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Toronto lawyer slams boycott call against **Guyanese in New York**

Toronto Civil and Human Rights Lawyer, Selwyn Pieters, has vehemently condemned Rickford Burke's call for the boycott of Guyanese-owned businesses that welcomed President Dr. Irfaan Ali during his recent visit to New York.

Burke, who is the head of the Caribbean Guyana Institute for Democracy (CGID), and a vocal critic of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) government is-



President Ali (centre) received a warm welcome from Guyanese when he visited New York

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sued a statement urging for a boycott in response to the warm reception the President received in Brooklyn.

Weighing in on the issue, Pieters, in a post on his official Facebook account, highlighted the importance of freedom of expression and political opinion for all individuals.

"Freedom of expression and political opinion cannot apply to some and not all," he said, explaining that welcoming a Head of State into a commercial establishment could be a patriotic act with no political expressiveness.

Pieters firmly asserted that such actions not only undermine the rights of business owners, but also threaten the fabric of unity within the community.

"No one's small business should be boycotted, no

one should be subjected to terror, no one should be subjected to abuse because they welcome a head of state into their commercial establishment," he said.

Pieters also urged the citizens of New York to stand in solidarity with these businesses, emphasising the

importance of supporting those who face unwarranted backlash for exercising their freedom of expression.

He said, "Hopefully, the citizens of New York turn out in droves to support those businesses that a few are calling upon citizens to boycott. It does no good for the Guyanese community in Brooklyn."

The attorney underscores the gravity of the situation, highlighting the potential consequences of divisive rhetoric on small businesses within the Guyanese diaspora community.

In response to the calls for boycott and the attempts to fuel divisions among Guyanese abroad, President Ali, in a statement which was streamed live on his Facebook page on Sunday evening, delivered a strong rebuke to Burke.

More on this story on Page 12



Selwyn Pieters

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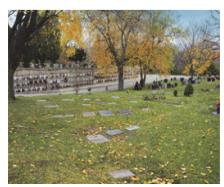
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Guyana signs mineral agreement with Canadian gold company

THE Government on Sunday announced the signing of a mineral agreement with Reunion Gold Corporation a gold exploration and development company—headquartered in Toronto.

This agreement signed between the company and the Guyana Geology and Mine Commission (GGMC), aims to establish stable fiscal and operating conditions for the Oko West gold project in Region Seven, which is owned entirely by the company's Guyanese subsidiary.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Natural Resources, key components of the mineral agreement include royalty payable to the government for gold produced from the operations, as established under the fiscal regime for mineral agreements.

"As part of the agreement, Reunion Gold commits to prioritising the employment of qualified Guyanese individuals and implementing a comprehensive training programme to develop additional skills necessary for Guyanese personnel at all operational levels," it added.

This approach, the ministry noted, aims to contribute to the sustainable development of the country by nurturing local talent. Additionally, the government said the company has pledged to establish a financial support programme for environmental and social projects.

The company has allocated US\$1 million annually towards initiatives that promote environmental sustainability and address social needs within surrounding communities.

The government said that this commitment will begin upon commercial production or within 24 months from the issuance of a mining license, whichever

The government has reaffirmed the West Project shared commitment to sustainable mining practices, aimed at minimising environmental impacts, fostering positive community relationships, and creating lasting benefits for Guyana and its citi-

In northwest Guyana, Reunion Gold has made a new gold discovery with the Oko West Project. Situated approximately 95 km west of Georgetown, the project is south of the famous "Oko" gold district. It can be accessed via the Puruni laterite road and trails from Bartica and Itabali on the Mazaruni River. Reunion's Guyanese subsidiary owns 100 per cent of the prospecting license covering an area of roughly 44 square kilometers, which is part of the Oko



Reunion Gold has said that, in 2020, its geochemical survey, trenching, and initial drill programme discovered and confirmed the presence of gold mineralisation in shear zones along the contact between a greenstone belt assemblage and a granitoid unit on the east edge of the project area.

The total combined open pit and underground resource reported in the 2024 Mineral Resource Estimate (MRE) includes 4.3 million ounces (M oz) of gold (Au) in Indicated Resources contained within 64.6 million tonnes (Mt) grading 2.05 grams per tonne (g/t) Au, with an additional 1.6 M oz of gold in Inferred Resources, contained within

The Oko West gold project in Guyana

19.2 Mt grading 2.59 g/t Au.

initial constrained underground Resource for Oko West of 1.1 M ounces of ounces of gold in the Indicated category.

gold in the Inferred Resource category The 2024 MRE update includes an contained within 11.1 Mt at a grade of 3.12 g/t Au and an additional 29,000





EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Lessons from the Zameer trial

When Umar Zameer moved to Canada five years ago, he never dreamed he would be the centre of his new country's attention -- for all the wrong rea-

Though Zameer has never disclosed his country of origin, he did say he and his young wife chose to move to Canada because they saw it as a proper country to raise their children.

Within two years of landing here, however, Zameer found himself in a situation he couldn't imagine.

After celebrating Canada Day -likely his first time venturing out to participate -- he and his then pregnant wife and young child were confronted in a relatively dark underground parking lot by two very aggressive people who were shouting at him.

No doubt, all Zameer felt at that time was fear. Not only he didn't know who these people were, but just a week before, another Muslim family had been slaughtered while walking the streets of a nearby Canadian city.

So he did what any sensible person would do to save his family and himself. He drove off.

That cost him his freedom, and put him in the public spotlight in the worst possible way. He was charged with the first-degree murder, when he drove over a plainclothes police officer in his haste to get out of the situation.

His lawyer applied for bail for his client, which was granted. That act caused a firestorm of controversy, with everyone from the Premier of Ontario to the Mayor of Toronto weighing in on that decision in favour of the police.

Zameer's lawyer, however, said at the time that when the full story was known, people would understand the judge's decision in granting bail. However, until the conclusion of the trial last weekend, that decision was under a pub-

We now know why the judge made that call. It was clear from the evidence before her that this first-degree murder charge was unwarranted, that the Crown's story did not seem to support such a serious charge.

As we now know, she was right. But the question remains, why did the prosecution proceed with such a charge against a man who only acted in apparent self-preservation?

We'd like to suggest some reasons. One is that Zameer was racially-profiled because he fit the stereotype of a violent actor who had earlier stabbed someone.

They, apparently, never took into consideration that Zameer was with his pregnant wife and a young child at the time. They didn't see the whole picture, but zoomed in only on the Muslim man before them.

Two, Zameer was charged with first degree murder because the incident resulted in the death of a police officer. Had the victim been anyone else, the facts of the incident would have been examined properly to figure out it was what it took a trial, and three years of a man's life, to determine: that it was a tragic accident.

Three, there was political motive to charge Zameer to the fullest extent of the law. At the time, as is still the case, championing the cause of the police is a smart move for anyone wanting to be elected to office in Toronto.

This is supported by the fact that both the Premier of Ontario and the Mayor of Toronto, among others, came out to voice opinions on the case (about bail being granted) without knowing the full story.

From the get go, however, this newspaper was suspicious about the whole saga involving Umar Zameer.

We never bought into the story that Zameer murdered a police officer in a parkade, using his vehicle as a weapon, during a police takedown.

We immediately saw holes in the story. The main one is that Zameer, an immigrant with a pregnant wife and child in tow, would have reacted out of fear for his family and his own life after being confronted by two people who were not clearly identifiable as police of-

And therein lies the rub: the officers in question, including the one who died, Constable Northrup, were in casual clothes. No marked police officers, nor any marked vehicles, were in sight. It was a mistake for them to confront a suspect before making sure said suspect knew they were indeed police officers. Flashing a badge is not enough. One can buy a "badge" in any dollar store.

The officers in question also never took the time to understand they could be perceived as a threat to personal safety. That's a mistake, especially when serving in a city as diverse as Toronto where people from countries from all over the world, including many where there is an inherent distrust of the police,

Look, we regret the loss of the life of Constable Northrup, as we believe every police officer should return home to their families at the end of shift.

To us, what happened in that underground parkade shows a systemic problem with the way police officers conduct their operations, especially those involving the use of plainclothes officers.

That needs to be addressed, and we are heartened by the decision by the Chief of Police in Toronto to seek an independent review of this incident to speak to similar operations moving for-

Also, we believe, officers still need to be trained further in avoiding the temptation to defer to stereotypes when trying to identify suspects.

We still don't know why Umar Zameer was targeted by the officers that day. That information has never been made public. This adds to our suspicion that he was profiled based on the way he looked, rather than the circumstances he

Surely, had other judgments been applied that day, the officers would have known that a man with a pregnant wife and young child in tow who was making his way to his car was unlikely to be a suspect in a violent stabbing that took place just moments earlier.

The confrontation that followed that cost Constable Northrup his life, therefore, would likely have not happened had assessment other than a racial stereotype been done.

