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QATAR TO BUILD STADIUM IN GUYANA

THE Government of Qatar will soon construct a massive stadium in Region Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), President Dr. Irfaan Ali has announced.

The Head of State, on Sunday, made the revelation during a brick laying ceremony for the Georgetown Seafront Resort and Convention Centre which is being constructed by private investors from Qatar.

“This relationship is as a result of our government’s commitment to diversifying the investors stream and by diversifying the capital markets through which investments are made... we have established a strong focus on the Middle East and other parts of the world that were not traditionally focused on investment in this region; we have seen tremendous [interest] and Qatar is one of the countries that has shown remarkable speed in expanding this interest,” the President said.

Guyana, he related, is expanding its bilateral ties with the country and will collaborate in areas of tourism and hospitality, service, oil and gas, food security, and other modernisation and transformational projects.

Qatar’s Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al, President Ali said, has been leading from the front on the expansion of the relationship between the two nations.

Last year, the Amir visited Guyana for the first time for bilateral discussions. During the visit, the two leaders held fruitful discussions on a wide range of issues of mutual interest to strengthen their bilateral relations.

The two nations signed agreements for collaboration in the legal sectors; promotion and protection of



President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, and the State of Qatar’s Amir, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani held bilateral discussions, on mutual areas of interest, after which their delegations participated in plenary discussions

mutual investments; and economic, commercial, and technical cooperation.

Meanwhile, the Georgetown Seafront Resort and Convention Centre is set to be a world-class facility. The new resort will feature 260 rooms and suites, 150 service apartments and premium villas and it represents a collaboration between the Governments of Guyana and Qatar.

The project is being executed by private investors, the Assets Group out of Qatar and construction is expected to begin soon with the hopes of completion within three years.

The five-star facility will also feature retail units for food and beverages, high luxury fashion brands, state-of-

the-art health club and a convention centre with cutting edge facilities. It was uniquely designed with Guyanese in mind.

“When you examine the features of the investment you will see that [it] mirrors the history of Georgetown; the architectural history was carefully taken into consideration in the design of the building. The natural attributes

of Guyana were taken into the design.”

“We now have the type of investment that will support the natural quality of our product and I have no doubt that we will be able to build a world-class tourism sector, a tourism sector that will see the diversification of our economy and expansion of our economy realising its full potential,” President Ali said.

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KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 61

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BOLD ACTION NEEDED TO COUNTER DEVASTATING IMPACTS OF CONFLICTS, CLIMATE CHANGE

- GUYANA WARNS UN

In a forceful address to the United Nations Security Council open debate, President Ali pushed for a **“targeted and bold approach”** to combat the interconnected threats of conflicts, food insecurity, and climate change that are plaguing the world.

“The interrelationship between climate change, food security, and peace and security is clear,” declared President Ali. **“Climate change and conflict are two of the main drivers of food insecurity, often creating a vicious cycle of instability and need.”**

He highlighted the case of Ukraine, where the war’s impact on agricultural production has **“sent millions of families to the breadline.”**

Beyond immediate hardships, President Ali exposed the hidden costs of conflict. **“Within the first 35 days of the war between Israel and Gaza,**



President Ali addressing the UNSC

emissions amounting to approximately 60.3 million tonnes of carbon equivalent were discharged,” he revealed, emphasising the significant contribution of conflicts to climate change.

He challenged the international community

to **“be bold enough to calculate these damages and assign a value to the damage as a result of conflict and war.”**

President Ali reminded the Council of its unique position to **“implement critical strategies”** and

urged them to **“take into account the consequential effects of war and conflict on food security and climate change.”** He stressed the need for a **“full analysis of the impact,”** highlighting that these issues are **“intricately linked**

to the rule of law, democracy and governance.”

This high-level debate, a flagship event of Guyana’s UNSC presidency, aimed to foster international cooperation and proactive solutions. Participating nations

discussed various strategies, including designing climate adaptation plans to help communities cope with changing weather patterns, and mobilising climate financing to assist vulnerable countries in climate action initiatives. It was also aimed at reinvigorating efforts towards achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, addressing poverty, hunger, and environmental sustainability.

President Ali’s closing message resonated powerfully: **“We must be bold enough,”** he asserted. **“Are we going to be bold enough to address the level of criminality that exists in creating such damage? ... We must adopt measures in our procedures to deal with the effect on food and climate at a minimum.”**

CLIMATE CHANGE A THREAT MULTIPLIER FOR FOOD SECURITY AND PEACE

- MINISTER TODD

Foreign Minister Hugh Todd also addressed the open debates and sounded the alarm on the alarming connection between climate change, food insecurity, and international peace and security.

“We are concerned that the increasing occurrences of extreme climate events are severely impacting access to vital resources, such as water and agricultural lands,” Minister Todd declared. **“There is increasing evidence of the interrelationship between climate change, food insecurity and conflict, with each directly and indirectly impacting the other.”**

He stressed that rising temperatures, droughts, floods, and other climate impacts are jeopardising access to

vital resources like water and food, particularly in vulnerable nations.

Minister Todd cited the stark link between food insecurity and conflict, pointing out that nine of the 10 countries most susceptible to climate change are already food insecure. This disruption to livelihoods and migration patterns can be a major driver of instability.

Minister Todd emphasised that climate change acts as a **“risk multiplier,”** disproportionately impacting already fragile and conflict-affected communities, women, youth, children, and indigenous populations.

The Foreign Affairs Minister urged the UN Security Council to adopt comprehensive approach, utilising data and analytics to build resilience and promote inclusive, evidence-based solutions.

Minister Todd reaffirmed Guyana’s commitment to collaborating on addressing these interconnected challenges, emphasising the need for a systematic and strategic response from the international

community. **“We stand ready to consolidate our efforts to advance systematic response, inclusive and evidence-based approach,”** the minister noted.

Foreign Secretary, Robert Persaud

and Permanent Representative of Guyana to the UN, Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett also accompanied the President to the meeting, which was held under the theme: **“Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Climate, Food**

Security and Conflict”. Guyana is at the helm of the Presidency of the 15-member Security Council for the month of February, 2024.

While at the meeting, President Ali also held several bilateral meeting with Guyana’s diplomatic partners.



Freign Affairs Minister Hugh Todd greeting António Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations

GUYANA LAUNCHES WORLD-CLASS OIL & GAS TRAINING FACILITY

As Guyana experiences rapid growth in its oil and gas sector, the government is taking action to ensure Guyanese citizens benefit from the boom. A key part of this strategy is the development of a skilled workforce, and recently, a significant step was taken with the commissioning of a \$13 million oil and gas Facility Simulator (FacTor) at Port Mourant.

This first-of-its-kind facility in the region is part of the wider Guyana Technical Training College Inc (GTTCI), a collaboration between the government and Stabroek Block coventurers (ExxonMobil Guyana, Hess Corporation, and CNOOC). The FacTor provides practical training on simulated FPSO equipment, enabling trainees to prepare for real-world scenarios.

President Ali at the launch noted that the project reflects the government's commitment to empowering its people and building a skilled workforce. **"We want to create world-class facilities that will not only train and equip our human resources with the skill set but**



President Ali witnessing the cutting of ribbon to new US\$13 million (\$2.6 billion) world-class Guyana Technical Training College Inc (GTTCI) Facility Simulator (FacTor)

also give them world-class certification that they will get anywhere else in the world. That is critical...When these young men and women leave this facility they can be hired anywhere in the world," the president affirmed.

"We are making these investments... that tell you about our philosophy in which our government believes in the people, believes in empowering people, believes in building capacity," he added.

The FacTor training site consists of classrooms, workshops and the FacTor module. It is a fully functional plant that mirrors the operations

of the real offshore platform, designed to accommodate at any one time, a cohort of 24 trainees, across four disciplines - mechanical, instrumentation, electrical, and production.

Training the next generation of oil and gas professionals

The first batch of trainees are already reaping the benefits of this hands-on learning experience. Shannon Tungcap, a mechanical technician trainee, envisions a future where Guyanese dominate the industry. **"I see myself moving up the chain of command within the oil and gas sector, to a position where I can advise and train other persons in similar ways,"** he said.

Arantra English, an electrical technician trainee, emphasised the facility's contribution to local content development and its role in inspiring young girls to pursue careers in oil and gas. **"This is important because it means we have our facility in Guyana, instead of having to depend on other places, and we can expand within our country. As a female within this industry, it is important for me to be a role model for younger girls who would like to join the industry, and to help them develop their skills within the industry,"** she said.

Priya Singh, another trainee, highlights the diverse trade

opportunities offered by the facility. **"It is of extreme significance to the Guyanese people because it provides them with the opportunity to be trained in various trades. If they have a passion for the engineering field especially, I would say this is the right path to go on,"** Singh said.

Joshua Gouveia expressed his gratitude for the investment in bringing world-class training to Guyana. **"As a young Guyanese, this is an amazing feeling, especially to be the**

represent the future workforce, empowered by the FacTor to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development.

Regional Chairman David Armogan applauds the facility's location in Berbice, recognising the revitalisation of the region and the immense training opportunities it presents. He encourages young people to seize these opportunities, emphasising the importance of preparing for the future. **"We have to prepare our people for the next ten, 15 years. Now, this kind of skills**



President Ali being led on a tour of the facility

first batch here. It is something that words cannot express enough. It should be appreciated by Guyanese because it is great to have young people being trained within the sector," he emphasised.

These young voices

development is here... we have many opportunities for training, for young people to get ahead in this country," he said.

GAS-TO-ENERGY PROJECT WILL ADVANCE- LOAN ON HORIZON



The hallmark Gas-to-energy project being developed at Wales

Guyana's ambitious Gas-to-Energy (GTE) project, slated for construction at Wales, Region Three is pushing

ahead despite facing criticism and roadblocks. Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo recently reaffirmed

the government's unwavering commitment, dismissing attempts to derail the project as mere **"noise."**

"The gas-to-energy (project) will be built. It is a commitment that we made and despite every attempt by Kaieteur News, by Glenn Lall, by everyone else, the APNU to kill this project – it's not going to succeed," the vice president firmly stated.

Dr. Jagdeo expressed confidence in securing the crucial US\$646 million loan from the US Exim Bank by second quarter of 2024, citing strong bilateral ties and positive project assessments.

He countered critics, questioning their legitimacy compared to the expertise involved in the loan evaluation. **"We have a great**

working relationship with the US Ex-Im Bank. We've had bipartisan support on this loan. You think a few loonies ... like Kaieteur News, Glenn Lall or the others who been trying to block this project; you think that the people who did an assessment of this project in the US are as stupid as they are," he questioned.

The project promises a 50% reduction in electricity costs, translating to annual savings of US\$100 million for consumers. It aims to ignite economic growth in manufacturing and industry, creating jobs and attracting foreign investment. The project also envisions

a smooth transition towards renewable energy in the long run.

The 2024 budget dedicates a hefty \$80 billion to propel the project forward, covering infrastructure upgrades like a 200-kilometre pipeline transporting gas from offshore fields and a processing facility in Wales. The partnership with ExxonMobil ensures vital expertise and resources.

With a projected lifespan of 25 years, the Gas-to-Energy project holds immense potential to reshape Guyana's economic and energy landscape.

HEALTH BOOST!

\$475M GPHC PATHOLOGY LAB PROMISES FASTWER, MORE ACCURATE DIAGNOSES

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) has unveiled a state-of-the-art pathology lab, promising significant improvements in diagnosis speed and accuracy for patients. Funded by the government and Mount Sinai Health Systems, the lab boasts cutting-edge equipment like pathology scanners and tissue processor. Digital image sharing enables remote consultations, improving access to expertise and expediting diagnoses. The lab aims to become a regional hub, offering accurate diagnoses to patients beyond Georgetown. Delivering the feature address at the commissioning ceremony, President Ali stated his vision of a healthcare system serving millions of people, including regional visitors, with first-class facilities and modern equipment. **“In building ahead**

of time, we have to build a healthcare system that is capable of servicing a population of at least 2.5 million people in the medium term. And it may not be 2.5 million people living in Guyana, but 2.5 million people that will need to pass through the economy of our country, that would rely on our different services, including healthcare,” the president underscored. A key facet of this vision is the provision of new CT scans for the GPHC and regional



A modern pathology lab was commissioned at the Georgetown Public Hospital

hospitals, and 25 additional digital X-rays for regional facilities. He said a mobile MRI unit will be acquired to boost accessibility and reduce travel costs. A vaccine-manufacturing facility is also in the works

and will see the input of several regional and international partners, such as the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Cuba. The proposed facility is expected to serve Latin America and the Caribbean.

“These additional investments will no doubt help us tremendously in advancing care and moving many steps closer to the development of a world-class healthcare system and facilities here in Guyana,” the Head of State pledged.

Meanwhile, Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, sees the lab as crucial for cancer care, enabling accurate diagnoses and tailored treatment plans.

Guyana’s healthcare sector received a major boost with the groundbreaking of the nation’s first private specialty eye hospital, Optique Eye Hospital Inc. This landmark agreement between the Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest) and Optique underscores the local private sector’s commitment to

LOCAL INVESTMENT BRINGS FIRST PRIVATE SPECIALTY EYE HOSPITAL TO GUYANA

- OPTIQUE EYE HOSPITAL INC. BREAKS GROUND



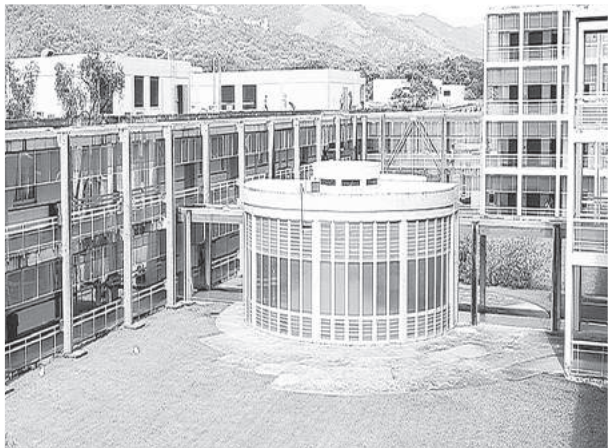
From left, Senior Director of Investment, John Edghill, CEO of Optique Eye Hospital Inc., Dhani Narine, Chief Investment Officer, Dr Peter Ramsaroop and Senior Investment Officer, Kegan Howard

improving healthcare. Chief Investment Officer, of GO-Invest, Dr. Peter Ramsaroop noted that the project reflects the government’s

focus on attracting local investments, with over 60% of recent agreements originating in Guyana. He observed that the initiative complements the President’s plan for seven new hospitals, including facilities in De Kinderen, Enmore, Diamond, Bath, No. 75 Village, and a specialised hospital in Ogle. Optique Eye Hospital, opening in late 2024, will offer a wide range of specialised eye surgeries, setting a new standard for the region.

Optique Eye Hospital’s CEO, Dhani Narine, expressed his pride in establishing this first-of-its-kind facility. With construction already underway at 350 New Market Street, the project is expected to generate jobs for Guyanese and potentially attract medical tourists. State-of-the-art equipment and a team of highly qualified professionals will ensure quality care. The hospital aims to tackle rising eye-related conditions like cataract, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy. The US\$3.5 million investment will provide a welcoming and conducive environment for healing, Narine said.

