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Welcome to Toronto, VP Jagdeo

Equality joins the Guyanese community in the Diaspora in welcoming Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo to our beautiful city.

Dr Jagdeo is here to attend the Guyana festival on Saturday in Scarborough and a business diaspora meeting on Sunday in Brampton.

The Guyana Festival will start at noon at the Malvern Family Resource Centre, 90 Little's Road in Scarborough, and will feature an afternoon of Food booths, DJs, Guyanese artistes and a Guyanese lime.

Earlier in the day, at 10 a.m., there will be a softball cricket match as well as a soccer game at the same venue.

The Diaspora/Business meeting will take place on June 23 at 2 p.m. at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton.

More information on the events can be obtained by calling 416-494-6040 x 23.

Welcome, Dr Jagdeo. We're sure the Diaspora will give you a warm Guyanese reception. See Editorial, Page 6



CRICKET LOVELY

CRICKET: The West Indies were in a record-setting mood on Monday night. Nicholas Pooran blasted the hosts to the highest Powerplay score in T20 World Cup history - 92 for one - and the highest World Cup score for the West Indies - 218 for five - as they dominated Afghanistan in St Lucia. West Indies were facing England in the first of the Super 8 round as we were going to press. For the full story, see Page 28.



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Gala celebrates Guyana

Parents of H.E. President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Minister Bishop Juan Edgill, MP Minister, Public Works in Guyana, HC Keith George in Ottawa, Guyana Independence Festival Gala Committee Members, and Guyana Consulate Staff In Toronto. *Photo by: Bobby Ramlagan*



In picture is the Hon. Minister Bishop Juan Edgill (Minister of Public Works) along with the Hon. Kieth George (High Commissioner of Guyana-Canada) and members of the Guyana Independence Festival Committee, and members of One Guyana Forum



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Guyana now third-largest economy in English-speaking Caribbean

By DeLisle Worrell

WITHIN three years of the start of oil production and exports in 2019, Guyana has become the third-largest economy in the English-speaking Caribbean, after Trinidad & Tobago, the largest by a wide margin, and Jamaica. Guyana’s 2022 gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$15 billion was just half of Trinidad & Tobago’s and 12 per cent less than Jamaica’s.

Three decades ago, in 1990, Guyana’s economy was just half the size of that of Barbados, and as recently as 2018 the Guyanese economy was just about the same size as Barbados. However, just three years later, Guyana’s economy was two and a half times that of Barbados. Whereas in 2019, Guyana contributed seven per cent of the total GDP of Caribbean countries, by 2022 that contribution had more than doubled to 15 per cent.

The picture is very different when we look at average income per person in Guyana compared with other Caribbean countries. Average incomes in The Bahamas are in excess of US\$30,000 a year, US\$10,000 more than anywhere else in the English-speaking countries of the region. Average incomes in Guyana have gone from US\$6,000 a year before oil exports began to US\$18,000 in 2022, but they remained just about US\$2,000 shy of average incomes in Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago. Average incomes in Jamaica remain at levels comparable to those in Guyana before the oil boom started.

It will be some time before the surge in incomes in Guyana is reflected in improvements in educational achievement, health services, infrastructure and other developmental indicators of the quality of life in that country. In contrast to the almost three-fold increase of average incomes, Guyana’s score in the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Index improved by just six per cent between 2017 and 2022. The Human Development Index incorporates health and ed-



Signs of Guyana’s economic growth are everywhere

ucational achievement, together with the purchasing power of average incomes.

Oil exports overshadowed all other Guyanese international sales in 2022, accounting for 89 per cent of the total; exports of gold, at eight per cent of the total, were the only other category of any consequence. Already in 2019, before oil production began, Guyana had become a predominantly mineral exporting economy, with gold sales contributing nearly two-thirds of exports and bauxite exports another 12 per cent. Agricultural exports no longer make a major contribution to foreign earnings; exports of rice are the only agricultural product of significance, and the value of rum exported exceeds that of sugar.

The advent of oil exports represents a watershed in the Guyanese economy; the country’s experience up to 2019 offers few clues to its economic future. The process of economic change has already begun, with a surge in inflation, particularly in housing in Georgetown, the capital and main commercial hub. The construction boom in the city will already have begun to attract labour from the countryside, to the detriment of agriculture.

As inflation and higher wages attract labour to oil-related construction of

ports, transport infrastructure, hotels, commercial real estate and housing, the migration of labour to Georgetown is likely to accelerate, aggravating existing imbalances between town and country and between the mineral sector and agriculture.

DeLisle Worrell is a former governor of the Central Bank of Barbados and lecturer in economics. His Economic Letters may be found under “Commentary” at DeLisleWorrell.com.



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Welcome, Dr Jagdeo. And thank you.

We join the Guyanese community and the wider Diaspora in welcoming visiting Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo to our fine city of Toronto.

Dr Jagdeo is here for two engagements with the community, including the annual celebration of the Guyana Festival.

Having him here -- not for the first time, of course -- is cause for celebration, as Dr Jagdeo, along with President Dr Irfaan Ali, have transformed the country of Guyana in a matter of a few years.

As Guyanese, we know what it has been like to be living away from home in a new country, and to have been met regularly by others in our new home with remarks that were almost always less than flattering about the land of our birth.

We've constantly heard, over the years, comments like, "Oh, you're from that place where there's a Dictatorship" to "What's it like being in the poorest country in the hemisphere?"

We've endured poor treatment from immigration officials everywhere

who see us, on landing, as a people trying to escape dire circumstances in their homeland, rather than genuine immigrants.

We've been belittled and humiliated by others, including other Caribbean nationals, for simply being Guyanese, because our homeland was in such a sorry state.

Today, however, thanks to the stewardship of people like Dr Jagdeo and Dr Ali, we can walk tall and proud to be Guyanese.

Today, everybody who once shunned us now want a piece of Guyana.

They know that it is one of the most prosperous countries in the world, that it now has the third largest economy in the Caribbean, and that it is poised to be the next "Dubai" of the Caribbean.

People are clamoring to do business in Guyana, including many Canadians who once laughed at us for being poor.

Even the airlines that once treated us as second class passengers are going

all out to welcome us on board, even, in one case, making Guyana the first destination rather than an after-thought that saw many Guyanese travelers left to suffer for hours in hot airplanes at another destination, waiting for the final leg of their flight.

This all hasn't come about by accident. It has happened because of the stewardship of the Ali Government, of which Dr Jagdeo is a key part, who took the riches from the oil and gas industry and managed it wisely.

The current administration has not gone money crazy like has happened with other nations that benefited from the windfall of cash from oil and gas, but instead invested this money in a way that will see long term benefits for all Guyanese.

Infrastructural developments, homes, hospitals, schools are all on the list to benefit from the earnings from oil and gas, while the government has astutely decided not to put all of its eggs in one basket, and instead has invested heavily in other industries, including agriculture, promising to return

Guyana to its once proud place of being the bread basket of the Caribbean.

That the Ali / Jagdeo administration did this in the face of bold-faced attempts by opposition forces to steal government is remarkable. They had to balance development in the face of political chaos, and have successfully managed to do so.

In addition, the government remains committed to a net zero carbon policy, by applying forest carbon accounting which allows Guyana to stay net zero while pumping oil.

The Ali government remains steadfastly committed to being the guardians of the Amazon, a position that has won them many global awards.

For all of this and a whole lot more, we should all stand and applaud Dr Bharrat Jagdeo as he stands before us this weekend in our hometown, celebrating Guyana with us.

Thank you, Dr Jagdeo. You've taken us full circle to a point where we can all now be rightly proud of being Guyanese.

Dr Ali, Dr Jagdeo have brought hope to the nation

Dear Editor,

AS the nation and several political parties, including the two main ones, the ruling PPP/C and the APNU/PNC, prepare for the next general and regional elections scheduled for late 2025, the stakes for our beloved Republic could not be higher.

In these transformative times, Guyana has emerged as a regional, hemispheric and global leader, thanks to President Dr. Irfaan Ali, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, and Vice-President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo.

Not only are they talented, skillful, wise, judicious and adept at solving the nation's problems, developing its economy and improving the lives of the poor and the working class, but they have also championed the cause of equality and fair justice for all. They have led with extraordinary vision, unwavering integrity, and a profound commitment to make Guyana prosperous so that all can live in peace and harmony.

Since elected President in 2020, Dr. Ali's exceptional advocacy of "One Guyana" has resonated very well with the residents across the country, and

has become a common phrase among children and adults from every race and ethnicity.

