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Top LatAm award for President Ali

Guyana President Irfaan Ali is pictured receiving the Latin America Wilson Centre Award from Benjamin Gedan, Director of the Wilson Center's Latin America Program, last weekend

at an event in Miami. The award is for his outstanding leadership in climate change action and biodiversity conservation. The award, part of the Wilson Center's Latin America Programme, recognises leaders who have made significant contributions to regional and global advancement, particularly in fields such as sustainability, biodiversity, and climate change. *Story inside*



New airline to service TO/GT route

JET Global Services (Guyana) Inc., a Guyana-incorporated company, has announced the launch of its chartered international flight operations, connecting Guyana to Europe, North America, and South America, starting in July 2025.

According to a press release, this groundbreaking initiative marks a significant milestone in positioning Guyana as a premier hub for global connectivity, driving economic growth, and enhancing travel opportunities for citizens and visitors alike.

In partnership with GullivAir, headquartered in Sofia, Bulgaria, and Luna Jets in Paris, France, Jet Global Services is set to redefine air travel in Guyana.

GullivAir's state-of-the-art Airbus A330-200 aircraft offers 269 seats across business, premium, and economy classes, ensuring a travel experience defined by comfort and elegance.

Each traveller will enjoy the convenience of two 23-kg check-in suitcases and eight-kg hand luggage, with additional capacity for cargo movement, catering to both leisure and business needs.

GullivAir is in the final stages of receiving all the requisite approvals from the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority, which is anticipated to be within weeks.

Flights will be to and from the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, facilitating direct, non-stop flights to key international destinations, including the Georgetown - Toronto route twice a week.

The airline will also service the Georgetown - New York route, as well as many others in the Caribbean and South America.

As Guyana becomes a significant player in the global oil market, the demand for a reliable, affordable international airline has never been more pressing. Jet Global Services and its partners are fully committed to meeting this demand, connecting Guyana with the world while propelling Guyana's economy.

"Passengers can anticipate unparalleled travel benefits that redefine air travel. Our dedication to exceptional customer service guarantees [that] every journey is comfortable and enjoyable," the airline said.

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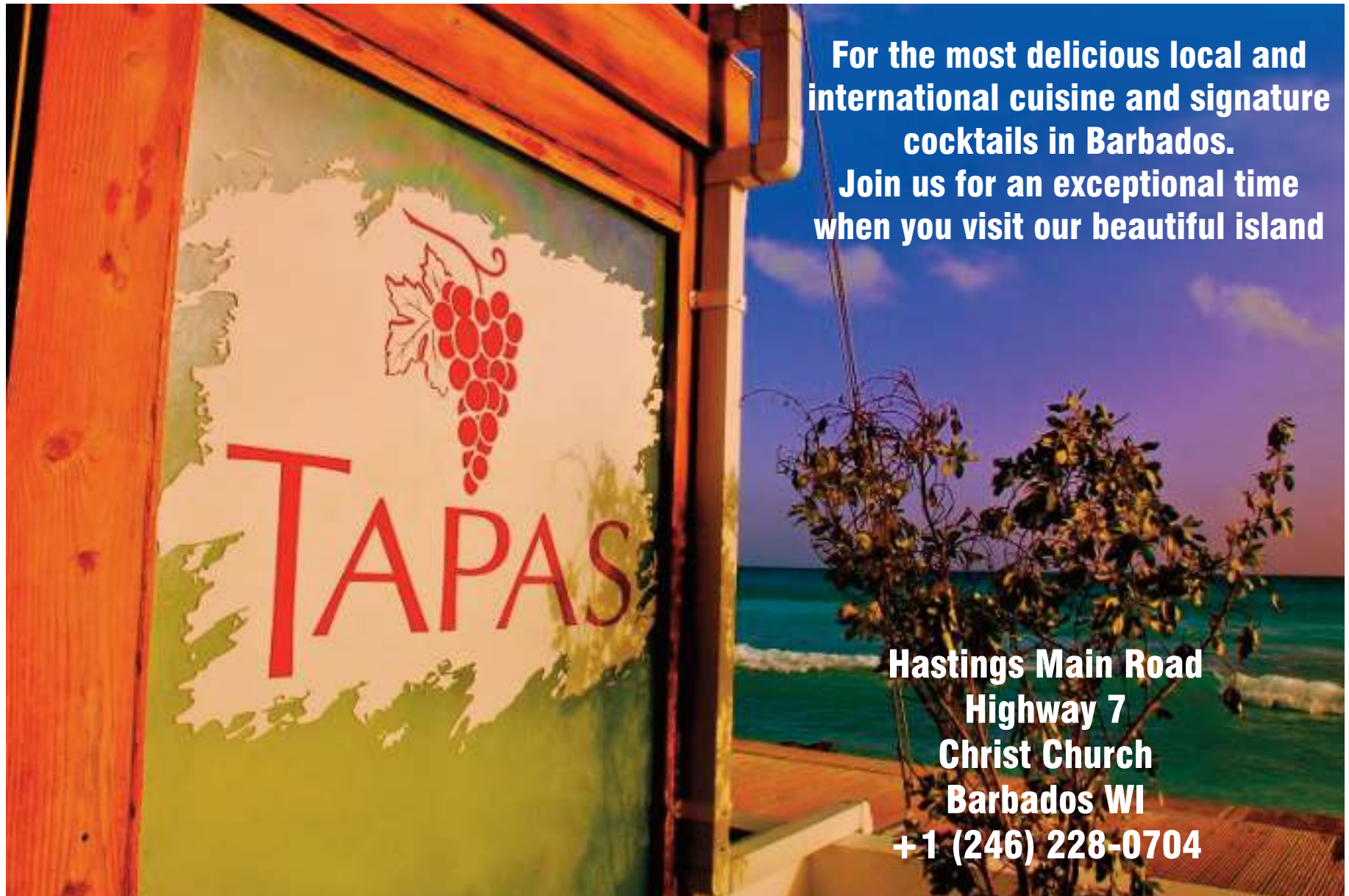
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A Region Nine resident signs for and collects her \$100,000 one-off cash grant.



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ONE GUYANA CHRISTMAS VILLAGE BRINGS
FESTIVE CHEER TO MAIN STREET

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WILSON CENTER HONOURS PRESIDENT ALI FOR OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP



President Ali addressing the Gala

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has been awarded the prestigious Wilson Award for Public Service by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Presented during a gala at the Four Seasons Hotel in Miami, Florida, on December 5, 2024, the award recognises leaders whose efforts have significantly improved the quality of life in Latin America and beyond.

This recognition highlights President Ali's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development. Under his leadership, Guyana has become a model for balancing environmental conservation with

economic growth. The nation's vast rainforests play a crucial role in global climate change mitigation and biodiversity preservation.

In his acceptance speech, President Ali expressed gratitude to the Wilson Center for its dedication to promoting democracy, justice, and effective public policy. He underscored Guyana's progress with the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, which aims to create a global model for leveraging tropical forests in the fight against climate change and biodiversity conservation. "The LCDS re-energizes Guyana's

commitment to sustainable development. It creates a global model for recognizing the essential role of tropical forests in the fight against climate change and biodiversity conservation," he said.

The President also emphasised the importance of global cooperation, acknowledging the complexity of the current global environment. "We must work across many areas—climate security, food security, and energy security. To find the right balance, we need everyone at the table. We cannot

lock out petroleum companies if we are to achieve balanced growth," he noted.

President Ali called for a collaborative approach to sustainable development, stressing the need for a balance between economics, science, and ecology. "We cannot allow emotions to drive our actions. There must be a match between economics, science, and ecology to achieve sustainability. All players must be part of the conversation," he said.

This recognition adds to President Ali's growing list of accolades, including the Caribbean Global Leader Award and the Global Africa

Leadership Award. Guyana's leadership in environmental conservation continues to grow, with initiatives like the Global Biodiversity Alliance and partnerships with renowned institutions like Harvard and Oxford universities. As President Ali's receipt of the Wilson Award demonstrates, Guyana is firmly positioned as a global leader in addressing climate change and protecting biodiversity.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

PRESIDENT ALI ENGAGES WITH GUYANESE DIASPORA IN MIAMI

On the evening of December 4, 2024, President Dr. Irfaan Ali connected with the Guyanese Diaspora in Miami, Florida, fostering stronger ties with citizens living abroad.



President Dr. Irfaan Ali engaging with the Guyanese Diaspora

The gathering featured dynamic discussions on Guyana's current development and its promising future, with attendees expressing excitement and optimism for the nation's continued progress.

During his address, President Ali highlighted key achievements and ongoing government initiatives, focusing on economic growth, healthcare advancements, and infrastructure



President Dr. Irfaan Ali engaging with the Guyanese Diaspora

development. He also underscored the vital role of the Diaspora in contributing to Guyana's success and called for ongoing collaboration to build a prosperous future for all Guyanese. The event served as a valuable platform for the Diaspora to exchange ideas and share their



President Dr. Irfaan Ali engaging with the Guyanese Diaspora

hopes for the future, further strengthening the bond between Guyana and its global community.

PRESIDENT ALI JOINS REGIONAL LEADERS IN CELEBRATING BARBADOS' MILESTONES

President Dr. Irfaan Ali extended warm congratulations to Barbados on its 58th Independence Anniversary, highlighting the enduring friendship and shared aspirations between Guyana and Barbados.

"On behalf of the Government and people of Guyana, I extend heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the Government and people of Barbados. This occasion marks a proud moment

in your nation's history, reflecting the resilience, unity, and progress of the Barbadian people," President Ali shared in a Facebook post.

The celebrations also commemorated two additional milestones: the third anniversary of Barbados' transition to a republic and the centenary of Shirley Chisholm's birth. President Ali joined Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley of Trinidad and Tobago, and Minister

Camillo Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to engage with bipartisan members of the U.S. Congress.

Key discussions focused on maintaining the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, advocating for concessional funding mechanisms based on vulnerability rather than GDP per capita to address the region's unique challenges, and exploring opportunities for investment, enhanced market access, and near-shoring initiatives to drive inclusive growth and resilience.

"We are committed to fostering partnerships that uplift all our citizens as we work toward a more prosperous and united Caribbean,"

President Ali affirmed. The events provided a platform for Caribbean leaders to deepen collaboration and advocate for the collective interests of the region. President

Ali's active participation underscored Guyana's leadership role in advancing regional unity and addressing shared challenges.



The regional leaders engaged in productive discussions with bipartisan members of the U.S. Congress

\$100,000 CASH GRANT DISTRIBUTION BEGINS IN REGION NINE



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips and Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag spearheading the distribution exercise

The government's promise of a \$100,000 one-off cash grant to every citizen is now a reality, as Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips officially launched the distribution in Region Nine. More than 14,000 residents in the region are set to benefit in this initial phase.

This initiative, first announced by President Irfaan Ali in his October

commitment to equitable development, emphasising that the initiative reflects the administration's dedication to sharing the nation's wealth with its people.

"I am part of a government that is serious about development and ensuring that you share in the prosperity of this nation," said the Prime

Phillips assured them that the funds for the cash grant come from the transparent and accountable management of Guyana's Natural Resource Fund.

"This fund is managed in line with international best practices. We are using these resources to improve lives and livelihoods across Guyana," he explained.

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag, also

items, or saving for future needs.

National Rollout and Distribution Process

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has outlined a robust plan for the distribution of the \$100,000 cash grant to approximately 300,000 citizens before the end of 2024. The initiative, supported by an initial \$30.5 billion supplementary provision from the National Assembly, prioritises pensioners and public



Scene from the cash grant registration in Georgetown

follows these steps:

Registration: Citizens register at community centres using pre-programmed tablets for data collection.

Verification: Identity verification, including photographs, ensures accuracy and fraud prevention.

Cheque Issuance: Distribution schedules are published, with cheques collected at registration locations.

Collection: Recipients must present a valid National ID or passport to collect their grant.

The government estimates the registration and distribution process will take five months, with a comprehensive database being created to streamline future initiatives.

Dr. Jagdeo assured the public that the Audit Office will oversee the process to ensure transparency and



Scene from the cash grant registration in Georgetown



More than 14000 people will benefit from the distribution of the cash grant in Region Nine

present at the event, emphasised that the government is balancing immediate support with long-term investments in infrastructure, education, and other critical sectors.

"This government doesn't just think about tomorrow; we think long-term," she said. **"While we are building roads and schools, it's equally important to ensure our people move forward."**

The Minister encouraged recipients to consider investing their grants wisely, whether by paying off debts, purchasing essential

servants in the first phase.

Dr. Jagdeo shared that technical teams are capable of producing up to 20,000 cheques daily, with the distribution expected to continue through December and into early 2025 to capture the remaining citizens.

"While some citizens may receive their grants in January, every eligible person will be paid as promised," he said.

Four-Step Distribution Process

To ensure efficiency and transparency, the distribution process



Residents collecting their cheques

10 parliamentary address, will inject approximately \$60 billion into the economy, benefitting 300,000 Guyanese by year-end.

Prime Minister Phillips highlighted the government's

Minister. **"We are not only building roads, schools, and hospitals; we are also putting money directly into your hands."**

Addressing residents in Nappi, Prime Minister



Residents collecting their cheques

PRESIDENT ALI MEETS U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND



President Ali engaging USSOUTHCOM

President Dr. Irfaan Ali visited the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), where he engaged in high-level discussions on defence and security cooperation between Guyana and the United States.

Accompanying the President were National Security Advisor Captain Gerry Gouveia, Chief of Defence Staff Brigadier Omar Khan, Director of

the National Intelligence and Security Agency Colonel Sheldon Howell, and Guyana's Defence Attaché to the U.S., Colonel Julius Skeete.