GUYANA EYES NEW UWI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE TO BOOST HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE



Faculty of Medical Sciences, UWI, St Augustine

President Ali has announced ongoing discussions with the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Trinidad and Tobago to establish a new UWI School of Medicine in Guyana. This initiative aims to address the nation’s healthcare workforce shortage and foster regional collaboration in medical education. The school is envisioned for Region Six, potentially attracting students from neighbouring Suriname, President Ali disclosed this while delivering the keynote address at the commissioning of a state-of-the-art pathology lab at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). The Head of State explained that ongoing negotiations target fees matching those for local students in Trinidad, promoting accessibility. This new institution would complement the existing University of

Medicine, fostering healthy competition and driving quality improvements in medical education. **“Competition is a part of life and a necessity in improving quality,”** President Ali noted. The initiative aligns with the government’s plans to increase the number of qualified healthcare workers, addressing a critical national need. The school’s presence in Guyana would expand the country’s regional and international academic footprint. Construction of a modern training facility for nurses in Suddie, Essequibo Coast, recently commenced. Additionally, the Ministry of Health has launched large-scale training programmes for post-midwifery, medical laboratory technicians, and nursing assistants.

GUYANA GEARS UP FOR SUICIDE CRISIS HELPLINE LAUNCH

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organisation/World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO), held a three-day training workshop for operators of the soon-to-be-launched Suicide Crisis Helpline. This timely initiative aligns with the ministry’s ongoing revision of the National Mental Health

Strategy Plan. The workshop focused on equipping operators with essential skills and knowledge to manage patients and establish guidelines for the helpline’s operation. During the opening, Minister Anthony highlighted recent advancements in mental health and suicide prevention legislation, including the removal of outdated criminal penalties for attempted suicide. Further, he noted the launch of the strategic plan for mental health and suicide prevention is expected in the first quarter of 2024. Addressing service gaps, Dr. Anthony

acknowledged previously underserved communities in remote areas and emphasised efforts to expand mental health services and data collection. **“When we look at our stats, whether for suicide or mental health issues, we’ll see a lot of information about the coastal regions, and we take for granted that this is where the problem is prevalent. But now that we start taking services to some of the interior locations, we realise that they have similar problems, but before we weren’t capturing the data,”** he explained. To address the shortage of trained professionals, the ministry utilises telepsychiatry to

connect individuals in remote regions with specialists. **“In that way, rather than having a specialist on-site, and going to the remote communities, at least we have a bridge where they can come and get help,”** he explained. He said that the addition of 25 telemedicine sites across Guyana creates further opportunities for telepsychiatry services. Meanwhile, Luis Codina, PAHO/WHO Representative to Guyana, underscored the importance of the new mental health plan and its focus on the helpline and other essential measures.



Minister Frank Anthony addressing the audience

HEALTH BOOST!



The maternal and child health facility

MORUCA WELCOMES NEW MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRE

Expectant mothers in Moruca, Region One, can now rejoice with the opening of a new maternal and child health centre at the Kumaka District Hospital. This well-equipped facility promises safer births and improved healthcare for families across the sub-district.

The facility was commissioned by Minister Anthony, who highlighted the dramatic drop in maternal deaths over the past two years, emphasising the center's crucial role in further ensuring safe deliveries. Recognising the challenge pregnant women face travelling

long distances during labour, the center offers the convenience of a waiting home, allowing them to stay close to the hospital. Dr. Anthony attributed the progress to a comprehensive approach, including community health workers in remote areas and trained traditional birth attendants. The minister reaffirmed the commitment to

providing equal access to quality healthcare across the country, regardless of location. **“We want the services to be equal across the country and that’s what we are working towards,”** he said. The new centre will cater to the entire Moruca sub-district, encompassing 18 medical facilities, including the Kumaka District Hospital, health centers, and health posts.

UPGRADED HEALTH POSTS BRING BETTER CARE FOR KOKO AND WALLABA VILLAGERS

Residents of Koko and Wallaba villages in the Moruca sub-district now have improved access to healthcare with the recent reopening of their upgraded health posts. Minister Anthony spearheaded the groundbreaking ceremonies. Dr Anthony noted that with the medical facilities now upgraded and services expanded, more persons will now be trained to complement the workforce.

Against this backdrop, the health minister urged people to take up training opportunities in the health sector to become community health workers, nursing assistants, or professional nurses. **“We want to improve health in our country. We want to improve health in Region One, and so we want to spend our resources on upgrading all**

the facilities that we have in Region One regardless of how small it is. We want to make sure that it is upgraded so it can serve the community,” he stated. The minister also urged parents to ensure their children take advantage of the comprehensive School Health Programme. The initiative is designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students and staff which has traditionally included health services, a healthy school environment, and health



The recommissioned Koko health post

education. **“Nursery school children, primary school children, we want to check their eyes, we want to check their hearing, we want to check their mouth to make sure they don’t have**

any rotten teeth and of course, we want to do a general checkup so that if we find anything early, we can fix it early,” he emphasised. Teams will also be in the communities to conduct eye tests and

vouchers will be given for persons to test their eyes. **“We want to ensure that people’s health is taken care of and that we bring the services closer to you,”** Dr Anthony asserted.



The commisisoning of the x-ray department

Residents of Region Five now have access to improved healthcare with the official opening of the new \$79 million X-ray department at the Mahaicony Hospital. This significant investment promises faster diagnosis, reduced radiation exposure, and a comprehensive upgrade for healthcare services in the region. At the commissioning ceremony, Minister Anthony disclosed that

MAHAICONY HOSPITAL GETS NEW \$79M X-RAY DEPARTMENT

the cost breakdown was \$30 million for the department’s retrofitting and \$49 million for the state-of-the-art Siemens X-ray machine. He highlighted the choice of Siemens for its proven reliability and superior imaging capabilities. The digital system enables rapid

access to results and minimises radiation exposure for patients and staff. The digital system allows for rapid access to X-ray results within the local healthcare network. Additionally, patients and staff benefit from significantly lower radiation exposure

compared to older X-ray systems. Similar X-ray systems are being installed in Suddie, Linden, New Amsterdam, Mibicuri, and Port Mourant. This project is part of a \$300 million investment to upgrade healthcare infrastructure in Region Five over the past two years, with further support planned.

GUYANA MAKES STRIDES AGAINST NEGLECTED DISEASES AND TB

The Ministry of Health is seeing positive progress in combating neglected diseases like Filaria, Leprosy, and Leishmaniasis, along with a decline in Tuberculosis cases, Minister of Anthony stated recently, during the examination of the 2024 budget estimates. **Filaria:** • Cases significantly reduced in eight out of 10 administrative regions.

• Targeted mass drug administration planned in remaining regions. • International evaluation team expected next year to assess progress towards eradication. **Leprosy:** • Cases experiencing a substantial decline. • Individual patient monitoring is ongoing. • New programme

to be launched this year to prevent transmission within households. **Neglected Diseases:** • Confidence expressed in eliminating five key neglected diseases (including Leishmaniasis and trypanosomiasis) by 2030. **Tuberculosis:** • Cases down from 500 to less than 40 in the past year. • New treatments acquired for multi-drug resistant cases. • Proactive efforts to locate and treat patients, including

addressing homelessness concerns. **Training and Prevention:** • Allocations made for training programmes to combat various diseases, including Filaria, malaria, leprosy, dengue, and port health. • Focus on strengthening surveillance systems and improving vector control through mosquito studies. The Ministry of Health’s multi-pronged approach, including targeted interventions,

training initiatives, and resource allocation, shows promise in eliminating neglected

diseases and controlling TB in Guyana.



Filaria pills being distributed in Guyana

US REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR GUYANA- NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR MEETS WITH PRESIDENT ALI

United States Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finan recently visited Guyana to strengthen regional partnerships on key issues. Accompanied by Senior Director for the Western Hemisphere Juan González, Finan emphasised the US' commitment to democratic governance, economic stability, and regional security.

Finan met with President Ali at State House and reaffirmed support for Guyana's

sovereignty, territorial integrity, and defence capabilities.

US Ambassador H.E. Nicole Theriot; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Mark Wells and National Security Council Senior Advisor Laura Updegrave were among the US officials present.

President Ali was joined by Foreign Secretary, Robert Persaud; GDF Chief of Staff, Brigadier Omar Khan; National Security

Advisor, Gerry Gouveia, GDF Colonel Sheldon Howell and Brigadier (Ret'd) Godfrey Bess.

Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral collaboration in areas of regional security, climate change mitigation, and food security.

Finan commended Guyana's leadership in supporting the Haitian political accord and the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission, which aims to improve security and facilitate humanitarian assistance. Both sides



The meeting with the US Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finan and the National Security Council Senior Director for the Western Hemisphere Juan González at State House

expressed commitment to advancing shared priorities during the visit. While in Guyana,

Finan also met with CARICOM's Secretary-General to discuss Haiti's MSS mission and promoting democracy in Venezuela, which continues to face political and economic turmoil, raising concerns about regional stability.

The high-level visit underscores the US' commitment to working with key partners in the Caribbean and Latin America to address critical challenges and advance regional stability and prosperity.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AIRLINE EXPANDS SERVICE TO GUYANA

Get ready for easier travel between Guyana and the Dominican Republic! Starting February 18, 2024, Sky High Aviation Services will launch three weekly flights connecting the two nations.

According to a press release from

the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) Corporation, this exciting news opens doors for convenient and affordable options for business and leisure travellers.

These new routes will be operated by comfortable Embraer

190 aircraft, offering 97 seats (including Nine Business Class and 88 Economy Class). They will provide smooth connections between Santo Domingo's Las Américas International Airport (SDQ) and the CJIA, the release noted.

This enhanced

connectivity is expected to generate positive ripples across both nations. More visitors mean a potential tourism boom, while improved trade and investment opportunities can fuel economic growth in both Guyana and the Dominican Republic. Cultural exchange is another exciting prospect, fostering deeper understanding and collaboration.

Guyanese officials celebrated the arrival of Sky High Aviation Services. Minister of Public Works Juan Edgill expressed his

joy, highlighting the alignment with the nation's vision for regional integration and a robust air transportation network. He believes this new route will "significantly contribute to increased tourism, trade, and investment, further propelling Guyana's development."

Sanjeev Datadin, Chairman of the CJIA Board of Directors, echoed the Minister's enthusiasm. He sees this addition as a sign of growing confidence in Guyana's aviation

industry. He expects the new route to "provide passengers with more travel choices, create jobs, and stimulate economic activity in the region."

Sky High Aviation Services already connect various Caribbean, Venezuelan, and US destinations, including Miami, Caracas, Aruba, and Havana. Their commitment to connecting people and cultures aligns perfectly with their contribution to the economic development of the regions they serve.



The new routes will be operated by comfortable Embraer 190 aircraft

INDIAN INVESTMENTS FLOURISHING IN GUYANA'S BOOMING ECONOMY

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd, emphasised the government's firm commitment to fostering private sector development through policy initiatives and frameworks designed to attract investment.

He highlighted the creation of a conducive business environment over the past three years as a testament to this commitment.



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd

Minister Todd's remarks came during the inaugural Cocktail Event of the India-Guyana Chamber of Commerce (IGCC) held in Georgetown. The event celebrated the growing partnerships and progress between the two countries since the Chamber's establishment in April 2023.

Lauding the IGCC's role, Minister Todd encouraged the Chamber to become a driving force in Guyana's business landscape. He urged members to actively participate, build strategic alliances, and contribute to the organisation's success, emphasising that a strong private sector hinges on effective collaboration. "The sky is the limit. Get involved. Be



Chief Investment Officer at the Guyana Office for Investment, Dr. Peter Ramsaroop

part and parcel of this organisation. Engage, build partnerships, strategic alliances, make it work because if we can make it work as policymakers, the task is now yours," he charged.

Underscoring the strong business ties between Guyana and India, Chief Investment Officer of the Guyana Office for Investment,

Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, revealed that over 45 Indian companies currently operate within the Guyanese economy. He attributed this growth to the government's policy frameworks, and active engagement with Indian businesses.

Dr. Ramsaroop cited examples of successful partnerships, including Texila University's proposal to expand its educational offerings in Guyana and an Indian mining company actively contributing to the country's infrastructure development.

The First Secretary at the High Commission of Guyana, Manoj Kumar, highlighted the existing partnerships, but also identified room for further growth in trade, which currently stands at \$6 million annually. He

emphasised the need for concerted efforts from both sides to expand trade opportunities.

The IGCC Cocktail Event witnessed the presentation of certificates and membership badges to member companies. This thriving Chamber, led by

President Ramnaresh Sarwan and First Vice President Kalamazad Ibrahim, serves as a key platform for fostering trade, investment, and cultural ties between Guyana and India.



The India-Guyana Chamber of Commerce's inaugural Cocktail Event

GUYANA IS THE PLACE TO BE - NCB CEO TOUTS GROWTH, INVESTMENT

Guyana's economy is exploding, and NCB Capital Markets CEO Angus Young is urging the world to take notice. At the recent Jamaica Stock Exchange conference, he declared Guyana "the place to be," highlighting its remarkable growth and vast potential.

"Guyana is probably the fastest growing country in the western hemisphere having grown by an estimated 39 percent in 2023, (and it) has been estimated similar percentage growth for 2024". CEO Young continued: "And it is by far the fastest growing in the region. This places the country at the forefront of global conversations and its people are set to encounter with unprecedented changes for the good, the bad and the in-between," he said.

The recently-concluded conference was held under the theme, **'The Drivers of Capital: From Concept to Growth'** and attracted more than 1,000 business leaders and aspirants from both private and public sectors regionally and internationally.

CEO Young contended that there are opportunities to assist in Guyana's domestic capital market by leveraging the collective expertise, and experience of other markets in the region such as Jamaica.

"This will be crucial to ensuring that every Guyanese citizen can participate in the world's fastest growing economy," he counselled.

He continued, "While traditional banking plays a vital role, it is not sufficient to harness the full spectrum of opportunities across various industries especially in the

rapidly evolving landscape of Guyana."

The Trinbagonian financier and businessman disclosed that Guyana's model is one that is drawing significant global interest, stressing that the energy sector is one that will aid in creating vast and untold opportunities.

"In the region traditional banks stipulate asset bank lenders relying on collateral as physical asset. However, the energy sector always requires specialise equipment posing a challenge for traditional banking. This is where the capital markets can play a pivotal role. The swift and expeditious development in Guyana presents tremendous opportunities for its people," he stressed.

Young reiterated his view that for Guyana to maximise these existing



Angus Young addressing the conference

golden opportunities there are a few key imperatives.

"To seize this opportunity, access to the right scale and type of financing is imperative given the fast pace commodity-based environment," he declared.

"By accessing capital markets, the public gives exposure to the activities of direct investors in energy, energy-support and spinoff

industries without direct involvement," he added.

The senior NCB executive noted that movement of skilled labour regionally will further boost and enhance Guyana's workforce.

"The recently-announced ferry system between Guyana, Trinidad and Barbados should be seen as a catalyst for further activity for labour and

physical resources."

"Additionally, Guyana has signalled its openness to being a recipient of skilled labour in the region a situation that would boost and strengthen productivity of that market while threatening the already tight labour markets in other territories," Young reasoned.

SOD TURNED FOR US\$7.2M HOSPITALITY TRAINING INSTITUTE AT PORT MOURANT



Sod-turned for construction of Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute in Berbice

The government has begun construction of a new Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute in Port Mourant, Berbice. The \$7.2 million facility is the first of its kind in Guyana and will provide hands-on training in a variety of areas related to the hospitality industry.

The institute is being built in collaboration with the ministries of Finance, Tourism and Education, along with the Caribbean Development Bank.

Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, delivered the feature remarks at the sod-turning ceremony, where he said that the project was conceptualised by the previous government but languished under the previous administration. He said that the institute is necessary to meet the growing demand for skilled hospitality workers in Guyana. "We have to develop continuous cohorts of trained

hospitality workers to assume the management of this sector and to provide the multiplicity of services required in this sector. Training individuals to work in the local hospitality and tourism sector is therefore a vital requirement in building up our hospitality and tourism sector to world-class standards," PM Phillips said.

