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Another major oil find in Guyana

ExxonMobil has announced a new oil and gas discovery at the Bluefin well in the Stabroek block off-shore Guyana.

The development marks the company's first such announcement in the country this year.

It adds to the more than 30 discoveries since 2015 in the 26,800km² area, which already boasts more than 11 billion barrels of recoverable oil and gas.

The Bluefin well, drilled by the Stena Drillmax drillship in 1,294m of water, encountered approximately 60m of hydrocarbon-bearing sandstone.

This discovery is located around 8.5km south-east of the Sailfin-1 well in the south-eastern portion of the Stabroek block.

Exxon, with its partners, began crude output in Guyana in 2019, and by 2027 the companies aim to produce up to 1.2 million barrels of oil and gas per day from the block.

ExxonMobil Guyana operates the block with a 45% interest, while Hess Guyana Exploration holds 30% and CNOOC Petroleum Guyana owns

25%.

ExxonMobil Guyana president Alistair Routledge said: "Our exploration programme continues to improve our understanding of the block's potential to drive viable oil-and-gas development. This latest find reinforces that we have the people, skills and technology to safely and responsibly deliver value to Guyana from the country's resources."

The discovery coincides with Exxon initiating arbitration proceedings to assert its pre-emption rights in the Stabroek oilfield.

This move could potentially affect Chevron's plans to acquire a stake in the Stabroek block through the \$53bn purchase of Hess.

Chevron is currently in discussions with Exxon and CNOOC regarding the right of first refusal for the Stabroek block.

Although Chevron contends that the right does not apply due to the structure of the deal, it acknowledges that the merger's fate hinges on the resolution of this issue.



This discovery is located around 8.5km south-east of the Sailfin-1 well

Caricom AGs work on draft laws for common domestic space for T20 cricket

ATTORNEYS General from across the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have been assigned to draft laws to establish a "common domestic space" within the region. This directive was disclosed by Guyana's Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall (pictured at left), during his weekly programme, "Issues in the News." The move comes ahead of the upcoming International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20 World Cup, scheduled to take place from June 1st to June 29th, with matches set to be hosted in both the West Indies and the United States of America. Speaking on the significance of this global cricket event, Nandlall emphasised the necessity of efficient legal frameworks to facilitate smooth operations during the tournament. "At the recently concluded CARICOM Heads of Government Summit in Georgetown, Guyana, several decisions were made to prepare the West Indies and the Caribbean region for this important tournament," Nandlall remarked.



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Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

 KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 63

CARICOM, LED BY PRESIDENT ALI, FACILITATES HAITIAN TRANSITIONAL GOV'T



PAGE 3

Dr. Irfaan Ali, the President of Guyana and Chairman of CARICOM, together with other prominent regional and international figures during a press conference held in Jamaica after a major discussion regarding the situation in Haiti



REPUBLIC BANK INVESTS \$1.2 BILLION IN BERBICE BRANCH

PAGE 4



BABU JAAN: GUYANA'S LEADERS PROMOTE COLLABORATION AND NATIONAL COHESION

PAGE 11



UG'S SECURITY EXPERTISE RECOGNISED - AWARD PAVES WAY FOR REGIONAL HUB

PAGE 15



GUYANESE CRICKETING HERO SHAMAR JOSEPH NAMED TOURISM AMBASSADOR

PAGE 23

GUYANA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND DIALOGUE WITH VENEZUELA AT CELAC SUMMIT



President Ali delivering remarks at the VIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of CELAC

President Ali reaffirmed his country's unwavering commitment to peace and regional stability during the VIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of CELAC.

Held in St Vincent and the Grenadines, the summit brought together leaders from across Latin America and the Caribbean, including Venezuela's President, Nicolás Maduro.

President Ali emphasised Guyana's dedication to fostering a positive relationship with Venezuela. **"I assured everyone at that time, and now, that I am prepared to speak with President Maduro on any aspect that may contribute to enhancing the relationship between our two countries,"** he declared.

This commitment

extends from a December 2023 dialogue initiated at the invitation of St Vincent's Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves, who also serves as CELAC's President Pro Tempore.

The summit served as a platform to reiterate Guyana's adherence to the legal process established by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for resolving the border controversy with Venezuela. **"The**

Joint Declaration of Argyle on Dialogue and Peace acknowledges that Guyana is committed to the legal process," President Ali reminded the gathering. He further underscored Guyana's readiness to accept the ICJ's ultimate decision.

President Ali stressed the importance of a peaceful Latin America and Caribbean. **"We want peace. We want prosperity for our neighbours and all in this region. We want to be our brother's keeper with our neighbour,"** he stated.

President Ali addressed comments made by Bolivia's president regarding Guyana's air surveillance and maritime exercises. **"The exercises conducted were merely part of a bilateral and regional security cooperation that had nothing to do with the Guyana/border controversy,"**

he clarified. He emphasised that Guyana's core principles are grounded in peace and its territory will never be used for war. **"Instead of drawing conclusions, States within the region must ascertain the facts. Statements that are not based on facts can only add to destabilisation,"** President Ali asserted.

He also highlighted the lack of acknowledgement

regarding incursions into Guyanese territory.

President Ali extended his condemnation of violence and aggression beyond the region. **"We must never allow the peoples of this region to be subjected to such actions,"** he declared. He denounced the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the plight of Palestinians, calling for an end to the **"genocide in Palestine"** and the release of hostages.



Venezuela's President, Nicolás Maduro

CELAC SUMMIT: PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR UNITY ON CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD SECURITY

At the VIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of CELAC (CELAC) in St Vincent and the Grenadines, President Ali emphasised the critical role CELAC can play in tackling pressing issues that threaten sustainable development in the region.

President Ali underscored the urgency of addressing climate change, energy security, and food security, all areas where a lack of progress could have dire consequences. **"Issues ranging from**

climate change, energy security, and food and nutrition security –can have adverse effects if not addressed properly," he warned.

Food security emerged as a particular point of focus. President Ali pointed out that climate change and extreme weather events are already jeopardising global food production. **"My government welcomes collaborative efforts and partnerships in the retooling effort to build the necessary capacity**



President Ali delivering remarks at the VIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of CELAC

to meet the rising need for expertise in the advancement of this sector," he declared. Guyana, as a leader in food security initiatives within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), is actively seeking collaborative solutions.

The impact of climate change is particularly severe for Guyana and many of its neighbours. President Ali reiterated the need to fulfil financial commitments pledged to support climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Importantly, the

President highlighted the preservation of forests and the crucial role of forests in climate mitigation and adaptation, including through reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

President Ali called on CELAC to champion sustainable forest management, forest carbon stock conservation (REDD+), and other climate-related policies established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He also expressed

appreciation for an invitation from Brazil's President Lula da Silva to present Guyana's forest preservation model at the G20 summit in July 2024. President Ali further extended this offer to CELAC member states.

The summit also served as a platform to promote investment opportunities in Guyana. President Ali encouraged companies to explore possibilities in areas like agricultural technology, eco-tourism, destination tourism, and construction. **"The Government**

of Guyana remains committed to the diversification of our economic and investors portfolio," he emphasised, highlighting both established sectors and the development of new and emerging industries.

This CELAC summit brought together leaders from across Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss critical issues facing the region.



President Ali at the VIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of CELAC



President Ali at the VIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of CELAC

CARICOM, LED BY PRESIDENT ALI, FACILITATES HAITIAN TRANSITIONAL GOV'T



President Ali and other high-level regional and international officials during a press briefing following the meeting

A significant step towards addressing Haiti's ongoing crisis was taken with the agreement to form a Transitional Presidential Council. This resulted from a high-level meeting convened by CARICOM Chairman, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

Representatives from the United States, Canada, France, the United Nations, and Haitian stakeholders participated in the meeting held in Kingston, Jamaica, on March 12th.

President Ali stressed the critical need for a solution, stating, **"These discussions have not been easy... all stakeholders have a duty to their people, to reach a consensus now."**

CONCRETE STEPS TOWARDS PEACE AND STABILITY

The meeting yielded important advancements, including the agreement for a seven-member council with two non-voting

observers. This council will hold specific presidential powers during Haiti's transition



Some of the bilateral partners at the meeting

period.

The council's primary focus will be selecting an Interim Prime Minister and forming an inclusive council of ministers. Operating through a majority vote, the council aims to remain neutral by excluding individuals facing charges, under UN sanctions, or intending to run in future elections.

Haitian Prime Minister Henry's resignation paves the way for the transitional government. President Ali urged patience and national unity: **"This process requires patience... Let us sacrifice a bit, and give this agreement a chance to work... encourage participation by all stakeholders, and pave the way for elections as soon as**



The special meeting on the Haiti crisis

possible."

SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The United States committed US\$133 million in aid, including US\$100 million to support a UN-backed multinational security force led by Kenya, aiming to assist the under-resourced Haitian National Police, and US\$33 million in humanitarian assistance to address the immediate needs of the people.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken acknowledged the Haitian people's role in shaping their future but emphasised the international community's support in restoring security. **"Only the Haitian people**

can...determine their own future but all of us... can help restore security," he said.

While gang violence persists, the establishment of a transitional government offers a chance for improvement. The ultimate goal is to create a secure environment for free and fair elections, ensuring a lasting democratic future for Haiti.

President Ali's leadership in spearheading this initiative demonstrates CARICOM's active role in fostering regional stability. His focus on facilitating dialogue and finding a Haitian-centric solution has been crucial in paving the way for a more peaceful and democratic future for Haiti.

GOV'T REASSURES PUBLIC ON FULL ROYALTY COLLECTION FROM EXXONMOBIL

Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, reiterated that Guyana receives all due royalties from ExxonMobil, addressing concerns raised by commentators.

"These are some of the most ridiculous analysis that pass off as technical work... and they get bold headlines. It is all a lie," Dr Jagdeo stated at a recent press conference at the Office of the President, firmly refuting claims of Guyana receiving a fraction of royalties.

He emphasised that calculations are based on the total value of production and sales, not profits, as per the Production Sharing Agreement (PSA). **"I addressed this issue,"** Dr. Jagdeo said. **"I pointed out that**

the calculations were wrong and outlined how the royalty is calculated," ensuring transparency in the process.

A new model agreement with a 10% royalty rate is being introduced for future oil blocks, signifying a focus on securing a better financial return for Guyana.

VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS

Dr. Jagdeo also addressed the influx of migrants from Venezuela, emphasising their potential connection to Guyana.

"These are our people," Dr. Jagdeo asserted, highlighting their Guyanese ancestry. He explained that a significant portion of the



Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

over 30,000 migrants are Guyanese who fled economic hardship in the past or their descendants, potentially eligible for citizenship

based on Guyana's constitution. **"Based on our constitution, they are citizens eligible for citizenship,"** he stated, countering

criticism regarding the government's integration efforts.

Dr. Jagdeo rejected claims that the government shouldn't support these migrants due to their perceived foreign status. **"We have to extend help to our own people when they come back here... these are our people,"** he emphasised, condemning such views as "racist."

When questioned about the source of his claims, Dr. Jagdeo assured reporters that government entities gather information while providing services. **"When you talk to them... they take you back to their past and tell you about their grandmother**

and mother... we can trace a lot," he explained.

Guyana prioritises understanding the migrant population over deportation. **"The approach is one of extensive humanitarian aid with continuous efforts to ensure that these persons are captured in immigration records,"** Dr. Jagdeo outlined, emphasising a comprehensive approach to the situation.

An earlier estimate from Minister of Governance, Gail Teixeira, suggests a quarter of Venezuelan migrants have Guyanese ancestry, further supporting the government's stance.

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR “STRUCTURED MECHANISMS” TO BOOST CARIBBEAN-AFRICA TRADE

President Ali is urging the Caribbean and African regions to develop a more formal structure to enhance trade relations.

“The Caribbean region and Africa must develop a structured mechanism for enhanced trade relations,” President Ali said in a recent interview with the African Prosperity Network. The interview took place in Accra, Ghana, where President Ali received the African Prosperity Champions Award.

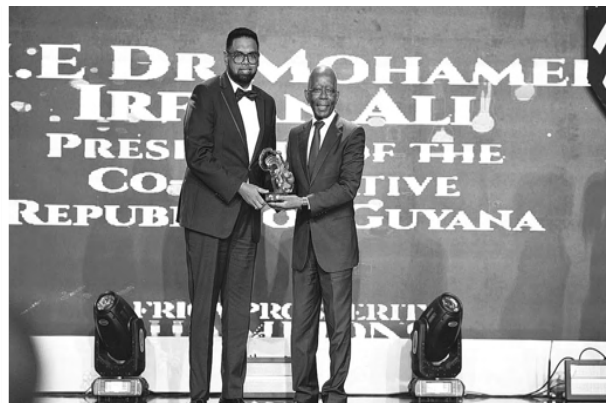
President Ali emphasised that stronger trade ties within the regions would open doors for significant investments. **“Greater intra-regional trade**

and integration policies can open doors for significant investments,” he said.

With such policies in place, the Caribbean and Africa could be better positioned to leverage each other’s goods and services for mutual development.

“I think we need to set ourselves targets, like to increase our internal trade by 30 per cent. That is, reducing our external dependence by 30 per cent by 2030,” President Ali proposed. **“I think once we set ourselves these targets, we will be able to build mechanisms that promote trade among ourselves.”**

President Ali acknowledged the need for improved transportation links



President Ali receiving the prestigious Global Africa Leadership Award in Accra, Ghana

to facilitate this trade expansion. He highlighted Guyana’s unique position as a potential bridge.

“We are the gateway to South America, and we are also a part of CARICOM,” President Ali explained. **“Guyana allows African investment to have**

access to a market of over \$400 million, and that is a market that we have trade arrangements with, which opens up all of South America to African investors.”

President Ali went on to detail how Guyana’s ongoing development initiatives present opportunities for African

partnerships. **“With the type of development that is taking place in our country, where we are trying to make Guyana a leader in climate, food and energy, Africa can play a very key role,”** he stated.

President Ali stressed that prioritising human resource development is crucial for both regions. He pointed to the growing importance of digitization, noting that countries must invest in their people to adapt to this changing environment.

“As we seek to add value to our natural resources, to our manufacturing and agricultural production, we need to have a greater skill set, deploy greater

technology, [and] better ways of doing things,” President Ali explained. **“We need to spend more on research and development, and all of this requires greater investment in our human assets.”**

President Ali also highlighted Ghana’s petroleum industry as an example, noting that Guyana has adopted a similar model for its Local Content Legislation.

This call for stronger Caribbean-African ties comes on the heels of another award for President Ali. Earlier this year, he received the Global Africa Leadership Award in recognition of his leadership style and commitment to national unity.