On the U.S. side, the meeting was attended by United States Ambassador to Guyana Nicole D. Theriot, Admiral Alvin Holsey (Combatant Commander), Lieutenant General Evan Pettus (Military Deputy



President Ali engaging USSOUTHCOM

General Julie Nethercot (Chief of Staff), and Ambassador Sarah-Ann Lynch (Civilian Deputy to the Commander and Foreign Policy Advisor).

The discussions underscored the importance of collaboration in addressing regional and global security challenges. They also explored ways to deepen bilateral defence ties, focusing on capacity building, intelligence sharing, and coordinated responses to emerging threats.

President Ali's visit highlights Guyana's ongoing commitment to regional security and its strategic partnership with the United States in fostering stability and peace in the hemisphere.

GUYANA'S GROWING FLIGHT NETWORK LINKS THE CARIBBEAN, SOUTH AMERICA, AND EUROPE INTERCARIBBEAN AIRWAYS BRIDGES GUYANA AND GRENADA



InterCaribbean Airways inaugural flights between Guyana and Grenada

Guyana's aviation sector is soaring with the launch of new direct flights, boosting trade, tourism, and cultural exchange.

On December 1st, InterCaribbean Airways inaugurated a twice-weekly direct flight service connecting Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Georgetown to Maurice Bishop International Airport in Grenada. This route strengthens ties between the two nations, with Grenada's Acting Prime Minister, Andy Williams, praising the initiative as a step toward sustainable development and

economic diversification.

Kamrul Baksh, Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority, emphasised the unique travel opportunities created by this connection, blending Guyana's lush ecotourism offerings with Grenada's Spice Island charm. To further promote cultural exchange, a media familiarisation trip is underway, offering firsthand experiences of both destinations to professionals from each country.

NEW ROUTES TO COLOMBIA AND EUROPE

Expanding its

international reach, Guyana will soon connect to Bogotá, Colombia, through direct flights from Avianca Airlines, starting next week. In 2025, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines will launch direct flights to Amsterdam and St. Maarten, providing over 1,000 seats weekly and enhancing Guyana's role as a regional aviation hub.

Tourism Minister Oneidge Walrond described these routes as transformative for Guyana's tourism sector and vital for reinforcing its position as a gateway to South America and the Caribbean.

These new connections follow a

series of advancements in Guyana's aviation sector. Earlier in 2024, Sky High Dominicana introduced direct flights to the Dominican

economic growth, strengthen trade partnerships, and attract more visitors to Guyana's vibrant culture and natural beauty. By



New direct flights to Colombia and Europe set to begin next week

Republic, Caribbean Airlines began flights to Suriname, and United Airlines launched a four-times-weekly service to Houston, Texas.

The growing flight network is set to drive

linking the Caribbean, South America, and Europe, Guyana is positioning itself as a pivotal hub for tourism and commerce in the region.

GUYANA SIGNS AIR SERVICES AGREEMENTS WITH THE BAHAMAS AND SOUTH KOREA

Guyana has secured two significant air services agreements with The Bahamas and South Korea, opening new opportunities for increased air travel, tourism, and trade between the countries.



Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation of the Bahamas, Isaac Chester Cooper and Hon. Bishop Juan Edghill, Minister of Public Works, signing the agreement

On November 25, 2024, Guyana and The Bahamas signed an Open Skies Air Services Agreement that will allow unrestricted air travel between the two

nations. The agreement, signed by Guyana's Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, and Bahamas' Deputy Prime Minister, Isaac Chester Cooper, removes limitations on flight capacity, frequency, and routes. One of its key features is the "Principal Place of Business" concept, which allows airlines to be designated based on their economic base rather than traditional ownership rules. This provision is expected to boost foreign investment and foster competition in the aviation sector.

While there are

currently no direct flights between Guyana and The Bahamas, this deal paves the way for future services, with Bahamas Air potentially adding Guyana to its regional network soon.

In a further boost to Guyana's aviation ambitions, on December 5, 2024, the country signed an Air Services Agreement with South Korea at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport. Signed by Minister Edghill and H.E. Ambassador KIM Jinhae, South Korea's Non-Permanent Representative to the Caribbean Community



South Korea and Guyana sign Air Services Agreement

Secretariat, this agreement lays the legal groundwork for airlines to operate between Guyana and South Korea. Although direct flights are not yet available, the deal is expected to open up market access and pave the way for airlines like Korean Air to consider Guyana as a potential destination, broadening

travel options and strengthening diplomatic and economic ties. Together, these agreements mark a significant step in Guyana's ongoing efforts to enhance global connectivity, stimulate foreign investment, and promote economic growth.

Together, these agreements mark a significant step in Guyana's ongoing efforts to enhance global connectivity, stimulate foreign investment, and promote economic growth.

Guyana's tourism sector is experiencing rapid growth, with the addition of 1,000 new hotel rooms projected for 2025. This surge in accommodation options is driven by the opening of several internationally branded hotels, including the recent debuts of Aiden by Best Western and the Royal Hotel, which added 400 high-quality rooms to the market.

As other branded hotels near completion, Guyana is poised to solidify its position as a competitive player in the regional tourism market. Tourism Minister



Aiden by Best Western opened its doors in October this year

Oneidge Walrond expressed confidence in the government's role in fostering this expansion.

"This expanding capacity naturally enables us to host major international

events and positions as a competitive player in the regional tourism market," Minister Walrond said.

Guyana's rising popularity as a tourist destination is evident in

1,000 NEW HOTEL ROOMS ON THE HORIZON

the impressive growth of visitor arrival rates. In October 2024, visitor arrivals surged by 22.5% compared to the same period in 2023, marking the highest October growth rate in the country's history. From January to October 2024, overall visitor arrivals increased by 15% compared to the previous year, totalling nearly 300,000 visitors.

"This is a result of strategic vision to bring visitors to

Guyana, to build out more tourism products in sports tourism, in meetings and conferences so that visitors arrival continues to see that growth," the minister said.

To further enhance the visitor experience, the Ministry of Tourism has invested in funding and training programmes to support the establishment of bed and breakfast properties. This year, the Guyana

Tourism Authority conditionally approved 36 such establishments nationwide, diversifying the hospitality market and creating opportunities for local businesses and communities.

With its growing infrastructure, diverse tourism offerings, and warm hospitality, Guyana is well-positioned to attract more visitors and contribute to the nation's economic development.

US EXIM BANK APPROVES LOAN FOR GAS-TO-ENERGY PROJECT



The Gas-to-Energy being developed at Wales, Region Three

The United States Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank) has approved a loan for Guyana's ambitious Gas-to-Energy project. This significant development brings the country closer to realising its goal of reducing energy costs and boosting economic growth.

This latest development was highlighted by Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, the General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), during a press conference.

The loan, which

will be used to finance a portion of the project's costs, is subject to a mandatory 30-day notification period in the US Congress. Once this period is complete, the Exim Bank board will make a final decision on the loan.

The Gas-to-Energy project involves the construction of a natural gas pipeline to transport gas from offshore oil fields to a new power plant. The project is expected to significantly reduce Guyana's reliance on imported fossil fuels and lower electricity

costs for consumers.

The government has already invested approximately US\$400 million in the project. The additional funding from the Exim Bank will help to accelerate its completion.

This project is a major step forward for Guyana's energy sector and is expected to have a positive impact on the country's economy for years to come.

FINANCE MINISTER ADVOCATES FOR EASIER BANKING ACCESS

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, has emphasised the need for greater accessibility to banking services, particularly in underserved areas.

Speaking at the World Trade Centre Georgetown's Banking Conference, Dr. Singh highlighted the challenges faced by many individuals in opening bank accounts. He called for simplified procedures and the adoption of

digital solutions to make banking more accessible.

"We should not be erecting hurdles to access or barriers to access to the banking system. Quite the opposite. We should be removing those barriers and making it easier," he said.

The Minister commended Demerara Bank for its efforts in leveraging technology to streamline banking processes. The bank's implementation of AI-powered systems has significantly reduced processing times for loans, making it easier for customers to access financial services.

Dr. Singh encouraged



Attendees at the World Trade Centre Georgetown conference

banks to adopt similar innovative approaches. He envisions a future where customers can open accounts and apply for loans without visiting a physical branch.

"We want to make sure that every single person in Guyana has

the opportunity to access this," he stated.

The World Trade Centre Georgetown's Banking Conference, held at the Pegasus Corporate Suites, Georgetown, brought together industry leaders to discuss critical issues

facing the banking sector, including access to financing, banking regulations, and international payment systems.



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh

LOCAL CONTENT LAW EQUIPPING GUYANESE COMPANIES FOR REGIONAL AND GLOBAL MARKETS

Guyana's Local Content Law is empowering Guyanese businesses to secure opportunities in the oil and gas sector while building the capacity to compete regionally and internationally.

Local Content Director, Dr. Martin Pertab, highlighted this during the *Energy Perspectives Podcast*, hosted by the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo.

Dr. Pertab emphasised that local companies must prepare to thrive beyond the oil

and gas industry. He noted that while the law creates opportunities, genuine competitiveness requires fostering growth and innovation locally.

"A local content certificate alone does not guarantee entry into the oil and gas supply chain," Dr. Pertab explained, urging companies to leverage the current environment to boost their capabilities. He stressed the finite nature of oil resources, adding, **"Once they can compete locally, they can transition**

to regional and international markets. Our role is to create that environment for them to innovate and succeed."

The Director also addressed the need to balance the dominance of large companies and the inclusion of smaller enterprises. He warned that without intervention, smaller businesses could be sidelined. **"We need to shift the mindset. The protections provided by local content laws won't last forever. To**



Local Content Director, Dr. Martin Pertab

ensure sustainable growth, we must build competitiveness across the board," he said.

Dr. Pertab acknowledged challenges, such as larger contractors' preference for specialised services

due to the oil industry's zero-tolerance for error. To address this, the Local Content Secretariat is revising its strategies to promote broader development among small and medium-sized businesses.

"Our goal is to create a competitive landscape where multiple companies thrive, ensuring stable prices and fostering innovation," Dr. Pertab stated.

LABOUR MINISTRY APPROVES SAFETY MEASURES AT WALES PROJECT



OSH workers on site

A recent inspection by the Ministry of Labour's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Department has confirmed that ExxonMobil is maintaining high safety

standards at the Wales Gas-to-Energy project site in Region Three.

The inspection team conducted a thorough evaluation of the site. They were impressed by the company's

commitment to worker safety, noting the presence of necessary safety equipment and emergency response measures.

The Gas-to-Energy project, a significant

undertaking aimed at reducing Guyana's dependence on imported fuel oil and lowering electricity costs, involves the construction of a natural gas pipeline, power plant, and other



OSH workers on site



OSH workers on site

infrastructure.

Given the inherent risks associated with such a large-scale project, it is crucial to prioritise workers' safety. The

OSH Department will continue to monitor the site regularly to ensure ongoing compliance with safety regulations.

OIL FIRMS' PROCUREMENT PRACTICES UNDER SCRUTINY

The Local Content Secretariat is taking a closer look at the procurement processes employed by oil and gas companies operating in Guyana. Concerns have been raised about inconsistencies and a lack of standardisation in these processes.

Dr. Martin Pertab, Director of the Secretariat, expressed his concerns about the variations in procurement systems across different companies. He highlighted the issue of some companies attempting to award contracts prematurely at the Request for Information (RFI) stage, before a thorough evaluation of potential suppliers. "At an

RFI stage where about experience? the information is What about finance? basically more or What about technical

procurement systems. Dr. Pertab emphasised the importance of a

typically involves fair and transparent, public tendering, that could withstand shortlisting scrutiny, not for any companies, company to come requesting and just say, this is our company, this is our procurement process, and this is how we do things here," Dr. Pertab stated.

The Secretariat plans to conduct random assessments of evaluation reports to ensure compliance with procurement guidelines. The aim is to create a level playing field for local businesses and to instill confidence in the industry. "Because in order for us to ensure there is confidence in the industry, and when we say to our locals to invest...We must have a system that is

Dr. Pertab reiterated the importance of adhering to established procurement criteria, including pricing, technical capabilities, and local content plans. While the Secretariat has not yet imposed penalties under the Local Content Act, it is committed to addressing these procurement issues and ensuring a fair and equitable environment for local businesses.



The Secretariat has emphasised adhering to established procurement criteria, including pricing, technical capabilities, and local content plans

less on a company profile... how can you decide at your level to say that this company is the right fit based on a company profile? So, what about pricing? What

capabilities?" he questioned.

Unlike government procurement, which is governed by a specific act, the oil and gas industry often operates with less transparent

he fair and transparent process, involving public tendering, shortlisting, requesting quotations, and evaluating bids before awarding contracts. "A proper process

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION REVEALS ACARAI-CORENTYNE'S BIODIVERSITY

A recent scientific expedition has unveiled the Acarai-Corentyne corridor in southern Guyana as a

of biodiversity. The findings, released by the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) and the Field Museum, highlight the region's pristine forests, unique ecosystems, and rich biodiversity.

This vast, untouched

wilderness, spanning nearly 1.3 million hectares, boasts ancient weathered soils, minimal sedimentation in rivers, and extremely pure water systems. The region is a critical carbon sink, playing a crucial role in mitigating climate change.

"What's most exciting about this project is not just the science, but its potential to shape the future of conservation in this region, ensuring that it continues to thrive

for generations to come," said Foreign Secretary and PAC Chairman Robert Persaud during the finding's presentation at Umana Yana.

The expedition team, comprised of local and international experts, conducted extensive research on plant, fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal communities. Their findings have identified numerous species of significant conservation importance.

"The massive



The audience at the finding's presentation at Umana Yana

untouched ecology has the potential to position Guyana as a global model for biodiversity conservation," said Lesley de Souza, Lead Conservation Scientist on the team.

