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Venezuela's government fans territorial dispute with Guyana

President Nicolás Maduro and his allies are appealing to Venezuelans' patriotism as they summon voters supposedly to decide the territory's future in a Dec. 3 referendum, although the legal and practical implications of the vote are questionable. They are using leaflets, reggaeton, videos and other content to promote what Jeanmaikol already knows.

"The Essequibo belongs to Venezuela," the 11-year-old said firmly outside his school. He then added that the two South American neighbors are fighting over the territory "because it has gold, a lot of wealth, and oil, too."

Most of Guyana's foreign investment is in the 61,600-square-mile (159,500-square-kilometer) area, which accounts for two-thirds of its territory. Yet, Venezuela has considered Essequibo as its own since gaining independence from Spain in 1811, and it disputes the border decided by international arbitrators in 1899 when Guyana was still a British colony.

Venezuela's commitment to pursue the territorial claim has fluctuated over the years. Its interest piqued again in 2015 when ExxonMobil announced it had found oil in commercial quantities off the Essequibo coast.

But the five questions it plans to ask voters about Essequibo prompted Guyana to urge the International Court of Justice on Nov. 14 to halt parts of the referendum, telling judges it poses an "existential" threat.

Maduro and his allies are encouraging voters to answer "yes" to all the questions, one of which proposes creating a Venezuelan state in the Essequibo territory and granting Venezuelan citizenship to the area's

current and future residents.

The government has not explained how it would create the state should voters approve it. The Ministry of Communication and Information did not respond to requests for interviews with Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, who leads the government's Essequibo-related efforts, and Samuel Moncada, Venezuela's ambassador to the United Nations.

"The collective decision called for here involves nothing less than the annexation of the territory in dispute in this case," Paul Reichler, an American lawyer representing Guyana, told the world court. "This is a textbook example of annexation."

Venezuela considers Essequibo as its own because the region was within its boundaries during the Spanish colony.

The disputed boundary was decided by arbitrators from Britain, Russia and the United States. The U.S. represented Venezuela on the panel in part because the Venezuelan government had broken off diplomatic relations with Britain.

Venezuelan officials contend the Americans and Europeans conspired to cheat their country out of the land and argue that a 1966 agreement to resolve the dispute effectively nullified the original arbitration. Guyana, the only English-speaking country in South America, maintains the initial accord is legal and binding.

Now, Venezuelan voters will also be asked whether they "agree to reject by all means, in accordance with the law," the 1899 boundary and whether they support the 1966 agreement "as the only valid legal instrument" to reach a solution.



GRATITUDE TO THE COUNTRY'S DEFENDERS: Commander-in-Chief of the Guyana Armed Forces, President Dr Irfaan Ali, on Tuesday, had lunch with families and relatives of members of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) serving at the country's borders. In brief remarks, the President conveyed the gratitude of Guyanese to the men and women in uniform protecting the country's borders. The Head of State also reiterated that Guyana has no interest in any conflict as it remains committed to peace and stability in Latin America and the Caribbean. Dr Ali encouraged Guyana's neighbours to participate fully in the process of international law and respect the outcome. The President reaffirmed Guyana's position amidst the ongoing border controversy with Venezuela, as the country waits for a decision on the claim to Essequibo by Venezuela from the International Court of Justice.

More stories inside

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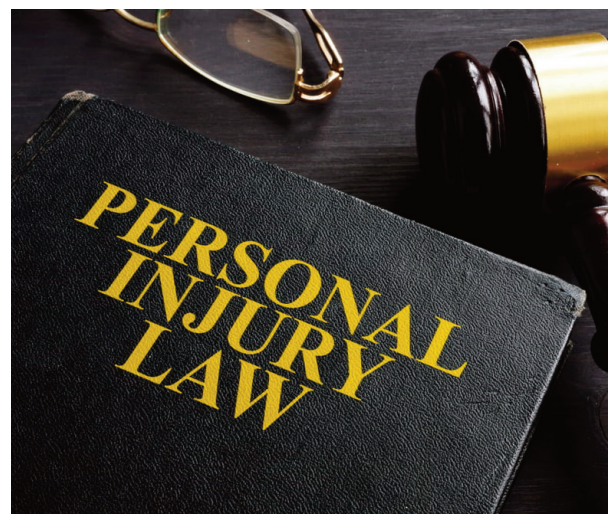
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Shipment of fake Toonies from China seized by CBSA

When the package from far away China landed at a FedEx warehouse at the sprawling Montreal-Mirabel International Airport in early January, Canada Border Services Agency officer Caroline Landry took a quick but careful look at the shipping label.

The customs paperwork accompanying the package declared it contained 10,000 “metal badges” from a clothing company in Quanzhou, the CBSA says.

Destination? A company called “Les Cartes Quebecois” (Quebec Cards) and a man identified as Jean-Francois Généreux from Sorel, Que., about 70 kilometres from Montreal.

Metal badges? Shipped by a clothing company? To a card company? None of it made much sense. So, Landry decided to pry open the package.

Inside, she saw no metal badges. Only six more boxes. She opened those. Inside those boxes, the CBSA says, Landry found what appeared to be around 12,000 \$2 Canadian coins, all stamped 2012, inside plastic bags.

Why would anybody ship thousands of \$2 Canadian coins from China to Quebec, calling them badges? Why all from 2012?, Landry wondered, pulling the package aside for further investigation.

What happened next saw the CBSA, with some RCMP help, unravel what has become the largest detected shipments of fake Toonies from China in Canadian history, according to sworn affidavits that CBSA investigator Jean-Francois Pinard has filed in Quebec court.

Metal coin manufacturing compa-



Some of the counterfeit Toonies seized by the CBSA

nies in China are pumping out thousands of fake Canadian \$2 coins and selling them to buyers here in North America through online web e-commerce platforms like AliBaba, eBay and others, Pinard alleged in the CBSA’s sworn affidavits.

Canadian buyers of such fake China-made Canuck coins actually have them delivered to their doors in cities across Canada by courier giants like FedEx and UPS, Pinard added.

For now, the CBSA’s allegations are unproven and the evidence CBSA investigators say they gathered about the latest dodgy coins from China is untested in court.

Which brings us back to Jean-Francois Généreux.

CBSA investigators wondered: who is he and why did he order so many Toonies from China?

First, CBSA say they learned there was no registered company called Les Cartes Quebecois.

Généreux was also reportedly jobless, living in an apartment in a four-unit building, just down the road from a Rio Tinto metals facility in Sorel-Tracy.

Next, while scrutinizing Généreux’s background, the CBSA documents state, investigators allegedly discovered the Sorel resident had been convicted several times for uttering fake documents and using or circulating counterfeit money, including twice in 2002, again in 2006, and once in 2009.

Reports confirmed Généreux’s prior criminal counterfeiting and fake

documents convictions in Quebec Court records.

There have been more than a dozen other police arrests dating back to 2001. He has pleaded guilty to multiple charges involving fraud, theft, identity theft, and mail theft, and repeated probation violations. He has been jailed three times, including for 12 months in 2012, court records show.


With that background intelligence on Généreux, CBSA says, it brought in Jennifer Merritt, a forensic specialist at the RCMP’s National Anti-Counterfeiting Bureau.

At CBSA’s request, Merritt examined 121 samples of the \$2 coins from China seized at the airport, representing a one per cent sample size of the final count of 12,049 coins seized at Mirabel Airport. Merritt’s conclusion allegedly confirmed what CBSA already suspected. The seized coins were fake Toonies because they allegedly displayed “differences in graphical detail and quality when compared to genuine Royal Canadian Mint \$2 coins.



ACG celebrates 50 years

The Association of Concerned Guyanese (ACG) held its 50th Anniversary Dinner & Dance at the Panemonte Banquet & Convention centre on Saturday, November 18th 2023. The event was well attended and was a success. Many long standing members were recognized for their sterling contributions to the organization and its work some including the Shaw family, Danny Doobay former counsel General, Jerry Karamat, Gail Texeria and others.



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Choosing the high road

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, November 20 2023

IN the face of escalating tension surrounding the longstanding border controversy between Guyana and Venezuela, President Dr. Irfaan Ali has demonstrated a commendable commitment to diplomacy and peace.

Unlike the tit-for-tat rhetoric often seen in international controversies, President Ali has taken the high road by refusing to engage in a war of words with Venezuela's Vice-President, Delcy Rodriguez.

Recently, Rodriguez made claims against Guyana, adding fuel to the already simmering tensions over the Essequibo region. Rather than responding in kind, President Ali, in a display of

statesmanship, declared that it is not necessary to match ignorance with ignorance.

This approach reflects a commitment to a higher standard of discourse and a refusal to be drawn into a cycle of provocation.

President Ali's decision to prioritize diplomatic and judicial means to address the border controversy underscores the importance of international norms and institutions in resolving such issues.

By opting for a measured response, he is sending a strong message about the maturity and responsibility required of leaders in times of crisis. In a world where inflammatory rhetoric and knee-jerk reactions often dominate headlines, President Ali's approach is a

refreshing departure from the norm.

In stating that Guyana will continue to pursue peaceful and legal avenues to resolve the controversy, President Ali is aligning his nation with the principles of international law and diplomacy.

This commitment to a rules-based approach not only positions Guyana as a responsible global actor, but also reinforces the notion that such issues should be settled through dialogue and legal mechanisms rather than through aggression.

In a world grappling with numerous challenges, the importance of leaders who prioritise peace and diplomacy cannot be overstated. President Ali's refusal to descend into a war of words with Vice-President Rodriguez sets a

constructive example for other nations embroiled in territorial controversies. It underscores the power of dialogue and the pursuit of justice over the pitfalls of escalating rhetoric.

As the international community observes the unfolding events between Guyana and Venezuela, President Ali's commitment to the high road serves as a beacon of hope.

It is a reminder that, even in the face of provocation, leaders can choose the path of reason, dialogue, and international cooperation. In a time when global challenges demand collective solutions, President Ali's approach stands as a testament to the enduring value of diplomacy and the pursuit of a more peaceful world.

Gaza and the world we live in

By Donald Ramotar

The mass murders that are being done in the Gaza by the Israeli Defense Force comes to us live, thanks to the courageous journalists of Al Jazeera. The brutality is so gruesome that many people, disgusted by the scene and feeling so helpless in the face of the brutal crimes against unarmed civilians including babies, have resorted to turning off their television to block out the horrible images.

The figures are simply staggering. At the time of writing the confirmed dead in Gaza is 13,300 persons. Thousands are missing under the rubble of collapsed buildings from the airstrikes. Indeed some 50% of the homes of the Palestinians have been destroyed. That is why those living in the open is estimated at more than one million five hundred thousand.

Of the 13,300 dead, 5600 or 42% are children, three thousand five hundred and fifty or 27% are women.

There is absolutely no doubt that the Fascist, racist regime in Israel intends to kill, indiscriminately as many Palestinians as they can. They are trying to force the people of the Gaza to leave the area, in other words to ethnically cleanse it of Palestinians.

That explains many of the targets, hospitals, schools, mosques, and churches and, as mentioned above, dwelling houses.

They have targeted ambulances. At this time (Nov 20) two hundred medical personnel have been killed. Twenty-two members of local Civil Defense Rescue teams were victims of the attacks, all dead.

Another group that is being targeted are media workers. Fifty journalists in the Gaza have died by bullets or by bombings; eleven are injured; three are missing and eighteen have been arrested.

