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Guyana initiates MPox protocols as precaution

Story on Page 2



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RAPTOR MEETS PRESIDENT:
Guyana President Dr. Irfaan Ali met with Toronto Raptors President Masai Ujiri, at the OVO Athletic Centre to discuss the growth of basketball in Guyana.
Full story on Page 28

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PRESIDENT MEETS MINISTER: President Dr. Irfaan Ali on Saturday met with the Minister of International Development of Canada, Ahmed Hussen. Discussions focused on ongoing collaboration between Guyana and Canada, and explored new areas of cooperation

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Guyana Health Ministry initiates precautionary MPox protocols

THE Caribbean has yet to report any cases of the feared MPOX disease that has been moving through the continent of Africa and now some parts of Europe.

Guyana's Ministry of Health has issued a new summary of the National Guideline for the Prevention and Management of Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox), in an effort to educate the public and help answer a few frequently asked questions. What is smallpox? How does someone get it? How does someone know if they have contracted it? And what to do if you believe you have gotten MPOX?

Mpox is caused by the monkeypox virus, an orthopoxvirus closely related to the viruses responsible for smallpox and the smallpox vaccine. It leads to a rash similar to smallpox, but there are two strains of the virus, with the Clade I(b) strain being the most virulent and transmissible in the current outbreak.

Mpox can be transmitted through direct or indirect contact with an infected person, animal, or contaminated surfaces. Although it traditionally causes a systemic illness with symptoms like fever, chills, and muscle aches, during



Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony

the recent outbreaks, some cases presented with genital, anal, or oral lesions without systemic symptoms. The virus has been spreading beyond endemic regions in Africa, with new cases reported in Sweden, Pakistan, the Philippines, and

Argentina.

The infection typically manifests with a rash that progresses through several stages, from small macules to papules, vesicles, and then pseudo-pustules, before crusting over and falling

off. The rash can be painful initially and may become itchy as it heals. Systemic symptoms, if present, usually appear just before or shortly after the rash.

Mpox can be diagnosed in Guyana through RT-PCR analysis at the National Public Health Reference Laboratory in Georgetown. It's crucial that samples be sent within 24 hours of collection, or refrigerated within one hour for up to six days.

If Mpox is suspected, it's vital to seek medical advice immediately. Suspected and confirmed cases must be isolated to prevent further transmission. Isolation should continue until all lesions have scabbed over, typically lasting 2 to 4 weeks.

Treatment is mostly supportive, focusing on symptom relief. Pain management may be necessary, and secondary bacterial infections should be treated with appropriate antibiotics. Antiviral therapy is reserved for severe cases and requires specialist consultation.

As Mpox continues to spread globally, understanding the signs, transmission methods, and necessary precautions is key to controlling its impact.

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Persons living overseas can be sued for defamation: Guyana AG

Persons living overseas can be sued locally for defamatory social media posts, Guyana Attorney General Anil Nandlall has clarified.

Nandlall, Tuesday night, strongly rejected assertions that individuals who reside abroad and make defamatory social media posts and statements cannot be held liable in Guyana.

Speaking during his weekly 'Issues in the News' programme, the AG contended that any such assertion is "a misnomer and it is absolutely erroneous."

Why did the Attorney General address this matter?

According to him, there has been much abuse of people's freedom of expression and there are at least two high-profile defamation lawsuits.

"There has been an abuse taking place on social media platforms where persons believe that they have the license to say what they want, to libel persons, to publish incitements, (to foster the) excitements of racial hostilities, publish statements that are racist and inflammatory designed to cause

mayhem and riotous conduct in this country, and statements of that ilk.

"You do not have a freedom of expression to publish those types of statements," Nandlall said.

Recently, Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar, has filed a \$50 million defamation lawsuit in the High Court against social media activist Melissa Ann Atwell, known as 'Melly Mel', and Opposition Parliamentarian Sherod

Duncan. Indar alleges that they defamed him during a Facebook Live session. Atwell who was also sued by a local health institution for statements she made on Facebook also faces the threat of being sued by a Guyanese businessman.

Then overseas-based Guyanese political activist Rickford Burke was also wanted in relation to a case of extortion in which two reporters have already been charged. The Police say they want Burke for "conspiracy to commit a felony to wit publication of defamatory libel in order to extort money."

And earlier this year, popular Guyanese businessman and entertainer, Marlon 'Freedom Boss' Jacobs also filed a \$5 million defamation lawsuit

against social media personality Allison Hunt, known as 'Aunty Allo'.

There are also local examples including the suit filed against Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton by Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha. Norton was sued for comments he made on social media.

Nandlall explained that the freedom of expression is guided by certain limitations including a responsibility to protect people's reputations and characters from any damages.

Beyond that, however, he explained that persons who engage in such libelous acts are not above the law- no matter where they reside.

The Attorney General, who is also Guyana's Minister of Legal Affairs, said the breach of the law unfolds



Guyana Attorney General Anil Nandlall

wherever there is injury to an individual's reputation. And he explained that defamatory statements are made via a Facebook broadcast in a foreign country, for example, can be tried in local courts if the broadcast is viewed or heard here.

"Whether are you in the United Kingdom, Canada or Timbuktu, if you publish something defamatory about me and it is read or seen in 10 hundred other countries, you are liable because the wrong takes place, or the law is breached, wherever my reputation is injured," he said.

Later in his programme, he added, "if you use Facebook, you are liable wherever that post is published and you are liable because everyone reads

that post is a different post, each incarnation can amount to a different publication... so many times you are liable."

The Attorney General also noted that legal proceedings can be served on a person wherever they reside and that the wanted individual can either return to Guyana to attend a trial or allow a judgement to be obtained in absentia.

Because some worrisome statements have been made about State actors, Nandlall also disclosed that the government is working alongside foreign partners including United States law enforcement bodies and law firms in the US to remedy the situation.

And he emphasised that wrongdoers will be dealt with "condignly."

"Whether are you in the United Kingdom, Canada or Timbuktu, if you publish something defamatory about me and it is read or seen in 10 hundred other countries, you are liable..."

AG Anil Nandlall



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Robust Capital Market

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, August 28 2024

AS Guyana stands on the brink of an unprecedented economic transformation, the focus on developing a robust capital market is not just a strategic necessity—it's imperative for sustainable growth and regional integration.

The upcoming regional conference on investment and capital markets, scheduled for October 8-9, 2024, at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre in Georgetown, represents a crucial juncture in this journey. The conference, aptly themed "Financing for Success: Where Passion, Prosperity, and People Align," will be a pivotal moment for Guyana and the broader Caribbean Region.

Dr. Marlene Street-Forrest, Managing Director of the Jamaica Stock Exchange, underscores the essential role that financing plays in the development of a capital market. She emphasises that successful economic growth relies on creating a capital market infrastructure that supports both individual and business needs. The conference aims to address these needs by fostering discussions on a wide array of topics that are critical to the growth of Guyana's capital markets and regional economic

integration.

One of the standout sessions will feature Guyana's Finance and Public Service Minister, Dr. Ashni Singh, who will discuss "Budgeting: The Pillar for Success, People, and Culture."

This session will be integral in aligning budgeting practices with the broader economic aspirations of the country, ensuring that both individuals and businesses benefit from the nation's economic boom. Dr. Singh's insights are expected to shed light on how strategic budgeting and financial planning can drive prosperity and ensure that economic growth translates into tangible benefits for the populace.

The conference will also tackle the pressing issue of capital access for businesses. In many regions, capital markets are underdeveloped, limiting businesses to primarily loan-based financing. This creates an imbalanced economic landscape.

The conference aims to address this gap by exploring diverse financing options, including equity capital, mezzanine financing, and other innovative financial instruments. This comprehensive approach is crucial for enabling businesses to scale and contribute to a more dynamic and inclusive economic environment.

Moreover, the conference will move beyond the oil sector, which has dominated recent discussions about Guyana's economic future. By broadening the focus to include other sectors, the event seeks to democratise access to the country's wealth, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are more widely distributed. This inclusive approach is essential for building a balanced and sustainable economic framework that can support diverse industries and communities.

The gathering will also feature contributions from notable speakers, including Kester Hutson, President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Gregory Fisher, Managing Director and Head of EM Fixed Income Wealth Management at Jefferies; and Eva Mitchell, CEO of Trinidad and Tobago Stock Exchange Limited. Their participation will provide valuable perspectives and best practices that can be adapted to enhance investment opportunities and sector development across the Caribbean.

A significant outcome expected from the conference is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Jamaica Stock Exchange and the Guyana Association of Securities Companies and Intermediaries Inc.

This agreement will mark a milestone in regional integration, facilitating greater connectivity between Caribbean stock markets and potentially attracting more global investors to the region.

Guyana's rapid economic ascent, fueled by its rich natural resources and recent oil discoveries, makes it an ideal host for this conference.

As Dr. Street-Forrest aptly puts it, Guyana is a country of extraordinary potential, with its rich democracy and unique topography providing a solid foundation for economic growth. The conference represents not just a moment of reflection but a proactive step towards shaping a more inclusive and prosperous future for Guyana and the Caribbean.

The upcoming conference on investment and capital markets is more than a significant event—it's a critical catalyst for transforming Guyana's economic landscape.

By focusing on the development of a robust capital market, fostering regional integration, and exploring diverse financing options, the conference aims to build a more resilient and inclusive economic framework. This is a golden opportunity for Guyana to leverage its growth, align passion with prosperity, and ensure that its economic success benefits all its people.

Fulfilling our civic duty

Dear Editor,

COMMUNITIES are contaminated with crime, corruption, cultural conflicts, communal constriction, and communication collapse.

These negative elements corroborate the convincing conclusion that society needs immediate attention to address social ills in every nook and cranny.

As such, as its mandatory civic duty, the Leonora Police Station Management Committee has commenced a

meet the people programme in collaboration and consultation with the officers of the Leonora Police Station.

This effort will create the ideal opportunity for the members of the LPSMC and the Guyana Police Force to better familiarise themselves with the surroundings, understand the people and analyse the social problems facing Region Three, in particular villages in close proximity.

The LPSMC also intends to work along with sister Police Station Man-

agement Committees and Community Policing Groups (CPG) in order to bridge gaps, forge friendships and attempt to prevent the spread of problems by identifying them in their early stages and reporting them to the relevant authorities.

The Leonora Police Station Management Committee in association again with the police from the Leonora Police Station, has started a food hamper distribution project in order to enhance its social service commitments

towards the less fortunate.