The institute will

offer training in a variety of areas, including hotel management, food and beverage service, and tourism marketing. The goal is to provide Guyanese citizens with the skills they need to get jobs in the tourism industry, which is a major source of revenue for the country.

The institute is expected to be completed in 2026. The government says that it will be a state-of-the-art facility that will help Guyana to develop a world-class tourism sector.

In his remarks, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and Public Service, Dr Ashni Singh, said that Guyana's physical transformation and modernisation must be matched by the requisite quality of service.

Dr Singh expressed that the aim is to merge poignant aspects of Guyanese culture with world-class service,

treating both locals and tourists to a culturally diverse blend that distinguishes Guyana as a prime tourism hub.

"We want to create Guyanese chefs who are celebrities, and this hospitality and tourism training institute has the potential to do just that," he explained.

The institute is expected to be completed in 2026 and will be built by KARES Engineering Inc.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce Oneidge Walrond said that the institute is an essential step in expanding the technical skills of the hospitality sector and will allow Guyanese citizens to seize the opportunities that have been created by the recent investment in the tourism sector.

"Never before in our country's history have we seen this amount of concentrated investment in

the tourism and hospitality sector. This speaks to international investors, savvy investors who have assessed our government, done their feasibility studies, and said that this country is safe for investment...the objective is to ensure that the necessary skills to manage the rapidly expanding and evolving sector are available right here in Guyana," the minister told those gathered.

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Sonia Parag, also delivered remarks at the ceremony, saying that the institute is a symbol of progress, and a testament to the government's commitment to excellence and the future development of the country.

GOVT PRIORITISES EDUCATION AMIDST ONGOING TEACHER STRIKE - OFFERS DIALOGUE AND TEACHER WELL-BEING INITIATIVES



President Ali interacting with teacher during a meeting in October last

Despite the ongoing teacher strike in Guyana, the government maintains its unwavering commitment to quality education.

While acknowledging the disruption caused by the strike, Education Minister Priya Manickchand emphasised, **“We will not stop working because of this...We are going to continue this entire process of teaching.”**

The Minister highlighted ongoing initiatives like distributing school supplies cash grants and providing educational content across various platforms for affected students. **“Where your child is affected, we have deliberately and consciously crafted educational content on all our platforms,”** she explained.

MINISTER CRITICISES STRIKE, HIGHLIGHTS PROGRESS
“The strike was not warranted,” Minister Manickchand said, claiming the government has addressed several of the Guyana Teachers Union’s (GTU’s) 41 demands and implemented additional beneficial measures for teachers. **“We have met 25 of**

those demands and we have granted and done 28 other things [We have] taken 28 other actions, some personal [and] some professional,” she explained.

She reminded that teachers’ salaries have seen a 20% increase since 2020, and the government is committed to further improvements.

PRESIDENT URGES PATIENCE, PLEDGES BETTER CONDITIONS

President Ali has urged teachers to be patient, assuring them of the government’s commitment to gradually improve working conditions for all categories of workers. **“Coming on to the end of this year, we are going to have a total evaluation by category of workers, so that we can have an intervention that is even more structured and that will bring more benefits,”** he pledged.

He emphasised the need for a sustainable approach and criticised the strike as politically motivated, urging teachers not to be used as pawns. **“You do not need to push at the PPP/C government to improve your**

welfare. We will do it unconditionally,” the president remarked.

GOVT NEGOTIATING SPECIAL HOUSING LOANS FOR TEACHERS

Further, President Ali announced that teachers across the country will soon benefit from special rates for housing loans, as negotiations with several banks are underway to establish a mechanism offering low-interest rates to facilitate homeownership. **“We took it upon ourselves to do these negotiations for our teachers, where they will be able to get loans at 3.5 and four per cent because we will give up the withholding tax on profits so that teachers can be treated specially. These are the things that we are doing,”** he said.

He assured teachers of their position as prime beneficiaries of Guyana’s development, but acknowledged the process requires time.

VICE PRESIDENT HIGHLIGHTS TEACHER SALARY INCREASES, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has highlighted significant investments in the education sector, including increased budgetary allocations, improved pupil-teacher ratios, and free upskilling opportunities through GOAL and other programmes. **“This**

shows a commitment to hiring people in the sector,” Dr. Jagdeo pointed out, referring to the improved pupil-teacher ratio and over 14,000 teachers on the payroll. **“This is better than the United States, and 156 other countries, including the average for many European countries. This shows a commitment to hiring people in the sector,”** he noted.

He emphasised that teachers salaries have seen substantial increases with further incentives for higher qualifications. **“There are massive amounts of money in the budget for the training of teachers. As you train and as you go up, the salary gets better, and that is why we have focused on that,”** he said.

DR. JAGDEO QUESTIONS GTU’S CREDIBILITY, RAISES FINANCIAL CONCERNS

Vice President Jagdeo has also raised concerns about the GTU’s financial transparency, pointing out the lack of audited financial statements since 1989 and non-compliance with legal requirements. **“The teachers union has collected billions of dollars in dues within the last 30 years. The last audited statement that they submitted to the auditor general was in 1989,”** Vice President Jagdeo said.

“The constitution of the teachers’ union says that at the annual

meeting, they have to get their accounts submitted to the auditor general,” he pointed out.

“The GTU has failed to account for monies earned from the salaries of teachers across the country,” he stressed. **“Almost \$2 billion in dues collected remain unaccounted for, as they haven’t had their records audited by the Auditor General’s office over the last 35 years,”** he emphasised. He suggested this could lead to the union’s deregistration.

MCDONALD’S POSITION QUESTIONED

Dr. Jagdeo has pointed towards the GTU’s rulebook, claiming General Secretary Coretta McDonald might be occupying the position in violation of its guidelines. **“Teachers who leave the classroom to serve as members of parliament fall under associate membership,”** Dr. Jagdeo pointed out, citing the GTU’s rulebook.

“McDonald is paid as a teacher...She receives a teacher’s salary as well as a parliamentarian’s salary. But it also says here that associate members...shall not be eligible to hold the office of president or general secretary.” He emphasised, **“These are your own rules, and I think this is a contractual obligation with membership.”**

STRIKE SEEN AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED

Doubling down on previous claims, Dr. Jagdeo labelled the strike **“politically nuanced,”** alleging the

opposition, including the GTU, seeks to **“create unease in the country...capitalise on in preparation for the upcoming general elections.”** He added, **“APNU can’t mobilise a crowd on its own...They get people to support them by expressing crocodile tears or symbolic sympathy... The teachers’ union and others, they are urging other unions to come out, so that when there is an industrial action, the go on the ground.”**

MANY TEACHERS DEFY STRIKE CALL, CLASSES CONTINUE

Despite the strike call, reports indicate a significant number of teachers are attending schools nationwide, ensuring educational continuity and preparations for exams like National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA) and the Caribbean Secondary Education Certification (CSEC).

GOVT DISCONTINUES UNION DUES DEDUCTION, CITES “POLITICISATION”

The Ministry of Education (MoE) recently announced it will stop collecting union dues for GTU. This decision, conveyed in a press release, cited a 2000 court ruling and the current strike’s alleged “politicisation” as reasons for discontinuing dues deduction.

“This decision aligns with the Honourable Chief Justice’s ruling,” the release stated, referring to a case where similar deductions were deemed unlawful. Additionally, the MoE criticised the GTU’s strike and accused it of **“harbouring racist sentiments”** and **“ethnically divisive rhetoric.”**



Classrooms in action despite call for teachers’ strike



Classrooms in action despite call for teachers’ strike

IMF PRAISES GUYANA'S ECONOMIC BOOM

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Deputy Managing Director, Kenji Okamura, concluded a visit to Guyana, offering praise for the country's **"unparalleled economic expansion"** fueled by oil and caution regarding ongoing development needs.

"I am delighted to be in Guyana," Okamura remarked, acknowledging the **"warm hospitality"** and **"productive meetings"** with President Ali, Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, and other officials. He lauded the **"hard-won gains"** from past reforms, stating, **"Guyana today is in the position to reap the benefits of rapidly increasing oil revenues."**

These benefits, he emphasised, are **"benefitting the entire population"** through improved healthcare, education, housing, and infrastructure. **"Most importantly,"** Okamura declared, **"these plans are providing current and future generations with entrepreneurial and work opportunities through very strong economic growth, and a more diversified and climate-resilient economy."**

He specifically commended the **"visionary"** Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, highlighting its focus on carbon credits, climate adaptation, and renewable energy. **"The sale of carbon credits and use of these funds supports the Amerindian population, finances climate adaptation needs, and fosters renewable and cleaner energy for development,"** he explained.

However, Okamura cautioned that **"Guyana still faces significant human and infrastructure development needs."**

While expressing **"strong support"** for the government's investment plans, he warned of the **"non-trivial risk of overheating."** **"The authorities have managed this transformation successfully thus far,"** he acknowledged, **"and we agreed that continuing to maintain macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability are paramount."**

He also stressed the importance of developing **"a large skilled labour force"** to ensure **"a balanced growth path with**



President Ali meeting with the Deputy Managing Director of the Inter-Monetary Fund (IMF), Kenji Okamura and his delegation at the Office of the President

low inflation and opportunities for well-paying jobs throughout the country."

Food security was another key discussion point, with Okamura applauding the government's ambitious goal of reducing food imports by 25% in the Caribbean by 2025.

He expressed his appreciation for the **"excellent, long-standing relations between Guyana and the IMF"** and pledged continued support through **"regular policy dialogue and technical assistance."**

EDUCATION BUDGET HAD INCREASED BY 162% IN FOUR YEARS - DR JAGDEO



General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

Guyana's education sector is witnessing a significant financial injection, with General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, highlighting a staggering 162% increase in the budget since 2020. This translates to a whopping \$83.5 billion more allocated this year compared to just four years ago.

"Where in the world can you find that in four years that a budget for a sector has grown by 162%?", Dr Jagdeo asked as he emphasised the government's commitment to education.

"We are spending more on almost every

single area, from training teachers to building new schools and providing better classrooms." He made the remarks during his weekly Press Conference at Freedom House.

The increased budget encompasses various initiatives aimed at improving the education landscape. Dr. Jagdeo elaborated on some key areas. **"Massive sums are going into training our teachers,"** he stated, highlighting investments in programmes like the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL), and scholarships to the University of Guyana.

"We are building new schools and renovating existing ones, particularly in underserved regions," Dr. Jagdeo said, mentioning the construction of three schools in Region One alone, exceeding the entire capital allocation for education during the previous administration.

Over \$2.5 billion has been set aside for purchasing additional

textbooks, ensuring students have access to necessary learning materials.

Recognising the importance of competitive wages, Dr. Jagdeo pointed to a 61.4% increase in salary allocation for teachers, translating to a \$15 billion investment. Additionally, stipends and duty-free allowances have been introduced for graduate and senior teachers. **"Outside of the salary benefit for teachers, we have dedicated large sums of money to address non-salary benefits. These are in the budget... That represents a commitment to our country and teachers..."** the general secretary asserted.

GOVT EDUCATION INVESTMENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE-TEACHERS

While some teachers remain on strike, others across Guyana are highlighting

improvements in the education sector, praising initiatives and increased resources that support their professional development and student learning.

"We want the system to grow and as a system grows, our human resources are going to grow because this government is doing a tremendous job when it comes to education," Essequibo Islands Secondary School Headmaster Sheikh Ahmad said. He noted that salary increases have amounted to approximately 35 per cent by category from 2020 to the present. He also stressed the support of students benefitting from daily provisions like juice, biscuits, hot meals, and breakfast, alongside the \$40,000 'Because We Care' cash grant per child annually.

Bishops' High School Headmistress Shandrina Welcome-Lee, welcomed, **"the upgrade of labs, I.T. rooms, and the computers and**

all that. We have benefited a lot." **"And I'm not talking about just the Bishops' High School. I'm speaking generally for all schools. And we appreciate the changes and the advancement and everything,"** she added, noting the significant strides have been made towards revolutionising the delivery of education across the nation.

GOVT INVESTMENT IN TEACHERS INCLUDES:

- **Salary increases:** 61.4% rise in allocation, translating to \$15 billion more for teachers.
- **Increased stipends:** \$10,000 monthly for graduate teachers, \$20,000 for masters, and \$30,000 for doctoral degrees.
- **Duty-free allowances:** Senior teachers nearing retirement and others can now access this benefit.
- **Infrastructure development:** New

schools, particularly in underserved regions, and textbook purchases exceeding \$2.5 billion.

Additional measures:

- Beyond financial aspects, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has listed further initiatives agreed upon with the union and implemented independently:
- **Reduced workload:** Weekly lesson plans instead of daily, additional support staff in schools.
- **Streamlined procedures:** Digitalized processes for promotions and teacher upgrades.
- **Improved access to training:** GOAL program and UG scholarships.
- **Travel facilitation:** Waiver letters for teachers going abroad.
- **Creation of senior positions:** More opportunities for career advancement.
- **Support for challenging situations:** Counseling officers in secondary schools.

GUYANA WELCOMES NEW TURKISH AMBASSADOR, SEEKS MANUFACTURING BOOST

President Ali officially welcomed Her Excellency Bengü Yiğitgüden as the new Non-Resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Türkiye (Turkey) to Guyana during a ceremony on February 15.

The occasion highlighted both countries' desire to strengthen bilateral cooperation and explore new avenues for collaboration.

President Ali emphasised his eagerness to enhance bilateral relations and expressed interest in Turkish support for building Guyana's manufacturing sector.

He recognised Turkey's impressive technological advancements, suggesting Guyana could benefit from partnerships and knowledge sharing in research and development (R&D).

Turkey boasts over 80 technoparks, vibrant hubs for R&D and innovation.

Guyana and Turkey established diplomatic relations in 1973, laying the foundation for a decades-long partnership.



General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AFTER DECADES-LONG WAIT, OVER 180 COTTON TREE RESIDENTS FINALLY GET LAND TITLES

Over 180 residents of Cotton Tree, West Coast Berbice, finally received their land titles at a ceremony, held at the community centre ground, after decades of waiting. This marked a significant milestone in the government's national land regularisation programme.

The residents have occupied and passed down the land for generations, but lacked formal ownership. President Ali and Attorney General Anil

Nandlall presented the titles, emphasising the government's commitment to land ownership and empowerment.

President Ali highlighted that the process involved completing over 4,000 titles, in Cotton Tree and surrounding areas, and the \$100 million+ invested by the government to cover the entire cost of the process.

The President acknowledged the shortage of land court judges and announced

plans to engage temporary judges to expedite the processing of remaining titles within six months.

He committed to examining the land court backlog to extend the mechanism to other residents awaiting judgments.

He highlighted the impact on economic and financial empowerment. **"This process will allow the empowerment for families, the ability for wealth creation and build prosperity for families,"** he stated.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to regularise land across

Guyana, spearheaded by the Ministry of Legal Affairs in conjunction with the Office of the President and the Guyana Lands and Survey Commission, with ongoing projects in Region Five and other areas.

Regularisation has paved the way for infrastructure development in these communities.

President Ali announced over \$3 billion investment in infrastructure development in Sheildstown, Balthyock, and Burma.

Attorney General Nandlall explained the programme's halt



President Dr. Ali handing over a land title to a resident as the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, SC and GLSC Chairman Enrique Monize look on

under the previous administration and its resumption under President Ali.

The land titling process began in 2011 and was halted in 2015.

The government aims to regularise all outstanding areas in

Region Five within eight weeks.