To ensure the long-term protection of this invaluable ecosystem,

the researchers emphasise the importance of engaging local communities in sustainable management and decision-making processes. By working together, Guyana can safeguard this natural wonder for generations to come.



Foreign Secretary and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Protected Areas Commission, Robert Persaud



Lesley de Souza, Lead Conservation Scientist from the Field Museum

NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART HOSPITAL FOR MORUCA AND KATO

The Government, in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), has announced the construction of two state-of-the-art hospitals in Moruca, Region One, and Kato, Region Eight. These multi-billion-dollar facilities underscore the administration's commitment to providing equitable access to quality healthcare for all citizens.

The **\$4.435 billion hospital in Moruca, Region One** slated for completion within 24 months, is poised to revolutionise healthcare delivery for residents of Moruca and surrounding communities.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali described the project as a **"new page"** for the region, stating, **"This project tells a story of transformation,**



Scene from the sod turning ceremony

empowerment, and partnership."

Equipped with modern amenities such as two operating theatres, a state-of-the-art emergency room, and advanced diagnostic tools like digital X-ray and CT scan facilities, the hospital will offer comprehensive healthcare services.

Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony emphasized the impact of the facility, saying, **"You will no longer have to go anywhere because you will have**

a world-class facility in your region."

The **\$5.4 billion hospital in Kato, Region Eight**, is also set for completion within 24 months. This facility will cater to the region's diverse healthcare needs, offering: 75 inpatient beds with modern amenities, operating theatres for cataract and maternity procedures, CT scans and X-rays, essential treatment for kidney disease patients, advanced Laboratory Services and, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

President Ali highlighted the transformative potential of the Kato hospital: **"You deserve the same level and the same standard of service like anyone else across the country."** He added that with the hospital's CT scan capabilities, residents would no longer face months-long waits for diagnostic imaging.

Beyond healthcare, these projects are expected to stimulate regional economic growth. The construction phase in Kato, for example, is projected to generate approximately 60 jobs for local residents.

President Ali emphasized the broader vision for development: **"This region is exploding with development, and**

we want all of you to be a part of this. But for all of this to happen, we have to build an ecosystem that includes proper health, proper education, good infrastructure, a good airstrip, and good facilities."

The hospitals in Moruca and Kato are

are under construction in Kamarang, Region Seven, and Lethem, Region Nine, further demonstrating the government's dedication to equitable healthcare access.

Through these transformative projects, the government aims to build a foundation for improved health



Scene from the sod turning ceremony for the Kato Hospital

part of a nationwide effort to improve healthcare in rural and remote areas. Similar state-of-the-art facilities

outcomes and sustainable development across Guyana.

PRESIDENT ALI PUSHES FOR ACCELERATED HEALTHCARE IN REGION 3

President Dr. Irfaan Ali visited the De Kinderen Regional Hospital construction site to assess progress and urge for accelerated completion of the project. The state-of-the-art hospital, once finished, will provide essential healthcare services to residents of the Essequibo Islands-West Demerara region.

"I know you have

June [2025] as a timeline, but I want you to give me a plan to see how you can expedite some work and finish this for April...tremendous progress but we need to accelerate it," President Ali emphasised.

The hospital, one of seven being constructed nationwide at a cost of approximately \$7 billion

each, will feature 75 beds and offer a range of modern medical services.

Following the hospital visit, President Ali met with teachers at Tuschen Primary School and residents of Vergenoegen to address their concerns. He committed to upgrading the school's ground and addressing drainage, irrigation, and road



President Ali inspects works on Region Three hospital, other projects

infrastructure issues in the community.

The President's visit underscores the government's commitment to improving the quality of life for citizens across Guyana, particularly in the areas of healthcare and infrastructure development.

434 NURSES GRADUATE, BOLSTERING GUYANA'S HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

A significant milestone was reached as 434 individuals graduated from the Georgetown School of Nursing, marking the largest graduating class in the institution's 79-year history. This achievement underscores the Ministry of Health's commitment to strengthening Guyana's healthcare workforce.

During the graduation ceremony at the National Cultural Centre, Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony assured all graduates of immediate job placements within



434 nursing school graduates to join health sector

the healthcare sector. This will allow them to utilise their training as registered nurses, nursing assistants, and midwives.

The graduates expressed immense

gratitude for the opportunity to fulfill their lifelong dream of providing quality healthcare to communities across Guyana. Nicola Dawson, the top graduate of the

professional nursing programme, stated her intention to **"serve the people of the community and look after their needs."** Similarly, aspiring midwife Jason Daniels

shared his aspiration to enhance healthcare in his rural community in Region Two.

The programme's accessibility enabled numerous individuals from hinterland and remote areas to enroll and successfully complete their training. Minister Anthony emphasised that this initiative is part of the government's broader strategy to improve healthcare services nationwide.

"We've invested a lot of resources in training people," the minister said, recognising the crucial

role of a skilled workforce in delivering quality healthcare.

In addition to human capital development, the Ministry of Health is actively investing in healthcare infrastructure. The construction of a state-of-the-art paediatric and maternal hospital in Ogle is underway, and six new regional hospitals are being built in Bath, De Kinderen, Diamond, Enmore, Lima, and No. 75 Village. These facilities are expected to open by the second quarter of 2025.

PORT KAITUMA GETS NEW MAGISTRATE'S COURT

A new \$239.8 million development will improve access to justice for residents of Port Kaituma and surrounding communities in Region One.



The new \$239.8 million magistrate court

The new facility, which replaces a less adequate arrangement, will serve approximately 800 residents of Port Kaituma and a broader population of 18,000 across the region. It offers modern amenities, a spacious courtroom, and living quarters for the magistrate, court clerk, and staff. Previously, court sessions were held in Matthews Ridge and, more recently, at the local police station.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, SC, emphasised

the government's commitment to ensuring equal access to justice for all Guyanese, regardless of their geographic location. The new court, he said, is a testament to this commitment.

"Today, you are here to see it as a reality, and that is our commitment as a government to work with every sector of our country and work in every sector of our country to ensure that the highest quality of services is delivered to the people of our country, wherever



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Port Kaituma Magistrate Court

they are located," marks a meaningful fulfilment of a promise made to the people within this catchment area," he said.

Minister Nandlall stated. The new facility will also provide services for domestic violence cases, probation, and social work.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, highlighted the positive impact of the new court on the region's judicial system. **"The opening of this Magistrate court**

of this facility is part of a broader government initiative to expand access to justice across Guyana. Similar facilities are planned for Mabaruma and Mahdia.

MAGISTRATES BENEFIT FROM RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TRAINING

Magistrates in Guyana underwent a two-day restorative justice training programme to equip them with the tools necessary to effectively implement the Restorative Justice Act of 2022. This initiative focuses on rehabilitating offenders through reconciliation with victims and the community, applicable to non-capital offences.

Attorney General Anil Nandlall highlighted the crucial role of magistrates in shaping public perception of the justice system. By adopting restorative justice principles, magistrates can contribute to a more humane and effective

approach to justice. **"Our magistrates represent the first stage of interaction with our court system. Therefore, you are the most important platform.**

interaction with you will influence their perception of our justice system," he stated.

The training, funded by the Canadian government was

empowers magistrates to delegate appropriate cases to restorative justice officers, who will facilitate informal resolutions outside of the traditional courtroom setting. This approach aims to reduce court backlogs, alleviate prison overcrowding, and foster a more restorative justice system.

The government is actively working to establish restorative justice offices nationwide, alongside probation offices, to enhance the efficiency of case resolution.

Chancellor of the Judiciary Yonette Cummings-Edwards emphasised the importance of judicial



AG Anil Nandlall, (SC), Chancellor of the Judiciary, Yonette Cummings-Edwards and Senior International Assistance Officer of the Canadian High Commissioner Tariq Clarke

officers understanding and applying restorative justice principles to increase public trust and confidence in the justice system.

Tariq Williams, Senior International Assistance Officer of the Canadian High Commission, underscored Canada's commitment to supporting Guyana's

justice sector modernisation efforts. By investing in restorative justice training, Canada aims to contribute to a more humane and effective justice system in Guyana.



Magistrates at the training

So, what impressions they get from the carried out at Cara Lodge, Georgetown and



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

\$100M DEFAMATION LAWSUIT FILED OVER FACEBOOK POSTS TARGETING ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, has filed a defamation lawsuit against social media personality Melissa Ann Atwell, known as "Melly Mel," seeking damages exceeding \$100 million.

The case centres on a series of allegedly defamatory Facebook posts published on November 21, 2024.

According to court documents, Minister Nandlall claims that Atwell's posts contained

false, malicious, and fabricated allegations, which damaged his reputation and professional standing. The lawsuit also seeks an injunction to prevent Atwell from making further defamatory posts and demands the immediate removal of the offending content from her Facebook page.

The Attorney General, who has held his position since August 2020 and serves as a key member of the People's Progressive Party/

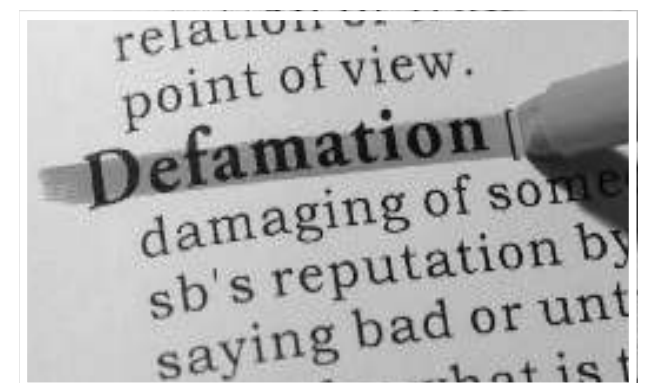
Civic (PPP/C), stated that the posts were intended to undermine his credibility among his Cabinet colleagues and the public. **"These baseless accusations have caused significant harm to my reputation and standing within society,"** Minister Nandlall emphasised in his lawsuit.

The posts in question accused Minister Nandlall of corruption, dishonesty, and criminal activity,

including allegations of involvement in the so-called "phantom squad."

Atwell's Facebook page reportedly has over 130,000 followers, significantly amplifying the reach of the alleged defamatory statements. The posts garnered hundreds of reactions, comments, and shares within hours of publication.

The lawsuit also highlights broader concerns about the use of



social media platforms to disseminate defamatory content. Minister Nandlall noted the government's ongoing efforts to address such misuse through legal

collaboration with U.S. authorities, aiming to hold individuals accountable for inflammatory and harmful content posted from outside Guyana.

HOPE AND JUSTICE CENTRE OPENS IN REGION 3 -FEATURES FORENSIC INTERVIEW UNIT

The second Hope and Justice Centre was officially opened in Vergenoegen, Region Three, offering comprehensive services to address violence and support vulnerable populations.

Funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the centre introduces Guyana's first-ever forensic interview unit.

At the opening ceremony, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips hailed the centre as a pivotal step toward building a just and equitable society. Larger than the first centre at Lusignan, East Coast Demerara, the Vergenoegen facility offers a wide range of services, including counselling, legal



The Hope and Justice Centre

aid, healthcare, and temporary shelter.

"These centres are sanctuaries of hope and citadels of justice," the Prime Minister said. **"They symbolise our commitment to a justice system that serves everyone—not just the powerful, but especially the weak and defenceless."**

The government plans to establish similar facilities in all the regions to combat violence and support victims. Prime Minister Phillips highlighted that these centres represent a broader reform agenda, making justice more accessible, compassionate, and effective.

Attorney General

and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, explained that the centre would reduce prison intakes while addressing the needs of both victims and perpetrators. He emphasised its one-stop approach, providing access to doctors, police officers, social workers, lawyers, and temporary shelter.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr. Vindhya Persaud underscored the government's commitment to ending gender-based violence. She highlighted the forensic interview unit as a groundbreaking initiative to address child abuse cases efficiently and effectively.

"For the first time in our country's history, we have

a state-operated forensic interview unit. This will significantly reduce the backlog of child abuse cases," Dr. Persaud stated.

The Hope and

literacy education, and employment opportunities to break cycles of abuse.

The IDB's Chief of Operations in Guyana, Ivan Alonzo Gaviria, reaffirmed the



The commissioning of the Hope and Justice Centre

Justice Centre will also support Region Two residents until a similar facility is built there. Its services extend beyond addressing domestic and sexual violence, offering skills training, financial

bank's commitment to supporting such initiatives, which align with the ongoing 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

GUYANA LAUNCHES CENTRAL AUTHORITY FOR INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

Guyana has taken a significant step towards ensuring safe and ethical international adoptions with the launch of the Guyana Central Authority (GCA). The GCA, located in Alberttown, Georgetown, and established in accordance with the 1993 Hague Convention, will oversee the entire adoption process, prioritising the best interests of children.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya



Guyana Central Authority building located in Albert Town

Persaud, emphasised the GCA's crucial role in safeguarding children's rights and promoting family reunification. The agency will work to ensure that all adoptions are conducted with integrity and transparency.

To apply for adoption, both local and international applicants must meet specific criteria and undergo rigorous assessments. Local applicants can submit applications to the Childcare and

Protection Agency, while international applicants must work through a registered and licensed adoption agency in their home country.

The GCA will conduct thorough assessments, including mental and health screenings, police clearance checks, and home study inspections, to ensure the suitability of adoptive families. Once approved, the adoption process will proceed through the legal system, culminating in a court order and the



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud cutting the ribbon at the launch of the Guyana Central Authority

issuance of an adoption certificate.

The GCA's establishment marks a significant milestone in Guyana's efforts to provide a safe and ethical framework for international adoption.

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance hosted a crucial Civil Society Consultation on November 26, as a prelude to Guyana's 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle. This engagement aimed to gather input from civil society organisations (CSOs) to shape Guyana's national report, due in January 2025.