This is an ideal opportunity to easily liaise with members of the community and to provide service to humanity.

The LPSMC along with the police from Leonora, will donate 30 hampers per month (a one a day project). The event started last Sunday to dozens residing in Leonora, Anna Catherina, Zeeburg and Zeelugt.

Yours respectfully,
Jai Lall

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Ben Johnson still believes he has a place among the greats

From the CBC:

Thirty-six years after he was stripped of an Olympic gold medal, former Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson still believes he has a place among the greats.

"In my mind and many [people's minds] who supported Ben Johnson over the years ... I'm the best 100-metre sprinter, and so be it," he told *The Current's* Matt Galloway.

Johnson should have been on top of the world when he won gold in the 100-metre sprint at the 1988 Summer Olympics, setting a record time of 9.79 seconds.

But just three days after the race, Park Jong-sei of the Olympic Doping Control Center found that Johnson's urine sample contained the anabolic steroid stanozolol. It's a drug that gives users increased strength and allows them to recover faster from exercise.

Johnson was disqualified, had his gold medal stripped away and his record time erased from history.

"My mom's always said to me over the years that the only way they can beat you is in a lab," he said.

Johnson has admitted to using anabolic steroids, though not stanozolol. His steroid scandal is being revisited in a new book, *World's Fastest Man*: The Incredible Life of Ben Johnson*, by Canadian sports journalist Mary Ormsby.

Ormsby, who covered the 100m race on Sept. 24, 1988, in Seoul, South Korea, for the *Toronto Star*, said she was shocked when her editor informed her of a wire story a few days later about Johnson testing positive.

"Until that point, for several years, there weren't a lot of people being caught [for doping] on the world stage," she told Galloway. "Certainly not at a high level, not famous athletes like Ben Johnson."

Johnson was a national hero after he crossed the finish line in the 100m race. Brian Mulroney, Canada's prime minister at the time, congratulated Johnson over the phone after the victory, and publicly referred to Johnson's gold medal win as "a marvellous evening for

Canada."

But just days later, the nation's tone had changed, Ormsby said. In the face of the doping allegations, Johnson faced a "very racist backlash" that painted him as an ungrateful immigrant from Jamaica who should return to his birth country.

"This really exposed a very ugly underbelly of Canadian sentiment," she said.

In a cartoon at the time that Ormsby says was published in the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, Johnson was identified as Canadian, then Jamaican-Canadian, then Jamaican over three identical images of him.

"There was a lot of references to Jamaica, which is a dogwhistle for 'This Black guy let us down. Can you believe it?'" Ormsby said.

The fallout was difficult for Johnson and his family. He said his nieces and nephews had to deal with snide remarks at school, and his dad felt the Canadian government should have protected his son.

"That never happened," Johnson said. "That really hurt, and it also hurt me because I love this country. I came here to [do] the best I can — not only for my mother, but for the country that I love and I run for, even though I'm Jamaican."

The scandal was particularly trying for his mother, Johnson said. He had a close relationship with her, and she was with him when officials came to take away his gold medal.

"It was kind of a sad moment," he said. "But I know my mom looked in my eyes, and she told me that, you know, 'Go with God, and things are going to be OK, son.'"

It was Johnson's coach, Charlie Francis, who raised the idea of taking steroids. Johnson says he agreed to do so because "I was told that everybody in track and field on that level was using performance-enhancing drugs."

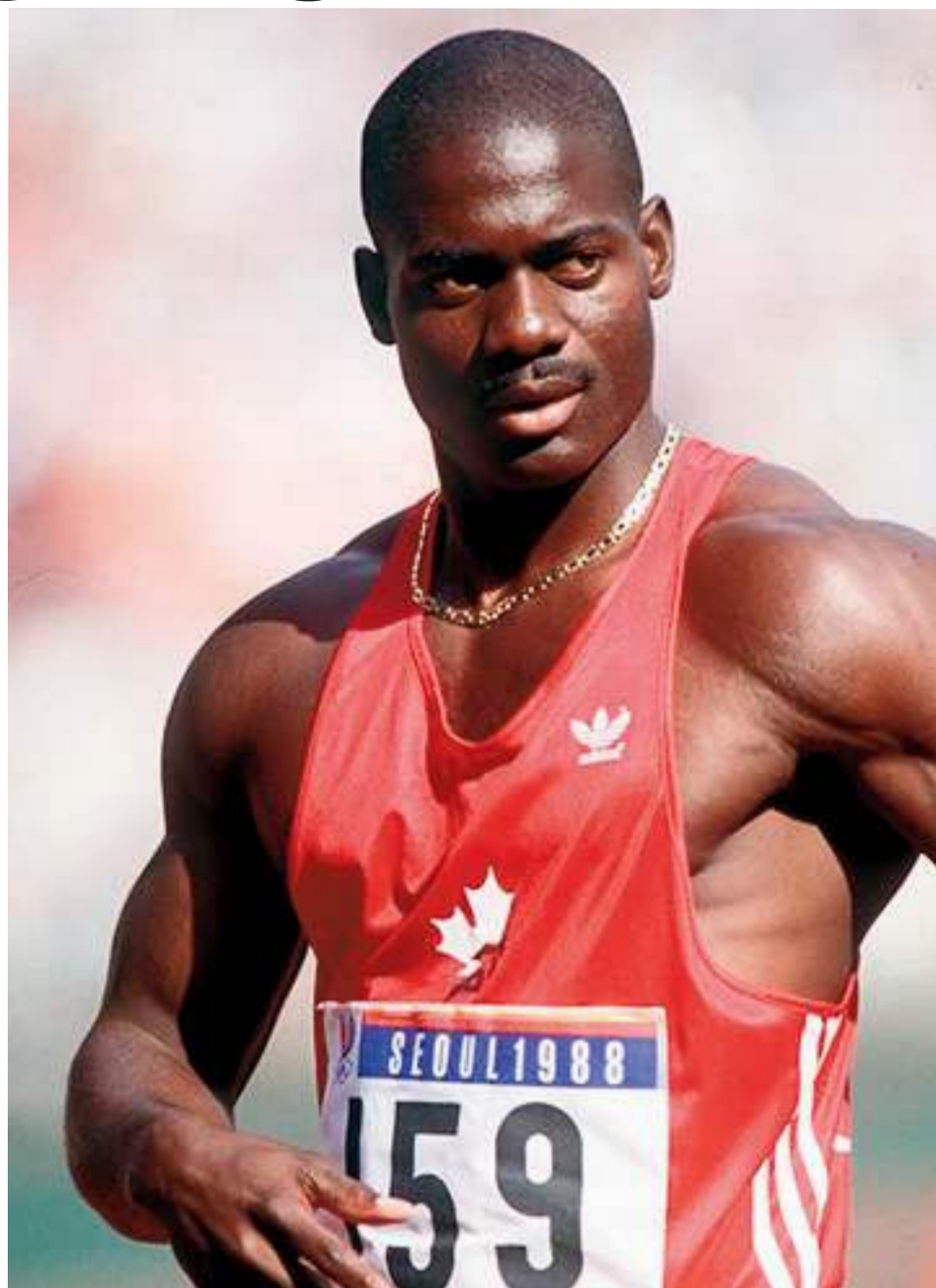
Johnson said the drugs don't make sprinters run quicker, but rather help you "to train harder so you can recover fast."

According to Dick Pound, a Canadian Olympic Committee executive member since 1968, that was a selling point for most runners.

"If you're using steroids, not only were you getting the physical body changes, you were also acquiring the ability to do more workouts," he told *The Current*.

"If you're bigger and stronger as well, the thrust you can generate when you're running ... also adds to the performance."

Pound was the vice-president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) when Johnson tested positive. As a



Ben Johnson pictured at the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988

lawyer, he tried to defend Johnson during the athlete's hearing before the IOC's medical commission members in 1988. Ormsby doesn't think Johnson got due process in that hearing.

Pound says steroid use was pretty well-known in sports before Johnson came onto the scene, and calls attempts to use its prevalence as an excuse a "convenient generalization."

He said steroids have serious health risks, including liver and blood pressure damage, and it's best to discourage their use before the risks become too real.

"Competitive sport being what it is, if I understand that you're taking five milligrams of whatever the prohibited substance is ... I don't take five mil-

ligrams so that I level the playing field. I take 10, [because] I want to beat you," Pound said. "And you find if I'm taking 10, you increase your dose to 15."

"It's not long before ... you're getting up to levels that are toxic."

Although Pound believes Johnson was "misguided" in taking steroids, he says he was a "very, very talented runner" and the successor to 1964 bronze medallist Harry Jerome.

Johnson is adamant his talents come from the work he put in, not the steroids he took.

"I just trained hard and dedicated my life to track and field. And I spent my whole life running, so I have to see some results in the end," he said.

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The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight



Joel Bhagwandin

AFC's Position on GTU and MOE Agreement

Reference is made to the Alliance for Change's (AFC) finance spokesperson's contention that "teachers' 10% salary increase can't keep up with rising food inflation". Unfortunately, the AFC's finance spokesperson did not consider the fullness of the Agreement between the Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU) and the Ministry of Education (MoE). In so doing, a few key points escaped the AFC's contention as adumbrated hereunder.

First and foremost, the Agreement inked between the GTU and the MoE provides for (i) the revision of salary scales for specific positions; (ii) salary upgrades for non-graduate teachers, who will receive a salary upgrade to the midpoint of their salary scale after three years of continuous service, and (iii) a new revolving fund to be established to assist eligible teachers with pensionable status, with details to be finalized in collaboration with the Central Housing and Planning Authority. These are all financial benefits in addition to the across-the-board increases.

In particular, the revision in the salary scale often gets overlooked,

but it is materially impactful. Case in point, it was overlooked when the government, during the 2021-2022 period effected upward adjustments to salary scales to correct anomalies in the system. These adjustments translated to, on average, a 46% increase (as high as 60% - 90% in some categories).

Secondly, in order to validate the argument that the AFC's finance spokesperson was trying to establish, which is that inflation would erode the increases in salaries, one would have to demonstrate that real wages have been falling on account of rising inflation. This is a theoretical argument that the Opposition Leader often put forward, but he has never tested. In this regard, his economic advisor (s) have never done the analysis to determine whether that theory holds any merit.

Although this was essentially an opposition argument, whereby they should have been performing the analysis to test their theories, I have recently done this sort of analysis.