It is a classic example of his genuine leadership, amazing ability, and a sincere dedication to the people of Guyana whom he loves.

His Excellency, Dr. Ali, Prime Minister Phillips and Vice-President Dr. Jagdeo have brought hope and buoyancy to the nation, which, during the five months of turmoil after the March 2, 2020 elections, was in despair of seeing their democratic rights vanish, and democracy cherished by most being disbanded.

For a while, hopelessness and anguish had spread throughout the country as the integrity of the elections was seriously challenged.

However, during the five-month ordeal, our leaders' actions spoke louder than words as they fought tirelessly to make sure that every vote was counted, and that democracy prevailed. They, along with other leaders in the PPP/C, firmly believed that the right to vote is the fundamental right of every citizen, and the foundation of the country's democracy.

They believed that free and fair

elections must reflect the will of the people and therefore must be defended and protected at all times.

The authenticity and modesty of our President, Prime Minister and Vice-President have been apparent to all and sundry. Furthermore, their widespread support and popular appeal are a true testimony to their ability to connect with everyone across the country regardless of race, ethnicity or party affiliation.

Since taking office four years ago, it has become clear that President Dr. Ali, Prime Minister Phillips and Vice-President Dr. Jagdeo are fully aware of the problems and challenges faced by many in the various regions of the country, and they are doing everything in their power to solve them and improve their living standards.

Their exemplary leadership skills and superb judgment have helped them to navigate complex local, regional and international issues, foster cooperation among all nation-states, and advance stringent and cohesive policies to protect Guyana's territorial integrity, promote diplomacy and engage in trade relations with member CARICOM States and members of the interna-

tional community, including the United States.

Their contributions have boosted Guyana's image and standing on the global stage and move it from its underdeveloped status to a developing/developed country.

As our leaders, they have spearheaded several community initiatives throughout the country aimed at improving the lives of the less fortunate with the creation of a workers' ten-day program. What sets them apart from the other political leaders is their creative and original approach to governance.

And a leadership based on transparency, accountability, respect for the rule of law and their resolute and purposeful commitment to the principles of democracy. Their dedication, determination and commitment to serve all Guyanese at home and in the diaspora are boundless and beyond and above their call of duty and have brought hope and meaningful change to Guyana. We should all embrace them as they strive for unity, prosperity and a bright future for all.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Asquith Rose



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Man charged with hate crimes after trespassing at mosque

A 54-year-old man is facing a hate crime charge after allegedly entering and refusing to leave a mosque in Hamilton over the weekend.

The incident happened on June 14 at an unnamed masjid in the city’s downtown core, Hamilton Police Service (HPS) said.

Police said that they were called to the mosque at about 12:40 a.m. after receiving a call for service about a male trespasser who had entered the building through an insecure door and made his way to a classroom with a teacher and students.

The suspect then allegedly made “hate-related comments” and wouldn’t leave, they said.

“Upon leaving the building, the male ripped up an English copy of the Quran that he brought with him,” HPS said.

Police said the male was removed from the property without incident.

Video evidence and witness statement provided to police resulted in the arrest of 54-year-old Wayne Voorthuyzen, of Hamilton. He has been charged with criminal harassment.

Hamilton police said that this incident has been classified as a hate crime based on the accused’s statements and actions.

“Hamilton Police Service stands with and supports the Muslim community in denouncing Islamophobia. Incidents of this nature create fear and question the sense of belonging for diverse communities. We appreciate the impact this incident had on the community, especially those directly involved in the incident,” they said in a news release.

Further, investigators said they increased their presence at the mosque over the weekend and are “working collaboratively with the mosque’s administration to assure the community of their safety.”

“Hate crime in Hamilton is not acceptable. Left unchecked, hate crime can have a far reaching impact on communities,” HPS said.

Hate crimes can be reported online at www.hamiltonpolice.on.ca, by calling 905-546-4925, or in person at any Hamilton police station.



Man entered the mosque and refused to leave, police say



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Joel Bhagwandin

Dr. Thomas Singh's Economic Theory in Reverse Order

Reference is made to Dr. Thomas B. Singh's letter in the Stabroek News edition of June 11, 2024, with the caption "the BOG policy seems to be a pursuit of exchange rate targeting as against inflation targeting or price stability". In the said letter, the author concluded by inviting "commentators, and especially those who only care about politics, would add to the discussion in a meaningful way".

While this author is inclined to add to the discussion in a meaningful way, there is nothing meaningful to add or even counter Dr. Singh's contention, because his argument which ordinarily rests on elementary economic theory, is fundamentally wrong.

Dr. Singh contends that (i) the central bank is more concerned about exchange rate targeting and not inflation rate targeting. Dr. Singh, who is a trained economist forgets that inflation rate is linked to exchange rate especially in the case of Guyana since we import $\geq 90\%$ of the goods we consume, intermediate goods and capital

goods. It therefore means that by managing the exchange rate, the inflation rate is also being taken care of. And (ii) he argued that we should allow the exchange rate to appreciate to increase exports. But this is another fundamental error on the part of Dr. Singh. Export competitiveness is more linked to exchange rate depreciation, not appreciation. An appreciation of the exchange rate will in fact make exports more expensive and imports cheaper, thus inflationary.

On the other hand, exchange rate depreciation would make exports cheaper, hence more internationally competitive. This was one of the main reasons why we had exchange rate devaluation in the 1990s and early 2000s. It was part of the economic recovery programme when the country was bankrupt, to generate foreign exchange earnings through exports.

Non-oil exports in 2023 amounted to US\$1.546 billion, while non-oil imports amounted to US\$4.589 billion, thereby giving rise

to a non-oil trade balance deficit of US\$3 billion. At an appreciated exchange rate of G\$200/US\$1, non-oil exports equate to G\$309.2 billion, non-oil imports would equate to G\$917.8 billion, with a trade balance deficit amounting to G\$608.6 billion. Conversely, at a depreciated exchange rate of G\$215/US\$1, non-oil exports would equate to G\$332.4 billion, non-oil imports would equate to G\$986.6 billion, and the trade balance deficit would equate to G\$654.2 billion.

As can be seen, the same value of imports in USD, would cost the Guyanese consumers G\$68.8 billion more at an exchange rate of \$215, up from \$200, which would be inflationary. In contrast, exports will become more expensive for the consumers in the exporting country because that country will essentially be paying more USD to purchase Guyanese exports. Consequently, exports would become less competitive, which could result into a decline in exports value. And this is what we have to guard

against, whereby any sharp appreciation in the exchange rate would engender what is commonly known as the dreaded "Dutch disease".

In the final analysis, Dr. Singh has the theory mixed up (in reverse order), which renders his argument contradictory. The Central Bank would have great difficulty controlling inflation rate if the exchange rate is allowed to appreciate too sharply. In this situation, it would mean that the bottled water that is imported from Trinidad and Tobago, for example, would become far cheaper than the bottled water produced right here in Guyana by Banks DIH and DDL. So, which one do you think the Guyanese consumers would prefer, and what will become of the local producers, whose products would then become less competitive because of an appreciated exchange rate? Dr. Thomas Singh, please explain!

...and then there's Dr Hunte

REFERENCE is made to Dr. C. K. Hunte's letter in the Stabroek News edition of June 16, 2024, referring to my letter in response to him regarding the accounting treatment of the royalties.

The goodly professor concluded that my responses are "red herrings" and irrelevant and asked that I complete a table which he constructed with missing data for the number of barrels of crude extracted, sold, price per barrel, total revenue, royalties, and exchange rate for the year 2023.

The learned professor believes that my previous responses were irrelevant because EMGL did not provide those explanations in the notes of their financial statements.

With the greatest of respect, I am afraid that Dr. Hunte continues to expose his deep lack of knowledge on these matters. Whether there was a note included in the financial statements or not, anyone conducting a proper analysis of the activities in the oil and gas sector and the earnings derived therefrom—ought to be knowledgeable of the Petroleum Agreement

(2016), the relevant pieces of legislations that govern the sector, and ought to examine the financial statements in conjunction with the Natural Resources Fund (NRF) reports published by the Bank of Guyana.

Dr. Hunte completely ignored the fact that I pointed him to Article 15.6 of the Petroleum Agreement, which establishes the form of payment of royalty, the accounting treatment of royalty, the calculation of royalty, and the stipulated timelines by when royalty ought to be deposited following each "lift". How could this be irrelevant when this is the established authority that governs the oil and gas production activities, which include the fiscal terms? One has to be of a "rare caliber" of intellectualism to discern such a conclusion that my responses thereof were red herrings and irrelevant.