The UPR, a United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council mechanism, periodically reviews the human rights records of all UN member states. Guyana's upcoming review in May 2025 will assess the nation's progress in human rights protection

since the last cycle.

Approximately 50 CSOs, representing diverse areas like children's rights, women's rights, indigenous peoples' rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and poverty reduction, were invited. The consultation provided a platform for these organisations to share insights and recommendations on key thematic areas, including legal and institutional reform, child rights, gender equality, the right to development, and equality and non-

discrimination.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, emphasised the government's commitment to human rights and the importance of collaboration with CSOs. She noted that the national report would reflect the contributions of all societal actors, not just the government.

The consultation featured breakout sessions where participants discussed specific UPR recommendations. These discussions focused on



(from right to left) - Jean Kamau (UN Resident Coordinator), Hon. Gail Teixeira (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs)

cross-cutting issues such as corporal punishment, the death penalty, and the decriminalisation

of consensual same-sex relations.

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs

and Governance is committed to incorporating the valuable input from CSOs into Guyana's national report. This collaboration will ensure that Guyana's human rights commitments are effectively addressed and the well-being of all citizens is prioritised.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEROES NEVER DIE

GUYANA REMEMBERS FALLEN GDF HEROES



President Ali delivering the keynote address

Guyana honoured five fallen heroes of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) during a solemn memorial service held at the Umana Yana in Kingston, Georgetown, on Sunday, December 1. The ceremony paid tribute to Brigadier (Ret'd) Gary Beaton, Colonel Michael Shahoud, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Charles,

Lieutenant Colonel Sean Welcome, and Warrant Officer Class 2 Jason Khan, who tragically lost their lives in a helicopter crash last year.

President Irfaan Ali, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, and other high-ranking officials

and commemorate their sacrifices.

"These men were bound by a shared commitment to the principles of service, sacrifice, and patriotism," President Ali said in his keynote address. **"Their service was a shield for us**

nation."

The highlighted Brigadier Beaton's steadfast dedication and leadership, the professionalism and expertise of Colonels Shahoud, Charles, and Welcome, and the skill and commitment of Warrant Officer Khan, a member of the GDF's elite corps.

"Let us pledge to carry forward their mission with the same courage and determination," President Ali urged. **"Let us honour their memory not just with words, but with actions that reflect their values and uphold their vision for a safe and secure Guyana."**



Scene from the Memorial Service

The high-ranking officers lost their lives on December 6, 2023, while on a critical mission to the border amidst escalating threats to Guyana's sovereignty. They were part of a seven-member crew onboard a Bell 412 helicopter that departed Georgetown that morning.

The crash site was located on December 7 by search and rescue

teams. Two survivors were recovered, but the loss of the five heroes plunged the nation into mourning.

The memorial service served as a poignant reminder of the ultimate sacrifice made by these brave soldiers. Their unwavering commitment to duty and their love for Guyana will be forever remembered.



Scene from the Memorial Service

joined the families of the fallen soldiers to express condolences

all, and their sacrifice has strengthened the foundations of our

ETERINGBANG GETS NEW AERODROME

- NAMED AFTER BRIGADIER BEATON

President Dr. Irfaan Ali officially inaugurated the \$688.8 million Brigadier Gary Beaton Aerodrome in Eteringbang, Region Seven. The state-of-the-art facility, named after the late Brigadier who tragically lost his life in a helicopter crash while serving his country, is a testament to his dedication and sacrifice.

The rehabilitation of the Eteringbang airstrip was a challenging endeavour, given its

remote location and harsh conditions. However, under the leadership of Brigadier Beaton, the GDF successfully upgraded the laterite runway to a concrete pavement, significantly improving its safety and operational capacity.

President Ali expressed gratitude for the sacrifices made by Brigadier Beaton and his team, emphasising the importance of recognising their

contributions to national security. **"I believe that too often we do not recognise properly**

the service that is given," President Ali said. **"I would say that the appropriate**



A shot of the new and improved \$688.8 million Eteringbang airstrip

border medal should be given to all those who served on this important border location."

The President also highlighted the economic benefits that the new aerodrome will bring to the region, including reduced transportation costs and improved access to essential goods and services. **"Needless to say, when we make this investment, we reduce the risk**

of failure for the industry, we reduce the risk of damages, and with reduced risk comes reduced prices," President Ali highlighted.

The government's investment in the Eteringbang Aerodrome is part of a broader plan to enhance hinterland connectivity and development.

GUYANA FIRE SERVICE EXPANDS TO INCLUDE RESCUE OPERATIONS

Guyana's firefighting capabilities are undergoing significant enhancements through strategic investments and training initiatives by the government. The Guyana Fire Service is evolving into the **Guyana Fire and Rescue Service**, with expanded responsibilities that include emergency medical technician services to improve on-site rescue operations.

Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn emphasised the government's dedication to fire safety during

the opening of the Caribbean Association of Firefighters (CAFF) conference.

"The term continuous development under our circumstances relates to making life better and safer, particularly for us here in Guyana and, by extension, the Caribbean," he stated.

The Minister also encouraged CAFF members to collaborate on improving firefighting responses across the region. **"This opportunity to bring together our expertise,**

knowledge, and engagement helps build the interpersonal relationships necessary to advance fire management and ensure continuous development," Minister Benn added.

To address challenges posed by climate change, urbanisation, and agricultural expansion, the government has made substantial investments in modern firefighting equipment and training. The recent acquisition of the Caribbean's first **Bronto Skylift**, a

cutting-edge firefighting apparatus, underscores this commitment.

Additionally, the government has fostered partnerships with other countries and prioritised public awareness initiatives to enhance fire safety.

Training remains a cornerstone of the Guyana Fire Service's transformation. Over 105 personnel have undergone specialised training in areas such as basic and tactical firefighting, equipping them with the skills necessary to respond effectively to

emergencies.

Through these investments and advancements, the Guyana Fire and Rescue Service is better equipped to protect citizens and

property from the devastating effects of fire. These developments mark a significant step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of all Guyanese.



Members of the Caribbean Association of Firefighters

PARLIAMENT ROUNDUP

The National Assembly approved **\$84.5 billion** in supplementary funding



Government minister defending the supplementary allocation

to accelerate major government initiatives. This funding, detailed in Financial Papers 3 and 4 for 2024, supports programmes ranging from cash grants to transformative infrastructure projects, signalling the government's commitment to advancing development goals. Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, piloted this initiative.

\$100,000 CASH GRANT INITIATIVE

A significant portion, **\$30.5 billion**, is earmarked for the \$100,000 cash grant initiative. This programme, set to inject **\$60 billion** into the economy, will roll out in two phases: registration at designated centers followed by verification to prevent duplication.

GAS-TO-ENERGY

The **Gas-to-Energy project** received **\$25.3 billion** to reduce

electricity costs by 50% and meet growing energy demands. Supporting allocations include **\$51 million** for Mahdia Power and Light operations and **\$9.2 million** for disaster



Government minister defending the supplementary allocation

preparedness initiatives.

HOUSING AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

A total of **\$8.4 billion** was approved to improve housing and water infrastructure. Key allocations include **\$6.5 billion** for road expansion in new housing areas, **\$653 million** for electrical installations, and **\$240 million** to construct 14 small water treatment plants across Regions Four, Five, and Six. Additional funds for potable wells in communities such as Mon Repos, Parika, and Bartica.

HEALTHCARE EXPANSION

Healthcare initiatives received **\$4.5 billion** to continue building six regional hospitals in Lima, De Kendren, Diamond, Enmore, Bath, and No. 75 Village. Additional funds support new hospital projects in Lethem, Moruca,

and Kato, and **\$3.6 billion** was allocated for essential drugs and medical supplies.

BOOSTING AGRICULTURE

The agricultural sector was allocated **\$5.5 billion** for drainage, irrigation, farm-to-market road rehabilitation, and flood mitigation efforts.



Government minister defending the supplementary allocation

EDUCATION INVESTMENTS

Education received **\$1.2 billion**, including funds to abolish tuition fees at the University of Guyana starting January 2025. This measure is part of President Ali's commitment to improving access to higher education for all Guyanese.

ADDRESSING IMMEDIATE NEEDS

An additional **\$456.9 million** was approved for contingency funding to meet immediate needs across various ministries, including increased security services for educational and health facilities.

- **\$84.5B APPROVED FOR KEY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**
- **NEW LAW SIMPLIFIES ACCESS TO DECEASED'S FUNDS**
- **LANDMARK OPEN DATA BILL PASSED**

HUMANITARIAN AID

Guyana's humanitarian contributions also received a boost, with **\$123 million** allocated to assist CARICOM nations affected by natural disasters and social challenges. This includes aid for Haiti and small island developing states (SIDS) impacted



Government minister defending the supplementary allocation

by Hurricane Beryl.

NEW LAW SIMPLIFIES ACCESS TO DECEASED'S FUNDS

The National Assembly also passed amendments to the **Deceased Persons Estate Administration Act**, easing the financial burden on grieving families.

The amendment expands the types of institutions from which beneficiaries can withdraw funds without the need for lengthy legal procedures. Previously, beneficiaries

could only withdraw a limited amount from bank accounts without probate or letters of administration. Now, they can access funds from a wider range of institutions, including credit unions, co-operative societies, and the National Insurance Scheme.

"This bill comes from the grassroots of all of our immediate and direct engagements with people," Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, SC, explained. **"In situations where the death is unexpected, especially when the**



Government minister defending the supplementary allocation

other person is in a vulnerable situation, they must be able to have access to the means to support themselves."

Landmark Open Data Bill Passed

The **Open Data Bill**, hailed as a transformative step toward transparency and digital innovation, was

also passed.

"This legislation will attract investment and empower citizens to participate fully in the digital economy," said Prime Minister Mark Phillips.

The bill mandates public authorities to appoint **Data Officers**, maintain data registries, and ensure public access to data while safeguarding privacy.

To ensure data security and privacy, the bill includes stringent measures to protect sensitive information. **"This legislation aligns with international best practices, striking a balance between data accessibility and privacy,"** the Prime Minister noted.

Attorney General Nandlall emphasized its practical benefits, stating, **"Open data will enable better decision-making in sectors like agriculture and transportation."**



Government minister defending the supplementary allocation

MINISTER TEIXEIRA HONOURED FOR LIFETIME SERVICE

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, MP, was recently awarded the prestigious Commonwealth Parliamentarian Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognises her over 30 years of dedicated service as a Member of Parliament in Guyana.

Minister Teixeira expressed gratitude for the nomination and the

opportunity to serve the people of Guyana. She urged younger parliamentarians to prioritise public service and work diligently for the betterment of the nation.

Throughout her career, Minister Teixeira has held various ministerial portfolios, including Health, Home Affairs, Culture, Youth and Sport, and now Parliamentary Affairs and Governance. She



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, receiving the prestigious Commonwealth Lifetime Achievement Award from Confidential Secretary to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Jaitun Haniff

has also served as a Presidential Advisor on Governance.

To qualify for the Commonwealth Parliamentarian Lifetime Achievement Award, a nominee must have served as a parliamentarian for over 20 years, demonstrated significant contributions to their parliament and country, promoted democracy and good governance, and achieved notable

positive change. Minister Teixeira's long and distinguished career clearly meets these criteria.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

Guyana has made significant progress in anti-corruption efforts

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr Ashni Singh has highlighted Guyana's significant progress in anti-corruption efforts.

During a panel discussion at the Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Expo on Monday, Dr Singh pointed to the visible transformation underway in Guyana, citing new highways and modern infrastructure. He said that these changes are further supported by substantial institutional changes.

He underscored the importance of establishing a strong constitutional and legal framework to enhance transparency and accountability.

"Guyanese democracy in contemporary times is perhaps only about 32 years old, if you consider that democracy was restored to Guyana in 1992, after three decades of dictatorship and dictatorial rule, mismanagement of the economy and destruction of institutions and infrastructure," the minister said.

Minister Singh pointed to the 2001 constitutional amendments that proved critical in introducing human rights commissions, parliamentary oversight committees strengthening the independence of the Auditor General's office.



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh

"We enacted, for the first time, a modern central bank legislation, new financial institutions act to lay the framework for sound and strong prudential regulation and oversight of the financial sector. We enacted a new Insurance Act. We enacted a new Securities Industry Act, and of course, subsequently, we will enact a new anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism Act, all of which comprise critical elements of the suite of legislation," he added.

The government has also been

keen on deploying information technology solutions to modernise government operations and enhance transparency.

The senior minister also highlighted the benefits of bipartisan, consultative approach to institutional reform. This was demonstrated in the drafting of the 2001 constitution through national stakeholder engagement.

The government also engages stakeholders on amendments or the introduction of other critical pieces of legislation, such as the Representation

of the People Act (ROPA) and the Protection from Harassment Bill.

Additionally, new laws were enacted for procurement, revenue administration, and financial sector regulations, all aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability.

He explained that Guyana's experience in rebuilding institutions after a difficult period requires a multi-faceted, sustained effort, but can ultimately lead to significant improvements in governance and the fight against corruption.