In this respect, I did an analysis of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and I've looked at real wages, using the inflation rate as the deflator, to

determine whether real wages have been falling or not.

In the ensuing section, the result of the aforesaid analysis is re-presented for ease of reference.

The base year for the CPI is 2009 (where December 2009=100) according to the CPI data reported in the Bank of Guyana Annual Report, 2023. Thus, after accounting for the estimated inflation rate for the year 2024, the CPI will close the year with an index of 143. This means that since 2009, consumer prices have increased by 43%. Conversely, it would be interesting to note that real wages for that period, have increased by 6.5 times or 539% (2009-2024).

In absolute terms, in 2009, real wages based on income tax data, amounted to about \$40 billion, which rose to \$237.4 billion at the end of 2023, and is projected to reach \$265 billion by the end of 2024. Further, real wages as a share of GDP averaged nearly 7% annually during the period 2009-2023/24.

Food prices have increased, on average, by 7.3% annually over the last 14 years. This outturn was largely attributed to the direct intervention by the government, inter alia, policies

aimed at containing inflationary pressures.

It is crucial to note that had there been zero intervention by the government since 2020, consumer prices would have risen by at least 3-4 times higher than current levels. In other words, it would have cost the average consumer 3-4 times more for the same basket of goods in the supermarket or traditional market place.

Altogether, the estimated cost of government's intervention to contain inflationary pressures amounts to an estimated \$322 billion annually (8.5% of GDP) in direct and indirect subsidized costs for household/consumption expenditure. Of note, this estimated value is exclusive of two key policies designed to minimize the impact of rising costs, while increasing disposable income. These are: (i) the subsidy provided to first time low-income home owners (assistance with free building materials) and (ii) the Mortgage Interest Relief policy. It can be concluded, therefore, that at the aggregate level, real wages have increased at a rate that has far outstripped rising consumer prices over the last fifteen (15) years.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The great Dave Martins

Dear Editor,

I AM so sad to hear of the passing of Dave Martins, as is all of Guyana.

I have known Dave for many decades and admired him for the enormous body of work he has produced as a song writer and singer, but much more importantly, as a Guyanese who was never far from his roots in his mind though, in fact, he earned his international reputation mainly as the leader of the Tradewinds performing in Toronto, Canada.

President Ali, in paying tribute to Dave, underlined the fact that "his music not only invited us to laugh at ourselves but also encouraged us to

stand tall and be proud of our Guyanese and Caribbean heritage."

Dave was indeed the quintessential Caribbean man and Guyanese patriot in the true meaning of the term.

Of course, he will never be forgotten for "not a blade of grass", written and sang by Dave in defence of our territorial integrity and, in particular, the Essequibo region where Dave was born and grew up as a young man.

In my view he was much, much more than a calypsonian. His songs, which as he had said reflect and portray his everyday conversation with the people he has met across the Caribbean, reflect the folklore of our

people. I will always remember that, when I was President of the Guyana Rugby Football Union, and in that capacity led Guyana's rugby team to participate in an international tournament in the Cayman Islands where Dave was living at the time, Dave coming to the airport to meet us and Dave invited me to stay at his home and then hosting the entire rugby team of almost 30 persons to dinner at his home. Dave then did so again, a second time, a number of years later when we played rugby in the Cayman Islands.

When serving as President of the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana, I had invited Dave to de-

liver the feature address at one of our dinners. We had invited Annette Arjoon to display an exhibition of her photographs depicting the indigenous aspect of our tourist attractions.

Dave saw and admired the photographs and asked my wife, Gem, about the photographer, which ultimately led to Dave meeting and marrying her.

The nation will mourn the passing of a great and distinguished Guyanese songwriter, singer and storyteller, who has left behind a song forever to be played over and over again as our second national anthem.

Yours respectfully,
Kit Nascimento



Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO



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An artist's impression of the Berbice Stadium

Major investments in sports facilities to unlock new opportunities

IN 2023, the Government of Guyana made investments to the tune of some \$4.3 billion to the nation's sport sector. This trend has continued well into 2024, with some major projects being slated for the sector while others can already be seen around the capital city, as well as in the hinterland.

Vice President of Guyana, Dr Bharat Jagdeo outlined just a few of the impactful ventures at a press conference last week. He explained that although not frequently highlighted, the government continues to invest in projects aimed at boosting the sport sector throughout the country.

"In sports, we have upgraded 65 grounds in Berbice of the 125. We spent 400 odd million dollars, and this year another \$400 million has been awarded to expand."

He further added that, "If you go to New Amsterdam, you will see a major track being built there for track and field. In Linden, we just put down the track and lights with FIFA lights."

These initiatives are critically and thoroughly thought out, with investments across the region, aiming to have all of the country's youth and athletes exposed to state-of-the-art sporting facilities. Further emphasising the importance of access to the facilities, Jagdeo stated that, "We also put ICC Cricket lights but two major developments, massive developments, on both sides of the river. We are building a new stadium in Berbice that has already started. I can go on. In Anna Regina, a massive new stadium

and ground is [sic] being built. I can list in Georgetown there [are] 34 grounds from Agricola to Cummings Lodge, and all of them are being upgraded now."

As the National Toshao's Conference comes to a close, the Vice President was sure to note that major investments in sport facilities are being made in the hinterland as well. As he explained, indigenous communities are issued funds specifically for the development of sport in their community. He stated, "Toshaos are leaving Georgetown with \$5 billion, \$4.8 billion with LCDS funds, and over 200 million just on the sports facility development. That's two initiatives alone."

He further added, "I'm not even speaking on the presidential grant. I'm not talking about the 10 billion that we are spending on hinterland roads, or over 10 billion on schools in the hinterland. I'm not talking about the 20-odd billion that we're spending on four major hospitals in these regions now."

Sport in Guyana is a major area of interest and investment for the government. For its 2024 budget, Guyana has allocated \$4.6 billion towards sports development to elevate athletes' performance and enhance sports infrastructure countrywide. The government's investment in the very important sector goes beyond investments in facilities, but also extends to sports education, training and the introduction of more skilled sport personnel and professionals; all done in an effort to develop the untapped potential of Guyana's youth and athletes.



The Anna Regina Stadium



The Providence Cricket Stadium

Guyanese student secures 24 passes at CSEC examinations

RUDRANAUTH Sankar, of Airy Hall, in Region Two, made the entire region proud when it was announced that he had secured 23 Grade Ones and 1 Grade Two at this year's Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC).

The Anna Regina Secondary School student is the son of two remarkable entrepreneurs, and was born into a family that knows the value of hard work and perseverance.

He is the youngest child of Anand and Vanie Sankar, both of whom have contributed to the building of a successful business through sheer determination.

Yet, as Rudranauth grew older, he realised that his dreams were bigger than the circumstances he was born into.

Rudranauth's elder sister, Kelly, had already embarked on her academic journey at Texila American University, with their parents pouring every resource they had into her education.

Knowing that their financial support was already stretched thin, Rudranauth said that he understood that his path to higher education would have to be paved with his own efforts. He knew there was only one way forward, to earn a government scholarship, and to do that, he set his sights on achieving the unthinkable—undertaking 24 subjects at the 2024 CSEC examinations.

The journey he embarked on was not for the faint of heart. The workload was overwhelming, and the pressure at times seemed unbearable.

There were moments when the young student found himself on the

brink of despair, his dreams teetering under the weight of countless school-based assessments, tight deadlines, and the heavy enormous amount of material he needed to read and remember.

Tears were shed in private moments of doubt, but Rudranauth's resolve never wavered. In Fourth Form, Rudranauth made the bold decision to take on subjects beyond the standard curriculum. He enrolled in lessons with his school's teachers, and even sought out additional guidance from instructors at neighbouring schools.

Among his chosen subjects that were challenging were Technical Vocational courses such as Mechanical Engineering Technology, Building and Furniture Technology, and Technical Drawing, subjects he began studying only late in the process. With limited time to cover the extensive syllabus, Rudranauth had to make sacrifices that most would consider unthinkable. Yet, he pressed on, driven by a vision of a brighter future.

Throughout this arduous journey, Rudranauth found strength in the support of those around him; individuals who saw his potential and treated him as one of their own. Among them was Sir Afmat Ali Nasir, a retired business teacher whose wisdom and encouragement has left a lasting impression on the young scholar.

"It is not the one who runs the fastest in the race, but the one who maintains the pace. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," became a mantra that Rudranauth clung to during the toughest moments.

Then there was Sir Parmanand



Rudranauth Sankar

Singh, known as the finest CSEC Spanish teacher on the Essequibo Coast, who saw the potential in Rudranauth to achieve greatness.

"Rudra," he would say, "I know you have the ability to excel in the Caribbean, just like Uotam Heerlall." Those words were more than just encouragement; they were a prophecy that Rudranauth would make come true.

Another guiding light was Ms. Kumarie Seurattan, who not only offered academic guidance, but also shared stories of her own daughter's success, inspiring Rudranauth to believe that he, too, could reach the pinnacle of academic achievement. The journey was far from easy.

Rudranauth's days were a blur of lessons, school, and late-night study sessions that often stretched into the early hours of the morning. Sleep became a luxury, and his health suffered as a result. There were days when exhaustion would take its toll, leaving him to collapse on his textbooks. Yet, even in the face of these challenges, Rudranauth refused to give up. He knew that every missed class, every skipped study session, was a step further from his goal, and he was not willing to let that happen. And then, the results came in.

Rudranauth stood among Guyana's top students, having achieved the highest number of Grade Ones. The joy and pride that filled his heart were indescribable. This success, he knew, was not his alone; it was the culmination of the unwavering support of his parents, who had sacrificed so much for him.

His mother, who had spent countless hours helping him complete his SBAs, and his father, who had faced near bankruptcy to ensure that Rudranauth could pursue his dream of taking on all 24 subjects. But Rudranauth's story does not end here.

With a deep sense of gratitude, and a vision for the future, he has now sets his sights on a career in medicine.

...while 16 year-old passes 29 subjects

VENISHA Devi Lall continues to make Region Two proud with her excellent academic performances.

At just 16 years old, the Anna Regina Secondary School student has already accomplished something remarkable.

Lall wrote 29 subjects at the 2024 Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and managed to secure 18 Grade Ones, eight Grade Twos and three Grade Threes.