REPUBLIC BANK INVESTS \$1.2 BILLION IN BERBICE BRANCH

President Ali hailed the opening of Republic Bank’s \$1.2 billion Williamsburg branch as a strategic investment aligning with the government’s plan to **“expand and diversify the economy”** of Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne).

“This is a wise investment,” President Ali said, at the symbolic ribbon cutting and unveiling of the facility’s commemorative plaque.

“Much development is on the cards for the region,” President Ali highlighted, mentioning “world-class training centres, public infrastructure and private sector investments.”

The region is expected to play a crucial

role in the government’s gas development strategy, particularly in **“transport and logistics sectors.”**

President Ali emphasised the

project, connecting Guyana to Brazil, and the need for a **“fixed Berbice bridge”** to further enhance regional connectivity. This bridge, he noted,

connecting Guyana with neighbouring countries.

President Ali acknowledged the strong foundation of the banking sector, but stressed the need for “modernisation”. He called for a shift towards “electronic transactions” through “legislative mechanism” and public education.

President Ali commended Republic Bank for recognising the market’s needs and making a **“perfect decision”** by investing in the region. He further encouraged private sector participation, stating: **“Any investor... that invests in this region is making an economic and financial decision that is wise and**

prudent.”

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Republic Bank, Nigel Baptiste said this milestone solidifies the institution’s vision of strengthening relations in the East Berbice-Corentyne region.

The establishment of a branch in the Williamsburg Village community development was driven by the advancement of communities.

“Our core objective, beyond the provision of financial services, is to pursue meaningful relationships and make a difference in the communities that we serve through our various customer education and empowerment programmes, as well

as our community relations,” Baptiste affirmed.

The state-of-the-art financial institution was meticulously designed, built and equipped and has employed a team of 29 professionals to ensure seamless delivery of its services.

This new Berbice branch is the largest of its kind and in addition to the standard banking services offered, it also has Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) that are equipped with two machines and a provision for a third.

This feature will ensure that customers always have easy access to cash while enjoying the comfort of the spacious and modern banking hall.



The formal opening of the \$1.2B Williamsburg Branch

importance of the ongoing **“Mabura to Lethem road link”**

would open up **“a series of investment prospects”** by

FIRST LADY DONATES AMBULANCE TO GPHC’S PAEDIATRIC WARD

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation’s (GPHC) paediatric ward has a new reason to celebrate. First Lady Arya Ali donated a new ambulance specifically for the ward, a first in the hospital’s history.

This timely donation is expected to significantly enhance healthcare delivery for

young patients. The ambulance will ensure a quicker response time for emergencies and allow for more efficient transportation of children requiring medical attention.

During a handover ceremony at the GPHC, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Robbie Rambarran expressed his gratitude for the

donation. **“There is no ambulance at this time that is assigned specifically for paediatrics. So, this will be our first.”**

Rambarran acknowledged the First Lady’s ongoing support for the hospital. **“We truly appreciate this donation,”** he concluded.



First Lady Arya Ali handing over keys to new ambulance to GPHC

NORTHERN BRAZIL SEEN AS ENGINE FOR GUYANA'S GROWTH

Guyana is setting its sights on Northern Brazil as a key driver of its continued prosperity. This strategic partnership was the focus of recent bilateral discussions between Guyana's President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, and his Brazilian counterpart, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The talks covered a broad range of areas, including food security, energy, climate change, and infrastructure development to enhance connectivity between the two countries.

During a recent press conference, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, Guyana's Vice President and General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), elaborated on the potential benefits of this partnership. **"Why do you think this road is critical?"** Dr. Jagdeo questioned, referring to the ongoing construction of an all-weather road linking Linden to Lethem. **"Because Northern Brazil is an important growth pole for Guyana, a big market of nearly three million people for our produce,"** he explained. This vital project is being undertaken by Brazilian contractor Construtora Quieroz Galvao SA and includes the construction of over 40 concrete bridges designed to handle heavy-duty trucks.

The completion of this road will establish a direct connection between Lethem in Guyana and Bom Fim in Northern Brazil. This significant development will revolutionise transportation and logistics for Guyana and the wider Caribbean region. **"That's thinking about that growth pool,"** Dr. Jagdeo elaborated, **"a growth pool associated with more movement of grains from Brazil, more movements of inputs into Brazil through this road and possibly a port. A lot more business and also generation of a sustained regional market. 'If we have a sustained attempt to slaughter cows and export them, we can't last a month for the demand if we slaughter all of our cows,'"** Dr. Jagdeo noted. Brazil's expertise and resources can play a vital role in advancing Guyana's cattle industry.

The Vice President outlined a vision for a food hub: **"The food hub that we are working with to bring Brazil in is upgrading. Maybe the airport, through a private initiative at Lethem, has cold storage facilities there, processed meat and other vegetables and all the things there that don't come directly into our market to compete with our people."**

This collaborative project would involve processing and storage facilities in Lethem, allowing Guyana to create a value-added food export sector without directly competing with domestic markets.

Guyana's abundant petroleum resources present another opportunity for collaboration. Dr. Jagdeo explained, **"If we can generate from our gas development, more electricity to sell to Brazil, then that's the value-added because we will generate more money from selling electricity."** Guyana's natural gas reserves can be leveraged to create an energy corridor with Brazil, generating significant revenue for Guyana.

In conclusion, Dr. Jagdeo emphasised the importance of establishing multiple growth poles to ensure long-term wealth creation and accelerate Guyana's transformation. He stressed the need to move beyond dependence on oil and gas, urging the country to explore and develop other sectors to secure a prosperous future for generations to come. Guyana's strategic partnership with Northern Brazil presents a promising opportunity to achieve these goals and solidify Guyana's position as a leading economic force in the region.



President Ali and President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, HE Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva at State House.

GUYANA AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC FORGE STRONGER PARTNERSHIP - 10 AGREEMENTS SIGNED IN 2023



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, Ambassador Ernesto Torres-Pereyra and their spouses give a toast on Dominican Republic 180th Independent Annivers

Guyana and the Dominican Republic are taking their bilateral cooperation to new heights, marked by a surge in signed agreements and a commitment to deeper collaboration.

"This has facilitated more meaningful engagements between our two countries, not only at the level of government but inclusive of the private sector and people-to-people interaction," emphasised Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, during his address at the Dominican Republic's 180th Independence Anniversary celebration held at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre.

The relationship between the two nations has seen significant growth in recent years, building on the foundation of 54 years of diplomatic ties. The establishment of a Dominican Republic embassy in Guyana further solidified this partnership.

"We're committed to working ... to give impetus to the several working groups that will serve to advance the programme of cooperation," declared Prime Minister Phillips. These working groups will provide practical support in implementing the numerous joint initiatives established for mutual benefit.

As the partnership flourishes, both countries acknowledge the importance of fostering closer connections between their citizens. Prime Minister Phillips stressed Guyana's commitment to exploring avenues for this.

Guyana's unwavering support within the multilateral system was also acknowledged by Dominican Republic's Ambassador Ernesto Torres-Pereyra. **"We would like to express our profound gratitude to Guyana for their unwavering support,"** he said. Ambassador Torres-Pereyra went on to express his optimism for the future, believing that 2024 will be a particularly **"auspicious" year for both nations.**

Ambassador Torres-Pereyra revealed a remarkable achievement in 2023: ten cooperation agreements were signed between Guyana and the Dominican Republic. This signifies a substantial leap forward in their collaborative efforts.

The Dominican Republic Ambassador also commended Guyana's growing leadership within the region. **"The successfully hosting international conferences ... demonstrates Guyana's growing regional leadership on many fronts,"** remarked Ambassador Torres-Pereyra.

GUYANA LAUNCHES AI ASSISTANT "JESSIE" TO CONNECT WITH DIASPORA 24/7

Guyanese citizens abroad can now connect with their homeland around the clock thanks to a new initiative – an Artificial Intelligence (AI) assistant named "Jessie." This initiative aims to streamline communication and address the surge in inquiries from the diaspora.

The re-establishment of the unit has sparked heightened interest among Guyanese in contributing to various sectors of the economy... This has resulted in a surge in inquiries and requests from citizens," Head of the Diaspora Unit, Rosalinda Rasul, explained at the programme's official launch at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Jessie, created by V75 Inc., can answer frequently asked questions and provide information on various topics including remigration, housing, investments, documents, and National Insurance Scheme.

The AI assistant can access and share information from the banking sector, the Guyana Elections Commission (GEC), the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA,) the General Registrar Office (GRO,) the Immigration Support Service Agency, and the Passport Office.

"She is there 24/7... infinitely scalable... can chat with a multitude of individuals simultaneously..." Chief Executive Officer of V75 Inc, Eldon Marks explained.

The AI assistant, Jessie, will be accessible worldwide within a week.

PRESIDENT ALI VOWS NEVER AGAIN AFTER RECALLING “DIFFICULT” 2020 ELECTION

President Ali, in a live address to the nation on the 4th anniversary of the highly contested March 2020 General and Regional Elections, declared with unwavering resolve, **“Those five months [of delayed results] were particularly difficult. It shows how fragile our democracy was...We did not allow them then. And we will not allow them ever again.”**

His speech, brimming with both reflection and pride, commemorated the tumultuous period and highlighted the significant strides his government, the People’s Progressive Party/Civic

(PPP/C), has made since taking office.

President Ali’s focus remained laser-sharp on the 2020 election, which saw allegations of rigging casting a dark shadow over the democratic process. He emphasised the government’s unwavering commitment to upholding democratic principles and the rule of law, stating, **“This would never happen again in the history of our country.”**

The President acknowledged the **“debilitating effects”** of the global pandemic that his administration inherited. Yet, he asserted, **“We rose to the occasion,”** implementing impactful measures and investing



President Ali

heavily in infrastructure and programmes to combat COVID-19’s economic and social blows.

He pointed to the unfinished state of a supposedly completed

COVID hospital, highlighting, **“We made that facility functional, working 24 hours, around the clock. In so doing, we kept our economy open, and saved more**

than 73,000 lives.”

Beyond pandemic response, President Ali underscored the fulfilment of numerous campaign pledges. He proudly listed achievements such as removing over 200 “burdensome taxes and fees” within 100 days, restoring thousands of jobs and revitalising sectors like mining and agriculture, expanding healthcare services, enhancing education quality, and increasing housing accessibility, and empowering Guyanese with tools to improve their livelihoods.

President Ali asserted, **“We have delivered on every single promise we made in the**

manifesto...We have improved mortality rates, life expectancy, pensions, social services, and education services.” He further emphasised investments in the hinterland and indigenous communities, alongside the creation of thousands of jobs for civil society organisations.

The President acknowledged the challenges faced, but his message remained one of unwavering determination. He reiterated the PPP/C government’s commitment to building a **“strong, resilient and sustainable country”** for all Guyanese.

GUYANA STRENGTHENS FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WITH UNDP SUPPORT

The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, under its Spotlight Initiative, received a critical boost in its fight against gender-based violence (GBV). The United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) donated a range of electronic equipment, including computers and printers, specifically to support data collection efforts.

Minister Vindhya Persaud, highlighted the significance of digitising in tackling GBV. **“Moving forward in a modern world, we must have digitising of records,”** Minister Persaud stated. **“We must have not only the collection of data but the analysis of data. We must also have the generation of reports.”**

She expressed her appreciation for UNDP’s ongoing support, acknowledging their previous contribution in developing the necessary software for data management.

The donated electronics will be distributed to key locations. **“Along with the Lusignan Hope and Justice Centre,”** Minister Persaud explained, **“the remaining electronics will soon be distributed to other centres in Regions One and Three.”** These additional centers are expected to open in the first quarter of 2024.

UNDP’s Deputy Director for the Caribbean, Linda Maguire, emphasised the importance of data collection in addressing

GBV. **“The act of data collection is vital to uproot the causes of gender-based violence in all countries,”** Maguire said. **“Initiatives like these are intended to get at the root causes of the problem while at the same time attending to survivors and giving them the tools that they need.”**

UNDP’s Resident Representative, Gerardo Noto, reiterated the organisation’s commitment to working alongside the Ministry. **“We work with the government of Guyana, specifically**

the Ministry of Human Services, to develop a GBV database that is currently in the last stage of improving and expanding its capacity to generate, analyse and produce data,” Noto explained.

This collaborative effort between the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security and the UNDP equips Guyana with stronger data collection capabilities, ultimately leading to more effective responses to GBV, and improved support for survivors.



Human Services Ministry receives electronics from UNDP

GUYANA TAKES TOP HONORS FOR ECOLOGICAL TOURISM AT PATWA AWARDS



Guyana wins Destination of the Year in the Ecological Tourism category

Guyana has been named the Destination of the Year in the Ecological Tourism category at the prestigious Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) International Travel

Awards 2024. The announcement was made at the International Tourism Exchange (ITB) Berlin, a leading travel industry event.

This recognition highlights Guyana’s ongoing efforts to promote sustainable tourism practices, and preserve its rich natural heritage. The country boasts vast rainforests, immense waterfalls, and a unique indigenous culture, making it a prime destination for eco-conscious travellers.

Adding to Guyana’s

triumph, Oneidge Walrond, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, was also awarded the Woman Tourism Minister of the Year for South America.

The PATWA International Travel Awards, in their 24th year, celebrate excellence in the travel and tourism industry. The independent organisation recognises individuals and entities that significantly contribute to tourism promotion, including airlines, hotels,

travel agencies, and government bodies.

This win marks a significant achievement for Guyana’s tourism industry, solidifying its position as a leader in sustainable travel. The country’s dedication to preserving its natural wonders while offering unforgettable experiences for visitors is sure to attract even more eco-tourists in the years to come.