Journalists are targets because the Israelis continue to follow the teachings of Goebbels to lie continuously in a very big

way. Therefore, they must destroy those who are working to expose the truth to the world.

The situation in the Gaza has become a window to the world in which we live. We are able to discern clearly those on the side of Justice, Truth and who follow the laws from those that are ready to destroy all international institutions, international laws and drive us back to the law of the Jungle.

From the moment that this struggle for Freedom of the Palestinian began the United States immediately sent millions of dollars' worth of military equipment to Israel. The US Congress voted fourteen million to assist the economy of Israel.

Moreover, they have sent in substantial military assets, including air-craft carriers, troops, submarines and to give Israel a free hand to attack and kill innocent civilians. "We have your back" President Biden assured Netanyahu.

The United States and many European countries are complicit in the unspeakable murders, misery, and the unfathomable unimaginable sufferings of the poor Palestinian people.

They have gone to the extreme to protect Israel diplomatically. At the start, the leaders of Western/NATO countries made pilgrimages to show their support for the fascist regime in Israel. President Biden made more than one visit and Secretaries Blinken and Austin even sat at meeting of Israel's cabinet.

These are the same countries that consistently voted against calling for a ceasefire at the UN Security Council. More than that they have joined to repeat the lies of the Israeli regime. President Biden, reading from a script, justified the bombings of hospitals on the grounds that Hamas had its command centers there.

Why did they have to do that? Was it not possible to allow a team from the UN to visit those places to inspect those places? Clearly, they did not want that, for that

would have been grounds to stop the genocide against the Palestinian people.

Clearly, the United States and its European allies have lost all moral authority. They have lost all regards for human lives and very basic human decency.

In addition to the above, the western backers of Israel have put their propaganda machine at the disposal of the Israeli regime. The task is to distort the news, create doubts and sow confusion, even to paddle blatant lies.

In the first place they depict what is happening as a war with Hamas. This implies that this is a fight between equals. They never say that Hamas has no war planes, no tanks, no military vehicles. They are at best a guerilla army with basic weapons and improvised rockets.

Such a poorly equipped group that is totally outgunned is fighting with conviction for freedom. That is why they are inflicting serious blows to the occupation forces.

One of the main objectives of US/EU/Israel alliance is to demonize the Hamas, to label it as a terrorist organization to try to 'justify' the murderous actions of the Apartheid regime in Israel.

Recall the lies they spread on October 7. They accused the Hamas fighters of beheading babies. This was proved to be a lie no one is yet clear if any baby died in that attack, much less beheaded. They accused them of rape. That too proved to be an untruth.

They said that the Hamas forces attacked a concert. Now it is being revealed that that is also false. The new information informs us that not fourteen hundred Israeli were killed, but twelve hundred, the other two hundred bodies found in the ground were Hamas fighters. It appears that they were all killed by Israeli helicopter gun ships that attacked the Hamas fighters during the operation of October 7.

We are also hearing of their precision

attacks. Well, it seems that they are hitting only civilian targets, their homes, schools, hospitals, and foreign aid workers. It seems that they are aiming at those civilian targets in a very precise operation.

The Israeli regime would never have been able to conduct this open genocide without having been given the assurance that they have the support of the world's most powerful military force.

Look at how the International Criminal Court is quiet in light of glaring crimes being committed. Instead, we see France charging the Syrian President Basha Al-Assad for an incident which was never properly investigated and which, from all available evidence, was a staged gas attack. However, the President of France has become a willing tool of the Israeli Prime Minister as so many other Western leaders.

It would have been comic had it not been so tragic.

Finally, what is taking place in Gaza is a warning to all of us who live in small developing states. It tells us that if international laws are disregarded and if international institutions are discredited and made ineffective, then it is only a matter of time when we would all be re-colonialized. Opposing the ethnic cleansing in the Gaza is at the same time a fight to preserve our sovereignty.

Therefore, we must fight for a New International Humanitarian Order as was proposed by Dr. Cheddi Jagan and adopted by the United Nations.

We must give all support to Gaza, their fight is one for Human Rights, Justice, and Peace. Therefore, we must do all we can to prevent this ethnic cleansing from succeeding. We in Caricom can make a vital contribution and a great impact on international politics if we join South Africa, Belize and others in Breaking Diplomatic Relations with Israel.

Donald Ramotar is a former Guyana President

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Gaza conflict is first televised genocide, says Guyana president

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, in a powerful condemnation of the ongoing war in Palestine, described the situation as the “first publicly televised genocide in the world.”

Speaking firmly on the issue, President Ali stated, “This is televised genocide. We have a very strong position on terrorism. We condemn the actions of Hamas. But what is occurring now is nothing short of being a genocide.”

He called for an immediate ceasefire to allow humanitarian aid into Palestine and strongly advocated for a two-state solution, urging all parties to return to the negotiation table.

The United Nations, reporting on the dire situation last Friday, highlighted the extensive destruction and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Martin Griffiths, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, informed that 41,000 houses had been destroyed or severely damaged, with over 1.5 million Gazans displaced. He stated, “Casualties continue to mount, with the dead reportedly exceeding 11,000 people – the majority of them children and women.” He also stressed the critical shortage of food, water, and essential services, calling for immediate action to prevent further deterioration and potential escalation in the region.

President Ali made his call for a ceasefire, during a press conference on Saturday, when asked to provide an update on the Caribbean Community’s (CARICOM) position on the matter. The CARICOM Secretariat, as recent as last week Sunday, registered grave concern in a statement about the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza. CARICOM “expressed] horror and concern at the mounting death toll on the civilian population, including women and children, particularly in Gaza, but also in other areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”

The community condemned any disregard for international humanitarian law, reaffirming its conviction that a lasting, two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved through peaceful means, based on relevant United Nations Resolutions and in accordance with international law. The statement further called for an immediate ceasefire and compliance with international law by all parties.

Earlier, on October 9, 2023, CARICOM had already voiced its abhorrence of the violence in the region. The statement read, “The savage nature of the attacks and counterattacks is the antithesis of civilized life and living.” CARICOM called for an immediate end to hostilities and noted that the Palestinians have been living in “veritable colonialism”, as well as that Israel has a sense of insecurity. CARICOM noted UN Resolution 242, which was passed since November 1967, calling for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from occupied territories.



Palestinian children stand in front of the rubble of their bombed out home in Gaza

Decades later, the tragic situation in the Middle East has not been resolved. Most recently, an attack on Israel by Hamas militants resulted in a scathing counterassault by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), provided a grim

overview of the health situation in Gaza. He stated, “What is clear is that the health needs of the people of Gaza are growing all the time, and the health system is near collapse.”

He pointed out that only 10 of Gaza’s 36 hospitals were functioning and underscored the severe shortage of hospital beds, health workers, medi-

cines, and supplies. Tedros stressed the importance of implementing the UN Security Council resolution, which recently called for the immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas, and for urgent and extended humanitarian corridors throughout the enclave to save and protect civilian lives.

Japan starts building 5th Guyanese FPSO

Japanese shipbuilder, MODEC, a renowned Japanese firm, has announced the commencement of the construction of the fifth floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) unit bound for Guyana.

The FPSO, named Errea Wittu, which means ‘abundance’ in the Warrau language, is the first order for MODEC to deliver to Guyana. All the other FPSOs have been entrusted to SBM Offshore.

The first steel cutting ceremony for the Errea Wittu FPSO’s topside modules was recently celebrated in Singapore, followed by a similar milestone in China. The event was attended by Soichi Ide, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MODEC in Singapore.

“We have a track record for successful project deliveries that we are proud of. Although FPSO Errea Wittu will be MODEC’s first FPSO for use in Guyana, she will be the 18th FPSO/FSO vessel delivered by MODEC for use in South America, out of 54 floating facilities delivered in the world. Thank you for choosing us to be your partner. We are proud to be able to play a part in contributing towards

Guyana’s energy future and the economy,” Ide said.

“MODEC is committed to achieving industry-leading performance and first oil on schedule in line with the project’s vision, without compromising on safety and quality, which we uphold with utmost importance for all our projects,” he added.

The FPSO Errea Wittu is one of the largest in the world by production capacity. Designed to process approximately 250,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd), it also has the capacity for gas treatment (540 million cubic feet per day), water injection (350,000 barrels per day), and handling produced water (300,000 barrels per day).

MODEC’s venture, Offshore Frontier Solution Pte. Ltd., a joint effort with Toyo Engineering Corporation, is responsible for the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) of the FPSO. This project leverages MODEC’s M350TM new-build hull, an advancement in FPSO design and construction.

The Uaru FPSO project is a critical component of ExxonMobil’s operations in the Stabroek Block.

The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

Coordinated campaign to attack Vice President Jagdeo



Joel Bhagwandin

There appears to be a consistent, coordinated campaign by opposition operatives, attempting to vigorously attack the General Secretary of the PPP/C and Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo. Specifically, in a recent series of articles, the likes of Glenn Lall, Peeping Tom, and Lincoln Lewis et.al, have all raised the question as to why the Vice President did not participate in the extraordinary sitting of the National Assembly on the border controversy with neighboring Venezuela.

In the Kaieteur News editorial of November 13th, 2023, the author intimated that the Vice President's only concern has to do with the voting rights of migrants from Venezuela. This notion, nevertheless, is a gross misrepresentation and mischaracterization of the fact. The fact is that it is not "migrants" who may be eligible to vote in Guyana, but re-migrants—that is, Guyanese who migrated from Guyana to Venezuela in the past, and the progenies of Guyanese who have remigrated from Venezuela. This is enshrined in the Constitution of Guyana, and it applies to Guyanese who are residing in any part of the world who may wish to re-migrate to Guyana. Further, the Vice President's position on this matter is not an isolated position, though its basis is premised within the Constitution; rather it is his response to a question posed by the media. Now, the media is on a campaign trail aimed at egregiously distorting his response to this particular issue in a variety of ways that is consistent with a certain narrative.

Returning to the question of the role of Vice President Jagdeo and his non-participation in debates in the National Assembly, the critics failed to acknowledge that it is not only on the extra-ordinary sitting that he did not contribute to the debate in the house. In fact, it is all of the sittings of the 12th Parliament of Guyana that Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has opted to stay away from making any presentation and / or debates. For the readers benefit, let me clarify that the Vice President's non-participation, inter alia,



Guyana Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo

debates in the National Assembly does not mean that he is not present. He is often times present.

It is worth noting that the same group of people who are making a big deal of the Vice President's portfolio in Government—are the same people who are firmly of the view that he should retire completely from politics since he is a former President who served two full terms.

Be that as it may, the question indeed is why he has elected not to debate in the National Assembly, and to this, I have an alternative perspective. To this end, it is a fact that since after Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo served two terms as President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the PPP/C became a minority Government for the first time in 2011, then it lost the elections in 2015. Owing to these failures of the party, my understanding is that Dr. Jagdeo was asked by the party to return to the lead-

ership of the party. He then successfully led the PPP/C back into Government in 2020.

During Dr. Jagdeo's term as President, the late Dr. Roger Luncheon played a pivotal role in supporting him during his Presidency, which is almost the same role he is now playing to the President Ali led Government, with an exceptional crucial focus on the national politics.