In 2019, a then pupil of the CV Nunes Primary, she was the country's top National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA) performer. Although awarded a place at Queen's College, her parents opted to have her remain in Region Two.

Lall, an ardent debater, was able to maintain 97-99 per cent throughout her secondary school years.

She is the only child of Radika Lall, an accountant currently acting as Town Clerk, and Muneshwar Lall, a contractor.

Despite her youth, Venisha's dedication and hard work have set her on a

path to a bright future, one that she has already begun to shape with a deep passion for economics.

Venisha's ambition is to become an economist, a goal that drives her every decision. Her interest in the subject isn't just academic; she envisions a future where she plays a pivotal role in crafting economic policies that address global challenges.

To achieve this, Venisha plans to pursue an advanced degree, such as a Master's or even a Ph.D., focusing on economic theories and quantitative methods.

She dreams of working with international organisations or government agencies, applying her knowledge to real-world issues, and possibly venturing into the private sector to help businesses navigate the complexities of the global economy.

Her journey so far has been anything but easy. Venisha took on the challenge of writing 29 subjects, a feat that required not only intellect, but also immense discipline and perseverance.



Venisha Devi Lall

She recalls the long hours of study, the struggle to manage her time effectively, and the pressure to excel in every subject. There were moments of doubt, anxiety, and exhaustion, but these challenges only strengthened her resolve.

One of Venisha's greatest motivators was the doubt of others—those who told her she couldn't achieve what she had set out to do.

Instead of letting their words discourage her, she used them as fuel to push herself harder.

Her accomplishments in the CSEC examinations are a testament to her determination.

Reflecting on her success, Venisha said she felt a deep sense of pride. The journey was tough, but the results have validated her efforts and boosted her confidence as she looks toward the future.

She is grateful for the support she received along the way—from her family and her private teachers.

As Venisha stands on the cusp of adulthood, she is motivated and prepared to continue her pursuit of excellence.

Her story is not just one of academic success, but also one of resilience, determination, and a clear vision of the future she wants to achieve.

UG to welcome over 11,000 students for new academic year

THE University of Guyana (UG) is set to begin the new academic year for 2024/2025 with a week-long series of orientation sessions culminating with a high-energy, formal opening on August 30.

According to a press release, this year's activities will bring new dynamism and innovation to the formal opening. The new high-energy format will welcome new and continuing students, even as orientation sessions for faculties and units begin on August 26.

The central hub for the formal opening and faculties meet-and-greet will be the new Multipurpose Auditorium at the Turkeyen Campus, gifted to the University of Guyana, from 14:00hrs to 18:00hrs.

“The formal Friday commencement activities will begin at noon with an open campus event, providing students with the opportunity to meet faculty, staff, and peers, explore the campus, student clubs and societies, and participate in other special activities in a festive atmosphere,” the release said, adding that the ceremonial opening will take place at 14:00hrs at the new Multipurpose Auditorium, Turkeyen Campus, and will feature presentations from senior officers of the university, including Registrar Dr Nigel Gravesande, Deputy Registrar (ag) Dr Daniella King, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Engagement Prof. Emanuel Cummings and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Paloma Mohamed-Martin.

The commencement ceremony will also feature cultural performances by the university's talent ambassadors and other



The University of Guyana — planning for a large influx of students

top performers. This event is open to all faculty members, students, and their families.

Meanwhile, virtual and face-to-face orientation sessions will take place from August 26 – 30 for new students at all campuses (Turkeyen, Berbice and IDCE Regional Campuses) and from September 12 to 13 for continuing students also on all campuses.

This year, the university is expected to welcome over 3,500 freshmen (new students), who will join over 8000 continuing students pursuing studies in various academic disciplines. Orientation

sessions will begin daily from 09:00hrs.

These morning sessions will then be followed by in-person or online faculty-specific sessions hosted by the various academic divisions in the afternoons.

Students will receive an email with login information for registering for orientation sessions, the release added.

“The University of Guyana’s orientation sessions are aimed at providing a step-by-step introduction to the university’s systems, policies, and resources that students need to settle in well during their academic journey.

“The most significant aspect of the

activity is an introduction to all key administrative and academic personnel who provide guidance and services.

This activity, which is a highpoint of the university’s academic calendar, is particularly important for students to start their classes seamlessly.

Students will also be introduced to the physical campuses, labs, faculties and classrooms as relevant.

They will also be provided insight on the conduct of online classes if they are taking online or blended options,” it said.

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
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2N 5P6



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:

Email: mail@wgc-org.com
Telephone: [1-800-317-0804](tel:1-800-317-0804)



Guyana is now the UK's largest trading partner in Caribbean region

TIES between Guyana and the United Kingdom have grown significantly over the past few years with significant achievements being made. As such, Guyana has been highlighted as the UK's largest trading partner in this region.

This was emphasised by officials from the United Kingdom during a reception held in honour of the visit of His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Latin America and the Caribbean, Jonathan Knott to Guyana.

Knott, during brief remarks, stated that he visited Guyana at the end of 2022 when an agreement was signed to pave way for the creation of a supportive environment for businesses to work with each other.

He said: "18 months later, and already I am seeing and experiencing a qualitative change in the relationship with the frequency of how we are talking to each other," he said.

Adding to this, he indicated that a great shift has also been seen in the conversations being had between partners during his visit this time around.

Against this backdrop, Knott indicated that several meetings have been held also with business associations in Guyana, which he said have given him enormous optimism.

Meanwhile, Caribbean Regional Director for Trade, D'Jamila Ward added that the UK and Guyana have had a long-standing and enduring relationship not only underpinned by political and diplomatic ties, but by trade and investment also.

She went on to add that trade between the two countries stood at £1.9 billion at the end of the first quarter.

"This represents an increase of 17.7 per cent or £282 million... This also makes Guyana the UK's largest trading partner in the Caribbean, or all CARIFORUM member states, accounting for



Left, UK Trade Commissioner for Latin America and the Caribbean Jonathan Knott, and Caribbean Regional Director for Trade D'Jamila Ward

34.3 per cent of all our trade," she said.

Ward added that while this is an impressive figure, it offers an excellent opportunity for Guyana and the UK to forge even stronger and greater partnerships, and deepen and increase the trading relationship.

She expressed that as Guyana is building its resilient economy, the country should consider the UK a great partner whether for financing through the UK Export Finance among other things.

"There's much that we have already achieved but there's much to do. I want to reiterate that this is a great time to do business in Guyana," Ward said.

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Amerindian villages now legally own 16.48 per cent of Guyana's landmass

THE government has made significant strides in empowering the land rights of its indigenous people, with Amerindians now holding legal tenure for 16.48 per cent of Guyana's landmass.

This achievement reflects the government's unwavering commitment to recognising and protecting the rights of Amerindians, who make up roughly around 10 per cent of the population.

Driving this progress is the Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) project, initiated under the People's Progressive Party/Civic Administration. The ALT programme aims to expedite the legal demarcation and titling of Amerindian lands, ensuring clear ownership and fostering economic development within these communities.

With funding from the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), the government has successfully increased the legal percentage of indigenous-owned lands from 6 per cent in 1991 to 16.48 per cent in 2024.

Project Coordinator for the ALT programme, Monica Sharma, provided an update on the project's achievements at the National Toshias Council Conference (NTCC) on Friday, where around 254 leaders converged.

She highlighted that the ALT Project, with a budget of US\$13.2 million, is on track to issue 45 absolute grants and complete 68 demarcations, as the government is actively seeking an extension of the project to guarantee the successful fulfilment of these objectives, before the end of the year.

"While the project is technically set to end in 2024, the government remains steadfast in its commitment to completing this vital work and ensuring land ownership for Amerindian peoples," Sharma affirmed.

Since 2020, the ALT project has issued 21 absolute grants to villages and completed 13 demarcations. In 2023 alone, 20 investigations led to six villages receiving approval for absolute grants.

Significantly, over 25,000 indigenous individuals have secured land ownership through the ALT Project since its inception.

"This is a remarkable accomplishment that has not only led to increased revenue for some villages but has also fostered greater confidence within communities as they engage with miners and foresters on clearly marked and recognised lands," Sharma emphasised.

The ALT project is a transformative initiative that empowers Amerindian communities to secure official recognition and legal ownership of their traditional lands and natural resources.

By strengthening land tenure rights through titling and demarcation, the project aims to enhance the social and economic development prospects of Amerindian communities.



A typical Toshias village in Guyana's interior

This process will bolster land tenure security and expand the asset base of Amerindians, enabling more effective long-term planning for their sustainable development and well-being.

With a clear understanding of their available resources, villagers are

better equipped to plan for their future development. They can also leverage the value of their land to attract additional funding and further support their progress.

The Amerindian Act (2006) mandates that Amerindian Titled Lands, be demarcated by the State, which is re-

sponsible for financing the process. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs' annual capital budget allocates funds for demarcation costs under the "Amerindian Development Fund." (DPI)



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No. 040

How to get your mortgage approved by an A lender

Welcome to the second article in our five-part series on the Five C's of Credit—key factors that determine whether you qualify for a mortgage. This week, we are diving into "Capacity," a vital element that can make or break your mortgage approval and the terms you receive.

Why Capacity Matters in the Mortgage Process

When applying for a mortgage, lenders zero in on your "Capacity"—your ability to repay the loan. Capacity isn't just a measure of your income; it reflects your overall financial health, including how well you manage your debt. Lenders scrutinize your debt-to-income ratio (DTI), employment history, and income stability to determine whether you can manage monthly mortgage payments comfortably. Understanding these factors is crucial to preparing for your mortgage application and securing the best terms.

The Critical Role of Debt-to-Income Ratio (DTI)

Your DTI is one of the most critical metrics lenders use to gauge your

capacity. This ratio compares your monthly debt payments to your gross monthly income. The lower your DTI, the more confident lenders are that you can manage a mortgage without stretching your finances too thin.

But here is the catch: Most A lenders will decline your application if more than 44% of your income goes towards mortgage and debt payments. If this happens, your options might be a B or private lenders, who often charge higher interest rates and offer less favourable terms. A high DTI signals that your finances are already under strain, leaving little room for a new mortgage payment.

High DTI: A Roadblock to Mortgage Approval

If your DTI is too high, qualifying for a mortgage becomes challenging. Even if you do qualify, it may only be for a loan with a higher interest rate or a smaller amount than you hoped for. High DTI means more of your income is already committed to existing debt, making lenders wary of adding a mortgage to your financial obligations. This

concern by the lender could lead to a declined application or an offer from a subprime lender with steep costs.