Minister Oneidge Walrond was recognised as the Woman Tourism Minister of the Year – South America

GOVT PUSHES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE COMPLETION

- DEADLINES LOOM FOR ROADS, KEY WHARF UPGRADES

Public Works Minister, Bishop Juan Edghill, is cracking down on stalled infrastructure projects, demanding stricter adherence to deadlines.

outlining a concrete plan to meet the extended deadline. This crucial project aims to alleviate traffic congestion in Georgetown by expanding the road from two to four lanes.

walls remains. Minister Edghill hinted at the possibility of terminating Kalco's contract due to the delays, emphasising the government's commitment to finding a solution for this critical project. "We have to make a decision," Minister Edghill declared during the visit. **"Likely, Kalco will not be able to complete that project. So, we will have to make some decisions."**

stated Minister Edghill. A major obstacle identified during a project inspection was a Digicel pole directly

challenges in the Lamaha extension project and emphasised the government's stance on delays. **"Government's**

Transport and Harbours Department (T&HD) are causing delays. Disrupting these ferry services is not an option. Minister Edghill acknowledged the need for a solution that balances construction progress with T&HD safety. **"Moving the operations from Kingston Goods Wharf to somewhere else would've caused us an excess of \$300 million,"** explained Minister Edghill, during a recent site visit. **"So, we are working out a modality on how we could operate and how the contractor will continue his work."**



Ongoing works on Cemetery Road project

CEMETERY ROAD FACES THREAT OF TERMINATION

The \$475 million Cemetery Road expansion project is at the forefront. Initially slated for completion in July 2023, then revised to January 2024, the project remains unfinished. Minister Edghill visited the site and expressed dissatisfaction with the progress by contractor Avinash Construction and Metal Works Company. He issued a clear ultimatum: complete the project by the end of March or face contract termination. **"Cemetery Road should've been completed,"** Minister Edghill declared during the visit. **"The contractor has not done what he said he would do."**

He demanded a revised work programme

CONVERSATION TREE ROAD: A CONTRACTOR CHANGE LOOMING?

Similar concerns surround the \$1.8 billion Conversation Tree Road project, vital for providing alternative



Ongoing works on the Conversation Tree Road project

routes into the capital. While Lot One, awarded to a Guyanese company, is complete, Lot Two awarded to Kalco Guyana Inc., is significantly behind schedule. Despite reaching 55% completion, substantial work on paving, drainage, and retaining

AUBREY BARKER ROAD EXPANSION TO EXTEND FURTHER

Minister Edghill, announced the extension of the Aubrey Barker Road four-lane expansion project by an additional 1.3 kilometers. This comes

amidst delays in the ongoing project.

"We have tenders out right now for the continuation of another 1.3 kilometres of road to widen Aubrey Barker to four lanes. The current project is taking too long,"

obstructing construction. Despite being informed by the overseeing engineer, Digicel reportedly failed to remove the pole.

"I called Digicel. If they don't move their wires by this afternoon, we will publish a public notice informing the communities that we will have to remove the poles and the wires will be affected and the responsibility will be with Digicel," the Minister emphasised.

In January, the Ministry signed an MOU with utility providers (GWI, GTT, Digicel, GPL, and NDMA) outlining a collaborative approach to prevent delays.

"It's again selfishness, utilities not putting their best foot forward based upon good faith agreement," Minister Edghill pointed out. The Minister highlighted similar

delivery of goods and services to people is priority... We can't keep hearing excuses," he firmly declared.

BALANCING SAFETY AND PROGRESS AT KINGSTON GOODS WHARF

Progress on the upgraded Kingston Goods Wharf, a project to improve travel experiences and accommodate a new ferry, is also facing challenges. While 40% of the infrastructure works are complete, ongoing operations by the



Ongoing works at the Kingston Goods Wharf.

CONSTRUCTION OF THREE ACCESS BRIDGES IN REGION THREE SOON TO BE COMPLETED



Ongoing work at Belle Vue

Bringing much-needed improvements to mobility and access, the construction of three vital bridges in Region Three is nearing its final stages. Minister of Public Works, Bishop

Juan Edghill, recently provided an update on the project.

The access bridges are located in Belle Vue, Canal No. 1, and Canal No. 2. **"In another six weeks, all three**

bridges should be wound up within that timeframe," Minister Edghill stated.

He revealed that works were put on hold due to objections raised by the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) regarding water flow and canal cleaning.

The ministry has since devised a new design to ensure the completion of this critical infrastructure.

Minister Edghill has affirmed his commitment to completing the project within the designated timeframe despite the setbacks.

C & L Contracting is undertaking the project at Canal No. 1 valued at \$171 million. This entails the construction of two bridges; a steel composite bridge and a pre-cast composite bridge.

Similar works are being undertaken at Canal No.2, where a pre-cast composite bridge is being constructed to the tune of \$89.7 million. Rim Construction Inc., is carrying out that project.

At Belle Vue, Hanbel Garnett is also constructing a pre-cast bridge at a cost of \$78.4 million. The contracts

were awarded in May 2023.

Meanwhile, the minister reported that this year major infrastructure works will be rolled out across the country.

He therefore urged contractors to highlight any issues, difficulties, or hindrances to the relevant ministers if they remain unresolved after two weeks.



Ongoing work at Canal No. 1

EAST, WEST RUIMVELDT RESIDENTS EMPOWERED THROUGH \$127M IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTS

Residents of East and West Ruimveldt, Georgetown, have received a significant boost through the awarding of 27 contracts totalling \$127 million. This initiative targets upgrading local infrastructure through projects like drain cleaning, desilting, and road construction, and providing opportunities for young people to contribute productively and gain valuable work experience.

The contract signing ceremony was witnessed by Minister in the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar, and Public Affairs Minister within the Prime Minister's Office, Kwame McCoy. Lazeena Joseph, Tiffany Greenidge, a single parent of four, expressed her

appreciation for the opportunity to provide for her family while contributing to the community's development. **"This will also provide work for me... I can look after my family,"** stated Greenidge, highlighting the economic benefit of the contracts.

Abiola Smith acknowledged the government's dedication to citizens' welfare and the positive impact of these initiatives on national progress. **"I am overwhelmed... I feel proud to uplift my community,"** expressed Smith, emphasising the chance to directly contribute.

Lazeena Joseph, a young resident, highlighted the importance of addressing

drainage issues. **"I am excited... I am helping my community by fixing the roads and cleaning the drains,"** shared Joseph.

A significant portion of the contracts was awarded to women, promoting their active participation in the nation's development. Roynell Berkley stressed the significance of community involvement and the

ability of empowered residents to effectively address local needs. **"It's very nice... the government is giving contracts to the people in the area. We know what our community suffers from, and what it needs so we want to give out good work,"** stated Berkley, underlining the value of local involvement.

Meanwhile, Minister

Indar highlighted the project's alignment with the government's commitment to serving the people. **"We are fulfilling a commitment made by the Vice President, Dr Bharat Jagdeo when he came here on the 19th of February... we are here again and between that time to now, the engineers came and did the assessment of the area. They made the Bill of Quantity and they came up with about 27 contracts or what we call lots,"** the minister posited.

While Minister McCoy emphasised the government's focus on job creation and citizen empowerment. **"We continuously build relationships**

with communities, we continuously invest in our people and empower them by creating jobs and other avenues so that we can set sail conditions for the comfort and the benefit of the people," Minister McCoy expressed.

Both ministers emphasised the ongoing commitment to delivering on the commitments made to the community, creating job opportunities and fostering a sense of ownership among residents in shaping their communities. They encouraged the contractors to deliver high-quality work within the designated timeframe.



Ministers Indar and McCoy with the contractors

ENMORE/FOULIS COMMERCIAL ZONE GEARS UP FOR BUSINESS

Progress is being made on the development of a new industrial and commercial zone at Enmore/Foulis, East Coast Demerara. The project was announced last year by President Ali, and construction is now well underway.

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, recently visited the site for an inspection. **"Infrastructure works are advancing on the imminent industrial and commercial zone,"** he revealed.

The first phase of the project encompasses over 660 acres of land, with a total investment of more than \$4.58



Minister Croal along with engineers inspecting the industrial and commercial zone

billion dedicated to infrastructure development. **"This zone will have about three categories,"** explained Minister Croal. **"You will have heavy industrial, light industrial and commercial activities. This is the first phase that we are**

working on. There are six lots where infrastructure works are being done..." While not all infrastructure works are complete, significant progress has been achieved. **"For the incomplete lots that we have here [six lots],"** Minister

Croal continued, **"all infrastructure works are expected to be completed no later than two months from now. But in the initial stage, we can have access."** Two of the six lots are already over 90% finished, with the overall project at about 60% completion.

The ongoing construction is divided into six lots and includes land clearing, construction of reinforced concrete composite bridges, and the development of 18.9 kilometres of access roads as part of the first phase. The completed zone will feature three primary access roads

to accommodate heavy truck traffic.

This new commercial hub is expected to generate significant economic benefits for the region. **"This area, alone, with the hub and the type of activities that are expected to take place will see thousands of employment opportunities being created for persons in Enmore/Foulis and other communities,"** Minister Croal highlighted.

Several industrial companies have already been allocated land within the zone. **"Persons have already started**

accessing their lands in the Enmore residential housing scheme," Minister Croal disclosed. **"In fact, for those in front that have been allocated, they can now start accessing the area or their lands that have been allocated to them for development."**

The Enmore/Foulis commercial zone project is a welcome development that will create jobs, boost economic activity, and provide essential commercial space in East Coast Demerara.

Good news for children with special needs! An aquatic therapy pool is nearing completion at the Regional Special Education Needs/Disability Diagnostic and Treatment Centre located at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) Turkeyen Campus.

This initiative aims to improve the quality of life for approximately 200 students facing challenges with sensory coordination, muscular strength, social

interaction, and balance and posture (specifically for blind and visually impaired students).

Beneficiaries include students from the Unit for the Blind and Visually Impaired David Rose Special School, Beterverwagting/Quamina Special Unit, Diamond Special Needs School, No. 8 Special

Needs School and users of CPCE's early stimulation services.

This project is a joint effort between the Ministry of Education and donor Teddy Mohamed, who recognised the positive impact aquatic therapy can have on his son with special needs.

The addition of the

Aquatic Therapy Pool complements the concept of related services, aiming to enhance the overall functionality of individuals with special needs.

This development aligns with Guyana's commitment to providing equitable access to educational opportunities for all learners nationwide.



Aquatic Therapy Pool

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL POLICE FORCE TO SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY



President Ali, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces

President Ali, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, in emphasising the critical role of law enforcement, urged the Guyana Police Force (GPF) to become a highly professional institution that safeguards democracy and the rule of law.

"We need to build a highly professional police force so that every citizen can feel safe knowing there are institutions that will not falter," President Ali said at the opening ceremony of the Annual Police Officers' Conference.

The President reminded officers of their oath to uphold

justice, stating, **"You are not based on influence, but it becomes an inherent character of who you are. When you put on this uniform, people must see someone who will defend democracy and the rule of law."**

President Ali acknowledged the challenges of modern policing and stressed the importance of technology in addressing them. He also commended the progress made in the GPF's collaboration with regional and international partners.

"That relationship has expanded greatly,"

he said. **"International accreditation of the Police Force Academy is nearing completion. This is how we can share our prosperity with the region,"** President Ali asserted, highlighting partnerships with the United States, United Kingdom, and India.

While acknowledging achievements, President Ali pointed to the ongoing issue of road fatalities. He emphasised the need for a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders.

"It is unfortunate that you have to find innovative ways of enforcement," President Ali lamented. **"It's within the power of every driver to act and behave in a manner that is befitting of what is expected on the roadways,"** he added.

TOP COP CALLS FOR CONTINUED VIGILANCE AND ADAPTATION

Commissioner of Police (Ag), Clifton Hicken, echoed the need for continued focus and innovation. He highlighted the 2022-2026 Strategic Management Plan as a roadmap for progress.

"Through our

Commissioner Hicken said.

However, he cautioned against complacency, pointing to drug trafficking, cybercrime, and resource constraints as key challenges.

The three-day

Strategic Partnerships," provided a platform for reflection on past achievements, confronting current obstacles, and charting a course for the future. By focusing on vigilance, adaptability, and strategic partnerships,



The Annual Police Officers' Conference

collective efforts, we have strengthened our organisation and enhanced our ability to serve and protect the communities,"

conference, themed "Transformative Unity: Nurturing Trust, Youth Development, Professionalism & Safety Through Competence &

the GPF aims to continue its progress towards building safer communities in Guyana.

GUYANA PRISON SERVICE STRENGTHENS REGIONAL COLLABORATION AT ANNUAL OFFICERS CONFERENCE

- SURINAME AND ST LUCIA PARTICIPATE

The Guyana Prison Service (GPS) hosted its Annual Officers Conference this year, marking a significant step towards enhanced regional collaboration. For the first time, the conference welcomed prison service leaders from St. Lucia and Suriname in person, while others from the region participated virtually.

The conference focused on critical areas, as highlighted by Director of Prisons Nicklon Elliot. **"We are reviewing all of the challenges with regards to case studies, looking at the best practices, [and] how to address those challenges we face,"** he explained. These challenges included adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), preventing escapes, and refining managerial and leadership techniques to create a more effective prison system.

"The conference

brought synergy among the senior officers," Elliot noted. The discussions provided an opportunity for introspection regarding individual and organizational performance,

for inmates as key performance indicators. **"For the year 2023, we would have trained a number of inmates in various skilled areas,"** he said. **"This in itself would have provided them with**

These programmes have demonstrably yielded positive results, with a significant reduction in prisoner-to-prisoner violence.

The conference aligned with broader regional efforts to

management of prisons in the correctional setting," he stated.

Representatives from Suriname and St. Lucia expressed their appreciation for the opportunity

We already made some agreements to facilitate each other, to exchange with each other so we can learn from each other."

Pane emphasised the importance of collaboration, not just within individual countries, but also across borders.

St. Lucia's Christ Felix echoed this sentiment. **"I'm very grateful for the opportunity,"** he said. **"I have seen how the team works for Mr. Elliot and his senior officers. The synergy right there - you cannot do it all alone, you need that team work to get it done."**

The Annual Officers Conference served as a valuable platform for regional collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the development of improved strategies for prison management and rehabilitation.



Christ Felix-Assistant Director For Administration-St Lucia, Nicklon Elliot Director of Prisons-Guyana and Joyce Pane-Afffaisi Commissioner of Prisons-Suriname

emphasising the importance of professionalism and integrity.

Elliot emphasised rehabilitation programmes and training opportunities

the necessary coping skills to help them effectively manage themselves while in prison, and give them the additional coping skills to prevent them from reoffending."

improve security, according to Director Elliot. **"This goes a very far way whereby we could have a greater interaction, looking at the best practices with regards to**

to collaborate. **"It's an advantage to be here,"** stated Suriname's Acting Chief Commissioner of Prison, Joyce Pane. **"One of the things we will do is to work together."**

UG'S SECURITY EXPERTISE RECOGNISED - AWARD PAVES WAY FOR REGIONAL HUB



President Ali addressing the conference

The University of Guyana (UG) is basking in the prestigious 2023 William J. Perry Center Award for Excellence in Security and Defence Education, solidifying its position as a leader in

the field.

The award ceremony, held at the George Walcott Lecture Theatre (GWLT), was graced by prominent figures, including President Ali. Dr. Paloma Mohamed, Vice Chancellor of UG, proudly accepted the honour on behalf of the university's Institute for Human Resiliency, Strategic Security and the Future (IHRSSF).

