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UN issues scathing report on Canadian seasonal program that employs many Caribbean migrants

FARM WORKERS ARE 'CONTEMPORARY SLAVES'

The last wave of seasonal agricultural workers will shortly be arriving in Ontario for the start of fall harvest, particularly apples. As employers and communities prepare to welcome these workers, Ontario farmers point to how much positive change has taken place in recent years around the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program's agricultural stream.

This comes as a scathing United Nations report called Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program a "breeding ground for contemporary slavery."

The program allows employers to hire foreign workers to fill temporary jobs when they can't find qualified Canadians. The number of workers employed through the program has grown considerably in recent years. According to the UN report, there were just over 84,000 permit holders in 2018. In 2022, there were nearly 136,000. Most of them worked in agriculture and related labour sectors.

But, says Bill George, grape grower and chair of the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) Labour Committee, the "ex-



Temporary farm workers from the Caribbean on an Ontario strawberry farm

treme language" used by the UN "is particularly troubling to farmers."

George says new protections for seasonal workers are in place, and among the biggest changes has been a provision of open work permits for vulnerable workers that started in 2019 and lets those workers freely seek employment with any other government-approved TFW employer. This complements existing mobility for

workers, including their ability to apply for a new work permit while they are already working in the province. Workers in SAWP can also request to be transferred to a different approved employer by their country's liaison office without having to go through the process of applying for a new work permit.

OFVGA says as well that starting in 2024, Ontario is also changing how

it compensates injured workers through the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and new federal rules introduced in 2022 provide additional protections from retribution and reprisals for workers who come forward regarding unsatisfactory working conditions.

Workers have a variety of mechanisms to reach out for assistance, including a toll-free 24-hour federal government hotline that was introduced in 2021 and in the case of SAWP employees, liaison officers from their home countries who can provide assistance.

Every year, Ontario fruit and vegetable growers employ approximately 20,000 seasonal and temporary foreign workers who come to Canada legally through the SAWP TFW programs agricultural stream.

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GPHC partners with GOLI to perform lifesaving cardiac surgeries

THE Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) has announced the successful completion of the second Paediatric Cardiac Mission for 2024, after the final two patients were discharged on Tuesday.

According to a press release from the GPHC, the mission, which commenced on August 3, has provided life-saving surgical interventions to eight paediatric patients, ranging in age from one to 17 years old, all of whom are now home recovering.

Priority was given to those in critical need of surgical intervention, provided they were healthy enough to undergo the procedure without added risk. After careful assessment, eight patients were chosen to receive open-heart surgeries.

“We are proud to report that all eight surgeries were successful, and all patients have been discharged from our facilities. They will continue to receive follow-up care through routine clinic visits as part of their ongoing recovery process,” the GPHC said.

This mission was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the visiting international team from Gift of



The GOLI team at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), with a young patient

Life International (GOLI), which included surgeons, anaesthetists, perfusionists, intensivists, respiratory therapist, and operating room and intensive care nurses.

GOLI is funded in part by Toronto-based The Caribbean Children Foundation (TCCF), which is supported by *Equality News*.

“Our local medical team worked alongside them, ensuring that all pa-

tients received the highest standard of care before, during, and after their surgeries. This mission was a comprehensive effort, with all hospital departments playing crucial supporting roles,” the GPHC related.

In addition to the complex and routine surgical interventions performed, the mission also focused on building local capacity. Training and teaching sessions were conducted for

our local medical staff, thus fostering the enhancement of their knowledge and skills.

The GPHC said: “We are excited to announce that a third mission is planned for December 2024, continuing our commitment to providing lifesaving paediatric cardiac care, and strengthening our medical capabilities through international collaboration.”

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Third death suspected from listeria contaminated Almond Milk

A third person has died and 15 people have been hospitalized as a result of an outbreak of Listeria infections linked to recalled plant-based beverages.

There are 20 laboratory-confirmed cases of Listeria monocytogenes illness linked to the outbreak, according to the Canadian government. "Many people" who became sick reported drinking recalled Silk and Great Value brand beverages before their illnesses occurred, reads the recall alert.

Health officials are urging Canadians to check their fridges and pantries for affected products. The recall affects several milk alternatives sold by Silk and Great Value. A complete list can be found here.

Most of the reported illnesses are among women aged 50 and over. Of those confirmed to be infected, 13 are in Ontario, five are in Quebec, one is in Nova Scotia and another is in Alberta.

Severe listeriosis can lead to death, meningitis – a brain infection – and blood poisoning. Infections can also spread to unborn children in the womb, potentially causing a miscarriage, still-birth or life-threatening illness.

If you find the affected product in

your home, throw it away or return it to where you bought it. If you're unsure if you purchased a recalled item, call the retailer.

Do not consume the products, and if you are infected, do not prepare food for others.

Contact your health-care provider if you think you're experiencing symptoms of Listeria infection. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, cramps, vomiting, constipation and muscle aches. Severe symptoms include loss of balance, head and neck aches, and confusion.

Symptoms may appear between three and 70 days after exposure.

On Aug. 7, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) revealed that the recalled products were produced in Pickering, Ont.

It said the dedicated assembly line was completely disassembled and that the investigation is ongoing.

"No production on this dedicated production line will restart until the necessary corrective measures are implemented," reads a release from the CFIA.



Dr. Isaac Bogoch

Minister steps in to help farmers improve production



Minister Mustapha handing over the barbed wire to a farmer

Agriculture Minister Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha handed over a quantity of barbed wire and wallaba posts to members of the Ithaca Farmers and Livestock Group to assist with im-

proving their production.


Representatives of the group recently met with H.E. President Irfaan Ali, pleading for assistance with fencing their farmlands as cattle continue

to enter their farms and destroy their crops.

Michella Benjamin, a member of the farmers' group, said she was overjoyed to receive the inputs so that they could move forward with fencing the land and improving their production. She explained that the materials would assist with fencing over sixty acres of farmland, benefiting approximately fifteen cash crop farmers from the group.

Minister Mustapha said while there continues to be a conflict between cash crops, rice, and cattle farmers, the government was working to provide the necessary support to sustain and develop all industries.





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Creating new opportunities

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, August 13 2025

IN recent years, Guyana has witnessed a dramatic transformation in its housing sector, an achievement that deserves both commendation and critical examination.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali's announcement at the 2024 Building Expo highlights a significant surge in housing development and small-business creation, underscoring the government's commitment to making homeownership more accessible, and fostering economic growth.

According to President Ali, over 350 new small contracting businesses have emerged, largely driven by the government's housing policies. This not only speaks to a burgeoning sector, but also reflects a broader economic shift.

The construction industry's growth of approximately 30 per cent in 2021 and 27 per cent in 2022 illustrates a robust momentum, with the promise of continued expansion. The government's investment, over \$240 billion, has facilitated the distribution of 35,000 house lots, and the development of crucial infrastructure, including 414 kilometers of new roads, and extensive enhancements to water and electricity networks.

Such advancements are indeed impressive, and align with the government's objective of broadening homeownership. The \$4.2 million subsidy on low-income house lots, and the reduction of interest rates have made housing more affordable for many.

The delivery of over 3,000 houses, including allocations for low-and-moderate-income families, showcases a targeted effort to address the needs of

various income segments.

However, while these statistics paint a picture of progress, the real measure of success lies in the tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary Guyanese.

The creation of new housing schemes in regions such as Mabaruma, Bartica, and Mahdia, alongside the development of new areas like Silica City, signals an inclusive approach to urban and rural planning.

The allocation of over 2,000 house lots, and the distribution of 1,730 certificates of title at the 'Expo' reflect ongoing efforts to make land ownership a reality for many.

In assessing the government's achievements, it is also important to consider the broader socio-economic context.

The investment in housing and infrastructure undoubtedly contributes to

economic growth and social stability. However, sustained success will depend on how well these initiatives integrate with broader national development goals, including education, healthcare, and job creation.

The progress reported by President Ali, and Housing and Water Minister Collin Croal, is commendable, and reflects a strong commitment to addressing housing needs, and fostering business opportunities.

Moving forward, the focus must remain on ensuring that these efforts translate into lasting, meaningful improvements in the lives of Guyanese citizens. As the country continues on this path, it will be essential to maintain a balanced approach that integrates growth with sustainability and inclusivity.

The Assassination of Ismail Haniyeh

By Donald Ramotar

News of the assassination of the political leader of HAMAS, Ismail Haniyeh in Iran early on the morning of July 31 is a blatant act of State Terrorism. The fascist regime in Israel is doing everything to sabotage every effort for peace in the Middle East and this is Israel's deliberate intention to widen the conflict and to get the United States involved to save it from disaster.

Israel has been committing state terrorism for years without any sanctions. Indeed, they are being encouraged. They have killed scores of Iranian scientists and important functionaries of Iran.

Instead of the US, which professes to be a champion of Human Rights, condemning the terrorism it has encouraged it. The Donald Trump government assassinated Qasem Soleimani at Iraq's airport on January

2020, while he was on his way to meet the Iraqi Prime Minister. In this action the U.S. had joined Israel in the act of state terrorism.

Only recently we see the murderous Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is engaged in terrorism in GAZA and the West Bank being embraced by the US leaders from both Republicans and Democrats. This man is responsible for the murder of almost 200,000 Palestinians in GAZA and the West Bank since October 7, 2023.

During his address to the joint houses, Congress and Senate, that murderous Prime Minister received some fifty-eight (58) standing ovations. He was given that reception even after he insulted American citizens who were protesting his presence in the Nation's highest bodies.