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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:
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Celery 西芹 45.00 case	Frozen Pangda Baza Fillet 魚片 8x4.5LB 60.00 case	Headless White Shrimp 天頭白蝦 20/25 100% B/Cross 190.00 case	Thailand Black Tiger Shrimp 泰國黑虎蝦 20/25 400g 185.00 case
Extra Large Egg 特大雞蛋 54.99 case	Huy Fong Chili Garlic Sauce 蒜香辣椒醬 387ml 65.00 case	Aroy-D Coconut Milk 椰奶 24x400ml 43.99 case	ADM All Purpose Flour 麵粉 20kg 19.99 bag
Monosodium Glutamate 味精 22.7kg 60.00 bag	Capri Vegetable Oil 菜油 1.8L 31.99 case	VALUE Dishwashing Liquid 4x4L 洗潔精 26.99 case	Lee Kum Kee Kum Chur Oyster Flavoured Sauce 李錦記蒜蓉鮮味蠔油 6x2.2kg 39.00 case
Lee Kum Kee Hoisin Sauce 李錦記蠔油 1.75L 48.99 case	NG-18 New Gen Eco-Friendly Red Bath Sugar 紅糖 20kg 22.00 case	Lee Kum Kee Hoisin Sauce 李錦記蠔油 1.75L 48.99 case	Lee Kum Kee Hoisin Sauce 李錦記蠔油 1.75L 48.99 case

Maggi Soy Sauce 350g Reg: \$1.79 4.99	Cook Brand Sweet Chili Sauce 650g Reg: \$3.99 3.59	LFC Soy Sauce 1L Reg: \$4.99 2.59
Angel All Purpose Creamer 370g Reg: \$3.99 1.99	Nestle Milo 400g Reg: \$3.99 3.79	Mescafe Coffee 120g Reg: \$6.99 4.99
BCH Bawang Comick Series 90g Reg: \$1.99/each 3/\$2.00	OK Aloe Drink 1.5L Reg: \$3.99 1.99	Royale Tiger 3-rolls Reg: \$9.99 3.59

FROZEN

O&C Head On Shrimp 台頭 20/30 400g Reg: \$7.99 5.99	Mil's Choice Baby Squid 魷魚仔 900g Reg: \$6.99 4.99	Coconut Tree Frozen Mix Vegetable Buns 400g 菜包 Reg: \$4.99 3.99	Sarangani Bay Cooked Milkfish Flakes 454g 魚片 Reg: \$9.99 6.99	Frozen Durian 冷凍榴蓮 Reg: \$4.99 3.99 lb	AA-1 Moonfish 900g 月片 Reg: \$2.99/ea 2/\$5.00
Bulacan Pork Tosino 375g 豬油肉 Reg: \$5.99 3.99	Bulacan Fish Ball Series 魚丸 180-200g Reg: \$2.99/ea 2/\$5.00	SA CAY Frozen Lemon Grass 454g 蒜香茅 Reg: \$3.99/ea 2/\$5.00	Armstrong Cheese Series 芝士 320g Reg: \$7.99 5.99	Spring Home TV Spring Roll Pastry 8.5" 20pcs 春卷皮 Reg: \$1.99/ea 2/\$3.00	Shi Pompano 金鯧魚 Reg: \$4.99 3.99 lb

MEAT

Beef Eye Round 牛柳 Reg: \$1.99 2.99 lb	Ground Beef 牛肉碎 Reg: \$4.99 6.99 lb	Ground Beef 牛肉碎 Reg: \$4.99 3.99 lb
Frozen Cow Egg 冷凍牛蛋 Reg: \$3.99 2.59 lb	Chicken Leg Drum 雞腿 Reg: \$2.99 3.59 lb	

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Frozen Fresh Pompano 冷凍金鯧魚 Reg: \$3.99 4.99 lb	Fresh Atlantic Salmon Fillet 新鮮大西洋三文魚片 Reg: \$11.99 9.99	Live Cat Fish 活草魚 Reg: \$4.99 3.99

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ONE GUYANA CHRISTMAS FESTIVE CHEER

Main Street lit up with joy and unity as President Dr. Irfaan Ali, alongside the First Family, officially opened the One Guyana Christmas Village and Supermarket, ushering in the 2024 Christmas season.

The village, adorned with sparkling lights and festive decor, welcomed hundreds of Guyanese eager to celebrate the holiday season.

This unique Christmas experience features small and medium-scale businesses showcasing traditional Guyanese Christmas staples, from black cake to handcrafted decorations. Live performances by local musicians and colourful dances added energy to the opening, highlighting the cultural richness that defines the season.

President Ali described the Christmas Village as an icon of peace, love, and unity, promoting the values that make the Guyanese Christmas so special. He also encouraged reflection and prayers for global peace, particularly for women and children in war-affected areas.

The President announced plans for a grand Old Year's Night celebration on Main Street, inviting all Guyanese to ring in 2025 with unity and optimism.

The One Guyana Christmas Village is opened daily, and promises a festive experience filled with holiday cheer, local traditions, and the warm embrace of the Guyanese community.



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Lucozade Energy Glucose Drink Orange Only 380 ml **1.99 each**



Tropical Delight 100% Apple Juice 1.89 L **2.49 each**



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Walker's Wood Jerk Seasoning assorted 280 g **4.49 each**



Benjamin's Vanilla Essence 480 ml **3.49 each**



Delphi Honey 1 kg **5.99 each**



Grace Vienna Sausage assorted 130 g **2/2.20**



Grace Jack Mackerel in Tomato Sauce 425 g **2.29 each**



Mr Goudas All Purpose Flour 8 kg **8.99 each**



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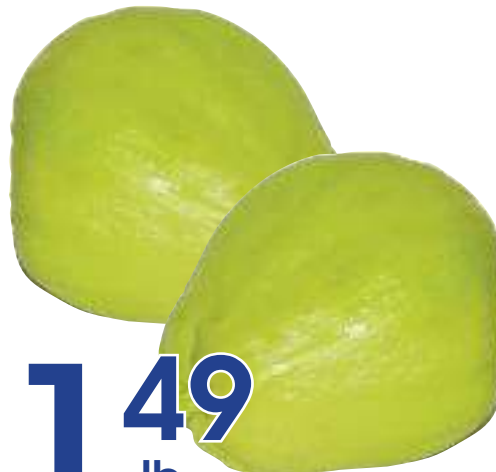
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NEW SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN REGION NINE TO BENEFIT OVER 700 STUDENTS



Sod turning for Marurunau Secondary School

Region Nine is set to transform its educational landscape with the construction of three secondary schools in Marurunau, Nappi, and Yupukari, offering quality education and enhanced opportunities to over 700 students from multiple communities.

A \$175.5 million secondary school in Marurunau will serve approximately 400 students from that community, Awarewaunau, and

Shea. The facility, which includes dormitories for students from Awarewaunau and Shea, is scheduled for completion by June 2025.

At the sod-turning ceremony, Minister of Education Priya Manickchand emphasised the importance of the project. **"This school will cater to about 400 children, and it is already attracting interest from**

students in Rupunau who prefer to attend here rather than Sand Creek. This demonstrates the growing demand for quality education closer to home," she noted.

The Marurunau school is being constructed by three contractors to ensure timely delivery, and teacher training remains a priority. **"By next year, 100% of our teachers in Region Nine will be fully trained or in training, the highest percentage ever achieved here,"** Minister Manickchand said.

In Nappi, the \$215 million George Tancredo Secondary School is under construction to benefit

over 300 students from Nappi, Hiawa, and Parishara. Local contractor Beerdat Harrinandan is leading the project, which is expected to be completed within nine months.

local labour and using furniture crafted in Nappi, boosting the community's economy.

Toshao Elroy McGarrell expressed gratitude, recalling the vision of George

secondary school is under construction to accommodate 60 students from Yupukari, Fly Hill, Kaicumbay, and Quatata. This facility will alleviate overcrowding at St. Ignatius Secondary School and reduce travel distances for students.

Toshao Russian Dorrick praised the initiative, highlighting its timely impact. **"We are moving forward, and I thank the Government of Guyana for prioritising education,"** he stated.

Beyond these schools, the government is constructing 12 nursery schools, seven primary schools, and seven secondary schools across Region Nine, including facilities in Tabatinga, Karasabai, Massara, and Katoka.



Minister Manickchand during the site visit to the Yupukari Secondary School

"This school will allow us to phase out primary tops, ensuring students access proper secondary facilities," Minister Manickchand stated. The project is creating jobs by employing

Tancredo. **"He dreamt of this for a long time. It's a blessing to realise his vision and provide our children with a space to learn and grow,"** McGarrell shared.

In Yupukari, a \$22.5 million

NEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS OPEN IN REGIONS 3 AND 9

The government's commitment to improving education access and quality across Guyana continues with the commissioning of three state-of-the-art schools in Regions Three and Nine, positively impacting students in remote communities.

In Region Three, the \$54 million Western Hogg Island Primary School was officially inaugurated on November 30, 2024. This modern facility replaces a deteriorating structure and offers a well-equipped learning environment for 50



The school is specifically designed to accommodate 50 pupils from Liberty, Hogg Island, and neighbouring villages on the island

students from Liberty and Hogg Island. During the construction phase, students were accommodated in nearby government buildings to ensure uninterrupted learning.

The school is staffed

by four dedicated teachers, including a recent graduate of the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE). An additional teacher is currently pursuing training at CPCE to further enhance the

school's teaching capacity.

In Region Nine, the Ministry of Education inaugurated two schools—Moco Moco Nursery School and Quiko Primary School—representing a combined investment of \$26.4 million.

The \$13.8 million Moco Moco Nursery School features modern classrooms, age-appropriate furniture, and a playground, fostering an environment conducive to early childhood development.

The \$12.6 million Quiko Primary

School offers spacious classrooms, modern teaching resources, and recreational spaces, significantly enhancing learning opportunities for students in Quiko and nearby villages.

Both schools address critical challenges, such as long commutes and overcrowding, allowing students to focus on their education in safe, purpose-built facilities.



The \$13M Moco Moco Nursery School

These projects are part of the Ministry of Education's broader initiative to bridge educational disparities, particularly in hinterland regions. By investing in infrastructure and teacher training, the government is ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of geographic location.

NATIONS GRADUATES ENCOURAGED TO LEVERAGE GUYANA'S ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has called on graduates of Nations Incorporated to understand Guyana's economic history and evolving opportunities as they enter the workforce.

Addressing over 300 graduates at the National Cultural Centre, he emphasised the importance of contextual thinking in making informed decisions and contributing to national development.

Reflecting on Guyana's transformation from a period of economic instability to becoming one of the world's fastest-growing economies, Dr. Jagdeo noted that young professionals are fortunate to begin their careers in such a flourishing environment. **"You would want to know where our country is evolving and how you fit into that context,"** he said.

The Vice President also urged the graduates to foster empathy, patriotism, and a long-

term vision in their careers, highlighting those facts—not hearsay or social media

narratives—are crucial to solving societal challenges.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, echoed these sentiments, encouraging women to **"take their seats at the table of change"** and actively shape the nation's future.

The graduating cohort, which included recipients of diplomas, bachelor's, and master's degrees, completed

programmes in fields such as business administration, public health, and oil and gas management. They are certified by institutions like the University of London and The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

Dr. Jagdeo also presented special awards to outstanding students, reinforcing his message of purpose and excellence.



Over 300 graduated from Diploma, Bachelor Degree and Master Degree programmes at the National Cultural Centre (NCC)

President Ali receives prestigious Latin America Wilson Centre Award

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has been honoured with the prestigious Wilson Award from the Latin America Wilson Centre for his outstanding leadership in climate change action and biodiversity conservation.

The award was presented during a Gala and Dinner held in Miami, attended by several world leaders. The award, part of the Wilson Center’s Latin America Programme, recognises leaders who have made significant contributions to regional and global advancement, particularly in fields such as sustainability, biodiversity, and climate change.

President Ali received the award from Benjamin Gedan, the Director of the Wilson Center’s Latin America Program.

In a keynote address, President Ali emphasised Guyana’s exceptional role in preserving its vast forests and biodiversity—two critical ecosystem services.

He underscored the importance of a global economic model that values and sustains these vital assets, highlighting Guyana as home to one of the world’s highest concentrations of biodiversity.

This achievement is particularly significant given that 60 per cent of global biodiversity has already been lost.

“As much as we have been able to keep this intact, as well as the forests, we also recognise the fact there must be an economic model to support the biodiversity and the standing forests that we are keeping alive.

...that global model must be able to put a value on these important global assets, and a proper pricing and market mechanism must be developed to value these assets. Otherwise, we will not be doing this in a sustainable way,” he underlined.

This focus is integral to countries like Guyana, as they are mandated to address the economic and social needs of its population, where over 80 per cent live below sea level.

Recognising this, Guyana along with like-minded countries have been extensively advocating for the establishment of a fair mechanism to value environmental services.

In line with this vision, President Ali highlighted Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 as a global model, balancing economic growth with environmental preservation.

Under this strategy, Guyana achieved several, including the issuance of the world’s first jurisdictional carbon credit under the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) mechanism in 2022. This led to the historic sale of US\$7450 million in carbon credits, with 15 per cent of

these funds directly allocated to the development of indigenous communities.

Furthermore, according to the president, Guyana’s progress also includes expanding its timber industry, advancing mineral mapping for sustainable mining, and transitioning towards renewable energy.

“This will allow miners to continue their business sustainably and open up possibilities for exploration of critical minerals, including lithium, which is becoming increasingly important to the global economy,” President Ali underscored.

He also stressed the need for leaders to unite and craft common policies to address global climate challenges, underscoring the need for shared vision and collaboration.



President Ali being congratulated on his award at the event in Miami

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BATH AND NUMBER 75 HOSPITALS ON TRACK

Construction of two state-of-the-art regional hospitals in Number 75 Village, Corentyne, Region Six, and Bath Settlement, West Coast Berbice, Region Five, is progressing steadily.

Valued at over \$6 billion each, these facilities are set to revolutionise healthcare for more than 70,000 residents and is part of the government's mission to establish a world-class healthcare system.

During a site visit to the Bath Settlement Hospital, Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony confirmed that

the project is on track for completion by the first quarter of 2025. He noted that work at Bath Settlement is slightly ahead of the Number 75 hospital, with ceilings scheduled for installation by early next month and equipment installation set to begin in February.