Highlighting the award's prestige, President Ali stated, **"The Perry Centre is not an ordinary centre... It is a tremendous honour...we must not**

take it lightly at all."

He emphasised the crucial role of security education, underscoring a long-term perspective: **"To deal with this we have to deal with security as a lifelong investment..."**

President Ali acknowledged the collaborative efforts of various entities including the US government through the William J. Perry Center, the Guyana government, UG, and the Guyana Defence Force.

The Guyanese leader expressed the potential for continued collaboration, noting, **"This is the only**

beginning of more partnerships..."

He announced plans to establish a National Defence Institute within UG during the first half of 2024. This institute, modelled after the US National Defense University, will focus on integrating regional leaders in security and defence training. The aim is to attract participation from beyond CARICOM nations, potentially including Brazil and Venezuela.

The institute will address critical security issues like cybersecurity, a growing concern demanding serious

attention, and port security, crucial due to Guyana's evolving economic landscape and integration into global logistics. Other areas of focus include artificial intelligence, digitisation, gang-related terrorism, border patrol, and joint operations training.

President Ali proposed developing a curriculum on hemispheric security for the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) to cultivate interest in security fields among younger generations.

Dr. Paloma Mohamed echoed

the sentiment of a pivotal moment, stating, **"This is not a slight moment...a moment that is to be brushed aside... It is a highly significant moment..."**

Chief of Defence, Brigadier Omar Khan, commended President Ali's vision, highlighting the importance of preparing leaders. **"We all know how imperative it is to have leaders... prepared to address new and emerging situations..."**

NEW TEXTBOOK SERIES LAUNCHED TO BOOST LITERACY, MATH SKILLS AT PRIMARY LEVEL

The Ministry of Education has launched a new primary school textbook series designed to improve literacy, problem-solving abilities, and critical thinking in students.

Speaking at the launch at the Roundhouse in Kingston, Georgetown, Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, highlighted the series' goal of providing **"an inclusive and engaging resource for both teachers and students."**

The "Guyanese in the World" Social Studies series offers a

structured approach, guiding students from understanding family dynamics to recognising the interconnectedness of communities and nations.

The "Mathematics Made Easy" series provides a comprehensive and contextualised approach to learning math, focusing on numbers and operations, patterns and relations, geometry, measurement and data analysis, and probability.

The textbooks were designed to incorporate culturally relevant content and support the

modernisation of the education system.

Minister Manickchand stressed the importance of effective educational delivery alongside investment: **"We have to start seeing better results... We will be measuring on literacy and numeracy."**

Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO) for Literacy, Stembiso Grant, emphasised the books' features that benefit teachers. "While the books consider global needs and trends, the content of each book is

relevant and links to our local context, enhancing its effectiveness in the classroom...The simple

and communicative language, coupled with attractive illustrations, aids in lesson delivery and

student engagement," she pointed out.

Grant further noted the books' flexibility, allowing teachers to adapt the material to meet individual student needs. "The structured revision work and inclusive assessment strategies also empower teachers to monitor students' progress effectively and adjust instruction accordingly," Grant elaborated.

The remaining books in the series, including Science textbooks, are expected to be completed by the end of May.



Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand and students at the launch

GPHC BECOMES GUYANA'S FIRST CERTIFIED KIDNEY TRANSPLANT CENTER

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) has achieved a historic milestone, becoming the first institution in Guyana officially certified as a Kidney Transplant Centre.

This certification signifies a major leap forward in Guyana's medical capabilities, enabling them to perform kidney transplants. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Human Organ and Tissue Transplant Agency (HOATTA), officially bestowed the certification.

"We are happy to have engaged in this

process...verifying that we are meeting all the international benchmarks...", said Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony,

who presented the certification to the city hospital during a simple ceremony at the ministry's head office,



GPHC now certified as Kidney Transplant Centre

emphasising compliance with global standards. Dr Anthony,

Brickdam, Georgetown also underscored the commitment to ethical

and high-quality procedures. **"As we go forward...the public can rest assured that we are adhering to all the best international practices..."**, stressed the Minister.

The establishment of HOATTA in February 2023, through the Human Organ and Tissue Transplant Act 2022, laid the groundwork for this achievement.

Dr. Anthony commended the GPHC team and the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) for their instrumental roles in advancing transplant practices. "By this action, you're setting a bar for

all the hospitals in our country... the same high standards would apply," said Dr Antony.

While acknowledging the need for further development, Dr. Anthony outlined crucial steps such as building local capacity for transplant matching tests (completion by 2024), training personnel and seeking partnerships with countries like Spain and Brazil to facilitate various transplants, and establishing a biobank – discussions are already underway. Legislative Framework and Collaborative Efforts:

Chair of HOATTA,

Dr. Shanti Singh, reiterated the agency's commitment to ensuring accessible and equitable transplant services, adhering to international standards and ethical practices, and continuous progress in policy development, human resource training, and standardised protocols.

"Our mandate is to ensure accessible and equitable transplantation services in Guyana, aligning with international standards and guidelines... emphasising ethical and high-quality practices for donation and transplantation," said Dr Singh, highlighting HOATTA's commitment to ethical and accessible transplant services.

BABU JAAN: GUYANA'S LEADERS PROMOTE COLLABORATION AND NATIONAL COHESION



Babu Jaan has become a symbolic location for remembering Dr. Jagan's life and legacy

President Irfaan Ali delivered a passionate speech at Babu Jaan, highlighting the importance of national unity. He condemned efforts to spread racial division, calling such actions detrimental to

values of the soul of our country and will never allow the evil and dark forces to tamper with the soul of our nation," he asserted. President Ali also addressed alleged

"Only days ago the evil and dark forces tested the souls of our country once more when they tried to steal the elections once again from the People's Progressive Party," he claimed.

President Ali strongly condemned these actions and the opposition party, APNU+AFC. He proposed combating these "enemies" through truth, factual evidence, and community engagement.

President Ali pledged to continue implementing programmes aimed at improving the lives of all Guyanese. "There are still forces out there that believe we don't have the finesse or we don't have the sophistication to stay in government... but what we do every single day is we do what is right for the people of this country," he maintained.

VP JAGDEO HIGHLIGHTS PPP/



Thousands gathered at the commemorative event

the nation's progress. "Anyone who deviates from this principle and anyone who seeks to spread racial division is an enemy of this country and an enemy to themselves," President Ali declared.

He emphasised the significance of preserving Guyana's "soul," which represents its core values and aspirations. He credited the late President, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, for shaping this "soul" and urged its continued protection. "The soul withstanding that test because Dr. Cheddi Jagan, the People's Progressive Party (PPP/C) has in it...citizens who are committed to the fundamental



President Irfaan Ali delivering a passionate speech at Babu Jaan



Vice President and General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party Civic, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

C'S COMMITMENT TO UNITY

Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, Vice President and General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C), also issued a strong message cautioning Guyanese about the opposition's "manipulation tactics and lies" aimed at dividing the nation.

"They [the opposition] kept us enslaved because they touch you in your hearts," Dr. Jagdeo asserted, accusing them of exploiting emotions to overshadow the government's programmes.

He specifically criticised the opposition's alleged use of race as a political weapon. "They say that they're in favour of afro-Guyanese but afro-Guyanese were some of the worst treated people in the five years they were in office," he claimed.

Dr. Jagdeo stressed the PPP's commitment to inclusivity, stating, "if you look at this crowd... all of our people, right across Guyana, in spite of their race, they're benefitting from the PPP."

He emphasised the dangers of misinformation and highlighted the lack of evidence supporting the opposition's corruption claims against the PPP/C.

Dr. Jagdeo concluded by highlighting the PPP's adherence to Dr. Cheddi Jagan's "people-centred philosophy," praising the current president's commitment to this vision.

Babu Jaan serves as the final resting place of Dr. Cheddi Jagan, Guyana's former

president and a revered political figure.

Situated in Port Mourant, Corentyne, Berbice, Guyana, Babu

Dr. Jagan's vision for a prosperous and unified Guyana.

Dr. Jagan was a prominent political figure in Guyana, serving



Thousands gathered at the commemorative event


Jagan has become a symbolic location for remembering Dr. Jagan's life and legacy, as the country's first democratically elected president from 1992 to 1997. He is widely recognised as the "Father of the Nation" due to his contributions to Guyana and his relentless fight for



Babu Jaan has become a symbolic location for remembering Dr. Jagan's life and legacy

Every year, thousands of Guyanese, particularly supporters of the PPP/C which Dr. Jagan founded, participate in a pilgrimage to Babu Jaan to commemorate his death anniversary. These gatherings serve as a powerful symbol of national unity and a platform to reiterate

Guyana's independence from British rule and his unwavering commitment to improving the lives of Guyanese citizens. Dr. Jagan's political ideology emphasised social justice, advocating for the rights of the working class, for women's rights, and promoting racial equality.



The Co-operative Republic of Guyana

DEEDS AND COMMERCIAL REGISTRIES AUTHORITY


INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority invites sealed bids for the following:

- **Procurement of Printers**

1. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedure specified in the Procurement Act 2003.
2. Interested bidders may obtain further information from, inspect the bidding document, and purchase a complete set of bidding documents in soft copy only, at the Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority (*address (1) below*) from March 18th, 2024. Bids can be purchased from 8:30 hours – 15:30 hours, Monday to Thursday and 8:30 hours – 14:30 hours on Fridays.
3. A complete set of the bidding documents (soft copy), in English, may be purchased by interested bidders at *address (1) below* upon payment of a non-refundable fee of \$3,000.00. The method of payment will be cash, or by cheque payable to the **Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority**. All bidders should submit *1 (one) original hardcopy and two electronic copies (flash drive only) with an exact PDF version of the hardcopy to Address (2) below*.
4. **Bids will be opened** in the presence of bidders' representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the *address (2) below* on **11th April 2024 at 09:00 hours**. Late bids or incorrectly labelled bids will be rejected and returned to bidders unopened.

<i>Address (1) - Purchase and Inspection of Document:</i> Accounts Department Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority Lot 1 High & Commerce Streets, Newtown, Georgetown, Guyana.	<i>Address (2) - Submission and Opening of Bids:</i> The Chairman, National Procurement and Tender Administration Board, Ministry of Finance, Main & Urquhart Streets, Georgetown, Guyana.
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The Co-operative Republic of Guyana

DEEDS AND COMMERCIAL REGISTRIES AUTHORITY

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority invites sealed bids for the following:

- **Procurement of Workstation**

1. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedure specified in the Procurement Act 2003.
2. Interested bidders may obtain further information from, inspect the bidding document, and purchase a complete set of bidding documents in soft copy only, at the Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority (*address (1) below*) from March 18th, 2024. Bids can be purchased from 8:30 hours – 15:30 hours, Monday to Thursday and 8:30 hours – 14:30 hours on Fridays.
3. A complete set of the bidding documents (soft copy), in English, may be purchased by interested bidders at *address (1) below* upon payment of a non-refundable fee of \$3,000.00. The method of payment will be cash, or by cheque payable to the **Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority**. All bidders should submit *1 (one) original hardcopy and two electronic copies (flash drive only) with an exact PDF version of the hardcopy to Address (2) below*.
4. **Bids will be opened** in the presence of bidders' representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the *address (2) below* on **11th April 2024 at 09:00 hours**. Late bids or incorrectly labelled bids will be rejected and returned to bidders unopened.

<i>Address (1) - Purchase and Inspection of Document:</i> Accounts Department Deeds & Commercial Registries Authority Lot 1 High & Commerce Streets, Newtown, Georgetown, Guyana.	<i>Address (2) - Submission and Opening of Bids:</i> The Chairman, National Procurement and Tender Administration Board, Ministry of Finance, Main & Urquhart Streets, Georgetown, Guyana.
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Modern Agriculture School coming: Minister

The Government of Guyana through the Ministry of Agriculture has signaled its intention to transform its premiere agricultural learning institution to cater to the advances within the sector.

During the launch of the Empowering Women and Youth Through the Mainstreaming of Climate-Smart Agriculture Technologies programme at the Guyana School of Agriculture's (GSA) Mon Repos campus, Agriculture Minister, Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha disclosed that the government will be partnering with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to make GSA a Center for Excellence.

While addressing the gathering, Minister Mustapha said that the GSA has, over the years, played a very important role in molding agricultural practitioners across the region and that the government was taking the necessary action to further develop the institute to offer additional resources and programmes in that regard.

"Over the years, the Guyana School of Agriculture has played a very important role in developing agriculture not only in Guyana but across the Caribbean. This year, as was announced during the opening of the CARICOM Summit by His Excellency, President Dr. Irfaan Ali, we will be collaborating with IICA to make this institution a center for excellence. We have students coming from across the Caribbean to attend the GSA and study different programmes in agriculture. We'll also be building a FabLab similar to the one at IICA's headquarters in Costa Rica. We are also looking to construct a Situation Room; a data center where we can have real-time



Minister Mustapha and Ambassador Berman at the announcement

data not only for Guyana, but the Caribbean so that we can drive this process forward," Minister Mustapha explained.

Furthermore, he said that the project being launched and the facilities being offered under the project provide a platform for women and youth to not only gain valuable skills and knowledge in climate-smart agricultural technologies but also to become agents of change within their communities.

"By mastering techniques like hydroponics and aquaponics, they will be equipped to cultivate food in a sustainable and efficient manner, even in the face of climate challenges. These cutting-edge technologies are being integrated by the government into the local agriculture system, to increase food production, achieve food security, and reduce our food import bill," the Minister added.

Canadian High Commissioner to

Guyana, H.E. Mark Berman in his remarks said harnessing climate-smart agricultural practices is more and more necessary than ever for a sustainable future and global food security

"Climate change can disrupt food availability, reduce food access, increase food cost, and affect food quality. Changes in precipitation patterns and extreme weather events have led to reduced agricultural productivity which impacts the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. Therefore, harnessing climate-smart agricultural practices is more and more necessary than ever for a sustainable future and global food security. In line with our climate finance commitment for climate-smart agriculture food systems Canada continues to deliver programming that focuses on smallholder farmers especially women and youth to help improve their economic resilience and livelihoods through sustainable practices while fa-

cilitating access to resources," Ambassador Berman said.

UNDP's Resident Representative in Guyana, Mr. Gerardo Noto said the EnGenDER Project has provided important opportunities to advance the regional shared vision on climate change resilience.

