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AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT: President Dr Irfaan Ali on Tuesday accepted the Letters of Credence from the new High Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Australia to Guyana, Sonya Koppe. He told the High Commissioner that Guyana is aligned with many of the policies and programmes that Australia promotes and called for stronger cooperation between the two nations. The President also stated that Guyana is undergoing a period of transformation and is building an ecosystem to support the country's quest to become a global leader in climate, energy and food security. Ali said his government is mobilising support for the country's standing forest and will ensure that the forest plays a central role in climate change mitigation. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Ambassador Elisabeth Harper were also at the event.




CEO Trevor Sadler of InterCaribbean Airlines, met with Equality Publisher Bhaskar Sharma in Barbados earlier this week to introduce his airline to Equality's readers. InterCaribbean serves The Bahamas, Haiti, British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, St Lucia, Barbados, St Vincent, Antigua and Guyana.



Barbados Minister of Tourism Dr. Ian Edgehill greets our Publisher Bhaskar Sharma, who is in Barbados for the the Tourism Conference. Dr. Edgehill, who is no stranger to Equality North American readers, said the 15,000 rooms of Barbados are open to the world. More in Equality in coming weeks.



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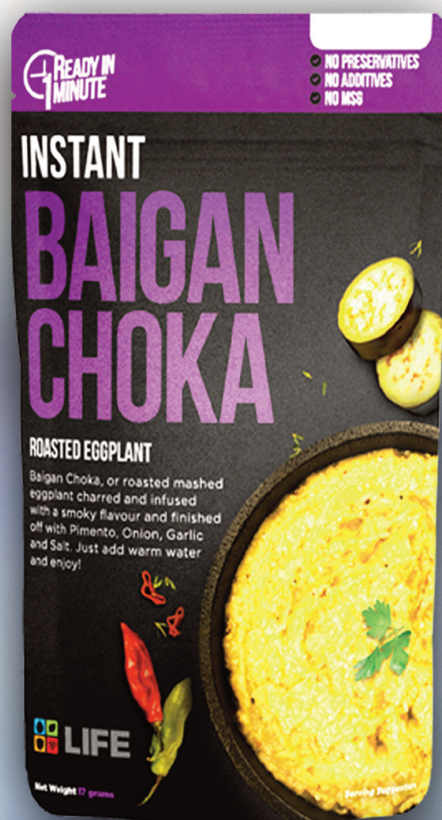
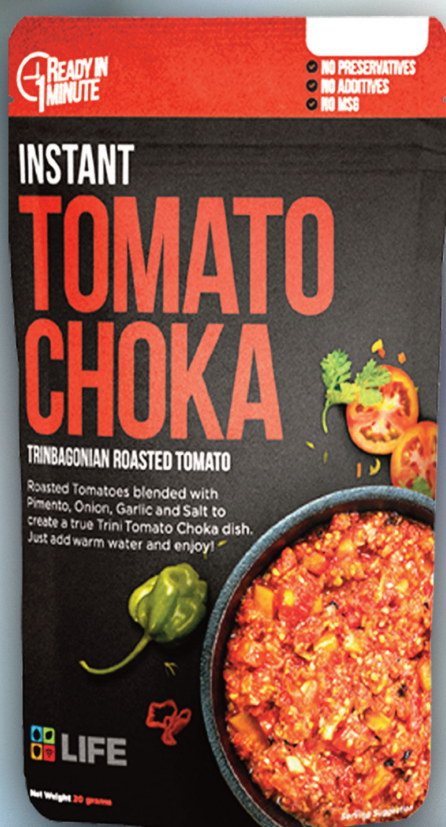
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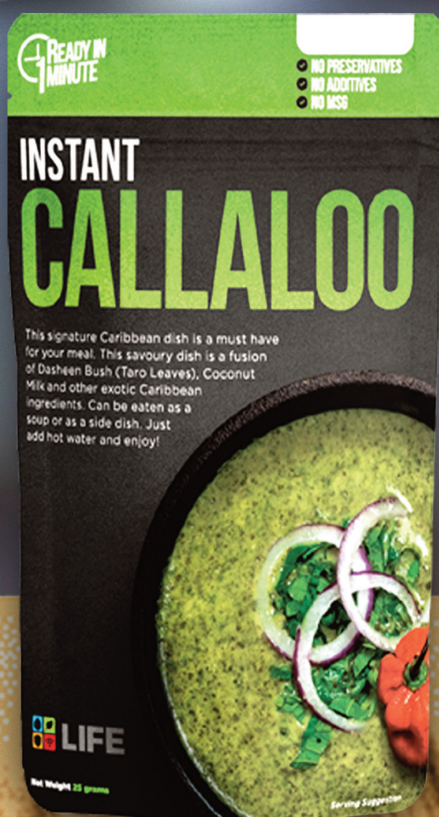


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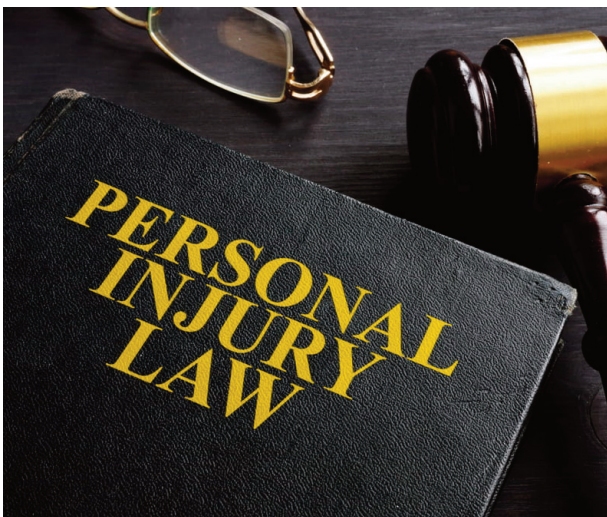
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Training for Extension Officers at Agri Ministry

Guyana's Ministry of Agriculture on Tuesday held the first session for its new extension system programme. The exercise which was held at the Zara Computer Training Center under the theme Delivering Extension Services in the New Dispensation, was developed in an effort to deliver improved extension services to farmers across the country.

Approximately 250 agriculture extension officers from all ten administrative regions will, over the next new weeks, be exposed to various techniques aimed at revamping the way services are delivered to farmers as the government works to facilitate an increase in the production of both traditional and non-traditional commodities.

Agriculture Minister, Honourable Zulfikar Mustapha while offering remarks said that extension officers serve as the primary link between the policymakers and the farmers, and as such, extension services should be delivered in a way that the government's policies and vision for the sector can be achieved.

He stated that following his engagements with farmers across the country and extension staff, it became evident that the ministry's extension arm needed revamping as part of the regional food security agenda.

"The policies of the Ministry of Agriculture, which are guided by the government will help us to ensure this sector is developed into a robust sector. As critical players in this sector, we are obligated to ensure we achieve and maintain food secu-

rity in Guyana, while playing a leading role in the Regional food security efforts. As a government, one of our main objectives is to improve and increase outputs in the agriculture sector. Therefore, we need our extension officers to be more aggressive, responsive, reorganized, and result-oriented," he noted.

He further stated that given Guyana's potential to become a lead exporter of both fresh and processed agricultural products, investments are being made to improve transportation, logistics, food standards, and traceability within the agriculture sector.

"Being cognizant of accelerating agriculture production and boosting intra-regional trade, the Government of Guyana is creating an enabling environment that will strengthen the agri-food system. As such, there has been an increase in both public and private investment in the agriculture sector. In light of the policy direction, it is necessary that the agricultural extension system be restructured to accommodate the expansion of agriculture production," he said.

Minister Mustapha also said for sustainable growth to take place within the sector, certain systems needed to be implemented. While underscoring the importance of integrating technology and updated agricultural techniques into daily agricultural operations, Minister Mustapha said that having regional leaders with the ability to drive innovation and productivity in the sector was critical.



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha

"For continued growth in the agriculture sector, we need a robust and coordinated extension and advisory services system that is accessible to all farmers and rural families. This system should be equipped with the latest technologies and knowledge to ensure that farmers are aware of the best practices and methods to enhance their productivity and profitability. There should be a focus on educating farmers and rural families on the importance of adopting sustainable agricultural practices and the most cost-effective techniques. Most importantly, however, we need to cre-

ate regional leaders in agriculture who will drive innovation, efficiency, and productivity in the sector," he noted.

Over the last few months, the ministry has developed a Regional Plan for Agriculture Transformation in each Region, which will guide the efforts to support the development of the sector.

Furthermore, boundaries for the 31 Extension Districts within the ten regions have since been established as well as a standardized reporting format for all Regions to improve data management and analysis capabilities.

The new system which is expected to go into effect as early as June, will see extension officers being multi-functional and equipped with the skillset to address issues relating to every aspect of the sector.

Earlier this year, Minister Mustapha met with the regional agriculture coordinators to discuss the government's plan to revamp and restructure the extension arm of the ministry.

Officers from the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA), Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB), National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI), New Guyana Marketing Corporation (New GMC), the Fisheries Department and other agencies under the ministry's umbrella will, during the course of the day and in the coming weeks, be given extensive training in keeping with the government's goal of delivering better services to farmers across the country.

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Montreal’s Carifesta Carnival on the rocks after City denies permit

By Nishad Sharma
LJI REPORTER

Montreal’s answer to Toronto Caribbean Carnival (Caribana) may be on the rocks, after the city refused to issue a permit to stage the annual Carifesta Parade.

According to organizers, Montreal’s decision comes as a shock since, according to them, they filed their permit application well before the deadline earlier this year.

“If there was something missing, it would’ve been nice to know,” said Everiste Blaize, president of the Caribbean Cultural Festivities Association (CCFA), which organizes the event.

“Nobody contacted us to say this was missing or that was missing. It was simply a letter I received after our application. That’s it.”

Blaize says without the permit, they won’t get more than \$30,000 in funding, about 80 per cent of the operating cost.

“For example, the no parking signs is usually about \$15,000, which is half our budget,” he said, adding that much of the rest pays for security.



Revellers on the streets of Montreal during a past Carifesta parade

In a statement, the City of Montreal says last year it changed its support programs for festivals and cultural events and that the Carifesta promoter was invited to submit a project under the Programme de soutien aux festivals et événements culturels (PSFEC) – Part III.

“The city says the promoter was notified of these changes and contacted him several times to support him in sub-

mitting his project,” the statement reads. “The promoter did not respond to the city’s support offer.

“The City of Montreal grants funding to organizations likely to be able to deploy an event in a viable manner according to realistic budget projections and a history of good governance. The Carifesta project, as presented, was not deemed viable in 2023, not to mention

that the issues experienced in 2022 were not addressed by the promoter.”

The statement goes on to say that 90 eligible projects under the PSFEC in 2023 will get funding, including Fes-tiThéâtreCréole / FestiTeyatKreyol, Festival Haiti en Folie, Mizik Kreyol International Festival of Montreal and A Taste of the Caribbean Festival.

Those who usually participate in the parade say they’re sad they may not get to participate this year and that to lose the parade, a staple in the city, would be a huge blow.

“I thought about what does this mean, how do we move forward from there?” said Melika Forde, president of the West-Can Folk Performing Company. “What can we as a community do?”