With respect to his role and portfolio in the Government as Vice-President, Article 102 (1) of the Guyana Constitution establishes that "the President may appoint Vice-Presidents for the purpose of assisting him in the discharge of his functions". Of note, the Constitution did not limit the number of Vice-Presidents the President can appoint, neither does it mandate whether the Vice-President (s), other than the Prime Minister, shall or shall not make presentations in the National Assembly. Article 101 (2) of the Guyana Constitution establishes that the "Prime Minister shall be the principal assistant of the President in the discharge of his executive functions and leader of Government business in the National Assembly".

Further to note, at least three Executive Presidents, according to my research, utilized this provision in the Constitution whereby they can appoint Vice Presidents to assist them in the discharge of their executive functions, namely: the late H.E. L.F.S. Burnham, former President H.E David Granger,

and the current President, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. Moreover, all three of them applied this provision in terms of the composition of their Vice Presidents' portfolio differently, and none of them, based on my interpretation amounted to an abdication of the respective Vice Presidents' responsibilities and / or violation of the Constitution in any way.

For example, in the case of L.F.S Burnham, he had appointed the late and former President, H.E Hugh Desmond Hoyte as a Vice-President in 1980 with responsibility for economic planning, finance and regional development, before appointing him as Prime Minister, replacing Hamilton Green in August 1984. Notably, during the period 1980-1984 while serving as Vice President, there was no other substantive Minister of Finance as is the case currently. Mr. Carl Greenidge was appointed Minister of Finance in 1983, which followed Mr. Hoyte's appointment as Prime Minister in 1984. In the case of former President Granger, he had appointed several Vice Presidents who held both titles as Minister and Vice President such as Carl Greenidge and Khemraj Ramjattan.

In the case of President Ali, he appointed Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo as the second Vice President with oversight responsibility for the economy, finance, oil & gas, and the environment. The difference with Vice President Jagdeo's portfolio and responsibilities versus Vice President Hoyte's who held a similar portfolio under the late L.F.S Burnham for the period 1980-1983 [under the same Constitution], is that there are two substantive Ministers with responsibility for finance; oil and gas, and the environment respectively under the President Ali's Government. Hence, this largely explains why there is absolutely no need for Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo to participate in the debates in the National Assembly of the 12th Parliament. Instead, the substantive Ministers have taken the lead. This, in my view, is perfectly in order considering all of the above.

In closing, there is clearly no need for Vice President Jagdeo to participate in the debates of the 12th Parliament. He has oversight responsibility for his portfolio, of which there are two substantive Ministers. More importantly, having examined the historical usage of this provision in the Constitution by former Presidents, the Vice President has in no way abdicated his responsibilities. His primary responsibility is to support the President in ensuring that the Government delivers on its commitments to the people and to continue winning future elections

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Developmental partners will not watch Venezuela take advantage of Guyana – Ali

President Mohamed Ali on Saturday assured at a press conference that Guyana's developmental partners will not stand aside and watch Venezuela take advantage of the country if it takes an aggressive military approach to falsely claim the county of Essequibo.

"...We are assured that Guyana's territorial integrity and sovereignty will not see our development partners standing aside and allowing anyone taking advantage of us," Ali said.

The president was at the time responding to question on whether Guyana will be seeking military support from the United States or any of its strategic partners in countering any Venezuelan military aggression.

Ali said that he does not believe that Venezuela will act in any "reckless manner" but if it does, Guyana has already engaged its strategic partners.

"We have engaged the Chief of Staff, (Brigadier Omar Khan) and the senior command are continuously engaged with partners across the region," added Ali, while assuring that none of the developmental partners will stand aside and allow Venezuela to take advantage of Guyana.

Apart from CARICOM, the United States of America and China are the largest investors in Guyana's oil operations.

Guyana's oil and other natural resources are key, not only to the development of the country but development of these two major superpowers.

One of America's largest oil companies, ExxonMobil is currently operating in Guyana and is the largest shareholder in the lucrative offshore Stabroek oil block. HESS another American company, and the Chinese owned CNOOC, are Exxon's investment partners in the block, benefiting from a lopsided contract that has been criticized as being more favourable to the oil companies than Guyana.

A Chinese company, Zijin, owns Aurora Gold Mines, a large scale operation located along the, Cuyuni River, Region Seven. Bosai, another Chinese company, has invested in a bauxite mine in Linden, Region Ten and a manganese mine in Matthews Ridge, North West District, Region One.

Apart from heavily investing in the country's natural resources, the China Exim Bank has lent Guyana a number of loans for a significant amount of infrastructural projects across the country, including roads and a US\$160M and counting, Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) expansion project.

Guyana has also approached the United States for a loan to fund part of its Gas-to-Energy project, an initiative that the government claims will reduce the electricity cost in Guyana and end black-outs and in turn boost development in the country.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro shows the area of Guyana on a map that his country is claiming

India is another strategic partner that has been lending Guyana money to develop the country.

President Ali is now hoping that these and other strategic partners, will not stand aside and allow Venezuela to

take advantage of Guyana if it takes an aggressive approach to falsely claim the Essequibo region.

UN can enforce ICJ ruling

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, explained the critical role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in enforcing rulings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which could be a major deterrent to aggression by Venezuela. The President explained this during a press conference yesterday, amidst rising concerns about the controversy with Venezuela.

As the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, the ICJ settles legal disputes between states. The rulings of the ICJ, as President Ali highlighted, are binding and enforceable by the Security Council under the UN Charter. This organ of the UN, consisting of 15 members, including five permanent members with veto power, can implement decisions that significantly impact the resolution of such controversies. Guyana is expected to join the UN Security Council in January 2024, as a non-permanent member, for two years. The Council can enact binding resolutions on its member states, with powers encompassing peacekeeping operations, sanctions, and military action.

Guyana's most recently sought provisional measures from the ICJ, to prevent Venezuela from taking actions that would violate Guyana's sovereignty. Venezuela's planned referendum for December 3, which seeks support to reject the 1899 Arbitral Award that es-

tablished the land boundary between the two countries, to reject the World Court's jurisdiction, and to annex Guyana's Essequibo territory. Guyana views this as a threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Guyana's call to the ICJ, according to Ali, represents a commitment to resolving the controversy peacefully and legally. He expressed confidence in the international community's support.

Amid concerns of misinformation and excitable social media posts, President Ali reassured the Guyanese public that the government is taking comprehensive action on the controversy. He urged person to rely on official channels and said the government will seek to work with the media on efforts for national awareness and education on the issue.

He said the government is engaged in extensive diplomatic efforts and continuous contact with international partners to ensure full awareness and support regarding the border controversy. "At different levels, this has not only borne fruit but has enabled us to strengthen our relationship with our partners," Ali stated.

He highlighted Guyana's commitment to a peaceful resolution, stating, "Our primary focus is to ensure that this region remains a region of peace."

Big turnout for Venezuela's 'mock' Essequibo referendum

Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE), has recorded a high turnout for the nationwide mock Essequibo referendum held on Sunday, November 19, 2023.

Guyana has rejected the planned referendum and has sought the protection of the International Court of Justice against Venezuela's expansionist claims. Additionally, the Government of Guyana announced on Saturday last that it will carry out a series of activities to counter the referendum scheduled for December 3. "On the 3rd for example, we have a series of activities, the third of December that includes sending a strong national unified message from Guyana to those participating in the referendum," President Irfaan Ali told reporters during a press conference held at the Arthur Chung Conference Center at Liliendaal, Georgetown.

Meanwhile, as a result of the high turnout Sunday, President of the CNE, Dr. Elvis Amoroso instructed that all electoral centres enabled at the national level for the simulation of the Consultative Referendum for Essequibo must remain open until there is not a single voter left in the electoral centres.

Amoroso indicated that the decision was made after electoral officials toured all the voting centres in the country and detected large influx of people who decided to participate in the simulation in order to become familiar with the automated voting system, as well as with the questions that will be asked on December 3 in the Consultative Referendum for Essequibo.

The president of the CNE took the opportunity to congratulate the people of Venezuela on "this great civic day" and invited them to participate, with the same enthusiasm, next Sunday, December 3, in the Consultative Referendum for Essequibo. Finally, he reported that, at the main headquarters of the Electoral Power, in Plaza Caracas, two voting tables were installed so that residents who live nearby can exercise their right.

Meanwhile, Presidential candidate from the Primero Venezuela party, José Brito, defended the Venezuelan people's resolve to defend their sovereignty and territory. He underscored their fearlessness and determination in the face of any adversarial force.

Another Presidential candidate, Luis Eduardo Martínez from the Acción Democrática party, led the swearing-in of the Raúl Leoni campaign command in preparation for the referendum. Martínez has been on a national tour to encourage citizens' participation in the forthcoming referendum, placing a significant emphasis on the defense of sovereignty.

Luis Ratti, another influential leader, also participated in the mock election and lauded the electoral organization for its successful conduct. He highlighted the unity of Venezuelans across political lines in defense of the



A section of crowd which is part of the voter turnout for the mock referendum

Essequibo territory.

Diosdado Cabello, the First Vice President of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), stated that the government of Guyana seeks to deny Venezuela's historical claim to the territory west of the Essequibo River. Despite the long lines, Cabello observed great enthusiasm among voters. This included opposition party members, social movements, and first-time voters, all casting their ballots in the name of the Essequibo territory.

Vice President Delcy Rodríguez speaking last week during a hearing into a request by Guyana for the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to order a halt to parts of a consultative referendum in December on the future of the Essequibo region, stated that "Nothing will prevent the referendum scheduled for Dec. 3 from being held."

Rodríguez told judges at the International Court of Justice too that her appearance at the court's headquarters in the ornate Peace Palace in The Hague "in no way implies recognition of the jurisdiction of this honorable court over the territorial dispute concerning Guyana."

The Venezuela referendum on December 3 asks the Venezuelan people to decide on five things:

They are asked to agree or reject the 1899 Arbitral Award. Mr. Reichler argued that most of them may never have heard of the Award.

They are being asked to say whether support the Geneva Agreement as the only means to settle the contro-

versy. The Geneva Agreement was reached in 1966 after Venezuela claimed that the arbitral award was null and void. This was after it participated in the exercise to mark the boundaries (a proceed that ended in 1905 and was ratified in its Parliament.) The agreement, while allowing for dialogue and a diplomatic solution, also allowed for the Secretary-General to seek a final end to the controversy if dialogue failed. Dialogue was carried out over many decades and failed to achieve a solution.

They are being asked if they agree with Venezuela for not recognizing the jurisdiction or the legal right of the Court. The Court has already ruled that it has jurisdiction. And Maduro has al-

ready said Venezuela will "never" recognise the court, so Guyana argues the question is pure theatre.

They are being asked to oppose Guyana's use of its maritime space. Guyana is not asking for provisional measures on this question because the Court has ruled that it cannot entertain matters outside of the Geneva Agreement. Guyana has proposed talks with Venezuela on this question but it has refused. They are being asked to agree with the creation of a "Guayana Essequiba", essentially the territory of Guyana it claims, and grant Venezuelan citizenship and ID cards and then incorporate the territory on the map of Venezuela.



Venezuelan claim that Guyana is xenophobic is 'a lie': Jagdeo

LABELLING the comments made by Vice-President of Venezuela Delcy Rodriguez as “misleading,” General Secretary of the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, stood firmly on the position that his government has always spoken out against xenophobia and protects the human rights of everyone.

“You’ve seen me at this press conference and elsewhere speak out against xenophobia. This is total misrepresentation by [the] Vice-President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodriguez, before the ICJ. She is trying to score political points there,” he stated at a press conference on Thursday at Freedom House.

