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# Measles cases worry Canada

As measles continues its slow spread across communities in the country, health officials are urging Canadians to stay vigilant and keep their vaccinations up-to-date.

Speaking at a media conference on Monday, Health Minister Mark Holland said he is “deeply concerned” with the global measles outbreak and its potential impact on Canada.

“We’re seeing a lot of illness that was almost rendered non-existent, starting to come back because of vaccine hesitancy,” Holland told reporters. “We have to depoliticize health information. We have to be a society that follows science. ... There should be no partisanship in following the best health advice that’s rooted in science and evidence.”

As of Feb. 17, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) had recorded six domestic measles cases this year. Since the data was recorded, there have been more reported cases in

Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.

Measles is a highly contagious viral infection. Symptoms include a rash, fever, cough and fatigue. It can also lead to serious complications, such as deafness and brain damage, and in some cases can be fatal, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

“The measles virus spreads through the air when a person who is infected breathes, coughs sneezes or talks,” a Health Canada spokesperson told Global News in an email on Friday.

“It may also spread through direct contact with secretions from the nose and throat of a person who is infected or from touching objects with these secretions. Measles is one of the most highly communicable infectious diseases, and can very easily spread to other people if they are susceptible.”

The best protection against measles is vaccination with two doses

of a measles-containing vaccine, which are almost 100 per cent effective at preventing infection.

Last month, Canada’s chief public health officer Dr. Theresa Tam said it was concerned that a global surge in measles activity could lead to more cases of the highly contagious disease in this country. PHAC is strongly advising everyone to check that they’re fully immunized against measles, espe-

cially before travelling.

Both adults and children need to have received two doses of measles vaccine in order to be fully protected. The first dose of a measles-containing vaccine is usually given to children at 12 months of age. The second dose is usually given at 18 months of age or between four and six years of age, PHAC said.



Award-winning Guyanese-Canadian chef Devan Rajkumar has released his new cookbook, Mad Love, with more than 100 inventive recipes that reimagine traditional East and West Indian dishes. Featured recipes include Fried Plantains with Cinnamon and Maple Syrup and Spiced Cauliflower Nachos, made for sharing; a classic Guyanese Peppercot served with a side of homemade Plait Bread, and Saffron Kheer and Garam Masala Pecan Pie — delicious finales to a memorable meal. Chef Dev is based in Toronto. Mad Love is now available for purchase on Amazon.



**GUYANA MINISTERS VISIT CANADA:** Guyana’s Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Vickram Bharrat, M.P. (pictured at the event) and Minister of Homes Affairs, Hon. Robeson Benn, M.P., are facilitating an interactive engagement with Guyanese Diaspora of the Greater Toronto Area of Canada. This engagement aims to share information regarding development of Guyana and to engage with the Diaspora on issues of interest or concern. The event is hosted by the Guyana Consulate Toronto.

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# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 62

## GUYANA AND BRAZIL STRENGTHEN RELATION DURING PRESIDENT LULA'S CARICOM VISIT

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CARICOM LEADERS CHART  
PATH ON KEY ISSUES

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DR. MOHAMED IRFAAN ALI, PRESIDENT OF GUYANA AND CHAIR OF CARICOM, PRESIDED OVER  
THE 46TH REGULAR MEETING OF THE CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IN GUYANA.

# CARICOM LEADERS CHART PATH ON KEY ISSUES



Part of the opening ceremony

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) held its 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in Georgetown, Guyana, from February 25th to 28th, 2024. The meeting, chaired by Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali, addressed various critical issues affecting the region, with focus on collaboration and progress.

Special guests at the conference included Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia Adel Al-Jubeir, Canada's Minister of International Development Ahmed Hussen, United States Representative to the UN, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, and Brazilian President Lula da Silva, demonstrating the region's growing international influence and partnerships.

## FOOD SECURITY

The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the "25 by 2025" initiative, aiming to reduce food imports by 25% within the next year. "We've made so much progress," stated President Ali, expressing confidence in achieving the target. He highlighted data-driven

initiatives and support for struggling nations, and noted collaboration with Canada and Saudi Arabia will further strengthen regional food security efforts. Recognising the region's high food insecurity rate (57%), CARICOM also strives to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030 through comprehensive efforts.

## REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The leaders discussed establishing a comprehensive regional energy plan focusing on self-sufficiency and becoming a net exporter, particularly in renewables. Dr. Ali reported that technical experts are currently working on a report to be presented at the next CARICOM meeting in Grenada.

Additionally, emphasis was placed on eliminating trade barriers within CARICOM. CARICOM's Deputy Secretary General, Dr. Armstrong Alexis, stressed the need for concrete action, noting "policy alone wouldn't cut it."

President Ali urged citizens to put "pressure on the leaders of CARICOM to remove trade barriers." "...

We are too small to be competing against each other," said President Ali

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Recognising their vulnerability, the CARICOM leaders called for fair mechanisms for developing countries to achieve climate goals. President Ali pledged US\$2 million from Guyana's carbon credit sales to the Regional Adaptation Fund and reaffirmed their commitment to the Bridgetown Initiative, advocating for reform of the global financial system to support climate efforts.

ExxonMobil joined the effort with a US\$3 million commitment to regional sustainable projects.

## HAITI CRISIS

Leaders sought a collective solution to the ongoing crisis in Haiti, with President Ali urging all stakeholders to compromise and find lasting solutions. "We are hopeful that ... we will be able to point the Haitian people, the region, and the global community in the direction through which we believe long-lasting solutions can be achieved. This requires all stakeholders in Haiti especially to give a bit, compromise a bit, and to express a collective willingness to achieve the outcomes that we are setting ourselves to achieve," stated President Ali.

## FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Mottley

reported that CARICOM is on track to achieve full free movement of its citizens by March 31, 2024. She explained that two final policy decisions remain before the official signing ceremony. The free movement will allow citizens to stay longer than the current six-month limit. Minimum guarantees for relocated citizens are also being established.

This initiative builds upon the existing Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), which already allows free movement for

concerns regarding their treatment of Haiti, another CARICOM member. Addressing this will be part of the "procedural process," as confirmed by Bahamian Prime Minister Philip Davis, who stated, "Work has been continuing, it came out and we recognise what those issues are."

## STRENGTHENING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Following a meeting between CARICOM and the Brazilian leader,

President da Silva pledged assistance in enhancing local agricultural productivity to address food insecurity, and highlighted the need to tackle inequality as the root cause of the issue.

Brazil also renewed its commitment to the region through contributions to the Caribbean Development Bank. "Our biggest obstacle is the lack of connections... We literally want to pave our way to the Caribbean," stated President Lula, highlighting the need for



Part of the opening ceremony

work and travel within participating countries (excluding Bahamas and Montserrat).

The leaders also discussed simplifying business registration across member states through a "common digital platform."

## MEMBERSHIP OF DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND MARTINIQUE

The Dominican Republic and Martinique have formally requested to join CARICOM as associate members. According to Dr. Ali, procedural work is underway for a potential decision in July. He stated, "The (CARICOM) Secretariat is going to work with both Martinique and the DR to fulfil the procedural aspect of things so by the time we get to July, the full mechanism would be applied and recommendations would come to the Heads."

This follows repeated attempts by the Dominican Republic to join the organisation, with previous discussions suspended in the late 1980s and 2013, partly due to

President Ali announced the operationalisation of the CARICOM-Brazil Joint Commission. The commission will address food, energy, and climate security, building on a 2010 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). President Ali emphasised the importance of this initiative, highlighting the need for more frequent engagements between CARICOM and Brazil. He identified potential areas for collaboration, including leveraging Brazil's expertise in renewable energy and sustainable development, utilising Brazil's knowledge to enhance early warning systems in the Caribbean and supporting the "25 by 2025" agenda, energy security, and technical training.

"With this platform of stronger dialogue in place, we have a unique opportunity to build a stronger future together," said President Ali. "As we grapple with the distinct challenges of climate change, we recognise Brazil's leadership in renewable energy and sustainable development as an invaluable resource," noted President Ali.

improved infrastructure. A Brazil-CARICOM summit will be held before the end of 2024, aiming to strengthen the relationship between the two entities.

## RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

The leaders agree that Sir Clive Lloyd, a legendary West Indies cricketer, will be awarded the Order of Caribbean Community (OCC), the highest regional honour, by CARICOM. This award recognises his exceptional contributions to the Caribbean's social and cultural development. Lloyd is celebrated for leading the West Indies to victory in the first two Cricket World Cups (1975 & 1979) and for captaining the team during their 27-match unbeaten streak.

The 46th CARICOM meeting highlighted the region's commitment to tackling challenges, fostering integration, and achieving sustainable development through collaboration and international partnerships.



Part of the opening ceremony held at the National Cultural Centre

# GUYANA AND BRAZIL STRENGTHEN RELATION DURING PRESIDENT LULA'S CARICOM VISIT

In a visit that underscored closer ties, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva met with his Guyanese counterpart, Mohamed Irfaan Ali, following the 46th Regular Meeting of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government in Georgetown. The two leaders emerged from their discussions with a concrete action plan aimed at deepening bilateral cooperation and addressing key regional and international issues.

A joint communique issued following the meeting noted that both presidents agreed to undertake the following actions aimed at strengthening the bilateral cooperation between Guyana and Brazil:

1. Revival of the established Ministerial Working Groups to further bilateral engagements between the two countries.

2. Greater collaboration in agriculture and food security, through sharing information and best practices, enhanced collaboration between their respective research institutions, and



President Ali and his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

3. The full implementation of the Guyana-Brazil International Road Transport Agreement (IRTA).

4. Encouraging the restoration of air connectivity between the two countries.

5. Advancing the process of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in November 2020 for the Technical Feasibility Studies for the installation of fiber optic link between

Guyana and Brazil.

6. Expanding the provisions of the Partial Scope Agreement.

7. Working towards the full operationalization of the Agreement on Cooperation and Facilitation of Investment.

8. Strengthening the bilateral dialogue and collaboration on frontier, consular and migration issues.

9. Convening of the Guyana/ Brazil Mixed Border Commission with a view to continuing border demarcation

activities between the two countries.

10. Fostering consultations on peace and security, including through their permanent missions to the UN.

11. Exploring a framework of engagement between Brazil and the Caribbean Community that seeks to contribute to enhancing food security in the region and advance the CARICOM Agri-Food Systems Agenda, in line with the recently approved CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and Hunger

Eradication 2030 (FSN CELAC Plan 2030).

12. Promoting South American cooperation initiatives, under the leadership of different countries in the region, open to the participation of all, in the areas of health, family agriculture, environment, infrastructure, energy, digital transformation, defense and security.

The discussions extended to regional and international issues. Both presidents expressed concern about the humanitarian crisis

in Gaza and urged for an immediate ceasefire and renewed peace talks.

They reaffirmed their support for a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and advocated for Palestine's full membership in the UN.

President Ali acknowledged Brazil's leadership on the global stage, particularly its focus on tackling hunger and poverty during its G20 presidency. He expressed Guyana's potential participation in the upcoming Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty. Additionally, he pledged support for Brazil's hosting of COP 30 in 2025.

The Guyana-Brazil meeting signifies a significant step forward in strengthening bilateral relations and fostering collaboration on critical regional and international issues. The established action plan outlines concrete steps to be taken, paving the way for a more prosperous and collaborative future for both nations and the wider Caribbean region.