It is apposite to note that he carried out this latest assassination immediately after his return to Israel from his "successful," visit to the United

States. Few people would believe that the US authorities did not know about this.

After all, US officials giving evidence before the Congress and Senate often admit that the CIA shares intelligence with Israel on the whereabouts of the Palestinian leaders.

It is clear that Israel's power in the United States is very great. Many Congress and Senate leaders have been receiving large sums of money for their election campaigns, including for the Presidency, by the pro- Israeli lobbying groups.

That has given them enormous influence not just in the legislative bodies but also in the Executive. A casual look would see that the US administration is dominated by Israeli, Zionist sympathisers.

To have an idea of the dept of influence or control that Israel has, just take a look at Press Conferences by the White House and State Department

spokespersons and you would see how much the Zionist influence has saturated the US administration.

This could be seen at the United Nations too. Here the US sees its greatest task is to protect Israel so that it can continue its barbarism against the Palestinians and Arab countries, that refuse to bend to Israel's world in the Middle East.

So widespread is Israel's influence in the US that many serious analysis are suggesting that the mighty United States of America has become a colony of Israel.

People are asking what is next? It is clear that we are in for more of the same as morality has taken its leave from people in power in Israel and the global west. This reflects a decadence of the western system of governance.

Donald Ramotar is a former President of Guyana



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Contributors: Niraj Sharma, Freddie Kissoon,

Donald Ramotar, Cliff Rajkumar, Dr Kumar Mahabir, Dr Vishnu Bisram
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Ottawa warns of QR code scam targeting parking machines

The City of Ottawa is warning residents about a new scam targeting its "pay and display" parking machines after discovering stickers with a fake QR code attached to dozens of the curbside units.

"When scanned with a smartphone, [the QR code] navigates residents to a fraudulent version of the PayByPhone website," the city warned Friday.

The city said it has no such payment option on its pay and display machines and asked residents not to scan the codes.

On Monday, the city said staff had inspected 90 per cent of Ottawa's roughly 650 pay and display machines

and removed 51 fraudulent stickers. No stickers have been found since Friday, though inspections were expected to continue Monday.

"If you see a QR code on any of these machines, call 3-1-1 to alert staff so that the stickers can be removed immediately," the city asked residents.

Residents who suspect they've fallen victim to the scam are encouraged to check with their credit card provider and contact Ottawa police. Ottawa police indicated Monday they'd have an update on their investigation by Tuesday.

Some motorists said the scam would be an easy one to fall for.

"It's automatic for you [to] just open the camera on the smartphone and just scan the QR code," said Thales Dutra, who often parks downtown.

"It's good to check everything. Don't trust it at first, question it," added Ervin Jean-Pierre, who said he planned to review his banking records after hearing about the scam.

Residents are reminded to use the correct payment methods at parking machines, which include downloading the official app, visiting PayByPhone.com or calling 613-691-1700.



This image shows one of the fraudulent QR code stickers, right

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Joel Bhagwandin

Kaieteur News is doing what they do best, distort and misrepresent

In the August 11, 2024, edition Kaieteur News (KN), a story was carried with the caption “Jagdeo changes tune on interest rates charged on ExxonMobil’s investments”. If there is one thing that is true is that Vice President Jagdeo has been consistent since 2015 when he assumed the General Secretary (GS) role of his party and former Leader of the Opposition, and now Vice President.

There is a cost of capital, the cost of equity is the return on equity, which is the profit generated (ROE). The cost of the debt financing is the interest expense. The implicit interest rate on the debt financing, which is in the form of a lease instrument works out to 5.18%, below the weighted average cost of capital (WACC) of ExxonMobil’s global WACC.

More importantly, the confirmation that the interest expense is not cost recoverable doesn’t mean that there is no interest on the debt finance. In the haste to distort, the most important point gets lost, i.e., the interest expense is NOT cost recoverable. Thus, in the context in which the question of the interest rate is framed by KN, the fact that the interest expense is confirmed to be, not cost recoverable, renders such line of questioning irrelevant.

Indeed, KN has been asking this question on the interest rate for a long time. But these are some of the most miniscule questions for any media house to dwell on and propagandize for so long.

It should be noted that when KN had initially put the interest rate ques-

tion to ExxonMobil Guyana (EMGL) directly, EMGL’s Vice President had promptly referred them to an article I had written on the very question of the interest rate, where I had calculated the implicit interest rate. His referral to my article on same suggests that it was correct.

Further, I had made the point that any independent accountant, finance professional or economist can do so, especially since the financial statements for the oil companies are publicly available and accessible. Therefore, the question of “interest rate” charged should never be a question for the policymakers or the oil companies directly, rather, the independent media should have their own subject matter experts to conduct these types of analysis and inform the

general public.

In market economies like ours, there is a role for all and sundry, in the same manner there is a role for the media, often referred to as the “fourth estate”. There is a role too for analysts and independent professionals.

Do you think the Financial Times, The Economist Magazine, Wall Street Journal, and the New York Times ask ExxonMobil’s CEO what is their interest rates or cost of capital? They absolutely don’t, because those questions are for their dedicated, subject matter analysts, who derive the answer from analyzing the company’s annual financial reports that are publicly available.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Improving the lives of the poor

Dear Editor,

AS His Excellency, Dr. Irfaan Ali and Prime Minister the Honorable Brigadier Mark Phillips mark four years in office, it is time to reflect and highlight on the progress country has made since the chaotic and frantic 2020 General and Regional Elections.

During the five disorderly months the nation was in panic as the PPP/C faced several challenges, not knowing the results of the March 2 election or what the future holds. Not only was the PPP/C declared the winner by the Guyana Election Commission (GECOM), but democracy also triumphed on August 2, 2020.

With elections expected in late 2025, everyone must be prepared to protect our cherished democracy which could have been lost had it not been for the steadfast efforts by the PPP/C to combat the barefaced rigging by the coalition government.

Since being sworn in as President and Prime Minister, the list of achievements under the Ali/Phillips leadership has been extensive and across the board.

Some of those achievements included the successful navigation of

the COVID-19 pandemic, which wreaked havoc on the nation for almost two years, the major floods that nearly crippled the agriculture industry, especially rice and cash crops and last but not least, inflation and its impact on the people, especially on the middle and lower classes.

While Guyana is not the only country in the world that has been afflicted by inflation which is a measure of cost of living, President Dr. Ali and his government including PM Brigadier Mark Phillips and Vice President Dr. Bharat Jagdeo have offered relief to thousands of households through fiscal grants, tax relief, and have pledged further assistance.

As Guyanese, we are blessed and should be extremely proud to have such outstanding, creative, visionary and devoted leaders with superb administrative and policy-making skills who in four years have inspired our youths, transformed Guyana and moved it from an underdeveloped nation status to a developed country.

To fulfill some of President Dr. Ali’s grand policies aimed at regional food security in the Caribbean by

2025, the Head of State has turned around the agriculture sector with massive crop diversification, the infusion of government funds and technology, the rebuilding of the Rose Hall Sugar Factory which was gutted by the Granger administration, and the modernisation of the outdated infrastructure landscape after years of neglect.

The PPP/C government has distributed more than 35,000 house lots, and created 45,000 jobs especially for youths who are 65 per cent of the population. Not to mention the careful development of the oil and gas sector by the government despite the lopsided contract signed by the Granger administration.

In the same period, President Dr. Ali has increased salaries for public servants, old age pensions have increased for the more than 60,000 senior citizens, and public assistance and “Because We Care” cash grant for school-aged children have risen significantly.

His Excellency has embarked on a set of broad-ranging policies to reduce poverty, create wealth and make Guyana the most prosperous nation in

the hemisphere.

The government has also invested large sums of money in health-care, social services and education with the construction of new schools in several regions, and with the ultimate goal of making post-secondary education free at the University of Guyana by 2025.

These initiatives by our leaders clearly underscore President Dr. Ali, Prime Minister Phillips and Vice President Jagdeo’s dedication, commitment and determination to sustainable and human development, and the preservation of the environment.

Their resolve to solve the nation’s problems, developed the country and improved the lives of the poor is unflinching and should instill optimism and confidence among all Guyanese at home and in the diaspora about country’s economic future. Everyone, regardless of their status, political affiliation or ethnicity should work collectively towards a prosperous and unified Guyana.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Asquith Rose



Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO



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Thousands become landowners at Guyana Building Expo 2024

UNDER the theme “Building on the Foundation of Sustainability and Unity,” the annual International Building Exposition, hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Water, has become a hallmark event reflecting the infrastructure transformation of Guyana. Held at the Guyana National Stadium, Providence, the expo draws spectators eager to witness the progress of a nation rapidly evolving in its pursuit of sustainable development and community building.

The event serves as a powerful reminder of the government’s commitment, under President Dr. Irfaan Ali’s administration, to provide 50,000 house lots by 2025. With over 30,000 house lots already distributed in the past four years, the expo stands as a testament to the realisation of a dream that once seemed distant but is now the reality of many Guyanese.

As National Spoken Word Artist, Daniella Araujo, eloquently expressed in her performance, the transformation from wetlands to thriving communities is a dream that has come to life. The Building Expo, she noted, is not just an event but a platform where innovation meets opportunity, showcasing the vision of a progressive and sustainable Guyana to both local and international audiences.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, highlighted the significance of the expo, describing it as an event that has become a household name in Guyana.