Employment History and Income Stability: Cornerstones of Capacity

Your employment history and income stability are as critical as your DTI when assessing capacity. Lenders want assurance that your income is steady and dependable, which will fuel your ability to make mortgage payments for years.

Stable Income: Your Ticket to Mortgage Approval

Lenders look for at least three months of employment for traditional employees in the same job or industry. If you're self-employed, have a part-time income, or depend on overtime income, proving income stability can be more challenging. In these cases, lenders might ask for additional documentation, such as tax returns from the last two or three years, to assess your average income over time.

The Pain of Inconsistent Employment

Frequent job changes or gaps in

employment can raise serious concerns for lenders. Even if you have recently landed a higher-paying job, they might still question the stability of your income. This uncertainty could lead to a higher interest rate or even a declined application. Lenders prefer borrowers who demonstrate consistent earning patterns, which suggests a lower default risk.

Managing Debt to Boost Your Capacity

Effectively managing your debt is critical to improving your capacity and increasing your chances of mortgage approval.

Continued next week

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Carbon credit funds to be audited, Jagdeo assures Guyanese

GENERAL Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and Guyana's Vice-President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has assured Guyanese that all funds generated from the sale of the country's carbon credits will undergo a thorough audit.

Dr. Jagdeo, during a press conference last Thursday, said that the audit will be conducted as part of the process for the allocation and expenditure to ensure that all funds are accounted for.

"At the end of the day, we have to account for all of these funds, and with a separate audit that will go to the Parliament," Dr. Jagdeo said.

In December 2022, the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions announced the issuance of 33.47 million TREES credit to Guyana for the five-year period from 2016 to 2020.

The Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) is a global initiative that seeks to incentivise the reducing of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), as well as restore forests and protect intact forests.

The Government of Guyana, in that same year, entered into an agreement with the Hess Corporation for the sale of carbon credits for a minimum of US\$750 million between 2022 and 2032.

Fifteen per cent of the earnings from the initial disbursements was allocated to Indigenous villages across Guyana, while the remaining 85 per cent was allocated to national priorities, such as climate mitigation efforts.

"We decided these funds will come through the budget, but be placed in a special account. So, the money, even now, that we have for adaptation will go into the special account, and then would be subjected to a separate audit. We have not spent all of the first-year allocation as yet. So, I guess the audit will take place as the spending is completed," Dr. Jagdeo said.

In 2023, the country received US\$150 million, and 15 per cent meant that US\$22.5 million had been allocated to the 242 Indigenous villages.

Some 800-development projects have been initiated in those communities. There have been initiatives ranging from the promotion of local tourism to enhancing food security.

"Most of these villages [are] just about to complete their project, or they just completed. So, at the end of the day, that will be done. But it's part of the process; if you look at the document's outline, you will see all the measures that are in place to safeguard to involve people, at the village level, ensure that the projects are properly managed and that we get the desired outcome and the

accountability for the funds is also, ensured through an audit," Dr. Jagdeo said.

Already, the government has begun preparing to disburse the second round of payments.

Last week, Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali revealed that the country earned US\$87.5 million from its sale of carbon credits for this year.

The government, he noted, would be increasing the percentage paid out to Indigenous villages.

This year's earnings would have seen villages receiving less money than they did in 2023, had the government maintained the 15 per cent payout.

"Although the agreement is 15 per

cent, we have increased the percentage of this year's earning to 26.5 per cent, thereby ensuring that you will get no less than what you got last year. You will get US\$23.2 million, or \$4.84 billion in your villages; directly transferred to your villages," President Ali said, adding:

"We do not want you to get less."

The LCDS 2030, which is one of the many hallmarks of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government, outlines a robust mechanism for the mobilisation of financing that will be accrued from the country's forest resources.



Bharrat Jagdeo

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2/2²⁰



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Assorted 750 ml

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2/2⁵⁰



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5 kg

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2 kg

6⁹⁹
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Clorox Bleach
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Egg production triples

WITH 94,000 hatching eggs produced so far this year, Guyana is aggressively working to increase its production of this commodity.

This is according to Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha during a community meeting at No. 63 Village in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) on Saturday.

Currently, Guyana imports nearly 53 million eggs annually at a cost of over \$350 million.

To reduce this dependency, the country launched a hatching egg production programme in 2023 with a private partnership, resulting in the production of 27,000 eggs last year at the broiler breeder facility on the East Bank corridor. This facility was established to reduce the reliance on imported hatching eggs.

“So, at the end of the year, we will produce more. So, you could see how much we have produced already. But that will not be sufficient for us... We are spending a lot of money importing eggs into this country,” the agriculture minister stated.

Minister Mustapha noted that, initially, Guyana produced a significant number of table eggs before starting hatching-egg production. Table eggs, also known as shell eggs, are unfertilised.

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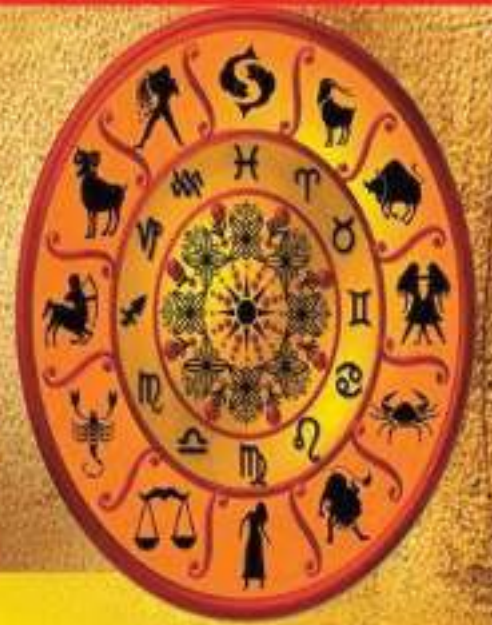
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Philanthropist and cultural luminary Ameena Gafoor has died

Ameena Gafoor, a Guyanese philanthropist and cultural luminary, died on Monday.

Gafoor was renowned for her cultural work, particularly through her role as founder and editor of The Arts Journal which distinguished her as an outstanding contributor to Caribbean cultural history.

Alongside her husband, she was also involved in a myriad of charitable activities, the Gafoor Foundation funding a dozen and more medical, educational, and sports projects. Her many roles include being Patron of ChildLink Guyana, an NGO that seeks out and counsels abused and neglected adolescents, and Chairman of the Doobay Medical Centre, a non-profit medical clinic that offers Haemodialysis treatment to patients suffering renal failure.

In 2020, the Ameena Gafoor Institute for the Study of Indentureship and its Legacies was established, the only such body in Britain or Europe.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali was among those who expressed condolences.



Ameena Gafoor

His statement read: I join all Guyana in mourning the passing of

Mrs. Ameena Gafoor, a truly extraordinary woman whose contributions to our nation, and especially to the liter-

ary arts were exceptional.

Ameena's kindness and generosity were unmatched, touching the lives of many through her consistent support for various philanthropic endeavours, particularly in the promotion of the literary arts. Her efforts nurtured and uplifted the talents of writers, poets, and artists across Guyana, making a lasting impact on our nation.

Ameena will be remembered not only for her profound influence in the literary world but also for her humility and warm-spiritedness.

Her gracious nature and compassionate heart made her a beloved figure to all who knew her. In her passing, Guyana has lost a true literary luminary and one of its kindest souls.

On behalf of the government and people of Guyana, I extend our deepest condolences to her husband, family, and all who mourn her loss. May her example continue to inspire kindness, generosity, and a love for the arts in all of us.

May Allah's divine blessings and mercy be with her!

Mom, disabled daughter dead; murder/suicide suspected

A Berbice mother who cared for her bedridden daughter for 38 years last week fed her a poisonous substance and then ingested some of it.

The incident unfolded on the morning of August 21, 2024 at Warren Village, Region 6.

The mother has been identified as 73-year-old Liloutie Baker and the daughter has been identified as 52-year-old daughter Davi Nandalall. Baker succumbed on the said day while Nandalall died two days later at the New Amsterdam Hospital.

It was around 07:30 hrs on the day in question when Franklin Baker, a 61-year-old Government Ranger and husband to Liloutie, discovered the distressing scene.

Franklin lived with his wife and his daughter – who lived with a disability since she was 14. The older woman had been battling diabetes and hypertension. Her daughter had reportedly stopped eating a week prior.

In a series of alarming events leading up to the incident, Liloutie had expressed fear of being home alone and had even mentioned to Franklin her thoughts of taking her own life.

On the morning in question,

Liloutie had just finished her breakfast and asked Franklin if he was ready to eat. When he declined, she handed him a pouch containing the family's jewelry, a gesture that, in hindsight, he said appeared to be a final farewell.

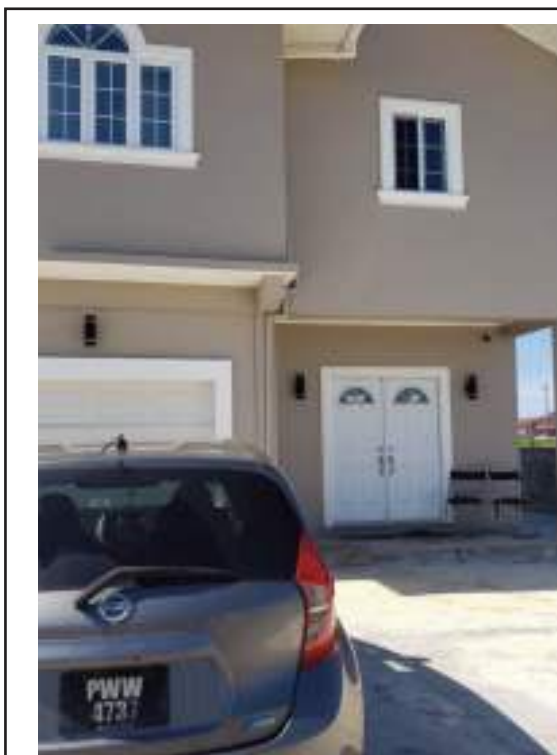
She then retreated to the kitchen. Moments later, Franklin was startled by

his wife's desperate cries. Rushing to the kitchen, he found Liloutie lying on the floor with a green substance coming from her mouth. His heart sank further when he found his daughter, Davi, in a similar state in her bedroom, also with a green substance coming from her mouth.