# GUYANA, BRAZIL AND SURINAME DEEPEN TIES WITH TRILATERAL PARTNERSHIP



Chandrikapersad Santokhi of Suriname

The presidents of Guyana, Brazil, and Suriname met in Georgetown on February 28, marking a significant step towards closer cooperation among the three nations. This trilateral working meeting, held on the sidelines of the CARICOM conference, resulted in a joint declaration outlining key

areas for collaboration. The leaders, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali of Guyana, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, and Chandrikapersad Santokhi of Suriname, emphasised their shared commitment to fostering sustainable development and social justice for their citizens. Recognising their historical ties and shared vision for a

peaceful and integrated Amazon and South America, they pledged to uphold international law and the principles of the United Nations.

## ESTABLISHING TRILATERAL WORKING GROUPS

These groups, focusing on infrastructure, energy, and combating transnational crime, will facilitate the development and implementation of joint initiatives.

## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Priorities include completing the paving of the Linden-Lethem road and exploring the modernisation of the road connecting Amapá, Brazil, to the Guyanese and Surinamese capitals

via French Guiana. Optimising these routes for trade and investment was also highlighted.

## ENERGY COOPERATION

The leaders agreed to deepen discussions on oil and gas, explore sustainable energy options like hydropower and bioenergy, and work towards regional energy security through grid integration.

## COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Recognising the successes of existing security cooperation, the presidents called for intensified collaboration through joint operations, intelligence sharing, and capacity building. They also agreed to explore utilising remote sensing

technology for this purpose.

## MINAMATA CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

All three countries affirmed their commitment to successfully implementing the Minamata Convention, which aims to curb mercury pollution. This trilateral

partnership marks a promising step towards a more unified and prosperous future for Guyana, Brazil, and Suriname. By working together on critical areas like infrastructure, energy, and security, these nations can tackle shared challenges and create opportunities for mutual benefit.



Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil

## PRESIDENT ALI PUSHES FOR DIGITISATION AS KEY TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

President Ali outlined a two-pronged approach to regional development at the 12th Annual Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Consultation with Caribbean Governors which was held at the Marriott Hotel in Kingston, Georgetown on February 24.

President Ali emphasised the importance of digitisation in driving development and achieving regional integration. **"The developing world has not even**



*The XII Annual Inter-American Development Bank consultation with Caribbean Governors*

**caught up with the developed world on industrialisation as yet, and we are now faced with the tremendous investment that is required in**

**digitisation, in AI, and all these things,"** he highlighted.

He called for **"a digital strategy, an AI strategy for this region,"** encompassing e-governance, digital

entrepreneurship, and robust broadband infrastructure.

**"If we are to integrate, that digital platform must be integrated from conceptualisation to implementation. We cannot all operate on a different platform. It will not help integration, so we have to take this very seriously,"** he stressed.

The potential benefits of digitisation are vast, encompassing sectors like healthcare, food security, education, and transportation. Guyana

itself has embarked on this journey through e-governance initiatives.

President Ali also urged the IDB to consider additional measures for fostering Caribbean development, including addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, enhancing social services, strengthening private sector support, and re-evaluating concessional financing based on vulnerability and social infrastructure, not just GDP.

The Guyanese leader also presented

his government's comprehensive development agenda, aiming to position Guyana as a leader in food security, energy security and climate and environmental services. He emphasised the importance of a **"robust and diversified economy"** and achieving **"sustainable, lasting and inclusive economic growth that benefits all,"** and reiterated that **"Guyana's prosperity must lead to the prosperity of the Region."**

## NEW ERA FOR TOURISM TRANSFORMATION

- AS GUYANA, QATAR BREAK GROUND FOR GEORGETOWN SEAFRONT PROJECT

The future of Guyana's tourism industry is gleaming brighter as the government and Qatari investors have officially launched the construction of the Georgetown Seafrost Resort and Convention Center at Carifesta Avenue.

This state-of-the-art facility, hailed as a **"new era of transformation"** by President Ali, promises to revolutionise the sector, attract investment, create jobs, and solidify Guyana's global tourism map position.

**"Since we established a strong focus on the Middle East,"** President Ali

declared, **"we have seen tremendous interest, and Qatar is one of those countries that has shown remarkable speed in expanding this interest into reality."**

This collaboration extends beyond the resort, with plans for a new stadium in Region Three soon to break ground.

Cementing a strengthened relationship with Qatar, the project marks a significant step towards realising the government's vision of a world-class tourism industry. Financed by Qatari company Assets Group Inc., the sprawling

76,000-square-meter development is slated for completion within three years, offering 261 luxurious hotel rooms, 150 modern service apartments, 10 opulent duplex villas, a cutting-edge health club, a world-class convention centre, members' club and retail units, and serene landscaped gardens.

Beyond its economic impact, the project reflects a commitment to eco-friendly tourism. Sustainable design principles will be woven into the construction, while national drainage and sewer system upgrades are planned. Additionally, dedicated **"green spaces"** will be established to preserve

the natural environment. **"Part of what we want to achieve is whilst we have these important massive transformational investments, the essence of our country remains- what we are known for; a country that is naturally beautiful, and green. We want to return our garden city to the status of the garden city,"** the President said.

He emphasised the crucial role of collaboration in achieving this vision. **"All parts of the tourism and hospitality ecosystem need to integrate and work seamlessly for**



*The groundbreaking ceremony for the Georgetown Seafrost Resort and Convention Centre*

**us to build the sector to a world-class standard,"** he declared. Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips; Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr Keith Rowley; Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo; President and Group CEO of Power

International Holding, Ramez Al Khayyat, several government ministers, and members of the diplomatic corps were among those in attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony.

## REGIONAL FERRY SET TO LAUNCH WITHIN THREE MONTHS

- AS GUYANA, QATAR BREAK GROUND FOR GEORGETOWN SEAFRONT PROJECT

The long-awaited regional ferry service connecting Guyana, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago is set to begin operations within

three months, according to President Ali. This exciting development promises to enhance trade relations, advance food security efforts,

and strengthen regional integration.