Anyone who is a practising economist, financial analyst or researcher, ought to know the sources of credible data that they would require to conduct their work—and be able to independently locate that information

directly from the authoritative sources.

Dr. Hunte has been writing on the oil and gas industry for the past three years and still appears to not know where to locate data and credible information to inform his analyses.

I say this because, with regard to his table that he has asked me to fill in the blanks, I don't need to do that. But I can certainly point him to the relevant authoritative report and the source with the data he has requested of me—for his own edification and future reference.

In accordance with the Natural Resources Fund Act (2021), the Bank of Guyana has been designated the responsibility for the operational management of the NRF. Accordingly, the bank is mandated to publish monthly, quarterly, and annual reports on the activities of the NRF.

As such, the data Dr. Hunte requested as per his table, those can be found in NRF Quarterly Report as of December 31, 2023, which is publicly available on the Bank of Guyana website. The report contains the market

value of the fund, the total receipts paid into the fund (profit oil and royalties), a chart with the oil price for each month of the fiscal year, the average price, the exchange (Bank of Guyana Rate), total revenue deposited from the inception, total number of lifts for the year (each lift is equivalent to 1-million barrels), transfers to the Consolidated Fund and the note that Dr. Hunte dismissed as irrelevant since it was not in the financial statements of the oil companies, that note, which I explained in my previous letter, is actually explained in the footnotes of the NRF report.

With that said, I do hope that Dr. Hunte will now familiarise himself thoroughly with all the abovementioned reports, the Petroleum Agreement (2016) and legislations—namely the Natural Resources Fund Act (2021), the Petroleum Activities Act (2023), the Local Content Act (2021), so that we can engage in more meaningful discussions or debate going forward.



Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO



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Passenger outcry after WestJet starts charging \$25 to book by phone

From the CBC:

Jana Fatovic prefers to buy her WestJet flights over the phone to ensure everything goes smoothly. But a recent attempt to book tickets for a family trip to Arizona didn't quite pan out.

While waiting on hold to speak with an agent, a recorded message informed her that WestJet now charges \$25 to book economy fares by phone.

"I was fuming," said Fatovic, who lives just outside of Edmonton. "I just feel like it's a big cash grab."

Airline fees are nothing new. But some major carriers have raised the ire of customers by introducing charges for features once included, such as overhead space for carry-on baggage and booking flights by phone.

Airlines often argue that charging fees helps keep base fares low and that customers only pay for the added services they want. But many passengers claim they already pay big bucks for flights, so they shouldn't be inundated with extra fees.

"It's just pricing people out of being able to fly," said Fatovic, who avoided WestJet's phone fee by reluctantly booking her trip online. But she notes that customers uncomfortable using computers might not be able to do that.

"So now they get nickel and dimed?"

WestJet spokesperson Madison Kruger said in an email that the airline has upgraded its website to ensure cus-



WestJet: passengers unhappy over the “nickle and dime” charges

tomers can easily book and change flights online.

She also said that fees for bookings by phone are "a standard industry practice."

CBC News could find only one other major Canadian airline that charges for the service: ultra low -cost carrier Flair.

Air Canada also faced customer criticism when it introduced a new fee in April for seat selection at check-in for economy fares.

Following complaints on social media, Air Canada's fee disappeared — but not for long.

Airline spokesperson Peter Fitzpatrick said in an email that the charge

was "paused for operational reasons" and will return at a later date.

The fee is common in the industry, he said. WestJet charges it, too, according to its website.

WestJet also got hit with customer backlash when, earlier this month, it introduced new rules and fees for its lowest-fare option — now called UltraBasic.

"I did laugh," said WestJet passenger Taryn Zielke, when she heard about the fare. "It was almost like a parody."

For starters, UltraBasic excludes overhead room for a carry-on bag.

Passengers can still bring carry-on luggage — if they pay for a service upgrade starting at \$30. They can also

check a bag, but it will cost at least \$45 on domestic flights — \$10 more than the same fee charged for economy fares.

UltraBasic passengers also board last and are seated at the back of the plane (unless they pay for seat selection).

"[It's] like they're trying to punish people for wanting to pay less," said Zielke of Regina, who typically books the lowest fare. "It's like [WestJet is saying], 'Fine, you think you can pay the least amount for a ticket? Well, we'll show you.'"

WestJet spokesperson Kruger said UltraBasic passengers still get a deal, because the airline has dropped its lowest fare by an average of 12 per cent.

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US Envoy: ‘We have a wonderful partnership with Guyana gov’t’

THE United States Ambassador to Guyana, Nicole Theriot, has written to the US Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) in Washington for the sharing of information on recent sanctions imposed on the Mohameds and government official Mae Thomas.

Maintaining that the US has a strong partnership with Guyana and will be working along with the country to share the information gathered in the investigation, Ambassador Theriot said: “We have a wonderful partnership with the Government of Guyana and we want them to be able to take that information and do with it what they need to do.”

Ambassador Theriot on Friday had disclosed that Finance Minister Dr Ashni Singh and GRA Commissioner Godfrey Statia requested the documentation used in building the case that led to the sanctions.

Against this backdrop, she strongly advocated for the provision of as much information as possible to assist Guyana’s internal investigations.

“I passed that request immediately to the Treasury Department, which is sort of the umbrella for the investigation, and I, again, strongly recommended that they share as much of that evidence that is unclassified or that can be shared.”

According to Vice-President Jagdeo, the Central Bank and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) have been tasked with preparing a report outlining the implications of the sanctions on Guyana’s financial system.

“We want to safeguard our finan-



Nicole Theriot with Guyana President Irfaan Ali

cial system,” he firmly said, adding: “The Central Bank has notified us that they’ve already indicated to the Mohameds that they will cancel their cambio licence, because that’s part of the financial system.”

Within the statement, the OFAC highlighted that gold is one of Guyana’s main exports, but it remains a highly fractured industry with small-scale gold-mining operations in Guyana occupying a majority share of the country’s gold production.

The cambio licence of the Mohameds has since been revoked, while PS Thomas has been sent on administrative leave. She has also tendered her resignation from the Central Committee of the People’s Progressive Party (PPP).

The OFAC’s statement noted that Mohamed’s Enterprise evaded more than US\$50 million in duty taxes by under declaring over 10,000 kilograms of gold exports between 2019 and 2023.

Ambassador Theriot stressed the

US’ support to Guyana in addressing the serious allegations, before noting her country’s commitment to there being a transparent exchange of information and a continued partnership between the two states.

“I was very clear in my request that we want to be able to share as much as humanly possible because we want to be very transparent. The Government of Guyana has been very transparent with us, and we want to do the same in return,” she affirmed.

Guyana ‘locking in’ on early investments in OG sector

WITH the energy transition advancing, Guyana is sparing no effort to “lock in” those early investments in its rapidly growing oil and gas sector, Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo has said.

At the time, Jagdeo was referencing the International Energy Agency (IEA) reporting that within the upcoming years, there will be a decline in the oil demand. However, Guyana is not letting the window of opportunities close.

The Vice President during a press conference at the Office of the President (OP) on Thursday last outlined the importance of planning for the future.

While underscoring its importance, he highlighted that Guyana previously found itself indebted in the 90s owing to the People’s National Congress Reform’s (PNC/R) imprudent strategies while it was in government.

“So, you have to be careful to ensure that whatever you commit to, particularly on the recurrent side, wages other recurrent expenditure, that it can be sustained based on future revenue flows, so that’s the first point. So, I think when people see this, they should have cause to rethink what many are advocating,” the Vice President said.

As it relates to the IEA’s predictions regarding the future of fossil fuels, beyond that date, one will not attain investments within that sector since there will be no demand for it.

“So, nobody will invest because their assets would be stranded and they would make huge financial losses. So, what you have to do is to make sure that even before they fall off in demand, which is coming, and as predicted by the IEA, that you secure your investments early.”

Examining Guyana’s commit-

ment to this, Jagdeo said that Guyana has locked in six Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessels, which according to him will take the nation to 1.3 billion barrels. As a result, over the period, this would amount to around US\$50 billion of investments.

On that note, the Vice President said, “Very, very few countries in the world have been able to secure that investment or to do it on for fossil fuel. Suriname is still to start. They may start producing if everything goes well and they make a decision to invest as investors by the end of this year or so to do a project.”