We're not lawyers here. Neither are we police officers. So we're not going to second-guess the actions of either the Crown or the officers in this case. We're just offering opinion on how we see it as a result of the facts of this case as it unfolded.

And we're just glad that the justice system worked for Umar Zameer and his family, and that their faith in this country has been restored.

Let's hope changes are made so no other innocent person will face this nightmare in the future.

AfroGuyana Unity Foundation defends gov't strategy

Dear Editor,

As an organisation dedicated to advancing the interests and welfare of Afro-Guyanese communities, we feel compelled to respond to Mr. Vincent Alexander's letter which criticizes the government's strategy of direct engagement and funding to organizations like ours.

We argue that direct funding to Afro-based organizations is not only justified, but essential for achieving the objectives set forth by the International Decade for People of African Descent.

Mr. Alexander's claim that government funding and support for Afro-Guyanese communities is a form of

propaganda overlooks the crucial role that these funds play in empowering

The decentralization of support and resources is crucial in acknowledging the diverse needs and capacities of various organizations that are deeply rooted in their specific sectors or re-

Each organization has its unique strengths and insights, which are invaluable for addressing the specific challenges of economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and social development among Afro-Guyanese com-

The previous centralized approach

benefited Alexander and his IDPADA-G group more or less led to inefficiencies and a lack of representation for the various voices within our community.

By allocating resources directly to organizations that are deeply rooted in and accountable to these communities, the government ensures that initiatives are culturally relevant, targeted, and effective.

It is disheartening to see comparisons drawn between funding for different ethnic groups as a zero-sum game. While we acknowledge the need for equitable support across all communities, diminishing the support to Afro- Guyanese under the guise of fairness only perpetuates inequality.

Mr. Alexander's criticisms fail to recognize the constructive outcomes achieved through these funded projects. From educational programs to economic initiatives, these projects have provided tangible benefits and uplifted many in our communities.

The government's role in facilitating such outcomes should be seen as a commitment to justice and equality, rather than as an act of tokenism or propaganda.

> Sincerely, AfroGuyana Unity Foundation



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Gold stolen from Pearson Airport melted down in Toronto shop: cops

By Jenna Smith

LJI REPORTER

Peel Regional Police have revealed that some of the gold from Canada's largest gold heist was melted down in the basement of a Toronto-area jewelry store. However, police have not disclosed how much of the gold was al-

The announcement came shortly after police shared details about the heist, which involved 6,600 gold bars worth over \$20 million and \$2.5 million in cash stolen from an Air Canada cargo facility at Toronto Pearson Airport on April 17, 2023. The police investigation led to several arrests and uncovered the method used to steal the gold.

During a press conference, Det. Sgt. Mike Mavity explained how the heist unfolded. A suspect arrived at the facility with a "fraudulent airway bill" and handed it to an attendant. Soon after, a forklift brought a container filled with gold and foreign currency, which was loaded into the back of a truck driven by one of the suspects. The suspect then drove off with the cargo.

So far, police have only recovered six gold bracelets, which appear to be bangles, from the stolen loot. These bracelets were sent for examination and confirmed to be made of pure gold, with a combined value of over \$89,000, according to Mavity.

Nine people have been identified in connection with the case, with several arrests made and Canada-wide warrants issued for others. Among those arrested are a jewelry store owner and an Air Canada employee, both linked to the heist.

As the investigation continues, the police are working to uncover the extent of the gold that was melted down and to track down the remaining stolen goods.

Meanwhile, police have also issued arrest warrants for three others in what they described as an "inside job." All nine suspects have been charged with over 19 counts.

The gold and currency had just arrived on an Air Canada flight from Zurich, Switzerland.

At least two former Air Canada employees allegedly helped in the audacious theft, police say. One is now in custody and an arrest warrant has been issued for the other.

"They needed people inside Air Canada to facilitate this theft," Detective Sgt. Mike Mavity of Peel Regional Police said, adding that in his opinion, this was an "inside job."

"We thank the police for their diligent efforts in investigating this matter. As this is now before the courts, we are limited in our ability to comment further. However, we can confirm, as stated by police, that two of the individuals identified did work for Air Canada..."



Some of the stolen gold was metled to make these bracelets



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The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

Response to David Patterson and the AFC on PPC's Report



Joel Bhagwandin

Mr. David Patterson, then Minister of Public Infrastructure under the APNU/AFC Government, was found by the Public Procurement Commission (PPC) to be directly in breach of the Procurement Act when in or about 2016 he took an "unsolicited proposal" procurement request directly to Cabinet, by passing the open tendering process mandated by law. On the approval by Cabinet, he instructed the General Manager of the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation to sign the contract. At page 8 of the Report of the PPC:

"Rawlston Adams, General Manager of the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation (DHBC) signed the contract with LIEVENSE CSO ENGINEERING CONTRACTING BV on December 9, 2016. Mr. Adams informed the PPC that the Board of the DHBC was not a party to the decision to use these funds for this purpose, as approved by CABINET, and further stated that he had not signed the contract on behalf of the DHBC, but only because he was requested to do so by the Minister of Public Infrastructure [Mr. David Patterson]".

At page 11 of the Report, the PPC stated:

"... the submission by the Minister of Public Infrastructure directly to Cabinet was in breach of the Procurement Act."

Mr. Patterson remains to this day with the distinction of being the only sitting Minister to be cited for a breach of the procurement law of this country.

However, although Mr. Patterson was found to be directly in breach of the Procurement Act, the PPC did not direct that

the contract entered into on that breach be rescinded. The decisions of the then and current PPC are consistent with each other and the law.

Is it therefore that Mr. Patterson and the Alliance For Change (AFC) by their public statements yesterday (April 19, 2024) are now saying that that decision of the then PPC was wrong and that the contract directed by Mr. Patterson to be entered into on the flawed procurement process should have been directed to be rescinded?

There was no penalty imposed against Mr. Patterson either for directly breaching the procurement law. Is he and the AFC now saying that was wrong and he should have been penalized and he should have resigned? Did they object to the Report of the then PPC as they are doing now demanding that the contract should have been rescinded and Mr. Patterson be penalized?

Of course, this clear inconsistency by the AFC and Mr. Patterson has not all been addressed by certain media houses who have dutifully carried their propaganda.

Of note, this PPC on which I proudly sit as a member under the astute Chairmanship of Ms. Pauline Chase, has gone further than its predecessor in that it expressly addressed the deficiency in the law of not providing for penalties for the breach of the procurement laws and recommended at paragraph 152(X) of its report that legislation be enacted to provide for penalties. Will the AFC and Mr. Patterson who are part of the Legislature take up this cause that they are now so openly passionate and

vocal about and ensure that the law is amended to provide for penalties for breach of the procurement law. And will they so passionately demand that it be applied retroactively? Perhaps the AFC ought to stay quiet and not shoot itself in the foot.



DIAMOND HOSPITAL: Construction on the new regional hospital in Diamond is progressing steadily, and the building is taking shape. Once completed, it will serve as an essential resource for the residents of region 4 especially those on the East Bank of Demerara. Here, Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony is pictured in discussion with one of the contractors.

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Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO

Man freed of killing police officer can't escape 'weight of tragedy'

By Aziz Abdool

LJI REPORTER

When Umar Zameer sees his three children laughing and playing, his thoughts often drift to the family of Toronto police officer Det.-Const. Jeffrey Northrup, whose death three years ago led to Zameer's arrest and trial for first-degree murder. Despite his recent acquittal, Zameer, 34, can't escape the weight of the tragedy.

Zameer, speaking to the news program CBC's The National on Monday, reflected on his relief at being declared not guilty after facing charges related to Northrup's death.

The officer, a 31-year veteran of the Toronto Police Service and father of three, died after being hit by a vehicle in an underground parking garage at Toronto City Hall on July 2, 2021. Zameer was accused of intentionally striking Northrup with his car but maintained it was a tragic accident. On Sunday, a jury acquitted him of all charges, bringing tears of relief to Zameer and his family.

"I felt so relieved," Zameer said.
"This is the first time I went home, hugged my kids, without any burden on my shoulders. But even in that moment of joy, I was thinking about Officer Northrup's family—his children, his wife. It's a tragedy for everyone in-



Umar Zameer with his lawyer Nader Hassan after the not guilty verdict

volved."

Zameer's acquittal came after four days of jury deliberations. Ontario Superior Court Justice Anne Molloy had given jurors four possible verdicts: first-degree murder, second-degree murder, manslaughter, or not guilty. After Zameer was cleared, Justice Molloy expressed her sympathy for his ordeal, saying, "my deepest apologies for what you've been through." Her words provided some comfort to Zameer after three challenging years.