**"We have launched the first phase of this,"** President Ali announced at the opening ceremony of the XII Annual Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB) consultation with Caribbean Governors. **"In another two, or three months that ferry will begin operations."**

The ferry service, envisioned as a **"coalition of the willing"** among these three nations, aims to address logistical challenges hindering regional trade and food

security. As President Ali emphasised, **"We are not waiting on everyone. Those who are willing to start an innovative project will go ahead, and the others will join when they are ready."**

This news follows a high-level meeting held in Trinidad & Tobago on February 15 to discuss the implementation of the ferry service. The meeting, initiated by President Ali, involved ministers and senior officials from all three participating countries. They focused on establishing a joint company with directors

from each nation to manage the ferry service and ensuring smooth operations while upholding public health, security, and safety standards.

Ministers from all three countries expressed their commitment to implementing the ferry system, aligning with the **"25 by 2025"** initiative aiming to reduce the region's food import bill by 25% within the next year. Difficulty in transporting agricultural goods within CARICOM has been identified as a major hurdle, which the ferry service aims to address.

Key steps outlined during the meeting include forming a joint company to manage the service, and having technical teams from Trinidad & Tobago visiting Guyana and Barbados to assess port infrastructure.

Implementing pre-clearance measures to facilitate smoother movement of goods and people, and finalising pre-clearance procedures within two months, thus paving the way for a swift launch were other crucial agreements coming out of the meeting.



*The high level meeting at the Ministry of Works and Transport in Trinidad, and Tobago*

# IDB INVESTS IN GUYANA'S EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND PRIVATE SECTOR



President Ali with IDB President, Ilan Goldfajn

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group signed six key agreements with Guyana on February 24, aiming to improve the country's education system, strengthen energy reliability, and support private sector development in logistics, tertiary education, and sustainable tourism.

The signings took place during the IDB

Group's XII Annual Consultation with Caribbean Governors of the IDB in Guyana. Guyana's Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance and Public Service Dr. Ashni Singh, and IDB President Ilan Goldfajn signed IDB education and energy agreements and were also joined by IDB Invest

Chief Executive Officer James Scriven in the signing agreements with representatives of Texila American University Guyana, Republic Bank, Muneshwers Limited, Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry and Caribbean Green Building.

**"Today's signings are an important step in our continued collaboration with the government to improve the lives of the Guyanese people. We are confident that these projects will make a difference in improving education conditions, increasing energy reliability and financing sustainable tourism, tertiary education and logistic sectors,"**

President Goldfajn said. The agreements include the US\$150 million Conditional Credit Line for Investment Projects (CCLIP) aiming to transform Guyana's education sector, benefiting nearly 9,000 primary school students. According to the IDB, US\$90 million will be accessible in the first operation. This initial investment will construct six new schools, rehabilitate 19 existing schools, and provide digital devices to students and teachers. While, a US\$5 million investment grant, funded by the Global Partnership of Education (GPE), will strengthen leadership capabilities at the district and school levels, impacting 200

education leaders. The signings also included a US\$26.9 million amendment to strengthen the energy matrix diversification. This will focus on improving the reliability of the electricity supply by replacing and upgrading transmission lines and installing capacitor banks, benefiting over 200,000 people. Meanwhile, the Private sector received US\$33 million in financing. Muneshwers Limited is receiving US\$14 million to support the acquisition of two new gantry cranes and the construction of a logistics warehouse at Port Georgetown, aiming to double the company's cargo handling capacity. Texila American University's US\$9

million investment is IDB Invest's first private-sector education project in the Caribbean, and it will support the expansion of the university's accommodation facilities, with the aim of increasing student enrollment by 73% and graduation rates by 20%. Additionally, the Caribbean Green Building's US\$22 million partnership will support the development of a sustainable mixed-use tourism project featuring a Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, conference facility, and retail in Georgetown. This project aims to generate tourism revenue, create jobs, and strengthen the local value chain.

# U.S DELEGATION ATTENDS CARICOM MEETING, ANNOUNCES NEW SUPPORT FOR CARIBBEAN

High-level United States (US) officials, led by Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield, visited Guyana for the 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Government of CARICOM. During the visit, the U.S. delegation held meetings with various leaders and announced new initiatives to strengthen partnerships with the Caribbean.

The delegation engaged with CARICOM's Council for Foreign and Community Relations, focusing on advancing the U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis (PACC 2030) and addressing regional challenges like food

security and illicit firearms trafficking. They also met with Guyana's President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, to discuss Guyana's priorities as a UN Security Council member, including food insecurity, and reaffirmed the U.S' support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield also met with Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry, emphasising the urgency of a unified approach to address the crisis in Haiti, including deploying a Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) and supporting free and fair elections. The U.S. also announced continued humanitarian, development, and



President Ali held bilateral discussions with a 12-member delegation from the United States at State House

security assistance for Haiti. Meanwhile, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield announced US\$43 million in new funding for climate adaptation and resilience projects in the Caribbean. **This includes US\$5.8 million** to reduce threats to coastal

ecosystems and species, and build the resilience of coastal communities to climate change impacts, **US\$10 million** to improve the capacity and performance of water institutions in Haiti, providing access to safe and reliable water for one million Haitians, particularly during

climate shocks and stresses. **The sum of US\$3 million** will be directed towards the Private Financing Advisory Network (PFAN) to provide business advisory services to help small and medium-sized enterprises prepare for climate-focused investments while **US\$608,000** will be for Deetken Impact, a climate resilience and renewable energy investment firm, to support small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly women-owned businesses. **Additional Initiatives include US\$6.1 million** for the Caribbean Resilient Economies and Sectors

(RESET) programme to reduce barriers to finance and support climate-smart practices in critical sectors, and **US\$1.75 million** to support the development of the CARICOM Development Fund's new Resilience Fund, aiming to raise \$100 million for climate adaptation investments. These efforts contribute to the U.S' commitment as part of the **President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE)** and the **U.S.-Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis 2030 (PACC 2030.)**

# GUYANA WELCOMES NEW DIPLOMATS, EYES INVESTMENT, COLLABORATION WITH IRELAND AND BELGIUM

President Ali received credentials from non-resident ambassadors representing both Ireland and Belgium, signalling Guyana's growing international engagements and pursuit of diverse investment opportunities.