Additionally, according to the latest edition of the IEA’s annual medium-term market report, despite the slowdown in growth, global oil demand is still forecast to be 3.2 million barrels per day higher in 2030 than in 2023 unless stronger policy measures

are implemented or changes in behaviour take hold.

It also noted that producers outside of OPEC+ are leading the expansion of global production capacity to meet this anticipated demand, accounting for three-quarters of the expected increase to 2030. The United States alone is poised to account for 2.1 million barrels per day of non-OPEC+ gains, while Argentina, Brazil, Canada and Guyana are poised to contribute a further 2.7 million barrels per day.

At a previous press conference, the Vice President explained that at maximum production of its oil and gas resources, Guyana will still remain a carbon sink nation.

At the time, he was defending the government’s strategic decision to utilise its oil resources while simultaneously maintaining its forest. He reminded that the country boasts over 87 per cent of standing forest.



Finance Minister Dr Ashni Singh speaking at the AMCHAM event

Finance Minister lauds Guyana's economic growth

CONNECTIONS were forged and partnerships were built at the AmCham (American Chamber of Commerce of Guyana) Business Brunch and Finance Seminar which was held at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown on Saturday morning.

A collaborative effort between AmCham and the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the event was celebrated under the theme, "Leveraging Your Assets for Sustainable Success."

The seminar featured several impressive speakers who tackled different areas of business, finances, and entrepreneurship. Among the notable speakers was Tracey Smith, the Management Consultant at Bold Enterprise Solutions & Technologies, who facilitated a session on strategic planning and revenue analysis.

Smith, who has extensive experience advising both national and international clients, provided insights on financial health. Devindra Kissoon, Founding Partner of London House Chambers and President of AmCham Guyana was also a speaker. His presentation focused on safeguarding wealth, asset management, and protection. Moreover, Serah Radhaykissoo, the Chief Executive Officer of Drevait Inc., which provides management consultancy services, delivered an interactive

session on how partnerships can unlock greater opportunities for entrepreneurs.

The keynote address was delivered by the Minister of Finance and Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, who explored the broader financial situation of the country, highlighting the unprecedented economic growth and opportunities emerging in Guyana.

“Over the last three years, 2021-2023, Guyana’s economy has grown on average by almost 40%, over 39% per annum, on average,” Dr. Singh revealed. This exceptional growth is projected to continue, with the economy expected to grow at an average of almost 30% per annum by 2027.

“There is no precedent that I know of, of any country in the world, any time in human history, that I’m aware of, that has grown at this extraordinary pace over a period as sustained as a year,” he added.

Dr. Singh attributed a significant part of this growth to the booming oil and gas sector.

“We moved from a point where we achieved first oil, and we had a single FPSO producing 120,000 barrels of oil per day, to a point where we now have three FPSOs producing just about 600,000, maybe a little bit under 600,000, maybe 560,000, 600,000 barrels of oil per day,” he detailed.



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Guyana gov't eyes turbines for reliable, cheap electricity supply

IN a bid to deliver cheaper and sustainable electricity, the Government of Guyana is exploring the establishment of turbines to supply power to several hinterland regions.

This is according to the country's Vice- President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, who, during a news conference last week, revealed that the government is exploring the potential of harnessing power from the country's landmark gas-to-energy project to set up turbines in Bartica, Lethem, Linden and along the Essequibo Coast.

"If it's technically feasible, we have some good price offers, but we don't know if it's technically feasible yet to take the power off the pipeline and containerise them, and move them into these areas, so that we can supply these areas that are not connected with the Demerara-Berbice grid," he explained.

The government, he stressed, will first have to see if this is feasible.

In the meantime, the government, he noted, has been distributing solar panels in these areas.

"We are putting in solar panels in Essequibo, Berbice, and Linden about 35 megawatts. We are thinking about another 25 megawatts of solar in Demerara," VP Jagdeo said.

Guyanese stand to save over US\$100 million per annum as a result of the reduction in electricity prices after the gas-to-energy project comes on stream, Jagdeo had previously noted.

The landmark project will see a 200km 12-inch diameter pipeline channelling natural gas from the Liza Phase One and Liza Phase Two Floating, Production, Storage, and Offloading (FPSO) vessels to a power plant and Natural Gas Liquids (NGL) facility that will be built in Wales, West Bank Demerara.

ExxonMobil's local affiliate, Esso Exploration and Production Guyana Limited (EEPGL), the operator in the



Vice-President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

Stabroek Block, and its co-venturers are constructing the pipeline.

That pipeline will be landing on the West Coast Demerara shore, and continue approximately 25 kilometres to the NGL and power-plant facilities. It has an estimated cost of US\$1 billion and is cost-recoverable.

The conversion of natural gas from ExxonMobil's offshore operations to electricity is a key component of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) government's objective to lower energy costs by at least 50 per cent through an energy mix, which incorporates gas, solar, wind, and "hydro" power.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jagdeo noted that the government intends to submit a supplementary budget proposal of US\$66 million to further subsidize the cost of electricity.


According to him, the cost of fuel has increased \$70 to over \$100 per barrel, and the government has been absorbing these increases.

"We are not increasing the price of electricity in another country; they would have increased the price of electricity. So that means before the end of the year, we'll go to Parliament for a supplementary of US\$66M for just subsidizing electricity."




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Decentralised training for nurses, other medical personnel coming

IN a significant stride towards enhancing healthcare services in Guyana, President Dr. Irfaan Ali’s administration has embarked on establishing a cutting-edge training facility for nurses in Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam).

Dr. Ranjeev Singh, the Regional Health Officer (RHO) of Region Two, expressed staunch support for this initiative, hailing it as pivotal in bolstering the local healthcare infrastructure.

Dr. Singh underscored the transformative impact of the new facility, particularly for aspiring nurses from the region and nearby islands.

According to the Region Two RHO, “Even though we are faced with some challenges at the hospitals, the development in the region, specifically the health sector, has been rapidly moving apace. This new, modern training school is a game-changer for this region for many reasons, but one of the main ones is because our young people who want to join the profession would be able to get trained in the comfort of their own region.”

He continued: “This was one of the major problems that we were faced with, especially with our young women, but with the completion of this facility, I have no doubt that it will be a big boost to healthcare in the region as well as in the country. Our aim with this training school is to ensure that our current and



The foundation for the \$881M state-of-the-art nursing training facility at Suddie Essequibo Coast

upcoming hospitals, health centres, and health posts are fully equipped with adequately trained medical professionals.”

While foreign specialists are welcomed and appreciated by the government of Guyana, Dr. Singh emphasised the government’s dedication to ensuring that their own citizens possess a high level of expertise across all domains

within the medical field. As with other sectors, the RHO has acknowledged the efforts of the Guyanese government, specifically the Ministry of Health, in striving to close the human resources gap, particularly in the healthcare industry.

“In terms of services, one of the great things that has happened is that we

have decentralised our training. Just last year, we graduated a batch of 22 pharmacy assistants, and throughout the country on July 6, we will have the first batch of 46 nursing assistants who will be writing their exams. We are anticipating a 100 percent pass rate, and those persons can be incorporated into our system.”





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Healthcare heroes honoured for dedication during Mahdia tragedy

IN a poignant ceremony at the Police Officers' Mess Annex, the Ministry of Health honoured healthcare workers who demonstrated extraordinary service and dedication in response to the Mahdia Secondary School dormitory fire tragedy.

The fire, which tragically claimed the lives of 20 youths in May last year, marked one of the most devastating events in recent history.

The Appreciation Ceremony for healthcare workers, held recently, highlighted the tireless efforts and unwavering commitment of those who responded to the crisis.

Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, praised the bravery and selflessness of the healthcare workers, acknowledging their pivotal role during and after the tragedy.

“Everybody gave selflessly, so tonight we want to acknowledge that,” Minister Anthony stated during his address. “We want to acknowledge by giving you a little token. It’s not much, but it’s a token to say that we value what you did, and we value all that you put in. It is a token that the ministry and the Government of Guyana really value your work,” he added.

Minister Anthony reflected on the multifaceted response to the tragedy, which included immediate medical attention, psychological and psychiatric care, and grievance counselling for affected communities. The comprehensive approach also involved a thorough report on the cause of the fire and the effectiveness of the emergency response, which was compiled for the Commission of Inquiry (COI).

“I think we came up with a written report of more than 50 pages on how we responded, and that in itself is a testimony to how we responded,” Minister Anthony explained.

One significant advancement highlighted during the ceremony was the implementation of telemedicine at four sites in Mahdia, ensuring prompt and effective communication and support for those in need.