Despite the relief, Zameer said it edged.

would be impossible to forget what had happened. His heart went out to Northrup's family. "Whenever I see my kids smiling, I can't help but think about his family. It's a heavy burden," he said.

Zameer's legal team played a crucial role in his acquittal. Lawyer Nader Hasan was determined to clear Zameer's name and was instrumental in securing bail after Zameer's initial arrest. Hasan assured him that the truth would eventually come out, though it would take time. "He was right," Zameer acknowledged.

The emotional toll of the trial was immense. Zameer missed significant moments with his family, including the birth of his second child. "That was the hardest moment," he recalled. "I wasn't there when my wife needed me most. She was alone in the hospital, about to give birth."

While Zameer remains grateful for the support he received during the trial, his lawyer, Hasan, highlighted broader issues related to police conduct and justice system processes. "There are many lessons to be learned here," Hasan said, pointing to problems with police testimony and investigation practices. He hopes the case serves as a reminder of the importance of constitutional rights, the presumption of innocence, and reasonable bail.

Toronto Police Chief Myron Demkiw has ordered an independent review of officer testimony and behavior following the trial. He also announced a review of plainclothes officer policies to address concerns raised during the proceedings.

As for Zameer, he's focused on rebuilding his life. "We want to move on from what happened," he said. "We're just looking ahead. We're happy that we were able to tell the truth." But he knows the memories of that tragic day and the years that followed will never completely fade.

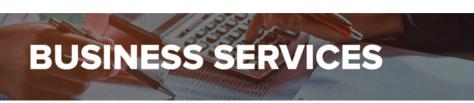
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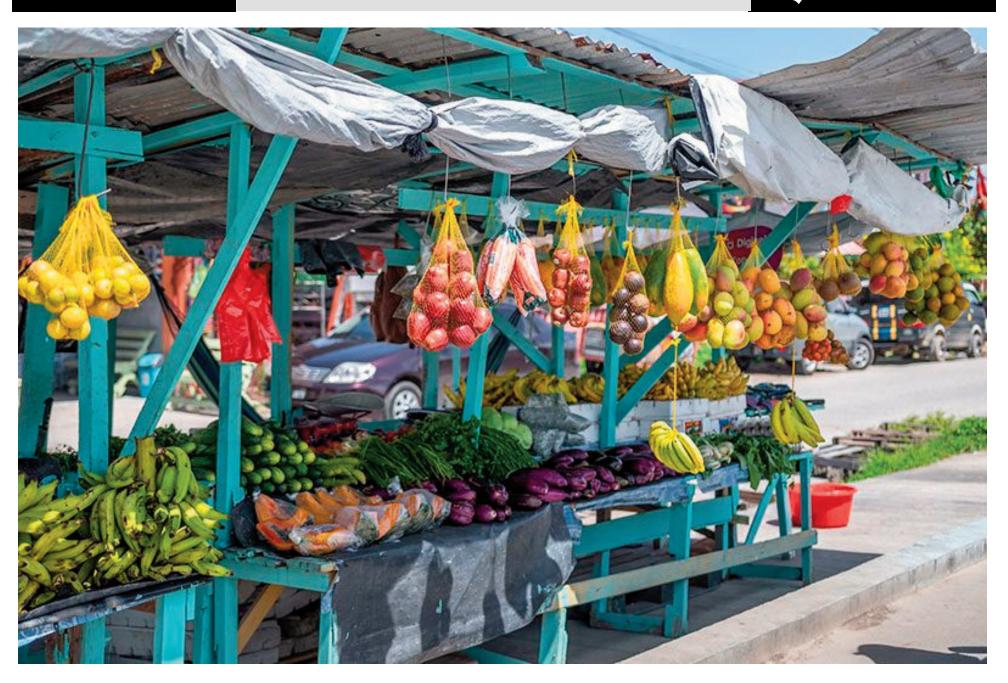
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Guyana making progress at ending malnutrition: ECLAC

GUYANA has been making steady progress in ending all forms of malnutrition, according to a report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The report is titled, 'The Challenge of Accelerating the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Transitions towards Sustainability.' It is the seventh report on regional progress and challenges about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and outlines not only Guyana's economic growth but also its achievements in reducing the number of chronically undernourished children.

In keeping with the sustainable development goal # 2, 'end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture,' the report stated that achieving it requires a 40 per cent reduction in the number of chronically undernourished children under 5 years of age by 2025 and a prevalence of less than 2.5 per cent by 2030.

Official data indicate that by 2022, the number of chronically undernourished children—as determined by the condition's most prevalent symptom, stunting—had decreased by 43.6 per cent since 2000.

The most significant achievement,

among the five countries, was Guyana, where the reduction reached 58 per cent in 2022.

It should be noted that Guyana has crafted a model to transform its agriculture and food production systems, seeking out newer technologies and innovative programmes to meet the nutritional needs of the region.

Lauding the country's approach to achieving regional food security targets, such as reducing import expenditure on food, and implementing programmes to address malnutrition and hunger, the Director of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Dr. Manuel Otero, said the nation has been playing a proactive role.

Dr. Otero, during an interview on the sidelines of the 38th Session of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC) last month, said there have been notable investments in the country's agriculture sector.

Dr. Otero noted that every country is unique, and their approach to addressing the challenges faced within the production sector may vary, but in Guyana's case, what has been notable is the government's persistent and public-private partnerships to not only increase food production but also the investments being made in innovation.



Minister: Growth in all sectors must match that of oil & gas sector

MINISTER within the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar, has said that nothing the government does is by chance and noted that plans are carefully crafted to ensure that the speed of development of the non-oil sectors matches the speed with which Guyana's oil and gas sector is growing.

The minister made these remarks at the recently concluded Local Content Summit as he participated in a panel discussion which focused on local content for the oil and gas sector as a driver of economic expansion.

According to Minister Indar, when the government was fighting to enact local content, people were saying that the legislation would stymie the development and slow up the speed of the sector. Since then, there has been rapid growth, he said.

As it is currently, he said that with several supply vessels offshore along with several FPSOs and drill ships, there are thousands of people moving back and forth.

With this level and kind of operation offshore Guyana, the infrastructure



Minister Deodat Indra speaking at the Local Content Summit

minister added that there needs to be support for those persons in various areas like warehousing, transport and logistics and accommodation to ensure that these operations run smoothly.

"So, you have to build the infrastructure. The infrastructure is not just the roads and the bridges; it's in the hotels, in the housing... you need to build shore bases, you need to build all the infrastructure onshore and that is what has been happening," he remarked. Against this backdrop, he gave an example and stated that Guyana's roadways were not designed for these intense onshore operations and as a result, everything has to be recalibrated from the planning for moving and transport to ensuring that roads are now able to withstand the weight of cargo and trucks that aid in the work of the sector.

Minister Indar added that government is looking at the country's development is a holistic manner.

"Nothing is by chance. Everything that we do, we look at what is going on and we ensure that we craft the plans. We ensure the speed of development in terms of the oil and gas sector is matched by the speed of development in the other sectors. There are some lags and unevenness in it but they will iron out itself as we go along but it is something that is looked at holistically," he emphasised.



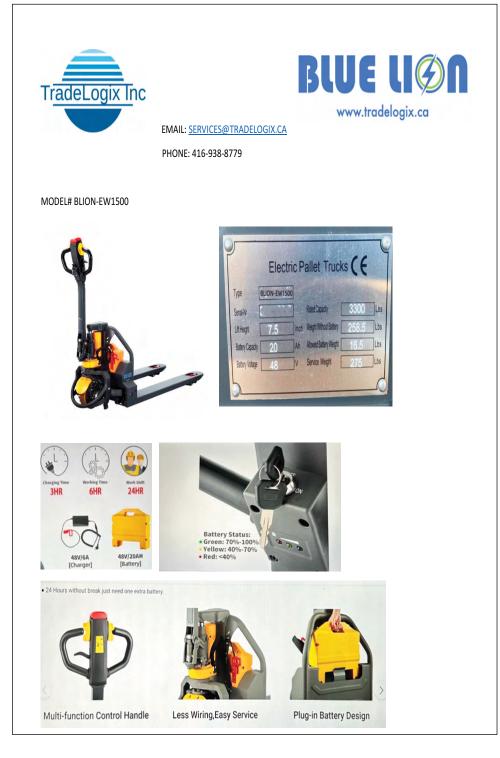
First Son raises \$6M for animal welfare

SIX animal shelters and welfare groups, on Friday, received donations totalling \$6 million from a fundraising activity hosted by the First Son Zayd Ali at State House, the official residence of the First Family.

The four-year-old son of President Dr Irfaan Ali and First Lady Arya Ali hosted the third edition of his lemonade sale which brought the lawns of State House alive with a number of other attractions.

Hundreds of patrons who supported the event were treated to locally made lemonade, snacks and sweets; while the children enjoyed games, pony rides, and face paintings.