One of the families receiving their Certificates of Title for land at the Building Expo

“There is something here for everyone,” she remarked, emphasising the expo’s focus on sustainable, environmentally friendly concepts aimed at improving the experiences of both visitors and exhibitors. The expo’s wide range of exhibitors present the latest developments in affordable, low-carbon building techniques and solutions, catering to every construction need.

One of the event’s highlights was the ‘Dream Realised’ housing drive, during which approximately 2,000 individuals became proud landowners. Three of these allottees—Jewell Ingles, Sima Singh, and Neville Lesli—shared their experiences, expressing satisfac-

tion with the housing programme.

Ingles, who had been waiting since 2011, finally received her houselot in Non-Pariel, East Coast Demerara. She recounted the joy of receiving the call from the Ministry of Housing, acknowledging the long wait but celebrating the eventual outcome. Singh echoed similar sentiments, expressing happiness after a decade-long wait, while Lesli noted that while the process was lengthy, he was thankful to have finally reached the stage of ownership.

The Ministry’s efforts extend beyond land allocation, with 427 land distributions, 85 outreaches, and 134 business permits granted as part of their

broader mission to foster development across Guyana. The expo, which runs from August 8 to 11, 2024, features 500 exhibitors from Guyana, the Caribbean, and international companies, representing both the public and private sectors.

The International Building Expo is more than an exhibition; it is a celebration of Guyana’s ongoing journey toward sustainable growth and community development. As thousands of Guyanese continue to receive the keys to their future, the event underscores the importance of unity and innovation in building a prosperous nation.

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Permanent Guyana indigenous exhibit for Barbados

A FASCINATING project to promote and preserve the rich legacy of Guyana's Indigenous peoples was recently unveiled by Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond, during a visit to the Amerindian community of Santa Aratack in Region Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara).

She announced that the government was exploring the creation of a "permanent presence" for indigenous craft in Barbados—a move that would unlock new business prospects for local craftspeople and cement cultural ties between the two Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries.

She brought up the fact that Guyana and Barbados signed the St. Barnabas Accord two years ago, which, among other things, commits them to looking into the idea of creating a duty-free zone for the sale of locally made crafts at their ports.

She began by outlining Guyana's three-year plan to send indigenous crafts and other locally made goods to Barbados for the Agro-Fest. She said that the demand was far higher than supply. Minister Walrond said that there was a lot of promise for those items and that "we are now working to have a permanent presence for our craft in Barbados."

With visitor arrivals continuing to climb, the minister noted that more tourists are actively seeking memorabilia to take back with them. Additionally, there is a growing community of expatriates who wish to incorporate local craft in their homes, according to her.

Santa Aratack boasts a vibrant



CARICOM Secretary-General Dr Carla Barnett

craft shop, nestled within its Amerindian village, that serves as a showcase of the community's rich cultural heritage. The shop is filled with intricately woven baskets, beautifully carved wooden items, and vibrant beadwork, all handcrafted by local artisans.

Each piece reflects the deep traditions and skills passed down through generations, making the shop a hub of creativity and cultural preservation.

Visitors are drawn to the unique, authentic pieces, which tell the stories of the Indigenous people.

The shop not only supports the local economy but also keeps the village's artistic traditions alive. According to Minister Walrond, this Amerindian settlement has a rich legacy of promoting indigenous craft items which are among the best in the country.

Last month, the minister visited

Santa Aratack to launch a transformative training course on bamboo and rattan product development technology which will benefit 30 residents.

The initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, the Guyana Tourism Authority, and the International Center for Bamboo and Rattan, China, facilitated through the Chinese Embassy in Guyana.

Chancellor underscores importance of media

THE public's trust in the judicial system cannot be overlooked as it plays a fundamental role in fostering transparency and accountability. In this regard, Chancellor of the Judiciary (ag), Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, has emphasised that the judiciary is not above the law and is here to serve the public.

The media shapes much of the public perceptions of the judiciary and Justice Cummings-Edwards, during a press engagement on Saturday at Cara Lodge, highlighted the importance of the media.

The Judiciary of Guyana, in collaboration with the Guyana Press Association (GPA), hosted the press engagement and it focused on 'promoting public trust and confidence through improved access to information, and reliable and responsible reporting.'

During her keynote remarks, the Chancellor said that the media, in its varied forms, is now an "inescapable" part of life and, more so, it can advocate for social change.

"Needless to say your words, your

writing, have a lasting impact," the Chancellor stated.

She pointed out that the media's crucial relationship with the state and society has unique consequences for law, politics, economics, culture, and overall, every sphere of society.

Justice Cummings-Edwards then touched on balanced reporting, which, according to her, carries all of the facts and brings out the truth in the stories.

"You members of the media cannot, therefore, and must not put your light under a bushel. That is, you have to keep your good qualities and abilities always to the fore, do not make it a secret or hide it from others, what we know in the legal profession, [is] that what you do is important," the Chancellor said.

She reminded media personnel of their constitutional rights. Referring to Article 40, the Chancellor explained that it provides for the protection of one's fundamental rights and freedoms, subject to limitations. She noted that it is designed to ensure that the enjoyment of the said rights and freedoms by an indi-



Justice Cummings-Edwards

vidual does not prejudice the rights and freedoms of others or the public interest.

More specifically, she touched on Freedom of Expression within Article 146, which states that no one may be prevented from exercising their right to free expression unless they give their own agreement.

She did point out, though, that the freedom of expression discussed in this article does not apply to hate speech or

any other kind of statement that could incite animosity or animosity towards any individual or group of individuals.

"The court itself, what we portray is for the public. We are here to serve the public. We are not above the law and you have a right of access to information with what's going on in the court, subject to the limitations where the law prohibits restrictions of certain matters.

"The other thing with journalists and the media, in the right to report, judicial proceedings, stems from the necessity of transparency and accountability. We are accountable to the public. We are, as I said before, we are not a law unto ourselves. And one way in which the public could get to know what we are doing as judicial officers is through the reporting of cases."

While emphasising that open justice is practised within the courts, the Chancellor said that the judiciary depends on the media. However, while the courts are open to criticism, Justice Cummings-Edwards asked for the criticisms be fair and constructive.

‘Agri’ Minister discusses medium, long-term plans for Region Five

AGRICULTURE Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, said that the government was working to modernise the country’s drainage and irrigation system.

The minister made the disclosure during a meeting with farmers from Prospect and other surrounding communities in Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice).

Minister Mustapha said that the government is currently working to develop an integrated drainage system for the country.

“We started that programme with the construction of the high-level Hope Canal when we were in government prior to 2015. When that canal was constructed, many persons were criticising it, calling it ‘Jagdeo’s white elephant’. We saw the usefulness of that canal when we had the flood in 2021. While all the areas in the country were affected, that area and Georgetown were not affected because the water was draining directly to the Atlantic Ocean,” he said.

Minister Mustapha also said the tender for the high-level Hope-like canal being constructed in Region five will be out in the coming week.

“In our manifesto, we said we’d construct other high-level canals in various parts of the country. Based on our assessments, it was observed that the best places to construct these canals were in Regions Three, Five, and Six. Work has already commenced in Region Six to construct two of those canals. We are doing an embankment from Number 66 Village to the Canje Creek to prevent water from coming from the backlands into the cultivation areas when there is



Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, announces plans for drainage and irrigation systems

heavy rainfall.

“In Region Five, we’ll do another set of high-level canals. In the coming week, the tender will be out. The expression of interest has already been published for these canals. This Danzig/Prospect area is slated for one. With that, we’ll install several irrigation pumps to bring water from the backlands into the irrigation system so that farmers can have sufficient irrigation.

“This will work in conjunction with the high-level canal so that we will not

experience flooding when there is heavy rainfall. We are also constructing a pump station at Cottage. That pump will help with the long-term development of this area,” he said.

While speaking on the medium-term plans, Minister Mustapha said that the requests made by farmers during meetings with officers from the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) for infrastructural upgrades to drainage and irrigation structures as well as the clearing of canals will be done.

“We’ll work to clear those canals and build those dams. These will be medium-term developments because we have to have a work plan. I cannot send machines into the area without doing a proper analysis and survey. So, the NDIA will be working on that. The NDIA Chairman will be coming with a team to look at the area, and once the survey is complete, I will designate machinery to do the work. I am optimistic that within a month, those works can commence,” Minister Mustapha added.

The World Guyanese Congress (WGC) is a federally incorporated non-partisan global organisation that represents the interests of citizens of Guyanese heritage around the world. The organisation focuses on the successful development of our communities globally with an emphasis on leadership development and collaborative activities in diaspora communities to strengthen the community worldwide.

The organisation is headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and led by a Chairman and Executive Committee supported by an Advisory Council and various Committees as well as a Board of Governors that acts as ambassadors for the organisation. It has nine national and regional chapters:

Key priorities of the WGC include:

- Build a globally cohesive community with a focus on youth and women in business and civic leadership worldwide.
- Support social entrepreneurship and civic engagement in communities around the world.
- Engage diaspora communities in the social and economic development of Guyana.

World Guyanese Congress

5200 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
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To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit www.wgc-org.com

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
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Telephone: [1-800-317-0804](tel:1-800-317-0804)



Culture lab will help Guyana meet goals of 4 million plants annually

WITH the construction of a tissue culture laboratory, Guyana is expected to grow four million plants annually, meeting both its local and regional demand for food.

This was last week disclosed by the country's Vice-President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, who, during a news conference where he told reporters that the government is already looking to construct a second laboratory.

"We probably will get another tissue culture lab. We are expanding all of our nurseries. The nursery at Charity is inadequate to service the needs of the people there. In places like the Amerindian communities, they want to expand cultivation," Dr. Jagdeo said.