“Venezuela should not be misrepresenting this issue, particularly before the court. It is a lie,” Jagdeo said while adding: “For her to go and tell the court this... is patently false.”

Just earlier this month the PPP General Secretary said: “We are not going to be part of any movement to promote xenophobia in our country.

“We have always insisted that people treat our people with dignity and respect,” Dr. Jagdeo had related before adding: “You have to treat people with dignity, as refugees too are entitled to protection of the state.”

Deeming the cruel treatment as “totally reprehensible,” Dr. Jagdeo remarked that he saw a video that made



Venezuela Vice President Delcy Rodriguez

his stomach “turn.”

Rodriguez accused Guyana of promoting xenophobia during her address at the World Court earlier this week.

She claimed that Guyana was directing actions against the Venezuelan population living on its territory, violating international obligations in terms of human rights, and fostering unaccept-

able xenophobia.

Rodriguez argued that Guyana’s actions were fuelled by its support for multinational oil companies and specifically highlighting the involvement of ExxonMobil.

However, no evidence was provided to prove these claims.

Contrary to Venezuela’s claims,

Guyana’s government has consistently maintained a stance against xenophobia. Officials have emphasised the importance of treating migrants, including those fleeing Venezuela due to the ongoing tensions in their homeland, with empathy and dignity.

The government’s condemnation of inhumane treatment underscores its commitment to fostering an environment that upholds human rights.

Guyana’s efforts to protect and provide for migrants have been rooted in humanitarian principles which emphasise the need to address the health and socio-economic concerns of vulnerable groups, such as the Warrau indigenous community.

Guyana’s government has also demonstrated a proactive approach to assisting migrants from Venezuela, numbering approximately 40,000.

Recent developments have heightened the geopolitical situation, as Venezuela, through its National Electoral Council, has unveiled plans for a “Consultative Referendum” on December 3, 2023.

Guyana contends that this move is a thinly veiled attempt by Venezuela to gather support for abandoning the substantive ICJ border controversy case filed by Guyana, and unilaterally taking control of the Essequibo region.

AMCHAM, Texans to form economic alliance

THE American Chamber of Commerce in Guyana (AMCHAM Guyana) has announced the signing of a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Bilateral Chamber of Commerce, headquartered in Houston, Texas.

According to a press release from AMCHAM, this momentous occasion took place during a ceremony held on Wednesday evening, symbolising a new era of collaboration aimed at fostering economic growth, educational advancement, and promoting trade and investment between the two organisations.

Founded in 2018, AMCHAM Guyana has been a pivotal force in facilitating US business growth and US investment in Guyana. AMCHAM boasts almost 200 members, and is constantly driving initiatives to foster US business growth in Guyana.

As part of this strategic alliance,

AMCHAM Guyana, in conjunction with the commercial arm of the United States Embassy in Guyana, and MHM Holdings Inc., hosted a reception to welcome a distinguished trade delegation from the Bilateral Chamber of Commerce, comprising over 20 US-based businesses, specialising in key sectors such as energy, oil and gas, engineering, law, banking, and logistics.

Notable companies within the delegation included Champion Foods, Arc Energy, BakerRisk, Andalusian Energy, and Citadel Engineering, among others.

The MOU was formally executed by Devindra Kissoon, President of AMCHAM Guyana, and Aida Araissi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Bilateral Chamber of Commerce.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of esteemed guests, including US Ambassador, Nicole Thierot and Minister of Public Infrastructure,

Bishop Juan Edghill. Both dignitaries commended the partnership between the two chambers and expressed their support for the continued growth of trade and investment in Guyana.



Kissoon remarked: “This collaboration marks a significant milestone for AMCHAM Guyana and the Bilateral

Chamber of Commerce. By joining forces, we aim to create a conducive environment for our members to thrive and to attract foreign investment that will contribute to the economic development of Guyana.”

Araissi expressed her enthusiasm about the partnership, noting: “We believe that together we can achieve greater heights. This collaboration opens new avenues for our member companies to explore opportunities in the vibrant Guyanese market.”

The MOU signifies a commitment to mutual cooperation and sets the stage for joint initiatives that will benefit the members of both chambers. As Guyana continues to emerge as a key player in the global business landscape, this strategic alliance is poised to make a lasting impact on trade and investment in the country.



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No foreign body can undermine our democracy: Jagdeo

STANDING in unison with democracy, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has maintained that foreign bodies entering Guyana must not seek to undermine the nation's democracy.

Speaking at a press conference, last Thursday, at Freedom House, Dr. Jagdeo, addressed the cloud of suspicion surrounding the group of American politicians led by Dee Dawkins-Haigler, and said that their press release was one-sided.

Pointing out loopholes within the statements, Dr. Jagdeo asked whether research was conducted in order to learn about the legal consequences of discrimination.

"...If there was discrimination, any foreign body that comes to Guyana must not undermine the democratic nature of this society and the institutions of our society. They should ask whether those are followed for us. And then if people can get a remedy there, then they can say, 'okay, then we will raise this as an issue'.

"This is a mission in their private capacity. And to think that the United States of America can tell us what to do in this case or to undermine our democratic institutions is something that we find very unusual and strange for people who claim that they are here to support the country and rule of law, and democracy," he said.

Speaking about the mechanisms available to tackle allegations of discrimination, he underscored the sole objectives and powers of the Ethnic



Guyana Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo

Relations Commission (ERC).

The ERC is a constitutional body established by Guyana's Constitution (Amendment) (No.2) Act No.11 of 2000, which amended Article 212 D to provide for the establishment of the body.

The commission's functions include promoting harmony and good relations between persons of different ethnic groups; discouraging and prohibiting persons, institutions, political parties, and associations from indulging in, advocating for, or promoting discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity; investigating any issues af-

fecting ethnic relations, and promoting the elimination of all forms of ethnic discrimination.

Dr. Jagdeo then highlighted the fact that Guyana has separation of powers and thus, allegations of racism can also be tried at the judicial level.

The Government of Guyana said in a press release that it has made note of the delegation and the intended visit. It added that the 'fact-finding' mission appears to have resulted from a conference organised by Rickford Burke, a Guyanese residing in Brooklyn, New York.

During the month of September,

2023, Burke organised a so-called "Conference on Guyana" in Washington, DC, to which the Government of Guyana was not invited, but which was attended by members of the opposition.

The one-sided engagement presented the platform for opposition members to spew concocted and fabricated narratives about the Government of Guyana, including their usual diatribes about racial discrimination and extra-judicial killings, without utilising any fact-checking mechanism and without the government being afforded a hearing or an opportunity to respond.

Islamic leaders ask Saudi Arabia to help improve Hajj experience for Guyanese

IN a recent diplomatic endeavour, Director of Education of the Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana (CIOG), Shaikh Moin-ul-Hack, and the Head of the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT), Shaikh Abdul Aleem, engaged in a significant meeting with His Excellency, Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al Rabiah, the Minister of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia, in Riyadh.

The meeting, characterised by a spirit of cordiality, focused on addressing challenges encountered by Guyanese and Caribbean pilgrims during their sacred journey of Hajj to Mecca.

The primary objective was to streamline the processes associated with air and land transportation, as well as accommodation, ensuring a more accessible and comfortable experience for pilgrims during the Hajj period.

Both Shaikhs expressed satisfaction that the concerns raised during the meeting would be earnestly addressed,



Fawzan Al Rabiah, Saudi Minister of Hajj with Guyanese Muslim leaders

promising positive resolutions to enhance the pilgrimage experience for the Guyanese and Caribbean pilgrims.

Additionally, the leaders explored the possibility of facilitating a complimentary Hajj for individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and distinction in serving their commu-

nities but face financial challenges in undertaking the pilgrimage.

This initiative, if realised, could provide an opportunity for those deserving individuals to participate in the sacred journey despite financial constraints.

Before the pivotal meeting with

Minister Al Rabiah, Shaikh Hack and Shaikh Aleem held discussions with the Honourable Minister of State for Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Adel Al Jubair. During this meeting, the leaders updated Minister Al Jubair on Islam and related activities in Guyana, emphasizing the country's high level of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence among adherents of various faiths and ethnic groups.

Expressing their gratitude, both the CIOG and the GIT acknowledged His Excellency, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, for his instrumental role in facilitating the visit to Saudi Arabia and the subsequent meetings.

The collaborative efforts between Guyana and Saudi Arabia aim to strengthen ties, foster understanding, and address the needs of the Islamic community, particularly concerning the significant pilgrimage of Hajj

Cops to target drinking and driving as holiday season approaches

TRAFFIC Chief, Senior Superintendent Mahendra Singh, has reiterated the commitment of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) to ensuring that there is safety on the roadways.

He made this announcement while presenting the traffic department's policing plans for the upcoming Christmas season. The event was held at the Police Officers Mess at Eve Leary on Wednesday.

"Our intention [is to] ensure the unhindered flow of all forms of traffic within all regional police divisions, to minimise traffic congestion in and around the critical areas of activities, to conduct continuous awareness programmes [which are] aimed at ensuring all plans, routes of travel, and safety information meets the target audience," he said.

According to a risk assessment, there is likely to be an increase in accidents across the country and an increase in alcohol consumption by road users, among other issues.

Also, when comparing the 2023 traffic accidents and deaths statistics to those of 2022, there was an overall 9 per cent decrease. However, there was an increase in the number of fatal accidents and deaths.

With the number of fatal accidents in 2023 increasing by 59 per cent and deaths climbing to 71 per cent, the traffic chief stressed that there will be stricter monitoring on the roadways.

In the categories of serious, minor and damage accidents, the decline was 19, 17 and 7 per cent, respectively.

While explaining the methods that will be implemented, Singh said each region will be divided into sectors and staffed by traffic ranks. There will be an increase in fixed point placement along the main thoroughfares and motorcycle and motor vehicle patrols will be done, among several other initiatives.

Additionally, there will be installation of lights along key roads and traffic cameras to safeguard road users.

Earlier this year, President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, said that he had instructed the GPF to launch a massive road safety campaign throughout the country, given the increase in deaths caused by road accidents.

"I have already told the police that we have to do a number of things; one, launch a massive road safety campaign across the country where you have more visuals, markings..." he said.

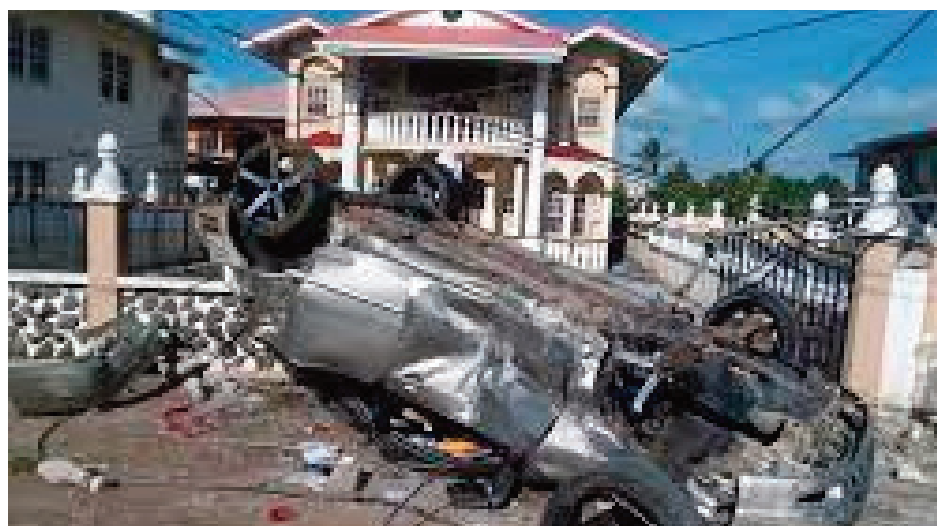
Dr. Ali was adamant that drinking and driving, and speeding have to be addressed, but the response needs to be seen as a collective responsibility.