The event was designed to raise funds to support animal welfare activities undertaken by six animal shelters and welfare groups. Those groups are: Tails of Hope, Paws for a Cause, GSPCA, Rosewood Foundation, Hope for Animals Inc., Fureva Hope Alive Animal Rescue Sanctuary.



Guyanese diaspora plays key role in achieving 'One Guyana' – Ali

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has expressed his disapproval and dismay at the verbal attack launched against the Guyanese diaspora who engaged him during his recent visit to New York, USA.

In a live broadcast Sunday evening, the head of state pointed to a release issued by the Rickford Burkerun Caribbean Guyana Institute for Democracy (CGID), which attempted to disparage the diaspora for its interactions with the president.

In response, President Ali lambasted the institute for its divisive agenda.

He asserted that such separatist propaganda would not deter his government from achieving shared prosperity and national unity.

The president recalled the hospitality and benevolence demonstrated by the diaspora in Brooklyn and Queens and said this represents the true Guyanese culture.

He rejected CGID's attempts to condemn 'innocent and hardworking' Guyanese and assured that the diaspora did nothing wrong.

"I assure you that I left strengthened in my resolve, and the government's resolve to achieve the agenda of One Guyana. No detractors, haters or racists, or anyone who seeks selfishly to derail this agenda will be allowed to shake my strong belief in the



President Ali with Guyanese in the Diaspora in New York

Guyanese people and in our ability to achieve One Guyana," he said.

He lauded the diaspora successes in the United States in areas such as healthcare and education, and the willingness to work alongside the government to promote a future of enhanced inclusivity and massive development in Guyana.

"You are an important part of our future. You are an important part of building a stronger Guyana. You are an important part of building prosperity in every home. Do not lose heart," he encouraged.

The president continued, "It hurts

me to know that people and organisations who claim to love can be so divisive, so self-centred and selfish so that they can issue statements calling for the boycott of business, for a boycott of your economic wellbeing."

The head of state called on US Congressman, Hakeem Jeffries and other elected officials to examine the actions of the group and the narratives that it is perpetuating against Afro-Guyanese.

"To belittle these people, to attack them by saying that they were paid stooges...This cannot be the type of people who put their hands up into the air and call themselves leaders. This cannot be people of dignity and integrity. This cannot be people who claim to represent the truth," he stated.

According to President Ali, the organisation's comments speak volumes about its character, noting the 'shallow' standpoint from which it makes pronouncements.

"We are committed to working with you in and out of government. Our messages are not founded on hate or racism. It is founded on national unity, and our collective desire to see our beautiful country prosper," the president affirmed. Ali was recently in New York to receive the Legacy Award from the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies (AFUWI).



Czech envoy meets Guyana's agriculture Minister

The Honourable Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P., Guyana's Minister of Agriculture received a courtesy call at his office on Tuesday, from the Non-Resident Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Guyana, Her Excellency Pavla Havrlíková. During the meeting, the two officials discussed areas of mutual interest focused on further developing Guyana's agriculture sector. Some areas discussed were opportunities for investment within the sector, and increasing smart agricultural technology in Guyana. Earlier on Tuesday, Ambassador Havrlíková presented her Letters of Credence to His Excellency, President Dr. Irfaan

Ali: Guyana's prosperity means prosperity for entire Caribbean region

EMPHASING that Guyana's prosperity will be the prosperity of the entire region, President Dr. Irfaan Ali has said that the country stands on the right side of history, as it has been dutifully upholding its regional and global responsibilities.

During an address at the American Foundations for the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Brooklyn, New York, where he was awarded with the Legacy Award, Dr. Ali, while highlighting the crisis affecting the region and the world at large, urged those gathered to remain on the right side of history.

"In our region, we have always had the moral standing to be on the right side of history. We must never allow any circumstance or changing conditions to change the way we approach situations, regionally and globally," the Guyanese Head of State said.

Recently, at a Ramadan celebration, Guyana was able to raise over \$72.5 million, through donations, for the People of Palestine.

He noted that more initiatives like this can be expected, before turning his attention to Guyana's Caribbean Community (CARICOM) sister State, Haiti.

"We cannot find ourselves locked



President Ali after receiving the UWI American Foundation Legacy Award

to a forum like this and ignore the realities of the people of Haiti; they have suffered for too long, and too little has been done by too many of us," he said.

Speaking candidly, President Ali stated that not enough is being done to support Haiti.

"Only recently, I looked at the shocking reality of resources; additional resources being allocated, justifiable so, to the people of Ukraine. But the question is: Where is the urgency for the people of Haiti?"

According to recent reports coming out of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, stakeholders there have finalised an agreement for the establishment of a Presidential Transitional Council.

Back in March, Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned, thereby paving the way for the establishment of a new transitional governance council.

Henry's resignation came after the CARICOM Chair led meetings with

several other regional leaders and international partners to address the increased waves of violence in the member state.

During those engagements, several pledges of support were made. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the United States' Department of Defence will double its support for a multinational security mission from US\$100 million to US\$200 million; this will bring the monetary pledge to US\$300 million.

Apart from this, the US has also pledged US\$33 million for humanitarian aid.

President Ali, who is also the current Chair of CARICOM, had noted that support for the country will need to go beyond the establishment of the council.

Back in March, international news reports had stated that heavily-armed gangs had attempted to take over Haiti's main international airport, exchanging gunfire with police and soldiers in the most recent attack on important government locations in a wave of violence that also included a mass escape from the nation's two largest prisons.



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Guyana enters team in World Drone Soccer tournament in California

TEAM Guyana Drone Soccer has arrived in San Diego, California, to take part in the renowned Academic Drone Soccer World Cup and its associated activities, taking place from April 23 to 25, 2024.

The visit also encompasses a comprehensive student conference and career fair aimed at immersing the team in both competitive and educational experiences in the drone and aeronautics sectors. Last Monday, the team was engaged in a hands-on drone building workshop at Millennial Tech Middle School, where they strengthened their skills in the assembly and maintenance of the very drones they will operate during the competition. The workshop is crucial, as all players are required to swiftly manage any technical issues that arise mid-competition.

Drone soccer, a sport demanding quick maneuvers and strategic play, is not just a game for these young enthusiasts but a gateway into the expansive field of aeronautics. "Our goal is to launch a robust programme across Guyana, empowering young people to access burgeoning 21st-century careers in drone technology," said Leon Christian, President of Drone Soccer Guyana. The initiative is the first of its kind in the region, combining elements of soccer,



The Guyana Drone Soccer Team now in California

and the intensity of a fast-paced e-sport.

The timing of Team Guyana's involvement in such international platforms is strategic, aligning with the increasing global demand for skilled drone operators in fields ranging from agriculture to security and beyond. Dur-

ing their stay, Team Guyana scholars will also participate in career fairs, meet industry leaders, attend lectures, and explore potential scholarships offered by aviation companies and universities.

Moreover, the team will have the opportunity to visit pioneering aerospace

exhibits. These exhibits showcase the latest advancements in drone technology and autonomy, providing a glimpse into the future of the industry.

The enthusiasm for expanding drone technology education is palpable. Christian plans to extend the programme to regions of Guyana where interest is most pronounced, specifically in Regions Two, Six and 10. The expansion aims to partner with STEM Guyana's Learning pods programme and industry leaders to foster a generation well-versed in aeronautical careers.

"The drone industry is rapidly expanding, and Guyana is poised to become a leader in preparing its youth for diverse roles in this innovative field," Christian added. With drones increasingly utilised across various sectors including policing, delivery services, and agriculture, the potential for career opportunities is vast.

Team Guyana Drone Soccer's involvement in the event not only represents a major milestone in their own journey but also establishes a precedent for the advancement of drone sports and education in the region. The future appears bright as these young students are poised to come back with knowledge, experience, and motivation to pursue careers in the fast-growing drone industry.



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Pepper boost: Shade houses to supply hot export market

TWENTY-FIVE shade houses are currently under construction at the National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) in Mon Repos, East Coast Demerara.

These structures are designed to cultivate two types of hot peppers—bull nose and tiger teeth—for an already secured market in St. Lucia.

It is projected that each cycle of the 25 shade houses will accommodate approximately 11,250 plants, yielding over 75,000 pounds of pepper per cycle. This will result in an annual production of about 75 tonnes of fresh peppers.

This initiative is part of the Agriculture and Innovation Entrepreneurship Programme (AIEP), which was launched by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali in January 2022.

The AIEP aims to stimulate interest in agriculture, boost economic growth, and improve the livelihoods of youths.

Since its inception, the programme has led to the construction of 120 shade houses across the country. In 2023 alone, 90 new shade structures were completed, bringing the total to over 450.

By December 2023, the AIEP had garnered some \$25.4 million. Notably, over 70 per cent of young agriculturists participating in the programme have become successful agri-business entrepreneurs.