To further support farmers, the government, he noted, will be expanding the capacity of existing plant nurseries across the country.

"We will be providing a lot of planting material," Dr. Jagdeo added.

Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, stated that the project will see the country being able to produce high-quality products for the regional and international markets.

He also revealed that the facility will feature a food-safety laboratory.

"This here will take our production level to new heights, where we will produce and comply with international standards. Our produce will be of a better quality to export, and we will be ready for the global market," Minister Mustapha said.

Tissue culture involves the cultivation of plant cells, tissues, or organs on a specially formulated nutrient medium. Under the right conditions, an entire plant can be regenerated from a single cell.

Plant tissue culture is a technique that has been around for more than 30 years.

In 2023, an agreement to establish a tissue culture facility was signed by the Government of Guyana through the Ministry of Agriculture and The Energy Resource Institute (TERI) of India.

This will see the establishment of a




Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha

commercial-size tissue culture and micropropagation facility at the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI).


Mustapha had said the project is extremely good for Guyana, as it will support the increased demand for planting materials.

"Over the last three years, we have seen a serious demand for planting materials... What we are producing now is just around 13,000 to 15,000 plantlets. When this lab is completed later on like mid-point 2024, we will be able to produce millions of plantlets for our farmers."

Additionally, works are in progress to upgrade 11 nurseries across the country, which will result in an increase in seedling production from 200,000 to 500,000.



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No wiggle room for contractors who breach conditions of their deals: Ali

THERE will be no wiggle room for delinquent contractors, as President Dr. Irfaan Ali has made it clear that heavy penalties such as the blacklisting of companies will be applied.

Blacklisting, owing to contractual breaches and non-performance, could even result in the loss of one's company, President Ali said on Saturday, when he met with officials from the Ministry of Education, contractors, engineers, Regional Executive Officers (REOs), and project consultants.

"I want to make it very clear, these projects must be managed independently in a project file, and we are going to hold the REOs and engineers accountable on all these projects," the President firmly said.

He went on to say: "From Day One, once there are breaches and the contractors are not fulfilling their responsibilities, I need letters to be written, and letters to be placed in the file. At the end of the contractual period, or before, if there's cause for termination, the file must be closed, and a copy of the file must be sent to the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board, so that they will know that these contractors are not performing."

He warned the contractors that no excuses will be tolerated, and stressed the importance of managing sites properly.

"There will be penalties for contractors, and it can cost you your company, too, because if you don't perform, then you can get blacklisted. Then you will not get new projects," the Head of State said while emphasising the importance of the infrastructure sector.

While receiving an update on several ongoing projects, the President was informed that the Christ Church Secondary School is on track to be completed on November 15 of this year.

The government has been battling insubordinate contractors for quite some time, however, with the massive number of national infrastructural works ongoing, and the administration's plans to reel out another cycle of projects, delays cannot and will not be tolerated.

As such, Dr. Ali had previously highlighted that efforts will be made to ensure accountability in the execution of contracts, such as penalties for breaches.

"I had a report from project managers across all national projects; letters have been sent out to contractors on liquidated damages to the value of about \$3 billion. Those are projects that are going beyond their timeline," President Ali had told reporters at a previous press conference.

He emphasised that institutions and agencies have been instructed to ensure that the liquidated damages for contractual breaches are applied.

"So, once there is no justifiable



President Dr. Irfaan Ali, earlier this year, inspected housing and road infrastructure works in Region Three,

reason for an extension of project time, liquidated damages must be charged," he firmly stated.

Also, Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, S.C., unveiled a series of measures aimed at ensuring the timely execution of contracts, and reinforcing the government's commitment to upholding contractual obligations.

First, highlighting the government's stance on contract breaches and delays, Nandlall said: "All of this is part of the government's no tolerance for breach of contracts and delay in the execution of contractual obligations."

One of the key measures announced by Nandlall is the resuscitation and functionalisation of units within various ministries, tasked with

evaluating contractual performance and activating relevant contract clauses.

These units will be responsible for assessing delays, breaches, and other contractual issues, and imposing sanctions on delinquent contractors, including liquidated damages, forfeiture of bonds, and termination of contracts.



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No. 040

The Five Cs of Credit

The Five Cs of Credit: Why Credit is Crucial in the Mortgage Process

This is the first in a five-part series on the Five Cs of Credit—critical factors that lenders use to assess whether you qualify for a mortgage. In this series, we'll delve into each of these factors, beginning with Credit—a fundamental element that can make or break your mortgage application.

When applying for a mortgage, several factors come into play, including your income, credit history, repayment habits, down payment amount, and the property's location and condition. These elements determine whether you'll be approved by an A Lender, B Lender, or even a Private Lender—or potentially declined altogether. Over the next five weeks, we'll explore what you need to do to enhance your chances of approval and secure the best possible mortgage terms. Although some circumstances that affect your credit may be beyond your control, working closely with a Sunlite Mortgage broker can help you minimize the impact of financial hurdles and secure favourable mortgage terms.

Understanding the Importance of Credit in the Mortgage Process

Credit is the cornerstone of the mortgage approval process. It is a

measure of your financial reliability and is used by lenders to gauge your ability and willingness to repay a loan. When you apply for a mortgage, lenders will assess your credit score—a numerical representation of your creditworthiness. A high credit score might signal to lenders that you are a low-risk borrower, which can result in better loan terms, lower interest rates, and a higher loan amount.

However, having a high credit score alone does not guarantee the lowest rates or the best terms. Factors such as the maturity and depth of your credit history also play a significant role. This is where working closely with a mortgage broker becomes invaluable. A broker can help you understand the nuances of your credit report, identify areas that need improvement, and guide you in taking proactive steps to optimize your credit before applying for a mortgage.

In some cases, we have seen huge gaps on a credit report and a high score, which usually happens when someone might have filed a bankruptcy or a consumer proposal and waited until it's fallen off the report before applying for any credit cards. There is a workaround that we can advise you on.

The Adverse Effects of Poor

Credit Management

Failing to manage your credit effectively can lead to several negative consequences when it comes to securing a mortgage:

-Higher Interest Rates: A lower credit score typically results in higher interest rates, which can add up to tens of thousands of dollars in additional interest payments over the life of your mortgage.

-Limited Loan Options: With a poor credit score, you may find that your choices are restricted to higher-cost lenders or less favourable loan products, limiting your financial flexibility.

-Lower Loan Amounts: Lenders may offer smaller loan amounts to borrowers with lower credit scores, potentially preventing you from purchasing your desired property.

-Risk of Declined Applications: Poor credit management can lead to a declined mortgage application, delaying your homeownership plans or forcing you to settle for less favorable terms.

How Working with a Mortgage Broker Can Help

A mortgage broker is not just a facilitator for securing a loan—they are your partner in ensuring your financial

health aligns with your homeownership goals. By starting the mortgage planning process 24 months before your renewal or application, you can work with a broker to strategically manage your credit and increase your chances of securing the best mortgage terms.

Here's how our mortgage broker can assist you:

1.Credit Report Review: A Sunlite Mortgage broker will thoroughly review your credit report, helping you understand the key factors that lenders will assess. We can identify any discrepancies or areas that need improvement and advise you on how to address them.

2.Credit Score Optimization: We provide specific strategies to boost your credit score, such as paying down high-interest debt, correcting errors on your credit report, adjusting your credit utilization, or helping you find funds to pay your credit cards monthly.

3.Budgeting and Financial Planning: By working with a Sunlite Mortgage broker, you can develop a budget that ensures you stay on top of your credit obligations. This proactive approach can help prevent late payments, reduce debt, and improve your overall financial profile.

To be continued

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Chinese official highlights untapped potential in Guyana-China co-operation

THE co-operation between Guyana and China has made remarkable strides in recent years, yet there remains substantial untapped potential for further collaboration, particularly in the fields of agricultural technology, modern machinery, and food security.

Mr. Zhang Peng, who currently serves as the Director of the Americas and Oceanic Affairs Division of the Foreign Affairs Office of Shandong Province, China, articulated this perspective. He had the privilege of hosting a media delegation consisting of eight members from Guyana.

“Much can be learnt from our two countries, and Shandong Province is ready to collaborate with Guyana to help with their agriculture sector,” Mr. Peng said, explaining that his province has maintained the position of being the largest agricultural exporter in China.

Shandong Province, renowned as a leading manufacturing hub and major industrial producer in China, boasts a gross domestic product (GDP) of around US\$1.8 trillion. In regards to trade and agriculture, it is one of the leading provinces.

The Director of the Foreign Affairs Office emphasised the importance of examining collaboration between the private sectors of Guyana and Shandong Province, in addition to expanding governmental co-operation between the two.

“We also encourage companies to have co-operation on agriculture technology or agriculture equipment, and we also encourage private companies to seek opportunities to have agriculture development in Guyana and the Caribbean,” he added.

The quick development of Shandong and its ongoing prominence in agricultural expertise in China can be attributed to the contributions of science and technological advancements. The reduction of poverty has been greatly facilitated by the modernisation of the agriculture sector.

In the past year, a delegation from Shandong Province paid a visit to Guyana and held meetings with various officials, including Mr. Robert Persaud, the Foreign Secretary. The purpose of those meetings was to discuss potential areas of co-operation, trade, and investment between Guyana and the province.

The delegation was led by Deputy Director-General of the Foreign Affairs Office of Shandong Provincial People’s Government, Ms. Baiwei Chen. She gave the commitment of the province to strengthening cultural and economic relations with Guyana. Persaud had also called for greater collaboration in the areas of agriculture and industry.