The Bath Settlement Hospital will provide a 24-hour Accident and Emergency (A&E) department equipped with a theatre for treating minor injuries and fractures. Its outpatient section will feature consultation rooms for both primary



Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony at the construction site of the new #75 Village Regional Hospital

and specialised care. Advanced imaging services, including digital X-rays, CT scans, and ultrasounds, along with fully operational laboratory facilities, will

ensure timely diagnoses and treatments. The upper floor will house two operating theatres, a delivery room, an intensive care unit (ICU), and a 75-bed

inpatient unit. The facility will include air-conditioned rooms with attached bathrooms, offering patients greater comfort and privacy. As a Level Four facility, it will significantly reduce the need for residents to travel to Georgetown or New Amsterdam for advanced medical care.

The Number 75 Hospital, slated for completion by the second quarter of 2025, will replace the aging Skeldon Hospital. It will feature similar services, addressing long-standing deficiencies in the region and aligning with the anticipated

growth of the Corentyne area, which is being driven by infrastructure projects such as the Corentyne River Bridge.

Both hospitals, constructed by Sinopharm, are part of a broader initiative to elevate healthcare across Guyana. Additional hospitals are being developed in Enmore, Diamond, Lima Sands, Lethem, and Kato, underscoring the government's commitment to accessible, high-quality healthcare.

ENTREPRENEURS RECEIVE COMPENSATION UNDER LIVELIHOOD RESTORATION PLAN

Seven small business owners from the East Bank of Demerara have been awarded compensation under the Adequate Housing and Urban Accessibility Programme (AHUAP) Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP). A total of \$676,000 was disbursed during a ceremony held at the Ministry of Housing and Water's Headquarters.

The LRP is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering Project-Affected Persons (PAPs) who experienced economic displacement due to infrastructure

upgrades in their communities. The plan is designed to help affected individuals rebuild or enhance their socio-economic conditions through a fair, consistent, and transparent process.

Delivering remarks at the ceremony, Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, highlighted the AHUAP's collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). He emphasised that the programme is part of the government's commitment to improving urban and peri-urban

living conditions, particularly for low-income populations. "Initiatives like these directly touch people's lives and create lasting impact," Minister Croal stated.

The beneficiaries are from areas significantly enhanced by AHUAP infrastructure upgrades, including Convent Garden, Farm (Phases 1 and 2), Herstelling, Providence (Phase 2, North and South), Peter's Hall, and Perseverance. These upgrades included 8.34 kilometres of improved roads, over two

kilometres of reinforced concrete drains and sidewalks, and 600mm-wide concrete sidewalks.

In addition to compensation, recipients will soon receive capacity-building training. The sessions will cover entrepreneurial skills, financial management, record-keeping, small business development, taxation, and business regularisation, equipping PAPs with the tools to sustain and grow their livelihoods.

A similar initiative is scheduled for Onderneemingsignalling



\$676,000 disbursed to small businesses under Livelihood Programme

the government's living conditions across Guyana. continued commitment to fostering economic resilience and enhancing

NATIONAL FORENSIC LABORATORY TO BE ENHANCED UNDER NEW GUYANA-INDIA PARTNERSHIP

The Government of Guyana, in collaboration with the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) of India, is set to transform the Guyana Police Force (GPF) through advanced training in investigative techniques, forensic science, cyber-security, and forensic psychology.

The partnership was solidified during a meeting between President Ali and a delegation from NFSU, led by Professor Asha Srivastava, Dean of the School of Behavioural Forensics, and Dr. Vishal Parmar. The High Commissioner of India, Dr. Amit Telang, also participated in the discussions. President



Guyana and India team up to advance law enforcement and forensic technology

Ali was accompanied by Commissioner of Police (ag) Clifton Hicken and Colonel Sheldon Howell, Director of the National Intelligence and Security Agency.

The collaboration

aims to position Guyana as a regional hub for law enforcement training through its Police Academy, offering cutting-edge education to both local and regional police services.

The partnership will also enhance the operational capabilities and management of Guyana's National Forensic Laboratory, strengthening the nation's capacity to tackle modern crime challenges.

Guyana's Police Academy will soon host NFSU-certified training programmes, empowering officers with the latest expertise in investigative techniques, forensic sciences, cyber-security, and forensic psychology.

This initiative underscores Guyana's commitment to becoming a Regional Centre for Police Excellence, with training

opportunities extended to law enforcement personnel from across the Caribbean.

President Ali emphasised the transformative impact of the collaboration, noting it as part of a broader strategy to enhance national and regional

security.

This groundbreaking initiative not only equips the GPF with the tools and knowledge to address modern security challenges but also highlights the strong ties between Guyana and India.



Guyana and India team up to advance law enforcement and forensic technology

400 LINDENERS RECEIVE HOUSE LOTS



Allottee, Lisa Robertson selecting her lot number

had been waiting for 12 years, was overjoyed: **"I can't explain how I'm feeling right now. I am so happy. Everything is falling in place. We were hoping and praying for this for a very long time."**

Lisa Robertson, a mother of two, also shared her excitement: **"I've rented for a number of years... For those years, I was privileged to live in my cousin's home, with the hope of having my own land..."** She added, **"It is an achievement. It is a moment to celebrate, it is something that I have longed to experience. They [her children] will help me build [the house]."**

Alica Walcott, who

had been waiting for 16 years, plans to construct a restaurant on her newly allocated land: **"I feel overwhelmed because I did this application 16 years**

Tuesday. I am beyond grateful."

Minister Croal highlighted the ministry's commitment to addressing housing needs in the region.



Allottee, Paula White selecting her lot number

ago and I've never been called. Before now, I [thought] that my application got lost. And then, they called me on

He noted that while approximately 3,500 applications remain pending, significant progress has been made, with nearly 1,500 lots

allocated in the past four-and-a-half years.

Minister Rodrigues explained that the Conception Fitz Hope development will accommodate both residential and commercial lots, with designated areas for schools and health facilities. She emphasised the ministry's dedication to delivering homeownership to Lindeners.

The ministers also engaged with Lindeners to discuss housing, water, and other related matters. Just one week prior, 600 allottees received house lots at the New Wismar Housing Development, further demonstrating the government's commitment to providing housing solutions for the region.

The Ministry of Housing and Water, through the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA), allocated 400 house lots to residents of Linden, Region Ten. The land allocation exercise, held at Watooka Guest House, was led by Ministers Collin Croal and Susan Rodrigues.

Many recipients expressed immense

joy and relief at finally acquiring their own land. Melissa McKinnon, one of the allottees, shared her excitement: **"I am excited now that I get back a land. When you have your own land, it helps you to motivate yourself where you can do your business or whatever."**

Paula White, a single mother of five, who

GOVT EXPLORING SOLUTIONS FOR VERGENOEGEN AND PARIKA SQUATTERS

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, has assured residents of Vergenoegen Sideline Dam and Parika Façade informal settlements that the government is working diligently to address their housing needs.

During recent site visits, Minister Croal engaged with residents and assessed the situation. **"We will proceed with regularisation once I can clarify the legal process [for the area],"** he promised.



Minister Croal and a technical team from the ministry examine the survey of Tuschen Vergenoegen Sideline Dam informal settlement

The minister acknowledged the challenges posed by sea defence regulations and the proximity of some settlements to the sea.

However, he assured residents that the government is exploring options to provide sustainable housing solutions.

"We will have to discuss this with sea defence and conduct some measurements and plan as to where they fall. And then, we will explore if they can be further regularised or if we will have to relocate them," he explained.

Regarding the Parika Façade informal settlement, Minister Croal noted that an updated occupational survey will be conducted to assess the current situation and identify eligible residents. **"We**

will explore options for the including land

and adjustments to property boundaries," he said.



Minister Croal engaging residents from Tuschen Vergenoegen Sideline Dam informal settlement



Resident, Fariana Degoeas and her family

Residents of Moleson Creek and Crabwood Creek in Region Six are celebrating a new era of convenience and comfort after decades of unreliable power sources. The recent electrification of these communities has significantly improved their daily lives.

For years, residents

depended on solar panels and generators, which made basic tasks like cooking, studying, and running small businesses challenging. The introduction of reliable electricity follows a commitment made by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali earlier this year during a regional outreach.

ELECTRICITY TRANSFORMS REGION SIX COMMUNITIES

Local resident Vashti Richard described the change: **"If you wanted to heat food in the microwave, we didn't have anything like current to do that. Now, we can use our fridge, TV, and charge our phones without worry."**

Another resident, Nutan Ally, expressed similar gratitude: **"We couldn't put anything in the fridge to cook the next day. We had to buy eggs and**

sausage daily. But now, we can buy chicken and fish and store everything in our fridge."

Beyond improving daily life, the electrification project is expected to stimulate economic growth in the region. Reliable electricity opens doors for small businesses to expand and for new opportunities to emerge.

The government's commitment to expanding electricity

access across Guyana represents a significant step toward a more equitable and prosperous nation. By providing essential services like electricity,

the government is empowering communities and improving the overall well-being of its citizens.



Several residents get first-time access to electricity at Moleson Creek and Crabwood Creek

GET READY FOR MASH 2025

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport has officially launched Mashramani 2025, promising a larger-than-life celebration of Guyana's diverse culture and creativity.

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr., unveiled plans for a series of exciting events, including Calypso Monarch, Soca Monarch, Dancehall Monarch, Splashramani, Masharama, Republic Flag Raising, Chutney Monarch, Costume and Float Parade, and

Panorama Steel Band Competition.

One of the highlights of Mash 2025 will be the early involvement of float parade designers. Minister Ramson explained, "We had a meeting with them about two weeks ago. We were able to secure the funding for them so that they could go to the various ministries with their proposals."

This proactive approach aims to ensure a more spectacular and organised float parade.

The ministry is also committed to taking Mashramani to the regions. For the first time, the Calypso Monarch competition will be held in Moruca, Region One. Additionally, multiple pop-up concerts will be held in Regions Two, Three, and Five to engage communities across the country.

Director of National Events, Andrew Tyndall, emphasised the importance of inclusivity, stating, "We want to give those persons who take part in

the competitions an opportunity to put their music out there. We also want as many as possible to feel that they are included in the Mash celebrations."

As the countdown to Mash 2025 begins, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport invites everyone to join in the festivities and experience the vibrant spirit of Guyana.



The main events for Mashramani 2025

SEVEN NEW TOURS TO EXPLORE GUYANA



GTA officials with product development team and tour guides at the experiential product launch

The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) has launched seven new tourism products designed to offer visitors a diverse range of experiences. These innovative offerings highlight the country's rich cultural heritage, stunning natural beauty, and thrilling adventure

opportunities. The new products are:

- **Guyana Biking Adventure by Atta Rainforest Lodge (Iwokrama River Lodge):** A cycling tour through the lush rainforest of Iwokrama.
- **Rupununi Hiking &**

Cultural Expedition by Touring Guyana:

A journey into the heart of Guyana's interior, exploring indigenous cultures and breathtaking landscapes.

- **Jaguar Tour by Adventure Guianas:** A wildlife adventure to spot elusive jaguars in

their natural habitat.

- **Jungle Survival Tour: Rockstone by The Wild Tales:** A challenging outdoor experience in the rugged terrain of Rockstone.

- **Essequibo River Jungle Trip by The Wild Tale:** A boat trip along the majestic Essequibo River, encountering diverse wildlife and indigenous communities.

- **Kato Hiking & ATV Adventure by Patamona Tours:** A thrilling adventure through the mountains and savannahs of Region Eight.

- **Jonestown Memorial Tour**

by **Wanderlust Adventures GY:** A sombre reflection on a tragic historical event.

These new products are expected to attract

GTA is actively promoting these offerings through targeted marketing campaigns and partnerships with international travel



New Tour Alert

both domestic and international tourists, boosting the country's tourism industry. The

agents and tour operators.

GOVT BACKS RUPUNUNI EXPO WITH \$2.5M BOOST

The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting businesses in Region Nine by contributing \$2.5 million to the Rupununi Expo 2024.

During the expo's opening ceremony, Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai, presented the cheque to Orlando Wong, President of the Rupununi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI).

"This expo represents a collaboration between the government and private sector in building sustainable food security for



Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai handing over the \$2.5 million cheque to President of the RCCI, Orlando Wong

the country," Minister Sukhai said. She highlighted the government's dedication to fostering opportunities for small businesses and encouraged regional entrepreneurs to capitalise on these opportunities for growth and success.

Now in its 22nd year, the Rupununi Expo celebrates the region's

cultural heritage, diverse products, and entrepreneurial spirit. This year's theme, "Crafting Our Tomorrow: Celebrating Rupununi Arts, Craft, Agriculture, Tourism, Business, and Innovation," underscores the region's potential for innovation and sustainable development.

Regional Chairman Brian Allicock urged businesses to embrace technology and innovation to remain competitive. He also encouraged entrepreneurs to set clear goals and contribute to Guyana's rapidly expanding economy.

The expo serves as a vital platform for local



Some of the products on display at the expo



Some of the products on display at the expo

businesses to showcase their products and services, connect with potential customers and investors, and engage in cultural exchange and networking. This year's event further highlighted the unique contributions of the Rupununi region to Guyana's national development.

GUYANA WINS PRESTIGIOUS AML/CFT AWARD

Guyana has achieved a significant milestone in its fight against financial crime by winning the Best Regional AML/CFT Case Award (BREMOLT) at the 59th Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) Plenary and Working Group Meetings in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The award recognises Guyana's

exceptional efforts in combating money laundering and terrorist financing. The winning case highlighted the successful prosecution of a high-ranking police official, Calvin Brutus, for money laundering and other financial crimes. The case showcased the effectiveness of Guyana's AML/CFT systems and the strong

collaboration between various agencies, including the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU), and the Attorney General's Chambers.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall SC, who led the Guyanese delegation, expressed pride in this achievement

and emphasised the country's commitment to international cooperation in combating financial crime. Guyana's participation in the CFATF Plenary has also involved signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cayman Islands to strengthen cooperation between their respective



Financial Intelligence Units.