Brian Smith, who has always supported the parade, agrees.

“It is very, very important to know exactly what took place and what can be remedied for that,” he said.

Blaize said he is hoping to hear from city authorities about why the Carifesta project was rejected.

Central Bank wants your opinion on a Digital Loonie

The Bank of Canada wants to know what Canadians think about the possibility of a digital loonie.

Consultations on what Canadians would like to have included in a digital currency are open online from May 8 until June 19, the Bank of Canada said Monday.

The central bank notes, however, that the decision to launch a digital version of the Canadian dollar remains in the hands of Parliament and physical coins and banknotes aren’t going anywhere.

Compared to private cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, which can sometimes fluctuate in value like a stock, a digital currency backed by the central bank would not be subject to the same level of volatility — it would always retain the same value as a Canadian dollar.

The central bank wants to know how Canadians would use a hypothetical digital currency, as well as any concerns they have about security and accessibility.

While the Bank reassured Canadians in its announcement that physical banknotes will always be available to those who want them, it said in a release Monday



there could be a future where cash transactions are not common in day-to-day banking, which could inadvertently exclude some from the financial system.

There is currently no need for a digital currency in Canada, the central bank said in the release.

But it added that if other central banks or private organizations eventually adopt their own digital currencies — China and India are two such countries that have already taken the step — falling behind could be a risk to Canada’s economy and the stability of the financial system.

“As Canada’s central bank, we want to make sure everyone can always take part in our country’s economy,” Carolyn Rogers, senior deputy governor at the central bank, said in a statement. “That means being ready for whatever the future holds.”

The Bank of Canada has been studying the possibility of issuing its own digital currency for much of the past decade, but the concept has garnered lots of attention within the government and political circles in the past few years.

Briefing notes prepared for Chrystia Freeland in January 2021 show public servants warned the federal finance minister about “wide-reaching implications for the economy” if the Bank of Canada adopted a digital currency, according to documents obtained by The Canadian Press.

Federal Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre said in April of last year — before taking the reins of the party — that he would stop any plans for a digital currency if he became prime minister, arguing they were mechanisms that should be left to financial markets.

Poilievre also sparked controversy around cryptocurrency when he was campaigning for the party leadership last spring, branding the technology as a way for Canadians to “opt out of inflation.” Rogers refuted that claim in an appearance at the House of Commons’ finance committee in April 2022.

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Relevance of the Crown

The pomp and ceremony, not to mention expense, of Charles’ ascension to the Crown in Britain on Saturday, have once again ignited the debate over the relevance of Monarchy in many of the countries where he is recognized as King and Head of State.

Among them is Canada, as well as several Caribbean nations that include Jamaica, St Kitts-Nevis and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The relevance of a constitutional monarchy in such countries has been questioned for decades.

In Canada, a debate over this has been raging since the 1960s, when the emergence of Quebec nationalism, and the evolution of Canadian nationalism brought the cultural role and relevance of the monarchy into the public discourse.

Of course, Canadians of that era who were mostly European immigrants wholeheartedly supported then then Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State, and wanted the country to remain a constitutional Monarchy.

This was largely at odds with the country’s indigenous population, which had tenuous relations with the Crown at best, understandably so over their stolen lands and attempts at eliminating

their culture and beliefs through the dreadful Residential School System, with complicity from the church.

To appease the natives, the Crown established agreements that include King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763. While not a treaty, it is regarded by First Nations as their Magna Carta or "Indian Bill of Rights", which remains a part of the Canadian constitution.

The proclamation set parts of the King's North American realm aside for colonists and reserved others for the First Nations, thereby affirming native title to their lands and making clear that, though under the sovereignty of the Crown, the Aboriginal bands were autonomous political units in a "nation-to-nation" association with non-native governments, with the monarch as the intermediary.

Today, however, First Nations leaders have raised concerns about what they see as a crumbling relationship between their people and the Crown, fueled by the failure of the federal and provincial cabinets to resolve land claim disputes and to secure an official apology for the horror of the residential school system.

Elizabeth II, for her part, tried to

calm waters. On Canada's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2021, the Queen said she "joins with all Canadians ... to reflect on the painful history that Indigenous peoples endured in residential schools in Canada, and on the work that remains to heal and to continue to build an inclusive society."

It must also be noted that part of Canada’s delegation to Charles III’s coronation included several indigenous leaders. Whether that was a sign of acceptance, or a sign of hope that better will soon come, is unknown.

Meanwhile, in the Caribbean, the far less complicated relationship between the Crown and its territories is under fire. Jamaica’s Prime Minister Andrew Holness has vowed to make his island a republic by 2025, following Barbados which did exactly that last year.

St Vincent and St Kitts are also planning to follow suit.

And it’s about time, given that much of the wealth on show at Saturday's coronation in London was stolen from Britain’s territories in the West Indies as well as India and Africa (the latter two accounting for many of the

glittering gems that adorn the crown), and countries like Canada continue to pay to support the Monarchy -- reportedly \$59 million annually -- for little in return. (These fees go to the Governor General, who represents the Crown in Canada.)

So perhaps it is time to ask: is the Monarch really relevant to this country?

The Canada that continued to embrace the Crown in the 1960s is a vastly different one today. Many Canadians are now people who have endured the horrors of British imperialism in their previous homelands, the theft of natural resources and brutality at the hands of British plantation owners.

The British Crown is a symbol of treachery and theft, and not one of which we can be proud.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a self-proclaimed Monarchist, has said that the monarchy’s role in Canada is not open for debate. But we must remind Mr Trudeau that he is not a Royal, and as such does not dictate to the people but is answerable to them

We think it is time it should be open for debate and a referendum.

Reflection On Arrival Day

Dear Editor,
“Accept the unedited past without any change”

So little or so much lie in the past,
People and performances perfected with a blast.
In the wink of an eye, it went fast,

To leave us in a conditional overcast.
Those days and nights will not change,
Try not to tamper or rearrange.
All’s written down along the range,
Now, everything seems a little strange.

Shun not memories that cannot be forgotten,
What in black and white, are already written.
Bitter or sweet, events harden, soften or smitten,
Issues viewed as uncomfortable and rotten.

History will be read but cannot be edited,
A real life lived and scripted, not animated.
If worthy and hearty, it may be imitated,
Others find interested, otherwise, wasted.

Words spoken and gone, cannot now erase,

The twists and turns traversed during that phase.
Now, a present and future summon a case,
Contingent on a foundation with a proven base.

Seasons upon seasons adept with reasons accept,
What many moons kept with an individual concept.
The passage of time swept the flowing tide to intercept,
When man wept but nature perseveres to its precept.

Yours sincerely,
Jai Lall

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City to consider proposal to rename Yonge-Dundas to Lightfoot Square

By Niraj Sharma
LJI REPORTER

The generic name for the popular downtown venue, Yonge-Dundas Square, could soon bear the name of legendary Canadian musician Gordon Lightfoot, who died last week.

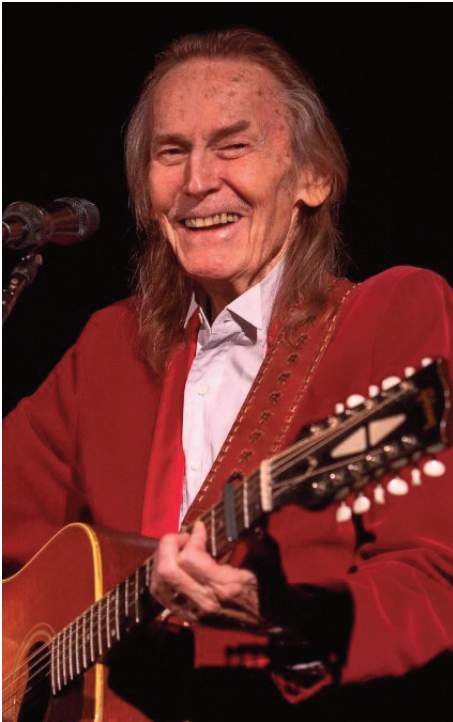
The name change has been floated before Toronto City Council to honour Lightfoot, a world-renowned musician who never left Toronto for brighter lights like LA or New York, like so many of his compatriots.

And the name change proposal comes at a time when the City has to change the Yonge-Dundas designation, as it has already decided to remove the name of Henry Dundas from Toronto because of his links to slavery.

One of the people who created Yonge-Dundas Square is the man behind the name change proposal: Arron Barberian, owner of Barberian’s Steakhouse, located near Yonge and Elm streets.

He has sent a letter to the mayor’s office asking if city council would consider renaming the square after Lightfoot.

“No person performed more con-



Gordon Lightfoot

certs within two blocks of Yonge-Dundas Square than Gordon Lightfoot,” Barberian said.

“Nobody embodies this neighborhood like him.”

In the 1960s and 1970s Lightfoot performed countless times at the taverns that used to be in the Yonge and Dundas area, including more than 170 concerts

at the iconic Massey Hall – more than any other performer by far.

Barberian – alongside Bobby Sniderman, owner of The Senator Restaurant and son of Sam Sniderman, founder of the record shop chain Sam the Record Man – came up with the plan to create a public space to hold concerts and events for the community.

“[We] conceived a redevelopment for the Yonge and Dundas area, and the centerpiece was this private-public partnership space at the corner of Yonge and Dundas where we could do music and events and everything,” Barberian said.

“It was my idea 30 years ago to build it and as we went forward with it...but the name Yonge-Dundas Square was just a placeholder. We always knew there was a name coming.”

When former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau died, the idea was floated to rename the square after him, but he had no real connection to the area, Barberian said.

And after many years of waiting, Barberian says that naming the square after Lightfoot, who meant so much to the community around it, is the best way to honour his memory.

“I believe, and I think many will

believe, that Yonge-Dundas [Square] finally has its name,” he said.

Barberian’s idea has largely been well received on social media, and Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie said that she welcomes Barberian’s suggestion.

“I am hopeful that we can find an appropriate way to commemorate Gordon Lightfoot’s life,” she said.

Toronto city council is set to consider two motions brought forward last week regarding Lightfoot at Wednesday’s council meeting.

One asks the city manager to report back to council by the end of the year on a plan for the creation of a statue honouring Lightfoot’s life. The other is to proclaim November 17 as Gordon Lightfoot Day in Toronto each year.

Lightfoot, though born in Orillia, Ont., spent much of his life living in Toronto. He cut his teeth as a performer in the coffee shops of Yorkville, once a folk music hotbed, and would later buy a home in the city’s Rosedale neighbourhood.

“He didn’t leave. He chose Toronto. They wanted him to move to LA and other cities, but he chose to live in Toronto,” Barberian said.

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The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

APNU's alternative housing policy impractical

The main Parliamentary Opposition's chief economic advisor proposed an alternative housing policy that the Opposition would implement, if elected in 2025. The proposal, according to the advisor, is one in which persons will be renting housing units and the ownership will be transferred at an undetermined future date. This means that throughout the rental life of the property, homeowners will not have legal ownership of the same. Ordinarily, when a homeowner obtains ownership of a property by way of a land title, it becomes their personal asset. As such, they can choose to leverage the appreciated value of the property as the principal balance of the loan is reduced over time, to borrow capital against the asset for any other personal or commercial purposes.