The increase in road accidents is of great national concern, he had said, adding: "And if you look, frankly speaking, a lot of the accidents have to

do with excessive speeding and drinking and driving."

President Ali added that he requested statistics on how many accidents occur in the early morning hours because such must be among the things ranks have to look at in order to develop and implement adequate safety measures.

In July 2023, to aid in reducing road fatalities, a Road Safety Awareness Campaign, "Respect the Road," was launched by the GPF in collaboration with the Government of Guyana and Impressions.



A recent fatal accident in Guyana

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\$350 million injected into forestry sector: Minister Bharrat

HIGHLIGHTING that the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration saw the forestry sector as an important one in the country, Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat, said that some \$350 million was invested in the sector since 2020.

The minister made these remarks during a recent press conference where he spoke of the state of the forestry sector which has seen growth from 2020 to now.

He said, "The government would have injected \$350 million into the sector seeing it as very important because it's not only about production now for the Guyana Forestry Commission but it is also monitoring and the protection of the forest too."

Added to this, he noted that this had to be done as the forestry sector was in a dreary state when they took office, highlighting that some staff members were not paid for two years, and utilities among other things were not paid for.

However, since taking over, he stated that the role of the forestry commission has been expanded even further now to ensure that there is more monitoring and protection of the forest while, at the same time, boosting and

keeping the sector viable.

Among measures that the government took to ensure that the sector was boosted, Bharrat said that VAT was taken off of equipment and machinery while fuel tax was removed to bring ease to stakeholders in the mining and logging sector.

Added to that, he indicated that the duty on 4x4 pickups has been lowered while there is currently no duty for All-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Further to this, the 10 percent tributary tax was removed even as the VAT on lubricants was introduced.

"We would have introduced the revolving fund for the forestry sector and the forest stakeholders of which several stakeholders have already benefited from," he added.

With the introduction of this revolving fund, the minister noted that there are a few small loggers that are still in the process of being approved as some would have encountered difficulties in relation to accessing loans.

However, he added that the ministry is committed to working with these small loggers and the banks to ensure that their needs are facilitated to ensure that they are aided to go back into production or expand their productivity.



Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat



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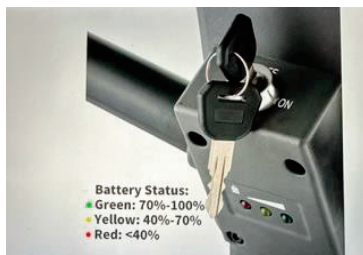


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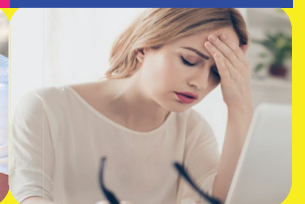
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Guyana in talks with Saudi Arabia for US\$25M food production facility

AS Guyana continues to lead the way in food security within the Caribbean region, President Dr. Irfaan Ali has announced that the country is leading discussions with Saudi Arabia for the establishment of a US\$25 million facility, catered to accelerate food production.

The Head of State made this announcement on Saturday during a press conference at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

“Guyana is leading this discussion on the \$25 million facility to accelerate food production by looking at a hydroponics facility for the entire region.

“We have submitted all the studies, and I am confident that before the end of this year we can see this project advance towards implementation,” President Ali said.

These discussions stemmed from a Caribbean Community (CARICOM)/Saudi Arabia Summit, which was held in the capital city of Riyadh.

Deeming it a “tremendous” success, President Ali said that fellow CARICOM Heads of Government left the summit with a sense of pride, given that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia now fully understands the value of CARICOM as an important development and strategic partner in areas such as energy, food and climate security.

Notably, the President said that a grant of US\$2.5 billion from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been set aside and targets the development of the Caribbean region.

President Ali also reflected on the fact that when he started this journey of expanding Guyana’s diplomatic relationship within the Middle East, many doubted this effort.

However, the President dispelled the negativity by speaking on the fruitfulness of the relationship.

He said, “Saudi Arabia, Qatar are now helping us, through a grant, with the building of a new stadium that will be in Region Three, approving the road project...”

He also briefly touched on the massive developments being achieved through the US\$150 million agreement that was signed earlier this year to finance infrastructural works in Guyana’s housing sector, and the construction of the Wismar Bridge in Region 10 (Upper Demerara-Berbice).

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Finance Minister Dr. Ashni Singh, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Saudi Fund for Development Sultan A. AlMarshad on the sidelines of the 2023 Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group’s Annual Meeting.

And, given Guyana’s progress, President Ali urged other CARICOM nations to follow suit and pursue non-traditional partners in order to attain their development goals.

President Ali further stated that the Minister of State of Saudi Arabia has also committed to attending the next CARICOM meeting in Guyana.

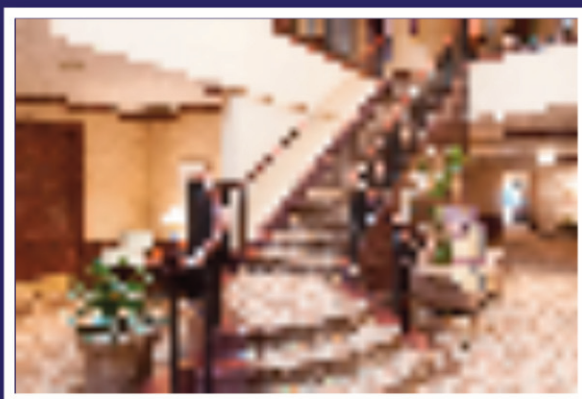


President Ali in Riyadh with Saudi government officials

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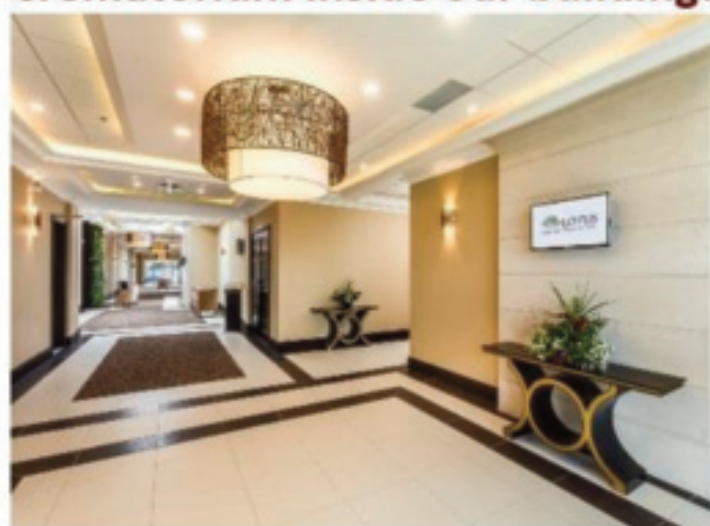
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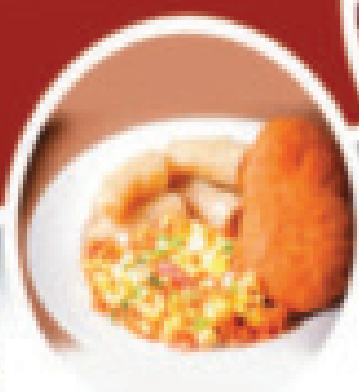


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Guyana on the forefront of climate issues ahead of COP28

Guyana President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, has unveiled Guyana's strategic vision for the upcoming COP28, which will showcase the nation's commitment to playing a pioneering role in global climate leadership.

During a press conference at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre on Saturday, the President highlighted key initiatives and goals, outlining a comprehensive plan that positions Guyana at the forefront of climate discussions.

He shared plans for the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference/Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC also known as COP 28, which will be held from November 30 to December 12 at the Expo City, Dubai.

President Ali acknowledged Guyana's achievements in climate change initiatives, particularly through the implementation of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030.

In December 2022, Guyana achieved a ground-breaking milestone as the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) issued the world's first TREES credits to the country, recognising its success in preventing forest loss and degradation through jurisdictional REDD+.

A historic agreement with the Hess Corporation promises a minimum of US\$750 million for Guyana over the next decade, with carbon credits playing



COP28 will be held next week in the UAE

a crucial role in the initiative.

Over 200 Indigenous communities in Guyana are already reaping the benefits from the sale of these carbon credits.

President Ali expressed confidence in Guyana's leadership, stating: "Our position on climate change and the successes we have had as a result of pursuing the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030."

Highlighting the significance of Guyana's role, he added: "Our leadership will be on show at COP28, as Guyana will be given a pavilion, a Guyana pavilion, in which many of the leaders across the world and from important international and regional organisations will be taking part."

This dedicated pavilion is set to serve as a platform for showcasing Guyana's commitment to addressing

climate change, fostering environmental sustainability, and presenting the LCDS as a model for comprehensive development.

President Ali highlighted that Guyana's active participation in COP28 goes beyond mere representation.

"At those meetings, the LCDS will be placed as a tool for development, as a development model and a strategy," he said.

This strategic positioning, Dr. Ali said, aims to influence global discussions and promote the adoption of sustainable development models that prioritise environmental conservations.

The President said that this vision extends beyond COP28, with Guyana co-chairing the group of forested countries in the Commonwealth.

He said that this leadership role reflects Guyana's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices in the face of climate challenges.

The Head of State also underscored the collaborative efforts, stating: "In coming up with a joint strategy, and in presenting its joint strategy to COP28...our leadership will be demonstrated in a very tangible way."

President Ali also addressed the need for a balanced approach to development, considering the potential risks of overheating and inflationary pressures associated with rapid expansion.

Caribbean Airlines eyes Saudi Arabian partnership

CARIBBEAN Airlines Limited has announced that its Chairman, Ronnie Mohammed, recently participated in the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago's delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

According to a press release, during this visit, Mohammed engaged in high-level discussions with Rashed Alshammair, Vice President of Commercial from Saudi Arabia's Air Connectivity Programme (ACP), to explore areas of collaboration and co-operation between Caribbean Airlines and Saudi Arabia.

Established in 2021, the Saudi Air Connectivity Programme aims to bolster tourism growth in Saudi Arabia by enhancing air connectivity and developing both existing and potential air routes.

By working at the intersection of tourism and aviation, ACP plays a crucial role in realising the National Tourism Strategy's vision, positioning Saudi Arabia as a global leader in tourism air connectivity.

These strategic meetings align seamlessly with Caribbean Airlines' ambitious 2023-2027 strategic plan, where network growth stands as one of the key pillars.

"Recognising the importance of



Caribbean Airlines' Chairman, Ronnie Mohammed (right), presents Rashed Alshammair, Vice President of Commercial from Saudi Arabia's Air Connectivity Program (ACP), with a gift after their strategic meeting

Saudi Arabia as a destination for the Muslim community in Trinidad and Tobago and the broader region, particularly for the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages, Caribbean Airlines is eager to contribute to the facilitation of affordable and convenient travel," the com-

pany said.

During discussions, Mohammed in particular explored potential inter-line arrangements with Saudi Air and Riyadh Air, with the latter set to launch in 2024.