Franklin immediately sought help

from a neighbor, Michael, and together they transported the women to the New Amsterdam Public Hospital where they eventually succumbed.

A Police investigation led to the discovery of a bottle of the poisonous substance under a shed in the backyard.



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Women in Kerala protest against gender violence

Rampant harassment and no toilets: Report exposes Kerala film industry

A landmark report into problems faced by women in the Malayalam-language film industry has revealed the deep rot in one of India's most popular film hubs.

The findings of the three-member panel are pretty damning.

The 290-page report – parts of which have been redacted to hide identities of survivors and those accused of wrongdoing – says the industry is dominated by “a mafia of powerful men” and that “sexual harassment of women is rampant”.

Headed by a former judge of the Kerala High Court and set up by the state government in 2017, the Hema committee details the abysmal working conditions on sets - including a lack of toilets and changing rooms for junior artists, no food and water for them, poor pay and no accommodation or transport facilities.

“There are no toilets, so women have to go in the bushes or behind thick trees. During their periods, not being able to change their sanitary napkins for long hours and holding urine for long causes physical discomfort and makes them sick, in some cases needing hospitalisation,” it says.

The report, which was submitted to the government in December 2019, was made public only this week after nearly five years of delay and multiple legal challenges by members of the film industry.

The panel was set up in the aftermath of the horrific sexual assault on a leading actress in the film industry. Bhavana Menon, who has worked in more than 80 films in southern Indian languages and won a number of prestigious awards, was assaulted by a group of men while travelling from Thrissur to Kochi in February 2017.

Her assault made headlines, especially after Dileep, one of the Malayalam-language film industry's biggest actors and Menon's co-star in half a dozen films, was named as an accused and charged with criminal conspiracy. He denied the charges, but was arrested and held in custody for three months before being released on bail. The case continues to be heard in court.

Indian law bars identification of survivors of sexual assault, but it was known from the start that it was Ms Menon who had been assaulted. In 2022,

she waived her anonymity in a post on Instagram.

A few months after the attack on Ms Menon, Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) – a group formed by some of her colleagues in a film industry known for its variety of successful mainstream and critically acclaimed films - petitioned the government, seeking swift action in the case and also to address the problems faced by women in cinema.

In the report, retired Justice K Hema says the WCC told her that “women are being silenced as the prestige of the film industry needs to be upheld”.

The panel interviewed several dozen men and women, including artists, producers, directors, scriptwriters, cinematographers, hairstylists, makeup artists and costume designers, and “gathered evidence including video and audio clips and WhatsApp messages”.

Describing sexual harassment as the “worst evil” women in cinema face, the report said the panellists saw evidence that “sexual harassment remains shockingly rampant” and that “it goes on unchecked and uncontrolled”.

The industry “is controlled by a group of male actors, producers, distributors, exhibitors and directors who have gained enormous fame and wealth” and they were among the perpetrators, it added.

“Men in industry make open demands for sex without any qualms as if it's their birthright. Women are left with very little options but to oblige - or reject at the cost of their long awaited dream of pursuing cinema as their profession.

“The experiences of many women are really shocking and of such gravity that they have not disclosed the details even to their close family members.”

Many of the people the panel approached were initially reluctant to speak because “they were afraid they would lose their jobs”.

“In the beginning, we found their fear strange but as our study progressed we realised it was well-founded. We are concerned about their and their close relatives' safety.”

The report, the WCC says, has vindicated its stand.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): You can tell a friend what they want to hear or you can tell them what they need to hear. Choose the first if you want a quiet day; choose the second if you feel they should know the facts rather than continuing to mislead themselves.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Try not to get too caught up with ideas about winning and losing. It's nice to be Number One, of course, but it's not the most important thing at the moment – that honor goes to being the charitable human being who puts other people first.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): If you get the urge to travel today then just pack a bag and go. According to the planets there is nothing of any great importance holding you back, so allow your spirit of adventure to lead you in whatever direction it feels most attracted to.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): As values planet Venus moves into the financial area of your chart tomorrow it might be wise not to go wild with the credit cards. All those little purchases you made over the past few weeks have been adding up to a considerable debt.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Ignore the critics and cynics and push ahead with your plans. The world is divided into two types of people: those who follow up on their promises with action and those who say they will act but never seem to get round to it.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): You must be 100 per cent sure that it's the right thing for you before starting a task that is going to take up a large slice of your time and attention, maybe on a daily basis. It's all or nothing: go for it or give up on it.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): If a friend goes against your advice and does something you believe is reckless there really is nothing you can do about it. Either they will prove you wrong and make a success of it or you can help them pick up the pieces later on.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Take time out today to look back over the first half of the year and ask yourself if the goals you set have all been reached. If the answer is No don't get upset. There is still time to make your mark, but you need to get serious.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): There is a danger that your expectations are too high and, as a consequence, you won't reach the success levels you had hoped for. There is no shame in adjusting your sights a bit to improve your chances, in fact it's a very wise move.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): Money matters will take center stage over the next few days and if you have been too free and easy with your cash of late then you may have to cut back a bit. Is there anything you paid a fortune for that you can now sell on?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Don't be too hard on yourself if something you have been working on has to be abandoned between now and the weekend. Yes, it's a failure of sorts, but it's also a useful learning experience and next time you will surely get it right.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): What happens today will no doubt take you by surprise but looking back from the end of the week you will recognize that you should have seen it coming. The fact is you were willfully blind to reason purely through emotion.

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Rowley to youth after cops kill 6: bad decision to shoot at police

Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley yesterday warned young people that it is a bad decision to engage in gun battles with officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force (TTDF).

He was speaking with reporters at the launch of TT Agri Expo 2024 at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port of Spain. Rowley said he didn't want to comment on that too much on the police shooting that left 6 dead, but the circumstances appeared that some bad choices were made.

He added, "I want to say to young people, don't make the mistake of believing or letting anybody make you believe that you could shoot your way out of a situation with the police or the Defense Force. That is a bad decision.

"If you arm yourself or associate with people who arm themselves illegally and somehow believe that in an encounter with the police that you will prevail that is a mistake and it is a bad decision. Don't do it. Don't do that to your family. Don't do that to your sisters. Don't do that to this nation. Don't make that decision."

The Prime Minister added: "We have to protect the law-abiding. The police have been trained to shoot and they will shoot to kill if you threaten their lives. When you arm yourself with a weapon like a gun, it means that you have made a decision to use it. And it doesn't make sense to think that the law enforcement officers will wait to



Police officers at the scene of the shooting where six people, including a 15 year-old girl, were killed

see what you do and how you use it. So, you are putting yourself in harm's way."

Rowley said, as Prime Minister, "I want to appeal to young people making (such) decisions, don't make that deci-

sion it could only end badly for you, for your family and for all of us."

On August 14 the Trinidad police shot and killed six people, including one woman, in Freeport.

The police said those killed were

allegedly involved in two home robberies in the Central area.

They said the five men and one woman, shot at them and in accordance with the Use of Force Policy, they returned fire, killing all six at the scene.

JA Ministry of Health issues MPox alert

The Jamaican Ministry of Health and Wellness is urging citizens to take necessary precautions against Mpox after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the disease a public health emergency of international concern.

The island has recorded over 20 cases of the disease in 2023.

Previously known as monkeypox, Mpox is a viral disease that spreads through close contact, including sexual activity, skin-to-skin interactions, and even talking or breathing in close proximity to an infected person.

Mpox is caused by the Monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same family of viruses that cause smallpox. Though it is not related to chickenpox, it shares similarities with smallpox, particularly in the rash it causes. The rash progresses through various stages, including scabbing, before eventually healing. The disease is primarily zoonotic, meaning it can be transmitted between animals and humans. Endemic to Central and West Africa, the virus is found in small rodents, monkeys, and other mammals native to these regions.

First identified in humans in 1970 in what is now the Democratic Repub-

lic of the Congo, Mpox remained largely confined to Central and West Africa for decades. However, in 2022, the virus began spreading globally, with cases reported in Europe, North America, and beyond. The WHO previously declared Mpox a global health emergency in July 2022, only to end that declaration in May 2023. The recent resurgence, however, has prompted renewed concern.

There are two known clades, or strains, of the Monkeypox virus: clade I and clade II. Clade I, which is endemic to Central Africa, is more severe and has been known to cause death in up to 10% of infected individuals in some outbreaks. More recent outbreaks, however, have had lower mortality rates. Clade II, the strain responsible for the global outbreak that began in 2022, is less severe, with a survival rate exceeding 99.9%. This clade is endemic to West Africa.

Alarmingly, Sweden recently reported its first case of the more dangerous clade I outside Africa, marking a significant development in the disease's spread. The individual is believed to have contracted the virus while traveling in an African region



Dr Jacquiline Bisasor-McKenzie

currently experiencing a major outbreak of Mpox clade I.

In light of these developments, Jamaica's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jacquiline Bisasor McKenzie, has issued a stern warning. "Persons must re-

port to the health department if fever and rash occur following recent international travel or close contact with persons who traveled within the preceding three weeks," she advised. Dr. Bisasor McKenzie also emphasized that healthcare workers should maintain heightened vigilance and promptly report any suspected cases to the parish health department.

Mpox's incubation period typically ranges from six to 13 days, but it can extend from five to 21 days. Symptoms, which can vary from mild to severe, include fever, chills, intense headaches, exhaustion, backache, muscle ache, swollen lymph nodes, and a characteristic rash that may be itchy or painful. While the disease is often self-limiting, with symptoms usually resolving within 14 to 21 days, severe cases can be fatal. Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to severe outcomes.

As the global community grapples with this renewed threat, the Jamaican Ministry of Health and Wellness is urging all citizens to remain vigilant and take the necessary steps to protect themselves and others from Mpox.

Gonsalves conferred Japan's Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun

Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr Ralph Gonsalves was recently conferred Japan's Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun.

The accolade was presented by Japanese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hosaka Yasushi on Tuesday, during the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States held in Antigua and Barbuda.

At the ceremony, Ambassador Matsubara articulated that this conferral marks a first-class honor and it is very rarely conferred to sitting Heads of Government, but expressed that it is reflective of Japan's high esteem for Prime Minister Gonsalves' vision and work in advancing bilateral and global cooperation, for development.

Ambassador Matsubara shared poignant messages from Prime Minister of Japan; Fumio Kishida and widow of Japan's longest serving Prime Minister; Shinzo Abe.