With that in mind, if the Opposition's proposal is to be implemented, effectively individuals/families will be deprived of such opportunity—that is, the opportunity to own their own property (personal asset) and deprived of the opportunity where ordinarily they can leverage its value to enhance their overall well-being and living standards in the long-term.

This contextual comparative analysis between Saudi Arabia and Guyana has shown that the budget for Saudi's housing programme to be spent over a twelve years period represents a mere 5.16% of its SWF balance as of 2021. On the contrary, the cumulative budgetary allocation towards housing development in Guyana over another five years represents 107% of the NRF cumulative balance as of the end of 2022. In other words, Guyana is expending a significant portion of its oil revenues in housing development relative to Saudi Arabia. And, most notably, to be expended over a shorter time span of five years in the case of Guyana—as against twelve years in the case of Saudi Arabia.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the Parliamentary Opposition's alternative policies and proposals are evidently poorly thought out, researched, and analyzed. To this end, the notion to devote more oil resources (which does not currently exist) on housing and other social welfare programmes—are impracticable and unsustainable in their current form—as publicly articulated by the opposition's chief economic spokesperson.

The main Parliamentary Opposition's chief economic advisor proposed an alternative housing policy that the Opposition would implement, if elected to govern in 2025. The proposal, according to the advisor, is one in which persons will be renting housing units and the ownership will be transferred at an undetermined future date. This means that throughout the rental life of the property, homeowners will not have legal ownership of the same. Ordinarily, when a homeowner obtains ownership of a property by way of a land title, it becomes their personal asset. As such, they can choose to leverage the appreciated value of the property as the principal balance of the loan is reduced over time, to borrow capital against the asset for any other personal or commercial purposes.

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the opportunity to own their own property (personal asset) and deprived of the opportunity where ordinarily they can leverage its value to enhance their overall well-being and living standards in the long-run. In addition, the chief economic advisor for the Parliamentary Opposition criticized the low-income housing programme that the Government is currently implementing. In so doing, the advisor referred to a housing programme that Saudi Arabia is currently implementing under a programme referred to as “vision 2030”. The opposition spokesperson contended that since Guyana has more oil per capita than Saudi Arabia, the Government should implement a low-income housing programme similar to that of Saudi Arabia.

This article therefore focuses on an evaluation of the abovementioned alternative policy and the contextual suitability and applicability of Saudi Arabia's housing programme in the Guyana context.

Saudi Arabia

Oil was first discovered in commercial quantities in 1938. It took another three years before the country reached commercial production and was producing at 500,000 barrels per day. As of 2017, Saudi Arabia's proven oil reserves which is reportedly the second largest in the world, stands at an estimated 268 billion barrels which would correspond to more than 70 years of production at current rates. Cumulative production as of 2009 stood at 119.4 billion bbl. The country's proven oil reserves per capita (per person) is 7,882—and since it began producing oil, the quantity of crude oil produced as of 2009 on a per capita basis is 3,511 barrels. Saudi Arabia produced 10.3 million barrels per day (Mbbl/d) in 1980 and is considered the world's most important swing producer. As such, the government would increase or decrease oil production to maintain stable prices. This aside, Saudi's average daily production has hovered around 10 Mbbl/d. Daily production levels in 2022, for example, was 9.9 Mbbl/d.

In 2021, the country's GDP stood at US\$834 billion with a per capita income when adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP) stood at US\$49,386 and a population of 34 million people.

Its Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) balance as of the first quarter of 2022 stood at US\$620 billion, and international reserve balance stood at US\$474 billion in 2021. Of note, Saudi's GDP per capita adjusted for PPP was equivalent to 250% of the global average and is ranked the 9th country in the world with the highest purchasing power index of 88 as of 2021 (Nombeo Quality of Life Rankings1).

Saudi Arabia's New Housing Programme, Vision 2030

In 2018, the Saudi government unveiled a US\$32 billion new housing programme as the kingdom seeks to boost Saudi ownership of homes from 47 percent to 70 percent by 2030. The programme includes US\$4.8 billion loan-guarantee funding to boost access to funding, and US\$3.3 billion to support home down payments, all to be spent through 2030. Based on a global home affordability study done by a British based entity, Saudi Arabia was ranked as the world's most affordable country to purchase a home in 2021.

According to the study, a 100 square meter (sqm) home costs just US\$90,775 which is equivalent to US\$908 per sqm or US\$84 per sq.ft. Guyana

Crude oil was discovered in commercial quantities in 2015 and it took another five years before commercial production began at 120,000 barrels per day. Guyana's proven oil reserves to date stands at over 11 billion barrels—representing 14,102 barrels per capita. As of the end of 2022, total oil production stood at approximately 172 million barrels, representing 221 barrels of oil produced to date per capita.

As of 2022, Guyana's GDP stood at US\$14 billion with a per capita GDP US\$18,000. As of 2021, Guyana's GDP per capita adjusted for PPP stood at US\$21,925 with an approximate population of 780,000 people. By the end 2022, cumulative oil revenues (profit oil and royalty) deposited into the Natural Resources Fund (NRF) amounted to US\$1.43 billion, and the country's international reserve stood at US\$939 million.

The argument that Guyana is richer than Saudi Arabia in terms of the amount of proven reserves Guyana has on a per capita basis to justify excessive spending is a politically distorted argument based on the following:

Saudi Arabia has been an oil producing nation for more than seventy years whereas Guyana has only commenced production less than three years ago.

The Purchasing Power Index is a tool that assigns a value to each country based on the purchasing power of its currency relative to other countries. It is based on a value of 100 for the United States. Countries with a higher purchasing power index means that people can afford more based on the cost of living in relation to income. If it is lower, the population is less wealthy. Saudi Arabia has a purchasing power index of 88, ranking number nine in the world and Nigeria 9.8, ranking at number 83, the lowest in the world. Although Guyana is not captured in the index, based on Guyana's adjusted GDP per capita as of 2021 which was equivalent to 123% of the world's average, and considering that Nigeria's adjusted GDP per capita on a PPP basis was equivalent to 28% of the world's average, it can be extrapolated that Guyana's currency purchasing power relative to Nigeria is 4.39 times stronger than Nigeria, thus giving rise to a purchasing power index of 43 for Guyana. Guyana's purchasing power index is higher than countries such as Panama, Peru, Argentina, Russia, Iran, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Vietnam, Lebanon, Philippines, and Sri Lanka, just to name a few.

Saudi's proven oil reserves is 24 times Guyana's proven reserves to date or 257 billion more than Guyana.

Saudi's cumulative production of oil as of 2009 is 694 times Guyana has produced as of the end of 2022 or 119.228 billion more than Guyana.

Because of Guyana's smaller population of less than one million people, it does have a higher per capita of proven oil reserves which is equivalent to twice that of Saudi Arabia, with a population of 34 million people. However, Saudi Arabia's per capita of oil produced as of 2009 is 16 times

Guyana's per capita of oil produced as of 2022.

In other words, Saudi Arabia produced an average of 3,500 barrels of crude per person cumulatively over 70 years. Conversely, Guyana produced only 221 barrels of crude per person in less than three years.

Saudi's GDP is 60 times the size of Guyana's GDP, per capita (PPP) GDP 2.3 times that of Guyana's, the SWF balance of Saudi is 443 times greater than Guyana's, the international reserve balance of Saudi is 527 times larger than Guyana's international reserve.

With respect to Saudi Arabia's housing development, a comparison of the cost per sqm/sq. ft relative to Guyana shows that the cost per sqm for a housing unit in Saudi Arabia is 2 times the cost in Guyana. Based on a comparative analysis done, the cost per sq. ft for a housing unit in Saudi is US\$84 while a low-income housing unit in Guyana costs US\$43.96 per sq. ft.

Saudi's housing programme of US\$32 billion is to be spent over a period of twelve years from 2018-2030. This amount represents 3.8% of Saudi's (2021) GDP, and 5.16% of Saudi's SWF balance as of 2022.

Conversely, in the case of Guyana, the Government's budgetary allocation for housing development in 2021-2023 and indicative estimates through 2024-2026 according to the Budget Estimates, Volume 2, for 2023, amounts to US\$1.525 billion to be spent over a five-years period. This amount represents 10% of (2022) GDP, and 107% of the NRF cumulative balance as of the end of 2022.

Given number (8) above, when compared to Saudi Arabia's 'vision 2030' housing programme to be implemented over a period of 12 years, Saudi has set aside less than 6% of the funds in its SWF towards this programme. Guyana, on the other hand, for a period of just five years has provided 21.4 times more of its oil resources or 107% of the NRF cumulative balance (2022).

This contextual comparative analysis has shown that the budget for Saudi's housing programme to be spent over a twelve years period represents a mere 5.16% of its SWF balance as of 2021. On the contrary, the cumulative budgetary allocation towards housing development in Guyana over another five years represents 107% of the NRF cumulative balance. In other words, Guyana is expending a significant portion of its oil revenues in housing development relative to Saudi Arabia. And, most notably to be expended over a shorter time frame of five years in the case of Guyana—versus twelve years in the case of Saudi Arabia.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the Parliamentary Opposition's alternative policies and proposals are evidently poorly thought out, researched, and analyzed. To this end, the notion to devote more oil resources (which does not currently exist) on housing and other social welfare programmes—are impracticable and unsustainable in their current form—as publicly articulated by the opposition's chief economic spokesperson.



Joel Bhagwandin

185 years of Indian arrival observed with rich cultural programmes

IN observance of the 185 years since the arrival of Indians to Guyana, persons from all walks of life gathered at Highbury, in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) to commemorate their fore-parents who came here on boats as indentured labourers.

The event was organised by the Berbice Indian Arrival Committee, and was held in the area where the first boat landed.

Those gathered were treated to a rich cultural programme that depicted the diversity of the Indian culture. There were songs, classical dance performances and skits that portrayed life on the plantation in the early days.

Regional Chairman David Armogan reflected on the journey and sacrifices that were made, and noted that despite the hardships they endured, the Indians who came were a contented group of people.

He emphasised that it is for this reason it is important for the descendants to always reflect on how they persevered with whatever little they had.

Further, he said that the sacrifices made by the ancestors have laid the foundation for the thriving Indian community in Guyana today, and it is their duty to continue to preserve and promote their traditions for generations to come.

“They were contented people, and we (the descendants) should also be contented people. Today, there are many things we learn from our ancestors. One of those is resiliency. We do not give up easily. We work very hard. We build on what we have and above all, we are resistant to people who try to exploit us. These are the things we were taught. We were taught courage; we were taught to stand up to people. Today, they must be proud of us. Wherever they are, they are looking down on Guyana today. They would recognise their sacrifices have not gone in vain because we the descendants of these people have done very well for ourselves and have made Guyana into what it is today; a proud country that is now accelerating towards moving to first world standard,” he said.

In continuing, he said that as we celebrate our ancestors, “we can never forget the roles our ancestors played in the building of Guyana, the then Guyana and [in] the now modern Guyana, we are continuing that work they have started... Today, we are building on that. Today, we are proud of them. Today, we continue the kind of culture they left with us.”

According to Armogan, a people without a culture is a lost people.

“So, we are very proud. We are very fortunate that our ancestors left



It was an exciting programme that was filled with dancing, singing and other cultural items

with us a great culture; a culture of music, dance, food, worship, rituals, functions,” he added.