This initiative forms a pivotal

component of Caribbean Airlines' growth strategy, emphasising partnerships with airlines and stakeholders to extend its reach and enhance connectivity between Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean, and the global community.

Guyana, EU record significant increase in trade

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali, on Monday, told European investors that the door for business and investment opportunities in Guyana is open, and collaborations could bring significant benefits for both Guyana and the European Union (EU).

The President made those remarks at the opening ceremony for the first EU economic mission to Guyana, at the Guyana Marriott Hotel in Kingston.

According to the Head of State, the presence of this mission here ensures that businesses and investors from the EU have no excuse for being part of the greatest story of growth and development in the world, and having an opportunity to be part of one of the most sustainable and comprehensive stories of development that will evolve further in 2030 and beyond.

He said: “[Guyana’s story] will position a small developing country into a mighty position of leadership on climate, food and energy... a position that will see a small developing country becoming one of the most aggressive modern, scientifically driven country providing services in education, healthcare, ecological services, and biodiversity services.”

With Guyana positioning itself as a leader in all of these services, he said that this provides the country with a wide market that could benefit the country, investors and businesses based on the existing trade arrangements and agreements that exist.

However, what the government hopes to do is to create competitive advantages in Guyana so that businesses may want to relocate their services or expand their services here, to better compete and gain access to those markets.

“We are fully aware that our policy agenda and our policy framework must position this country to give you the best possible competitive advantage in providing and selling your services or products from Guyana, and that is the journey we are embarking on,” President Ali said.

Sharing the prospects of Guyana’s burgeoning success in the oil and gas industry, he related that this sector is just the fuel to build what Guyana wants, which is a fully diversified economy which is highly competitive in every area and leading in all sectors that matter for the future.

Dr Ali said that while some may call this a monumental task, this cannot be achieved through a straight-line approach and as such, the government has taken the policy decision to adopt the best approaches today to build a Guyana ahead of time.

Against this backdrop, President Ali said that it is important for the mission to understand the opportunities that lie ahead, as he disclosed that Guyana’s export value to the European Union from January 2017 to September 2023 was



President, Dr Irfaan Ali along with EU Ambassador to Guyana, Government Ministers and members of the first EU economic mission

some US\$7.9 billion, which reflects a steady growth. Overall, he added that trade between the EU and Guyana for that same period amounted to some US\$11 billion.

“We are here to tell you in a convincing way that the door for our opportunities is open so that it can become your opportunities also,” Dr. Ali said.

Meanwhile, also delivering remarks at the opening ceremony was EU Ambassador to Guyana, Rene Van Nes, who

said that the hosting of this mission came as a result of a bold promise he made to President Ali to bring “more of Europe to Guyana.”

As he expressed his joy in being able to have this done, he said that the mission consists of some 23 companies from 10 EU member states ranging from various industries. Added to this, he noted that these 23 companies had, last year, a total revenue of €400 billion and employ some 500,000 people worldwide.

Van Nes said: “So these companies were selected for their contributions to the priority sectors of the EU global gateway that you know is the EU strategy to connect Europe to the world.”

Some of these sectors, he related, include renewable energy, agriculture, health care and even pharmaceuticals, all sectors that are highly relevant to Guyana’s ambition to become a regional hub for key services and products.



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Anurag Kashyap: deep depression

Filmmaker Kashyap reveals he got 2 heart attacks after Netflix axed film

Anurag Kashyap is an Indian filmmaker and actor known for his works in Hindi cinema. He is the recipient of several accolades, including four Filmfare Awards. After the controversy between Saif Ali Khan and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub's Tandav, several projects were shelved to avoid backlash. Anurag Kashyap in a recent conversation with the Washington Post said, "It was my best work. I've never done such honest, important work. Why greenlight it, then change your mind? It's invisible censorship."

The filmmaker added, "Maximum City was where all my energy went. I was heartbroken. I totally lost it. After the film got shelved, he went into

deep depression and took to drinking alcohol. He also revealed that he suffered two heart attacks during this period. Streaming was finally the space I was waiting for. The disappointment is it was supposed to be a revolution, but it was not. Like social media, it was supposed to empower people, but it became a tool". Maximum City is a non-fiction novel that depicts four perspectives on how people live in Mumbai. The book is also a Pulitzer Prize finalist.

Anurag Kashyap got his major break as a co-writer in Ram Gopal Verma's crime drama Satya and made his directorial debut with Paanch, which never had a theatrical release due to censorship.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): You will get the opportunity today to smash through an obstacle that has been blocking your path for quite some time and once you have smashed through it you must keep going. The Sun's imminent change of signs will turbo-boost your sense of adventure.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Give yourself permission to dream and give your imagination the okay to set out on a brand new adventure. Some people may try to hold you back, claiming that you cannot afford to be so daring, but they are wrong, so be brave and find a way.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Partnerships are about to take center stage again, so make a conscious decision right now to work with people both in your private life and at work rather than try to do it all on your own. Remember, what you do for others you also do for yourself.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Whatever else you do over the next 24 hours you can and you must stick up for yourself when challenged by people who clearly do not have your best interests at heart. It's a tough world out there and you must be tougher than your rivals.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): The efforts you make over the next few days will bring huge rewards between now and year's end and well into 2024, so get your act together and, once you start moving ahead, don't stop until you have reached your final destination. It's all about you now.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): Your confidence will get a boost today and you will need it because you are about to be challenged by someone who thinks you are expecting too much of life and need to rein in your ambitions. Ignore what they tell you and go all out for success.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Tensions at home and at work need to be defused before they get out of hand, so make it your number one priority today to talk sensibly to people you don't seem to be getting along with. Your differences are actually of a very minor nature.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Your world has changed big time in recent weeks and for you it has been a change for the better. Now you need to build on your achievements and also see to it that other people share in your gains. There's plenty of good stuff to go around!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): The Sun moves into your sign tomorrow, so forget about all the little things that have gone wrong or frustrated you in recent weeks and adopt a more positive outlook on life. The good times are about to begin and they won't be ending any time soon.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): The cosmic dial is on the move and over the next few days it will be pointing at the most sensitive area of your chart. Now that you know that you can take steps to prevent bad feelings taking hold. Try treating life as a wonderful privilege.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): There is no reason to be suspicious of other people's motives, either at home or at work, so lighten up a little and act as if everyone wants to be your best friend – because over the next few weeks that won't be far from the truth.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): You can go it alone with some sort of creative project but it's unlikely you will get very far. The message of the stars now is that progress will be quicker, and more profitable, if you join forces with people who share your ambitions.



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Tragedy strikes newlyweds during St. Lucia honeymoon

In what was meant to be a blissful honeymoon to celebrate their recent vows, Mariana Kuhlman found herself facing the unimaginable after her husband Nate met in a tragic accident.

Reports are that on October 28, 2023, the Kuhlman couple who are from Ohio exchanged their vows in an intimate ceremony, surrounded by loved ones.

With hearts full of hope and anticipation, they embarked on a honeymoon trip to the picturesque island of St. Lucia.

According to reports, only three days into their romantic getaway, on October 31, 2023, their world took a tragic turn as Nate Kuhlman met with a devastating accident while water skiing.

Specific details of the water skiing accident remain undisclosed.

In response to this heart-wrenching incident, two GoFundMe pages were established.

These crowdfunding efforts were dedicated to helping cover the funeral expenses and any unexpected costs arising from the tragedy.

The GoFundMe pages have successfully raised funds to address a range of expenses that the Kuhlman family faced during this trying period.

According to reports, these expenses include last-minute plane tickets to Saint Lucia, the subsequent journey back home, immediate passport issuance, transportation, accommodations, meals, funeral arrangements, and any unforeseen financial burdens.



Honeymoon tragedy: Nate and Mariana Kuhlman.

To date, the combined efforts of the two GoFundMe pages have generated over US \$100,000.

Heather Kuhlman, Nate's mother, expressed her profound grief and deep appreciation for the support they received through social media.

She arrived in Saint Lucia to offer a final prayer over her son's body before an autopsy was conducted.

The post-mortem conducted on Thursday confirmed the heartbreaking cause of Nate's death as drowning.

"Nate's death took all of us by surprise and just took our breath away," said his grieving mother, Heather.

"By God's grace, we are ok. It's so hard and painful, but we are walking each day, one moment at a time. I am sad that Nathaniel is no longer here

with us, but I know he is very much alive in heaven and will be praying for us," she added.

The Kuhlman family's heart-wrenching story has touched the hearts of many, and the GoFundMe pages have become a conduit for people to offer their condolences and support during this unimaginable ordeal.

Holness wants new Ministry to deal with crime and violence in Jamaica

The Prime Minister of Jamaica Andrew Holness has suggested that the island needs a separate ministry to "treat crime and violence" in the country.

Holness hinted at the proposal of the new ministry during a sitting of Parliament on November 7, where he and other legislators condemned what he described as a "barbaric killing" of three Jamaicans, including two young boys, in the community of Salt Spring, St. James, on Monday.

A state of emergency has since been declared for the entire parish of St. James.

During a debate with other members of Parliament on the current measures in place to quell crime in the country, the Prime Minister said the security measures like curfews and states of emergency aren't the only measures needed.

Holness said the crime problem is "over and above" the capacity of the Ministry of National Security, "which



Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness

means the magnitude of the crimes is a threat to our national security."

The Prime Minister said there is now a need for the government to "pursue the crime-fighting strategy on the human element.

"We cannot rely solely on the emergency measures or the police to deal with the crime problem. The

human element has to be dealt with ... these issues that have been raised regarding mental health and trauma, parenting, corporal punishment within the schools ... all of these are elements that we have to treat within our society," Holness said.

He noted the "great work" being done by the National Violence Preven-

tion Commission, established in 2019 to identify gaps in the prevention and intervention services and to make recommendations with respect to violence prevention and intervention programs.

The commission is expected to submit a major report to the government by year end.

"The strategic thinking is that we need this national commission to look at what assets we have already deployed in treating violence, see where the gaps are, and then the government will have to dedicate a budget and probably create an entire ministry to coordinate all the state and civil activities to treat with this issue."

Holness said the government's biggest challenge is that the culture in Jamaica has evolved in such a way "that we embrace violence," and any shift in legislation to oppose that will likely result in "cultural backlash."

"But we have to break that," he said.

Man jailed for murder of Paulwell's baby apologizes

One of the men who was sentenced for his role in killing Jamaican Member of Parliament Phillip Paulwell's 10-month-old daughter and her mother has apologized to the nation.

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

He was also sentenced to one year and 10 months in prison on each of the two counts of kidnapping of the mother and daughter from their home in Kingston on September 9. The sentences are to be served concurrently and he has been ordered to serve 20 years before he is eligible for parole.

According to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Brown pleaded guilty to his role as the driver who transported Patterson and

Sarayah from Stony Hill, along with the shooter and other persons, to a scene in East Kingston where they were killed.

He also said he accepted part payment from co-accused, Leoda Bradshaw, on behalf of his co-conspirators for the execution of the plan to kidnap and kill Patterson and Sarayah.

Following the sentencing, Brown delivered a letter to his attorney, to be read to the media, in which he expressed remorse for his actions.

"I want my lawyer to tell the family of the baby and her mother and the Jamaican public that I am very sorry for the loss of their lives. I want my lawyer to also tell my mentor that I [am] very sorry for the disappointment. I hope one day everyone will find it possible to forgive me," the lawyer, Rita Allen-Brown, read.