"The project made a significant contribution to climate change adaptation through capacity building and the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices incorporating gender equality and human rights through disaster risk reduction and climate response. This particular part of the project was focused on the students of the Guyana School of Agriculture and has helped to introduce the gender-based perspective in climate-smart agriculture. Since the project focuses on both entrepreneurship and income generation it offers another way to advance income-generating opportunities, and spark youth interest," Mr. Noto explained.

The project, which was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Government of Guyana, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Enabling Gender-responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean" (EnGenDER) project, saw the construction of a greenhouse as well as the establishment of an aquaponics system.

Students will be able to utilize climate-smart agricultural techniques such as hydroponics and aquaponics to cultivate leafy vegetables as well as rear various species of fish.

Hospital Training focus on being baby friendly

On Tuesday, the Ministry of Health's Food Policy Division, in partnership with the Pan American Health Organisation/ World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO), inaugurated the second phase of a comprehensive five-day Focal Point Training programme for the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) at Cara Lodge, Georgetown.

Building on this legacy, last year, the Food Policy Division, in collaboration with PAHO/WHO and UNICEF, launched a nationwide Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Programme. This initiative aims to recertify previously certified hospitals as baby-friendly and accredit other maternity and newborn services providers.

The overarching goal of the BFHI project remains steadfast to enhance infant health outcomes and save lives by championing breastfeeding promotion, protection, and support. In this phase, eleven focal points, consisting of proficient health workers specialized in midwifery and affiliated with Public Hospitals, have been identified to undergo training as trainers. These dedi-

cated midwives will serve as the BFHI Focal Points within each region, empowered by the support of Food Policy, PAHO, and UNICEF. They will play a pivotal role in driving the implementation and facilitation of the BFHI programme across all ten regions of Guyana.

These facility recertifications will be done as often as every two years to ensure that continued compliance with the ten steps to successful breastfeeding is maintained.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), spearheaded by PAHO/WHO and UNICEF, was introduced in 1991 and has been instrumental in encouraging healthcare facilities worldwide to adhere to the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. These 10 Steps include:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff
2. Train all healthcare staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of

breastfeeding.

4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half-hour of birth.

5. Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.

6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breastmilk unless medically indicated.

7. Practice rooming in - allow mothers and infants to remain together - 24 hours a day.

8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.

9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called dummies or soothers) to breastfeeding infants.

10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

Dr Ertenisa Hamilton, Director of Family and Primary Health Care Services in her remarks, said that to see more behavioural change among patients more education sessions are needed at an early stage.

"The earlier you start exposing

people to information, the easier it is to have the behavioural change that we're looking for; our antenatal clinics see at least 96% so we have no room to say that there isn't a platform for us to begin the conversation about education on breastfeeding ...", she explained.

Dr Hamilton in closing encouraged the health care workers to develop new approaches and strategies to improve health education at their respective facility. "Education begins within our clinics and it should even begin even before we begin clinics understanding very clearly that there are many entry points within the system where education can begin. The Ministry of Education has their health and family life education programme that is a good entry point for us to begin the conversation about nutrition especially when we look at the context of child survival", she said.

Also present at the workshop were Gillian Trim Director(ag) National Breastfeeding Coordinator Food Policy Division; Ninian Blair - PAHO Consultant; and Neibert Tucker BFHI Coordinator.

BERBICE AND LINDE DIVERSE CULT



This year's Mashramani celebrations in Berbice and Linden, Region 10 were a sight to behold, exceeding all expectations, and etching themselves in the memories of all who participated.

The streets of New Amsterdam, Region Six and Linden, Region 10 were a kaleidoscope of colours, pulsating with the infectious energy of Guyanese music and the irresistible aroma of local delicacies. Berbicians and Lindeners, young and old, came together to

celebrate their nation's unity and resilience, solidifying the spirit of Mashramani. This year's event truly embodied a shared sense of pride in Guyana's diverse cultural tapestry, with a record number of vibrantly

decorated floats and innovative costumes filling the streets. The air thrummed with the infectious rhythms of local music, further amplifying the atmosphere of joy and camaraderie.



CELEBRATE NATION'S CULTURAL TAPESTRY



MASHRAMANI 2024 FLOAT PARADE WINNERS

- Large Band: Muneshwars/GYSBI
- Medium Bands: Ministry of Housing & Water (CHPA)
- Small Bands: Heritage Band
- Semi-Costume Bands (Large): Ministry of Agriculture
- Semi-Costume Bands (Medium): Office of The Prime Minister
- Semi-Costume Bands (Small): Ministry of Labour

CATEGORY STANDOUTS

- Queen/King of the Band: Ministry of Public Works (Olympia Small-Sonaram)
 - Female Individual: Ministry of Public Works (Olympia Small-Sonaram)
 - Male Individual: Ministry of Human Services and Social Security (Maxi Williams)
 - Road March: Melissa 'Vanilla' Roberts
- A complete list of winners can be found on the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport website or social media pages.

INDIVIDUAL



Ministry of Housing & Water – CHPA placed first in the medium band category



The Muneshwars and GYSBI band emerged victorious in the large band category



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99¢ each	6.99 each	5.99 lb	5.99 lb
 <p>Chubby Flavoured Drink 250 ml Bubble Gum ONLY</p>	 <p>Vita Malt Classic 330 ml</p>	 <p>Angostura Chill Lemon Lime Bitters Drink 355 ml</p>	 <p>Willmac Jamaican Bammy 394 g</p>
4/\$1	99¢ each	99¢ each	44¢ ea
 <p>Grace Coconut Milk 400 ml</p>	 <p>Maggi Season Up All Purpose Seasoning 430 g</p>	 <p>Grace Jerk Seasoning Mild ONLY 312 g</p>	 <p>Benjamin's Rose Water 480 ml</p>
2/2.20	7.99 each	2.99 each	3.99 ea
 <p>Hereford Luncheon Meat 340 g</p>	 <p>Sabina Green Pigeon Peas 425 ml</p>	 <p>Mr. Goudas Corn Meal 15 lbs</p>	 <p>Pearl Basmati Rice 8 lbs</p>
1.99 each	1.29 each	9.99 each	6.99 ea
 <p>Sunlight Dishwashing Liquid Lavender ONLY 562 ml</p>	 <p>Strongmor Garbage Bags 40 s</p>	 <p>St. Ives Cranberry Grape Seed Oil Body Lotion 621 ml</p>	 <p>Vaseline Blue Seal Original Petroleum Jelly 250 ml</p>
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ea

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lb

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4 kg Box

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lb as is

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lb as is

Fresh Atlantic Whole Salmon



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lb as is

Fresh Doctor Fish



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lb as is

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Sunday 9 am to 7 pm

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY WITH SUFFERING PEOPLE IN GAZA, HAITI IN RAMADAN MESSAGE

President Ali, issued a message to the nation on the commencement of the holy month of Ramadan, emphasising the importance of reflection, prayer, and global solidarity. President Ali acknowledged the profound meaning of Ramadan within the Islamic faith, highlighting it as a period of **“reflection, prayer, and self-discipline.”** He noted the emphasis on acts of charity, self-improvement, and strengthening family and community bonds during this sacred time. The President expressed deep concern over the ongoing crisis in Gaza, calling the situation a **“grave violation of human rights”** and a **“modern-day crime against humanity.”** He emphasised the significance of Ramadan as a time for demonstrating compassion and urged Guyanese citizens to, **“stand beside those who are suffering and to extend our hands and hearts in support and solidarity with them.”** President Ali

referenced a verse from the Quran (2:177) stressing the importance of righteousness and supporting those in need. He called upon Guyanese citizens to dedicate prayers to those facing hardship, including the people of Gaza and Haiti, and to advocate for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the violence. **“Let us dedicate a portion of our fasting and prayers to all their plights, praying fervently for their safety and well-being...and an end to the violence that has inflicted such immense suffering on innocent lives.”** President Ali concluded his message with well wishes to the Muslim community in Guyana for a blessed Ramadan filled with **“spiritual growth, peace and tranquility.”** He urged citizens to embrace the spirit of Ramadan and **“work towards a better, more just world for all.”**



President Dr Irfaan Ali performed Fajr (an early morning prayer)

GUYANA CELEBRATES DIVERSE CULTURE WITH LAUNCH OF NATIONAL RAMADAN VILLAGE



Launch of Guyana's first National Ramadan Village

G u y a n a ’ s diverse,” Dr. Jagdeo stated, emphasising the importance of recognising this unique aspect of Guyanese society. He underscored the need for peaceful coexistence and collaboration, stating, **“we have to live together, work together and understand each other if we’re going to realise the full potential of our people and our children.”** Dr. Jagdeo

acknowledged the government’s support for cultural groups and religious communities. He highlighted President Ali’s efforts in allowing these groups **“to not just celebrate their own culture, but also allowing them to share diversity with the rest of the nation.”** The National Ramadan Village serves a dual purpose: preserving religious practice and promoting interfaith



Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

understanding. As Dr. Jagdeo stated, **“this event not only allows Muslims to observe their faith together... but also allowing non-Muslims to experience this wonderful religion, Islam.”** The Vice President expressed his hope that this initiative would foster a **“better understanding”** of Islam and dismantle misconceptions surrounding the religion.

Dr. Jagdeo did not shy away from addressing the ongoing conflict in Gaza. **“There is a part of the world, in Gaza, where people are fasting involuntarily,”** he reminded the gathering. He condemned the international community’s inaction, stating, **“How could you not want to ensure that there is a ceasefire now in Gaza?”**

Dr. Jagdeo emphasised the need for a two-state solution to achieve lasting peace in the region. Sheik Moeenul Hack, Director of Education and Dawah of CIOG, emphasised the village’s role in strengthening Guyana’s social fabric. **“This initiative will serve to strengthen the family bond... This national Ramadan village...offers another opportunity to educate the Guyanese community about Islam and its culture,”** Hack remarked.

The village offers a variety of experiences: Educational booths showcasing Islamic garments, literature, and local cuisine, recreational spaces for families and a visually appealing setting with lit minarets, creating a welcoming ambience. The village will be open every weekend during Ramadan.



Launch of Guyana's first National Ramadan Village



Launch of Guyana's first National Ramadan Village



Launch of Guyana's first National Ramadan Village



Launch of Guyana's first National Ramadan Village

Guyana working on laws to manage AI, digitisation

WITH the aim of navigating the intricate nexus of technological advancement and democratic governance, Guyana is working to create a legislative environment to manage Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digitisation.

This is according to Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mr. Hugh Todd, who was at the time addressing the Ministerial Conference which followed the opening of the Third Summit for Democracy in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

“Guyana recognises the transformative potential of AI and digital technology in enhancing the efficacy and efficiency of our democratic institutions... My government is working to create a legislative environment to manage AI and digitisation,” Minister Todd said.

He pointed out that this is in keeping with the vision of the President of Guyana, Dr. Irfaan Ali, who had said that artificial intelligence and digitalisation are critical to competitiveness and sustainability.

In Guyana, AI is a topic of growing importance, with various initiatives and projects underway in the country.

Artificial intelligence is being considered for environmental governance in Guyana, with a focus on water management. The use of AI tools like ChatGPT and Big Data can offer benefits such as improved environmental impact monitoring and decision-making.

The Competition and Consumer Affairs body in Guyana recently launched an AI agent, indicating a growing interest in leveraging AI for consumer-related services.

Additionally, a Guyanese AI system was launched to aid diaspora engagements, showcasing the diverse applications of AI in different sectors. TrueSelph, a pioneering AI project in Guyana, has also gained attention for its innovative approach driven by AI.

While policymakers are working on laws to regularise AI, Todd pointed out that the University of Guyana has also drafted an AI education policy of its own.

Acknowledging the dual nature of AI’s influence on democracies, Minister Todd stressed the importance of balancing opportunities with challenges.

“AI exerts a profound influence on democracies, offering both challenges and opportunities, particularly for small states like Guyana,” he said, adding, “We are equally cognisant of the risks and pitfalls associated with its rapid proliferation.”

He, however, said that the move

towards legislation reflects Guyana’s commitment to addressing the multifaceted implications of AI and digital technology.

“The integration of AI into governmental decision-making processes also poses challenges related to accountability, transparency, and the potential for bias in automated decision-making,” Minister Todd outlined, citing concerns raised by experts in the field.

Additionally, Guyana’s efforts align with global trends and initiatives aimed at harnessing the benefits of AI while mitigating its risks.

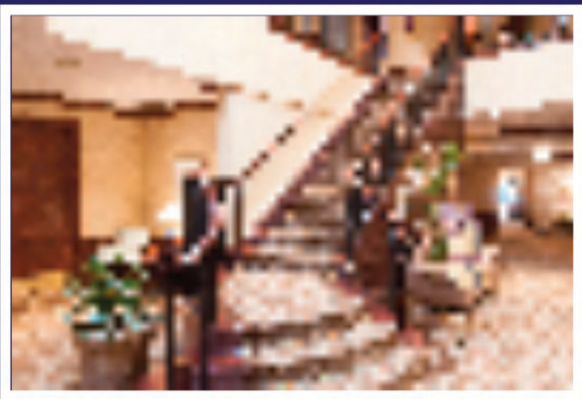


Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mr. Hugh Todd

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HOUSING AND WATER MINISTRY'S NEW HEADQUARTERS ON TRACK FOR YEAR-END COMPLETION

The Ministry of Housing and Water in Guyana is getting a major upgrade, with its new headquarters nearing completion. Minister Colin Croal recently led an inspection visit to the site, offering insights into the project's progress.

Located at Houston, along the Mandela to Eccles Highway, the complex will house both the Ministry's secretariat and the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA). A separate building will serve as the new headquarters for Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI).

Minister Croal emphasised the growing need for a larger and more modern facility: **"Our staff keeps increasing...we are trying to push the contractor to be able to complete in time."**

The five-storey housing ministry building is budgeted at \$741.5 million, while the four-storey GWI building will cost \$562 million.

Construction on the ministry's building has reached the second floor. Minister Croal assured that previously encountered material shortages have been resolved, and



Artist impression of the New Headquarters for the Ministry of Housing and Water and Central Housing and Planning Authority at Houston

construction will resume swiftly.

The building's frame is expected to be finished by mid-2024, with all aspects, including amenities and office

location by the new year [2025]," Minister Croal stated.

GWI CEO Shaik Baksh, added, **"We feel that [the contracted timeframe] will be adequate to complete the building...so that GWI can move very quickly to occupy this building."**

The new headquarters are anticipated to significantly enhance the ministry's operations. Centralising all offices will streamline procedures and improve service delivery. Additionally, individuals seeking services will benefit from a more convenient and efficient one-stop shop.

While the majority of the ministry will relocate to the new complex, the projects department with roughly 200 staff members will remain at the current location.