The Indian High Commissioner to Guyana Dr. K. J Srinivasta, who was present at the function, also spoke about the struggles of those who made the journey, but persevered and managed to remain grounded to their roots.

“I believe we should take lesson from that unique history of the people that came that despite their extreme hardships they were determined, they endured and persevered and overcame their circumstances even their own survival but they always worked hard to maintain their sense of origin, their traditions and culture,” he said.

After reflecting on some of the achievements made since that journey 185 years, he said: “Their children, grandchildren and their descendants will always take pride in these unique achievements of theirs and recognise their sacrifices and achievements they made on their behalf.”

He reassured those present that not only will his country continue to work with the Government of Guyana, but with every Guyanese so that more people can benefit and learn more about people of Indian origin and their achievements.

Meanwhile, Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr. Vindhya Persaud, and Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water Susan Rodrigues attended a similar event at Palmyra, which is also located in Region Six. The Indian High Commissioner was also in attendance.

Vedic Cultural Centre observes the
185th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indians to the West

A group of people in traditional Indian attire, including women in saris and men in dhotis, standing together.

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UPPER HALL: STAGE PROGRAM
6:30pm – 9:00pm
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Cliff Rajkumar
DANCE DRAMA: "Hesperus 1838 2.0"
presented by Panwar Music and Dance
Productions & STCC Dance Academy

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Health Minister applauds midwives for their ‘selfless’ service

UNDERSCORING their importance in ensuring the safety of pregnant women and unborn children, Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, has said that midwives should be celebrated every day for the hard work that they do.

“Midwives play a very important role in our health system in Guyana and throughout the world. Most of our births now are done institutionally and in a safe and secure manner, and that’s because over the years, the Government of Guyana has invested a lot to ensure that our midwives are trained so that they can be the best at their jobs,” he said earlier this week ahead of International Day of Midwives (IDM).

On Friday, midwives across Guyana joined the rest of the world in celebrating this special day under the theme, “Together again: from evidence to reality.”

Dr. Anthony emphasised that he wanted to recognise all the midwives across Guyana for “the excellent work that they have been doing, the sacrifices that they have been making, their selfless acts of kindness, but more importantly, the many lives that they have saved over the years.”

Minister Anthony noted that “birth attendance” was a major challenge a few years ago, before pointing out that there were many instances where persons were performing deliveries at home.

According to him, at-home deliveries can cause a lot of complications, which may end in death if the woman does not reach the hospital in time.

According to Minister Anthony, one of the things that the government and health officials are working on, is ensuring that pregnant mothers attend



Midwives in Guyana celebrated International Day of Midwives

clinic in their first, second, and third trimesters.

He explained that “this is very important as in each of these phases, we are able to do proper evaluation and identify mothers who will be at risk, and midwives are trained to do all of this.”

Dr. Anthony further explained that the government has built a “waiting home” in the compound of several rural hospitals to accommodate pregnant women until they are ready to give birth.

This, according to Minister Anthony, will be more convenient and helpful to the mothers than having

them wait at home or in their villages with little to no medical attention.

“We have set up waiting homes in Regions Nine, One, Seven, and Eight. Having them wait in the waiting home until they go into labour after which they go over or are taken to the hospital which is in the same compound. After delivery, the mothers can go back into the waiting home and spend a few days before they go back home. All the while, the midwives will attend to them so that they can feel safer knowing that they are in safe hands. We have also found that that has been a very effective way of preventing death in preg-

nant women,” he added.

The minister told this publication that these mothers have, on many occasions, given birth on the way to the hospital, which, according to him, can result in serious complications for both the mother and the unborn child.

Minister Anthony said that the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation has organised a Nurses in Concert event.

Additionally, the Ministry of Health has planned a number of activities for the upcoming Nurses Week, during which midwives will also be celebrated.



Guyana Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony



Guyana shows up big at Off-shore Tech Conference in Texas

Last week was the Offshore Technology Conference 2023 (OTC), a four-day event based in Houston, Texas that serves as a central hub for convening energy industry leaders, experts, and government officials to share ideas and to discuss and debate the most pressing topics facing the offshore energy sector. Over the last four years, Guyana has been a breakout star at this event due to its rapid rise as an emerging oil and gas producer.

The event opened with a symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, Head of the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-INVEST) and Mr. Lutfi Hassan, Honorary Consul General of Guyana in Houston. OTC is the time of the year where the Guyanese government can tout to other international stakeholders across the offshore energy value chain that vast amounts of opportunities are present while demonstrating to peer governments and experts that it is taking sustainable and equitable development seriously.

Right now, Guyana is a hotspot for investment as the country angles to expand its local private sector and bring in more diverse investors. OTC is a prized forum for the Guyana Office for Investment and private sector companies to collaborate.

“OTC is one of the most prestigious platforms for the world to keep engaging with Guyana as we continue to lead on energy transition, low carbon development, and climate services,” Dr. Ramsaroop said.

“The group that we have here comprised representatives from Government and from private sector organisations, inclusive of individual companies at every size.”

One notable example of how impactful attending the OTC event can be for Guyanese stakeholders was a new memorandum signed between the Guyana Oil & Gas Energy Chamber (GOGEC) and CBMEX Energy Guyana, which signifies both groups’ intention to work closely together and share expertise, particularly in the oil and gas development and management space.

The President of GOGEC, Manniram Prashad, stated that, “GOGEC plays a significant role in linking Oil and Gas and energy companies to Guyanese businesses. We are excited to bring such a large delegation to the oil and gas capital of the world and expect to see tremendous results in the form of MOUs and contract signings.”

Guyana’s oil and gas industry has created tremendous interest for investment in Guyana, which has taken



The Guyana booth at OTC in Texas

strides to create a favourable environment for new investors. Dr. Ramsaroop said it best, “Guyana is an exciting country [as] we are on the map for many reasons, [...] Now that we’re in a significant growth stage, we’re like buying a stock.”

All of which to say, the Government has been proactive in supporting local businesses through policies such as the Local Content Act and putting in place transformative processes that will make it easier for companies to do business in Guyana.

Back in 2021, President Irfaan Ali highlighted the government’s work with regional bodies on the modernisation of the institutional and legislative infrastructure to help establish the single window approval system for permitting. This was a significant step towards making it easier to do business in Guyana by improving the access to more streamlined processes and approval.

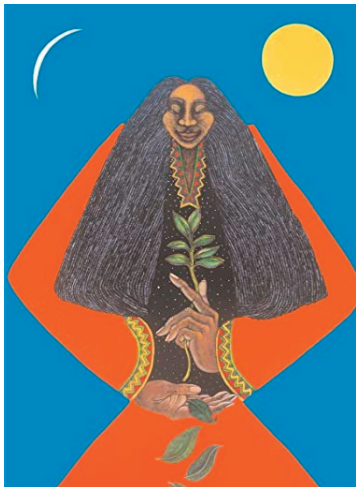
An important factor in the success

of Guyana’s oil and gas industry will be the ability to cultivate an economy where small and medium-sized businesses can grow, thrive, and take advantage of new opportunities. Permitting reform, cheaper and more reliable electricity and removing regional barriers to trade have all been cited by analysts as key steps to improving the ease of doing business in Guyana.

Earlier this year, an analysis by Focus Economics stated that Guyana is leading the list of top five countries with the fastest-growing economies up to 2026. The country is on a fast-paced upward trajectory and while surrounded by global economic uncertainty, Guyana continues to develop at a rapid rate.

The country is growing quickly across all sectors and the investments being made in Guyana are positioning the country as an emerging market leader, both in the region and globally.

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Buxtonians hail government, say there’s no shortage of opportunities

STRATEGIC planning and key interventions by the government in the community of Buxton, East Coast Demerara (ECD), have restored hope to residents, who have capitalised on various opportunities to improve their lives. Reporters were able to observe the ongoing work, and the result of the social and economic initiatives during a tour of the community and interactions with residents. Contractor, Gladwyn Hamilton, of G. Hamilton’s Builders, said his life changed after his company was contracted by the government to construct a bridge in the community.

Although his business was already established, the contract allowed Hamilton to reach new heights. “Buxton and Buxtonians were forsaken for a while now, but President Dr. Irfaan Ali has given us, as small contractors and the young people of this village, hope. This was shown through the bridge initiative that was given to me and my fellow contractors.

“Our families and all the people who were employed by us benefitted from this; everyone was able to put food on the table, and we cannot express fully how grateful we are to President Ali and his government,” Hamilton said.

Essentially, with the award of those contracts, the government was able to change their lives.

According to Hamilton: “All we needed was for someone to believe in us and give us a chance to show that we are talented and skilled like the bigger contractors. Not everyone saw that in us, but the President and his government did.

“We know for a fact that our government is caring, and they show that by what they are doing for small business-



Buxtonians Monica Alphonso with her daughter, Valesia Willis, and her son, Gordon Willis

men like us.”

In the past, small businessmen felt as though they were neglected by the government, but things are different now, Hamilton admitted.

“We are not just hearing about what will happen; we are seeing the changes. And whoever says otherwise,

isn’t being truthful. Of course, everything cannot be done at once for everyone, but we are all getting a piece of the pie,” the contractor said.

Hamilton used the opportunity to encourage persons to visit the community and see for themselves the changes that are underway, and the advance-

ments that have been made already.

“We all know where it was before; and look at where it is now under this administration. Let’s not fool ourselves, we are seeing progress; not just hearing about it. And I want to encourage all Guyanese to forget about the noise that is being made around you about racism and other foolishness,” he said, adding:

“Wake up and make use of the opportunities that are in front of you. The government is helping you secure a job by providing training or any other support, so that we can live a decent and happy life, and provide for our families.”

He was adamant that the changes that are underway prove that the government’s agenda is not about race, but rather it is one that encompasses equal opportunities and development for all Guyanese.

The community, in his view, has evolved and moved away from the days when the village and its people were used by certain politicians as tools and mascots for specific political gain.

“We are not naïve, and people are tired of the divide that some mischievous people are trying to portray about us. We have a government that is working with us, and we are willing to work with them in unity. The young people see clearly what is happening in the country, and they are all for positivity and betterment,” Hamilton said.

Water treatment plants to be upgraded

THOUSANDS of residents from communities across Region Five are set to benefit from an improved level of treated water, as several treatment plants will be upgraded there soon.

This was disclosed by Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal during the recent distribution of cement and steel subsidy vouchers in New Amsterdam, Region Six.

“We know the quality of the water on the coastland. We know the iron content in the water and Region Five is no exception, but the way to address it, is with the injection of resources for treatment plants and your government is doing such,” Minister Croal assured residents.

Some \$424 million will be invested within 18 months to upgrade the water treatment plant at Cotton Tree, which will benefit 15,000 residents between Number Six Village to Ithaca.



Collin Croal

Another treatment plant will be constructed at Bath Settlement and the water distribution network will be upgraded. “We will spend about US\$15.6 million. This we are expecting to complete in another two years. That treatment plant, when it is constructed, will service from Number Seven to Kingelly, benefitting another 22,000 customers,” the minister noted.

The water distribution network will be extended from Ithaca to Britannia to deliver first time access and approximately \$7.2 million will be spent on the expansion which will be completed in another month.