**Ireland: exploring food, energy, and climate security**

Ambassador Fiona Flood presented her

credentials, paving the way for discussions on potential collaboration in key areas like food, energy, and climate security.

President Ali highlighted Guyana's potential to become a global leader in these domains, expressing interest in exploring investment opportunities with Ireland.

Collaboration in healthcare and human resource development were also identified as potential avenues for cooperation.

Both sides emphasised the importance of deepening and expanding bilateral relations, aiming for a "working, active" cooperation agreement that benefits both nations.

**Belgium: strengthening diplomatic ties**

Ambassador Helen De Geest presented her credentials, focusing on further strengthening the existing diplomatic relations between Guyana and Belgium.

Established in 1971, the relationship between the two countries is set to deepen with renewed dialogue and potential

future collaborations.



President Ali greeting Non-Resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Guyana, Her Excellency Helen De Geest

## CANADA AND GUYANA PARTNER ON MAJOR LOAN TO SUPPORT STRONGER SOCIAL SERVICES

Canada and Guyana marked a significant milestone in their relationship with the signing of a CA \$120 million (GY\$18 billion) sovereign loan agreement. This groundbreaking agreement represents a first for Canada in the Western Hemisphere, signifying a new chapter in their collaborative efforts to support social development in Guyana.

The agreement was inked by Guyana's Finance Minister Dr Ashni Singh and Canada's Minister of International Development Ahmed Hussen, at the Residence of the Canadian High Commissioner in Bel Air, Georgetown.

The loan will directly target bolstering social protection programmes managed by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. Key areas of focus include streamlining social service delivery through technological advancements, ensuring financial security for Guyana's senior population, combating gender-based violence and supporting survivors, empowering individuals with disabilities and promoting their inclusion, and addressing human trafficking and protecting vulnerable individuals.

Dr. Singh, expressing Guyana's satisfaction



Dr. Ashni Singh and Minister of International Development, Ahmed Hussen with signed copies of the agreement

with this collaboration, a programme." He stated, "Guyana is proud to be one of the few countries in the world to partner with Canada on such

He further acknowledged the substantial contribution this loan makes in supporting vulnerable groups

amidst Guyana's rapid development.

Hussen noted that the loan agreement is unique as it is tailored to Guyana's specific needs and priorities as such it will directly address the country's development goals and challenges. "It's about protecting the most vulnerable populations... empowering people with disabilities... Our retirees deserve a life of dignity..." he pointed out.

Canadian High Commissioner Mark Berman noted that loan is just the 'tip of the iceberg' in the Canada-Guyana partnership."

He also acknowledged the

collaborative efforts required from both governments and the IDB to ensure the success of this initiative.

This loan agreement signifies a significant Canadian commitment towards supporting social progress in Guyana. By addressing critical areas like social protection and vulnerable populations, this initiative aims to create a more inclusive and equitable society in Guyana. The agreement also paves the way for a strengthened partnership between the two nations, fostering future collaborations for mutual benefit.

The Menstrual Hygiene Initiative, championed by First Lady Arya Ali, has reached a significant milestone, providing access to free sanitary pads for over 32,000 school girls across the country.

This achievement marks a crucial step in the fight against period poverty and its negative impact on girls' education and well-being.

"This guarantees a better education and ultimately a better life for our children, girls in particular," Mrs. Ali said during a presentation event at the Umana Yana in Georgetown. "Having reached this milestone, our attention is shifting to providing coverage

for women."

Launched in 2021, the initiative aims to eradicate period poverty, a widespread issue with detrimental social and economic consequences in vulnerable communities. Period poverty refers to the lack of access to sanitary products, hygiene facilities, education, and proper waste management.

"In Guyana, 84 percent of school girls miss school due to lack of access to sanitary products," Mrs. Ali highlighted, emphasising the critical

need for the programme. "Recognising the effects of period poverty, this initiative was devised to go beyond providing free pads."

Beyond distributing hygiene products, the programme equips girls with crucial knowledge about menstruation and menstrual hygiene. It also tackles the stigma and misconceptions surrounding menstruation, fostering a more informed and empowered environment for young women.

Building upon the success with school-aged

girls, Mrs. Ali announced the programme's expansion to support women in vulnerable areas. "My aim is to gradually expand coverage as more funding becomes available," she stated. "So that we're able to eventually provide full coverage to every woman and girl in Guyana. Ambitious right? I know. But we are halfway there and it is all because of support from our partners."

The programme has garnered significant support, including a



First Lady, Arya Ali addressing the presentation event held at the Umana Yana

\$50 million allocation from the government in 2022 and additional contributions from partners like China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). The presentation event also saw the

participation of First Ladies from CARICOM member states, along with Guyana's ministers of education, local government, human services, and social security.

## GUYANA'S HOTEL BOOM- ROOMS TO INCREASE BY 1,300 BY YEAR END



President Irfaan Ali proudly making the announcement at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Georgetown Seafront Resort and Convention Centre

Over 1,300 "world-class" hotel rooms are set to join Guyana's market by the end of

2024, President Irfaan Ali proudly announced at the groundbreaking ceremony for the

Georgetown Seafront Resort and Convention Centre.