Additionally, Alicia Williams from Guyana's Financial Intelligence Unit moderated a

roundtable discussion on suspending transactions, sharing insights and best practices with other CFATF member countries.

Guyana's success in winning the BREMOLT award underscores its dedication to upholding high standards of financial integrity and transparency. This achievement will further solidify Guyana's position as a leader in the region in the fight against financial crime.

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT REGIONAL CRIME WAVE

As the Caribbean grapples with a surge in crime rates, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has emphasised the urgent need for collective action and integrated strategies to address the root causes of this pressing issue.

Speaking at the 2nd Regional Symposium on Violence as a Public Health Issue: The Crime Challenge, President Ali highlighted the significant economic and social burdens imposed by crime on the region. Citing findings from the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), he underscored the need for a multi-faceted approach involving health, education, and public policy.

The President stressed the importance of addressing gender-based violence, a critical component of the crime problem. He advocated for a holistic approach, including cultural, educational, and behavioural interventions, beginning with primary education.



CARICOM leaders at the 2nd Regional Symposium Violence as a Public Health Issue – The Crime Challenge

“We can’t address this without having health, public health, and education as part of the solution.... So, we have a whole generation coming up with a different perspective of life and how we deal with these issues,” he said. To combat other

forms of crime, such as those involving illegal firearms, narcotics, money laundering, and human trafficking, President Ali called for a multidimensional approach to dismantle international criminal networks.

The symposium held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC), aimed to foster collaboration among Caribbean nations, share best practices, and develop actionable solutions to address the crime crisis.



\$1.1B in contracts signed to bolster security infrastructure

The Ministry of Home Affairs signed contracts totalling \$1.1 billion for various projects aimed at enhancing security infrastructure across

\$1.1B POURED INTO BOOSTING SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Guyana. These projects will benefit the Guyana Fire Service, Guyana Police Force, and Guyana Prison Service.

Permanent Secretary Andre Ally emphasised the importance of timely project completion and adherence to safety standards. **“This significant**

investment underscores our focus on enhancing infrastructure to better serve our communities and workforce,” he stated.

Key projects include construction of female and male living quarters (\$371.6 million) and a caged walkway (\$76.9

million) at the Mazaruni Prison, construction of a living quarter (\$161.1 million) at the Lusignan Prison, completion of construction (\$40.8 million) of the Paramakatoi Police Station, and expansion of the power network (\$132.4 million) at the New Amsterdam Prison

These investments are expected to improve the living and working conditions of staff, enhance operational capacity, and ultimately contribute to a safer and more secure Guyana.

The National Data Management Authority (NDMA) has been recognised for its outstanding contribution to gender equality in

NDMA'S GIRLS IN ICT PROGRAMME RECEIVES GLOBAL ACCLAIM



NDMA General Manager, Christopher Deen receiving Recognition Award for the 'Girls in ICT' Programme, Eighth Ministerial Meeting on Digital Government of the Americas, Brazil

the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The organisation received an award at the Eighth Digital Government Ministerial Meeting of the Americas, held in Brazil, for its Girls in ICT programme.

The Girls in ICT programme, a key initiative of NDMA, aims to inspire and empower young women and girls

to pursue careers in technology. This year's programme focused on providing hands-on training, mentorship, and career guidance to young women in both urban and rural areas.

In rural communities like Wakapao and Baracara, NDMA engineers conducted training sessions in basic ICT, coding, and career counselling. Meanwhile,

in urban areas, students from various schools in Georgetown participated in workshops on coding, robotics, and cybersecurity.

The recognition at the Ministerial Meeting underscores NDMA's commitment to bridging the digital gender gap and creating a more inclusive tech industry. Christopher Deen, General Manager

of NDMA, expressed gratitude for the award and reaffirmed the organisation's dedication to empowering young women.



DR. JAGDEO CALLS OUT AFC'S EVASIVE TACTICS AND SELF-SERVING GOVERNANCE

Vice President and PPP General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has strongly criticised the Alliance For Change (AFC), accusing the party of putting self-interest above public welfare and evading accountability for its actions during the APNU+AFC coalition government.

Dr. Jagdeo's comments followed evasive responses by AFC leader Nigel Hughes to 15 pointed questions posed by Dr. Randy Persaud in *Kaieteur News*. These questions examined the AFC's governance record, including its role in the no-confidence vote, economic policies, and the controversial 2020 elections.



Vice President and People's Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

"Imagine being given days to prepare answers and still failing to provide credible responses," Dr. Jagdeo remarked during a press conference. He accused Hughes of justifying the coalition's failed policies and avoiding responsibility for its mismanagement. Dr. Jagdeo highlighted inconsistencies in Hughes' defence of the coalition's fiscal policies. While public revenue increased by \$92 billion through heavy taxation, social programmes were

slashed, and the funds were diverted to luxury vehicles, new buildings, and inflated ministerial salaries—some raised by up to 100% within six months.

"What happened to this money? They chose themselves over our children," Dr. Jagdeo stated, contrasting the coalition's approach with the PPP/C government's pro-people policies. He also pointed to reckless spending that led to a \$100 billion overdraft, leaving critical social and infrastructural needs unmet.

Dr. Jagdeo criticised Hughes' vague responses regarding the AFC's role in the 2020 elections,

accusing the party of complicity in attempts to rig the polls. "They were part of the plot to steal the elections," he said, noting Hughes' failure to address allegations of electoral fraud or personal conflicts of interest.

He also condemned AFC Executive Cathy Hughes for shutting down reporters' questions about the party's past actions, dismissing them as irrelevant. "A serious political party refusing accountability is shocking," Dr. Jagdeo asserted.

Dr. Jagdeo expressed concern over the Guyana Press Association's

(GPA) silence on the AFC's refusal to answer questions, contrasting it with frequent accusations of government media interference. "If the PPP refused to answer, the uproar would be deafening," he said, accusing the GPA of applying double standards.

Dr. Jagdeo concluded by urging voters to scrutinize the AFC's record of self-serving governance. He contrasted their approach with the PPP/C's commitment to policies that prioritise the people, emphasising that accountability is crucial both in opposition and in government.

DR JAGDEO REJECTS OPPOSITION'S FEARMONGERING, DEFENDS GECOM AHEAD OF 2025 ELECTIONS

Vice President and PPP General Secretary Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has dismissed Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton's claims that foreign nationals are being added to the voter list to secure a government victory in the 2025 elections. At a press conference, Dr. Jagdeo denounced the allegations as baseless fearmongering intended to create distrust and anger among opposition supporters.

"We don't need foreigners to win elections," Dr. Jagdeo stated, emphasising that

the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), not the government, is constitutionally responsible for maintaining the voter list. He also reminded that Guyanese citizens abroad retain their voting rights under the constitution.

Dr. Jagdeo criticised the opposition's push for biometrics in the electoral process, labelling it unconstitutional and a ploy to delay election preparations. He argued that these tactics aim to erode confidence in free and fair elections while

laying the groundwork for unfounded claims of electoral manipulation.

The Vice President also condemned ongoing attacks by the opposition on GECOM and its Chairperson, Justice (Ret'd) Claudette Singh. He accused the opposition of attempting to discredit GECOM, particularly Justice Singh, for her pivotal role in safeguarding democracy during the 2020 elections.

"They are bitter because the Chair upheld the law and the electorate's will,"

he noted, adding that reforms to GECOM's secretariat had removed "internal riggers" who previously undermined the electoral process.

Dr. Jagdeo highlighted the legal challenges faced by former GECOM officials and APNU+AFC members, including Volda Lawrence and Keith Lowenfield, for their alleged roles in attempting to manipulate the 2020 elections. A presidential Commission of Inquiry revealed brazen attempts by officials such as



GECOM official at a recent press conference

Clairmont Mingo and Roxanne Myers to derail the electoral process.

Reaffirming the PPP/C government's dedication to democracy, Dr. Jagdeo stressed

that elections will remain free, fair, and transparent. "This is a different Guyana," he declared, underscoring that no one is above the law.

GECOM CONFIDENT OF ITS READINESS FOR 2025 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) is confident in its ability to smoothly execute the 2025 General and Regional Elections, as constitutionally required. This assurance was provided by Chief Elections Officer (CEO) Vishnu Persaud during a press conference held at GECOM's office.

While the Elections Secretariat has not yet received an official mandate to begin preparations, Persaud emphasised the team's readiness. "I do not see

such preparations, the activities associated with such preparations, posing any difficulties for us at the Secretariat, considering that the procedures for the conduct of those elections have not changed. They are the same. We know what we have to do," he stated.

Persaud highlighted that some prerequisites for the elections, such as staff training, do not require formal directives and are already in



Chief Election Officer Vishnu Persaud

progress. Manuals for presiding officers are currently under review.

Next, manuals for

returning officers, clerks, and deputy returning officers will be updated.

The manual review process is expected to conclude soon, after which the Secretariat will focus on identifying and training personnel for election roles.

"We are likely to advertise for those positions in December, so that training could commence in January. This will begin with the training of trainers, followed by

management staff, including candidates for the positions of returning officers, clerks, and deputy returning officers," Persaud explained.

Persaud noted that amendments to the Representation of the People Act (ROPA) now require Regions Three, Four, and Six to be divided into sub-regions, with supernumerary returning officers overseeing these areas. This measure is expected to simplify vote tabulation in the larger

districts. Addressing concerns about deceased individuals remaining on the National Register of Registrants (NRR), Persaud outlined ongoing efforts to ensure its accuracy. The Secretariat is verifying and removing deceased persons using death returns from the General Register Office (GRO) and reports from the Chief Medical Officer and Commissioner of Police. This process aligns with the requirements of the ROPA.

325 CONTRACTORS LEAD \$4.2B ROAD UPGRADE DRIVE IN LINDEN

Linden is on the brink of an infrastructure transformation as 325 small contractors have signed \$4.2 billion in contracts to upgrade 442 roads across the township.

This initiative is part of the government's larger \$8.8 billion investment in Region 10's infrastructure, aimed at boosting community development, job creation, and economic growth.

The ambitious project includes significant upgrades across key communities. In Ituni, \$405 million is allocated for 32 roads, while Kwakwani will see 16 roads upgraded at \$194 million and 21 asphaltic concrete roads constructed for \$1.16 billion. Additionally, \$440 million is earmarked for 32 lots in Kamaka Mines, supported by a mobile asphalt plant newly deployed to Kwakwani.



Small contractors from Linden signing their contracts at Watooka Guest House

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips and Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill, who attended signing ceremonies in Linden, Kwakwani, and Ituni, emphasised the importance of these projects for Region 10 and the nation.

"This is a historic day," said Prime Minister Phillips. **"These roads are not just infrastructure; they represent**

a foundation for sustainable development and economic growth, ensuring no one is left behind."

In addition to community-level projects, the government has awarded \$12.2 billion in contracts to 26 major contractors for large-scale works in the region. These investments complement transformative initiatives such as the US\$190 million Linden-

Mabura Road project, the US\$161 million Linden-Soesdyke Highway rehabilitation—which will include 2,900 new streetlights—and the US\$35 million Linden-Wismar Bridge.

Other planned upgrades include \$100 million for the Mackenzie and Wismar waterfront redevelopment and enhancements to local water treatment facilities and schools.

Minister Edghill noted that approximately 2,000 jobs will be created for Region 10 residents, with small contractors benefiting from policies ensuring equitable access to projects and sustainable profit margins.

"This initiative is a game-changer for small contractors," he said. With a flat rate of \$28,000 per square meter for concrete road construction, contractors are guaranteed a 20% profit

margin, while a new rating system ensures fair participation.

Strict quality standards have also been implemented, with roadworks requiring a strength of 4,500 PSI. Contractors failing to meet standards will be required to redo their work or face contract termination.

transparency and collaboration.

Prime Minister Phillips highlighted the broader impact of these efforts, saying, **"We are accelerating development with revenues from the oil and gas sector to improve lives and livelihoods."**

With unprecedented



Small contractors from Linden signing their contracts at Watooka Guest House

Minister Edghill encouraged contractors to engage residents and share detailed project information before starting work to ensure

investments and a focus on inclusive growth, Region 10 is poised to become a hub of economic opportunity and sustainable development.

MAJOR ROAD WORKS UNDERWAY IN REGIONS FOUR AND FIVE

The Ministry of Public Works has allocated a substantial \$17 billion to upgrade 19 key access roads in Regions Four and Five. This significant investment aims to improve connectivity, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance overall road infrastructure.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan

Edghill, underscored the importance of these projects, stating, **"These are not projects that we can lime on. These are projects I will be paying keen attention to."** He emphasised the government's commitment to transparency and community engagement, mandating contractors to brief residents before

commencing work. The projects include upgrades to the Diamond Alternative Access Road, Third Avenue, First Avenue, and Back Street Diamond to improve connectivity and traffic flow.

Also covered is Georgetown Inner City Roads including the rehabilitation of Princes Street, St. Stephen's

Street, Sussex Street, and Aubrey Barker Road to enhance the condition of the road, pedestrian safety, and traffic flow. Ongoing works on Conversation Tree Bypass and Thomas Lands roads aim to alleviate congestion and improve the overall road network.

Meanwhile, the De Hoop Main Access Road

is being upgraded to accommodate increased agricultural activity and the opening of a new asphalt plant.

Minister Edghill highlighted the positive impact these projects will have on the lives of residents, stating, **"These upgrades aim to enhance connectivity and improve the quality**

of the road network."