This year, Guyana plans to construct approximately 200 more shade houses to meet the increased demand and profitability of high-value crops.

The 54 shade houses at NAREI continue to yield remarkable results in the cultivation of crops such as cauliflower, bell peppers, lettuce, and carrots. Additionally, a variety of other crops including kale, mint, celery, 'blue star' sweet peppers, cilantro, and parsley are being grown on-site.

The harvested crops are distributed to communities, farmers' markets, hotels, and restaurants.

Furthermore, Guyana boasts one of the largest hydroponic facilities in the Caribbean at NAREI, which will soon be replicated in Regions Two, Five, and



10 benefiting over 300 youths.

Guyana's approach emphasises innovative agro-business opportunities through the integration of technology, research, and the active involvement of women and young people.

This investment in shade houses, hydroponics, and other agricultural mechanisms is expected to significantly reduce CARICOM's high food import bill by 25 per cent by the year 2025.

In 2021, Guyana spent \$2.6 billion on importing high-value crops to satisfy the hospitality sector. However, with local production now in place, the country has managed to reduce importation by almost 50 per cent.



A section of the shade houses at NAREI, Mon Repos

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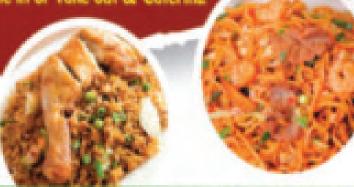
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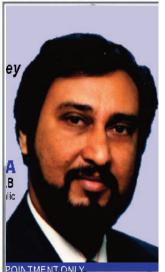
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Guyana wins top travel award for indigenous marketing

GUYANA has been awarded for its magnificent contributions to the indigenous communities nationwide at the 4th edition of the World Travel Market (WTM) Latin America Responsible Tourism Awards.

The country secured silver place under the category 'Best Initiatives for Indigenous Communities and/or Traditional Communities.'

In a recent interview with the Department of Public Information (DPI), Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), Kamrul Baksh noted that over the years, the nation has been fostering many tourism initiatives led by the indigenous peoples.

"This was well-deserved because as you know Guyana is uniquely positioned as a country that promotes indigenous tourism that is led and owned. This means that the indigenous people own the land, the assets, the business, and control the profits," the director explained.

He added that this type of indigenous tourism is a major differentiating factor compared to other communitybased tourism models around the world.

"One of our officers who is also an indigenous person went to Brazil to collect this award and also to make a presentation. We are really happy about this, because it shows our commitment to supporting communities and developing tourism in Guyana," Baksh stated.

In Guyana, many tourism products and services can be found deep within indigenous communities due to the nature-like and relaxing environment like the pristine rivers and the fresh and heavy vegetation that surrounds these areas.

Additionally, with great tourism potential existing in many indigenous villages, the GTA plays a crucial role in helping the leaders and residents of the communities to further build upon what



Indigenous people of Guyana celebrating their rich heritage

the village is already offering.

The authority oftentimes conducts its assessment of the talent and art of the people such as pottery and painting and see how it can make this into an activity for tourists when they visit the village, making their stay more enjoyable.

activities, employment for the indigenous people will become available and foreign exchange will begin to circulate in the villages which will help to expand the newfound venture.

The government also plays a pivotal role in sustaining these products With the implementation of these and services by funding them through

various grants such as the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) funds and the Presidential Grants.

These grants help the villages to build guest houses, kitchens, and purchase vehicles to propel tourism within the area. (DPI)

CJIA responds swiftly to in-flight medical Emergency

THE Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) sprang into action on Monday atternoon when a distress call pierced the airwaves at 15:20 hours, signalling a medical crisis aboard an AirEuropa flight from Peru en route to Spain.

In a seamless display of coordination and efficiency, the airport's control tower swiftly alerted authorities and activated emergency protocols. The airport's ambulance and medical team were immediately put on standby, poised to provide urgent assistance upon the aircraft's imminent arrival.

At precisely 15:52 hours, the aircraft touched down, and within moments, the medical team was at the scene, ready to attend to the distressed passenger. Their swift intervention ensured that the individual received the necessary care without delay.

After a thorough evaluation, it was deemed imperative to transfer the pa-



The AirEuropa flight from Peru en route to Spain

tient to the Diamond Hospital for further medical attention. Subsequently, arrangements were made for the individual's transfer to the Georgetown Public Hospital, ensuring ongoing care and treatment.

In the wake of the incident, the CJIA expressed profound appreciation to all stakeholders involved for their rapid and professional response to the medical emergency. The seamless collaboration between airport personnel, medical teams, and other authorities underscored the effectiveness of the preparedness measures in place.

As the passenger embarks on the

journey towards recovery, the airport's management and staff extend their heartfelt wishes for a speedy and full recuperation. The incident serves as a testament to the airport's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of all travelers passing through its gates.

President Ali eyes lucrative water market amid oil boom

WITH the goal of diversifying Guyana's economy and utilising its abundant freshwater resources, President Dr. Irfaan Ali is turning his attention to the water market as a promising avenue for economic growth. He is urging local businesses to capitalise on this opportunity and make lucrative investments

Speaking at this year's Local Content Summit in Kingston, Georgetown, President Ali outlined a bold vision for leveraging Guyana's abundant freshwater resources to tap into the growing demand for water in the region and beyond.

Guyana, which means 'Land of many waters,' boasts significant freshwater reserves, with an annual per capita water availability of 344,541 m3. The country is rich in freshwater resources, with an abundance of rivers, waterfalls, and rainfall. However, these resources are primarily used in agriculture, forestry, mining, fisheries, and service industries.

Against the backdrop of an oil boom that has the potential to transform the country's economy, President Ali sees the water market as a valuable opportunity for diversification and expansion.

Addressing attendees at the summit, President Ali highlighted the potential for Guyana to become a key player in the global water market.

He stressed the strategic importance of leveraging the country's geographic location, its burgeoning diaspora, and its proximity to regional markets such as North America, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic.

"We have the diaspora unit, the diaspora in North America, we have the regional market, and then we have Brazil. So, here is that we are building this huge infrastructure into northern Brazil. And then we have the DR, a huge market opportunity," President Ali remarked

President Ali outlined a pragmatic approach to seizing opportunities in the water market, citing the analysis of regional budgets to identify core areas of investment across neighbouring countries.

He underscored the demand for water-related infrastructure projects, revealing that many countries in the region are actively seeking investment in water and are prepared to offer agreements similar to power purchase agreements.

"How are we going to build the



President Dr Irfaan Ali

scale and capability that local content exposes us to, to now position ourselves in this market? Is it possible? Let me tell you how possible it is?" President Ali asked the audience.

"Recently, I took time out to go through the budgets of all the countries in the region," the Head of State explained. "And would you believe it that many countries in the region are looking for investment in water and they are ready to give you, just like you have a power purchase agreement a water purchase agreement for investment in water?"

Illustrating the magnitude of investment opportunities in the water sector, he explained that the scale is a

US30-50 million project.

As such, he proposed the formation of local business consortia to capitalise on these opportunities, leveraging the growing expertise in water treatment plant construction and management.

He highlighted the potential for Guyanese companies to transition from simply selling water to owning water distribution networks in neighbouring countries, thereby significantly enhancing their market presence and value proposition.

"Why can't we get a group of local business personalities to come together in a consortium with experience that we are building, we are building seven water treatment plants, yes, many from external companies, but we are building up that local capacity, and go after this opportunity. Hopefully, we have encouraged enough of them to go after these opportunities.

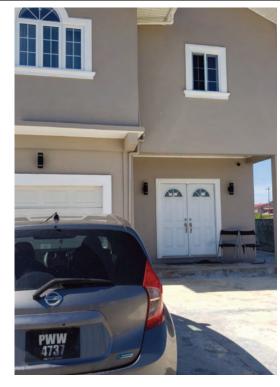
"But you can transform overnight your portfolio from selling water to big companies, selling water locally to owning water distribution or owning 40-50 per cent water distribution in one of the countries. Imagine what that does to your company profile. Imagine what that does to your capability and your scale," President Ali said.

While acknowledging the significant economic benefits of tapping into the water market, President Ali also stressed the importance of ensuring that such endeavours are carried out sustainably and equitably.

He highlighted the need to protect water security and uphold the human right to water and sanitation, emphasising the importance of affordability and accessibility for all, including the most vulnerable segments of society.

As such, President Ali reaffirms his commitment to a strategic approach to harnessing the country's natural resources for sustainable development and prosperity.

Guyana is currently undergoing a significant economic transformation driven by its burgeoning oil industry. With vast freshwater resources and strategic geographical positioning, the country is well-positioned to capitalise on growing regional and international demand for water.