“While all of this was happening, if you are going to provide support to these communities, we have to think of different ways of providing support. So, during all of that, we placed telemedicine in four of the sites so we could communicate with people and ensure that whatever issues they were having, we were able to address them,” Minister Anthony noted.

Robbie Rambarran, Chief Execu-

tive Officer of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), also lauded the compassion and empathy of the healthcare workers, who were at the forefront of one of the country’s most tragic events. He emphasised the importance of continuous improvement and encouraged the participants to be proud of their achievements.

Some of the healthcare workers who were honoured received a token of appreciation from officials for their extraordinary service and dedication

In his closing remarks, Minister Anthony reiterated the government’s support to the affected families and friends of the young lives lost.



The awards which were handed out at a ceremony

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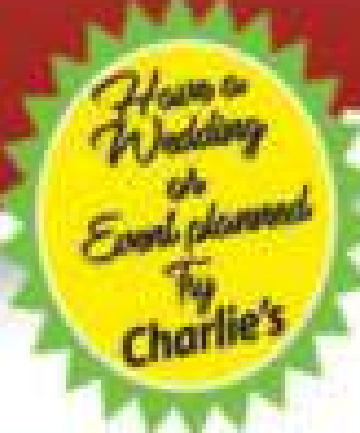
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Guyana Police Force now deploying body cameras

THE Guyana Police Force (GPF) is taking a major step towards modernising its operations and building trust with the public. The force is deploying 1,200 body cameras to be distributed across all police regions in the coming weeks.

Officers recently completed training on how to use these fourth-generation body cameras effectively. The GPF plans to hold continuous training sessions to ensure officers are proficient with the new technology.

This initiative aims to achieve several key goals:

Increased Transparency and Accountability: Body camera footage will provide valuable audio-visual evidence for criminal, civil, and traffic cases. This can improve the accuracy of police reports and support fair investigations.

Enhanced Public Trust: The use of body cameras fosters trust between the police and the communities they serve. Citizens can feel more confident that police interactions are being documented accurately.

Improved Police Performance: Body cameras can help officers accurately record events and interactions, leading to more detailed reports. They



Officer with a body cam

can also be used to review procedures and interpersonal skills during police encounters.

Officer Protection: Senior Superintendent, Jermaine Johnson, who oversaw the training, highlighted that body cameras can also protect the well-being of police officers by providing a clear record of their actions.

The implementation of body cameras signifies a significant step forward for the Guyana Police Force. This technology has the potential to improve transparency, accountability, public trust, and overall police performance.

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Mia urges Caribbean, African countries to look within for investments

IN the pursuit of collaboration and mutual interest, Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados emphasised the importance for countries in the Caribbean and Africa to seek investments internally and from one another.

Mottley made these remarks on Friday last during the third day of the African Export-Import Bank's (Afreximbank) 31st Annual meeting which was held alongside the third AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum (ACTIF) in Nassau, The Bahamas.

During her presentation, the Prime Minister stated that the Afreximbank has become the bridge across the Atlantic and has made itself very well known to the Caribbean due to the presence it has chosen to have.

In light of this, she further mentioned that Caribbean and African nations persist in seeking investments from the North, yet expressed the need for a shift in this approach.

"We keep looking north for investments but we need to look within and across and I believe that if we find the appropriate instruments to mobilise capital and the savings of our people and if we can find a way, that makes it easy to understand what the possibility for those investments can be," she expressed.

Mottley believes these countries can do far more to help themselves and each other before they ask others for help.

She added, "I say so against the background that the reform of the global financial architecture is still critical but we do believe that when you have excess liquidity in our banking system as many of us have and when we are exposed to the extreme conditions that the climate crisis presents, then we need to ensure that we do not put all of our eggs in one basket."

The Prime Minister remarked that, in those investments, there will be tremendous opportunity for green transformation as she added that in there is only so much time to adapt and build the resilience that is needed.

UNTAPPED INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Meanwhile, Mottley said that there are amazing untapped tourism opportunities that exist and noted that while the



Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Amor Mottley

two regions seek to develop transport links for consistent land-based tourism, opportunities exist for cruise tourism.

"There's an amazing opportunity in cruise tourism that remains untapped not to be shaped and directed by others but to be shaped and directed by ourselves," she said.

She stated that while Africa and the gulf states have the lowest penetration in global cruise tourism, the Caribbean region has cruise ships visiting daily.

In light of this situation, Mottley stated that the moment has arrived for Caribbean and African investors to collaborate in order to pursue this tourism opportunity.

She said, "The time has come for investors here in the Caribbean and Africa to work together to be able to pursue initially the leasing of a cruise ship, the chartering of it and focusing directly on the things that our people like to do because I really believe that it will become tremendously successful and it must be done first and foremost

by us for us."

The suggestion she made is to potentially start with leasing the vessels until there is sufficient capacity to acquire ownership, which should be seriously considered.

Recently, representatives from the

Caribbean and Africa convened at the ACTIF to explore investment opportunities and foster collaboration between the two regions. Additionally, they deliberated on the establishment of a trade route connecting Africa and the Caribbean.



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Guyana poised to become South America’s leading oil, gas hub

GUYANA is rapidly emerging as the leading oil and gas hub in South America, according to Dr. Ernest Azudialu-Obiejesi, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nestoil Group.

Nestoil was incorporated in 1991 and is Nigeria’s largest indigenous engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning (EPCC) company in the oil and gas sector.

Speaking on this week’s episode of the Energy Perspectives Podcast, Dr. Azudialu-Obiejesi, visited Guyana for a four-day fact-finding mission from June 9 to 12, 2024, highlighted Guyana’s remarkable progress and vast potential in the oil and gas industry.

“The level of opportunities [in Guyana] have been wonderful. I see a country that is heading towards a boom in the oil and gas industry. I see a country that will emerge in the short run as one of the biggest oil and gas hubs in South America,” he said.

The Nigerian businessman has urged Guyana to prioritise local content in the ongoing development of its growing oil and gas industry and to draw lessons from his country’s experiences.

Dr Azudialu-Obiejesi underscored the paramount importance of incorporating local businesses and workforce in the sector to guarantee sustainable economic growth and development, highlighting Nestoil’s significant contribution to local content in Nigeria. According to him, Nigeria has achieved a lot thanks to its local content laws.

He pointed out that Guyana could benefit from Nigeria’s experience, notably in terms of local content legislation, funding for local participation, and thorough training programmes to empower the local workforce.

He urged the Guyana government to ensure that the local content law is reviewed and enforced.

“The government has to ensure that the local content law is not only written but that it is enforced. If you write it like Nigeria and you don’t enforce it, at the end of the day, the billions [of dollars] that will pass through Guyana will not improve or touch the lives of the people. The local content law in Nigeria came a bit late...after many years of production.”

As of April 2024, over 800 companies have been approved to be included in the Local Content Register. An estimated 6,000 jobs have been created as a result of the country’s robust local content legislation. Since its enactment in



A drillship off the Guyana coast

2021, the law has earned approximately US\$1 billion in revenue, with an additional US\$550 million expected in 2024.

The Local Content Secretariat, a unit within the Natural Resources Ministry, will commence a review of the legislation with the aim of improving it.

This amendment will target increasing the areas in which companies

are mandated to utilise Guyanese goods and services, adding 20 services. The oil and gas sector is also projected to hire over 1,600 more Guyanese over the next three years.

In addition, Dr. Azudialu-Obiejesi also stressed the necessity of ensuring that oil investments help the overall economy, citing areas such as tourism

and technology.

He believes that the government has positioned Guyana advantageously to become a big player in the oil and gas business by utilising lessons learnt from other countries.

The CEO noted that Guyana’s business-friendly environment will attract investors.



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Kumar Sanu, who provided vocals for Tujhe Dekha To, says he's not surprised it came top

Tujhe Dekha To voted best Bollywood songs of the 1990s

A legendary track has come out top in a vote for the UK’s favourite 90s Bollywood song. BBC Asian Network invited listeners to choose The Ultimate 90s Bollywood Song from a list of 50 contenders.

A panel made up of the station’s presenters Haroon Rashid, Nikita Kanda, Gagan Grewal and Nadia Ali, plus industry experts Asim Burney, Amrita Tanna, and Karan Pangali chose the shortlist.

It included song and dance numbers such as Ole Ole from the film Yeh Dillagi, to ballads like Bahon Ke Darmiyan, from Khamoshi: The Musical.

But there could only be one winner - Tujhe Dekha To, from the 1995 blockbuster Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge.