"He didn't mention who the mentor was. He just handed me a note



Murdered: Toshnya Patterson and her baby Sarayah

today that he wants me to read to the media," Allen-Brown said.

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

A statement from the DPP said Miller pleaded guilty to participating in

the planning of the murder of Patterson and Sarayah. But it said there was no evidence that Miller was on the scene on the day of the kidnapping and murders or that he participated in the actual kidnapping and murders.

Leoda Bradshaw, the United States Navy Officer said to be the mastermind behind the crime, along with her co-accused Roland Lloyd Balford, have been remanded until a further hearing scheduled for December 1.

CARIBBEAN ROUNDUP

Tunnel collapse kills nine in Dominican Republic

In a tragic turn of events, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, witnessed the deadly collapse of a concrete wall in a tunnel on a bustling avenue on Saturday.

The collapse, which resulted in the loss of at least nine lives, came as heavy rains and floods battered the west of the Caribbean.

The wall, integral to the city's infrastructure designed for traffic efficiency, gave way in the late hours of Saturday afternoon.

This incident occurred despite prior alerts from emergency agencies, with many vehicles still navigating the avenue.

Compounding the difficulties faced by rescue teams, damaged pipes in the vicinity flooded the tunnel.

This influx of water created additional hurdles, hampering the efforts to reach those trapped. Rescue teams faced a grim situation, with the collapse having claimed multiple lives.

The collapse proved catastrophic, with a total of nine casualties reported in the incident.

Among the deceased were five males and four females, according to reports.

Several vehicles were crushed under the fallen concrete structure, highlighting the sheer magnitude of the disaster.

Reports are that the concrete wall crushed several vehicles circulating at the time in the center of the Dominican Republic's capital.

At the same time, floods swept away vehicles and drowned houses and people in the western part of the city.

American businessman facing firearms charges in Jamaica

An American businessman, accused of purchasing five firearms discovered at a Kingston warehouse last March, is set to seek bail on November 23 in the Gun Court.

The 32-year-old defendant, Fitzroy Johnson, hailing from Atlanta, Georgia, was apprehended at Norman Manley International Airport on November 3.

Johnson faces charges of conspiracy to illegally import firearms and ammunition.

According to reports, he is the third foreign national entangled in the gun discovery, which also unveiled 2,000 rounds of ammunition.

Four additional individuals implicated in the case, including the alleged mastermind and two other foreigners, had their bail extended and are expected

to return to court on December 14 for a plea and case management hearing.

A trial date has been scheduled for May 13 of next year.

Godfrey Martin, known as 'Rev,' a St. Elizabeth businessman, was apprehended and charged with conspiracy to illegally import firearms and conspiracy to illegally import ammunition.

Sherilyn McLean, the girlfriend of the 51-year-old businessman, also faces charges related to the case.

Thirty-six-year-old Jermaine Baker, a chef from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and 42-year-old Dervan Brown, a construction worker from Bronx, New York, are also charged.

Dervan Brown, who was also charged in the matter, was shot and killed in Spanish Town, St. Catherine on November 6.

Their charges stem from their association with the discovery of the illegal firearm on March 4, 2022.

The startling discovery comprised three rifles, 18 handguns, and an excess of 2,000 rounds of ammunition.

The revelation unfolded after customs officers detected a suspicious package and promptly summoned the Contraband Enforcement Team.

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Jamaica to open STEM schools with help from the World Bank

The Jamaican government will be opening several schools dedicated to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) with help from the World Bank.

This is according to the island's Finance Minister Dr. Nigel Clarke. He made the announcement on Sunday while speaking at a constituency conference for North Western St. Ann.

According to Clarke, a focus on fostering STEM skills in the younger population has always been a priority of the Andrew Holness administration.

"To be able to attract high-paying jobs in Jamaica, we're gonna have to address Math and Science. And that is exactly what we plan to do. The Prime Minister has a vision of having Math and Science schools in the country and upgrading the quality of teaching of those subjects generally across the country" Clarke said.

The finance minister said an agreement will be signed with the World Bank in short order to launch the first of six such schools.

"I'm here to tell you that tomorrow morning, I am signing an agreement with the World Bank to launch the first STEM school in Jamaica. This will be the first of six to come," Clarke said.

Clarke did not delve into the details of the agreement, but described the opening of the schools as a "revolution in education" in Jamaica.

Over the past several years, Prime



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke

Minister Andrew Holness has touted the idea of opening schools dedicated to STEM across the island.

Last year, ground was broken for the construction of Jamaica's first Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) Academy in Dunbeholden, St. Catherine.

Addressing a landmarking ceremony, the Prime Minister said the prop-

erty, which was once a sugar plantation, would be used to prepare Jamaicans for "the new world."

"To stand on the grounds of a former sugar plantation and say we are going to build a technology school to produce the people of Jamaica who will not just be consumers of technology but will become producers of technology... that is the true liberation of our people,"

Holness said.

He argued that, as technology develops, "it is the nations that own technology that own the future".

Holness had also promised that six STEM schools would be built by the government at an overall cost of US\$133 million. An institution for the Arts will also be constructed.

JA Customs seize cocaine bound for Thailand

The Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) achieved a major breakthrough by intercepting two cocaine trafficking operations at the Norman Manley International Airport (NMIA) Cargo Section on Thursday, November 16, 2023.

During their routine Customs operations, Customs Officers stationed at NMIA unearthed a concealed stash of cocaine ingeniously tucked away in a toaster oven bound for Thailand.

In response to the discovery, the JCA is collaborating closely with law enforcement authorities to delve deeper into the origins of the narcotics and the individuals entangled in this illicit operation.

Reports are that Mrs. Velma Ricketts Walker, the CEO/Commissioner of Customs, emphasized the significance of this latest seizure as a stern warning to criminal networks attempting to exploit non-traditional global trade routes.

Ricketts Walker shared that the seizure not only disrupts the illicit drug trade but also serves as a resounding message to criminal enterprises seeking to exploit alternative routes for drug trafficking.

Furthermore, Ricketts Walker reaffirms the agency's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation's security against the evolving challenges posed



Some of the cocaine seized at the Norman Manley International Airport in Jamaica

by transnational crime. She highlights their dedication to adopting cutting-edge inspection techniques aimed at thwarting those who jeopardize national security.

Since October 2023, the JCA has recorded 10 cocaine seizures within Customs-controlled areas.

Behind these successful interceptions lies a significant investment in technology.

This investment has been instrumental in bolstering both intrusive and non-intrusive inspection operations.

14 killed after illegal gold mine collapses in Suriname

The aftermath of a catastrophic collapse of an illegal gold mine at Rosebel, Suriname, one of South America's largest open-pit gold projects, continues to unravel as the death toll surged to 14 on Tuesday.

On Monday evening, President Chandrikapersad Santokhi revealed to the National Assembly a grim account of the disaster's toll.

He disclosed that ten lives had initially been extracted from the wreckage following the incident, which struck at 3:00 PM local time.

The catastrophe unfurled when a temporary tunnel, constructed to a considerable depth, entombed a group of gold miners.

President Santokhi, speaking on behalf of the government, expressed profound shock and extended condolences to the bereaved families.

In light of the tragedy's magnitude, he also mentioned the possibility of declaring a day or more of national mourning.

The ill-fated incident occurred within the gold concession of the Chinese-owned Zijing Mining, which had acquired Rosebel Goldmines from IamGold earlier in the year.

Rosebel, an iconic open-pit gold project, stands tall as one of South America's largest. However, the presence of illegal gold miners within the vicinity has generated an ominous and precarious environment.

Santokhi underscored that, at the behest of Zijing Mining, law enforcement had taken action to remove a significant number of illegal gold diggers from the area a few weeks ago.

Their expulsion was prompted by the discovery of a substantial gold vein in the vicinity. Regrettably, reports suggest that the group of illegal miners clandestinely returned to the site shortly thereafter.

In response to the unfolding tragedy, the government dispatched police officers, soldiers, and members of the National Disaster Management Co-



Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi

ordination Centre to provide immediate assistance.

Additionally, an investigation team led by the Attorney General has been appointed to probe the incident, shedding

light on the events leading to this disaster. Authorities have underscored that, if the need arises, Suriname may seek assistance from Brazil to bolster the ongoing rescue operation.

CARICOM reaffirms support for Guyana in land dispute

Leaders from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have reaffirmed their support for Guyana's territorial integrity and its pursuit of a resolution to the long-standing dispute with Venezuela through the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados and Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines delivered this message during a joint statement made in Barbados on Saturday.

Prime Minister Mottley emphasized the unwavering nature of Guyana's stance, characterizing it as robust and steadfast.

She underscored CARICOM's commitment to stand firmly behind Guyana in this matter, stating, "In this particular case in our view, Guyana's position has been strong, it has been unwavering and it is before the International Court of Justice and we'll back them 150 per cent with that."

Mottley expressed her reliance on Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit, who currently chairs CARICOM, and Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, who chairs the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

She expects them to play pivotal roles in maintaining stability in the region, even if a definitive resolution to



Prime Ministers Mia Mottley and Ralph Gonsalves

the dispute is not immediately achieved.

The contentious issue centers on Guyana's 160,000 square kilometer Essequibo County.

Guyana has sought the intervention of the ICJ to declare the 1899 Arbitral Tribunal Award as the definitive and conclusive resolution to the territorial dispute. However, Venezuela does not acknowledge the ICJ's jurisdiction in this matter.

The ICJ's impending decision will determine whether Venezuela's referendum, which seeks to declare Essequibo a state of Venezuela and grant citizenship to its inhabitants, can proceed.

Venezuela's upcoming December

3 referendum also includes a popular vote on rejecting the ICJ's jurisdiction in the territorial controversy.

The outcome of this referendum holds significant implications for the ongoing dispute.

Prime Minister Gonsalves emphasized the importance of preserving regional peace and the rejection of any use or threat of force in resolving the Guyana-Venezuela territorial dispute. While he refrained from providing specific details, he reiterated CARICOM's steadfast commitment to upholding the territorial integrity of Guyana.

This commitment underscores the region's dedication to achieving a peaceful and lawful resolution to this enduring conflict.



Trini fugitive loses fight against extradition to New York

A TRINIDADIAN man who fled the US after he was convicted and sentenced in New York some 18 years ago for assaulting a store owner, has again lost his challenge against his extradition.

This comes as an Appeal Court judge dismissed an appeal filed by Kim Maharaj who asked for additional time to appeal a ruling of the High Court in 2020 which initially paved the way for his return to New York to serve his sentence.

Maharaj had applied for relief from sanctions on September 8, 2021, claiming that the delay in filing his appeal was due to the covid19 pandemic.

He wanted to appeal the habeas corpus ruling of Justice Robin Mohammed delivered in February 2020.

The State had argued for the dismissal of Maharaj's application and appeal. Attorneys Ravi Rajcoomar, SC, Graeme McClean, head of the Central Authority of the Attorney General's office and Tiffany Ali had argued the State had international obligations under both a treaty and a statute.

Rajcoomar argued that the fact Maharaj would be extradited and may have to serve a sentence was a consequence of criminal conduct.

Maharaj was charged, tried and convicted at the Supreme Court in Queens for assaulting a store owner by punching him in the face while two other people held the victim down. The incident took place on September 7, 1998, and Maharaj was sentenced to 12 years with five years of mandatory post-release supervision for second-degree assault and seven years for second-degree gang assault. The sentences were to run concurrently.