"This reflects our commitment to diversifying capital markets for investment," President Ali declared, highlighting the government's vision.

This surge in new hotels isn't just about numbers; it represents major international brands joining the scene, including Marriott, Hyatt, Hilton, Radisson, and Best Western Hotels.

Aiden Best Western in Georgetown (150

rooms) is opening in June. This hotel will bring modern convenience to the heart of the city.

Four Points Sheraton in Providence (172 rooms) is expanding accommodation options on the East Bank Demerara.

AC Marriott at Ogle (152 rooms) will add stylish comfort by December, perfect for exploring Ogle's attractions.

Hyatt Place at Providence (136 rooms) is situated conveniently

on the East Bank Demerara, and will offer a comfortable stay.

King's Hotel and Residence (60 rooms) is expanding its brand with modern amenities in a central location on the corner of Quamina and Waterloo Streets.

Courtyard by Marriott Hotel at Timehri (US\$20 million investment) is bringing Marriott's signature hospitality to Timehri.

President Ali emphasised global confidence in Guyana's economy. "Investors

span from North America to regional partners, showcasing the diversity of investment coming in. We expect even more announcements by year's end."

This hotel boom aligns with the government's push to expand tourism and cater to a growing influx of visitors. With these developments, the ambitious goal of 2,000 hotel rooms by 2025 seems well within reach.



# GUYANA FORGES NEW TRADE PARTNERSHIPS WITH CHAMBER LAUNCHES

## - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND SURINAME STRENGTHEN TIES

Guyana is witnessing a surge in economic diplomacy with the recent launch of two new Chambers of Commerce: the Dominican Republic Chamber of Commerce (DRCC) and the Suriname-Guyana Chamber of Commerce (SGCC). These initiatives mark a significant step towards strengthening Guyana's business ties with its neighbours and expanding trade opportunities in the region.

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC STRENGTHENS PARTNERSHIPS

The DRCC launch, held at the 2024 Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, signifies the Dominican Republic's commitment to fostering

closer business ties with Guyana. Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, CEO of Go-Invest, and Ernesto Torres-Pereyra, the Dominican Republic's Ambassador to Guyana, officiated at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Ambassador Torres-Pereyra emphasized the chamber's role in building "sturdy bridges" between not just businesses, but also stakeholders and governments. He highlighted President Ali's reciprocal visit to the Dominican Republic, where agreements were signed to boost trade and economic growth.

### GUYANA AND SURINAME FORGE CLOSER ECONOMIC TIES

Meanwhile, the



The launching of the Suriname-Guyana Chamber of Commerce

SGCC launch, held at the Pegasus Hotel, was attended by prominent figures from both countries, including Guyana's Senior Minister of Finance and Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, and Suriname's President, Chandrikapersaud Santokhi.

Dr. Singh stressed the long-standing

economic relationship between Guyana and Suriname, stating, "And so, we really are obviously, logically, and naturally economic partners."

President Santokhi echoed the sentiment, calling for "intensive and increased collaboration" between both countries' business communities.

He pointed to the shared leadership of the two presidents as a "fortunate situation" to support this process.

Both chambers aim to facilitate communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange between businesses in their respective countries. The DRCC focuses on connecting

stakeholders, while the SGCC prioritises workforce development, educational partnerships, and talent pool integration. These initiatives are expected to unlock new trade opportunities and contribute to sustainable economic growth for all parties involved.

The launch of these chambers signifies Guyana's commitment to strengthening regional partnerships and building a brighter economic future for its citizens. As Ambassador Torres-Pereyra aptly stated, "Commerce is a way of showing how we're building bridges," and these new institutions pave the way for a more connected and prosperous future for Guyana and its neighbours.

# GUYANA AND SURINAME GEAR UP FOR BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION, ANTICIPATING ECONOMIC BOOM

Excitement is brewing in Guyana and Suriname as the long-awaited construction of a bridge across the Corentyne River inches closer. This infrastructural development is seen as a catalyst for economic growth, fostering closer business ties between the two neighboring countries.

"The bilateral relationship and the close geographic

proximity that the two countries enjoy will soon be translated into real and demonstrative business and commercial relations," declared Dr. Ashni Singh, Guyana's Senior Minister of Finance and Public Service at a recent engagement.

He envisions a future where Guyanese producers can seamlessly export their goods to

Suriname, just as they would to local markets. "We want them to continue that journey to the Nickerie and Paramaribo Markets, and vice versa," Dr. Singh enthusiastically stated.

Suriname's President, Chandrikapersaud Santokhi, echoes this sentiment, expressing his eagerness to "initiate the first phase of construction"

alongside Guyana's President, Dr. Irfaan Ali. He believes the bridge will be "a vital undertaking" that will significantly boost trade, tourism, and economic activity in both countries.

The project is estimated to cost around US \$611 million, with financing shared by the Guyanese and Surinamese governments. The procurement process is complete, and

construction is expected to begin as soon as the final evaluation is finalised, which, according to Public Works Minister Bishop Juan Edghill, is currently underway.

This bridge represents more than just infrastructure; it symbolises a stronger future for Guyana and Suriname, one built on collaboration and shared prosperity.



Senior Minister of Finance and Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh

# GUYANA PITCHES HOUSING EXPERTISE TO ST. LUCIA, EYES LUCRATIVE PARTNERSHIP



President Ali meeting with the Governor General of Saint Lucia, Errol Charles

President Ali seized the opportunity of St. Lucia's 45th Independence anniversary to propose

a unique partnership. He showcased Guyana's thriving housing programme and expressed his country's

readiness to help St. Lucia tackle its housing deficit.

"Regional leaders are increasingly looking inward to fulfil needs across various sectors," President Ali stated, highlighting the trend of intra-regional trade. "And Guyana's housing drive, a testament to our capacity built in the past three years, presents a promising opportunity."