Known as DDLJ, it's Bollywood's longest-running film and still shows every day at the Maratha Mandir Theatre in Mumbai.

It tells the story of Raj, played by legendary actor Shah Rukh Khan, and Simran, played by actress Kajol.

The two are Indians living in London who meet and fall in love against Simran's family's wishes.

Tujhe Dekha To plays over a scene featuring the couple dancing in a field full of yellow mustard plants.

The song, featuring vocals by Kumar Sanu and the late Lata Mangeshkar, who died in 2022, shares a special place in many people's hearts.

Both singers recorded their parts separately, and Sanu tells BBC Asian Network he was so busy at the time that he recorded his half "in hardly half an hour".

But he says he knew the song would be a hit when he recorded it.

“Whilst singing we felt that kind of vibration,” he says. “And I was sure this song would do something.”

Reacting to the news that his song had taken the coveted number one spot in the station’s vote, Sanu, says he’s "pleased" and thanked fans who had voted for it.

He says he isn’t surprised, though, based on the reaction he gets whenever he performs it live.

"I've travelled everywhere and it is always the number one song to the audience,” he says.

Bollywood movies are renowned for mixing epic tales with song and dance numbers.

The 90s were a particularly special era as it was the decade which saw the rise of actors such as Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who are all considered household names today.

Musically, 90s Bollywood soundtracks were incredibly exciting as they not only blended traditional Indian melodies with western orchestras, but audiences began to hear more electronic instrumentation and contemporary pop blends.

It was driven by the rise of composers like Anu Malik, Jatin-Lalit and A R Rahman.

Today Bollywood movies reach a global audience, and it’s easier than ever for fans to connect with tracks from the films via streaming services.

As with Hollywood, it’s not unusual for songs to become hits in their own right after featuring in a popular film.

Singer Kavita Krishnamurthy, who worked with Lata Mangeshkar, says Tujhe Dekha To is “a very, very catchy song and the film was tremendous”.

“It had every commercial ingredient and Lata Ji who is phenomenal,” she says.

And there’s a long history of those working in the industry name-checking the song to show how deep the love for it runs.

In 2014 actress Kareena Kapoor told Desi Island Discs Tujhe Dekha To would be her first pick to take with her to a desert island.

"I'm kind of a romantic at heart and I love the mushy movies,” she said.

Singer Raghav, who is known for sampling Bollywood songs in his music, called the song "the ultimate dream love sequence".

Actor Ayushmann Khurrana also called the film "his favourite film of all time". He remembered watching it while he was at school, but said it remained "amazing" today.

Speaking to Asian Network in 2015, Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol reflected on the success of the film.

Kajol said "it's become what it has become because of the people who have been watching it, who have made it theirs. I don't even think it belongs to us any more".

Khan said: "Nobody could have imagined the longevity of it. The greatness of the art only follows when the audience appreciates it."



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Don’t overreact if what you were planning to do next has to be postponed. This is one of those occasions when you will have no choice but to put creative endeavors on ice until the cosmic climate is more settled. The delay may even do you good.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Although you will be more sociable and chatty than usual now that your ruler Venus is moving through one of the more outgoing areas of your chart you must be careful not to reveal too much about yourself. Your opponents may be listening.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): You will need to be on your guard today, especially where money matters are concerned. What a friend or colleague suggests may sound inviting but make sure you know how much it is going to cost – especially if you will be paying the lion’s share.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Stop worrying about things that will most likely never happen and use the improved cosmic climate to move up in the world. A positive attitude will attract the kind of opportunities that most people can only dream about – but for you they will become a reality.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): At this time of year your natural self-belief can easily desert you, but now you know that you can take positive steps to limit any negative feelings you may have. Remind yourself often that behind those dark clouds the Sun, your ruler, never stops shining.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): Ignore the fools who preach doom and gloom and act as if the world is a wonderful place – and it will be, at least for you. There may be a lot of serious things going on around you but if you keep smiling they won’t turn out so bad.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You cannot just ignore a problem and hope that it will go away. Well, you can, but common sense should tell you that it will remain a problem until you do something about it. It’s time to get tough and deal with that problem once and for all.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Watch your words over the next 24 hours, both in your private life and on the work front. With Venus and Mercury strong in your chart you may be tempted to speak up when it would be wiser to stay quiet. You don’t have to have your say.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Cosmic activity in one of the more sensitive areas of your chart means you must play by the rule book today. If you cut corners or ignore instructions there is every chance you will fall foul of the powers that be, who could punish you severely.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): If you bring joy to other people today the universe will bring joy to you. Cosmic activity in your opposite sign means that while your needs and desires and other people’s needs and desires may look different, they are in fact very much the same.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): You cannot allow yourself to dwell on negative interpretations of what is going on in the world. On the contrary, you must force yourself to believe that even the bad things are part of the overall cosmic plan. Your belief will help make it a fact.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Don’t waste your time trying to get a straight answer from people you work with today, because the more you question them the more evasive they will become. Don’t let it worry you though – they simply have no idea what they are doing.

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Jamaica to reintroduce aged-vehicle policy to boost public transport

In a bid to rejuvenate the island nation’s public transport sector, the Ministry of Science, Energy, Telecommunications, and Transport in Jamaica has announced plans to reintroduce an aged-vehicle policy.

This policy aims to assist public passenger vehicle (PPV) operators in upgrading their fleets, offering a lifeline to operators grappling with aging vehicles.

Import guidelines: A lifeline for operators

Under the proposed policy, existing PPV operators will be permitted to import motor cars up to 10 years old and buses up to 20 years old for utilization within the PPV sector.

Portfolio Minister Daryl Vaz unveiled these details during his recent contribution to the 2024/25 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives.

Ensuring compliance: Monitoring mechanisms

Minister Vaz emphasized the importance of ensuring compliance with the policy’s objectives. To this end, he disclosed plans to implement monitoring mechanisms, including placing liens on the imported vehicles by the Trade Board.

Further details on these monitoring measures are expected to be released as the policy takes shape.

Expanding routes: Collaboration with JUTC

In a collaborative effort with the Jamaica Urban Transport Company (JUTC), the government plans to introduce 16 new routes to the PPV sector.

Notably, five of these routes will



Minister of Science, Energy, Telecommunications and Transport, Hon. Daryl Vaz

be stage-carriage routes exclusively for coaster and minibuses.

These routes, operating under a sub-franchise from the JUTC, will connect various neighborhoods, including

Shortwood, Barbican, Duhaney Park, Whitehall, Havendale, and Harbour View, with downtown Kingston via Half-Way Tree.

Acknowledging the demand for

enhanced service, Minister Vaz revealed plans to allocate 11 routes to taxi operators within the Kingston Metropolitan Transport Region.

Barbados police sounds alarm over ganja use

In a recent panel discussion hosted by the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA), Superintendent Anthony Warner issued a stern warning to Barbadians regarding the prescription of marijuana by local doctors.

While acknowledging the legality of such prescriptions, Warner emphasized the necessity of adhering to a stringent legal process and securing the required permissions from authorities.

Superintendent Warner addressed a common misconception surrounding law enforcement’s role in interpreting legislation.

He stressed that while police are tasked with enforcing the law, it is not their responsibility to interpret it.

Warner cautioned against leaving such interpretation to the discretion of law enforcement, underscoring the importance of adhering to legal standards established by the state.

Central to the discussion was the recent amendment to the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act CAP 131.

Superintendent Warner outlined the amendment’s introduction of a



Cops warning Barbadians over use of marijuana

fixed penalty system for minor cannabis offenses, particularly for individuals found with 14 grams or less of cannabis.

This approach aims to provide an

alternative to arrest, emphasizing a shift in how law enforcement handles such cases.

Superintendent Warner also addressed concerns regarding cannabis

prescriptions and the role of medical practitioners.

He emphasized the necessity for doctors to follow a stringent legal process and obtain the requisite permissions from authorities.

This, he explained, ensures that cannabis use remains regulated and prevents its misuse or abuse.

Highlighting the importance of community engagement, Superintendent Warner emphasized the role of collaboration between police and citizens.

He expressed belief that such interactions foster mutual understanding and trust, ultimately creating safer environments for communication with law enforcement.

Nursing Officer Joel Barrow provided insight into the physiological and psychological effects of cannabis use.

He detailed the interaction of cannabis compounds THC and CBD with the brain, outlining various consumption methods and immediate effects such as bloodshot eyes and increased appetite.

American Airlines flight veers off runway at Kingston airport

An American Airlines flight reportedly veered off the runway while landing at Norman Manley International Airport (NMIA) in Kingston, Jamaica, late last Thursday night.