CH&PA's CEO Sherwyn Greaves noted, **"There wouldn't be this cluster and cramped environment anymore...it will be an added pleasure, of the atmosphere and the ambience that you would get when you visit the institution."**

ONDERNEEMING TO GET NEW \$130 MILLION PRIMARY SCHOOL

The children of school. The contract for the project was signed recently between the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) and Builders Hardware, General Supplies, and Construction.



Minister Manickchand at the construction site of the new St Mary's Secondary School

This initiative directly tackles the issue of unequal access to education, a core objective of BNTF. Funded by the Caribbean Development Bank, the BNTF specifically targets communities like Onderneeming, where students currently face the challenge of travelling significant distances to attend the Suddie Primary School. Additionally, the existing annex school in Little Red Village only caters to a small number of students and up to a certain grade level.

The new school promises a significant improvement in the learning experience for students. The two-storey "U" shaped structure will boast an impressive size, allowing ample space for educational activities. Six classrooms will be on the ground floor and four on the first floor.

Additional amenities include a sick bay, library, lobby area, head teacher's office, staff room, storage room, and washroom facilities. There will be a dedicated courtyard for recreational activities.

The construction of this new school signifies

the government's dedication to ensuring equitable distribution of educational opportunities throughout Guyana.

This project aligns with the government's focus on ensuring equitable access to education throughout Guyana.

It follows the commissioning of the \$585 million Abram Zuil Secondary School last year, further solidifying the government's investment in Region Two's educational infrastructure.

Nationwide efforts are underway to provide a high standard of learning and ensure equitable access to secondary education.

Construction of new secondary schools is planned in Aishalton, Christianburg, Jawalla, Kopinang, and Micobie this year.

Other ongoing projects include the reconstruction of St. Mary's Secondary, Christ Church Secondary, and St. George's High Schools in Georgetown, the construction of a new \$864.7 million Tuschen Secondary School in Region Three, and new secondary schools in Hosororo (Region One) and Kwebanna (Region One).

GUYANA BOOSTING OIL AND GAS MANAGEMENT SKILLS THROUGH TRAINING

Guyana is actively strengthening its capacity to manage its growing oil and gas sector by providing targeted training to key government entities. This initiative highlights the government's commitment to transparency, accountability, and maximising the benefits of this crucial resource.

Staff of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) are receiving training as part of the Whiptail project.

This programme, led by the UK-based consulting firm Bayphase, is supported by the World Bank's Guyana Petroleum Resources Governance and Management Project. **"Similarly to how we have**

been building local capacity in the private sector...we are trying to build capacity within to ensure that we can manage the sector to ensure that there can be full transparency and accountability,"

stated Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat at the kickstart of the training initiative at the ministry's petroleum office, Brickdam, Georgetown.

The sessions will equip ministry personnel with the necessary skills to handle innovative software, and navigate the technical complexities of the Whiptail project.

This enhanced knowledge will be instrumental in analysing technical reports, evaluating development proposals, monitoring production activities, and verifying operator costs. **"This collaboration with Bayphase has significantly strengthened the ministry's capacity to conduct reviews and by extension better manage these aspects of the sector,"** highlighted Minister Bharrat.

The training initiative aligns with the government's broader agenda of fostering a robust, transparent, and efficient oil and gas

industry.

The country has already implemented a series of regulations and reforms to bolster oversight and efficiency, including the Natural Resources Fund (NRF)

a long way, but we know that there is more to do...Now, they are integrally involved in the review and the analysis of the FDP, and I can see that over the last



The kickstart of the training initiative at the ministry's petroleum office, Brickdam, Georgetown.

Act, the Petroleum Activities Act, and the Local Content Act.

"We have come

Bharrat.

The Whiptail project represents ExxonMobil's sixth development venture within the Stabroek Block. The project's field development plan, along with an accompanying environmental impact assessment, was submitted in 2023.

Upon completion, the project is expected to significantly increase Guyana's oil production capacity to approximately 1.3 million barrels per day.

This venture entails drilling 33 to 72 development wells across three primary reservoirs: Whiptail, Pinktail, and Tilapia.

few licences that we have signed, we have gotten better over the years," said Minister

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION GOES DIGITAL

- NEW WEBSITE STREAMLINES JOB APPLICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has taken a major step forward in modernisation with the launch of its official website, <https://ppsc.gov.gy/>. This new platform aims to improve efficiency, transparency, and accessibility for both job seekers and the commission itself.

"This is a pivotal moment in the journey towards modernising and enhancing the efficiency of our public service," said Commission Chairman Maniram Prashad. **"This is a momentous occasion and it marks a significant milestone in our commitment to delivering government services with greater effectiveness."**

The website offers a user-friendly experience for individuals seeking employment or promotions within the public sector. **"We are moving forward on this and so every time we build a platform to connect our country, we are building inclusivity, fairness, transparency, accountability,"** stated Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira.



Members of the Public Service from different regions gathered for the launching of the website

Minister Teixeira emphasised the website's role in promoting transparency. **"The system will ensure fairness and transparency,"** she declared.

Prashad further elaborated, stating, **"With the help of this website and its online application process, you will have an opportunity to observe how this process has been**

streamlined and better," said Minister Teixeira.

The website is expected to contribute to a more qualified and efficient public service. **"I think that this is an important contribution to ensuring that we have a responsive and accountable Public Service Police Service Commission in our country, [and] that we are dedicated to improving [it and] the quality of staff in the public service so that the Permanent Secretary, REO's can do better, perform better, [and] the sectors can perform**

The launch included a demonstration for public service members, showcasing the website's functionalities. Prashad even hinted at future developments, mentioning, **"we might even consider you [Permanent Secretaries and Regional Executive Officers] assisting in the shortlisting of applicants to your agency."**

This initiative reflects Guyana's commitment to modernisation and improving public service delivery.

LABOUR MINISTRY STRENGTHENS WORKER PROTECTION WITH INDUSTRY SEMINAR



64 organisations participated in Labour Ministry's labour laws seminar

The Ministry of Labour hosted a successful seminar focused on work conditions and occupational safety and health (OSH) requirements. Held at the Regency Suites Hotel in Georgetown, the event attracted representatives from 64 organisations, encompassing over 10,500 employees, primarily from the private sector oil and gas industry.

Labour Minister Joseph Hamilton emphasised the importance of these seminars in fostering an understanding of labour regulations among both employers and employees. **"We expect**

that every employee must honour their obligations to their employees," he declared. **"And also, employees must honour their obligations to their employers because many times, the focus is on the employer and what they are not doing."**

Minister Hamilton highlighted the importance of training and development for both parties. **"Workers should ensure that their employers are paying attention to their upward mobility,"** he stated. He also stressed the responsibility of employers to ensure a qualified and well-informed workforce: **"employers also need to ensure that their staff members are not only qualified, but also fully aware of the company's processes."**

The Minister advised workers to always request a copy of their signed contracts. **"This will provide them with information about their responsibilities, salary, and vacation leave, among other concerns,"** he explained.

In a direct message to oil and gas companies, Minister Hamilton asserted, **"We know that you expect to make money on your**

investments. But what we will not allow is for any employer to take advantage of Guyanese people. We will not allow any employer to create new conditions."

The Ministry has plans to launch a public relations and communication programme to promote health and safety beyond the workplace. **"Health and safety are national issues and should be prioritised not only at worksites, but also in persons' homes and other public places,"** Minister Hamilton affirmed.

Chief Labour Officer Dhaneshwar Deonarine reported that this was the second successful seminar hosted by the Ministry. The previous event attracted 252 participants, representing 171 establishments. The Ministry remains committed to ongoing communication and collaboration to ensure compliance with labour laws and OSH requirements. **"We intend that once we share information, we share the practices on industrial relations and also to clarify any questions that you may have,"** Deonarine concluded.

The Ministry of Labour's proactive approach demonstrates its commitment to protecting workers' rights and fostering a safe working environment across all industries in Guyana.

The construction of the new \$286 million Charity Market in Region Two is progressing steadily. The new facility will offer improved working conditions for local vendors.

Construction commenced in January and has made substantial headway. The concrete foundation and steel framework are complete, and the zinc sheet roofing is currently underway.

Minister of Local Government, Sonia Parag, expressed satisfaction during a recent visit, acknowledging the project's swift progress.

"The engineers and contractors are working diligently to complete the project within a specified timeframe," stated Regional Executive Officer, Susanah Saywack in a recent interview.

Builders Hardware, General Supplies, and Construction was awarded the contract in December 2023 for the market, size 152 feet by 164 feet with a capacity to accommodate over 100 vendors.

Installation of vendors' stalls will be the next step. Stall dimensions will be determined in consultation with vendors through the Charity/Urasara Neighbourhood

CHARITY MARKET CONSTRUCTION MOVING APACE - FACILITY TO BENEFIT OVER 100 VENDORS

Democratic Council (NDC).

Construction of washroom facilities will also be facilitated.

This project follows a devastating fire in July 2023 that destroyed a significant portion of the old market.

The government's prompt action ensures a swift reconstruction, allowing vendors to resume their livelihoods.



Work progressing on the market

GUYANA CELEBRATES LITERARY EXCELLENCE AT THE GUYANA PRIZE FOR LITERATURE AWARDS

Guyanese writers and artists revelled in a night of recognition at the prestigious Guyana Prize for Literature Awards, a ceremony that resonated with the power of storytelling and artistic expression.

Hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, the event underscored the government's dedication to cultivating and safeguarding Guyana's vibrant creative tapestry.

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson, reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to both established and emerging talents. **"When it comes to the expression of creativity by words,"** Minister Ramson remarked, **"it really is**

an art form. it is also a space for people, young people, people who are attracted, interested, and have a love for the use of language and a passion for it."

The Awards provided a platform for these passionate individuals to showcase their talents alongside some of the nation's most distinguished literary figures.

The Fiction category enthralled readers with compelling narratives. Michael Jordan's evocative piece, "Girl in the Pink with the Pleated Skirt," secured the top prize. Somnauth Narine's "Rage from the Backwaters" earned a well-deserved second place, while Kennard Ramphal's "Slippery

Ochro" rounded out the top three.

Poetry lovers were treated to a night of moving verses. Ruth Osman's "All Made of Longing" took home third place.

Drama enthusiasts were enthralled by theatrical excellence. Harold Bascom's "Unfounded" claimed the top spot, followed by Shaphan Hestick's "With a Kiss" in second place and Jamal La Rose's "Requiem for the Living" in third place.

The Non-Fiction category honoured Estherine Adams

with first place for her insightful work, "The Few Among the Many: Women's Labour in British Guiana's Jails." Baytoram Ramharack's "A Powerful Indian Voice: Alice Bhagwandai Singh" secured second place, while Nesha Haniff and Joanne Collins Gonsalves shared the third place.

The Youth Awards served as a testament to the burgeoning talent within Guyana's younger generation. Renika Anand's "Lotus Flower Story: The Woman" claimed first place in the Girls Poetry category, while Samir Mohamed's "The Lighthouse at the Bottom of the Sea" shone as the top contender in the Boys Short Story category.

A distinguished

panel of jurors, including luminaries such as Professor Funso Aiyejina, Professor Evelyn O'Callaghan, and Professor David Dabydeen, meticulously evaluated the entries.

The evening also featured a captivating dramatic play, "Father of the Man" by Paloma Mohamed, brought to life by director Simeon Dowding. This initiative exemplifies the government's dedication to fostering Guyana's rich cultural heritage by transforming the works of its creative minds into vibrant experiences.

Prime Minister, Mark Phillips, graced the celebratory event with his presence and personally distributed the prestigious awards to the winning creatives.



Prime Minister, Mark Phillips handing over award to Shaphan A Hestick's brother for dramatic piece 'With A Kiss'

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports recently convened a meeting with Guyanese artistes who participated in the 2024 Mashramani competitions. This gathering focused on gathering feedback and exploring methods to enhance the event while amplifying its impact in showcasing Guyanese culture on a global scale.

Highlighting the future, Minister Charles Ramson Jr. emphasised the creation of **"future initiatives that will help to improve the sessions moving forward."**

GUYANESE MUSICIANS PRAISE GOVT'S PUSH FOR LOCAL TALENT



Guyanese Artist, Omaiah Hall

The artistes expressed their appreciation for the platform provided by the competitions.

Calvin Burnett, the reigning Soca Monarch, praised the competition as a **"launching pad"** for local artistes. He applauded the government's role in supporting local talent. He stated, **"This is like a propeller behind the boat that we had... They are creating**

platforms..."

Gaby Melville who goes by the stage name Gaby Luv extended gratitude to the government for providing a platform for artistes to **"shoot to stardom."**

"Big shout out to the Minister... they gave us an opportunity... they doing a great job," she expressed.

Osei Clark aka OKC, Calypso Monarch,

highlighted the platform's potential for **"international recognition."**

"It gives me exposure... a major, major shout out to the Ministry..." OKC said.

Vicadi Singh, Chutney Monarch acknowledged the government's **"significant efforts and investments"** in supporting local talents. He remarked, **"I have travelled to**

so many countries, and I haven't seen the efforts that those governments put into their talents and for them to be doing that for our talents in our country it's amazing."

The Ministry's commitment to further promoting artistes' work is evident through their pledge to share the performances of each participant on their social media platforms.

BOARD OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING EQUIPS 313 GUYANESE WITH VALUABLE SKILLS

The Board of Industrial Training (BIT) continues to empower Guyanese citizens across the regions by offering free, advanced skills training programmes. Recently, 139 graduates in Georgetown and 174 in Berbice celebrated their achievements after completing courses in in-demand fields like heavy-duty equipment operation, electrical installation, cosmetology, and commercial food preparation.

The training programmes ranged from four to six months in duration, with the heavy-duty equipment operation course taking six months to complete.

Navin Ashley, a graduate of the heavy-duty equipment operation programme, expressed his enthusiasm. **"This course will help me acquire more knowledge about three new machines,"** Ashley stated. **"I'm happy to have this certificate that will structure my life in such a way that my family will benefit."**

Ashley also encouraged young people to take advantage of these valuable opportunities, highlighting the transformative power of education.

Heather Steven, a cosmetology graduate, is eager to leverage

her newfound skills. **"The training was wonderful! I learned so much and filled in the gaps in my knowledge,"** Steven said. **"I plan to use this training to launch my own cosmetology business, allowing me to share my knowledge and help others."**

Steven is committed to continuous learning, expressing her desire to pursue further cosmetology courses in the future.