According to Mr. Peng, Shandong has shown increased interest since that visit. “Ties have already been established in various areas, both in the petroleum industries and infrastructure, and hopefully this will expand to other sectors, including agriculture. I think Shandong and Guyana will have a bright future ahead.”

Additionally, the Chinese official emphasised that Shandong Province is the host of the China-Caribbean Development Centre (CCDC), an organisation established in 2022 to enhance China’s collaboration with Caribbean nations.

The nation of Guyana has already experienced positive outcomes from

participating in an online seminar that provided training in cage fishing. The local fishing industry perceives this training as highly advantageous, given the government’s efforts to address the adverse effects of climate change by altering fishing techniques in this area.

In fact, it has already expressed an interest in doubling its aquaculture output by 2025, and, to support this, it has budgeted millions to back cage fishing projects introduced in various parts of the country, including Lake Mainstay and Capoey, on the Essequibo Coast. The Chinese Embassy had also donated 50 fishing cages to support these projects.



Zhang Peng

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500 students benefit from First Lady's backpack drive

APPROXIMATELY 500 children from Better Hope and Tiger Bay collected back-to-school backpacks from First Lady Arya Ali.

The distribution exercise took place at the Better Hope Community Centre ground, and the One Guyana Kitchen on Main Street.

Lunch kits, books, pencils, pens, rulers, sharpeners, erasers, hand towels, lunch bowls and bottles were also given out.

Children from nursery, primary and secondary schools benefitted from this initiative.

First Lady Ali said education is key to success, and every parent should ensure their children complete their schooling.

"All of you are fully aware that education is important; education is key, so we have brought some supplies not just to equip you for a great term ahead, but to take you all the way to your final careers," the First Lady said.

Chairman of the Better Hope Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) Zaman Shaw was also present at the event. (DPI)

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Progress being made to rebuild hurricane-ravaged islands

SIGNIFICANT progress is being made to rebuild key infrastructure on the island of Carriacou, in Grenada, in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl.

In a video posted by Tevin Andrews, Minister for Carriacou & Petite Martinique, Affairs and Local Government, to his social media platform, one of the ranks of the Guyana Defence force (GDF) who is a part of response team, explained that three main projects, which included the reconstruction of a police station, a revenue office building and a school, were making progress.

“We have done the most work so far on the police station, and the revenue office building. We have recently started the ministers building because that was only added to our work last week. I would say that the island has made a lot of progress since when we got here,” the GDF official said.

Beryl set a record for the first-ever Category Four storm in June in the Atlantic, making landfall last month on Carriacou, in Grenada, and wrecking nearby islands.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Lucia were among some of the Caribbean States that were affected by the Category Four hurricane.

“We have seen a relative amount



President Dr. Irfaan Ali and Grenada's Prime Minister, Dickon Mitchell with Guyanese ranks in Grenada

of normalcy being returned to the island; I admire the resilience of the people of Carriacou because some people their entire homes are destroyed. And you know, they still had somewhat of a positive demeanor,” the GDF official said.

In July, 50 ranks Grenada and St. Vincent and Grenadines to aid in re-

building efforts following the destructive passage of Hurricane Beryl.

The GDF's mission, Guyana's President, Dr. Irfaan Ali had said, is to restore normalcy and demonstrate the values of passion, love, and service learnt in their training.

“Take with you the love, pride and rich tradition of what makes us

Guyanese; strength of character and a sense of purpose as you help assist the nations within CARICOM [the Caribbean Community] to rebuild,” President Ali had said.

The 50 soldiers had joined another eight who left to provide support earlier.

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Masterplan for \$6B homestead programme for single moms completed

THE masterplan for the \$6 billion homestead programme along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway has been completed, President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced on Monday.

According to the Head of State's official social media page, the masterplan was unveiled at a meeting with several government ministers, technical officials, and representatives from the banking industry. The project is expected to commence shortly.

President Ali announced plans for the innovative project, during a media conference back in June.

This innovative housing programme, incorporating agriculture, will see 500 houses being constructed on some 100 acres of land at Yarrowkabra.

These homes will be equipped with agricultural facilities and harness the power of solar energy, creating a self-sustaining ecosystem for its residents.

At the opening of the now-concluded International Building Expo



President Ali unveiling plans for the homestead programme

2024, President Ali said the government aims to deliver on this project

within six months and will see multiple ministries collaborating.

“For the first time, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Survey, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Human Services will be working together to deliver this project,” he stated.

At the heart of this transformative plan, each plot of land will feature several coconut or breadfruit trees in the front yard and the installation of a 20 x 40 shade house to the rear of the house.

Equipped with advanced agricultural technology, these shade houses are designed to boost food production and provide a steady income for families. By integrating sustainable agriculture, single mothers earn, guaranteeing a way out of poverty into a middle-income family.

The administration continues to outline its plan to provide proper living conditions and enhance the economic stability and quality of life for thousands of families, focusing on setting standards for low-income housing.

Close to 17,000 benefit from mortgage relief

ALTHOUGH there have been increases in mortgage rates globally, Guyana has stood out for being able to significantly reduce this over the past three years as a result of direct policies implemented by the government, according to President, Dr. Irfaan Ali.

“The government has increased the mortgage interest relief from 15 million to 30 million... to date, approximately close to 17,000 homeowners have benefitted and the total costs of \$2.7 billion, more than \$2.7 billion that were put back directly in the pockets of 17,000,” the Head of State said recently.

He related that the government negotiated a reduction in interest rate for mortgage by close to 2.5 per cent.

“As a result of this policy, we have seen an increase in housing loan by almost 20 per or \$56 billion and these housing loans have the lowest default rate in this hemisphere,” Dr. Ali said.

The President emphasised the decades of targeted policies implemented by successive People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) governments to promote affordable and sustainable housing to all Guyanese.

“Between 1992 and 2015, it is important for us to trace this segment of our history in the housing sector. In 1992, we

had one of the highest debt burdens per capita in the world; our debt-to-GDP ratio was 750 per cent,” President Ali said, pointing out that Guyana has evolved to now having a development matrix which has seen the country garnering much investments.

Despite taking office in 1992 at a time when over 90 per cent of the country's revenue was being used to service

its debt, successive PPP/C governments were able to make strategic decisions, and implement policies that saw the development of new lands and the promotion of home ownership, in a pre-oil-and-gas economy.

“What we achieved was as a direct result of a system of government under the People's Progressive Party/Civic that prioritised certain key areas that invested

in our people; that understood the policy-making matrix, and that developed policies that changed the lives of people,” President Ali said.

He keenly emphasised that in less than 35 years, Guyana has moved from a debt-to-GDP ratio of 750 per cent to being the fastest growing economy in the world.



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This is how makhana looks before being roasted and popped

The 'superfood' taking over fields in northern India

Like his father and grandfather before him, Phool dev Shahni once made a living by diving to the bottom of 8ft-deep (2.4m), muddy ponds.

"I used to dive in 7 to 8ft of water for hours a day - coming to the surface to breathe after 8 to ten minutes," explains Mr Shahni.

While down in those murky depths he was harvesting the seeds of a type of water lily called euryale ferox.

Known as makhanas, fox nuts or lotus seeds, they are prized for their nutritional value, being high in B vitamins, protein and fibre, with some touting them as a superfood.

Often eaten as a snack, makhanas are also used in various dishes, including the milk pudding kheer, as well as being ground into flour.

In the north-eastern Indian state of Bihar, where Mr Shahni lives, 90% of the world's makhana is grown.

The leaves of the lily plant are large and circular and sit on the top of the pond. But the seeds form in pods under water and collecting them was an exhausting process.

"While we are at the bottom diving, mud enters our ears, eyes, nose and mouth. Lots of us have skin issues due to this. Also the plant is covered in thorns, which give us cuts all over our body during harvesting of the seeds," Mr Shahni says.

But in recent years farmers have changed the cultivation process. The plants are now often grown in fields, in much shallower water.

Harvesting seeds in just a foot of water means Mr Shahni can make twice as much money in a day.

"It's still hard work but I am proud of my tradition. I have three children and I will make sure that one of my sons continues the legacy of working in a fox nut field."

Dr Manoj Kumar, is one of those behind the change in makhana cultivation.

About ten years ago he realised it would be difficult to expand its cultivation in deep ponds.

Now Senior Scientist at the National Research Centre for Makhana (NRCM), he helped to develop the cultivation of lilies in fields of shallow water.

Over the last four or five years that technique

has been taking off.

"With our innovations, growing fox nuts is now as easy as any crop grown on land. The only amount of water needed is a foot. The workers don't have to work for hours in deep water," he explains.

And after experiments with different seeds, his centre found a more resilient and productive variety, which he says has tripled the income of farmers.

Dr Kumar says that makhana cultivation has helped some farmers cope with more uncertain weather conditions and floods that have hit Bihar in recent years.

Now NRCM is working on machines that can harvest the seeds.

All that innovation has attracted more and more farmers.

In 2022, the area used for fox nut farming was 35,224 hectares (87,000 acres), an almost threefold increase over 10 years.

Dhirendra Kumar is one farmer who has made a recent switch to makhana cultivation.

Although he grew up on a farm, he didn't want to follow in his father's footsteps.

"As farmers we always grew wheat, lentils and mustard but ended up losing a lot of money.

"Most of the time floods destroyed the crops," he says.