Flight 850, originally scheduled to arrive at 7:32 PM, was delayed by nearly two hours due to issues at Miami International Airport. When the plane finally landed at NMIA, it experienced a hard landing and veered off the runway. While the extent of injuries, if any, remains unclear, the aircraft is said to have sustained significant damage to its engine and landing lights.

Despite the incident, the aircraft managed to taxi to the gate under its own power, and passengers disembarked without further issues. In response to the event, American Airlines issued a statement on Friday morning, reassuring that no injuries were reported.

“American Airlines flight 850 from Miami (MIA) to Kingston, Jamaica (KIN) briefly exited the runway after landing. The aircraft taxied to the gate under its own power, and customers deplaned normally. Safety is our top priority, and we apologize to our customers for their experience,” the statement read.

The flight’s return to Miami was scheduled for Friday morning, pending the arrival of a replacement aircraft.

CEO of the Seprod Group and Past President of Jamaica Manufactur-



An American Airlines aircraft on the taxiway at the NMIA

ers & Exporters Association Richard Pandohie was a passenger on the flight. He recounted his the experience, describing the flight as “rough, even scary,” but expressed gratitude for the safe landing.

“Thankful that we landed safely despite significant damage to the

plane.. the AA flight crew was calm and professional ...life has a way of reminding us that every day is a blessing,” Pandohie wrote.

This is the second time that such an incident has happened at the Kingston airport involving an American Airlines flight.

In December 2009, American Airlines Flight 331 overran the runway while landing in Kingston. None of the 154 passengers and crew died, but because of the damage to the aircraft, it had to be written off. The aircraft involved in the accident was a Boeing 737-800 registered N977AN.

Caribbean lauds Modi after his re-election

Leaders from the Caribbean community have extended their congratulations to Narendra Modi following his re-election, signaling the start of his third term as India’s Prime Minister.

This widespread commendation highlights the strong ties and mutual interests between India and various Caribbean nations.

Strengthened ties and economic co-operation

CARICOM Chairman and President of Guyana, Dr. Irfaan Ali, emphasized that Modi’s re-election is a testament to the trust and confidence the Indian populace has in his leadership and vision.

He highlighted the deep-rooted connections between Guyana and India, which serve as the foundation for robust bilateral relations.

These ties have recently been enhanced through increased economic co-operation, benefiting both countries significantly.

President Ali expressed his anticipation for the continued growth and strengthening of these bilateral relationships.

Expanding collaboration with Dominica



Narendra Modi — re-elected as Prime Minister of India

From the Commonwealth of Dominica, Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit lauded Modi’s historic victory in the general elections.

Skerrit expressed eagerness to deepen existing ties and explore new areas of collaboration, aiming to boost the prosperity of both Dominica and India as Modi begins another ground-

breaking term.
Barbados and Belize acknowledge India’s global leadership

Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, recognized Modi’s role in elevating India to a position of global leadership, benefiting Barbados and the broader Caribbean region.

Similarly, Belize’s Ministry of For-

eign Affairs congratulated Modi on his re-election through a coalition government.

An announcement on the social media platform X from the ministry expressed Belize’s interest in advancing shared objectives with India’s new government.

Jamaica to tackle crime through social development programmes

In a move to bolster crime prevention through social development, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, Minister of National Security, outlined the Jamaican government’s latest initiatives focusing on psychosocial investments.

During a speech at the Half-Yearly Conference of the Jamaica Association of Guidance Counsellors in Education (JAGCE) held at the Cardiff Hotel and Spa, Dr. Chang highlighted the government’s evolving approach to tackling crime by integrating educational and community-based strategies.

Integrating Education and Security Efforts

Dr. Chang emphasized the long-standing commitment of the government to collaborate with the Ministry of Education in implementing activities designed to prevent crime.

The shift in policy reflects a broader vision of addressing the root causes of crime through community and educational interventions.

The Crime Prevention and Community Safety Branch (CPSSB), established by the Ministry of National Security, plays a pivotal role in these efforts, focusing on enhancing social development as a key factor in crime reduction.

Launching new centers for youth wellness

As part of its strategy, the government has also committed to establishing a Child and Adolescent Wellness Centre in Montego Bay, St. James.

This decision follows a comprehensive needs assessment conducted in 2022 with assistance from the Euro-



Minister of National Security, Dr. Horace Chang

pean Union. The assessment identified a pressing need for therapeutic counseling for approximately 22,600 children who exhibit mental or behavioral issues due to exposure to violence or trauma.

Empowering guidance counsellors

The conference featured several professional development sessions for guidance counsellors, covering topics from maintaining integrity in leadership to the impact of artificial intelligence on their profession.

Dr. Chang praised the critical role of guidance counsellors in shaping the lives of young Jamaicans, dealing with issues ranging from discipline and character development to family and parenting.

A unified approach to national security

The conference, themed “Stronger together through prayer, perseverance, and integrity”, served as a platform for reaffirming the Ministry of National

Security’s commitment to its partnership with the Ministry of Education and Youth.

This collaboration underscores the holistic approach the government is taking to ensure the safety and well-being of its youth, aiming for a future where community support and educational initiatives converge to create a safer Jamaica.

JA starts constitutional move to Republic

The Constitutional Reform Committee (CRC) in Jamaica is actively working on drafting instructions for a Bill that will guide the country’s transition from a constitutional monarchy to a republic.

This significant move was announced by the Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Marlene Malahoo Forte, during her presentation at the 2024/25 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives.

The Minister outlined a strategic plan to ensure extensive public engagement and informed discussions around the proposed Bill. Initially, the Bill will be presented to the House and will remain on the table for three months.

This period is intended for public hearings and educational campaigns to enhance citizens’ understanding of the implications of the republic transition.

Following the initial three-month period, the Bill will undergo scrutiny by a Joint Select Committee of Parliament. This phase bridges the gap between tabling the Bill and the start of formal



Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Marlene Malahoo Forte

debates in the Lower House.

Detailed parliamentary discussions will follow, incorporating feedback from various stakeholders. Once debated, another three-month period must

pass before the Bill can be voted on, allowing further consideration of the points raised during the parliamentary debates.

After securing approval in the

House, the Bill will move to the Senate. Here, it must garner a two-thirds majority vote within a month.

Failure to achieve this threshold would mean the Bill is considered rejected by the Senate. If necessary, the Bill could be sent back to the House for a second vote, which could occur in the same or a subsequent parliamentary session.

The Minister emphasized the importance of adhering to established timelines throughout the process, assuring that the final decision will be placed in the hands of the Jamaican people.

This approach underscores the government’s commitment to a transparent and participative process in reshaping the nation’s constitutional framework.

The report detailing the CRC’s findings and recommendations was initially presented to Parliament on May 21, marking the beginning of a historic endeavor to redefine Jamaica’s political structure.

Four Grenadians recognized in King Charles III’s 2024 Birthday Honours

King Charles III has honored four distinguished Grenadians in his 2024 Birthday Honours, celebrating their exceptional contributions to government, community, education, and entrepreneurship.

Distinguished service in governance and community
Joan Purcell has been appointed as Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) in recognition of her extensive service to government and community.

Born in Carriacou, Purcell’s political journey includes significant roles such as Deputy Political Leader and later Political Leader of the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

Her political career is marked by her tenure as President of the Senate from 2008 to 2013 and a period as Acting Prime Minister, reflecting her impactful contributions to her nation’s governance.

Community and education advocates recognized

Agnes Dorothy Lessey has been named a Member of the British Empire (MBE) for her dedicated service to the community, acknowledging her efforts to enhance the social fabric of her surroundings.

Additionally, Elizabeth Forsyth has been awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil Division) for her commitment to advancing education, a testament to her influence in shaping the



King Charles III — named four Grenadians in his list of honorees

educational landscape.
Fostering entrepreneurship in the fishing industry
The honours list also includes Gerard Bethel, who received the British Empire Medal (Civil Division) for his entrepreneurial services to the fishing

industry.
His recognition underscores the importance of innovation and leadership within the sector, contributing to its growth and sustainability.
A global recognition of service
The Birthday Honours list is a

revered tradition that highlights the extraordinary service of individuals to the United Kingdom and its international interests, celebrating those who have made significant impacts in their fields and communities.

Surge in hotel occupancy in St Vincent

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has witnessed a significant rise in hotel occupancy rates recently. This surge is largely due to the influx of visitors for the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup and the anticipated Vincy Mas celebrations.