Similar initiatives are underway in other villages and regions, including Bath Settlement, Enterprise, De Kendren, Ann's Grove, and Dochfour.

Residents of Container City in Ruimveldt, can look forward to improved accessibility. A road will be built to connect two sections of the Georgetown area.

Minister in the Ministry of Public Works Deodat Indar and Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy were recently in the area, and the pledge was made to build the road that will provide easier access to homes, especially for those returning late from work. Safety measures like lighting will also be implemented.

Though the area is mainly occupied by squatters, the government ministers emphasised that the Administration works for the betterment of all citizens. Minister Indar highlighted similar development efforts undertaken in

IMPROVED ACCESS COMING TO CONTAINER CITY, RUIMVELDT



The Ministers engaging the residents in Container City

other communities. **"As you know we have done this in many communities across the country when we go to do visits. And when we leave a community, we leave it in a much better place than how we find it, simply because we try to develop it by putting in infrastructure and getting the residents themselves involved in its transformation,"** Minister Indar said.

The government ministers encouraged the

residents' participation in transforming their community. Minister Indar emphasised a collaborative approach to infrastructure development, "Because at the end of the day we want to make sure that we work with you to create better conditions and to make sure that you can move upward."

Assessments for drainage and electricity improvements were conducted, and discussions are underway to create a recreational area.

Residents in two separate communities have experienced positive developments recently, thanks to government initiatives.

Following concerns raised by residents over heavy machinery use, dust pollution, and speeding in populated areas, Housing Minister Collin Croal met with contractors and residents. As a result, contractors will now use an alternate route for transporting materials, regularly soak the road to minimise dust, and maintain a section of the connecting road. This agreement brings much-needed relief to residents who were impacted by the ongoing infrastructure projects.

Meanwhile, Over 120 families in the former squatting area are celebrating a significant improvement in their lives with the completion of new roads. Minister Susan Rodrigues visited the area to inspect the

RESIDENTS FIND RELIEF IN LEONORA, CHARITY SQUATTING AREA SEES NEW ROADS AND TITLES

developments, which include 2.5 kilometers of concrete roads, a new bridge, and the installation of water and electricity services. These improvements were made possible by the area's regularisation in 2022 and a \$200 million investment in infrastructure development. Additionally, residents received land titles, allowing one resident to secure a loan for property renovations. Minister Rodrigues emphasised the government's commitment to improving families' lives and livelihoods through such initiatives.

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HERSTELLING, COVENT GARDEN TO GET \$195M MAKEOVER WITH MULTI-PURPOSE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Herstelling, Covent Garden to get \$195M makeover with multi-purpose recreational facilities

Residents of Herstelling Plot C and Covent Garden, East Bank Demerara will soon enjoy new multi-purpose recreational facilities thanks to a \$195 million investment by the government and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The \$94 million

facility to be built in Herstelling Plot C, will feature among other things, play areas, washrooms, and a basketball court while the \$101 million facility coming to Covent Garden, will offer similar amenities with an open auditorium and perimeter fence.

Minister Rodrigues unveiled these plans during a recent consultation with the communities. She explained that funding is

from the IDB's Adequate Housing and Urban Accessibility Programme (AHUAP), which aims to improve housing and urban accessibility.

At the meeting, residents were presented with preliminary plans outlining the recreational facilities slated for construction.

Minister Rodrigues conveyed her satisfaction with the completed sidewalks and road construction in the communities.

The residents were reminded of their role in monitoring the ongoing initiatives.

Upon completion, Minister Rodrigues stressed the importance of residents taking responsibility for the maintenance of these facilities.

Residents were also updated on the various housing-related projects and initiatives being undertaken.

Meanwhile, it was highlighted that Onderneeming

and surrounding communities will also benefit from the construction of a \$182 million recreational facility.

The government

continues to establish wholesome communities so that people have access to recreational areas, particularly in the housing schemes.



Residents during the consultation session with Minister Rodrigues

INFRASTRUCTURAL UPGRADES AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS UNVEILED FOR GROVE



The President during the community engagement

Residents of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. President Ali assured residents, that these works will commence soon as the Public Works Ministry will execute road assessments and build more internal roads.

Meanwhile, the government has allocated \$1 billion to improve water supply in the area. Residents will benefit from improved water supply as construction of a water treatment plant is 60 per cent completed, and will be operationalised by mid-year.

In response to these issues, President Ali stated that infrastructural works will be undertaken by the Ministry of Public Works while a sporting facility will be provided through

Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) will be installing a high-capacity electrical drainage pump to service the area, and will see completion at the end of next year.

For consistent power supply, the Guyana Power and Light Incorporated is continuing work to change transformers and connectors and install equipment while swapping the old wooden poles with new concrete poles.

The East Bank, Grove public roads will also be outfitted with street lights.

The president further stated the Ministry of Local Government will be assessing weaknesses that exist in terms of the garbage collection system.

The head of state praised the fast development ongoing, noting that the area is quickly becoming a major industrial, commercial, manufacturing, and development hub.

He informed that the extension of the highway from Diamond to Busbee Dam has begun and tenders for the extension from Busbee dam connecting the Linden / Soesdyke highway, will be published before the end of March.

In addition, Dr Ali disclosed that the contract for the new Linden / Soesdyke highway will be awarded shortly and will be integrated into the

Linden/Mabura hill. Further, contractors will be working to complete construction of bridges, which will eventually connect Guyana to Northern Brazil.

- Swift action pledged on issues affecting Friendship residents

Meanwhile during a visit to the community of Friendship also along the East Bank Demerara (EBD) the President committed to addressing challenges such as the need for proper irrigation for farmlands, employment opportunities, and a community playfield.

As it relates to agriculture, farmers complained about animals destroying their cassava crops.

“Let me get the Ministry of Agriculture to work with the wildlife department to see what solution we can come up with,” the head of state assured in response to farmers’ complaints.

The National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) will assess the drainage challenges to come up with a solution, he committed.

Additionally, the Guyana Lands and Survey Commission will examine land conflicts at Friendship to find a solution to the residents’ woes. Further, the Attorney General’s Chambers is



A resident raising a concern

instructed to appoint a mediator to resolve a private matter involving the overlapping of land titles.

Due to the Friendship community being a squatter settlement, the water pressure is limited. However, the Chief Executive Officer of Guyana and Water Incorporated (GWI), Shaik Baksh informed residents that a new water treatment plant is being constructed at Caledonia which will improve the level of service that they are now receiving.

“Just be patient for a little while and understand the context of this area. We ran all the pipelines and we tried to facilitate,” Baksh emphasised.

Residents were informed that a new secondary school is being constructed at Prospect, which will ease the overcrowding of classrooms currently being experienced at the Friendship and Diamond Secondary Schools.

GDF TO TRANSFORM WITH NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY

President Ali announced plans to transform the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) through a comprehensive National Defence Strategy, and a significant budget increase. This initiative aims to build a more resilient, adaptable, and agile force capable of safeguarding national sovereignty and addressing evolving security threats.

The President explained that the National Defence Strategy will reorganise and reorient the GDF, emphasising technology, strategic partnerships, and training. He was at the time addressing the Annual Officers’ Conference at Base Camp Ayanganna.

Consistent with this aim, the president announced that the designation of Chief of Defence to align with regional and international structures.

The GDF received \$42.2 billion in the 2024 budget, focusing on both material and human resource investments.

The President

noted that the focus is on maximising defence capabilities while maintaining fiscal responsibility. While, investments in modern infrastructure and equipment aim to create a more prepared and effective force. **“We aim to create a force that is not only better prepared to address evolving security threats, but is also more effective in dealing with potential aggressors,”** the commander-in-chief emphasised.

This year’s

conference was held under the theme: Transforming to better confront present and future challenges by enhancing awareness, adaptability, and agility capabilities.



President Ali and the officers that attended the conference



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MODEL# BLION-EW1500



Electric Pallet Trucks	
Type	BLION-EW1500
Rated Capacity	3300 Lbs
Lift Height	7.5 inch
Weight (Without Battery)	258.5 Lbs
Battery Capacity	20 Ah
Alkaline Battery Weight	16.5 Lbs
Battery Voltage	48 V
Service Weight	275 Lbs



Charging Time
3HR



Working Time
6HR



Work Shift
24HR



48V/6A
[Charger]



48V/20AH
[Battery]



Battery Status:
Green: 70%-100%
Yellow: 40%-70%
Red: <40%

• 24 Hours without break just need one extra battery.



Multi-function Control Handle



Less Wiring, Easy Service



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Bahamas PM, T&T's Rowley express support for Guyana's fuel industrialisation

WITH recognition of Guyana's advancements in the global energy sector, Prime Minister Phillip Davis of The Bahamas affirmed the region's endorsement of Guyana's pursuit to fuel industrialisation through energy production.

He delivered these statements during his virtual address at the inaugural ceremony of the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, currently taking place at the Guyana Marriott Hotel.

Davis observed that Guyana's GDP has experienced substantial growth in recent years due to the discovery of offshore oil and gas reserves. However, these findings, he stated, have not been exempt from encountering a number of challenges.

He pointed out that one of the issues is the reluctance of the global north to permit new participants in the global oil market, despite their historical and ongoing benefits from oil and other fossil fuels.

He added, however, "We support Guyana in its quest to boldly fuel its industrialisation on its own terms according to the resources that the people of Guyana have been blessed with. Providing a long-term plan for energy production also includes a meaningful effort to be responsible stewards of the environment."

The Prime Minister of The Bahamas asserted that Guyana is charting its own course in the energy sector, while other small Caribbean states are also adopting distinctive measures to



Prime Minister Keith Rowley of Trinidad and Tobago

ensure energy stability.

In his statement, he emphasised the region's progress and the accompanying responsibility. He urged leaders to carefully consider their obligations amidst these increasing challenges.

"We must think hard about how we preserve our economies, create op-

portunities for our people and power our nations to success; we must consider the roles that emerging technologies in renewable and sustainable energy can play in providing stable and affordable power for our people especially against the backdrop of climate change," Davis said.

This objective, he added, is possible to achieve while also respecting the fact that each CARICOM (Caribbean Community) nation has its own unique energy reality that necessitates different approaches.

During his address, Prime Minister Keith Rowley of Trinidad and Tobago highlighted the importance of the Caribbean energy economies, namely Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, as influential players in the market who are committed to responsible actions and embracing beneficial opportunities.

Furthermore, he mentioned that the region upholds the idea of sustained development by virtue of its oil resources.

Rowley said, "In order to ensure energy security for the region and combat the negative impacts of climate change, it is imperative that we effectively utilise our resources whether they be hydrocarbon or renewables through collaborative efforts."

Additionally, he indicated that only by working together can the region obtain its objectives of fostering productive and resilient economies in what he said promises to be hostile business environment.

"With the emergence of our region as a significant player in the hydrocarbon industry, we are presented with a valuable chance to proactively utilise our combined knowledge and expertise in order to maximise future prospects," the Trinidadian Prime Minister said.

Gas resources will be developed in a timely manner

AS Guyana continues on the journey towards achieving economic prosperity through the careful management of its energy sector, President Dr Irfaan Ali has said that "the time to develop our gas is now".

"In addition to the current and future oil development in Guyana, the Government of Guyana has made the strategic choice of developing all of its gas resources in a timely manner to maximize the economic benefit associated with such development," President Ali said during his remarks on the opening day of the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo at the Marriott Hotel on Monday.

He said, too, that the government is also working on substituting fossil fuels, such as diesel, to accelerate the transition to a low carbon energy platform.

The Head of State, however, reminded stakeholders that "time is of the essence" owing to market forces and uncertainties.

"There is an immediate window of opportunity between now and the end of the decade to monetise and maximise the value of Guyana's natural gas resources; the time to develop our gas is now!" Dr.

Ali emphasised.

The President mentioned the launch of the Request For Proposals (RFPs) for the designing, financing, construction and operation of the required gas infrastructure.

This strategy is part of a pivotal roadmap for managing the nation's significant gas resources. It also serves as a vital tool for Guyana to make informed decisions regarding the utilisation of its gas resources.

The Stabroek Block, along with the Corentyne Block, holds substantial gas resources. Ongoing exploration and appraisal activities are underway to determine the full extent of Guyana's gas resources.

The President then went on to say: "New infrastructural solutions in Guyana to develop and monetise our natural gas will undoubtedly support our CARICOM brothers and sisters, and friends in Latin America to attain energy security whereby Guyana will be uniquely positioned as a regional energy hub."

Making reference to another one of the nation's revolutionary developments, the Gas-to-Energy project, which will

see Guyana's gas resources being utilised in a manner that will usher in massive development, Dr. Ali said: "We have already seen that that second phase of gas coming in will have to support a second power plant that is based on the interest, just interest in manufacturing, industrial development..."

For context, Phase Two associated gas is planned to be utilised for liquefied natural gas (LNG) production, depending on the capacity.

Guyana's development in the oil-and-gas sector will serve as a catalyst for the transformation of almost every other sector.

According to the Head of State, the first phase of gas, that is the 40 per cent capacity of the pipeline, is approximately 4,000 barrels of propane-butane per day.

But what does this mean for Guyanese? Giving insight, Dr. Ali said that the normal consumption now is 800 barrels per day, so Guyana will be producing at least 4,000 barrels. This is in Phase One- 40 per cent of the pipeline.

"Our local consumption is 800 barrels. Immediately, we have 3,200 barrels available for export... [this] has to be

transported," he said while adding that this is where the Corentyne River Bridge, which will link Guyana and Suriname, can play an integral role.

In October 2023, two companies, the Dutch engineering company, Ballast Nedam, and Chinese-owned China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) submitted proposals to build the bridge over the Corentyne River to link Guyana and Suriname.

The project will be facilitated through a public-private partnership arrangement, which means that the successful contractor or joint venture will be responsible for its final design, construction, financing, operation, and maintenance.

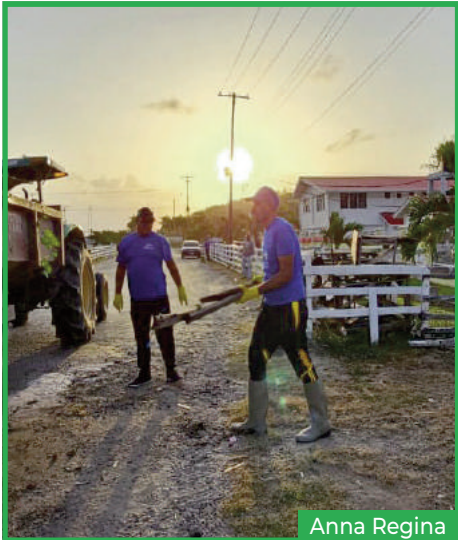
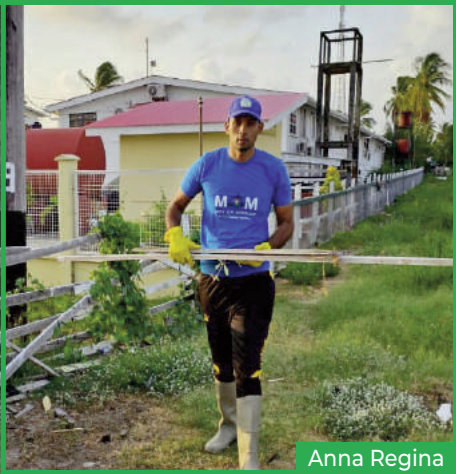
President Ali also noted: "So, let us look at full capacity...which we don't foresee to be long after phase one, we are looking at 10,000 barrels per day that is propane...So you're moving to 10,000 barrels per day. Now what does this mean for us? This means for us, that even with the growth in our demand, we will have 9,000 barrels per day ready for export."

SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER:

Community effort drives nationwide cleanup success

Witness the transformative power of community as Guyanese from all walks of life joined forces on February 17th. This photospread captures the energy, collaboration, and impact of a nationwide cleanup, taking you across ten regions and showcasing a shared vision for a cleaner, greener Guyana.

REGION TWO



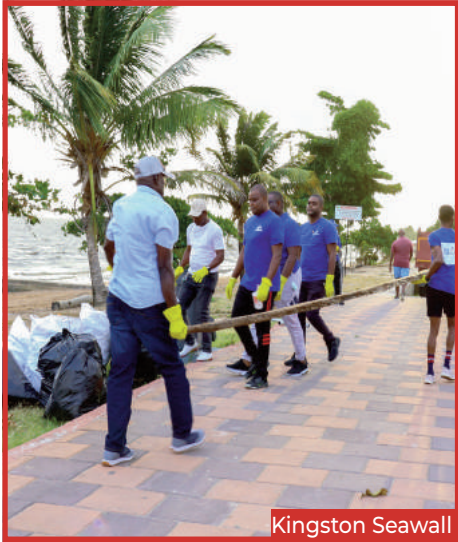
REGION THREE



REGION ONE



REGION FOUR



REGION FIVE



Woodley Park



Rossignol

REGION EIGHT



Mahdia



Mahdia

REGION SIX



Black Bush Polder



New Amsterdam



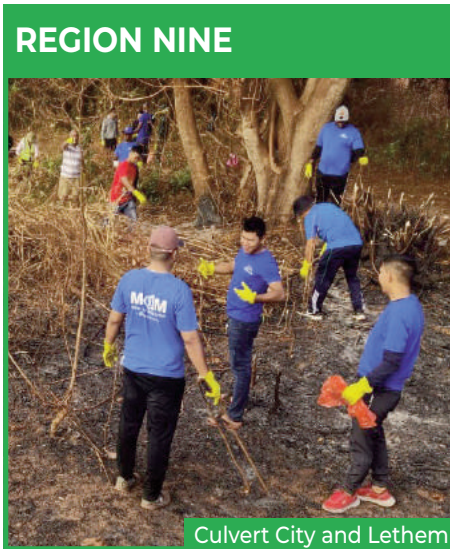
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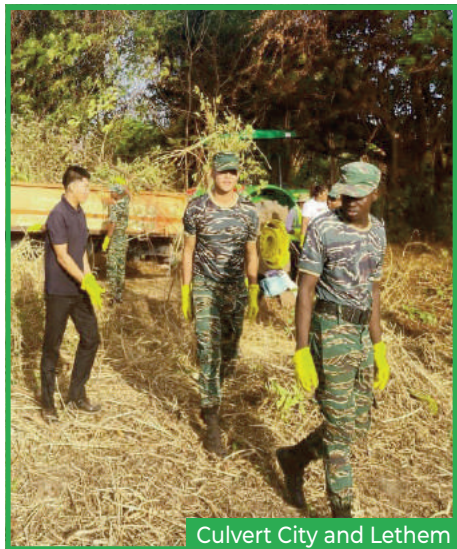
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Number 76 Village



Culvert City and Lethem

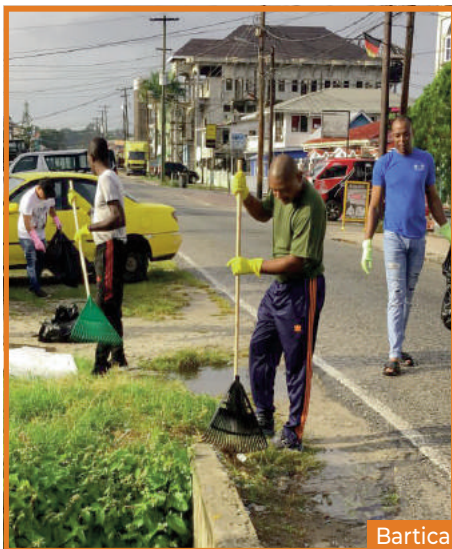


Culvert City and Lethem

REGION SEVEN



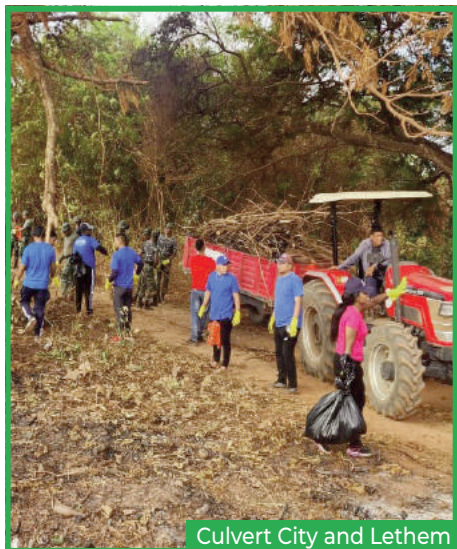
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 <p>Maggi Season Up All Purpose Seasoning 430 g</p>	 <p>Grace Jerk Seasoning 312 g Mild ONLY</p>	 <p>Ekono Seas Salt 700 g</p>	 <p>Grace Creamed Coconut 141 ml</p>
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MINISTERS FAN OUT -EXPLAIN TRANSFORMATIVE MEASURES, COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF BUDGET 2024



The Minister engaging the residents at the meetings



The Minister engaging the residents at the meetings



The Minister engaging the residents at the meetings



The Minister engaging the residents at the meetings

Government ministers are crisscrossing the country, engaging residents in community meetings to explain the benefits of the recently passed \$1.146 trillion national budget. Their message is clear: Budget 2024 has the potential to transform lives and significantly improve the living standards of all Guyanese.

Public Works Minister Juan Edghill, in West Bank Demerara, highlighted increased income tax thresholds, pension hikes, and support for vulnerable groups. He emphasised

the government's commitment to inclusive prosperity, showcasing initiatives like eye test vouchers and cervical cancer screening for women. **"Every Guyanese must have a chance for a good education, access good paying jobs, be able to raise and provide for a family and own their own homes,"** he noted.

He also countered opposition claims, urging residents to verify information and actively participate in development.

Minister Kwame McCoy in Region Ten emphasised investments in health, education, agriculture, and savannah development, fueled by both oil revenues and prudent management. He listened to concerns like drainage, water access, and land regularisation, assuring prompt attention. **"We are taking every bit of interest in people and what they need for their development,"** he assured. Additionally, he encouraged residents to utilise available services like small business grants and scholarships.

Labour Minister Joesph Hamilton in Region Six, reaffirmed the government's commitment to delivering on promises, highlighting the New Demerara River Bridge and free university education by 2025. **"All the commitments this PPP/C government make to you we will deliver them all. And we are far in advance in our way going there,"** he assured.

Similarly, he countered opposition tactics, emphasising the budget's transformative measures like infrastructure development and improved healthcare.

Minister within the Ministry of Public Works Deodat Indar in Region Three touted the budget's potential to improve lives through targeted policies and programmes. **"Budget 2024 has the potential to develop the lives of**

all Guyanese through a focus and targeted set of measures and policies," he said.

He acknowledged the challenges overcome since 2020 and highlighted Guyana's status as the world's fastest-growing economy. He emphasised the importance of community engagement and ongoing communication with residents.

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha, in Region Three, assured Wakenaam Island residents of fulfilled manifesto promises and equitable resource distribution. **"Resources are being distributed equitably to Guyanese throughout the country, aiming to improve the standard of living and ensure prosperity for all citizens,"** he stated.

He highlighted improved access to scholarships, healthcare, and infrastructure. He emphasised investments in human resources, with \$129.8 billion allocated to the health sector and a new regional hospital planned. He outlined agricultural interventions like fertiliser distribution and enhanced land access. He encouraged increased production, promising lower food costs and export opportunities.

From increased disposable income to improved healthcare and educational opportunities, Budget 2024 promises a brighter future for Guyanese. While challenges remain, the government's commitment to transparency, communication, and inclusive development paves the way for a transformed nation. The message is clear: engage, participate, and reap the benefits of Guyana's remarkable growth journey.

PM Modi emphasises importance of Guyana Energy Conference

The following is the full text of a message from the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi:

“As we continue the quest to shape a sustainable future for humanity, our shared vision and commitment finds expression through the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo. Greetings and best wishes to the Government of Guyana for hosting this Conference.

Today, there is an urgent need for a strong, influential and united voice in the global energy landscape, particularly for nations belonging to Global South and the developing world. Often, these are the nations that have the least carbon footprint, as well as the greatest number of people to be lifted out of poverty.

As a responsible and conscientious global partner, India recognises the importance of nurturing international cooperation to give a pro-people and pro-planet direction to the energy sector.

In this mission, this conference hosted by Guyana will also help in meeting the twin needs of access to energy, as well as smooth energy transition. In the last few years, we have worked on both access and sustainability.

On the one hand, we took electricity and LPG access to hundreds of millions of hitherto unreachable households. At the same time, our solar energy capacity grew over 23-fold and we also met the Paris Accord target of bringing 40% of our energy from non-fossil fuel sources.

Our dedication to sustainable and inclusive progress harmonises perfectly well with the underlying objectives of this conference.

India is keen about working with Guyana and the world in executing energy projects and fostering capacity-building endeavours in the spheres of conventional and renewable energy. We can all learn from each other’s experiences and best practices in the energy sector.

Our dedication to global collaboration for sustainable energy is evident through initiatives such as Global Bio-fuels Alliance and the International Solar Alliance. Our vision and energy are directed towards inclusive, resilient, equitable, and sustainable energy for all.

I am sure that this gathering of global experts, policymakers and industry leaders will deliberate upon the energy landscape, offer innovative solutions, as well as forge international collaborations to bring people closer for a cleaner, greener and better planet.

Best wishes for making Guyana Energy and Supply Chain Expo a resounding success.”



Participants at the opening of the 2024 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo

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ENHANCING THE COUNTRY'S CRIME-FIGHTING CAPABILITIES

GOVT AIMS FOR YEAR-END LAUNCH OF ADVANCED FORENSIC FACILITY



Guyana Forensic Science Laboratory

President Ali announced plans to establish a high-tech forensic facility in Guyana by the end of 2024, in partnership with Mount Sinai Health System. This initiative aims to significantly enhance the country's crime-fighting capabilities.

The announcement followed the commissioning of a modern pathology lab at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, showcasing the government's

focus on healthcare advancements.

The new facility will offer a comprehensive range of forensic services, including DNA analysis, ballistics testing, and fingerprint analysis.

The president noted that this collaboration leverages Mount Sinai's expertise in healthcare development to create a world-class facility. The Mount Sinai partnership has already brought projects like the national child and youth health initiative and diabetes

care improvements.

Existing investments have improved operations at the Guyana Forensic Science Laboratory (GFSL), reducing the DNA testing backlog.

According to the President, the new facility will further expand forensic capabilities, leading to speedier investigations and improved justice outcomes.

Thirty officers of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and five staff from the Ministry of Human

Services and Social Security will soon travel to India on fully paid scholarships to receive training in forensic interviews as part of this agenda.

The government has also recruited highly qualified forensic experts for the next three years to boost operations at the GFSL. The experts have a variety of skills in areas including ballistics, handwriting and fingerprint analysis, and crime scene forensics, among other areas.

POLICE FORCE LAUNCHES TRAINING FOR ITS RANKS, GDF AND CARIBBEAN SECURITY OFFICERS



Commissioner of Police (Ag), Clifton Hicken

The GPF has kicked off a three-month Junior Officers' Course, at the force's academy, marking a significant milestone in regional collaboration and leadership development.

Participants include Assistant Superintendents of the GPF, ranks of the Guyana Defence Force, and security officers from various Caribbean countries.

Law enforcement personnel attached to the Guyana Revenue Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, City

Constabulary, Guyana Prison Service, and Guyana Geology and Mines Commission are also participating in the course offered.

Commissioner of

Police (Ag), Clifton Hicken and Deputy Commissioner 'Administrative', Calvin Brutus addressed the first cohort of trainees ahead of the course's official commencement, urging trainees to equip themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge.

"As the future leaders of the Guyana Police Force and the organisations represented, you

play an essential role in upholding our unshakable dedication to integrity, professionalism, and academic excellence. Accept this adventure with excitement, devotion, and a thirst for education, and you will stand out as the forerunners of justice and public safety," the top cop expressed.

Meanwhile, Deputy

Commissioner Brutus highlighted that the training is not only designed to benefit law enforcement officers, "but for the communities that we serve."

Officers will undergo training guided by a comprehensive curriculum developed by local and international partners. It encompasses theoretical and practical exercises and interactive classroom sessions designed to equip

them with relevant skills, knowledge, and mindset to excel in their profession.

Other aspects include, hands-on skills in leadership, effective communication, critical thinking, ethical conduct, knowledge of organisational policies and team management skills.

Participants will be housed at the police academy, where thorough attention has been given to restoring the barrack rooms to create a comfortable and conducive environment for their training.

The leadership of the GPF met with academy instructors at the Officers Training Centre, Camp Road, Georgetown, emphasising the crucial role they play in shaping effective law enforcement officers.

The meeting

focused on discussions surrounding the roles and responsibilities of educators to make the police academy a professional and successful educational institution.

In his address, Minister of Home Affairs

Robeson Benn outlined the vision for broader national development, emphasising the pivotal role of law enforcement in shaping Guyana's future. He also highlighted the importance of modernising the infrastructural development within the police force.

Furthermore, the minister underscored the significance of continuous training and education for police officers, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to evolving challenges in

POLICE ACADEMY INSTRUCTORS URGED TO STEP UP: BUILDING BETTER OFFICERS & A STRONGER FORCE

policing.

Commissioner Hicken expounded on the importance of maintaining a strong disciplinary framework within the academy, which is pivotal in moulding the character and professionalism of law enforcement officers.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Brutus added that a well-organised academy

lays the foundation for a productive training environment that will ultimately contribute to the overall success of the academy's mission and strategic plan.

He also advocated for the implementation of more practical training, which will equip recruits with practical skills and problem-solving abilities essential for effective law enforcement,

thereby enhancing their readiness.

In August 2023, the police academy received the Institutional Accreditation Certification from the National Accreditation Council of Guyana – a historic achievement in the force's history.



The training instructors

FEMALE INMATES OF TIMEHRI PRISON LEARN TILAPIA REARING

Female inmates at the Timehri Prison in Region Four recently participated in a one-day practical training session on tilapia rearing and aquaculture.

The initiative was facilitated by the prison, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture's Fisheries Department,

and sought to introduce another source of food for the general prison population.

According to the Guyana Prison Service (GPS), the training session is the first to be held at the prison, focusing on essential aspects of tilapia rearing, including feeding and

angling techniques.

Spearheaded by the Satyadeow Sawh Aquaculture Station, the initiative serves as a pilot project of the prison's training module. The success of the initiative was evident as it yielded a notable output of 36 pounds of red tilapias.

Director of Prisons

(ag), Nicklon Elliot noted that the project further demonstrates the Prison Service's effort to aid prisoners' development.

Moreover, the Officer-in-charge of the Timehri Prison, Assistant Superintendent of Prisons Michelle Boyce, said the initiative widens the scope of programmes available to inmates.

This programme is one facet of the

Prison Service's rehabilitation and training programmes, which are geared toward

facilitating a smooth transition into society, equipped with skillsets to earn a livable income.