While studying for a PhD, he came into contact with a scientist working on makhana cultivation and decided to experiment with the crop on his family farm.

"The results were amazing. In the first year I made a profit of £340 [US\$432]," he says.

Now he grows lilies on 17 acres (6.9 hectares) of land.

"In my wildest dreams I did not think that I would get into growing fox nuts, as it was a labour-intensive job, which was mostly carried out by fishermen."

The change in crop has also opened up job opportunities for women. Mr Kumar now employs about 200 local women who sow the seeds.

"My aim is to provide jobs to as many farmers as possible so they don't leave farming because of uncertainty in agriculture," he says.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Nothing will disturb you today. No matter how worrying the news that comes your way may be you will just shrug it off and get on with your life. As far as you are concerned it's not worth getting worked up over things that cannot be changed.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): You can be somewhat obsessive at times but that is not necessarily a bad thing and today it could even be a good thing in that it keeps you searching for answers to life's big questions. Don't stop probing until you understand everything.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Affairs of the heart are under generous stars at the moment, so if there is someone you are attracted to don't be afraid to approach them, because you may get a warmer response than expected. You must though be serious in your intentions.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Make sure that your personal feelings for a certain individual do not encroach on your working relationship. When there is business to be done it is essential that you adopt a thoroughly professional attitude. After work though it's another story!

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Do something dramatic over the next 24 hours, something that cannot be ignored. Cosmic activity in and around your birth sign urges you to soar above and beyond the limits you have imposed on yourself. Aim higher, try harder and make great things happen.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): You may not want to accept that a colleague has done better than you on the work front but it's a fact and there is no point moaning about it. Look carefully at what brought them success, then find ways to adapt their methods for your own use.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Go out of your way to mix with people socially today, even if you still have a heap of work to get through. If you force yourself to knuckle down and get it all done you could miss out on some interesting and potentially profitable gossip.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): According to the planets your overactive imagination is causing you problems, not least in that you seem to believe you are heading for the poor house. Stop worrying and start looking for ways to boost your income, ways that you are in full control of.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): You may think that you are special but it would appear that someone in a position of power has their doubts, so make it your business today to prove that you are up to the tasks they have set you. You were born to be Number One.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): There is nothing you need to be afraid of, so why are you always looking over your shoulder? Whatever the reason you need to get over it because there are some fantastic opportunities coming your way – opportunities that will approach from the front, not the rear.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Don't just accept what the so-called experts tell you. The planets warn they are every bit as confused by events as you are, so reject their advice if it doesn't sound right and act on what your instincts tell you. Deep down you already know what the truth is.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Don't sit back and wait for the world to beat a path to your door over the next 24 hours. Take your show on the road and let everyone know what you are capable of – which is much more than most people have given you credit for.

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Caribbean tourism rebounds after passage of Hurricane Beryl

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) says the regional tourism industry has shown extraordinary resilience in the wake of Hurricane Beryl, with data revealing a rapid rebound in travel bookings.

Hurricane Beryl, the first hurricane of the 2024 Atlantic Hurricane season, left a trail of death and destruction in Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica when it made its way through the Caribbean at the start of July.

The CHTA said that despite the initial impact of the storm, which made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane in the Grenadines on July 1, the region has experienced a remarkable turnaround, driven particularly by its largest market, the United States.

The CHTA said that comprehensive air travel data from ForwardKeys, analysed in collaboration with the association, “reveals a swift rebound in tourism, most notably from the United States.

“While analysis of data is ongoing with results to be shared in a future report, the overall trend shows the Caribbean’s impressive ability to recover and adapt,” the CHTA said, acknowledging that there was a short-term decline in regional bookings in the wake of Beryl.

The CHTA said analysis of air tickets issued between June 30 and July 23 showed a modest two per cent drop compared to the same period in 2023.

“Destinations which were in the storm’s direct path saw more pronounced falls, such as Grenada with a 14 per cent decline and Jamaica with a 24 per cent drop. Notably, the period leading up to the hurricane saw a nine per cent increase in bookings across the Caribbean, demonstrating strong pre-storm travel interest.

“During that period, Jamaica recorded a five per cent increase while



Beryl left a trail of devastation across the Caribbean, including Grenada (above)

Grenada recorded an impressive 26 per cent rise,” CHTA said, noting that the “swift rebound in bookings from the US, our largest source market, underscores our region’s enduring appeal.

CHTA president, Nicola Madden-Greig, said “this rapid recovery not only highlights our industry’s resilience and strength but also reaffirms our unwavering commitment to overcoming challenges”.

The CHTA said that the US had shown encouraging signs of a swift recovery. Starting from July 9, 2024, ticket sales from the US to the Caribbean had returned to year-on-year

growth, marking a faster recovery compared to the overall average.

This was particularly significant given that the US initially saw a decline of 36 per cent immediately after the hurricane, highlighting the resilience and ongoing appeal of the region.

CHTA said Grenada, one of the islands directly impacted by the storm, had shown a remarkable recovery.

“Although intra-Caribbean ticket sales fell 23 per cent and bookings were down 18 per cent from key US markets, such as Boston (-19 per cent), Miami (-18 per cent) and New York (-15 per cent), Grenada’s market has

quickly bounced back to near-normal levels.

“Booking patterns have shifted, with last-minute trips to Grenada from the US in July seeing a 51 per cent increase in cancellations due to the hurricane disruption. However, cancellations for trips from August onwards were less impacted, rising by six per cent.

“The dramatic rebound is particularly significant given the initial challenges, with key segments like business and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) showing notable growth of 57 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively, since July 2,” the CHTA said.

Descendants of slave owners apologize for slavery

In a profound moment at Seville Heritage Park in St Ann, the Emancipation Jubilee attendees listened intently as descendants of those involved in chattel slavery on the island issued heartfelt apologies.

The annual event, held from July 31 into August 1 (Emancipation Day), is traditionally a time for reflection, cultural celebration, and a look towards a brighter future. However, this year’s Jubilee featured a poignant addition: a series of video apologies from families of former plantation owners and others who played roles in chattel slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Among the in-person apologies, sisters Kate Thomas and Aidee Walker traveled from New Zealand to address the people of Jamaica. They are de-

scendants of the Clan Malcolm of Argyll, a family that owned an estate in St Ann.

“We acknowledge the deep suffering and injustice inflicted on your ancestors by our forebears and we recognize the lasting impact of those atrocities in Jamaica. Chattel slavery was, and is, a crime against humanity,” the sisters stated.

They expressed gratitude to researchers and historians who unearthed the extent of Clan Malcolm’s involvement in Jamaica, particularly at the Argyll estate. They also highlighted the 1824 Argyll Rebellion, where 12 men were executed for fighting for their freedom.

“We acknowledge the wealth created by our ancestors through chattel

enslavement and the injustice of financial compensation paid by the British government to the enslavers. The enduring and damaging legacy of this injustice continues to the present day,” they added.

The sisters pledged to advocate for the New Zealand government to recognize the region’s connection to Caribbean injustices and to support CARICOM’s 10-point plan for reparatory justice.

Additionally, Joseph Harker, Senior Editor of Diversity and Development at The Guardian, sent a video apology. He addressed the newspaper’s link to the transatlantic slave trade through its founder, John Edward Taylor, and backer Sir George Phillips, who co-owned a sugar plantation in

Hanover.

“The Guardian has looked back into its history and discovered that its founder, John Edward Taylor and his backers had links to transatlantic slavery. One of those backers, Sir George Phillips, co-owned a sugar plantation in the parish of Hanover,” Harker said.

He emphasized The Guardian’s commitment to raising awareness and implementing a 10-year program of restorative justice in consultation with affected communities.

The Emancipation Jubilee was organized by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT), an agency of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, under the theme ‘Feel di Spirit’.

Maduro says no negotiating with opposition over vote

President Nicolas Maduro on Friday ruled out negotiating with opposition leader Maria Corina Machado after he appeared before Venezuela's Supreme Court, asking the country's top judicial body to ratify his disputed reelection.

He was responding to Machado's offer of "guarantees and incentives" for a "negotiated transition" of power that would see him leave office, in an interview with AFP as she continues to challenge the July 28 vote.

The South American nation has been in political crisis since election authorities declared Maduro the winner of last month's poll, a decision questioned both at home and abroad.

The National Electoral Council (CNE) has yet to release detailed results from the vote, while the opposition has released copies of 84 percent of ballots cast, showing an easy win for their candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia. The government says those results are forged.

The Supreme Court — widely seen as aligned with Maduro — summoned all presidential candidates be-



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro

fore it, though Gonzalez Urrutia refused to attend.

Maduro did so on Friday, after which he directed a warning to Machado.

"The only person in this country

who needs to negotiate with Machado is the public prosecutor," Maduro said after his hearing.

"She should surrender to the courts and answer for the crimes she has committed" in contesting the elec-

tion result. She is currently in hiding amid fears for her safety.

The disputed election sparked protests that have left at least 24 people dead, according to rights groups, and more than 2,000 arrested.

10 new bids for TT refinery after Indian investor pulls out

The Trinidad and Tobago government said that at least 10 proposals have been submitted for the operation of the state-owned oil refinery in Point-a-Pierre. This disclosure followed the weekend announcement by Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley that Jindal Steel and Power Limited was no longer a contender for the takeover of the asset.

The request for proposals issued by Trinidad Petroleum Holdings Limited closed on July 31.

"Right now, the evaluation committee that is chaired by former permanent secretary, now High Commissioner from Trinidad and Tobago to UK, Vishnu Dhanpaul, they are busy working at it and looking at what has come forward," Energy and Energy Industries Minister, Stuart Young, told reporters during his attendance at a function.