During this period, various hotels have reported impressive occupancy statistics, with overall rates reaching 75 per cent and some major hotels nearing full capacity.

Impact of International Cricket
The ICC World Cup has been a major contributor to this increase, with around 4,000 nights booked across different hotels.

This event alone has not only brought spectators to the island but also technical staff and team members.

Specifically, over 1,600 rooms have been occupied by these groups, underscoring the significant impact of international sporting events on local tourism.

Preparations for peak capacity
With the final matches of the ICC World Cup approaching, there is an expected shortage of available accommodation.

Tourism Minister Carlos James has emphasized the need for additional room stock and is actively encouraging Airbnb providers and unlicensed providers to



Hotels like Mariners in St Vincent are reporting higher occupancy rates

register with the Tourism Authority.
This move aims to accommodate the surge in demand and ensure all visitors have suitable lodging options.
Anticipating the Vincy Mas Festival
Looking ahead to the Vincy Mas,

which is set to run from June 28 to July 9, 2024, there is already a noticeable increase in air transportation bookings.
One airline has reported a 75 per cent load factor extending through to the end of August, indicating strong visitor

interest.
Hotel bookings for this period are also robust, with occupancy rates expected to climb, potentially reaching full capacity as the festival draws closer.

UNC members bet on Kamla to lead party into 2025 elections

POLITICAL analyst Dr Bishnu Ragoonath said on June 16 the UNC membership believes Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar is capable of beating the Prime Minister in next year's general election; although whether this belief translates to the general population was a different question.

He was giving his reaction to the sweeping victory of the Star Team – aligned to Persad-Bissessar – in June 15's UNC internal elections for a new national executive, exclusive of political leader.

The Star Team fended off a challenge by the United Patriots (UP) slate led by Mayaro MP Rushton Paray and including Tabaguite MP Anita Haynes-Alleyne, attorneys Larry Lalla and Kiel Taklalasingh and former council chairman Henry Awong. Star candidates got an average of 13,000 votes each, while UP candidates each got roughly 4,000 votes.

Ragoonath also alerted that outcomes of the two local government by-elections on June 17 will have some significance for the 2025 general election, especially the Lengua seat, which he said falls in the Moruga constituency, where the UNC will want to beef up its 500-vote margin won in the 2020 general election.

He said Persad-Bissessar enjoyed an incumbency that was hard to challenge, despite her having unseated her predecessor Basdeo Panday in 2010.

Ragoonath said the mood on the ground was that despite concerns that Persad-Bissessar had not won another general election since 2010, the party's base was not deterred from continuing



Kamla Persad-Bissessar and her Star Team celebrate their win at the internal polls

to support her, as shown by June 15's polls.

Asked if her win was due to a mood among supporters that there was no leadership vacancy, due to a personal love for Persad-Bissessar or a feeling the UNC could beat the PNM next year, he replied, "All of the above."

The party had dumped Panday in 2010 but not done similar to Persad-Bissessar by rejecting her slate, he said.

"There is still a feeling Kamla can lead the party into an election victory."

Asked if Paray's slate had made a weak challenge, Ragoonath gave a mixed answer.

Firstly, he queried the premise the UP slate had many unknowns – citing Haynes-Alleyne, Lalla and Awong, although admitting some candidates for lower-level posts were less known. Secondly, Ragoonath said Paray did not command the support enjoyed by former minister Vasant Bharath, who unsuccessfully challenged Persad-Bissessar for leadership in 2015.

"Vasant Bharath was leaps and bounds ahead in popularity and everything else compared to Paray, yet Vasant lost."

"It's not a matter of the slate, but a majority of people having confidence

in the current leadership."

Asked if the wider population also had faith in Persad-Bissessar, he responded: "Three to one, the party supported Kamla. Whether that is spread across the whole country is a different question altogether."

He said within the UNC rank and file there was three-to-one support for her and a belief she can beat Rowley.

"There are other issues on the horizon. For instance, if the PNM is unable to take back Tobago, that takes their seats down to 20, which is not a majority."

T&T benefitting from closer India, Ghana ties

T&T Prime Minister Keith Rowley has identified the importation of planting materials to grow Ghanaian yams and cassava locally to boost food production as some of the benefits that Trinidad and Tobago could receive from increased economic ties.

Dr Rowley repeated that increased commercial activity with India, through the Reliance Group's establishing a cricket academy in Tacarigua, remains very much on the cards.

He said the UNC-led People's Partnership (PP) coalition government wasted approximately \$12 million on a trip to India during its tenure, which he said brought no benefits to the country.

He made these statements in response to a question from Naparima MP Rodney Charles in the House of Representatives on June 14.

Charles scoffed at previous public comments by Rowley about importing yams from Ghana.

Rowley, who is a registered farmer and former agriculture minister, told Charles, "I planted one Ghanaian yam in my backyard in St Ann's and got 20 pounds of yams. How many did you plant?"

Rowley has a kitchen garden in the grounds of the prime minister's official residence in St Ann's.

Charles claimed yams from Barbados or Suriname were superior to Ghanaian yams.

Rowley countered, "What you know about

yams?"

He told Charles his statements would not improve his standing in the UNC owing to his alignment with the Patriots slate in the party's June 15 internal elections.

Rowley reminded Charles of his current seating arrangement in the chamber, directly to the left of Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar, who has endorsed the incumbent Star slate.

"That does not improve your position over there. You will eventually be thrown out, way down there."

Persad-Bissessar has publicly hinted about changing the parliamentary seating arrangements of UNC MPs who opposed the Star slate, which won the UNC's national executive election on June 15.

Returning to Charles' questions over the quality of Ghanaian yams, Rowley said, "The quality and species of yams that we are interested in can only be had from Cape Coast in Ghana."

"We are, in fact, at this moment, taking steps to import significant planting material (for yams) and while we're at it, we now have growing and testing spots around the country. Cassava varieties have come in from Ghana because we are looking for particular species."

Rowley told Charles, "I trust you will use it when it becomes available in the marketplace. Grow

what you eat and eat what you grow."

He reminded MPs of his visit to Ghana and India last month.

On the former, Rowley said two Ghanaian business delegations have come to TT to discuss opportunities for collaboration in energy matters.

Last month, he said Phoenix Park Gas Processors Ltd is pursuing an energy initiative in Ghana.

On the latter, Rowley said the UNC has failed to discourage the Reliance Group from its interest in building a cricket academy here.

At a news conference on May 18, Rowley said a parcel of land in Trincity was earmarked for this academy.

After repeating his role as TT's number one salesman, Rowley said the UNC could boast of no such achievements during its tenure in office from May 2010-September 2015.

Government MPs thumped their desks as Rowley told Charles, "What I could tell you is that the \$12 million trip that you and your friends made to India didn't produce an ochro, far less yam."

"If you want to talk about expenditure and income, you are talking to the right man. Just give me the notice."

Pooran hits 98 to keep West Indies unbeaten at T20 World Cup

Nicholas Pooran gave fans at the Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in St Lucia a show, with a knock of 98 to keep West Indies unbeaten at the 2024 International Cricket Council T20 World Cup on June 17.

Pooran’s innings, the top score in the tournament, led West Indies to a 104-run win over Afghanistan.

It was the fourth win for West Indies in as many matches.

West Indies topped Group C with the win and Afghanistan finished second. Both teams had already sealed a spot in the Super 8 before the match bowled off.

West Indies have been placed in Group Two of the Super 8 based on pre-tournament seedings.

West Indies are in the same Super 8

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group with England, the US and South Africa.

Pooran’s knock propelled West Indies to a healthy 218/5 in 20 overs batting first. The left-handed batsman struck six fours and eight sixes in his 53-ball innings.

West Indies also got contributions from Johnson Charles (43 off 27 balls), captain Rovman Powell (26 off 15) and Shai Hope (25 off 17). Hope was one of two changes in the West Indies team. Hope and Obed McCoy replaced Roston Chase and Romario Shepherd.

Gulbadin Naib picked up 2/14 in two overs for the Afghans.

In response, Afghanistan could only muster 114 all out in 16.2 overs.

Left-arm pacer McCoy grabbed 3/14 in three overs and the left-arm spin “twins” of Akeal Hosein and Gudakesh Motie took 2/21 and 2/28 respectively.

Ibrahim Zadran scored 38 off 28 deliveries for Afghanistan.

West Indies face England in their first match of the Super 8 stage on June 19 in St Lucia at 8.30 pm., as we were going to press.



West Indies’ Nicholas Pooran plays a shot against Afghanistan

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