the critical state of climate change, she described it as a potential "death sentence" for many regions.

Mottley pointed out the absence of a significant global agreement on methane, a greenhouse gas with a nearterm impact far more damaging than CO2.

She stressed the importance of moving from regulatory discussions to concrete actions to control methane emissions effectively.

The Prime Minister directed attention towards the oil and gas industries, urging them to take a more proactive role in reducing emissions.

She advocated for stringent regulations and compliance to minimize the adverse effects of methane, contributing

While Mottley recognized the progress made, particularly the establishment of a loss and damage fund, she called for adequate funding of these initiatives.

She highlighted the cost-effectiveness of preemptive measures in disaster management, noting the significant savings in both monetary terms and human lives.

A major accomplishment at this year's UN climate conference was the finalization of a fund designed to support countries grappling with climate change-induced loss and damage.

This initiative marks a significant step forward in global climate efforts.

Several countries, including Germany and the United Arab Emirates, have already contributed to the fund, each pledging \$100 million.

The COP28 conference, held in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates, brought together around 150 global leaders.



Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley

These presidents, prime ministers, and royals presented their strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The conference this year holds par-

ticular significance as the threat of a climate catastrophe seems more imminent than ever.

Jamaica surpasses 1000 confirmed dengue cases

Jamaica has now surpassed 1,000 confirmed cases of dengue, according to a statement from the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

As of November 30, there were 1,301 confirmed Dengue cases in Jamaica, the ministry said, along with 12 Dengue-related deaths – eight of which have been classified as suspected and four as confirmed.

Kingston & St. Andrew has reported the highest number of cases for 2023 at 1,232. At the same time, St Thomas continues with the highest rate of 541.4 cases per 100,000 population.

The highest number of cases continues to be observed in the 5-14-yearold cohort at a rate of 623.1 cases per 100,000 population.

The ministry is again reminding the public that Dengue fever is a mosquitoborne disease that is usually a mild illness in which a person may get a fever, headache, joint, and muscle pains.

"Rest and adequate hydration are usually enough to see one through the period of illness. The recommended treatment for the fever is acetaminophen/paracetamol," it said in a statement.

The ministry has also urged residents not to self-treat themselves if they suspect that they have dengue, but to visit a health facility and seek medical





Jamaica's Minister of Health and Wellness Dr. Christopher Tufton

advice.

It also urged people to play their part by checking for and eliminating mosquito breeding sites in their surroundings.

"Persons are asked to play their part in ensuring that the Dengue cases are minimized by monitoring water storage containers for mosquito breeding; keeping surroundings free of debris; destroying or treating potential mosquito breeding sites; wearing protective clothing and using a DEET containing mosquito repellent," the statement read.

Since the outbreak was declared in September, over 400 communities have been fogged to date, according to Minister of Health Christopher Tufton.

Morning and evening fogging ses-

sions are just one part of the ministry's dengue outbreak mitigation plan, which includes a public education campaign on dengue, clinical management, destroying mosquito breeding sites (primarily located in the homes of residents), drain cleaning, and waste removal.

A triple threat of COVID-19, dengue, and the flu are putting additional stress on Jamaica's health care system, according to the Health and Wellness Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton.

He pointed out that while COVID-19 is no longer a public health emergency, the positivity rate on the island is above 10 percent which is relatively high.

EQUALITY NEWS **THURSDAY DECEMBER 7 2023** Killer freed from prison after serving 30 years for wife's murder in T&T

HAVING spent almost three decades in prison after being found guilty in 1999 of chopping his wife to death five years prior, a High Court judge has ordered the immediate release of a Mayaro man.

Initially, 58-year-old Tackhoor Ramcharan was sentenced to hang for the murder of Naline Ramcharan, but the sentence was eventually commuted to life.

Justice Gail Gonzales on Monday re-sentenced him in accordance with the Privy Council case of Naresh Boodram v The Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago which held that life in prison amounts to cruel and unusual punishment. Therefore, the High Court is now required to re-sentence those who were ordered to serve life, to specific numbers of years based on the individual circumstances of each case.

In imposing sentence on Ramcharan at the Hall of Justice in Port of Spain, Justice Gonzales began with a starting point of 35 years, before reducing it by five.

The judge said she believed that Ramcharan was no longer a threat to society. Taking into account the time he had already spent in prison, Justice Gonzales proceeded to sentenced him to time served.

Attorneys Rhea Libert, Josiah Soo Hon and Ananda Gobin appeared on behalf of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), while John



Justice Gail Gonzales: ordered convicted killer freed

Ramcharan.

In May 1994, Ramcharan and his wife, who had two children together, were separated for some time and, when she refused a request by Ramcharan to move back in with him, he became enraged and threatened to kill her.

According to the State's case, even though the two were still married, Naline Ramcharan became involved in a relationship with another man, and told her husband she preferred him (the other man).

One week later on May 14, Ramcharan returned to the house where the woman was living and called out to her.

Heath SC, and Peter Carter appeared for As she opened the door, Ramcharan chopped her a number of times including to the head.

> Seconds after the incident, the victim's mother, who was on her way to visit her daughter, heard her screaming and found her with chop wounds.

> Ramcharan was also seen standing about 25 feet away with a cutlass in his hand.

> The victim was taken to the Mayaro Hospital where she died the next day.

> On May 16, police went to Ramcharan's house where he was living with his mother and placed him under arrest after he was said to have made a potentially incriminating oral statement.

The State claimed he also handed over to officers the clothing he had been wearing at the time of the incident as well as the cutlass he used before indicating he wanted to make a statement in writing. Ramcharan was then taken to the police station where he gave a written statement to the police, which was later authenticated by a Justice of the Peace.