"I look forward to getting the results from them and their recommendations in the next few weeks," Young said.

The minister declined to state the precise number of bids, saying the process of review was ongoing.

Rowley said at a constituency meeting that he had received a letter from the India-based company's chairman, Naveen Jindal, on July 26, indicating that Jindal Steel was no longer interested in investing in the Guaracara refinery that the government said it had been forced to close down due to huge losses over the years.

"When Mr Jindal came, he was the one who thought it was interesting and he had until July 31 to put in the pro-



T&T Prime Minister Keith Rowley

posal. He came, he visited, and he left. And the Opposition leader launched an attack on Naveen Jindal," the PM said.

"All that happened is that a number of Trinidad & Tobago politicians launched an attack on Naveen Jindal personally. This is a man who is chairing a conglomerate that produces 40 percent of India's steel and has investments around the world," Rowley remarked.

In response to the disclosure, the

main opposition party, United National Congress, said it welcomed the decision by the businessman.

In June, Opposition Leader Kamla Persad Bissessar had called for Prime Minister Rowley to address allegations of corruption involving Jindal, and questioned his reported connection to Venezuela. She described a potential partnership deal with the businessman as a scandal.

In relation to those allegations, Opposition legislator Wade Mark's response to Jindal's withdrawal of interest in the refinery was, "good riddance".

Prime Minister Rowley said he received the letter from Jindal "and this is after having come to Trinidad and Tobago, expressing an interest in our mothballed refinery".

"One of the reasons the refinery was a money loser was because it was obsolete, and to bring it back into operation, it means that you have to upgrade it significantly," the PM explained.

"One of the upgrades includes putting in modern technology, because some of those dials are 100 years old. You would have to spend some significant money on the physical management of the refinery, and this is from a company that has the ability to do it; not like some people who want the refinery and cannot pay their lawyer," he said of the critics.

"I am talking about a multibillion-dollar company, and the only thing that could happen from the other side of the Parliament was to launch an attack on the man," he said.

"This is an investor who was prepared to consider putting in a bid in the offer of approximately US\$700 million to bring that refinery into operation, and the only people in this country who don't want that to happen is a handful of politicians, who there talking stupidity about it" rather "than see it restarted and operated in a different way," the PM charged.

150 Jamaicans to be honored with National Awards this year

Veteran dancehall entertainers Moses 'Beenie Man' Davis and Rodney 'Bounty Killer' Price are among 150 Jamaicans being bestowed with national awards as Jamaica celebrates its 62nd anniversary of Independence.

Both Davis and Price, long-time rivals turned friends, are being hailed for their contribution to the development of Jamaican music and specifically dancehall and are to join the Order of Distinction in the Rank of Officer.

Olympic champion Hansle Parchment, who is currently at the Paris 2024 Olympics in France, is being honored with membership in the Order of Distinction in the Rank of Commander for his exceptional achievements in athletics at the World and Olympic levels.

Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security Dr. Horace Chang are among eight Jamaicans receiving membership in the Order of Jamaica, the nation's fourth highest national honor.

The two are being awarded for outstanding contribution to public service and politics, with Chang serving over 31 years in representational politics and 22 years as a government minister and Bartlett 38 years and 21 years, respectively.

The category also includes Ja-



Beenie Man

maica's Ambassador to the United States Audrey Marks, Professor Wendel Abel, philanthropist and businessman Gary 'Butch' Hendrickson, businessman William Shagoury, Lyttleton 'Tanny' Shirley and business executive Senator Don Wehby.

At the same time, 30 Jamaicans

have been honored with membership in the Order of Distinction in the Rank of Commander, including Supreme Court Justice David Batts for his contribution to the development of the judiciary and Police Commissioner Dr Kevin Blake for outstanding service to national security and public safety.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health & Wellness Dunstan Bryan; Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) President Professor Andrew Spencer; Commissioner of Customs Velma Ricketts Walker; and Reverend Gary Harriott are also among the awardees.

The late Daniel Dawes, former CEO of the Universal Service Fund, has been awarded posthumously with membership in the Order of Distinction in the Rank of Officer.

Dawes, Constituency Development Fund head Kedesha Campbell Rochester, Maximising Velocity & Power Track & Field Club veteran coach Paul Francis, and Dr Paul Wright are among 38 Jamaicans also awarded in that category.

Professor Randolph Henry and Jermaine Hurst are the only two Jamaicans awarded with the Badge of Honor for Gallantry this year.

On September 11, 2019, Henry,

while travelling along Red Hills Road in St Andrew, saved the life of a man who had been shot multiple times, by rendering assistance until the police and ambulance services arrived.

Hurst, meanwhile, is reported to have demonstrated exceptional courage and compassion in preventing a potential victim attempting suicide.

A Medal of Honor for Gallantry has been posthumously awarded to Constable Ricardo Fairclough who is reported to have, earlier this year, displayed great courage in the face of extreme danger.

Fairclough is said to have gone above and beyond the call of duty, to challenge an armed man who shot and injured a vendor in St Ann on April 15.

Fairclough was shot during an ensuing gun battle and later died in hospital.

The Badge of Honor for Meritorious Service has been awarded to 35 Jamaicans, including Senior Medical Officer at Bellevue Hospital Dr Myo Kyaw Oo.

Oo has given 33 years of service in the field of psychiatry at the hospital.

Thirty-six Jamaicans have been awarded the Badge of Honor for Long and Faithful Service. Among them is Ainsworth 'Big A' Higgins for 34 years of service to the broadcasting industry.

JA top cop welcomes wearing of body cams

Jamaica's Police Commissioner Dr Kevin Blake says he is in full support of members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) wearing of body cameras, and added that, contrary to belief, the members of the force welcome its use.

"My officers welcome it (wearing of body-worn cameras) with open arms because they understand it," said Blake. "We have smart officers; a number of our officers are people who are highly educated, well trained, highly skilled, and so, this argument about the accountability that persons may be shying away from, let me dispel that and assure the members of public that that is not the case."

According to him, the JCF has been quite busy over the last three years, working diligently to build out a technologically driven communication infrastructure to support new technology, such as the use of body-worn cameras.

"We have been building out that infrastructure, strengthening our infrastructure, our data center, ensuring that our network communications are adequate, so that we can properly manage the products from these body worn cameras," explained Blake.



Dr. Kevin Blake

"Now that we have completed that, the next part of the project is to actually procure body-worn cameras and pin them on to our members."

In noting that the body cameras would be useless without the infrastructure to support their use, the police commissioner said the public needs to understand that in getting

the program up and running in the proper way, the requisite infrastructure must be put in place.

Blake, who became police commissioner on March 19, is viewed as a part of the new face of the JCF, which is increasingly using technology as a crime-fighting tool. He has a first degree in computer science and

mathematics, a master's degree in computer-based management information system, and a PhD in sustainable development from The University of the West Indies.

Blake was appointed as the new Commissioner of Police, succeeding Major General Antony Anderson, who assumed the role in 2018, last March.

He joined the Jamaica Constabulary Force in 2002 and was appointed Deputy Commissioner in 2020, after serving as Assistant Commissioner of Police for seven years prior.

He was conferred with the Order of Distinction in the rank of Officer in 2021.

Blake holds a Ph.D. in Sustainable Development from the University of the West Indies.

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Holness: foreign criminals involved in mass shooting in Clarendon

Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness has confirmed that criminals overseas and other individuals currently incarcerated in Jamaica were behind the mass shooting that claimed the lives of eight people in Cherry Tree Lane, Clarendon, late Sunday.

The Jamaica Constabulary Force today revised the number of people who received injuries to 11. The total number of people shot was 19. So far, only one person has been treated and released from hospital.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday morning, Holness described the killings as an attack on every Jamaican and an act of terror. "We know that persons overseas are involved and connected in this act. We know that persons who are incarcerated presently have connections in this act. We know that multiple gangs are connected and involved in this act," said Holness.

Holness vowed to hold those responsible accountable, stating, "Every gang, every person who in any way facilitated, provided the arms, or were involved and pulled the trigger themselves, we will find you ... We will not treat this as another criminal act, we will treat this as an act of terror."

In response to the violence, Holness announced an all-out "assault" on the gangs involved, as well as any gang operating in Jamaica.

"There is no way that eight persons can be killed in one incident in Jamaica and the state stands as if nothing happened... This must never happen again in Jamaica," he declared.

Holness also revealed that the Jamaican government had supplied Wash-



Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness

ington with a list of 31 overseas-based criminals involved in local crimes, following his recent trips to the United States. He noted that cooperation with

the U.S. Department of Justice and other U.S. law enforcement agencies continues but did not provide further details on the matter.

In the wake of the tragedy, a 96-hour curfew has been imposed across Central and Southern Clarendon, as well as Southern and Northern St. Catherine, where gangs are known to collaborate.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security Dr. Horace Chang provided further insights during the press conference, highlighting the ongoing efforts of security forces in the area. "This incident comes at a time when the security forces have been doing extensive work in these areas. In fact, in all the three police divisions there have been significant reductions in homicides," Dr. Chang said.

He reported that Clarendon had seen a 39 percent reduction in homicides this year, attributing the improvement to the coordinated efforts of the security forces. Dr. Chang also acknowledged the trauma inflicted on the community, especially with the death of one child (seven years old) and the injury of another (one-year-old infant) in the attack.