Female inmates being trained on how to rear tilapia

COURT UPHOLDS EXTENSION OF GUYANA'S ACTING POLICE COMMISSIONER



Acting Commissioner of Police, Clifton Hicken

The Chief Justice, Roxane George, has dismissed a legal challenge to the extension of Clifton Hicken's term as acting Police Commissioner. Hicken reached

retirement age in July 2023, but President Ali extended his term upon the recommendation of the Police Service Commission, under **section 2(b) of the Constitution (Prescribed Matters) Act, Chapter 27:12** which reads:

“The ... **Commissioner of Police shall vacate their respective offices** on attaining the age of ... **fifty-five years** respectively: **Provided that – (b) the President, acting on**

the recommendation of the Police Service Commission may permit a Commissioner of Police who has attained the age of fifty-five years to continue in office until he has attained such later age, not exceeding sixty years, as may (before the Commissioner of Police has attained the age of fifty-five years) have been agreed with the Commissioner of Police...”

Carol Joseph,

member of the People's National Congress (PNC), challenged the extension, arguing it only applies to substantive commissioners, not acting ones. Dexter Smartt represented the applicant, while, the Attorney General, **Anil Nandlall SC** represented the government.

The Chief Justice agreed with the Attorney General's arguments and ruled that the terms “Commissioner of Police” in the Constitution and relevant laws encompass

both substantive and acting appointees.

Since there's no substantive commissioner, the extension granted to Hicken was lawful.

The Court also rejected arguments that the President needed to consult the Opposition Leader before the extension.

Significantly, the court's decision upholds Hicken's continued service as acting Commissioner.

It clarifies that extensions apply to both

acting and substantive commissioners.

The court acknowledged the importance of filling the substantive position but cannot order it.

This decision aligns with a previous ruling, in a challenge filed by Christopher Jones, Opposition Chief Whip, validating Hicken's acting appointment.

The Court did not award costs to either party.

ROAD UPGRADES ACROSS GEORGETOWN AND ENVIRONS!

CEMETERY ROAD PROJECT NOW SLATED FOR MARCH 31 COMPLETION

The \$475 million

Edghill issued a warning that if the thoroughfare is not completed within the newly revised timeline, contracts will be terminated and

This is in keeping with the government's vision of community development aligned with the modernisation of the capital city and country at large.

EAST COAST TO EAST BANK ROAD PROJECT MAKING GOOD PROGRESS

The government has expressed satisfaction with the progress of the US\$106.4 million East Coast to East Bank Road linkage project, which has completed more than 32 percent.

Minister Edghill recently said he is confident of October 2024 completion date. “We at the Ministry of

We are moving on this.”

The new road is expected to enhance infrastructure, and boost agriculture, housing, and oil and gas development.

The project will link the Eugene Correia Airport with the Cheddi Jagan International Airport for improved accessibility.

A US\$3.2 million contract was awarded to RITES for project oversight and quality control.

Meanwhile, the separate project that caters to adding four lanes and improving existing infrastructure is progressing.

Both projects aim to improve connectivity, reduce traffic congestion, and promote economic

KITTY

Residents and commuters in Kitty are celebrating a significant improvement in their community with the completion of a \$149 million road rehabilitation project. This initiative, undertaken by the Ministry of Public Works, has revamped 13 vital roads, totalling over 6.5 kilometres, bringing smoother and safer

infrastructure improvements.

The project went beyond simple repaving. Existing surfaces were thoroughly cleaned and primed before receiving a fresh layer of asphalt, ensuring optimal adhesion and durability. A total of 2,862 tons of asphalt were used across key thoroughfares like Alexander Street, Queen Street, Lamaha Street, and more.

The revitalised



The \$475 million Cemetery Road expansion project

Cemetery Road expansion project has faced another setback, with the completion date now pushed to March 31, 2024. Minister of Public Works, Juan Edghill, recently announced the revised deadline for the project which initially was billed for completion in July 2023.

Heavy rainfall and procurement challenges were cited as reasons for the delay of the project that will see the expansion of the two-lane carriageway to four lanes, aiming to alleviate traffic congestion. Avinash Construction and Metal Works Company is the contractor.

Recently, Minister

potentially awarded to a new contractor or the Special Projects Unit (SPU).

Apart from the expansion of Cemetery Road, the overall project includes the enhancement of Independence Boulevard into three lanes, and the creation of a recreational promenade.

The Independence Boulevard project has long been completed and has repositioned the lives of residents allowing for the increase of property value, increased foot and vehicular traffic in the community, easier road access, and most importantly, a catalyst for community engagement.



Improved infrastructure along the East Coast of Demerara

Public Works are quite satisfied...the contractor has shown the goodwill to execute this project within the time frame.

development.

\$149M PROJECT REVAMPS 13 CRUCIAL ROADS IN



Rehabilitated road works in Kitty, Georgetown

travel to the area.

Following a commitment made by President Irfaan Ali during a community engagement, the government delivered on its promise to enhance Kitty's infrastructure. Starting on January 10, 2024, and completed within a month by the ministry's Special Project Unit, the project signifies the government's dedication to nationwide

roads are already making a difference. Residents now enjoy smoother rides, improved connectivity, and enhanced safety when navigating their community. This project contributes to the overall development and prosperity of Kitty, facilitating easier access to essential services and promoting economic activity.

DR. JAGDEO ACCUSES NORTON OF TWISTING IMF REPORT FOR POLITICAL GAIN

The General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, lambasted Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton for misrepresenting data from an International Monetary Fund (IMF) report.

During the 2024 budget debate, Norton

cited the IMF report to claim Guyana lost 41% of its economy due to inefficiency.

Dr. Jagdeo countered that Norton deliberately twisted the report's meaning for political gain.

Clarifying the facts, he told reporters at a press conference at

Freedom House, that the report, published in 2017, analysed public investment management in Guyana under the then - A P N U + A F C government.

It estimated an “**efficiency gap**” of **41%**, meaning inefficiencies cost Guyana money, but did

not claim a 41% loss of the entire economy, Dr Jagdeo noted.

He added that the report recommended measures to improve efficiency, which the PPP/C government has implemented, reducing the gap significantly.

“We have done feasibility studies on

almost all of these and almost every road project, every big project that we have had. We have had to go through an efficiency assessment for it. So, this has come down significantly,” he noted.



General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

300 EVIDENCE KITS TO BOOST JUSTICE FOR HINTERLAND WOMEN IN GUYANA

A major step forward in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Guyana was marked by the delivery of 300 sexual assault evidence kits valued at \$3.7 million. These kits, distributed to the Ministry of Health and the Guyana Police Force, specifically target remote Amerindian communities where SGBV cases are prevalent. Previously, lack of proper evidence collection often led to the dismissal of SGBV cases in court. These

new kits, part of the “Strengthening Justice for Women, Girls and Indigenous People” project funded by Canada, ensure proper evidence collection and hold perpetrators accountable. Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, and Commander of 4C, Senior Superintendent Khali Pareshram received the kits from JES Project Director and Country Representative, Lisa Thompson, and Head of Development Cooperation for Guyana in the High Commission



300 sexual evidence kits received to enhance justice for hinterland women

of Canada, Adam Loyer at the ministry’s Brickdam office. While primarily focused on Regions One and Four, training on using these kits will extend to healthcare professionals across all emergency rooms in Guyana. Minister Anthony lauded the partnership with Canada, highlighting similar ongoing collaboration in areas like mental health and children’s support.

The High Commission of Canada and the Justice Education Society were also commended for their continuous support. Commander Pareshram expressed gratitude for the technology advancements these kits bring, emphasising their crucial role in solving crimes. He acknowledged this timely donation as a significant support for the police force. As part of the programme, health professionals will receive comprehensive

training on utilising the kits effectively. This ensures proper evidence collection and strengthens the fight against SGBV. Meanwhile, Adam Loyer, representing the Canadian government, reiterated their commitment to combating SGBV through such initiatives. This project by the Justice Education Society aims to achieve greater equality in justice access for women and girls facing SGBV, particularly in remote communities.

\$600M PROGRAMME TO ADVANCE AMERINDIAN VILLAGES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A transformative programme worth \$600 million (US\$3 million) was launched to empower Amerindian villages in Guyana. This multi-year initiative aims to strengthen their capacity to develop and implement sustainable long-term plans aligned with national development goals. The programme was inaugurated at National Toshias Council’s (NTC) Secretariat Headquarters

with the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Ryan Toolsiram, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Guyana Odd-Magne Ruud, and NTC’s Chairman, Derrick John among those attending. The NTC will provide technical support to villages in crafting 10-year Village Sustainability Plans (VSPs). The plans will prioritise environmental

management, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Training programmes and workshops will enhance the knowledge and skills of village leaders, community members, and NTC staff. The programme aims to foster partnerships between villages, government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, and other stakeholders. A system will be established to track progress, share learning, and improve VSP implementation. The NTC and Ministry of Amerindian Affairs will gain greater capacity to support VSP development, execution, and monitoring. This programme is crucial as 242 Amerindian and remote villages will receive REDD+ programme



The launching event

funds from 2023 to 2030. In 2023, \$4.7 billion (US\$22 million) was distributed to villages, leading to over 500 projects being implemented. However, accessing these funds requires developing VSPs through village consultations and identifying sustainable livelihood projects.

75 WELLS DRILLED IN HINTERLAND REGIONS WITHIN THREE YEARS

With the aim of ensuring nationwide access to potable

water, the government has drilled 75 wells in hinterland regions



A child drinks from the new water system in Sawariwau

over the past three years, Minister Susan Rodrigues announced during a recent interview. The government plans to drill 40 more wells in 2024, aiming to achieve 100% water coverage in hinterland regions by 2025. This builds on the already impressive increase to 86% coverage achieved by the end of 2023. While some communities still rely on creeks, springs, rainwater harvesting, or hand-dug wells, Minister Rodrigues emphasised aggressive efforts to close the gap. Initiatives like rainwater harvesting tanks, and ongoing well construction are key strategies. Over 35,000 residents across the country have gained first-time access to potable water in the past three years, including 435 coastal families in various regions.

Approximately \$26 billion has been invested in ensuring clean drinking water access for all households. This includes projects like the construction of 13 water treatment plants. By 2025, the Minister highlighted aims to increase treated water coverage to 90% on the coast. Seven treatment plants are already under construction, with five more in the tendering stage, funded by the

Caribbean Development Bank. A pilot project using surface water to feed a treatment plant will be implemented in Hope, marking a departure from the deep-water well approach used for other plants. These initiatives, combined with rehabilitation and expansion of existing facilities, aim to deliver clean, safe drinking water to both hinterland and coastal communities.

NDCS GET COMPUTERS FOR FASTER BUSINESS PERMITS

The government is investing \$12 million in computers for Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) to implement a new single window system for business permits. This aims to simplify processes, promote transparency, and ultimately improve on the ease of doing business in the country. A total of 17 NDCs in the Demerara-Mahaica region received Dell

OptiPlex Micro Desktops worth \$2.9 million, marking the first step in the nationwide rollout. The single window system will create an electronic platform for processing, and approving planning and building permits, streamlining procedures and eliminating. This simplifies NDCs’ land and contract management, clarifies responsibilities, and improves internal

efficiency. The central government can access information on land issues and infrastructure agreements across all NDCs, enhancing transparency and accountability. The system empowers the central authority to rectify any issues, and ensure smooth operations across different NDCs. The Ministry of Housing and Water

is spearheading the initiative, having invested \$202 million in IT infrastructure, and consulted with stakeholders nationwide. The Planning and Development Single Window System Bill, passed in July 2023, provides the legal framework for this reform. This initiative signals a commitment to modernising business processes, improving transparency, and environment for ultimately creating economic growth in a more conducive Guyana.



A representative from one of the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) collecting a computer from a representative from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

AGRICULTURE ON THE MOVE

GUYANA TO BUILD FIRST AGROCHEMICAL PLANT BY 2025, SEEKS LOCAL INVESTMENT

President Ali announced plans to build Guyana’s first-ever agrochemical plant by the end of 2025, aiming to boost the nation’s agriculture sector and achieve fertiliser self-sufficiency.

Delivering a keynote address at a Private Sector Commission event, President Ali highlighted the project as part of a broader economic diversification and transformation strategy. The plant, leveraging the upcoming gas-to-shore project, will prioritise domestic fertiliser production, potentially expanding to serve the regional market in the future.

“Our initial plan is for national security and then to see how much more gas we have to make it into regional operation.”

To encourage

local participation, the government plans to offer incentives for consortiums investing in critical sectors like agriculture, tourism, and energy. President Ali emphasised the strong global interest in Guyana, calling it a “natural pull factor” for investment.

“We have investors from all over the world coming in. The country is on every newspaper headline, every magazine headline; it is in every major newscast headline. So, we have a natural momentum in marketing.”

This initiative goes beyond self-sufficiency. The plant is expected to enhance the competitiveness of Guyana’s agricultural sector by producing essential chemicals domestically. Additionally, the focus on utilising cleaner gas from the gas-to-shore project aligns with the nation’s sustainability goals.



His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali

ABANDONED ENMORE ESTATE TO BE REPURPOSED AS SUGAR REFINERY



Enmore estate

President Ali also announced a significant development for Guyana’s sugar industry: the conversion of the abandoned Enmore estate into a sugar refinery. This project promises to create hundreds of jobs, revitalise the economy, and further solidify the government’s commitment to reviving the sugar sector.

This initiative builds upon the recent reopening of the Rose Hall Sugar Estate, bringing the total number of new jobs in the industry to over 4,000 since 2020.

President Ali emphasised the government’s ongoing commitment to investing in the sugar industry,

recognising its vital role in the economy. **“We are going to invest in GuySuCo because GuySuCo can be made profitable. We have an investor who is in the final stage of an investment decision soon to convert the Enmore sugar estate that is now scrapped into a sugar refinery to refine the brown sugar there,”** he updated.

He noted that the refinery project presents opportunities for private sector involvement in transport and logistics.

President Ali said the government aims to produce 100,000 tonnes of sugar this year, however, the refinery’s capacity will be 180,000 tonnes. He indicated that the government might consider importing sugar to meet the refinery’s full capacity and ensure its viability.

The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), has launched two significant projects worth \$143.1 million (€\$636,106) aimed at propelling Guyana’s food security agenda and expanding market access for its exports.

The projects are funded by the CDB and the European Union’s CARIFORUM - EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and CSME Standby Facility.

Enhanced Livestock Disease Surveillance is a project that focuses on strengthening surveillance programmes against bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis in cattle, protecting the growing livestock industry, boosting beef and dairy production, and supporting initiatives like the government’s dairy project for single parents.

The Food Traceability System is a project that implements a traceability system for pineapples and leafy greens, ensuring

transparency from farm to table, enhancing supply chain management, and facilitating swift response to potential disease outbreaks.

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha highlighted the projects’ groundbreaking nature, addressing critical challenges and unlocking growth opportunities. He emphasised the sector’s rapid transformation with public-private collaboration and lauded the 12.7% growth in livestock and 4.1% growth in crops achieved in 2023.

GUYANA LAUNCHES NEW PROJECTS WITH CDB TO BOOST FOOD SECURITY, MARKET ACCESS

Minister Mustapha spoke of the partnership’s role in building a sustainable agriculture sector and positioning Guyana as a regional food hub.

These projects represent a significant step towards achieving food security, expanding market access, and contributing to the overall transformation of Guyana’s agricultural sector.



The launch of the projects with CDB to boost food security

The 38th United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation’s (FAO) regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC38), promises a pivotal discussion on food security challenges and solutions for the region.

Hosted for the first time in Guyana from March 18 to 21, the conference will bring together key stakeholders to address critical issues.