The diplomatic honor reflects the strong and positive relationship between the two countries and also underscores the global recognition of Prime Minister Gonsalves' contributions to international diplomacy and cooperation.

It is expected that the actual conferment ceremony of the national decoration will take place in St. Vincent and the Grenadines during this calendar year, at a mutually convenient time.

The Order of the Rising Sun was established in 1875 by the Japanese Emperor.

In its design, there is the central feature of the rays of sunlight from the rising sun. This symbolizes energy as powerful as the sun. It was awarded to Gonsalves in the form of a Grand Cordon class medal, the highest rank available within the order.

The Prime Minister thanks the Government of Japan for its kind consideration and accepted the national decoration with humility in the quest for the further strengthening of the already excellent relations between Japan and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the statement concludes.

Notably, 2024 has been designated as the "Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year" and commemorative projects will be implemented in Japan and CARICOM countries with the aim of deepening exchanges between Japan and CARICOM countries.



Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines Dr Ralph Gonsalves and Yutaka Matsubara, Ambassador of Japan to St Vincent and the Grenadines

Jamaicans see surge in electric bills; JPS blames fuel costs

There has been an uproar amongst Jamaicans in regards to their most recent electric bills following the passage of Hurricane Beryl. In response to concerns from customers regarding a noticeable increase in their bills, the Jamaica Public Service (JPS) has sought to provide clarity about the charges outlined and address the issue directly.

"This month, many customers may have seen a rise in their electricity bills for consumption during the July to August billing period, despite consistent usage compared to previous months," JPS said in a press release this evening.

"The main components which cause customers' bills to either go up or down include Energy Charges set by the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR), the amount of electricity that customers use and additional components including the Fuel Charge and the Billing Exchange Rate which may change monthly."

The light and power company said, "The recent increase is primarily due to a higher Fuel Charge, and to a much lesser extent, a higher Billing Exchange Rate."

The Fuel Charge on August bills is \$32.172 per kilowatt hour (kWh) compared to the Fuel Charge of \$24.335 on July bills.

The Billing Exchange Rate on bills moved from \$156.30:1 in July, to \$157.53:1 in August.



A recent electric bill in Jamaica

JPS said the Fuel Charge that customers see on their bills is heavily influenced by the actual costs associated with purchasing the fuel used to generate electricity for the period.

As a precautionary measure against potential hurricane damage, the utility company said New Fortress Energy – the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) supplier – had to take the gas facility offline just before the hurricane to protect it from damage.

The switch of dependent generating plants from LNG to the significantly more expensive fuel Automotive Diesel Oil (ADO) to generate electricity for some days, resulted in higher associated costs reflected in customers' bills, JPS said.

"JPS will continue to provide customers with information and clarity, even as it strives to provide reliable

Meanwhile the governing Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) is calling on JPS to

immediately roll-back the major increases in electricity bills.

In a release on Tuesday, the party says it takes note of a statement by JPS on which cited a temporary increase in its cost of fuel as the reason why major increases have been applied to electricity bills in the current cycle.

The party says it does not support the decision by the light and power company to attempt to pass on to customers the reported temporary increase in fuel costs allegedly caused by its use of Automotive Diesel Oil (ADO) in the lead up to Hurricane Beryl.

"In the circumstances of a natural disaster, we are of the view that it is unconscionable and unacceptable to impose such onerous additional costs on the people of Jamaica. Enough is enough," commented Jamaica Labour Party spokesperson, Kerensia Morrison in the release to the media.

Morrison, who is also the Member of Parliament for North East St Catherine, says reports that the JPS has applied the objectionable increases to some customers who have not had electricity for several weeks is particularly disturbing.

The JLP spokesperson says the party support efforts by Energy Minister Daryl Vaz on behalf of the Government to get the Office of the Utilities Regulation (OUR) to hold the JPS to account for the questionable major increases in electricity bills.

Energy Minister Vaz: Oil discovery in Jamaica is 'fake news'

Jamaica's Energy Minister Daryl Vaz has dismissed as "fake news" social media reports that oil has been discovered on the islands shores.

"I have seen the many posts on social media and received WhatsApps and telephone calls in relation to the fake news circulating on social media in relation to the discovery of oil on our shores or off our shores. As minister, I can categorically state that there is no such thing, it is absolutely fake news," Vaz said in a statement on Sunday.

Rumours of the alleged discovery of oil the equivalent of seven billion barrels have been spreading like wildfire on social media in recent weeks, however, Vaz said the claims are "untrue" and urged Jamaicans to disregard the rumors.

"I as minister would be the first one to be excited to share any such good news if and when that happens. So until such time... disregard all information in relation to Jamaica's discovery of oil, it is just simply untrue," Vaz said.



Energy Minister Daryl Vaz

United Oil Plc, the British-based company with the license to explore for oil and gas off Jamaica's south coast, has

identified fields off the coast of St Elizabeth and Westmoreland as massive in potential and has proposed that they could produce in excess of one million barrels of oil per day.

United Oil and Gas (United Oil) has valued the largest repository within its wider zones of oil exploration offshore Jamaica as being worth J\$3.5 trillion, or US\$23 billion, at current oil prices.

It still, however, needs to prove that substances that resemble oil are indeed oil, and will require investments to dig the ocean floor for core samples.

"The potential net present value at a 10 per cent discount [is] US\$23 billion to United at 100 per cent working interest over the 25-year production life of the licence," according to United Oil in a statement from CEO Brian Larkin.

The company has until January 2026 to decide if it will "drill or drop" the license but said it will do so before January 2028 in an apparent indication that it wants to go ahead and drill for oil and gas.

Over 4M cyber attacks in Jamaica so far for 2024

Cybercriminals have targeted security systems in Jamaica over four million times in the first half of this year, a significant decline from the 43 million times recorded in 2023.

Cybersecurity experts from computer security provider in Latin America and the Caribbean, Fortinet have cautioned that the reduction should not be a source of respite for businesses and government as this is an indication that cybercriminals have become more strategic in their attacks.

"It doesn't necessarily mean that that's a good thing, it means that the techniques have changed, they are going with a more targeted approach whereas in the past it was more like a massive distribution of attacks," Fortinet's senior systems engineering manager, Emmanuel Oscar said.

"We are seeing less but the attacks are coming directly at the companies and if companies aren't prepared to be able to address some of these attacks that are coming their way then they'll probably end up becoming a victim," he added.

These attacks, he noted, are increasingly targeted towards utilities companies, transportation and government.

Carlo Caloca, regional sales manager at Fortinet, explained that these companies are earmarked because they are "more robust when it comes to data and it causes more harm, so the ransom for that attack could be a higher stake".

"So imagine the day when you wake up and you turn on the lights and there is no light, why? Because your



electrical grip has been compromised," Oscar added.

The Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) confirmed in May that a ransomware attack in February affected some aspects of the state-run agency's service delivery. It was reported that it cost the entity US\$231,900 or J\$36.1 million to procure the services of two international companies to recover and secure its information and communications technology (ICT) structure.

The National Certification Body of Jamaica and the National Compliance and Regulatory Authority, which share a campus with BSJ, were also impacted by the cyberattack.

The development followed a similar "cyber incident" at the state-owned

oil refinery Petrojam in December and last September's cyberattack at the Financial Services Commission, the entity that oversees the regulation of Jamaica's insurance, pension, and securities industries.

The team, which analysed the Caribbean's evolving cybersecurity landscape during a press conference on Wednesday, also revealed findings from FortiGuard Labs, which highlighted that cybercriminals are exploiting vulnerabilities 43 per cent faster.

Contending that investment in cybersecurity is "not an option" for government agencies and businesses, Oscar acknowledged that some companies are reluctant to put these systems in place. He however stressed that cybersecurity

systems should be considered a critical part of operations.

"A lot of times it may be something that is cost prohibitive for a lot of companies so, what we do, we work with them through the resources we have in country, we meet with customers, and help understand what their needs are, and then we work with building a plan that's going to get them from where they are today to where they want to be," he said.

Concurring, Oscar emphasized that cybersecurity is ultimately a business decision centered around managing risk. He stated that the average cost of a breach costs between US\$4.5 million and US\$9 million per year.

National Council of Indian Culture President Dr Sharma passes on

THE man behind the dream of the Divali Nagar in Trinidad has deemed it a mission success during the funeral for one of its founding members, Dr Deokinanan Sharma.

Delivering Sharma's eulogy during a tribute ceremony and viewing of the body held at the Nagar site on August 25, Hans Hanoomansingh said his vision and the mission of the Divali Nagar have been largely achieved.

"Imagine from 1986 to now, the President of the Republic attends the opening. The Prime Minister attends the opening and during the week the Leader of the Opposition, members of the judiciary and a growing number of people from around the world make it to this site that was once a site of sugar canes."

Hanoomansingh was the first president of the National Council of Indian Culture (NCIC), overseeing its transition from the National Council for Indian Music and Drama. He was the man who dreamt of the Divali Nagar in 1986. Later that year the inaugural event was hosted at the Mid Centre Mall car park. In 1989 the National Alliance for Reconstruction government granted NCIC 15 acres of land where it now resides, having expanded to occupy 27 acres. The first Divali Nagar was hosted at its current home in 1991.

Sharma served as the NCIC president for over 20 years and was the chairman of the Divali Nagar, helping build both entities into what it is today. He died peacefully at 87 on August 23. His funeral took place at 9 am at his Valsayn home where his son, Ashvin, thanked Minister of Works and Transport Rohan Sinanan and Minister of Social Development and Family Services for their help in getting things in place to host the funeral on short notice.

Sharma's body was then taken to the Divali Nagar site for public viewing



Dr Deokinanan Sharma

and a short tribute ceremony. Chairing the ceremony, independent senator and NCIC vice president Deeroop Teemal said Sharma would always be remembered as a selfless, committed person who was "imbued with devotion."

Sharma's body was then taken to the Caroni Cremation site for cremation.

Since his passing his family has received an outpouring of support. An

NCIC release on August 24 said Sharma, who was a civil engineer by profession, was awarded the Humming Bird Gold Medal in 2012 for his work in Indian culture, an honorary doctorate from UWI, and the Pravasi Bharitya award from the government of India. It said Sharma also served as treasurer in the Maha Sabha under the late Bhadase Sagan Maharaj.

In a post to his Facebook page on

August 25, the Prime Minister described Sharma as deserving of every accolade received and an example for the country.