Nirvanie Nauth, a graduate of the commercial food preparation course, has already translated her skills into a thriving business. **"This**

course filled in the knowledge gaps I had, and I'm so happy to be graduating with this certificate,"

Minister of Labour, Joseph Hamilton,

congratulated the graduates and urged them to continuously enhance their skillsets. **"Individuals like yourselves who**



174 were certified at the BIT's graduation ceremony in Region Six

undergo this training play a crucial role in Guyana's development, particularly in the construction and hospitality sectors," Minister Hamilton remarked.

"To achieve true development, we must revolutionise our education system by placing equal emphasis on technical and vocational training. Without a skilled workforce like yourselves, all the hotels we're building would simply be structures – mortar, brick, and steel. Take advantage of the opportunities the government is creating to equip yourselves with diverse skillsets," he concluded.

BARTICA MINERS AND AUTHORITIES TO COLLABORATE ON ENHANCING SECURITY



President Ali during a brief engagement with miners in the township of Bartica

Following a recent tragedy in the mining community, President Ali has pledged to work with miners in Region Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni) to improve security measures.

met with miners, where safety concerns were raised. “A miner myself, I think we should get better security, especially in the interior area,” one miner said. “Like patrols.” This concern stemmed from the unfortunate deaths of 50-year-old miner Zaheer Mohammed Sheriff and his 26-year-old porter, Donovan Washington, during a robbery in Arimu Backdam.

President Ali acknowledged the miners’ concerns, and outlined a plan for collaboration. “What I will do, I will let

the commissioner come; he’s right here [in Bartica] but he’ll come back and meet with miners and we can discuss some ways in which we can have more collaboration,” he said.

The President also highlighted the importance of miners working together to create a network of support. “One of the weaknesses I find is that all you miners who are mining in a locality when you go into an area, you got to build a network

among yourselves so that you can support each other,” President Ali emphasised.

By working together with miners,

the authorities aim to establish a more secure environment for those working in the industry.



President Ali during a brief engagement with miners in the township of Bartica

GOV’T INVESTING IN MARINE PATROL TO ENHANCE POLICE RESPONSE TIME

President Ali, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, announced significant investments in the Guyana Police Force’s (GPF) marine capabilities which will strengthen law enforcement and improve response times, particularly along the coastline.

“Very shortly, a marine response arm of the Guyana Police Force will be activated,” President Ali declared at the opening of the Annual Police Officers’ Conference.

The government has procured patrol boats specifically designed for coastal operations.

“Two patrol boats have already arrived in the country, while two more are expected to arrive soon,” President Ali confirmed.

This investment reflects a strategic approach to equipping the police force for success. “We have all the rivers. We’re known as the land of many waters,” President Ali pointed out. “We never utilised this asset to support policing.”

The new patrol boats will significantly reduce response times, especially in congested coastal areas. “If you have to go through the

traffic from Stabroek to Diamond, the marine response will be half the time or less the time to establish a presence anywhere on the coast,” President Ali explained.

The government is taking a multi-pronged approach to enhance police effectiveness. “We’re investing in agile units that are equipped with quick-response assets to further improve the response time,” President Ali revealed. These units will also be outfitted with advanced technology to facilitate efficient operations.

President Ali

emphasised the importance of a coordinated approach to security. “A platform is being established to incorporate all stakeholders involved in security,” he announced. This collaborative effort will ensure a safer environment for all Guyanese citizens.

The incorporation of marine patrols, agile response units, and stakeholder collaboration signify the government’s commitment to a more robust and responsive police force in Guyana.



President Ali

MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE TACKLES WILDFIRES IN REGION NINE

The Civil Defence Commission (CDC) is leading a coordinated response alongside the Guyana Fire Service (GFS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Protected Areas Commission (PAC), and regional authorities to extinguish wildfires plaguing parts of Region Nine. This situation arose from the persistent dry weather conditions gripping the country.

Communities in the Rupununi area have sustained structural damage. Kumu and Moco Moco are the most recent areas impacted. A joint team comprised of

personnel from the CDC, GDF Reserves, GFS, and Kumu villagers swiftly responded on March 11, to a large wildfire threatening the Kumu Hydro Installation. Villagers employed their tractor with a water tank, pump, hoses, and buckets to combat the fire. GFS joined the operation, strategically controlling the blaze and preventing further spread. The firefighting effort lasted approximately eight hours.

Fires and smoke continue to affect various areas, including the Kanuku Mountain,

small parts of Lethem and several other areas. Villages affected by



Several communities in the Rupununi area have been hit by these wildfires

smoke from the Kanuku Mountains in Central Rupununi are Nappi, Hiawa, Parishara, Moco Moco, Kumu, Quarrie,

and St. Ignatius. Villages affected in South Central are Sand Creek,

Rupunau, Katoonarib, Sawariwau, and Shiriri. Villages affected in South Pakaraimas are Karasabai, Tiger Pond,

Tipuru, Rukumuta and Yurong Paru. Villages affected in the North are

Annai, Aranaputa, Toka, Wowetta, Crash Water, Surama and Kwatamang. Recent rainfall provided temporary relief, but the situation

remains critical. Several villages have received firefighting equipment and essential supplies. Auxiliary firefighters are assisting the Region Nine Fire Service Station.

The CDC and collaborating agencies continue to monitor the situation.

Meanwhile, smoke originating from wildfires in neighbouring Suriname has reached Region Six. School schedules have been adjusted, and residents are advised to stay vigilant.

The government remains committed to controlling and ultimately extinguishing these wildfires through various agencies.

GUYANA RAMPS UP HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- NEW SCHEMES PLANNED AND EXISTING PROJECTS PROGRESSING

The government is making significant strides in addressing the country's housing needs, with several new initiatives and ongoing projects across various regions. Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, highlighted these developments during recent meetings with residents.

REGION THREE SEES MAJOR INVESTMENTS

Region Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara) is a prime example of the government's focus on housing. Here, Minister Croal emphasised the stark difference between the current administration's efforts and those of the previous government. **"In this short period, for example, we [PPP/C Government] have allocated here in Region Three, over 5,696 lots on the West Coast of Demerara in three years,"** Minister Croal declared, contrasting this with the previous government's allocations over five years.

This focus extends beyond land allocation, with infrastructure

land, the government has introduced a house construction initiative. **"We have also added the construction of houses, so you have land allocation and you have houses. As I speak there are over 400 houses under construction most of which the private sector here, meaning with small contractors, are involved in that construction and we have potential for more,"** Minister Croal revealed. This initiative provides residents with a wider range of options for obtaining housing.

The high demand for land in Region Three has led to the government securing additional land for allocation. **"We have since gotten the approval for the next batch of allocation of lands which will be for Wales... we are targeting 3,000 [house lots] over those two days and the priority is, starting with 2019 and prior,"** Minister Croal announced. This phased approach for the Wales area, with an initial allocation of 3,000 lots out of a designated 5,000, allows for a more manageable rollout.



Minister Croal and team inspecting ongoing works at Five Miles Housing Scheme Phase II

development playing a crucial role. Areas like Edinburgh, Anna Catherina, Cornelia Ida, Stewartville, and Meten-Meer-Zorg are benefiting from this approach. **"Major infrastructure was also carried out in these areas to ensure all the necessary amenities were in place within these communities,"** Minister Croal explained. Recognising the need for more than just

The Ministry of Housing and Water is actively working to address the existing backlog of applications in Region Three, which currently sits at 11,666. Infrastructure development is another key area of focus, with a significant investment of **"\$42 billion for infrastructure development in the region."** Minister Croal elaborated: **"In Region Three, right now \$15 billion**



Ongoing works at Five Miles Housing Scheme Phase II

we are spending on that four-lane road that I alluded to, and then for infrastructure works in the very Leonora, Stewartville, Meten-mer-Zorg, DeKinderen, when you add all of that, \$42 billion in infrastructure work, for housing development right here in Region Three."

Regularisation of existing communities is another priority, with Minister Croal highlighting the recent agreement for Greenwich Park North and ongoing efforts along the Railway Embankment. These initiatives aim to provide residents with secure land ownership.

NEW HOUSING SCHEME FOR MOLESON CREEK

Residents in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) can also look forward to a new housing development in Moleson Creek. **"We are about to acquire lands for the other side at Moleson Creek,"** Minister Croal explained. **"So, there is a housing scheme that we will be starting up this year. Right now, we are finalising the lands from the Guyana**

Lands and Survey Commission (GLSC). We will move to design and tender for the infrastructure work."

The Ministry is collaborating with the GLSC to secure additional land to meet the high demand in the region, where over 5,000 applications are pending.

Minister Croal highlighted the ongoing efforts in the region, including the allocation of 1,336 lots and the construction of 200 houses. These projects include the construction of 100 houses each at Ordnance Fortlands and Hampshire, with a total investment of \$11.3 billion. These developments have also generated positive spin-off effects in the construction, building material supplies, transportation, and service sectors.

The Ministry is also making progress on the Palmyra housing area, where construction of "young professional homes" is underway. Infrastructure works valued at \$1.2 billion are nearing completion, with approximately 65% of road access and drainage networks already finished.

PROGRESS IN BARTICA'S FIVE MILES HOUSING

SCHEME Bartica, Region Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni), is also seeing progress on its Five Miles Housing Scheme Phase II. **"Infrastructure works are moving apace at the new Five Miles Housing Scheme Phase II in Bartica,"** Minister Croal announced. The \$1.87 billion project is on track for completion and will offer over 300 serviced lots.

The new development is designed to be a comprehensive community, featuring residential and commercial lots, a community service

the incoming Aruwai-Teperu Road.

Minister Croal emphasised the government's commitment to addressing the housing backlog throughout Guyana. **"We remain adamant that all housing requests before 2020 will be addressed by the ministry,"** he declared.

Housing affordability remains a priority, with heavily subsidised housing areas and over 30,000 house lots allocated to persons countrywide. The allocation of \$78 billion specifically for housing infrastructure



Residents in Region Three meeting one-on-one with Minister Croal

centre, and recreational spaces. It will also be conveniently located with easy access to transportation via the Bartica/Potaro Road and

development further demonstrates the government's dedication to meeting the needs of all Guyanese citizens.

GUYANA STRENGTHENS FOOD SECURITY WITH FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND GREENHOUSE AT GSA

The Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) received a groundbreaking addition: a greenhouse equipped with both hydroponics and aquaculture facilities. This initiative, funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC), aims to empower women and youth through innovative climate-smart agriculture technologies. The handing-over ceremony was held at the GSA in Mon Repos, East Coast Demerara.

The greenhouse serves as a learning hub for equipping students with skills to combat the challenges posed by climate change, promoting environmentally conscious techniques for long-term food security, and preparing graduates for successful careers in the agricultural sector.

This project is a combined effort of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); through their EnGenDER initiative, which aligns with Guyana's national priorities and international climate agreements, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); providing expertise in agricultural development and Global Affairs Canada (GAC); contributing financial support.

"We will have almost 5,000 plantlets being grown here simultaneously while rearing fish. That is the training



The greenhouse facility at GSA

that we are looking at...," said. Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha. "When we talk about precision agriculture, this is the way to go," he added, emphasising both the project's training

potential and focus on modern agricultural practices.

Canadian High Commissioner, Mark Berman underlined Canada's commitment to supporting climate-smart agriculture and empowering vulnerable groups, stating "Canada continues to deliver programs that focus on smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, to help improve their economic resilience... through sustainable practices."

IICA Representative in Guyana, Wilmot Garnett, stressed the project's focus on practical training and incorporating technology for informed decision-making, noting, "We are training the students because agriculture is a business... This is the place for us to make sure that we do it... We will be testing the water and plants regularly so that the students can understand the importance of precision and agriculture."

The EnGenDER project has been supporting nine Caribbean nations since 2020.

Sophia residents receive chicken to boost poultry rearing. Six families in Sophia, are delighted after receiving a feathery gift to kickstart their poultry rearing businesses. The initiative, aimed at supporting residents' livelihoods, distributed 75 broiler chickens to each family.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond, oversaw the handover ceremony at the Sophia Community Centre. Shelly Hytmiah, one of the grateful recipients, expressed her appreciation. "I feel so good to know that at least I get something," Hytmiah beamed. "It's a nice gesture, I have my grandkids here they love to rear chicks. I want to say thanks to

SOPHIA RESIDENTS RECEIVE CHICKEN TO BOOST POULTRY REARING

everyone who made this possible, and we are going to put our best foot forward."

For single parent Clavreen Jackson, this was a long-awaited opportunity. "I feel great, I feel blessed to know that I was granted such a privilege to mind a large amount of poultry," Jackson expressed. "I'm a single parent and I'm grateful and I give thanks to the government for what it provided for us, and I will try my best to make it expand."

Minister Walrond acknowledged the initiative's significance, highlighting the

government's responsiveness to residents' needs. "It's really a way to empower our women, give you an additional source of income, give you the financial independence that you need once it's handled correctly," she explained.

Looking beyond the initial distribution, Minister Walrond promised continued support. "While we have the GLDA [Guyana Livestock Development Authority] to help us with the rearing knowledge, we are going to help you, because this thing



The six families who benefitted from the chicken distribution

is a business," she noted. "We want for you after this first tranche to be able to make money. Monetise it to be able to buy another 75 more chicks and be able to grow from thereon."

The Minister emphasised the long-term potential of poultry rearing. "Real empowerment comes from managing businesses and many persons have become successful from poultry rearing," Minister Walrond concluded. With this feathered boost and ongoing support, these Sophia residents are well on their way to hatching a brighter future.

REGION TWO FARMERS RECEIVE TOOLS, LIVESTOCK TO BOLSTER AGRI PRODUCTION



Region Two farmers receiving tools, livestock to bolster agriculture production

Essequibo Coast farmers have received a much-needed boost to their agriculture projects thanks to a recent initiative by the Guyana

government. The distribution of a range of farming tools, livestock, and other resources aims to bolster the region's food production systems.

Farmers received a variety of equipment to enhance their operations, including water pumps and sprinklers, knapsack sprayers, tillers, shade house materials, and mist blowers. Livestock such as pigs, breeding bulls, sheep, and black giant chickens were also distributed.

This distribution fulfils a commitment made by Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, during recent meetings with Essequibo Coast farmers. These meetings provided a platform for farmers to voice their concerns and learn about the government's plans to support the agricultural sector through this year's national budget, exceeding \$1 trillion Guyana dollars.

The initiative goes beyond the initial distribution. Director General of the Ministry, Madanlall Ramraj, who oversaw the handover, announced the upcoming arrival of a tractor specifically designated for cash crop farmers to prepare their land. Delivery is expected soon.