He elaborated on the existing trade relationship, mentioning, that over the past decade, "Guyana

exported US\$71 million in commodities to St. Lucia, while St. Lucia exported US\$79 million worth of goods to us."

President Ali expressed confidence in Guyana's potential to significantly increase exports to St. Lucia within a shorter timeframe. "Addressing your housing deficit conservatively estimated at 2,500 units in the next three to five years, with low-income homes costing around US\$30,000 each," he explained, "presents

an export potential of US\$75 million in the immediate and medium-term for Guyana."

"The time is ripe to foster an environment conducive to this opportunity," President Ali urged, emphasising the need for collaboration. He highlighted Guyana's ambitious housing programme's success, stating, "We're on track to fulfil our promise of distributing 50,000 house lots in five years, with over 30,000 already allocated."

He further elaborated on Guyana's initiatives, including constructing homes for various income groups, offering steel and cement subsidies, and providing low mortgage rates. These factors, he emphasised, have fueled the sector's remarkable growth.

## NEW DOMINICAN REPUBLIC CONNECTION WILL BOOST TOURISM, BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Minister of Public Works Juan Edghill, at the inaugural ceremony for Sky High Aviation Services' new route connecting Guyana and the Dominican Republic said, the development will provide great opportunities for business, recreation, and other engagements.

This exciting development promises to enhance tourism, facilitate business connections, and unlock new opportunities for both nations.

Sky High will operate convenient Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday flights between Santo Domingo and Georgetown, catering to both business and leisure travellers.

Sky High's extensive network connects Guyana to Miami, Caracas, Aruba, and beyond, expanding travel options.

The "game changer" collaboration, according to Dominican Ambassador Ernesto Torres-Pereyra, "will create more opportunities for engagement and development."

Hoping to replicate the Dominican Republic's 10 million tourist milestone in Guyana, the Ambassador sees this partnership as a key step.

The PPP/C Administration, since returning to office, has been actively attracting new airlines to Guyana. Inter Caribbean, Jet Blue, Fly Always, Suriname Airways, and now Sky High have all joined the growing network.

Direct flights between Guyana and Houston are set to launch in April, adding 700,000



The new routes is being operated by a comfortable Embraer 190 with 97 seats (9 Business Class, 88 Economy Class)

annual seats and fueling further expansion. British Airways' success in transporting 20,000 passengers in its first

year set a positive precedent.

With new airlines, affordable flights, and expanding

accommodation options, the country is poised to take flight as a major Caribbean destination.

## GUYANA AND BVI EYE VISA-FREE TRAVEL

Guyana and the British Virgin Islands (BVI) are in advanced discussions regarding a potential memorandum of understanding (MoU) that could lead to visa-free travel between the two countries.

This news was announced by BVI Premier Dr. Natalio Wheatley during the 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in Guyana.

Dr. Wheatley emphasised the potential for closer economic collaboration, stating, "It only makes sense for us to form stronger



(Second from left) Premier of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Dr Natalio Wheatley

economic ties with these nations, especially when you have a nation like

Guyana which has so many natural resources, benefits, and advantages that

we could benefit from as a territory."

The BVI sees potential benefits in

attracting Guyanese with expertise and resources, while Guyana could benefit from increased tourism and business opportunities.

Dr. Wheatley expressed hope for a swift signing of the MoU to address the visa issue. He said, "We are discussing a memorandum of understanding that hopefully we would want the BVI and Guyana to sign to speak about the type of relationship that we have... So, certainly, as a part of that MoU, we would see that matter being handled quite

speedily."

The discussions are ongoing, with details of the potential agreement still being finalised.

Last July, a BVI delegation led by Deputy Premier Lorna Smith visited Guyana to discuss trade, investment, and collaboration. This visit laid the groundwork for the current discussions.

This potential agreement could bring significant benefits to both nations, fostering closer economic ties, facilitating travel, and strengthening the relationship between the BVI and Guyana.

## INCREASED PASSENGER ARRIVALS AT CJIA MARKS POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY, CARGO BOOMING TOO



CJIA experienced 15 per cent increase in passenger arrivals so far

The Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) is experiencing a significant post-pandemic rebound, with increased passenger

arrivals recorded thus far in 2024, according to Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill.

"I am pleased to

inform you that on the 15th of February 2024, we have had a 15 percent increase in passenger arrival movements," Minister Edghill announced at the inauguration of Sky-High Aviation Services at the CJIA. This surge surpasses not only 2023's, 11% increase, but also pre-pandemic levels, highlighting a remarkable recovery trajectory.

The good news extends beyond passengers. Cargo operations at the CJIA have also seen a notable increase, with a jump of 11,276 tonnes in 2023 compared to 2022. This trend continues in 2024, with a 2% rise in imports

and a whopping 32% increase in exports.

"It is important to note that many countries worldwide are now returning to their pre-pandemic passenger movement," Minister Edghill noted, attributing the success to Guyana's thriving agricultural sector and the leadership of President Ali.

He emphasised that the surge in passenger and cargo movements, coupled with the addition of new airlines and expansion plans, are propelling CJIA towards becoming a key regional transportation hub.

Underlining the government's commitment to CJIA's

development, Minister Edghill announced plans to construct a new "Guyana Shop" showcasing the nation's culture, crafts, and cuisine. Additionally, he revealed the signing

of MOUs with partners for CJIA expansion and the commencement of preparations for Terminal B or Two construction.



Cheddi Jagan International Airport check-in cues.

# 2000 YOUNG GUYANESE TO BENEFIT FROM DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Guyana and Canada have joined forces to launch a groundbreaking initiative, "One Guyana Digital," aimed at empowering Guyanese citizens with the skills needed to thrive in the digital age.

This programme seeks to train 2,000 individuals in full-stack development, equipping them to build and maintain both the front-end and back-end aspects of websites and mobile applications.