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Hema Malini with her husband Dharmendra

Hema Malini: Dhamendra didn't approve of my political career

Veteran actor and politician Hema Malini is contesting the Lok Sabha election for the Bharatiya Janata Party. This marks her third candidacy for the Lok Sabha seat with the BJP. In a recent interview, she shared how her husband Dharmendra, also a veteran actor, initially didn't approve of her political career and expressed concerns for her safety. She also fondly remembered late actor Vinod Khanna and acknowledged how his early guidance in politics contributed to her own political journey.

Speaking about her husband Dharmendra's concerns, Hema told News18, "Dharamji didn't like it. He told me not to contest election as it's a very difficult task. He said, 'I have experienced that.' So when he said that it's difficult task, I thought let me take it as a challenge. He faced a problem because

he had to travel a lot of distance but he still did a lot of work. But when you are a film star working in politics, people have a lot of craze about you and want to approach you and you can imagine the craze people had about Dharamji. So it used to trouble him. I also face such problems which Dharamji doesn't like. Because I am a woman so I am able to manage properly."

Dharmendra himself served as an MP from BJP representing Bikaner, Rajasthan, from 2004 to 2009. Despite his political stint, he rarely attended Parliament sessions, opting to focus on his film career and personal commitments, which drew criticism.

Hema also remembered the late actor Vinod Khanna's influence on her political journey.





ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Try not to let your guard down because the full moon could tempt you to make the kind of mistake that costs a great deal of money. You don't have to be overly suspicious but you do have to remember that not everyone will be putting your interests first.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): No doubt you have high hopes for yourself and no doubt they will be realized now the Sun is moving through your sign, but you must expect a certain amount of negativity from people who fear your rise. Ignore those who say you are aiming too high.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): You may need to get tough with someone who has let you down or failed to put in the required effort today. Let them know why you are taking such a hard line but don't overdo it and risk turning them against you forever. Be firm but fair.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): The fact that others look up to you and want to know what you think shows that your judgment is valued, but don't get carried away and start believing you are some sort of guru. Common sense is all you need to make the right decisions.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): By all means be proud of what you have achieved but don't fall into the trap of thinking that every move you make must lead to success. The full moon warns that your ego could easily get the better of you today, with potentially damaging results.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): Accusations will fly thick and fast over the next 24 hours but your conscience is clear and you have no doubt that none of the mud that is being slung about will stick to you. You may be right but it would be smart to duck it anyway.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Today's full moon takes place in the money area of your chart, so be smart and count every cent that goes out and every cent that comes in. Just because you have some cash in your pocket does not mean you can act as if you are rich.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You may not be in a hurry to work with other people but the full moon in your sign means you won't get much done if you try to do it all on your own. The simple fact is you need other people's help more than they need yours.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): You may lack enthusiasm for what you are expected to do today but do it anyway and make the best possible job of it – not because you feel the need to impress other people but because you have high personal standards it would be wrong to ignore.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): Creative and artistic matters are under excellent stars now but because there is a full moon today your efforts may not get the recognition they deserve. But what does that matter? If you are happy with them then what others think is of no importance.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): The planets suggest you will be torn today both mentally and emotionally about whether to focus on your career or your private life. It's a tough call to make but on balance you would be wise to put loved ones first – as they always do you.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Travel plans are under really good stars at the moment but you may have to get out and about on your own over the next 24 hours as friends and loved ones seem reluctant to leave hearth and home. That's okay, you don't need company to be happy.

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Grenada to honor former PM Maurice Bishop with sculptured busts

Grenada's Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell has unveiled plans for a significant commemoration, announcing a collaboration with a Cuban foundation to erect sculptured busts honoring former Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and others slain on October 19, 1983.

Fresh from an official visit to Cuba, Prime Minister Mitchell revealed that these busts will form a poignant centerpiece during the National Heroes Day celebrations on October 19 of this year.

Last October marked the first observance of National Heroes Day in Grenada, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of Bishop's assassination.

Bishop, Grenada's inaugural leftwing prime minister, and several cabinet members fell victim to a palace coup, leading to the collapse of the People Revolutionary Government (PRG).

Decades after the tragic events of 1983, Bishop's remains remain unidentified, leaving his final resting place unknown.

The absence of a tangible memorial has long been felt by Grenadians, making this initiative a symbol of unwavering remembrance.

During his visit to Havana, Prime Minister Mitchell engaged in productive discussions with the son of the renowned sculptor responsible for the Maurice Bishop bust.



Maurice Bishop: former Grenada Prime Minister executed during a coup in 1983

Through this encounter, a partnership blossomed with the foundation, paving the way for a similar endeavor in Grenada.

In a press conference, Prime Min-

ister Mitchell highlighted the broader significance of this partnership. Beyond the creation of the busts, the collaboration aims to foster artistic endeavors among Grenadian students.

Mitchell emphasized the foundation's commitment to imparting knowledge of bust making and sculpture, nurturing a new generation of artisans.

Grenada's PM advocates for Cuba's rights

Grenada's Prime Minister, Dickon Mitchell, has publicly urged the United States to reconsider its stance towards Cuba, specifically targeting the economic sanctions and the designation of Cuba as a sponsor of terrorism.

This call to action was made during a press briefing at Maurice Bishop International Airport, following Mitchell's official visit to the island nation.

Mitchell highlighted the resilience of the Cuban people, who despite enduring a rigorous economic blockade for six decades, have remained open and generous on the global stage.

The economic sanctions imposed on Cuba has been a point of international contention, seen by many as an unjust measure that hampers the nation's ability to engage fully with the world.

Mitchell's remarks were made in the context of commemorating 45 years of diplomatic relations between Grenada and Cuba, underscoring a long-standing bond between the two countries.

Accompanied by four government ministers, Mitchell's visit to Cuba and his subsequent statements reflect Grenada's stance on the importance of standing in solidarity with the Cuban



Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell

people.

He emphasized the adverse impacts of U.S. policies on ordinary individuals globally, preventing them from experiencing Cuba's culture and hospi-

tality.

Mitchell's advocacy for Cuba goes beyond bilateral relations, touching on principles of international justice and cooperation. Mitchell's call for action is backed by the broader international community, as evidenced by the United Nations General Assembly's overwhelming vote against the U.S. embargo on Cuba in November 2023.

With 187 member states voting in favor of lifting the embargo, the global consensus reflects a strong opposition to the U.S. current policy towards Cuba.

The UN's continued critique of the embargo underscores the pressing need for change, highlighting the detrimental effects of such sanctions on the Cuban populace and expatriates alike.

The Prime Minister's stance and the international community's support represent a unified call for revisiting and potentially lifting the economic and trade barriers imposed on Cuba.

The recognition of Cuba's contributions to the global community and the injustices faced due to the embargo and terror sponsorship label underpin a broader movement towards reevaluating longstanding geopolitical policies.

As Grenada and other nations continue to advocate for Cuba's cause, the push for change gains momentum, signaling a hopeful shift towards more equitable international relations.

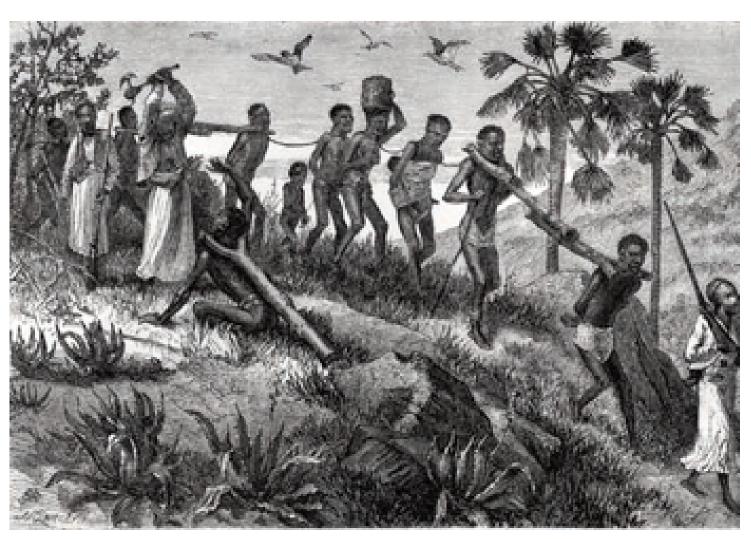
United Church apologises for slavery, offers land to Jamaicans

The United Reformed Church, one of the most historically significant religious institutions in the United Kingdom has joined the ranks of institutions acknowledging their involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, issuing an apology to Jamaica, the wider Caribbean, and Africa.

The apology was accompanied by a pledge to give parcels of land it had received from those who profited from slavery to the most vulnerable people in Jamaica and The Cayman Islands.

During an ecumenical service on Sunday at the Webster Memorial Church in St. Andrew, Jamaica, the UK church group acknowledged the harrowing legacy of slavery — that subjected millions of men, women and children to backbreaking labor, violence, and dehumanization — and expressed regret for the actions of their ancestors.