Discussions will focus on finding ways to end hunger through

GUYANA GEARS UP TO HOST FAO CONFERENCE ON REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

sustainable funding mechanisms for national programmes, exploring technological innovations to minimise post-harvest losses, and building resilience and mitigating climate impacts for a sustainable agricultural system.

Other key discussion points include working towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to food security despite global



Launching ceremony for the 38th FAO regional conference

challenges, promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building to enhance regional food production, aligning regional efforts with the CARICOM goal of reducing the food import bill by 25%, and focusing on concrete action plans and commitments for the next two years.

Speaking at the conference’s press launch at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC), Liliendaal, Minister Mustapha highlighted that the region’s food systems are vulnerable, and **“this conference will help us formulate policies and guidance to address challenges.”**

Meanwhile, Assistant Director General and Regional Representative

of FAO, Mario Lubetkin stressed that **“we need to combine local, regional, and global efforts to overcome food security challenges.”**

Approximately 33 countries from the region will be represented at the conference. Over 100 delegates are expected to attend including various ministers of agriculture and other high-ranking officials from the region’s member states. The high-level session will be held at the ACCC.

AGRICULTURE ON THE MOVE

ABATTOIR AT ONVERWAGT NEARING COMPLETION

Construction of the new abattoir in Onverwagt, Region Five, is 75% complete and on track for a second-quarter completion, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha announced.

“This will be a state-of-the-art abattoir. And that is why you had some changes to

the design. The new completion date will be the second quarter of 2024,” Minister Mustapha highlighted recently.

The abattoir is also ideally located since residents in Regions Four, Five, Six, and other areas, will be able to utilise the amenities there.

The facility is being

funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and will serve as the nation’s key site for slaughtering cattle.

Importantly, Guyana’s meat processing facilities will be modernised and brought up to international standards with the construction of the new abattoir.

As a result, beef will be able to reach new markets, while increasing the revenue of cattle farmers and generating significant job prospects.

This initiative will support Guyana’s ongoing efforts to enhance meat production while also contributing to the decrease in meat imports.

The facility will have a sediment pond that will receive all of the waste.



Abattoir at Onverwagt in Region Five

Among the plethora of measures aimed at enhancing the livestock sector, Guyana will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Columbia to commence investment in the local cattle industry.

GUYANA TO RAMP UP HIGH-VALUE CROP PRODUCTION WITH 200 NEW SHADE HOUSES



Crops being cultivated under shade house conditions

To meet the growing demand and ensure profitability of high-value crops, Guyana

plans to add 200 more shade houses this year, announced Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha.

“We have here in our budget approximately 200 [shade houses] ... We will procure it and then we will work with various organisations, groups and schools,” Minister Mustapha said.

The minister highlighted that the ministry has received numerous requests for

this initiative, especially from schools.

In 2023, 200 shade houses were constructed as part of the Agriculture and Innovation Entrepreneurship Programme (AIEP).

These shade houses continue to benefit young agri-entrepreneurs, while at the same time improving the production of high-value crops including broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, sweet pepper, cilantro, kale, chili pepper, and parsley.

A total of 90 new shade houses were completed in 2023, bringing the total to 365 since the initiative started in 2021.

As of December 2023, some \$25.4 million was earned under the AIEP.

“We have the Agriculture and Innovation Entrepreneurship Programme that will be extended to Regions Two, Five, and Ten, where a number of those shade houses

will be going,” Minister Mustapha emphasised.

This intervention will support the growth of a range of crops, such as pak-choi and high-end herbs which will, among other things, satisfy the demands of the expanding tourism sector.

Additionally, 2023 saw the launching of the hydroponics project in collaboration with the private sector.

Farmers in Region Two are experiencing a wave of positive changes thanks to a comprehensive set of agricultural interventions implemented by the government.

Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, hosted community meetings at Canal, Heath Field, Hackney, and Charity in the lower Pomeroon area and highlighted these interventions.

The agriculture minister noted that the current bed and drain programme which is in its first phase, along with the ongoing dredging works of the Pomeroon’s river mouth will benefit about 540 farmers.

“We will continue to

ensure that we develop the infrastructure so that you can have the kind of infrastructure that you can invest in ... We will continue to make investments,” he said.

Dredging of the Pomeroon River’s mouth which is being carried out at \$560 million will benefit the farming communities in the Pomeroon region.

It is anticipated to reduce flooding which is a significant problem for the region’s farmers.

Due to excessive siltation at the river’s mouth, Pomeroon farmers have suffered from poor drainage for a long time.

The National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) will be deploying a pontoon and

REGION TWO FARMERS REAP REWARDS FROM MULTIPLE AGRI INITIATIVES



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, and other officials inspecting ongoing dredging works of the Pomeroon River mouth

two additional excavators to service the area, giving farmers greater access to irrigation and drainage.

With the commencement of the distribution of the \$850 million fertiliser assistance programme, farmers have been

receiving vouchers to purchase manure to help boost crop and rice output.

Approximately 50 per cent of the fertiliser needed will be distributed to the farmers for the first crop.

“Last crop you

would have received almost 75 per cent. Because of the expansion that we have, we had to take it back to 50 per cent...,” he further explained to the farmers.

Farmers have also benefitted from agricultural inputs including breeding bulls and black giant chickens, among others.

Some 7,000 high-yielding coconut seedlings will be provided shortly to about 100 coconut farmers in the Pomeroon region to enhance production.

Minister Mustapha emphasised that farmers can maximise other opportunities in the sector including the production of brackish water shrimp and

vannamei prawns.

To expand honey production, three specialists from Cuba arrived in Guyana recently to work with residents countrywide to develop apiculture.

“So, for those on the Essequibo coast who are interested in honey production, we will work with those groups. Those are new things because we were doing honey in a very subsistence way,” he added.

Region Two, he said, is slated for massive development which will boost economic growth there.

BLACK TANKS DISTRIBUTION EASE WATER WOES FOR LOO CREEK RESIDENTS

Over 50 residents of Loo Creek, a community along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway, received much-needed water tanks from the government, alleviating their long-standing struggle with accessing clean water.

Minister Kwame McCoy, responsible for Public Affairs, personally

distributed the tanks following a recent visit where he listened to community concerns, including the lack of potable water.

This intervention brought relief to the residents, who were very grateful.

“I am thankful for the tank. I used to walk far to

fetch water, but now it’s easier,” Rosemary Henry said.

“This tank will be a great help to us because we suffer a lot from [accessing] potable water,” Herbert James said, emphasising the water tank’s importance.

Residents like Lloyd Sukhoo see this initiative as a step towards a

more comfortable life, appreciating the government’s efforts to address their needs.

“The government can’t do everything, but this is a big step,” he said.

Josephine DaSilva echoed this sentiment, highlighting the crucial support these tanks provide.

Minister McCoy emphasised the government’s commitment to



Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy handing over a water tank to Lloyd Sukhoo

improving lives, and investing in communities across the country. He encouraged continued partnership with residents, highlighting the importance of collaboration for development.

SCHOOLS GET \$1.8B CASH GRANT FOR SUPPLIES

Schools nationwide are receiving \$1.8 billion in cash grants to purchase essential cleaning, janitorial, and office supplies, marking a shift towards greater autonomy and transparency.

This innovative approach cuts teachers' reliance on personal funds for classroom items, offering greater choice and quality control over cleaning, janitorial, and office supplies. Additionally, schools now have more decision-making power,



Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand alongside teachers of Abram Zuil Secondary School

leading to potentially improved learning environments.

“We thought that if we gave the grants

directly to schools, teachers would be able to choose what they want, what quality they want,

and when they want it,” stated Minister Priya Manickchand at the distribution exercise at the Abram Zuil Secondary School in Region Two.

“It is not a grant to do whatever one wants with it; it is a grant to provide materials and supplies. For the most part, teachers don’t have any problems with that...”

To ensure responsible spending, teachers need to provide receipts, and audits

will be conducted. The ministry is also encouraging schools to set up bank accounts for smoother electronic transfers in the future.

Allocations vary between coastal and hinterland schools, and secondary schools have a separate structure. Coastal schools are receiving \$4,500 per student, with \$3,500 to teachers and \$1,000 to the school. Hinterland schools are getting \$5,500 per student, with \$4,500 to teachers and \$1,000 to the school.

Secondary schools receive \$1,000 per student to the school, with department heads managing the remaining funds in collaboration with teachers.

This grant empowers schools, reduces teachers’ financial burden, promotes transparency, and has the potential to significantly improve learning environments as classrooms will have the necessary materials for effective teaching and learning.

GOVT PARTNERS WITH TORONTO UNIVERSITY TO UPSKILL 2,000 YOUTHS, LEVERAGE DIASPORA

Recognising the crucial role of a skilled workforce in national development, the Guyana government has announced a partnership with Toronto Metropolitan University to upskill 2,000 Guyanese youths across various sectors.

The programme focuses on high-demand fields like accounting, auditing, software development, and healthcare, equipping participants for well-paying jobs (minimum US\$25,000-30,000 annually). President Ali spoke of this partnership while delivering the keynote address at the Private Sector Commission’s (PSC) Corporate Dinner at the Guyana Marriott Hotel, Kingston, Georgetown.

The programme is open to both local and Guyanese citizens in the diaspora, promoting knowledge exchange and leveraging diaspora expertise. “The diaspora has to be part of wealth



Toronto Metropolitan University

creation, and wealth creation is investing in innovation, investing in research and development, investing in the market, investing in getting the right technical skills that are going to help you,” President Ali emphasised.

Partnering with a top Canadian university (ranked #851-900 in QS World University Rankings 2024) ensures high-quality training and international recognition, he noted.

This new programme

complements the government’s ongoing efforts to equip its workforce for the challenges and opportunities of development. These include the Port Mourant Oil and Gas College offering specialised training for the petroleum industry, the Board of Industrial Training (BIT) providing technical and vocational skills in various fields, and the Tourism and Hospitality Training Institute, under construction to address industry needs.

The Office of the First Lady and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport joined forces to host a vibrant networking forum at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. The event, themed “The Continuum: Connecting Cultures to the Creative Industry,” brought together local creative talents with internationally renowned designer Kwaku Bediako to foster knowledge sharing and career development.

Recognising the pivotal role of the creative industry in shaping national identity and igniting social change, Mrs. Ali emphasised the government’s commitment to supporting its growth. She highlighted the industry’s potential to expand global visibility of Guyanese culture and showcase the nation’s unique heritage on a global stage.

The industry’s ability to preserve cultural legacy by transmitting traditions and stories to future generations, and contribute to national development by generating income

FIRST LADY HOSTS FORUM TO CONNECT GUYANESE CREATIVES WITH GLOBAL EXPERTISE

through tourism, job creation, and investment were also highlighted by the First Lady.

Mrs. Ali reiterated the government’s investments in the creative sector through initiatives like the Ministry of Culture’s grant programme, which provides financial support for creative endeavours, and through collaboration with international experts as such facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity building.

The forum saw fashion designers, make-up artists, hair stylists,

poets, photographers, and other creatives interacted with Bediako, gaining valuable insights.

It also showcased Guyana’s rich cultural heritage through performances, with Bediako praising the country’s cuisine and warm hospitality.

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr, Minister of Tourism, Oneidge Walrond, and Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy were also in attendance to give their support.



First Lady, Mrs. Arya Ali with Minister of Tourism, Oneidge Walrond, and Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy

GOAL SCHOLARSHIPS OFFER FREEDOM OF CHOICE, NO CONTRACT REQUIRED

Senior Minister in with responsibility for the Office of the President Finance and Public



A recent batch of GOAL graduates (2)

Service, Dr. Ashni Singh clarified that graduates of the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) programme are not obligated to work for the government after completing their studies.

Unlike traditional government scholarships, GOAL recipients do not sign contracts requiring public-

sector employment. “Recipients of the Government of Guyana scholarships typically have a contract and a contractual obligation to serve in the public domain,” Dr Singh explained.

He emphasised the programme’s focus on providing choice and flexibility in educational

pursuits. GOAL programmes offer online learning options and a broader range of training compared to traditional universities like the University of Guyana.

The government aims to empower Guyanese through education and employment opportunities, regardless of sector. GOAL scholarships

offer a unique pathway to learning, while traditional scholarships provide different benefits and obligations. Ultimately, the choice lies with the individual to pursue the path that best suits his / her aspirations and career goals.

ADDRESSING WATER WOES IN REGION TWO

-NEW ONDERNEEMING WATER TREATMENT PLANT NEARING COMPLETION

Residents from Supenaam to Taymouth Manor along the Essequibo Coast can finally celebrate! The construction of a new \$1.18 billion water treatment plant in Onderneeming, Region Two, is nearing completion, promising access to clean and safe drinking water.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, announced the good



Minister Rodrigues inspecting ongoing works at the Onderneeming Water Treatment Plant

news during a recent inspection of the project. **“We are expecting completion at least**

a month ahead of schedule, by August of this year,” Minister Rodrigues

declared, expressing her satisfaction with the progress.

This new plant is part of a larger initiative by the government to improve access to treated water across Guyana. The Onderneeming plant is one of seven facilities currently under construction, funded by the government.

By year’s end, these seven projects are expected to be completed, bringing significant improvement to the lives of residents.

Additionally, five

more treatment plants funded by the Caribbean Development Bank are in the tendering stage. These will further expand water access.

Over the past three years alone, more than 35,000 Guyanese have gained access to potable water for the first time.

Minister Rodrigues also visited the future site of another water treatment plant in Maria’s Delight, which will benefit residents from Charity to Queenstown and she emphasised the

government’s aggressive plan to achieve 90% treated water coverage on the coast and 100% in hinterland regions by 2025.

O n g o i n g construction of water treatment plants in Onderneeming and Maria’s Delight, along with the existing plant in Lima, will contribute to this goal. **“So, you will have three water treatment plants that will service the customers on the coast,”** Minister Rodrigues indicated.

NEW WATER SYSTEM BRINGS CLEAN WATER TO 550 CAPOEY RESIDENTS

A new era of clean and accessible drinking water has begun for approximately 550 residents of Capoey Village with the official commissioning of an \$11 million water supply system.

The new 42-meter well was drilled by Guyana Water Incorporated’s (GWI) team using their latest drilling rig.

The project encompassed a comprehensive network

of pipes, standpipes, a solar panel, pump, water tanks, and fencing.

Minister Rodrigues officiated at the ceremony.



550 Capoey residents benefiting from new \$11M water supply system

HACKNEY AND FRIENDSHIP RESIDENTS TO GET POTABLE WATER SOON



Minister Rodrigues inspecting ongoing work at the Hackney well

M e a n w h i l e , residents in the communities of Hackney and Friendship, can soon say goodbye to water woes! Two new wells are being drilled, promising a continuous supply of clean drinking water to 1,600 residents.

The beneficiaries comprise 1,400 residents in Hackney and 200 in Friendship, serving over 475

households.

Hackney’s well and distribution network are to be completed by March month-end, while Friendship’s well and network will be ready within four weeks. The wells are being drilled by the Guyana Water Incorporated’s (GWI) in-house team using their PAT Rig 421.

While inspecting the ongoing works at the wells, Minister Rodrigues disclosed that pipes will also

be installed along the waterfront at Hackney to provide purified water to passersby.

“Additionally, over 40 households in the immediate vicinity will receive connections to their own homes. We will also have standpipes in different areas. The schools [Hackney Nursery and Primary] will benefit from direct connections to the well. We are very pleased with the progress we have here,” she emphasised.

The communities’ village councils will work along with the GWI team to install the distribution networks.

Budget 2024 allocates funds for similar water system upgrades in communities like Friendship, Mashabo, and Baracaro, in the region.