“The construction of these treatment plants will improve the level of service, quality of water, and also will bring a reliable supply of water on a 24-hour basis to your homes. The quality of life that you live is very important,” the minister underlined.

By 2025, the level of treated water on the coastland will increase to 90 per cent in keeping with the government’s 2021-2025 strategic plan.

‘We have enough’: No more importation of poultry: Mustapha

THE Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA) says it will not allow the importation of poultry or poultry products due to “sanitary and other conditions.”

A brief notice published in Saturday’s edition of this newspaper noted that “anyone found in contradiction of this notice will be prosecuted in accordance with the Laws of Guyana.”

No further details were provided by the GLDA as to why this practice must cease, however, when contacted, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, said that Guyana can produce the amount of poultry it needs to meet the current demand.

Noting that the country is “self-sufficient,” Mustapha argued that there is no reason for Guyana to import poultry or poultry products.

“Normally we don’t import poultry and poultry products. We are self-sufficient; we have enough in the country. There are a number of areas and farmers, so we don’t have a ban but the GLDA is not giving permits because we have enough in the country,” the Agriculture Minister said, noting that efforts have to be made to also protect farmers.

He reiterated, “We have to protect our farmers because we have sufficient [poultry] in the country. And I think that there is no need to import poultry product and poultry meats presently.”

According to Minister Mustapha, the prices have already been reduced.

“If you go around the market and ask about the prices of chicken and so on, [they] have reduced from the end of the Christmas season last year when it would have increased because of the demand.”

In a News Room article, it was revealed that Guyana spent about US \$4.7 million importing poultry products in 2020, with a notable demand for sausages.

And according to the same article, a detailed analysis of the agricultural sector and imports of several countries within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) revealed that nearly all of the poultry meat consumed in the region in 2020 was imported at the cost of millions.

Guyana’s President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, who presented this analysis to other CARICOM leaders, offered solutions to cut imports by producing more poultry and feed in the region.

According to the article, the President highlighted that extra-regional markets (that is, countries outside of CARICOM) supplied an estimated 98.8

per cent of the poultry imported by CARICOM member states in 2020.

Those poultry imports ranging from the meat of ducks, geese, turkeys and guinea fowls that are fresh, chilled or frozen was US\$ 242.288 million. Only 1.2 per cent of poultry demanded was imported from within the region. And in that same year, only six CARICOM countries – Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago – produced 83 per cent of the poultry in the region.



Guyana Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha



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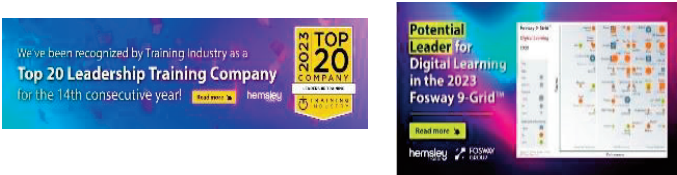
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In December 2022, Hemsley partnered with ActionINVEST Caribbean Inc. (ACI), an ISO 9001:2015 certified educational institution and business development company of Guyanese origin benefitting from female ownership and leadership. **ACI is focused on becoming the Caribbean’s solution to professional and organizational growth.**



ACI’s Executive Chairman, Dr. Vishnu Doerga, and Hemsley Fraser Canada’s Learning Lead and VP Solutions Architect, Rita Sookrit, have teamed up to create ground-breaking work strategies that assist organizations in planning and shaping their future. To meet the future needs of the workforce, they are charting the necessary skills and identifying specific learning needs towards future-of-work requirements.

Together, Hemsley and ACI are hosting a workshop on May 17, 2023: **Future of Work: Building Effective Strategies to Enhance Learning**. Rita and Dr. Vishnu, primary speakers, will address the significant changes that are shaping the future-of-work. Camille

Deokie, Founder and CEO of Camille’s Academy, as the guest speaker, will talk about the initiative to bridge the gap for students entering post-secondary education or the workforce — a project spearheaded by Hemsley and ACI.

Additionally, the Hemsley/ACI Digital Resource Platform — featuring courses in leadership, coaching, and much more — will officially be launched.

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If you are interested in attending the presentation on Wednesday, May 17, contact Ms. Selena Bacchus at sbacchus@actioninvest.org.

We hope to see you there!

Recently, ACI and Hemsley participated in a joint podcast, **Guyana’s Big L&D Opportunity**, which was disseminated to a global audience.



Listen here: <https://hr-gazette.com/dr-vishnu-doerga-and-rita-sookrit-guyanas-big-ld-opportunity/>

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Brackish water shrimp rakes in \$274M in first quarter

AGRICULTURE Minister Zulfikar Mustapha has said that brackish water shrimp (*Peneaus schmitti*) production has increased significantly when compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

“For this year, our farmers were able to produce 182.89 metric tons (182,890 kilograms) of black water shrimp in the first quarter, earning over \$274 million. When we look at the production figures for the first quarter of 2022, we are seeing an increase of almost 50 per cent.

“This is in keeping with our goals for the industry and a testament to the government’s commitment to increasing local production, lowering the food import bill, and increasing both our production and export capacities. We are working towards producing 1.5 million kilograms annually by the year 2025,” the minister said.

Mustapha related that with the successes seen thus far, the ministry is now working to have the programme replicated in other regions, the next being Region Five.

“So far, we’ve assisted farmers with constructing ponds in Region Six and we’ve started preliminary works in Region Five. We’re also looking at other places like Region Two and so on. In the first few months of the project, we were able to increase production by 203 per cent and those levels have continued to increase over the years,” the minister said.

Minister Mustapha further stated that some 37 farms in Region Six have been developed comprising a total of 133 ponds.

He added: “Before we started this project in July 2021, farmers were producing just about 10,000 kilograms monthly, just about 120,000 kilograms annually. We announced that this was the direction we wanted to take and that farmers would be given the support to expand. To date, we’ve been able to construct 133 ponds, and this has contributed to us exceeding initial production figures.”

In an effort to boost productivity, the Government of Guyana partnered with United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to conduct a study and gather information for the piloting and implementation of a strategy to enhance shrimp production in Guyana and several other Caribbean states.

Recently the ministry received three manuals that were developed collaboratively by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the World Wildlife Fund – Guianas (WWF-Guianas), and the ministry’s Fisheries Department; one of which will be used to guide brackish water shrimp production in Guyana.

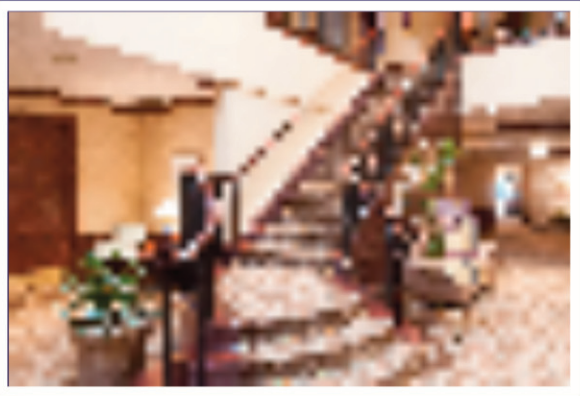


Shrimp farmers from Region Six

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 <p>Red Rain Energy Drink 355 ml</p>	 <p>Mauby Fizz Diet 300 ml</p>	 <p>Carita Ram Jam Soup 45 g</p>	 <p>Ann Honeyed Ginger Drink 18's</p>
99¢ each	99¢ each	2/\$3	2/5.50
 <p>Grace Coconut Milk 400 ml</p>	 <p>Cedar Table Salt 1 kg</p>	 <p>Swiss Tomato Ketchup 750 ml</p>	 <p>Jamaican Pride Browning 148 ml</p>
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 <p>Grace Sardine in Tomato Sauce With Chili 155 g</p>	 <p>Dunya Harvest Butter Beans 425 g</p>	 <p>Mr Goudas Yellow Corn Meal 15 lbs</p>	 <p>Redpath White Sugar 4 kg</p>
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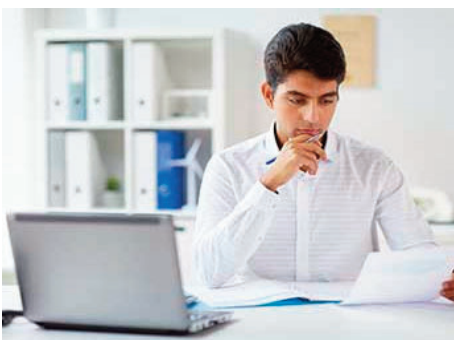
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Major enhancement works in store for Guyana’s zoo, parks

Guyana’s Protected Areas Commission (PAC) has an ongoing campaign to enhance urban parks to create a more engaging atmosphere for the thousands of patrons who visit daily.

Some of these enhancement projects are ongoing across all of Guyana’s urban parks, with the support of local and international stakeholders, while more long-term plans are being examined.

This will see the National Park, Botanical Gardens, the Guyana Zoo and the Joe Vieira Park benefitting from major and micro projects to enhance these facilities throughout this year and the foreseeable future.

“The conditions of the Guyana zoo in particular, are constantly brought to the attention of management and we would like the public to recognise that we are working assiduously to improve the conditions of the zoo for both the patrons who visit and the animals who live there,” the PAC said in a press release on Monday.

The commission added: “Most importantly, the PAC currently has a tender out in the print medium for rehabilitation of the animal clinic and the jaguar enclosure, which is all part of enhancing the aesthetics of the zoo in a phased approach.

“Currently, our zoo does not function according to the definition of a traditional “zoo”; i.e., we do not seek out and acquire animals for captive breeding or ex-situ conservation. Rather, the animals currently in the zoo have been rescued from various abandoned, illegal or abusive conditions, and brought to us for rehabilitation and release.”

Those that can no longer survive in the wild are rehabilitated and provided a safe space in the zoo to live out the remainder of their lives. Over the coming weeks, the public will learn more about the zoo and its function as a Rescue Centre.

“Additionally, our zoo has served as a wildlife education centre in the past, using our animal ambassadors to encourage conservation and teach wildlife education to youths along the coast.

“Our efforts are centred on ensuring our population and visitors alike become familiar with our local wildlife to be more knowledgeable about our home-grown biodiversity and natural wealth,” the PAC said.

Several enhancement projects have been approved for the urban park and the Guyana Zoo under the 2023 budget, including projects to improve drainage, security, lighting and our animal enclosures.

“We have already begun working on some of these projects, and there has been improvements in the walkways and enclosures in some parts of the zoo,” the



The Guyana Zoo is one of the national parks to benefit from major enhancement

PAC related.

In the coming months, the team will be working with stakeholders and contractors to continue those renovations.

“As part of those efforts, our engineer and team met with interested contractors on May 3, 2023, to discuss works on a jaguar enclosure and rehabilitation of our animal hospital,” the PAC said.

The commission will also be launching discussions with interested stakeholders from the public and private sectors and the business community, who would hopefully lend their support to enhancing the zoo. “We will be announcing more information as time progresses, and inviting stakeholders to meetings to discuss how we can work together,” the PAC said.

Guyana Tourism continues to flourish

GUYANA’S tourism industry has made significant progress over the past year, with critical investments from both public and private stakeholders.