The apology was read by Rev. Tessa Robinson, moderator of The United Reformed Church UK and accepted by Rev. Gary Harriott, moderator of The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.



The church said the apology was rooted in gospel that calls on sinners to repent for slavery

We want repatriations

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment, and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, reaffirmed the Jamaican Government's unwavering dedication to seeking reparations for the enduring legacy of chattel enslavement suffered by African ancestors on the island's plantations.

Addressing attendees at the Webster Memorial United Church in St. Andrew during a Sunday service on April 14, Minister Grange underscored the profound and lasting repercussions of the transatlantic slave trade on Black communities.

She emphasized that contemporary challenges, including the struggle to finance education and healthcare, combat poverty and housing inequalities, tackle economic instability, and address the impacts of climate change, are all deeply rooted in the historical trauma of enslavement.

The church service also marked a pivotal moment of acknowledgment and reconciliation, as the Moderator of the Assembly of the United Reform Church (URC), Reverend Tessa Henry-Robinson, issued a formal apology for the church's historical complicity in slavery.

Expressing remorse for the scars that continue to afflict society and the lives of Black individuals, the apology acknowledged the church's role in perpetuating the transatlantic slave trade.

In response to the apology, Min-



Olivia Grange

ister Grange called upon UK churches, especially those represented during the solemn occasion in Jamaica, to advocate for their government's acknowledgment of culpability through formal apologies and collaborative efforts with Jamaica to explore avenues for reparations.

She highlighted the enduring impact of the church's complicity in slavery, stressing its contribution to systemic racism, white supremacy, and discrimination that persist to this day.

Minister Grange reflected on the paradox of enslaved peoples embracing the religions of their oppressors, noting the resilience of African spirituality within these faiths.

She urged for a collective reckoning with history, emphasizing the need to confront the violence and dehumanization of the past in order to build truly peaceful and equitable societies. Robinson said that the apology is rooted in the gospel that calls on sinners to repent of what has been done in the past and to be reconciled.

"We, the general assembly of The United Reformed Church, mindful of our own history and that of our antecedent bodies, apologize for our role in transatlantic slavery and the scars that continue to blight our society, our church, and the lives of black people in our midst and around the globe today. We have heard the pain of sisters and brothers who have been hurt and are still being hurt by these legacies, including the continuing scourge of racism," the apology read.

The United Reformed Church, formed in 1972 through the amalgamation of various denominations across England, Scotland, and Wales, acknowledged its complicity in the transatlantic slave trade, highlighting the financial benefits it received from donations linked to slavery.

In its apology the church acknowledged its "share in and benefit from our nation's participation and that of some of our own antecedent bodies in transatlantic slavery".

It further made a commitment to find constructive ways to move from saying 'I'm sorry' into concrete actions of repairing justice.

Jamaica's Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport Olivia Grange accepted the apology but said that the government of Jamaica would continue to pursue reparations.

"It is not enough that the enslavers and their descendants should regret the

suffering that slavery inflicted on our ancestors. When you have done something wrong, you must take responsibility for it, apologize and try to set things right," Minister Grange, who attended the church service, said.

Rev. Harriott reiterated The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands' commitment to supporting the most vulnerable by offering parcels of land, adding that "landlessness has significantly hindered formerly enslaved people in their drive towards generational creation."

This apology follows similar gestures by other institutions, including the Church of England, which apologized last year for its historical ties to slavery.

The apology followed the revelation that the organization benefited from donations from a fund dating back to Queen Anne in 1704 intended to help the poorest clergy. The fund was invested in the South Sea Company, which traded in African slaves.

The organization also pledged to support communities affected by slavery with a £100-million (US\$127 million) investment over nine years. However, experts advising the church on the initiative have recommended a new target of £1 billion.

According to a report launched at The University of the West Indies, Mona, last year June, England owes the descendants of the enslaved in 31 countries in the Caribbean, Central America, and North America US\$24 trillion, of which US\$9.5 trillion is said to be owed to Jamaica.

215 CCTV cameras from Republic of Korea fortifies JamaicaEye program

The JamaicaEye Programme received a substantial boost with the donation of 215 closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras by the Government of the Republic of Korea.

During the handover ceremony held at his New Kingston offices on Tuesday, April 16, Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, emphasized the critical role of a comprehensive, integrated approach in achieving success in citizen security.

Highlighting the evolving landscape of law enforcement, he stressed the necessity of incorporating new technologies into the law-enforcement toolkit.

Dr. Chang underscored the digitization of policing operations as the cornerstone of 21st-century policing, emphasizing its multifaceted nature beyond the mere acquisition of modern equipment.

He emphasized the need for a strategic plan, collaborative partnerships, and unwavering political commitment to drive this transformation forward.

The integration of the donated CCTV cameras into a centralized system is poised to revolutionize law enforcement capabilities, providing real-time, high-quality footage for use in police investigations and supporting law enforcement efforts island-wide.

Dr. Chang emphasized that this initiative represents a holistic approach to digital transformation, equipping po-



Dr. Horace Chang (centre), receives the cameras from Chargé d'Affaires at the Korean Embassy Jin-wook Kim

lice officers with the necessary technology-enabled capabilities to enhance operational efficiency.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, lauded the bilateral relations between Jamaica and Korea.

She emphasized the tangible demonstration of support for public

safety and national security through the generous donation.

Chargé d'Affaires, Korean Embassy in Kingston, Jin-wook Kim, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the pivotal role of a secure environment in fostering confidence, stability, and prosperity for all citizens.

The JamaicaEye initiative, aimed

at providing comprehensive coverage over major towns and highways in Jamaica, continues to expand its reach.

With over 800 cameras already installed and an additional 350 slated for installation in downtown Kingston and Olympic Way spaces, the initiative signifies a concerted effort toward bolstering public safety nationwide.

A&B to relocate mentally unstable prisoners

The government of Antigua and Barbuda has unveiled plans to transfer psychologically unstable inmates from the nation's solitary correctional facility, His Majesty's Prison, to a dedicated establishment.

As outlined in a recent Cabinet report, the decision stems from the necessity to segregate mentally challenged individuals from the general prison population.

The report emphasized the refurbishment of a building at Crabbes previously occupied by ABDF personnel for this purpose.

Executing this plan demands a substantial allocation of resources, as highlighted in the report.

A comprehensive workforce and support infrastructure are deemed necessary to ensure the enhanced security sought by both the Cabinet and the Court.

This governmental initiative follows a directive issued by High Court Judge Ann Marie Smith during a preliminary hearing involving murder suspect Ziggy Beazer.

Beazer stands accused of the murder of Leroy Caesar, a tragic incident purportedly occurring during a confrontation within their shared cell at St.



Prisoners at His Majesty's Prison in Antigua

John's Police Station in December 2021

With a diagnosis of schizophrenia rendered by a psychologist, Beazer has been deemed unfit to stand trial, accentuating the complexities surrounding managing mentally ill inmates within the prison system.

In light of Beazer's troubled his-

tory, including a prior accusation of murder in 2020, Judge Smith directed Minister of Public Safety Sir Steadroy Benjamin to secure an appropriate facility for Beazer.

Furthermore, she mandated regular expert evaluation of his condition, to be reported every six months.

Antigua and Barbuda's mental

health facility currently operates at full capacity, leading to mentally ill individuals being confined within the prison.

This situation has been associated with incidents of escape and violence, prompting the need for strategic intervention.

Barbados to officially recognize Palestine as a State

Barbados is set to formally recognize Palestine as a state, revealed Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Kerrie Symmonds.

During a media launch marking the 166th Regular Session of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Symmonds announced the decision made by the Cabinet to extend formal diplomatic recognition to the State of Palestine.

Symmonds emphasized that this acknowledgment of Palestine does not impact Barbados' relationship with Israel, which has been formally recognized by Barbados since August 29, 1967.

He underscored the strong bilateral ties between the two countries, particularly in areas such as technical cooperation, food security, agriculture, and addressing water-related challenges.

Barbados has consistently advocated for a two-state solution at the United Nations. Symmonds highlighted the incongruity in promoting such a solution while not recognizing Palestine as a state.

The move to formalize recognition aims to rectify this inconsistency.

Barbados engaged in formal discussions with the State of Palestine in September last year, preceding the Israel-Hamas Gaza Strip dispute.

Symmonds clarified that Barbados, in alignment with CARICOM, ex-



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Kerrie Symmonds.

pressed unconditional disappointment with the humanitarian crisis and dissatisfaction with the proportionality of the Israeli response to the conflict.

Expressing concern over the escalation of tensions in the region, Sym-

monds urged for reason, clear-headedness, and diplomacy to prevail.

He called for a de-escalation of hostilities and emphasized the need for a return to stability in the affected area.