Farmers can also look forward to an allocation of 7,000 Brazilian green dwarf coconuts to further expand their production capacity. Additionally, Minister Mustapha plans to inaugurate a new Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) building dedicated to agro-processing.

These strategic interventions highlight the government's commitment to strengthening the agricultural sector in Region Two. By providing essential supplies, equipment, and infrastructure, the government aims to ensure the sustainable growth and prosperity of Essequibo Coast farmers.

The initiative targets communities like Queenstown, Mashabo, Anna Regina, Dartmouth, Siriki, and New Road, empowering these communities to play a vital role in Guyana's agricultural development.

DOCHF0UR RESIDENTS ASSURED OF COMPENSATION FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE DURING ROAD PROJECT

Residents of Dochfour, received a guarantee from the government that damages caused to their homes by the ongoing East Coast Public Road expansion project will be addressed.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, met with residents directly.

He instructed engineers, contractors, and the project consultant **“to conduct a comprehensive survey of all the homes within the work path”** to determine the extent of the damage.

“Before we continue further up, a conditional survey of every home in the work path must be done inside and outside,” Minister Edghill emphasised.

The minister acknowledged the need to prioritise resolving the issue while protecting both residents and the contractor. **“We have to be able to keep the people’s interest protected but at the same time we can’t allow the contractor to be exploited,”** he stated.

An initial assessment by the ministry’s engineers attributed the cracks and broken heavy trucks were work zone overseen by the contractor, China Railway First Group (CRFG).

Three homes located roughly 300 meters outside the work zone will be addressed through the project’s consultant, Beston Consulting Inc.

The ministry will ensure all affected properties are inspected. The completed survey will be available on the ministry’s social media platforms for public transparency.

In cases of unresolved disputes, the government will appoint an independent technical engineer to verify the cause of the damage.

To minimise further issues, Minister Edghill directed CRFG to install speed bumps near the Hope Bridge.

The US \$192 million project, spanning from Annandale to Mahaica, is expected to be completed in May 2025.

The project aims to improve the road’s capacity, safety, and efficiency by widening the lanes, enhancing intersections, and implementing flood mitigation measures.



Minister Edghill inspecting ongoing works in the community of Dochfour

NABACLIS ROAD REHABILITATION TO FOLLOW PHASED APPROACH, MINISTER EDGHILL ASSURES RESIDENTS

Residents of Nabacelis West Sideline Dam received assurances from Public Works Minister, Bishop Juan Edghill, regarding the ongoing road rehabilitation works in their community.

A meeting was held with the residents to address concerns and misconceptions surrounding the project.

The Minister acknowledged a recent community protest sparked by a lack of prior communication. The contractor, following a misunderstanding, had distributed excess crusher-run materials beyond the initial scope of works.

Minister Edghill emphasised: “So, to disabuse anybody’s minds of saying that we are doing half the road is not true.”

He clarified that the project is being executed in phases. **Phase 1** is currently underway by Rowell Jagroop General Construction Services at a cost of \$28.6 million, covering 365 meters, and **Phase 2** is scheduled to address the remaining 600 meters of the road.

The minister confirmed that the contractor would bear the responsibility for the excess crusher-run materials. He further stressed the importance of adhering to the project timeline and scope to facilitate a smooth transition to phase two.

Minister Edghill acknowledged a lapse in communication regarding the project’s details. While an unpriced bill of quantities was delivered and signed by a village representative on February 15, 2024, residents were not fully informed.

“This was supposed to go to the council and the council was supposed to know and notify the residents. What happens at the council, I can’t take responsibility for that, but I am still apologising to the residents,” he stated.

The Minister encouraged residents to actively monitor the construction process and ensure it aligns with the outlined specifications in the bill of quantities.



Ongoing road works in the village of Nabacelis

GOVT HITS PAUSE ON NEW SAND PITS ALONG SOESDYKE/LINDEN HIGHWAY

General Secretary of the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has announced a temporary halt on establishing new private sand pits along the Soesdyke/Linden Highway.

Dr. Jagdeo said, **“The government of Guyana has put a hold on all sand pits on the highway.”**

“We want the land for public use, for housing, and the development of new towns along the highway, etc. So, we can’t wantonly give out.”

Dr. Jagdeo acknowledged the lack of proper documentation for some landholdings along the highway.

The government aims to develop these areas for establishing new housing schemes to address the growing need and allocating land for the large-scale Silica City initiative.

Recognising the surge in construction activity, the government is committed to addressing the increased demand for building materials. Dr. Jagdeo emphasised, **“We intend to open up more public sand pits to lower prices.”**

This aims to regulate the sand market and ensure affordability.

“We have already received approximately 200 applications for sand pits thus far,” Dr. Jagdeo said. This underlines the significant demand for sand.

The government is exploring possibilities for utilising the land for agricultural purposes in addition to public development projects.

Dr. Jagdeo stated, **“We have to have a strategy that brings down the price.”**

This statement reflects the government’s commitment to finding long-term solutions to stabilise sand prices.

This decision prioritises long-term public development while acknowledging the immediate need for affordable building materials.



Heavy equipment at work in an illegal sandpit.

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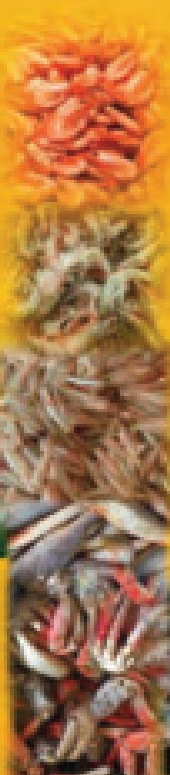
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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE INITIATIVE EXPANDS WITH NEW TRAINING PROGRAMME

The government's Restorative Justice Initiative is gaining traction with the launch of a new training programme for a fresh batch of participants.

The programme, officially launched at the Police Officers' Mess Annex in Georgetown, seeks to equip 23 participants over a two-week period with the skills to effectively engage victims, offenders, and community leaders.

"This training focuses on a more holistic approach to addressing crime," Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, stated during the launch.



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

Upon successful completion of the programme, participants will receive certificates allowing them to apply restorative justice in their communities and social environments.

Attorney General Nandlall emphasised how the programme

aligns with the government's vision for a dynamic justice sector.

"Restorative Justice is one of the many concepts... that demonstrates the government and the judiciary's commitment to ensure that our justice

system continues to incorporate innovations," he highlighted.

The programme delves into the core principles of restorative justice, an alternative approach that prioritises repairing harm and addressing the root cause. This involves the active participation of the victim, the offender, and the community in the process. As the Attorney General pointed out, **"Restorative Justice allows the practitioner to delve deep into the root cause...cure it, so the symptom will not arise."**

COLLABORATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

This training programme is facilitated through a collaborative effort among the government, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB,) and the Canadian High Commission, through the Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism.

The IDB's financial contribution reflects the programme's potential to tackle prison overcrowding. **"It allows for a more targeted approach to minor crimes,"**

the Attorney General explained, **"allowing for healing and accountability."**

This programme follows a similar training launched in January 2024, benefiting 70 individuals, including community leaders and officials within the prison and probation systems.

The initiative has been strategically aligned with the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security's probation department to ensure a wider reach and the programme's availability across the country.

Guyana is preparing to host the highly anticipated Caribbean Investment Forum from July 10 to 12, 2024. This key business event aims to foster collaboration and development within the region.

Slated to be held at the Arthur Chung

Conference Centre (ACCC), the forum will prioritise discussions around exploring innovative practices for long-term agricultural development, addressing the shift towards environmentally responsible economic practices, and enhancing

GUYANA TO HOST CARIBBEAN INVESTMENT FORUM IN JULY

business operations through technology adoption.

Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, Guyana's Chief Investment Officer and Head of the Guyana Office for Investment, emphasised the forum's significance: "This is one of the largest investment forums within the region and has attracted up to 700 investors. We expect a lot of investors coming to see what Guyana is all about."

He stressed the importance of attracting investors with "bankable projects": "...we are pushing the Private

Sector...There is a call out for bankable projects because the investors are coming in looking for these, and we want to showcase what Guyana is all about."

Dr. Ramsaroop outlined Guyana's key priorities, including achieving the "25 by 2025" target, a national initiative aiming to reduce food imports by 25% by the year 2025, and securing cheaper energy by 2025, by facilitating large-scale agro-processing and sustainable farming practices.

Dr. Ramsaroop

also commended the local private sector's achievements. **"We have seen very successful joint ventures... 60% of tourism sector projects, including the construction of hotels like Kings Hotel and Aiden Hotel, are being undertaken by local investors."**

The forum aims to foster partnerships, particularly in the tourism sector, to enhance product offerings and collaboration. It aims at facilitating mutually

beneficial business partnerships between local and international entities.

Dr. Ramsaroop urged the local private sector to **"...get ready for this influx of investors that will come in looking for these 'bankable projects.'"**

Individuals can pre-register online at the official Caribbean Investment Forum website: <https://caricom.org/institutions/caribbean-export-development-agency-caribbean-export/>.



Deodat Maharaj, Executive Director of the Caribbean Export Development Agency Guyana's Chief Investment Officer and Head of the Guyana Office for Investment, Dr Peter Ramsaroop

WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT SUMMIT AIM TO BREAK BARRIERS

The Guyana Police Force, in collaboration with the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) and the Women's Chamber of Commerce, is hosting a landmark summit titled "Inspiring Inclusion, Advancing Women in Law Enforcement."

Deputy Commissioner 'Administrative' Calvin Brutus opened the ceremony at the Officers' Training Centre, Camp Street Georgetown with a speech acknowledging the significant strides made by female officers.

"From the pioneering detectives who shattered glass ceilings with their

relentless pursuit of justice to the patrol officers who bravely serve on the front lines, your dedication

and courage are an inspiration," Brutus remarked.

Brutus highlighted the need to address the

under-representation of women in leadership roles within law enforcement.

"Over the next few

days, we will delve into critical topics that hold the key to unlocking the full potential of women

in law enforcement," he stated. **"We will explore concrete strategies to dismantle**

unconscious bias in promotion processes."

The Deputy Commissioner outlined

specific plans to address the issue: **"Implementing fair and transparent evaluation procedures... and creating opportunities for targeted training programmes focused on leadership development for women."**

Brutus emphasised the potential of technology to empower female officers: **"We need to explore how technology can be incorporated to empower women officers, streamline processes, and enhance overall safety."**

Encouraging women to actively participate in the summit, Brutus urged them to, **"Let your voices be heard**

at these discussions... advocate for change... and never shy away from showcasing your leadership potential."

Brutus concluded by emphasising the crucial role women play in shaping the future of law enforcement: **"Your voices are crucial in shaping a future where women thrive in law enforcement."**

This summit was a crucial step towards achieving greater inclusivity and promoting female leadership within the Guyanese law enforcement sector. By fostering open discussions, implementing targeted strategies, and leveraging technology, the initiative sought to unlock the full potential of women in this vital field.



Deputy Commissioner 'Administrative', Calvin Brutus

GUYANESE CRICKETING HERO SHAMAR JOSEPH NAMED TOURISM AMBASSADOR

The Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) has announced the appointment of renowned Guyanese and West Indies fast bowler, Shamar Joseph, as its official Tourism Ambassador.

This decision follows Joseph's remarkable performance in the recent Australia vs. West Indies Test match, where he secured a historic win for the West Indies with an impressive seven-wicket haul.

"We are incredibly proud to welcome Shamar Joseph as our Tourism Ambassador," stated Kamrul Baksh, Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority.

Baksh further emphasised Joseph's qualities: **"Shamar's dedication, resilience, and passion for his home**

country perfectly align with the values we strive to promote for Guyana."

This collaboration aligns with the GTA's goals of promoting sports tourism.

"More importantly, as we continue to promote sports tourism, this is the perfect opportunity for us to amplify our efforts," Baksh added.

The GTA and Joseph will collaborate on various projects leading up to the highly anticipated ICC Men's T20 cricket matches in Guyana.

These initiatives include awareness sessions with young students, promotional sweepstakes, and familiarisation trips to Guyana's stunning natural attractions.



Shamar Joseph

GOVT COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT OF CRICKET TALENT- PRESIDENT ALI



The memorial T20 match for the late Guyana and West Indies cricketer Clyde Butts

President Ali highlighted the government's commitment to nurturing and developing cricketing talent in the country, and the wider Caribbean

region. He said while investments would focus on cricket, attention will also be paid to multiple sporting disciplines.

Speaking during a memorial T20 match honouring the late

Guyanese and West Indies cricketer Clyde Butts, President Ali pointed to significant government investments in infrastructural development, and the establishment of an academy for talent identification.

A DAY WITH THE LEGENDS

The event, held at the Everest Cricket Club ground under the banner "A Day with the Legends," saw the participation of several former West Indies cricketers, including Sir Clive Lloyd, Roger Harper, and Ramnaresh

Sarwan.

Sarwan captained the Challengers, while Leon Johnson led the Champions.

Batting first, the Challengers set a target of 135 runs, with notable contributions from Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr. (20 runs), Sarwan (18 runs), and President Ali himself (10 runs).

In pursuit of the target, the Champions narrowly missed the mark, ending their innings at 132 runs after the allotted overs.

Former Guyanese and West Indies cricketer Sewnarine Chattergoon top-scored for the Champions with 35 runs, while youngsters Matthew Nandu and



The memorial T20 match for the late Guyana and West Indies cricketer Clyde Butts

Shemroy Barrington chipped in with 21 runs each.

dinner at State House to celebrate the 1983 Shell Shield Harrison Line Cup Champions.

PRESIDENT ALI HONOURS 1983 SHELL SHIELD CHAMPIONS

Following the memorial match, President Ali hosted a

The event saw the participation of legendary figures like Sir Clive Lloyd, Roger Harper, and Faoud Bacchus, who were part of the team that secured Guyana's first double (first-class and 50-over championship titles). The then President of the Guyana Cricket Board, Major General (Retired) Norman McLean, was also present.

Current and past Guyanese cricketing talents, including Ramnaresh Sarwan, Reon King, Leon Johnson, Tagenarine Chanderpaul, Ashmead Nedd, and Matthew Nandu, were also part of the gathering.



The memorial T20 match for the late Guyana and West Indies cricketer Clyde Butts



The memorial T20 match for the late Guyana and West Indies cricketer Clyde Butts



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- Blue Ridge Hotel: A large-scale hotel with 350-500 rooms, conference space, and attractions (completion: 2025).

These projects are part of a government initiative to boost tourism. Five additional hotels, including international brands like Marriott and Hyatt, are also under construction, aiming to meet the rising demand for rooms by 2025.



Kings Hotel and Residence



Blue Ridge Hotel

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