The industry’s success continued in April, according to the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), which recorded a productive month and concluded that, with the current achievements, the targets set for 2023 will be reached.

According to a statement from the GTA, 37 tourism establishments, tour operators, and tour guides have been licensed to date. Some of those establishments include Rock View Lodge, Baganara Island Resort, Rewa Eco Lodge, Millemium Manor, Bimichi Eco-lodge, Evergreen Adventures Inc., Wild Tales, Epic Tours, and more.

The GTA also conducted inspection activities in Region Four (Demerara-Mahaica), on 34 tourism establishments. Once those businesses have passed the inspection process, they will be one step closer to becoming officially licensed by the GTA.

Additionally, the GTA trained 187 individuals in various disciplines relevant to the tourism and hospitality industry.

The GTA also conducted various training sessions in April, including a three-day leadership and governance training with 17 participants.

The authority also launched its official Health, Safety, Security & Environment (HSSE) training for tourism businesses, following the first HSSE sensitisation session in collaboration with the Centre for Local Business Development (CLBD).

A pilot session was held earlier in April, reinforcing the GTA’s commitment to promote safe, certified tourism experiences to both domestic and international markets. Businesses such as Touring Guyana, Blackwater Adventures, Old Fort Tours & Resort, and 592 Tours participated in the training.

Other training sessions conducted in April included mixology training, business & social media marketing, delivering quality service training, and successful taxi driver training.

Additionally, the GTA aims to launch 15 new tourism experiences this year as part of its effort to expand and diversify its product offerings.

Given this, the authority provided product development support to the Mahaica River Tours by refining its itinerary and improving its tours and service quality.

They conducted site assessments to ensure that the experiences included in the official itineraries offered by the operator meet the highest quality standards in Region Five. The product is scheduled to be launched officially by the end of the second quarter of 2023.

Moreover, the GTA presented a cheque worth \$3.6 million to Deputy Toshao, Delano Davis, to support the enhancement of the tourism package in his village. The funds will be utilised to complete two cabins in time for the official launch of the Toka Pottery Experience & Tours.

The release stated that the GTA & VR will supervise the construction works to ensure that they meet the required building standards specified in the plan.

In addition, the GTA collaborated with Rupununi Adventures to test a Kayaking and Paddle Boarding Experience at Manari Creek in Central Rupununi, Region Nine.

Experienced guides will lead this experience, which promises several highlights, including kayaking and paddleboarding along a pristine and scenic route.



In happier times: Naga Chaitanya and former wife Samantha Ruth Prabhu

Naga Chaitanya: what happened with my divorce is unfortunate

Naga Chaitanya and Samantha Ruth Prabhu parted ways about two years ago. Their divorce was finalized about a year ago. They seemed to have fairly moved on from their separation and have been focusing on their career. Naga Chaitanya has been promoting his film, Custody, which is an action thriller also starring Arvind Swami, R Sarathkumar and Krithi Shetty. Chaitanya has been subjected to questions about his personal life as he is promoting his film. And the actor seems to have now addressed his divorce from Samantha and also his link-up with the Ponniyin Selvan 2 actress Sobhita Dhulipala. Also Read - Sobhita Dhulipala finally opens up

about dating rumours with Naga Chaitanya; ‘I am not doing any wrong’
Ever since Naga Chaitanya and Samantha Ruth Prabhu went separate ways, they both and their personal life have been making headlines in entertainment news.
He says that whatever happened in his personal life with his marriage was very unfortunate. However, he has the utmost respect for that phase of his life. The actor says that it is due to media reportage and how speculations surface about the two of them all the time that has led to loose respect in the public eye. It has hurt him a lot.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Wait and see what the new week brings before making any more radical changes. You may feel you have to transform your existence on every level but the planets warn you are probably overreacting to events that are of no real importance.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): No doubt you are desperate to get into the world and show what you can do but if you rush in blindly this week the results may not be to your liking. Bide your time and see which way the wind is blowing before committing yourself.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): It may seem as if an opportunity to do something amazing has passed you by but almost certainly you are misreading the situation. The cosmic focus this week is on finding ways to make your creative ideas pay, so avoid negative thinking at all costs.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): The world will look a happier, brighter and more attractive place as Venus joins Mars in your sign this week. Your positive outlook will draw people to you like moths to a flame but your agreeable nature means they will be warmed rather than burned.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Start planning ahead for what you want to be doing in the second half of the year. The more you think about your ambitions now the easier it will be to hit the ground running when the planets move in your favor and new opportunities arise.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): You need to broaden your horizons and you need to do it now. Instead of focusing on all the bad things going on in the world try shifting your perspective so you can see what the positive effects might be in the future. Trust in the cosmic plan.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Some rather intense feelings will sweep over you this week but that’s good because they will motivate you to do more and do better. Venus, your ruler, in the career area of your chart will encourage you to believe that your aims are well within reach.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Someone you meet socially over the next few days may be as different to you as it is possible to get but you will find them strangely alluring. Yes, it’s true, opposites really do attract and this new friendship could last a lifetime, or maybe several.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Your energy will surge when the Sun links with Uranus in the work area of your chart this week, so get your act together and make those far-reaching changes you have been thinking about for so long. All things are possible if you want them enough.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): There seems to be a great deal of excitement in your social environment at the moment and what occurs over the next few days will give you the chance to add to it in your own special way. You have been far too quiet of late!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): How can you heal a rift with a loved one? Give it some thought and then take action when the Sun joins forces with your ruling planet Uranus on Tuesday. They want to get back on good terms too and will respond well if you make the first move.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): The tempo of life will pick up dramatically this week and there will be times when you fear you are losing control. The good news is that won’t happen, in fact you will find it amazingly easy to stay on top no matter how chaotic life may get.

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Guyana gov't spends billions for housing in Regions Five, Six

THE government continues to inject billions of dollars into housing infrastructure across the country.

Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal said that infrastructural works ongoing in Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice) value some \$3.5 billion.

During the recent steel-and-cement distribution exercise there, the minister said that some \$4 billion has been expended on developing housing schemes in the region, including investments in roads, drainage, electricity, and water.

Infrastructural works are ongoing at Shieldstown to the tune of \$2 billion, while another \$820 million is being invested at Burma, and yet another \$621 million and \$500 million will be expended at Balthyock and Experiment, respectively.

Meanwhile, there are ongoing infrastructure works in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) to the tune of \$9.2 billion, for which contracts have already been signed.

In less than three years, Region Six has seen investments of over \$10.5 billion for housing infrastructure development. At No. 75 Village, some \$1.2 billion was spent, while \$1.7 billion was invested at No. 76.

Palmyra Village is also undergoing ground-breaking projects worth over \$10 billion.

“Palmyra will be the envy, in terms of development, planned infrastructure, and growth for that area. We have already started the work in terms of land



Some of the new housing in Region Five

clearing and preparation for the housing development that will see the construction of houses as well as some allocations eventually, and for commercial industrial activities,” the Housing and Water Minister said.

He added: “Our business is not just about finding lands and allocating... You have to follow up with the infrastructure works to prepare these areas; these are lands that have no development.”

To date, close to 1,000 house lots

have been allocated in Region Five, while another 1,300 have been allocated in Region Six. This is in keeping with the government’s aim to allocate 50,000 house lots within five years.

Lawyers question process as Senior Counsels named

IT was highly unethical for Trinidad and Tobago President Christine Kangaloo to be the one conferring her husband Kerwyn Garcia and her brother Colin Kangaloo with the title of senior counsel.

What the President ought to have done was recuse herself from the process when it came to the two and leave the appointments up to the President of the Senate and for when-soever he was acting as the Head of State.

So said senior counsel Avory Sinanan Monday as he commented on the conferring of “silk” to 18 attorneys.

“What is this, a pappyshow?” Sinanan asked during a telephone interview.

“I mean, really, if it is that Mr X or Y are deserving of it and are to be appointed and they are so closely connected with the President, then the President ought to have rescued herself and when the President of the Senate is acting then they are appointed. How farcical it is that the President would be shaking the hand of her husband and her brother. I mean, this is a pappyshow?”

“I do not know much about the others and I make no comment about that save and except that I say that where people are so closely politically affiliated, it leaves a sour taste in the mouth. As a matter of fact a colleague of mine from abroad sent me a WhatsApp telling me it seems as though ‘you all are giving out silk like you give out dinner mints in a

restaurant after you pay your bill and is leaving’,” said the senior attorney.

He pointed out that it ought not to go down well with the public that about “three of four” of those appointed were “whether literally of figuratively in the bosom of the Government and the President.”

He added: “Make no mistake about it. The current President has to sign the instruments. So she is signing an instrument assigning her husband and her brother. I mean, really, come on. And the media has been shirking its responsibilities to identify these crucial issues to rehabilitate the confidence in the institutions that we have. We cannot just be turning a blind eye and I am not happy with it,” said Sinanan.

Sinanan also questioned exactly who decides which attorneys are to be awarded senior counsel status.

He said at the time when he was appointed, other senior counsel would make a recommendation to the Judiciary and it in turn would advise the President. All of this would be based on the number of years the attorney had been in practice, their integrity as well as the nature and complexity of matters they had dealt with.

While the criteria largely remain the same, Sinanan said attorneys were now invited to apply for the position themselves to the Office of the Attorney General.

But who are the ones assessing the applications and determining whether an applicant was deserving or not, he asked.

“Is there a committee appointed? Is there a committee that interviews them? In my case it was totally different. In my case it was a recommendation from silk and they consulted the Judiciary for them to decide if I was entitled to silk and so on. So now that they have transformed into this formal application I don’t know what essentially is the criteria, but more importantly is the question of who exactly adjudicates on the criteria,” he said.

When an attorney is appointed senior counsel, Sinanan said the benefit they enjoy is being called to the Inner Bar and they are treated with “certain deference” before the courts. They are also allowed to charge higher fees for their services.

The appointment also carries with it the responsibility of those attorneys nurturing and ushering in new practitioners into the profession, he said.

Senior counsel Israel Khan, the most senior attorney at the criminal bar and head of the Criminal Bar Association (CBA), also commented on the appointments Monday, saying in his view the Executive should have no role to play in determining who is awarded silk. “I am of the view that the Prime Minister of the country under the doctrine of separation of powers ought not to be making recommendation as to who should be granted the status of senior counsel,” he said.

JA Gov’t establishes more than 2,000 permanent posts for doctors

The Jamaican Government has established more than 2,000 permanent posts for doctors within the public health system.

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, made the disclosure during his contribution to the 2023/24 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, on May 3.

This is being supported by the recent compensation review processes, as well as forward planning to restructure and expand services at both the primary and secondary levels.

“These are the numbers – permanent posts as opposed to short-term contracts for 789 doctors currently in the system, new posts of 1,112 doctors to be filled over time, and 140 posts that were established to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

That is over 2,000 permanent posts to impact service quality for the people of Jamaica,” Dr. Tufton said.



Jamaica Health Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton.

“This means less patient-to-doctor ratio, more specialists in the system, more doctors at the primary/community healthcare and also in the hospitals,” the Minister added. Dr. Tufton further emphasized that “when we have more doctors, it means patients will get better care. This Government cares about those who go to the public health system”.

He pointed out that the Ministry is working on the other categories of healthcare workers, such as nurses.

CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

Jamaicans in Diaspora can apply for National IDs

Jamaicans in the diaspora will be able to pre-enrol online for the National Identification System (NIDS), but they will be required to visit an enrolment center in Jamaica to provide their biometric information.

The NIDS pre-enrolment software will allow citizens to log their information into the NIDS database and make an appointment to visit the enrolment site.

“For my diaspora family... you can apply for NIDS. You will have to travel to Jamaica to get your picture taken and to give your fingerprints, but what you will be able to do is to pre-enrol, get an appointment date, align that appointment date with your trip and come in and get it done,” said Minister Without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Floyd Green.

He was responding to questions from callers during the Nationwide News Network (NNN) radio program ‘Ask the Minister’ on Tuesday.

He noted that persons who are ordinarily resident in Jamaica, that is, someone who has lived in Jamaica continuously for six months or more, are also eligible for NIDS.

“It doesn’t matter where you live. Once you are a citizen of Jamaica, you qualify for the National Identification System,” he pointed out.

Persons must also submit supporting documents such as birth certificate, proof of address or marriage certificate. A reference number will be given for the applicant to track the application online.

Once the verification is done, a notification will be sent to the applicant to collect, pin, and activate the national ID card that will be issued.

For pre-enrolment and other information per-

sons can visit <https://www.nidsfacts.com>.

Antigua refuses to accept Cameroonians

Antigua and Barbuda is standing firm on its decision not to accept the 14 Cameroonians, who are detained in St Kitts and Nevis after being rescued from a sinking boat in March, back into the country.

The government had previously said it would have accepted the West Africans once they are released from the custody of immigration officials on St Kitts and Nevis. But Prime Minister Gaston Browne announced the government was backtracking on the position because of fears they will attempt to leave Antigua and Barbuda again.

At Monday’s post-cabinet media briefing, Information Minister Melford Nicholas explained the government’s U-turn came after some of the migrants and an Antiguan escaped from the confines of the St Peter’s Community Centre, which is located just outside the St Kitts and Nevis capital, Basseterre.

“If the persons, who were held in St Kitts, found a way to escape custody, clearly it was not with an intention of coming back to Antigua. So there seems to be an onward intent for them to continue to pursue entry into a US border,” he said.

Nicholas said the government does not want the Cameroonians to use “Antigua as a trans-migratory location”.

It will now be up to St Kitts and Nevis to repatriate the Cameroonians back home.

Nicholas said the government is continuing its assessment of the remaining West Africans in An-

tigua and Barbuda.

Once the assessment, which is being done in conjunction with the UNHCR and IMO is completed, a decision will be taken on who will be deported and who will be allowed to stay in Antigua.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Health informed the cabinet on Wednesday that one of the Cameroonian women, who arrived in December 2022, will give birth to a baby in less than a week.

Clarendon Dad wins \$542M lotto

One lucky Supreme Ventures Limited customer has made history by winning the biggest Super Lotto jackpot ever!

One month after it was announced that one lucky winner had hit the historic jackpot, the suspense has finally ended as an overjoyed A. Fraser has claimed his massive winnings of \$542.5 Million.

“I heard someone from Clarendon won but I didn’t think it was me. I was on the phone with a friend and they were calling out the winning numbers – me eye dem wide out when me see say me win, cold bump start wash me! Me run out to me kids dem and say ‘unnu daddy rich!’” said an emotional Fraser.

The winning ticket with lucky numbers 05, 19, 22, 23, 33 and Superball 08 was bought at True Friends Emporium in Clarendon.

The magnitude of his win brought Fraser to tears as he recounted numerous struggles he faced in his childhood and now in raising his own children. He was overcome with emotions upon realizing how his fortunes had changed overnight with his Super Lotto win.

Opposition APNU goes to court to stop Guyana’s local election polls

The A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) has filed an application in the High Court seeking to postpone or cancel the June 12 Local Government Elections since they believe changes made to 37 constituency boundaries violate the constitution and the Local Government Act.

In the application, APNU activist Carol Joseph, said the reformed boundaries are “severely prejudiced” against the party.

Joseph’s application is supported by an affidavit from Opposition Commissioner on the Guyana Election Commission (GECOM) board, Vincent Alexander.

In his affidavit, Alexander said Local Government Minister Nigel Dharamlall presented GECOM with a list of boundary changes in November 2022 and they rejected it because he overstepped his powers.

Chief Election Officer (CEO) Vishnu Persaud was tasked with conducting a field exercise to determine if boundary changes were needed.

Alexander said Persaud returned with a report that did not deviate from the Local Government Minister’s recommendations.

Alexander, who has been an Election Commissioner for more than a decade, said Persaud’s report was rejected and he was directed to conduct the field exercise based on established



Voters in line to cast their ballots at the last general elections in Guyana

precedent for boundary changes.

Joseph’s application claims Persaud insisted that he had no precedents to follow and Alexander provided previous reports showing the discussions that took place in the past about how a field exercise should be undertaken.

Alexander said the CEO returned on January 31 with a report that did not follow the precedent. He said he objected to the report being used since it did not comply with Guyana’s Constitution.

However, it was accepted by the Commission via a majority vote.

The application will be heard by Chief Justice Roxane George on May 30, 2023.

Hollywood A-listers named Antigua Ambassadors

Hollywood actresses Angela Bassett and Dawnn Lewis have been named the Tourism Ambassadors of Antigua and Barbuda.

The decision to appoint both women as Tourism Ambassadors was taken during the cabinet meeting this week.

According to a statement from the Government, Basset has demonstrated her love for Antigua by regular visits and by making use of the celebrity power she has accrued by appearing in numerous films.

“Miss Lewis, who starred in Grey’s Anatomy, A Different World, and many movies and sitcoms also loves Antigua,” the statement added.

The Hollywood stars will not be paid for their work as the government noted that the “appointment is voluntary, does not involve any remuneration and they have agreed to make appearances on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda.”

Angela Bassett is well-known for her role in films such as Black Panther, Avengers: Endgame, and Black Panther: Wakanda Forever amongst others.



From left to right: Minister Maria Browne, Dawnn Lewis, Prime Minister Gaston Browne and Angela Basset.

Caribbean diaspora play key role in King Charles III’s coronation

Four members of the United Kingdom’s Caribbean diaspora played a key role in the coronation of King Charles III and Camilla, the Queen consort.

Baroness Floella Benjamin, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago, carried the Sovereign’s Sceptre ahead of the King’s arrival.

“It was a truly magnificent experience carrying the Coronation Sceptre with Dove, which represents peace, mercy, equality and love which is everything I believe in ♥,” the Member of the House of Lords and former television presenter wrote on Twitter following the ceremony.

Guyana born Baroness, Valerie Amos, participated in King Charles III’s Recognition Ceremony at the start of the coronation. “I here present unto you King Charles, your undoubted King. Wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage and service, are you willing to do the same?” she asked the King,” she read.

The attendees all replied: “God save King Charles.”



Baroness Valerie Amos presenting at the Recognition Ceremony

The Jamaica-born Bishop of Dover, Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin, presented Queen Camilla with The Queen’s Sceptre with Cross and The Queen’s Rod with Dove.

British-Jamaican baritone singer and composer, Roderick Williams, sang the ‘Confortare’ anthem, which was a throw-back to the coronation of Charles III’s grandfather George VI.

Several Caribbean leaders including the Prime Ministers of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda and St Kitts and Nevis were at the ceremony to witness the coronation.

Suriname condemned by human rights group

The human rights organization, Foundation December 8, 1982, has condemned violence that took place in Pikin Saron southwest of the capital, earlier this week, resulting in the deaths of two people and a police station and 11 lumber trucks set ablaze.

“We call on the authorities to take all necessary measures to track down and prosecute the perpetrators of this violent act and to create conditions in which the loss of life can be prevented and protected,” said Sunil Umrawsingh, who chairs the human rights group.

Government have since held talks with Amerindian leaders who have been complaining for years that their land rights are not protected by law and successive governments, despite repeated commitments, have never rectified this issue.

A draft law to regulate the land rights issue has been before parliament for a number of months for consideration and approval and a few weeks ago, indigenous people, during a protest demonstration, presented petitions to the Speaker of Parliament to speed up the passage of the bill.

Umrawsingh insisted that violence is unacceptable and in a constitutional state

The human rights group said as an organization, “we emphasize that advocacy for the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples must be done peacefully and without the use of violence.

“To achieve normalization, the government and other stakeholders must engage in dialogue with indigenous and tribal communities to work towards a solution that respects their interests and rights. Respecting human rights and the rule of law is essential in this regard.”

Umrawsingh insisted that violence is unacceptable and in a constitutional state it is important that everyone obeys the laws of the country.

“Standing up for your rights must and can be done without the use of violence. We therefore once again strongly condemn this violence. The Surinamese government has been repeatedly convicted by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for violations of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, but has not implemented these sentences fully or at all.

“Violations will continue in 2023. We call on the government to stop

trampling on the collective human rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and to pass the necessary legislation in accordance with the rulings of the Inter-American Court. We urge the government to stop trivializing and respecting the rights and legitimate interests of indigenous and tribal peoples,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Land Policy and Forest Management (GBB), Dinotha Vorswijk, says the government has started a process to withdraw the extension of a timber concession without going to court.

She recalled that when the government came to office three years ago, it took a decision not to issue new logging concessions and to approve extensions.

Vorswijk, who gave an overview of logging concessions in the Para district, said that there are 31 active logging concessions in the area, and with regards to the Pikin Saron where the incident occurred, a concession extension was signed last July for five years.

She said following the incident, the government has decided to work with lawyers for the withdrawal of the extension and that the government is in the process of revoking other extensions.

In her statement to the National Assembly, Vorswijk said that the historical injustice must be corrected and that recognizing the fundamental rights of the indigenous and other tribal peoples is crucial.



Excessive heat predicted for Caribbean region into next season

It has been a hot couple of months for many Caribbean islands with no end in sight to the excessive heat.

According to the Barbados-based Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) in its heat outlook for May to October 2023, excessive heat can be expected, especially in August and September.

The heat outlook forecast notes May to July, marking the first half of the Caribbean heat Season (April/May to October) may well be hotter than usual for most.

Intense night-time and daytime heat is expected in much of the Caribbean from August to September/October, marking the peak of the Heat Season.

The implications of the Heat Season:

Frequent and possibly intense episodes of heat stress in the vulnerable population and small livestock because of high temperature and increasing humidity from May through September.

Cooling needs rising sharply towards August and September.

Over in St Maarten, the Meteorological Department in its seasonal outlook for May to July 2023 states models are indicating that rainfall totals for the season May-June-July 2023 are likely to be near the normal range in St Maarten and the rest of the Caribbean.

The normal rainfall for May-June-



Heat outlook forecast says the dry season will be hotter than usual for most in the Caribbean

July season on St Maarten ranges 167mm–295mm /7-12 inches, with 28 to 36 wet days. May to June the region transitions to the wet season where rainfall may be more frequent while in July there is often a summer dry spell.

The forecast is for up to 5 (7-day) wet spells, up to 3 very wet spells and about 5 (7-day) dry spells on St Maarten

during this season.