He did not appear in court during



Justice of Appeal Malcolm Holdip

the jury's deliberations when they convicted him on September 28, 2000, or when he was sentenced on January 12, 2001, but said he returned to Trinidad one month later in February.

In his writ of habeas corpus, he said he was not in hiding but just "pretended like it (his conviction and sentence) never happened."

Maharaj moved to Aranjuez where he lived with his extended family and opened his own automotive suspension business – Suspension Kings. He got married in 2007 and has a son.

He was arrested and charged with driving under the influence on February 15, 2016, and it was then that TT's Interpol unit contacted their counterparts in Washington for a foreign criminal record trace for Maharaj.

Interpol in Washington confirmed using fingerprints that Maharaj was wanted in the US and extradition was to be pursued for him.

On June 27, 2018, the Attorney General issued an authority to proceed with the US request for extradition and on October 31, 2018, Chief Magistrate Maria Busby Earle-Caddle committed him for extradition.

In seeking to avoid extradition, Maharaj, who was represented by attorneys Mario Merritt and Karunaa Bismsingh, argued it would be oppressive to send him back to the US because of the passage of time. He also said it was his belief if the TT police didn't request Interpol, the US were not going to make any attempt to find him.

Maharaj complained that his wife was ill and he was diagnosed with transverse myelitis, an auto-immune disease which affects his spinal cord.

Mohammed disagreed. He said Maharaj could not involve the passage of time, though it was lengthy, because he was guilty of deliberately fleeing from the US.

"The fugitive cannot pray in aid what would not have happened but for the additional passage of time for which he is culpable," he said, as he also dismissed a complaint that the length of time it took for the extradition request to be heard was inordinate.

"This is not a case where the fugitive is being sought to face a trial, where the longer the delay the more likely it will affect the fairness of the trial," Mohammed said.

In seeking an extension to appeal Mohammed's decision, Maharaj claimed his attorneys' offices were closed during the pandemic owing to curfew restrictions.

In his ruling, Holdip said the application to extend time failed because there was no sufficient explanation for the breach of the civil proceedings rules for the timely filing of an appeal within three months of the High Court's decision.

Holdip said even before the pandemic, technology was used for an efficient litigation practice and judicial system and it was no different during covid19.

"The covid19 pandemic does not relax the legal standard or test to determine an application for an extension of time..."

"The culture of compliance and trial date certainty developed under the CPR has not been suspended by the pandemic. The court will expect parties to continue to make appropriate use of technology in the delivery of legal services and meeting deadlines."

Holdip said the pandemic did not relax the rules.

Maharaj has been in custody since his arrest in 2016.

Rowley defends foreign travel claims

T&T Prime Minister Keith Rowley said on Monday that TT could collaborate with Saudi Arabia over energy, airline transport, tourism investment, and visas for Hajj pilgrims, in a briefing at the Diplomatic Centre, St Ann's since his return over the weekend. He asked the public to dismiss the concerns of opposition MPs about his per diem travel allowance, but instead consider the diplomatic and economic benefits of his various overseas trips.

Dr Rowley urged the public to focus on what was real and sensible, not on those individuals whose job it was to mislead and undermine the national effort.

Saying Caricom had functioned

like "a well-oiled machine" during the Caricom-Saudi Arabia Summit, he said he was pleased with relationships within the group.

He hailed the regional efforts of Trade Minister Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Foreign and Caricom Affairs Dr Amery Brown and Energy Minister Stuart Young.

Rowley recalled that in 2015, he saw TT having a grave future unless it could find additional natural gas supplies, TT's life blood.

He asked what would be TT's position if the gas dried up, asking who would fund public servants, free education and free medicine in public hospitals.

"Who will pay the bills?" Rowley

recalled once making five speeches in a day to hostile gatherings overseas seeking investment.

"Support the efforts of the Government to make sure there is blood in our veins."

He accused the Opposition of rejoicing when his Government met obstacles.

Saying Saudi Arabia had indicated its willingness to work with Caricom, the PM said, "Our positions are so close, one wonders how come this did not happen before."

Saying sentiment at the upcoming Conference of Parties (COP) climate conference would be to curb the use of oil and gas, he said natural gas was a clean fuel on which TT would continue

to live for some significant time.

Rowley noted an 11-day difference in the dates of the Saudi-Caricom meeting and the COP event and said if he had stayed in that area in the interim, it would have cost \$250,000. He said he had put himself through personal stress to reach and return from Saudi Arabia including flights respectively of 13 and 14 hours.

Planning Minister Penelope Beckles will lead TT's delegation to COP, he added.

Rowley also admitted, when asked, that Petrotrin's Pointe-a-Pierre refinery was a topic of discussion at the Saudi Arabia summit. He gave no further details.

CWI on Bravo's absence: We invested in younger players

TT opening batsman Kjorn Ottley, 33, and Barbados wicket-keeper/batsman Shane Dowrich, 32, have earned recalls to the West Indies team for the three-match One-day International (ODI) series versus England from December 3 to December 9.

The CWI men's selection panel named a 15-man squad for the series, which starts at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua. Former West Indies captains Nicholas Pooran and Jason Holder were both unavailable for selection, along with aggressive left-handed batsman Kyle Mayers.

A Cricket West Indies (CWI) release on Monday said Pooran was prioritising "preparation for the T20 format" and Holder was prioritising preparation for the T20 format, as well as the Test match arena.

There was no room in the squad for the TT Red Force pair of Akeal Hosein and captain Darren Bravo, who finished as the leading run scorer in the 2023 CG United Regional Super50 tournament as he led Red Force to the title. Lead selector Desmond Haynes said the direction of the selection committee has turned to-

wards the 2027 Cricket World Cup.

"It was a very tough decision for us to make as a panel. Darren has proven not only this year, but last year as well in the Regional Super50, to be somebody who performs well at this level. We have invested in players like Alick Athanaze and Keacy Carty," Haynes said during a virtual press briefing on Monday.

"We just figured that selecting this team, we also had to take into consideration the World Cup 2027 is something we have in mind and we believe we have invested in these players and we believe we should give them the opportunity to play against a very strong England team. That's the reason why Darren has been omitted."

Bravo, 34, topped all batsmen in the Regional Super50 tournament with an aggregate of 416 runs. Justin Greaves, who played for the losing finalists Leeward Island Hurricanes in the Super50 tournament, was the tournament's second-leading scorer with 403 runs. Greaves was ruled out of selection due to an injury he sustained in the Super50 final. Ottley finished third among the run scorers in the Super50 with 317 runs.



Barbadian wicketkeeper/batsman Shane Dowrich



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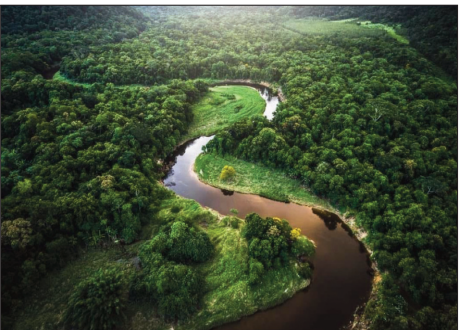
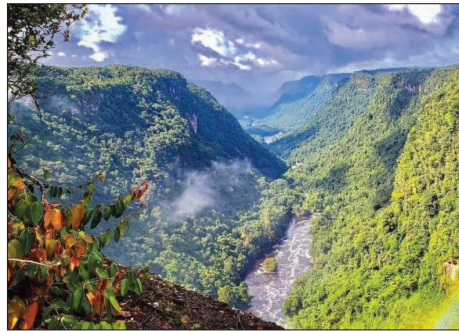
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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JUNE						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

JULY						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

AUGUST						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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OCTOBER						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
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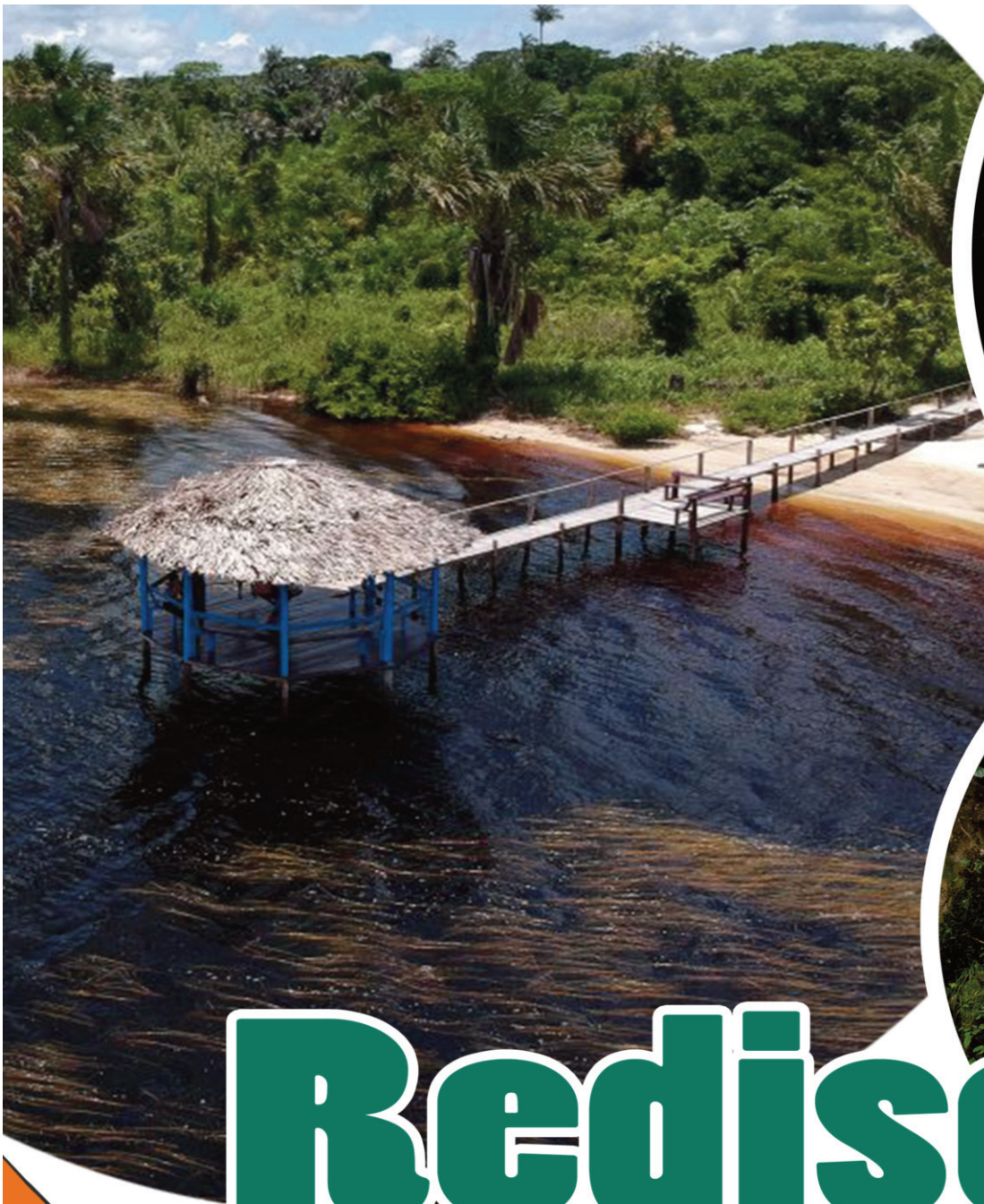
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DECEMBER						
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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