Contractor signing contract for the development of Main Access Roads

An investment of \$100 million has been allocated for the development of Linden's waterfront. This initiative aims to enhance transportation networks, essential services, and the overall aesthetic appeal of the mining town, contributing to its economic growth.

Eight local contractors signed contracts to undertake various projects. Among the contractors is Chancey Caleb, a first-time contractor who expressed gratitude for the government's inclusive approach, enabling women to participate in the construction industry.



Contractors signing contract

\$100M TO FUND LINDEN'S WATERFRONT TRANSFORMATION

"This is great for the people of Linden and it is also great because it enables persons who are self-employed in works that they are doing so they can have a better life," Caleb said.

Kady Sears, another female contractor, highlighted the project's potential to beautify Linden and attract tourists. **"It is a nice project all the way round to make Linden look good because, in my opinion, the**

river here in Linden is somewhat of an attraction to persons coming here," she stated.

Prime Minister Mark Phillips urged contractors to deliver high-quality work, emphasising the importance of the project for the community. He highlighted the initiative's potential to create jobs and stimulate the local economy.

Minister of Public Works Juan Edghill noted that while only

eight contractors were selected, the remaining bidders would be considered for smaller projects to contribute to the overall waterfront development.

Additionally, the government plans to improve access to the Linden Hospital from the riverside, a request made by Amerindian leaders at the recent National Toshaos Council Conference.

NEW BOULEVARD OPENS IN GEORGETOWN

Georgetown's landscape has been enhanced with the opening of the newly completed Conversation Tree Boulevard. Nestled between Delhi Street and the newly constructed road along the Conversation Tree corridor, this modern promenade offers a family-friendly space for relaxation and recreation.

a project under the Ministry of Public Works' Urban Rehabilitation Programme, is equipped with comfortable seating areas and strategically placed garbage receptacles.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, highlighted the project's significance in improving the quality of life for residents.

"We invite all of Guyana to come and



The Conversation Tree Boulevard



The Conversation Tree Boulevard



The Conversation Tree Boulevard

experience this. The entire Conversation Tree stretch now has a full walkway for exercising, whether it's raining or the sun is shining," he stated.

To further enhance the boulevard's aesthetic appeal, additional improvements are underway, including the planting of palm trees and the installation of decorative water

fountains.

Once completed, the boulevard will rival the beauty and functionality of Independence Boulevard and the Lamaha Stretch.

The Conversation Tree Boulevard provides a safe and inviting environment for various activities, from leisurely walks to family gatherings and bicycle rides.



The Conversation Tree Boulevard

KWAKWANI'S BARGE SERVICE BACK IN OPERATION

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, has highlighted the government's crucial intervention to restore the barge service in Kwakwani, a move that has significantly impacted the lives of residents.

During a recent National Assembly session, Minister Edghill defended a \$138 million supplementary allocation for the repair of the Kwakwani pontoon. He explained that the previous administration had transferred the

responsibility for the pontoon's maintenance to the Kwakwani Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC), leading to its deterioration.

"The pontoon began to sink. In order for the economic activity in that community to continue, which is primarily forestry, the government of Guyana made an intervention," the Minister stated.

The government, with the assistance of



Commercial activities continue due to government ensuring the Kwakwani barge is operational

the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation (DHBC), undertook the repair, ensuring the

resumption of the vital barge service. **"This was about the lives and livelihood of the**

people of Kwakwani and their economic future," Minister Edghill emphasised.

The restored barge service is crucial for the transportation of goods, connecting Kwakwani to essential services and markets. It also supports local industries such as logging, mining, and agriculture.

The Minister expressed gratitude to the DHBC team for their dedicated efforts in repairing the pontoon, highlighting the challenges they faced,

including a lack of funds for fuel.



Workers carrying out repairs to the damaged barge back in June

STATE SUPPORT FUELS MARITIME SECTOR



Minister within the Ministry of Public Works Deodat Indar with other officials at the dinner

Guyana's maritime sector is experiencing significant growth, and the government is actively working to support and regulate this expansion.

Minister within the Ministry of Public

Works, Deodat Indar, highlighted the government's efforts at the Shipping Association of Guyana's Annual Dinner at the Marriot Hotel. He noted that the number of vessels operating on Guyana's

waterways has increased substantially, with 3,822 vessels recorded this year. Additionally, Guyana has exported significant quantities of crude oil, with 167 lifts shipped to various global destinations as of September 2024.

To accommodate this growth, the government is investing in port expansion and bridge construction projects. However, global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine have presented obstacles to the sector.

To mitigate the impact of rising shipping costs, the government has implemented

measures to maintain pre-pandemic freight rates, ensuring that the cost of goods remains affordable for consumers. The government has also taken swift action to address incidents like the recent barge accident on the Demerara Harbour Bridge.

Minister Indar emphasised the government's commitment to developing Guyana's maritime sector and ensuring the safety and security of its ports. The implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) at 22 ports across Guyana is a testament to this

commitment.

By providing funding, implementing sound policies, and addressing challenges proactively,

the government aims to position Guyana as a maritime hub in the region.



Minister within the Ministry of Public Works Deodat Indar speaking at the dinner

AGRICULTURE MINISTRY TO MONITOR MARKET PRICES AHEAD OF HOLIDAY SEASON

The Ministry of Agriculture, through the New Guyana Marketing Corporation (New GMC), is intensifying its efforts to monitor and report on market prices for fresh and agro-processed commodities, particularly as the holiday season approaches.

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha explained that the ministry aims to provide

consumers with daily updates on market prices to help them make informed purchasing decisions. **“We know that consumers usually have more spending power during the holiday season,”** Minister Mustapha noted. **“A few months ago, I tasked the New GMC with providing daily market updates for major markets**

across the country. As we head into the Christmas Season, these efforts will be intensified.”

While the government does not impose price controls, it is committed to minimising production costs for farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture has been providing various forms of support, including seeds, fertilisers, and



Agriculture Ministry to intensify efforts to monitor market prices as holiday season approaches

livestock, to reduce farmers' expenses. smart agriculture, Additionally, the government is investing in research, climate-smart agriculture, and infrastructure development to enhance

agricultural productivity.

The ministry plans to share daily market price updates on its social media pages and is exploring partnerships with other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, to expand its monitoring efforts to include supermarkets.

By providing transparent information on market prices and supporting farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture aims to ensure affordable and accessible food for all Guyanese.

Guyana's honey production has experienced significant growth, with the country producing approximately 18,000 gallons of honey as of October 2024. This remarkable increase is attributed to increased government investment and renewed interest in the apiculture industry.

Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, highlighted the government's commitment to boosting honey production. **“I am hoping that by the end of the year, we will increase that 18,000-gallon**

HONEY PRODUCTION DOUBLES IN 2024



Scene from the honey fest

mark. Imagine this was increased from 2,000 gallons in 2023 to 18,000 gallons by

the end of October of 2024,” he stated, at the first-ever honey fest hosted at the Guyana

Livestock Development Authority (GLDA) at Mon Repos.

The government has invested over \$200 million in the apiculture industry and distributed over 5,000 hives to potential beekeepers nationwide. Additionally, the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA) has collaborated with Cuban apiculture experts to train local beekeepers in modern techniques.

Guyana's diverse ecosystems, including

mangroves and forests, provide ideal conditions for honey production. The country aims to tap into this potential to produce various honey types and boost the local economy.

Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Madanlall Ramraj, emphasised the importance of honey bees to the ecosystem and food security. He noted that the expansion of the honey industry aligns with the Low Carbon Development

Strategy (LCDS), promoting sustainable resource management and economic empowerment.

Currently, approximately 9% of Guyana's honey production is consumed domestically, while the remaining is exported to countries like Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis. As the industry continues to grow, Guyana has the potential to become a major honey exporter.

AGRICULTURE TRAINING BOOSTS INDEPENDENCE FOR PWDS IN REGION TWO

Eighteen individuals with disabilities in Region Two recently completed a five-day sustainable agriculture training programme, hosted by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security.

This initiative, held at the State House boardroom in Anna Regina, is part of the

ministry's ongoing efforts to promote financial independence among this demographic.

The training programme covered a range of topics, including sustainable agriculture practices, plant and seedling care, and various farming techniques. Participants also had the opportunity

to visit nurseries and engage in hands-on planting exercises in a shade house.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, has emphasised the government's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all, including persons with disabilities. The

ministry's Learning Lab, established in 2023, offers a variety of skill-based training programmes to equip individuals with disabilities for employment.

Thus far in 2024, the Learning Lab has upskilled approximately 108 persons with disabilities in various

fields. The centre is designed to cater to the diverse needs of individuals with different types of disabilities, ensuring that training opportunities are tailored to their specific circumstances.



A student watering plants at the shade house

REMOTE COMMUNITY WOMEN BENEFIT FROM GARMENT CONSTRUCTION TRAINING

Construction course offered by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security's Women Innovation and Investment Network (WIIN) programme.

Sarah Adams, Delicia Da Silva, and Leshann Inniss, hailing from the remote communities of Grant Strong Hope-Pomeroon River and Mainstay/Whyaka, participated in the 12-day intensive training programme. Despite their lack of

prior experience, they quickly learned essential sewing techniques and gained confidence in their abilities.

Leshann Inniss expressed gratitude for the opportunity, stating, **“Before the 12 days began, I knew nothing about a sewing machine.”** Now, she is excited to apply her newfound skills to her own creative projects.

Sarah Adams, the youngest participant,

celebrated her first-ever graduation, a significant milestone in her life. She expressed pride in her accomplishment and her ability to create beautiful garments.

Delicia Da Silva, aspiring to become a business owner, sees the training as a stepping stone towards her entrepreneurial goals. She plans to utilise her skills to establish her own garment construction business.



Graduating class from Mainstay/Whyaka

The WIIN programme continues to empower women and men across Guyana by providing them with valuable skills and opportunities for economic growth.



Leshann Inniss showcasing her piece

Three young women from Region Two have seen their lives transformed thanks to a Garment

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CRICKET'S GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT ON GUYANA



excitement on the field, the GSL underscores Guyana's growing prominence in the cricketing world. The tournament is boosting sports tourism, drawing fans and visitors from across the globe while showcasing Guyana's ability to host international events of this scale. The live broadcasts are putting the nation in the spotlight, providing long-term benefits for local businesses, hospitality, and infrastructure.

The GSL also fosters cultural exchange, with fans from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Australia,

and the United Kingdom converging in Guyana. This global presence not only strengthens Guyana's cricketing

legacy but also inspires the next generation of players and enthusiasts. The ExxonMobil Global Super League has

cemented its status as a transformative event for Guyana, blending cricket, culture, and economic opportunity in a way that promises enduring impact.

Guyana has taken centre stage in the world of cricket with the inaugural ExxonMobil Global Super League (GSL), launched on November 26, 2024, at the Guyana National Stadium in Providence. This groundbreaking tournament, declared open by President Ali, is more than a celebration of cricket—it is a statement of Guyana's emergence as a premier destination for sports tourism.

of something remarkable," he declared, encouraging players to showcase their talent while immersing themselves in Guyana's unique heritage.

The GSL features five competitive teams: Guyana Amazon Warriors, Rangpur Riders (Bangladesh), Lahore Qalandars (Pakistan), Victoria (Australia), and Hampshire Hawks (United Kingdom). These teams are battling it out in 11 high-stake matches in a round-robin format, with the top two advancing to the final on December 6, 2024. The winner will take home a \$1 million prize.

President Ali described the tournament as a historic moment for the nation, blending the passion of cricket with the richness of Guyanese culture. **"This is the beginning**

Beyond the



GOVT PARTNERS WITH CHESS FEDERATION TO ADVANCE THE SPORT

President Dr. Irfaan Ali reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to advancing chess in Guyana during the closing ceremony of the President's Cup Independence Day Chess Tournament, held at the State House.

In his remarks, President Ali emphasised the importance of making chess accessible to communities across the country. **"We want to see chess played on the streets, on the avenue; played in Region One, Region Two, played in Region Six, played in Region Nine;**



Scene from the tournament

Region One, Region 10. We want all of you to be ambassadors of chess and help us take this out to all the regions," he stated. To facilitate the

growth of the sport, President Ali announced plans to collaborate with the Guyana Chess Federation to construct a dedicated facility—a "home for chess." This

building will serve as a central hub for chess activities, providing a space for training, tournaments, and community engagement.

President Ali also pledged continued government support for the federation's calendar of activities, including the prestigious CARICOM chess tournament. To further promote the sport, the government will provide 500 chess boards to players across the country, with the potential to expand this initiative to an additional 500 boards if demand increases.

The President's

remarks underscored the broader vision of using chess to inspire critical thinking, discipline, and strategic skills among Guyanese, particularly youth. This nationwide initiative is a significant step toward making chess a prominent and inclusive activity across all regions of Guyana.

The President's Cup Independence Day Chess Tournament, which brought together players of all ages, reflects the growing popularity of chess in the country. With strong governmental backing, the sport is poised for unprecedented growth

and success in the coming years.



President Ali handing over a trophy to one of the tournament winners



Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

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20 YEARS OF HOLIDAY CHEER RAHAMAN'S CORNER CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS UP



A symbol of hope and community spirit, the iconic 70-foot Christmas tree at Rahaman's Corner lit up the night sky on Sunday, December 1, marking 20 years of this cherished holiday tradition.

The celebration brought together Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce Oneidge Walrond and Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag, who commended the Rahaman family for their dedication to this annual event. The tree stands as a beacon of hope, joy, and peace, bringing Guyanese from all walks of life together during the festive season.


As the nation moves forward, Minister Walrond encouraged citizens to embrace the season with pride and gratitude, reflecting on the unity and joy that the holiday spirit brings to all.



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