GUYANA LAUNCHES FOREST RESTORATION INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT LOW-CARBON ECONOMY

In a significant step towards achieving its ambitious climate goals, the government has launched the National Forest Restoration Initiative (NFRI) under the framework of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030.

This initiative aims to restore degraded and deforested areas using native tree species, contributing to environmental sustainability and empowering local communities.

The NFRI targets mined-out, degraded, and deforested areas across Guyana, promoting biodiversity



and mitigating climate change.

The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) collaborated to implement the

project, aligning with the LCDS’ 2030’s commitment to sustainable forestry, and low-impact mining, a joint press statement from the agencies noted.

Native tree species like Tauroniro, Simarupa, and Baromalli are being used, fostering ecological restoration and preserving Guyana’s unique ecosystem.

The release noted

that the initiative began in Region 10’s Dakoura area, with plans to replant 23.3 hectares with native species. Over 1,484 seedlings have already been planted.

Two seedling stations support the project, ensuring a steady supply of healthy trees for restoration efforts.

C o m m u n i t y involvement is a crucial aspect of the NFRI. Youths from nearby areas have received training on seedling care, planting, and site monitoring. Three individuals currently manage the Wismar Seedling Station and the Dakoura Pilot Site,

showcasing community participation, and creating employment opportunities, the release stated.

It highlighted that the NFRI team is collecting data to analyse species performance, site suitability, and the effectiveness of current methods. Further, this information will inform future restoration initiatives, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptation.

LAW OFFICE

CHET SHARMA

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Barrister, Solicitor & Notary Public

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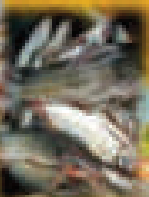
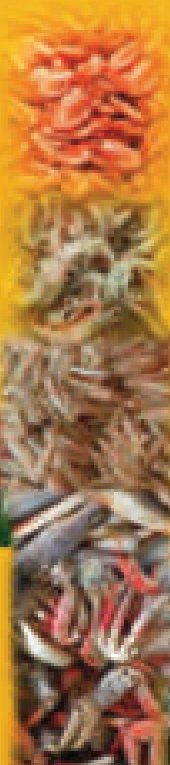
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GUYANA CELEBRATES WORLD RADIO DAY



Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister, Kwame McCoy

Guyana joined the global chorus in celebrating World Radio Day on February 13, reflecting on the enduring power and importance of this communication lifeline.

Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister, Kwame McCoy, emphasised the theme of “Radio and TRUST” in his message, highlighting its crucial role in news, information, education, and entertainment across the nation.

Marking 11 years since its recognition by UNESCO, World Radio Day underscores the impact of radio on Guyanese lives since its 1951 inception.

From news and information to education and entertainment, radio has evolved into a diverse and trusted

source, reaching every corner of the country.

Minister McCoy in a message lauded the dedication of broadcasters, journalists, technicians, and support staff who keep radio stations operating.

He emphasised the government’s commitment to supporting the sector through expanding spectrum frequencies, fostering a conducive environment, and providing capacity-building opportunities.

The Minister highlighted the government’s efforts

to support the sector, including allocating more spectrum frequencies, cultivating a favourable environment for both public service and commercial stations, and providing capacity-building opportunities.

Minister McCoy expressed confidence in radio’s continued relevance and ability to underpin the social fabric of the Guyanese society, particularly for young people. “Radio still captivates the imagination. Radio still keeps us well informed, and radio has become a most



World Radio Day is celebrated on February 13

dynamic source of precious medium daily entertainment and celebrate its for people of all gatekeepers and ages and walks of countless values,” he stated. Let us reaffirm our trust in this

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR STAFF EDUCATED ON LABOUR LAWS’ COMPLIANCE

Over 115 representatives from public and private sector entities participated in a recent seminar aimed at fostering greater awareness and adherence to Guyana’s labour laws.

Organised by the Ministry of Labour’s, Labour Department at the Regency Suites Hotel, the event covered crucial topics like minimum wage guidelines, probationary periods and paid leave, workplace safety and health, overtime payments, severance pay, termination of employment, inspections, record-keeping, and reporting child labour incidents.

The seminar saw participation from



Participants at the seminar

prominent figures like Minister of Labour Joseph Hamilton, Chief Labour Officer Dhaneshwar Deonarine, Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry

Limited (CAGI) Chair Jairam Petam, and Federation of Independent Trade Union of Guyana’s (FITUG) President Carvil Duncan.

Minister Hamilton commended the participants for their commitment to enhancing their knowledge of labour laws, emphasising

its importance in safeguarding employee rights and well-being. He aligned this initiative with the ministry’s core principles of “capacity building,” “human development,” and “protection of workers’ rights.”

He encouraged attendees to trust the ministry’s dedication to realising this vision across both public and private sectors. Further, he emphasised the need for collaboration between the ministry and stakeholders to promote and enforce labour regulations encompassing not only working conditions, but also occupational safety and health nationwide. This pursuit aligns with Goal 17 of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) which emphasises partnerships for achieving such objectives.

Representatives from various companies participated in the seminar, including A m a l g a m a t e d Security Services, Aruwai Enterprise Incorporated, BPI Guyana Incorporated, CARICOM Secretariat, Citizens Bank Guyana Incorporated, Demerara Bank Limited, E Networks Incorporated, Guyana Power and Light Incorporated, Guysons Oil and Gas, Massy Distribution Guyana Incorporated, and NSB Omega Guyana Incorporated.

DR JOSH KANHAI CHOSEN AS YOUTH REP ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMISSION

After months of consultations with various youth organisations, Dr. Daniel Josh Kanhai has been selected as the official youth representative on the newly formed Constitutional Reform Commission.

Nalinie Singh, coordinator of the President’s Youth Advisory Council, described Dr. Kanhai as a “determined and dedicated” individual, receiving widespread support from various youth groups across the country. “We had a fair

bit of representation, but a name that seems to be a consensus that we have been getting a lot throughout the country has been Dr Kanhai,” she explained.

The final consultation with key stakeholders, including the Progressive Youth Organisation and Muslim Youth Organisation, cemented his selection. While the Guyana National Youth Council opted not to participate, the overall consensus favoured Dr. Kanhai.

Singh emphasised

Dr. Kanhai’s responsibility to advocate for the interests of young people during the commission’s deliberations.

He is expected to actively consult with various youth groups and ensure their concerns are heard and reflected in potential constitutional amendments.

The selection process began in late 2023, involving consultations with numerous youth organisations like the Guyana Youth Development Association, National

Youth Parliament of Guyana, and Young Peoples’ Movement.

This inclusive approach aimed to gather diverse viewpoints and select a representative who reflects the broader sentiments of Guyana’s youth population.

Established in August 2022, the Constitutional Reform Commission seeks to review and potentially amend Guyana’s supreme law.

Comprised of 20 members appointed by the president, the commission includes

representatives from religious groups, and civil political parties, society organisations, professional bodies,



Representatives of youth groups at the final consultation for the selection of a youth representative

PM PHILLIPS URGES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AT GLOBAL SUMMIT

Guyana’s Prime Minister, Mark Phillips, stressed the importance of sustainable development and global cooperation at the 8th Global Business Summit 2024 hosted by The Times Group in New Delhi, India. He emphasised the need for adaptability and innovation in the face of ongoing disruptions like climate change and geopolitical tensions.

He lauded the summit’s theme, “Disruption, Development, Diversification,” emphasising the need for businesses to adapt and diversify in a rapidly changing world. “In today’s world, primary disruptive forces such as technology, globalisation, and economic and demographic change are constantly occurring. As a result, businesses, governments, and individuals must be able to prepare, adapt, and respond to these changes effectively. These ‘transformative trends’ define the present and shape the future by impacting businesses, economies, industries, societies, and individual lives.”

Prime Minister Phillips cited India’s Vaccine Maitri initiative and Guyana’s food security efforts as examples of turning challenges into opportunities.

He commended India’s achievements in renewable energy, and its role as a global innovation hub.

Prime Minister Phillips outlined Guyana’s plans to leverage gas and renewables for energy security and manufacturing, and to become the “breadbasket of the Caribbean” through agricultural diversification.

He emphasised the deep-rooted connection between Guyana and India and expressed optimism for further collaboration. “Critical to development, of course, is diversification. Our nations understand the importance of cultivating diverse economies, forging diverse partnerships, varying supply chains, and embracing innovation across various sectors. As Guyana accelerates the development of its oil and gas resources to become the world’s highest per capita oil producer by 2027, the government’s vision is to lift the quality of life by investing in healthcare, education, and the diversification of the economy.”

Additionally, during his visit to India, Prime Minister Phillips held fruitful meetings with several key figures including Honourable Vice-President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, External Affairs Minister, Dr. S Jaishankar, President of India, Droupadi Murmu, and Director General of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Mr Amit Prothi.

During the discussion, the Prime Minister explored avenues to strengthen partnerships in economy, energy, security, and development cooperation.



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips with External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S Jaishankar

TWO EXCITING NEW TOURS LAUNCHED IN RUPUNUNI



Local tour operators on a tour of Lethem

The tourism sector in Guyana’s Rupununi Region is booming with the launch of two new experiential tours! This exciting development promises to attract more visitors to the region and showcase its unique culture, nature, and adventure opportunities.

The Guyana Tourism Authority led by Kamrul Baksh,

Rupununi Adventures, Tara’s Choices & Tours, and Bushcow Eco Trails launched the new products at the Cashew Grove Park at Lethem, Region Nine.

“Explore Lethem” by Rupununi Adventures and Tara’s Choices & Tours offer an immersive journey through the vibrant town of Lethem.

Visitors can experience the thrill of guided tours to Matapee Falls, paddle boarding and kayaking adventures in Manari Creek, and explore the town’s diverse offerings.

This collaborative effort caters perfectly to visitors on short timeframes, allowing them to experience the essence of Lethem in a single day.

This tour blends nature and culture seamlessly, offering a unique perspective on the region’s history and traditions.

nature and culture seamlessly, offering a unique perspective on the region’s history and traditions.

Baksh, commended the tour operators for their efforts in creating these innovative and appealing experiences.

He specifically highlighted the responsiveness to market needs demonstrated by Bushcow Eco Trails and the timely collaboration of Rupununi Adventures and Tara’s Choices & Tours, aligning their offering with the upcoming Rupununi Rodeo. “I like that

experience because it draws on the main elements of the Lethem district and just on the periphery and packaging that in a day experience. A lot of people are interested in doing that first flight in from Ogle, spending just a few hours and then flying back out,” he said.

Over 50 new tours have been developed in the past four years, highlighting the growing momentum and commitment to raising industry standards.

SBM OFFSHORE LAUNCHES SECOND ANNUAL GUYANA-MONACO MOUSETRAP CAR GRAND PRIX

The tourism sector in Guyana’s Rupununi Region is booming with the launch of two new experiential tours! This exciting development promises to attract more visitors to the region and showcase its unique culture, nature, and adventure opportunities.

The Guyana Tourism Authority led by Kamrul Baksh, Rupununi Adventures, Tara’s Choices & Tours, and Bushcow Eco Trails launched the new products at the Cashew Grove Park at Lethem, Region Nine.

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This collaborative effort caters perfectly to visitors on short timeframes, allowing them to experience the essence of Lethem in a single day.

Meanwhile, visitors can embark on an unforgettable adventure with Bushcow Eco Trails’ “Indigenous Exploration: Kanuku & Rupununi Trekking and River Adventure.”

Tourists and others can delve deep into the heart of Guyana’s rich indigenous heritage, surrounded by the awe-inspiring Kanuku Mountains.

This tour blends nature and culture seamlessly, offering a unique perspective on the region’s history and traditions.

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Raphael Persaud, in photo, was the first-place winner of the Acceleration category at the first Guyana-Monaco Mousetrap Car Grand Prix, in 2023.



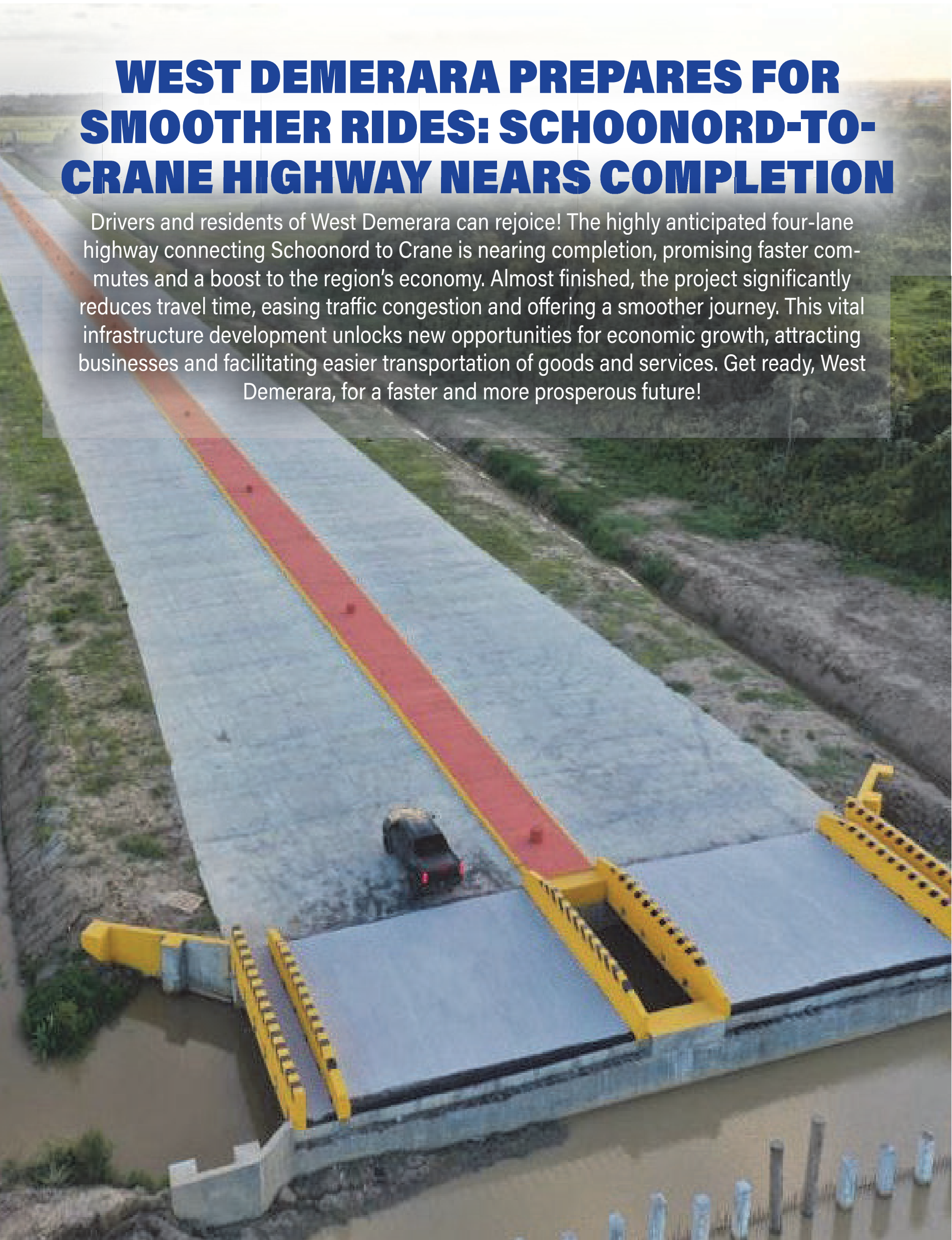
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ea

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ea

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	NZ v AFG		Fri June 7, 2024
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Semi-Final 1			Wed June 26, 2024



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