"All elements of the security forces, the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF), the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), supported by MOCA (Major Organised Crime & Anti-Corruption Agency), will be mobilized, led by the police force in the areas identified. They will have the full support of the government," Dr. Chang assured the public.

"We will find, apprehend, disrupt, and degrade the criminal gangs. The social support services of government will also be brought to bear in the relevant community of Cherry Tree Lane and across areas where the gangs have taken action to disrupt the lives of our citizens," he added.

T&T ferry sinks days after sale to Spain

Herbert George, chairman of the National Infrastructure Development Co Ltd (Nidco), said TT had received its full payment for the TT Express before it was taken away to its new owner in Spain, so the sinking of the vessel does not affect its sale.

The vessel was sold to Servicios y Concesiones Maritimas Ibicenca, a bookings, transportation, and vehicle rentals maritime company in Spain owned by a company named Trasmapi, for US\$3 million.

In March Nidco announced the shipping company had already paid a 50 per cent deposit.

Contacted on Tuesday, George saidm "The downpayment at the time was made. Subsequently they paid in full and then they took delivery of the vessel, as is, where is, from Trinidad and Tobago. They were on their way to Spain, there was a mishap and the vessel sank."

The country said goodbye to the boat on April 11.

Days before it was expected to arrive at the port of Vigo, Spain, The TT Express sank 800 miles off the Azores



The T&T Express serviced the sea route between Trinidad and Tobago before it was sold

while being transported by a tugboat owned by a Portuguese company Rebonave.

From Vigo it was to have been delivered to its new owner by May 3.

It's reported that sometime on Saturday Rebonave informed Trasmapi of an issue, and in a second call it reported that the vessel had sunk.

Trasmapi told its local media that

the TT Express was bought to return to service and expand its capacity. The company is investigating the sinking, but it's believed that the strong winds, heavy rain, and high waves of Storm Lola over Spain, during the weekend, may have swallowed up the vessel.

George said he is still disappointed that the new owner wouldn't have the opportunity to enjoy the use of the ferry

as the people of TT did.

"I feel for that owner. He would have paid for it and made all his plans for it, and it has come to nothing. ..."

Minister of Works and Transport Rohan Sinanan also described the event as "very unfortunate."

He said the vessel will be remembered as one of the first catamaran ferries the country acquired.

JA dancehall star Bounty Killer calls for less crime in T&T

Jamaican dancehall superstar Rodney "Bounty Killer" Pryce delivered an anti-crime and violence sermon of sorts to the massive audience assembled at The Paddock, Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain, in the midst of his electrifying performance at the Magnum Xplosion SummerStageTT concert event on August 10.

Pryce called on communities, concerned citizens and the government of TT to work together to alleviate the scourge of crime and violence escalating in the country, and shared several poignant and powerful anti-crime messages during his hour-long headlining performance, which began just around 2 am.

Earlier that day, Pryce emerged smiling, excited and triumphant from the Piarco International Airport, after he was detained for nine hours by immigration authorities when his entry into TT was rejected on his arrival on August 9.

The "Poor People's Governor," as he is also known, thanked his "Trini friends and family," including cricketer and entertainer, Dwayne Bravo; soca stars Bunji Garlin and Fay Ann Lyons; celebrity bodyguard Kevin Da Costa (aka Johnny Bravo) and entrepreneur Kweisi Daniel for supporting him during his detention, and praised Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Transport Minister Daryl Vaz for their intervention in securing his waiver to enter TT.

Pryce said he was happy to be in Trinidad again, but saddened and concerned about the reports of escalating crime and violence in his "sister country."



Bounty Killer on stage in Port of Spain after his 9 hour detention at Piarco Airport

Speaking to the thousands assembled for the concert, Pryce called out familiar areas such as St Paul Street, Sea Lots, Belmont and Maraval and numbered gangs such as "6, 7 and 11" whilst advising those listening that "even the smartest criminals ended up in prison eventually" and adding that "most of them are actually dead," before leaving with the question: "So why

choose a path like that with no future?" Pryce also sang several uplifting songs, including a remake of the Billy Ocean classic Suddenly, where he questioned how "life could have no meaning" to some of those involved in criminal and violent activities in TT. The veteran entertainer made no apologies for his frequent interludes, declaring that he was hired "not just to come

and entertain the people, but to deliver these messages of peace and unity to TT at this time."

Magnum Tonic Wine's export brand manager from Jamaica Georgia Fearon, who attended the concert, also echoed and endorsed Pryce's concern and advice, describing his performance as "exemplary."

Mom claims daughter was threatened by cops before fatal shooting

THE mother of 21-year-old Jody Barath, killed by police early on the morning of August 11, claims her daughter was threatened by an officer 12 hours before her death.

On August 12, reporters visited Dookiesingh Street Extension and was greeted with flash flooding, which turned the community's road into muddy terrain.

The Barath family were much more welcoming, as they gathered outside talking.

Kamla Barath described her 21-year-old daughter and mother of one as "quiet and humble."

"I can't complain that she was bad and unruly or anything like that."

She said when her daughter was in her early teens, she dreamt she would die at the age of 20.

This dream was dismissed by her daughter on multiple occasions, as just that, a dream.

Kamla explained, "Last Saturday evening Jody came, as she asked her father to pick her up from her in-laws.

"She said she was spending the

night here.

"Her birthday was the week before and she didn't get to fully celebrate it so she said she was going out with friends."

Kamla said her daughter told her she was going to a club named D 59 Bar & Lounge and would be back home around 10 pm.

When Barath arrived at her mother's home around 3 pm on August 10, she told her mother she had "news for her."

Her mother frantically recalled her daughter's story.

"The police officer stop and tell me they going to kill me you know! They going to kill me! They say they going to shoot me," Barath had said.

Kamla said her daughter explained when the threats were issued, she began looking around, but the officer specified her daughter from her red hair.

She claimed Barath said the officer told her, "You red head, you red head, you have to dead! We will kill you!"



Jody Barath

Kamla told her daughter to report it to the police station as she considered it "a serious threat."

Her daughter declined, out of fear. "She said she would go report it tomorrow, but if she had gone that same time, they would've had it recorded at the police station that she was threatened."

Kamla said Barath and her friends then went out as planned later on Au-

gust 10.

She said around 10.15 pm, Barath called and said she was "coming home just now."

Barath said her daughter left money for her father to buy milk and pampers for her two-year-old daughter. She reminded him to do so during that same phone call.

Barath said that was the last time she spoke with her daughter.

"I get a message from her boyfriend around 4.30 am that police gunned down a car (sic) by the cremation site and they believed Jody was in the car."

Relatives: Police, witnesses tell different stories

A police report said around 4.40 am on August 11, four officers were on patrol on the road near the Caroni Cremation site when they got a tip of a white Nissan Almera transporting guns.

The officers said they tried to stop them when the Almera hit the police car, and two gunshots were seen from the driver's side of the Almera. Officers then returned fire, killing Barath.

Skipper Kraigg Brathwaite: Rain stopped West Indies victory vs SA

West Indies Test skipper Kraigg Brathwaite had faith his batsmen would have pulled off a win in the first Test against South Africa on August 11, had the rain not stalled their chase at the Queen's Park Oval in St Clair.

After two lengthy rain delays on the final day, the match ended in a draw, courtesy a brazen batting display from Dominican left-hander Alick Athanaze (92), who fell eight runs short of his maiden Test century.

This was after the Proteas declared on 173/3 in their second innings during the first session, and set West Indies a target of 298 for victory from the remaining three sessions.

However, rain interrupted play just before lunch, and the match resumed almost two hours later, stifling a potential maroon victory. Altogether, 142 overs were lost over the five days, since there were also rain delays on previous match days.

Athanaze put up the most resistance, batted smartly and was the centre of three crucial partnerships which kept the hosts ticking upward to their target.

Owing to the delays, time ran out with the Windies on 201/5, falling short by 97 runs.

When asked if he thought the rain had saved them from a loss, Brathwaite disagreed.

"I wouldn't say we would have escaped (losing): we had 100 runs to win and were fully confident we would have made it if the rain didn't fall, albeit the game would have been a little different. We were fully confident we could have gotten the runs and we showed it," he said.

On Athanaze's aggression with the bat, the captain was pleased the 25-year old stayed true to the team's plan.

"It was surely planned. It's quite easy to think (we would) come and defend and bat out the day. From me to the boys, was to trust the plan and fully back it, whatever it is. Alick showed it from his approach and tried to sweep the ball. He's a good sweeper and for him to go and do it, I thought that was good."

Brathwaite lauded Athanaze's innings and believes despite not being able to secure his maiden Test century, it's all



Kraigg Brathwaite

part of the process.

"The more cricket we play, the better. Playing a Test match, it is intense cricket and the more we do it and the more guys continue to see growth from

watching, if you can see that, that's what's important.

"If we continue to do that, that's what's important. Once we continue to do that as a group, improving, that's how we get better. "And the more cricket we play, against different opposition, that's how we will improve as a team and the batters as well."

Brathwaite, however, was not his usual self on the final day, as he was caught by Tristan Stubbs off Keshav Maharaj's spin after facing the third delivery of the second innings.

On his shot selection, he called it "poor execution."

Meanwhile, Athanaze was pleased to play an important role in helping his team snatch a well-deserved draw. While he was a bit disappointed to miss out on his first century, the Dominican was satisfied to play a solidifying role among the batters. "The result of the match is more important than getting the hundred. I would have loved to get the hundred and I am really hungry for it. It's unfortunate that I didn't get it. But at least I'm getting closer," Athanaze said.

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