During the course of the trial, Ramcharan denied he murdered his wife.

He claimed the last time he saw her was on May 8, when she hurled obscenities at him and told him she had "another man."

Ramcharan also denied having given his clothes or cutlass to the police or having dictated a statement to the police. According to him, he went to the police station because of a telephone call he received. He said during that phone call he was informed that his wife had been wounded after a fight with his mother.

He claimed when he arrived at the station he saw his mother there and she was handcuffed at the time.

Ramcharan claimed officers brought documents for him to sign and informed him they were paperwork to have his mother granted station bail. Without reading the documents, he said he placed his signature on them, after which he said he was informed by an officer that he was to be charged with the murder.

Judge champions campaign finance reform

High Court judge Frank Seepersad has called on business owners to become vocal advocates for the enactment of campaign finance reform as he appealed to them to adopt a firm notolerance approach to unlawful conduct and corruption in all its

vest in T&T. If the flowers are to bloom again, each of you must take risks, embrace innovation, harness technology, and identify and seize new and emerging opportunities. You can revive San Fernando, explore the potential which the waterfront presents, use it and focus on local content to create cultural and gastronomical space which can entice visitors. We must rebrand T&T as a place of peace, prosperity and productivity," said Seepersad.

of finances towards an electoral campaign arose, he said:

"The defendant, through its principal agent, boldly and brazenly advanced that the money was paid on the premise that if the election was won, valuable contracts would be awarded to the claimant as a form of gratitude. The defendant further asserted that after his party's success at the polls, the claimant was handsomely rewarded and received multi-milliondollar contracts from the State. I found that this articulated arrangement was intolerable and offensive."

their profit margins increase annually. Is this coincidental or by design?" he said.

Seepersad appealed for a firm stand to be taken and a loud call to be issued to those holding executive and legislative authority that the best interest of the taxpayer is of paramount importance and that no political financier should be given preferential treatment.

manifestations.

Justice Seepersad was the featured speaker at the San Fernando Business Association's Christmas dinner in the City Hall of San Fernando on Saturday night.

He told the gathering that society must confront the scourge of crime by intervening at the community level.

"Become your brother's keeper, partner with the police to share information and identify those who are or have the inclination and capacity to cause chaos. As community leaders, you must employ intervention strategies and engage at-risk youth. Let your sense of empathy and compassion radiate and show them that they are worthy and that their lives matter. From an economic perspective, you must believe in our unrealised potential and in-

The judge said that the biggest challenge, however, requires a reorientation in the way in which citizens operate.

"As you reflect upon how you may be prepared to realise your integrity-driven leadership potential, I want to implore you to become vocal advocates for the enactment of campaign finance reform," Seepersad told the business owners and San Fernando city stakeholders.

Referring to a court matter, in 2018, when he, as the trial judge, presided over a matter when the issue

He said the scenario which he referenced was not an isolated event.

"I am sure that many of you have had to engage in fiscal restructuring brought about by an unavailability of forex and a decline in the retail sector. Your profit margins have suffered and you are struggling to keep your businesses afloat, yet there are some businesses, financial institutions and conglomerates which seem to be immune from the financial constraints which grapple most of the country,

"All is not lost, the citizenry can save this blessed Republic and you are urged to harness your strength of character and business savvy to stand confident in the fact that your integrity can shield and empower you. Do not shirk the responsibility to become leaders, for each of you has the capacity to become catalysts for change. Your voices can resonate and collectively we can transform this place we call home into an efficient, empathetic and effective space where procedural regularity, peace, patience, and proactive and principled positions are practised with regularity. Please accede to the leadership call and save our blessed Republic," said Seepersad.

CWI Academy crush Emerging Ireland, sweep series 2-0

Cricket West Indies (CWI) Academy crushed Emerging Ireland by 432 runs on Monday to sweep the two-match series, on day three at Coolidge Cricket Ground, Antigua.

CWI Academy won the first fourday match by an innings and 134 runs last week.

Resuming play on 172 for four with a massive 426-run lead, after dismissing the Irish for 72 on Sunday, the CWI Academy batsmen again put their opponents to the sword.

An unbeaten century from Kevin Wickham steered the Academy boys to a massive 321 for eight declared. Wickham stroked 105 not out while Ackeem

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Auguste (75), Teddy Bishop (46) and Nyeem Young (32) also starred with the bat.

Bowler Tom Mayes (5/75) was the pick of the bowlers for the Irish.

Needing an unlikely 576 for victory, the visitors doubled their first innings total but were still woefully short of being competitive. They were bowled out for 143 with Liam McCarthy (35) and Stephen Doheny (23) the only batsmen showing some resistance. Joshua Bishop, who scored a century in the first match, took four for 36 while McKenny Clarke had two for 16.

Scores: CWI ACADEMY 326 (Kevlon Anderson 125 not out, Nyeem Young 80, Matthew Nandu 35, Joshua Bishop 22; Tom Mayes 5-64, Michael Frost 2-71, Matthew Foster 2-114) and 321 for eight decl. (Kevin Wickham 105 not out, Ackeem Auguste 75, Teddy Bishop 46, Nyeem Young 32; Tom Mayes 5-75) vs EMERGING IRELAND 72 (Cade Carmichael 39; Joshua Bishop 4-18, Isai Thorne 3-16) and 143 (Liam McCarthy 35, Stephen Doheny 23; Joshua Bishop 4-36, McKenny Clarke 2-16)



CWI Academy batsman Kevin Wickham raises bat after scoring a century



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