The majority of the forecast models predict that an El Nino will start this season May to July 2023 (73 per cent chance). There is a likelihood that the El Nino phase will persist through early 2024. The wet season in the Caribbean may be drier than normal in view of the likely development of El Nino.

Currently, short-term drought has developed in Barbados, Belize, southeast Cuba, USVI, Martinique and St Vincent while long-term drought has also developed in other areas across the Caribbean.

Although ‘drought’ conditions will persist in St Maarten through May, models indicate that by the end of July there will be no drought concern.

SVG, SKN want to sever ties with Monarchy

Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines Dr Ralph Gonsalves is hoping to see his country try again to transition to become a Republic.

In an interview with the BBC’s Mohamed Madi and Celestina Oludole, Gonsalves said having a British monarch as head of state is “an absurdity” he would like to end in his lifetime.

St Vincent and the Grenadines back in 2009 held a referendum to become a Republic, but it failed.

On BBC Radio 4’s The World at One Highlights, the Vincentian Prime Minister said he does not know if he is going to lead that particular process or is going to allow the next generation of leaders to do that.

Gonsalves said: “It is something I am hoping to see consummated... the severing of the umbilical cord between our country and the British Monarchy. King Charles knows that... and he and I have discussed that in very amicable ways.

Gonsalves was further questioned about how King Charles III reacted when the issue was brought up.

The prime minister said: “I would say the King is understanding of the impulses of former colonial peoples to cut the links.”

St Vincent and the Grenadines is among eight Caribbean countries which



King Charles and Queen Camilla after Saturday’s coronation

still recognize King Charles III as its head of state.”

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Dr. Terrence Drew said he plans to hold public consultations towards dropping the British Monarch as St Kitts and Nevis’ head of state.

In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Drew did not give a date when the consultations will begin but he said “that discussion will start sometime during my leadership”.

Drew said St Kitts and Nevis, which became an independent state nearly 40 years ago, is “not totally free” as long as King Charles III remains as the head of state.

St Kitts and Nevis joins Belize and

Jamaica in expressing an intention to drop the British Monarch as head of state.

Belize and Jamaica have established commissions to guide the governments towards becoming republics.

Barbados became the world’s latest republic on 30 November 2021 when it officially removed Queen Elizabeth II as the head of state.

King Charles, who was then the Prince of Wales, was on hand to witness the historic moment.

“The creation of this republic offers a new beginning, but it also marks a point on a continuum – a milestone on the long road you have not only travelled but which you have built,” he said in a speech at National Heroes Square.

“As your constitutional status

changes, it was important to me that I should join you to reaffirm those things which do not change

“For example, the close and trusted partnership between Barbados and the United Kingdom as vital members of the Commonwealth; our common determination to defend the values we both cherish and to pursue the goals we share; and the myriad connections between the people of our countries – through which flow admiration and affection, co-operation and opportunity – strengthening and enriching us all.”

Drew also told journalist Celestina Oludole that apart from becoming a republic, St Kitts and Nevis would like King Charles III to apologize for the monarchy’s historic role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

“I think that acknowledging that... something wrong was done, acknowledging it and apologizing for it, is a step in the right direction,” he said.

For his part, King Charles III acknowledged “the appalling atrocity of slavery” in the Caribbean during his speech in Barbados.

Last month, Buckingham Palace said King Charles III was cooperating with an independent study exploring the relationship between the British monarchy and the slave trade.

Former Windies keeper David Murray passes at 72

Cricket West Indies on Monday paid tribute to David Murray, the former Barbados and West Indies wicketkeeper who passed away on Friday night. He was 72. Murray was the son of West Indies batting great Sir Everton Weekes. Murray’s son Ricky Hoyte, represented Barbados and West Indies ‘A’ Team as a wicketkeeper/batsman.

Murray’s first tour with the West Indies was in 1973 to England. He made his international debut in the second One-Day International by a West Indies men’s team, which featured Lance Gibbs, Roy Fredericks Rohan Kanhai and Clive Lloyd. His Test debut came in 1978 against Australia in Guyana. Overall, he played 19 Tests, ten One-Day Internationals and also 114 first-class matches.

However, Murray’s career was cut short after he joined a West Indies

“rebel” tour of Apartheid South Africa in 1983.

His final decades were spent in poverty.

However, on Monday, Ricky Skerritt, president of CWI paid tribute to Murray.

“On behalf of CWI I want to offer my sincere condolences to Ricky, and other members of David’s family and friends. David was a gifted wicketkeeper and a stylish middle-order batsman. He loved the game of cricket, and played with a smile on his face. He will be remembered as a member of the great West Indies squad which dominated world cricket for over a decade. Devoted West Indies Cricket fans still remember David’s fantastic glove work and footwork behind the stumps to Michael Holding and other members of the fearsome West Indies fast bowling attack of



West Indies wicket keeper David Murray: passed away at 72

his time.”

On Monday, the West Indies Players Association (WIPA) also acknowledged Murray’s death. WIPA president and CEO Wavell Hinds described him as

an “excellent wicketkeeper” and conveyed condolences to, “our dear brother Ricky Hoyte, Murray’s family and friends and the entire cricketing fraternity.”

Russell propels KKR to victory over Punjab

Andre Russell lashed a Man-of-the-Match cameo to propel under-pressure Kolkata Knight Riders to a

last-ball win over Punjab Kings here Monday and climb to fifth in a clustered Indian Premier League standings.

Entering the contest at Eden Gardens with six defeats in 10 matches, KKR chased down a tricky 180 to get home by five wickets, with Russell scoring 42 from 23 balls, batting at number five.

The West Indies all-rounder plundered three fours and three sixes but perished to the penultimate delivery of the match when he was run out at the non-striker’s end attempting a sharp single with Rinku Singh.

With two runs needed from the final ball, the 25-year-old Rinku belted a high full toss from left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh behind square for four, to trigger the KKR celebrations.

“There was a little chaos on the back end there with me getting run out wanting to finish the job,” Russell said. “But we have a finisher in Rinku and I was very proud of him.”

Captain Nitish Rana top-scored with 51 from 38 balls while English opener Jason Roy struck 38 from 24 balls, Rinku ending on a 10-ball unbeaten 21.

Punjab Kings had earlier gotten 57 from captain Shikhar Dhawan as they reached 179 for seven from their 20 overs, after opting to bat first.

The left-handed opener struck nine fours and a six, helping to inspire a 53-run fourth wicket stand with Jitesh Sharma (21), which pulled his side around from 53 for three in the sixth over.

Dhawan was eventually fifth out in a slide that saw three wickets tumble for 20 runs but Shahrukh Khan (21 not out) and Harpreet Brar (17 not out) added a vital 40 off just 16 deliveries in an unbroken eighth wicket stand.

Russell’s solitary over cost 19



Andre Russell

runs while West Indies counterpart Sunil Narine also went wicket-less in a four-over spell that leaked 29 runs.

In reply, Roy put on 38 for the first wicket with 21-year-old Afghan Rahmanullah Gurbaz (15) and a further 26 for the second with Nitish who then put on 51 for the third wicket with Venkatesh Iyer (11), as KKR stitched together crucial partnerships.

When Venkatesh and Nitish fell in the space of 10 balls with only nine runs added at 124 for four in the 16th over, KKR found themselves wobbling but Russell entered to dominate a 54-run stand with Rinku, which swung the chase in the hosts’ favour.

KKR are one of five teams in the standings on 10 points, just six points adrift of leaders Gujarat Titans.

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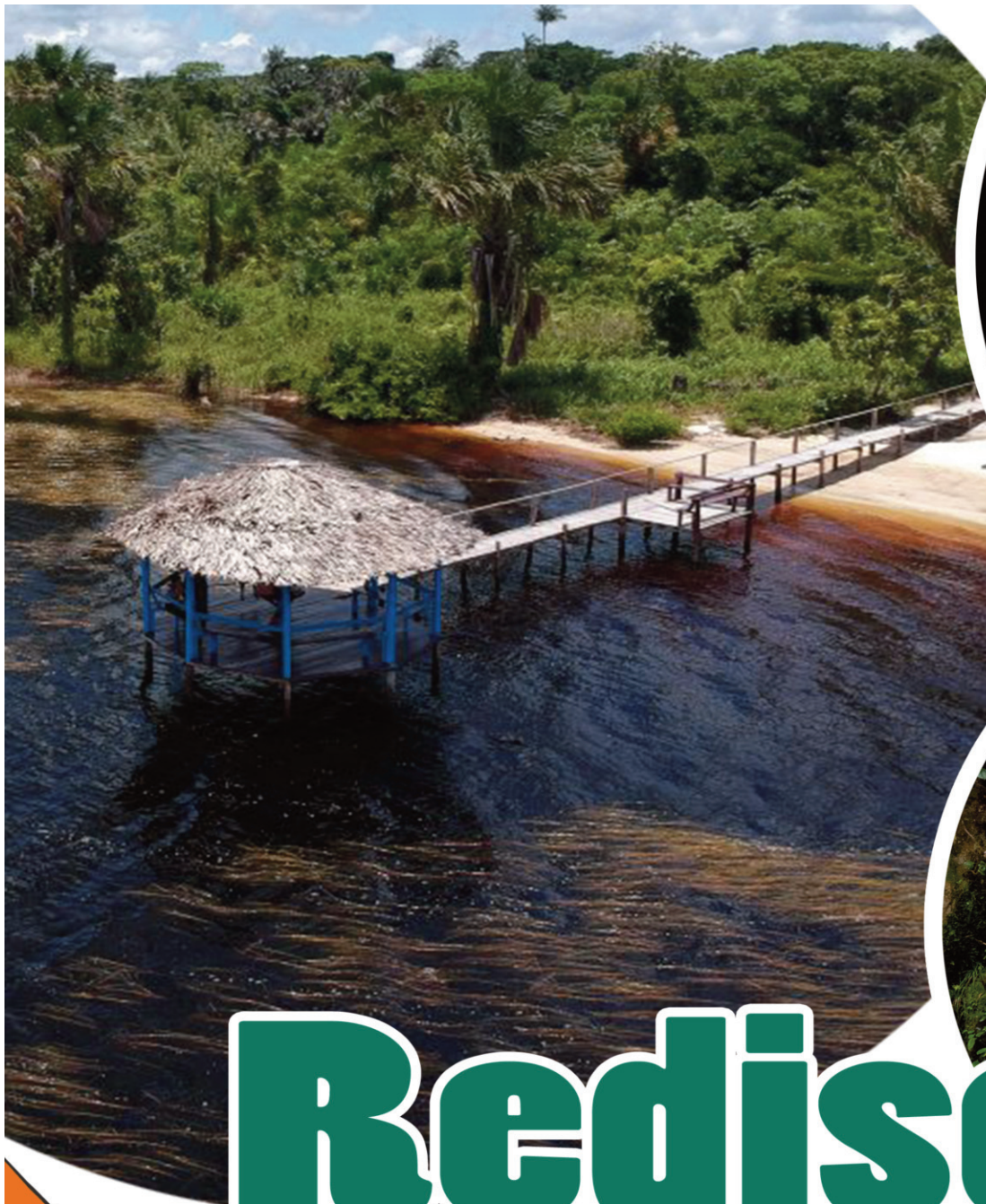
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SCAN
FOR MORE



A journey of a
thousand miles
begins with a
single step!