"From humble beginnings, he chose a path of decency and hard work and rose to high levels as a nation builder in the young Trinidad and Tobago. I am sure that, given his many personal contributions to engineering and culture, he would have been immensely satisfied with the progress that his efforts have assisted in making for the benefit of the entire nation. Herein lies a remarkable example for our nation, that a life so lived, is possible in our country and for that we say thanks and may his legacy endure amongst us."

In a statement on August 24, Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar said the nation owed him a debt of gratitude for his work.

"By his living example, Pundit Deokinanan Sharma embodied a sublime faith in his fellow citizens and an enduring belief that despite our innate ethnic and religious differences, the common thread of our rare cultural beauty would eventually unite us in a unique, beautiful tapestry of togetherness, and evoke the best expressions of our collective humanity. As a nation, we owe a debt of eternal gratitude to Pundit Deokinanan Sharma for this truly beautiful gift he taught us to claim, realise, and embody and for the very rich, inspiring heritage he has left us for posterity."

Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts Randal Mitchell said TT was grateful for his "indelible contributions."

"Indeed, he was a true son of the soul and has left a lasting mark on the cultural tapestry of our people and country."

In a post to Facebook on August 24, President Christine Kangaloo described him as a visionary.

JA Finance Minister quits for post in IMF

Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has announced the appointment of Jamaica's Minister of Finance Dr. Nigel Clarke as Deputy Managing Director, the third highest ranking official at the global financial agency.

Clarke's appointment, a first for any citizen of the Caribbean or Central America, will become effective on October 31, 2024. Clarke will succeed Antoinette Sayeh, who will step down from the role on September 12.

Georgieva praised Clarke's selection, noting his exceptional track record in public service and economic leadership.

"Mr. Clarke is an exceptional public servant and policymaker, with proven leadership in institution building and economic crisis management, who

has stewarded his country's economy to a stronger and more sustainable position. Since 2016, he has been the IMF's chief counterpart on successive and historically successful programs for Jamaica, including an Extended Fund Facility, a precautionary Stand-By Arrangement, and most recently a Precautionary Liquidity Line plus Resilience and Sustainability Facility, leaving the country with robust economic fundamentals. Nigel also brings a wealth of experience from a stellar private sector career."

Clarke, who has served as Jamaica's Minister of Finance and the Public Service since March 2018, and as a Member of Parliament, has been instrumental in driving national reforms.

His tenure includes reforms in central bank independence, tax policy, and

public sector governance, as well as leading Jamaica's response to the COVID-19 pandemic with targeted policy support. Clarke's leadership also saw Jamaica complete significant privatizations and public-private partnerships and implement a disaster risk financing model that included sponsoring a catastrophe bond.

Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness sent his congratulations to Clarke, saying: "I wholeheartedly congratulate Dr. Nigel Clarke on today's announcement of his pending appointment as Deputy Managing Director of the IMF. This is a historic and important development in which I take immense pride. No citizen of Jamaica, the Caribbean or Central America has ever before served at this level in the IMF in its 80 year history. It is to the benefit of

Jamaica and the Caribbean region for one of our nationals to serve in such a consequential global position."

Before his role in public service, Clarke was Vice Chairman and Chief Financial Officer of the Musson Group and began his career as an Equity Derivatives Trader at Goldman Sachs in London. In 2022, he was elected Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Inter-American Investment Corporation.

Clarke holds a PhD in Numerical Analysis and an MSc in Applied Statistics from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar and Commonwealth Scholar, respectively. He also earned a BSc in Mathematics and Computer Science from the University of the West Indies as a Jamaica Independence Scholar.

Former CLICO chairman Lawrence Duprey passes at age 89

CHAIRMAN of the Colonial Life Insurance Company (Clico) policyholders group Peter Permell says he remains hopeful that any policyholders who were affected by company's collapse in 2009 could still be able to recover their money.

He made this statement on August 26 when asked to comment on the death of Clico chairman Lawrence Duprey.

Duprey, 89, died on August 24.

He inherited Clico from his uncle Cyril Duprey and expanded it into CL Financial, the largest local conglomerate and one of the first local insurance companies.

After the group collapsed in 2009, the government "bailed out" Clico at a cost, as of 2020, \$30 billion.

Permell made no comment on Duprey's death

But he recalled that 225,000 policyholders were affected by Clico's crash.

Permell said those were people who held executive premium holder policies.

He recalled that in 2009, when the then PNM government intervened to bailout Clico, certain guarantees were made to those policyholders, in the hope that they could be able to recover the money they lost.

Permell said that stopped in September 2010, under the then People's Partnership (PP) government, when the PP expressed concerns about the payment of interest to policies which did not exist.

He added that this was subsequently proven not to be true.

Permell said Clico had since paid back government all of the money it used to bail it out.

He added that the company was no longer under the supervision of the Central Bank as it was no longer con-



Lawrence Duprey: died in Florida last week at age 89

sidered to be in the red.

The bank announced the end of this arrangement, which began in 2009, in 2022.

Permell said Clico announced a profit of approximately \$2 billion last year.

He added that the group had always advocated that the company pay

back money to the shareholders once it was able to do so.

Permell hoped that good sense would prevail and there would be no need for any legal action.

Given the 15 years that have passed since the Clico collapse, Permell said a protracted legal battle to recover monies owed by the company to share-

holders was in no one's interest.

He added that such a course of action was not being considered by his group at this time.

In addition to Trinidad and Tobago, the collapse of CLICO affected policy holders and investors across the Caribbean, most notably in Guyana and Barbados.

Canadian blogger facing sedition charges in TT fires lawyers

DAYS after parting ways with his previous legal representatives over fees "above (his) pay bracket," Canadian YouTuber Christopher "Chris Must List" Hughes says some "powerful lawyers" have contacted him saying they are willing to represent him for free.

Last week, the 45-year-old travel vlogger, who is facing a sedition charge, said he received a US\$40,000 invoice from his lawyers for two ten-minute court hearings.

He was being represented by Pamela Elder, SC, and Russell Warner. Elder has since said that the fee reflected the total cost for the entire trial, regardless of how many court appearances it took, for both attorneys.

Hughes, who was charged in June, had said he would represent himself in court moving forward, and did so at his last appearance on August 23.

In an Instagram video, he said "everything went smooth," but the case was adjourned to January 14, 2025. He said the prosecution's evidence was not yet ready and they asked for an extension to compile it.

"I'm repping myself and standing up for myself," he said.

However, he added that a few "very powerful" local lawyers have contacted him to say they are "more than happy to represent (him) free of charge." He said he will have meetings with them and make a decision soon.

He added that his passport remains confiscated but he plans to the High Court to get it back so he can travel while awaiting his next appearance.

"While I'm stranded in Trinidad and Tobago, I will continue to create content," he said.



Christopher Hughes

President Ali, Raptors discuss Basketball expansion in Guyana

In a pivotal move for the development of basketball in Guyana, President Dr. Irfaan Ali met with Masai Michael Ujiri OC, Vice Chairman and President of the Toronto Raptors, and Co-Founder of Giants of Africa, at the OVO Athletic Centre, the team's state-of-the-art training facility.

According to a release, President Ali and Ujiri discussed ways in which the 2019 NBA champions can contribute to the growth of basketball in Guyana.

Their discussions focused on key areas such as the development of sports facilities, the organization of coaching clinics, talent identification programs, and the promotion of grassroots basketball initiatives in the country.

Beyond their discussions on Guyana, the leaders also explored a broader Caribbean initiative aimed at boosting basketball across the region, leveraging the Raptors' expertise and experience to inspire and nurture young talent.

As part of this collaboration, Ujiri is expected to lead a delegation to Guyana later this year to advance these initiatives, marking a significant step in strengthening sports development ties between Guyana and Canada.



President Irfaan Ali and Masai Ujiri OC, President of the Raptors.

Dottin seals stunning Super Over win for TKR

Deandra Dottin's cool head and power hitting saw Trinbago Knight Riders defeat Guyana Amazon Warriors in a pulsating encounter in the 2024 Massy Women's Caribbean Premier League (WCPL) at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad.

A defeat would have been terminal for Dottin's side, but a last-gasp Super Over victory win saw the Knight Riders get their first points on the board to keep their competition hopes alive.

Both sides scored 128 runs off their twenty overs to set up a tied match and a box office finish. Dottin top scored for the Knight Riders with 53 from 38 balls at the top of the order before a stutter in the middle overs was then rescued by valuable contributions from Shikha Pandey (25) and Kycia Knight (16).

The Warriors looked to have the run chase in hand. With Erin Burns playing a patient innings to score her second fifty in succession and with Shemaine Campbelle in support they needed a seemingly manageable 19 runs off the final three overs.

Two quick run outs scuppered the Warriors chances with Burns and Chloe Tryon both caught short of the crease in the dying stages of the main game to take the match into a Super

Over finish.

Shabnim Ismail took the ball for the Warriors in the Super Over having impressed once again with figures of 2/24 in the match. Dottin then grabbed the game by the scruff of the neck and smeared two huge sixes off the first three deliveries, the second of which saw her fall to her knees as she propelled the ball high and long over the rope on the leg side.

A single saw Jemimah Rodrigues come on strike for the final two deliveries, the diminutive batter showing her class with a cover drive for four off the final ball from Ismail. The Knight Riders scoring a whopping 19 runs off their six deliveries.

The Warriors' response did not go to plan. Jess Jonassen was her frugal self with the ball in hand all evening and bowled the Super Over for the Knight Riders to close out the match. Chloe Tryon was run out for the second time in a matter of minutes, this time off the very first ball of the super over, before Burns then slapped a catch to Dottin in the covers.

Campbelle and Natasha McLean saw out the last rites but by then the target was out of reach for the Warriors. Dottin's side dealt with the pressure of defending a total twice in one evening and live to fight another day in



Deandra Dottin of Trinbago Knight Riders hits 6 in the super over

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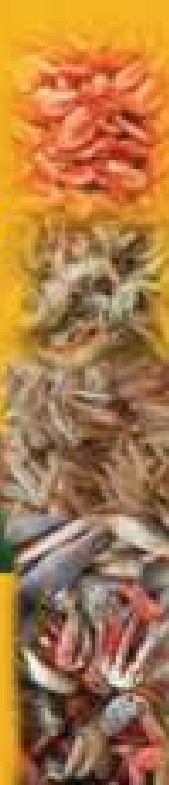
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