Barbados' decision to recognize

Palestine reflects its commitment to diplomacy and its stance on promoting peace and stability in the Middle East.

Gang leader killed, Spanish Town boils over

Chaos erupted in Spanish Town, Jamaica, over the weekend, as residents took to the streets in protest, resulting in the arrest of 22 individuals, according to Superintendent Hopeton Nicholson, head of the St Catherine North Police Division.

The unrest stemmed from the news of the death of reputed Clansman gang enforcer Sheldon Walters, also known as Termite, who was shot and killed in a shootout with the police on Friday night.

What began as expressions of anger and grief soon turned into vandalism, with residents blocking sections of Burke Road, Salt Pond Road, and the Spanish Town Bypass, and even targeting local establishments such as the KFC store on Burke Road.

Superintendent Nicholson disclosed that among those detained, two are being investigated in connection with a murder and shooting case, while the others were apprehended as part of the police's efforts to maintain public order.

"We will be continuing the enforcement throughout the division to bring a state of peace to those persons who are desirous of going about their lawful businesses," Nicholson said.

Relatives of the detainees gathered



Fiery roadblocks were part of the violent protests in Spanish Town, Jamaica

at the Spanish Town Police Station, vehemently declaring the innocence of their loved ones, claiming they were coerced into participating in the road blockades.

Confirming the removal of all roadblocks in Spanish Town, Nicholson emphasized the authorities' commitment to ensuring the safety and security of the area.

In response to the escalating situa-

tion, a 24-hour curfew has been imposed in various sections of St Catherine, including Top Banks, Oxford Road, and Spanish Town. The curfew, effective from 6 p.m. Saturday to 6 p.m. Sunday, aims to restore calm and prevent further unrest.

On Saturday, it was reported that another man, identified as Charles Mc-Donald, was shot and killed in an alleged confrontation with the police in the town.

In a bid to restore order and quell the violence, a significant police presence flooded the streets of Spanish Town, signaling the authorities' determination to maintain law and order in the area.

Several businesses in the town also closed for the weekend, in response to the unrest.

Volcanic eruption blamed as Montserrat sees decline in population

Preliminary findings from the 2023 Population and Housing Census paint a stark picture of Montserrat's demographic landscape, indicating a notable decline in its population over the past decade.

According to data released by the Statistics Department of Montserrat, the island's population has dwindled by 10.9 per cent since 2011.

In 2024, Montserrat is reported to have 4,386 ordinary residents, a significant drop from the 4,922 recorded in 2011

Despite the decline, gender parity remains nearly intact, with men constituting 49.9 per cent of the population and women making up 50.1 per cent.

The island's residential distribution reveals that 33.1 per cent of residents reside in the Central Region, while 47.4 per cent call the Northern Region home.

Currently, Montserrat boasts 2,256 private homes, each housing an average of 1.9 residents.

The island's demographic shift can be traced back to the catastrophic eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano in 1995, which rendered much of Montserrat uninhabitable.

Once boasting a population exceeding 13,000 residents, the aftermath



Montserrat's active volcano blamed for the decline in the island's population

of the eruption spurred mass emigration, leaving a fraction of the populace behind.

Data collection for the census spanned from September 12, 2023, to January 30, 2024.

However, the process faced obsta-

cles, including reluctance from some individuals to participate and difficulties in reaching specific households.

These challenges necessitated an extension beyond the initially planned wrap-up date of November 30, 2023.

Montserrat's commitment to cen-

sus-taking dates back centuries, with records indicating population data collection as early as 1678.

Since 1871, census efforts have been conducted every decade, with exceptions noted in 1931 and 2021.

New DPP in Jamaica follows resignation of incumbent

Jamaica ihas welcomed a new director of public prosecutions (DPP) after 16 years.

This change comes as Paula Llewelyn, who served as DPP since March 2008 and received extensions to her tenure, has chosen to step aside.

Llewelyn's decision follows a recent ruling by the Constitutional Court, which declared unconstitutional a second extension granted to her by the Andrew Holness-led Administration. The ruling upheld a constitutional amendment that raised the retirement age for the DPP from 60 to 65 but invalidated the provision allowing Llewellyn to continue in office.

At 63 years old, Llewelyn had already been granted one extension when she turned 60. The Public Service Commission (PSC) is expected to appoint an interim DPP today, its first task after being reconvened on Sunday following the expiration of its tenure on March 31.

The decision for Llewellyn to step aside is due to the ambiguity arising from the court's ruling, as stated in a news release from the Attorney General's chambers. The release also confirmed the intention to appeal the Full Court's decision in accordance with the Constitution.

"Due to the ambiguity and the consequent uncertainty arising from the Full Court's judgment in Paulwell and Bunting v the Attorney General SU 223 CV 02499, the Director of Public Pros-



Paula Llewelyn — resigned after constitutional court ruling

ecutions has advised that she is unable to carry out the functions of her office at this time," the release stated.

The Attorney General's chambers also reiterated that in accordance with section 96 (3) of the Constitution, the office would be appealing the Full Court's decision.

The AG had insisted on Friday that the court ruling had no impact on Llewellyn's status as DPP, signaling that she would have remained in office while the appeal took place. Now the

chambers said the PSC will be invited to appoint a qualified person to act in the role of DPP.

It emphasized: "After careful consideration of the judgment and in the public interest, the Attorney General will be appealing the Full Court's decision immediately, to have the issues resolved and determined by the Court of Appeal."

On Sunday, Opposition Leader Mark Golding called for the resignations of both the attorney general and Justice Minister Delroy Chuck, over the DPP issue.

Specifically, Golding charged that statements issued by both men on Friday that Llewellyn's status was not affected by the court ruling brought Jamaica to the edge of a constitutional crisis.

"Their actions have fatally undermined their credibility as holders of those important offices," Golding said in a statement.

Chase leads WI 'A' Team in first ever tour of Nepal

TRINIDAD and Tobago Red Force and Trinbago Knight Riders (TKR) batsman Mark Deyal has been included in a 15-man West Indies "A" team squad that will tour Nepal for a five-match Twenty/20 series from April 25 to May

This will be West Indies' first tour to Nepal, and the games will serve as preparation for the regional team's campaign at the June 1-29 International Cricket Council (ICC) men's T20 World Cup. The squad will be skippered by experienced Barbados allrounder Roston Chase, while exciting Dominican batsman Alick Athanaze will serve as the vice-captain.

Deyal, 31, has played 44 matches in his T20 career since making his debut for the TT franchise – then named TT Red Steel – in 2015. The left-hander has played 39 matches in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) and he has an average of 19.14 with two half-centuries. Deyal's career-best T20 score of 78 came against TKR in the 2021 CPL semi-final, while he was playing with the St Lucia Kings.

Last year, Deyal returned to the TKR franchise in a swap deal with left-

arm spinner Khary Pierre, after spending a few seasons with the St Lucia franchise.

The West Indies "A" team also features the veteran opening pair of Johnson Charles and Andre Fletcher, and exciting Jamaican allrounder Fabian Allen, who last represented the Windies against India in February 2022.

Middle-order batsman Keacy Carty, who has so far played 22 One-day internationals (ODIs) for WI, has also been included in the squad, along with out-of-favour 2019 CPL MVP Hayden Walsh Jr and the Guyana Amazon Warriors pair of Gudakesh Motie and allrounder Keemo Paul.

West Indies white-ball coach Daren Sammy says the Nepal tour has arrived at the perfect time and it gives the coaching staff the opportunity to explore the talent at its disposal across the region.

"From a coaching perspective, the Nepal tour couldn't have come at a more opportune time," the two-time T20 World Cup winner said, via a Cricket West Indies (CWI) press release.

"It offers us a chance to refine our World Cup squad, defining roles and personnel more clearly. Additionally,



Rolston Chase — leading the West Indies tour of Nepal

with nine players in the IPL, we can truly gauge and push the limits of our T20 team's depth."

Lead selector Desmond Haynes echoed Sammy's statements on the exposure that will be afforded to "emerging prospects."

Haynes said, "I am confident this Nepal tour marks a crucial step forward in our preparatory phase for the ICC men's T20 World Cup." He also backed Chase to excel as a leader. "Chase has exhibited over the past few years an impressive work ethic and proven leadership qualities," the lead selector said

The tour will bowl off with the first T20 at Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur on April 27. On the cusp of the T20 World Cup, the two-time T20 World Cup winners West Indies will host South Africa in a three-match T20 series.





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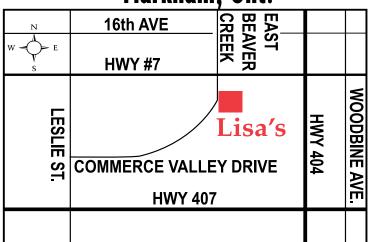
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