This collaborative effort is fueled by a CA\$9.5 million contribution from Canada and a G\$4 billion investment from Guyana.

Each participant will receive comprehensive training valued at CA\$10,000, making this programme accessible to a wider audience.



Some of the persons gathered for the Launch of the One Guyana Digital Initiative

The intensive training programme will span eight months. Falling under the Guyana Online Academy for Learning (GOAL) programme, it will offer participants a mix of live classes with the Toronto Metropolitan University, and self-directed learning materials. Additionally, each student will be provided with a laptop to facilitate their studies.

Graduates will acquire a diverse skillset

encompassing PHP programming, Java Script programming, mobile application development, Python programming, website security, and front-end development.

One Guyana Digital goes beyond just training - it also promises to assist graduates in securing suitable positions within the tech industry. The programme boasts a starting salary of at least CA\$25,000, offering significant earning

potential.

Recognising the evolving nature of the job market, the programme also aims to equip graduates with skills relevant even in the face of advancements like Artificial Intelligence (AI).

President Ali highlighted the programme's swift execution, during the launching ceremony at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. "This is the fastest any international programme has moved from conceptualisation to realisation."

He also emphasised the importance of fostering a work culture, mentioning the government's plan to build dedicated workspaces for graduates. "Young

people, you have an opportunity like never before ... it is yours to cherish and it's yours to accomplish. Many countries would love to have this opportunity. Don't take it for granted, don't take the investment, what would have been an investment of \$4 billion in your education for granted. Take this seriously," the head of state emphasised.

Ahmed Hussien, Canada's Minister of International Development applauded the initiative's commitment to inclusivity, acknowledging the programme's efforts to ensure participation from women and indigenous communities.

Mark Etwaroo, CEO of One Guyana Digital provided encouraging statistics, stating, "60% of those who have already signed up are women and 20% are indigenous people." He also emphasised the programme's commitment to job placement, mentioning partnerships with companies to create employment opportunities for graduates.

Dr. Ashni Singh, Senior Minister of Finance and Public Service underlined the programme's transformative potential, stating, "One Guyana Digital allows for a 'completely new level' of training that will provide near-sourcing jobs."

## GUYANA AND CHINA CELEBRATE YOUTH LEADERSHIP WITH FRIENDSHIP COMPETITION



Head of the Unit of Allied Arts, Nicholas Fraser and Chinese Ambassador to Guyana, Guo Haiyan handing over one of the prizes to a student

The strong bond between Guyana and China was evident as 20 students were awarded prizes for their participation in the third annual Friendship Youth Leadership Competition. This programme, a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Chinese Embassy, exemplifies the growing cultural exchange and shared values between the two nations.

Launched in September 2023, the competition coincided with the 51st anniversary

of diplomatic ties between Guyana and China.

The theme, "170 years of China's contribution to the Guyanese Society", aimed to foster understanding and appreciation for the long-standing partnership.

The competition goes beyond academic excellence, encouraging students to develop leadership skills and engage with their communities.

Projects tackled real-world issues like waste recycling, water purification, and mobile

libraries, showcasing the students' initiative and creativity.

Head of the Unit of Allied Arts, Nicholas Fraser, emphasised the importance of cultural exchange in enriching both nations. "The cultures that we have between the countries are very well intertwined... there is a lot of the Chinese cultures that we have accepted and adopted into our own culture. And so, the exchanges that we have only make us richer," he said.

Chinese Ambassador to Guyana, Guo Haiyan echoed the sentiment, highlighting the strong "blood bond" and "multiculturalism" that bind the two countries. "The multiculturalism in Guyana and the historical link and the blood bond between China and Guyana is very strong. As President Ali said, the Chinese and Guyanese are one family," she said.

## GUYANA PRESENTS WORTHWHILE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL BANKS- FINANCE MINISTER

Guyana's booming economy presents lucrative opportunities for international and regional banks, according to Senior Minister Dr. Ashni Singh. He urged these institutions to explore potential partnerships during his presentation at the Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo 2024.

While local institutions are supportive, Dr. Singh acknowledged their limited capacity in financing large-scale

projects. Dr. Singh emphasised opportunities for international and regional banks to "provide financing for some of these eminent bankable projects," particularly those involving companies contracted by Exxon or its tier-one suppliers.

The government is undertaking significant investments in agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, energy, and housing to diversify the economy and ensure

long-term sustainability beyond the oil sector.

Dr. Singh highlighted the government's goal of laying a "foundation of strong economic growth" by making strategic investments that enhance global competitiveness across various sectors.

Dr. Singh noted the significant increase in lending to the local private sector by multilateral banks like IDB-Invest.

Dr. Singh showcased how the oil and gas industry, coupled with

climate services, has tripled the country's finances, enabling "modernisation" and "transformation in every sector of the economy."

He emphasised Guyana's position as a "premier destination for investment," highlighting its robust economic growth and commitment to responsible fiscal management.

Guyana's economy has witnessed a 30% expansion over the past three years and is

projected to continue growing at an average of 20% in the coming years, Dr. Singh shared.



Citizens Bank Guyana

## NINE NEW MAGISTRATES SWORN IN TO TACKLE CASES BACKLOG

Nine newly appointed magistrates took the oath of office, vowing to serve the people of Guyana and tackle the growing backlog of cases plaguing the legal system.

The ceremony, held in the presence of Prime Minister Mark Phillips, Chief Justice Roxane George, and other dignitaries, marked a significant step towards improving access to justice in the country.

The nine magistrates are Omadatt Chandan, Tameika Clarke, Abigail Gibbs, Tuanna Hardy, Shivani Lalaram, Michelle Mattias, Ravindra Mohabir, Teriq Mohammed and Orinthia Schmidt.

"This is a



Prime Minister, Brigadier Retired Mark Phillips with the nine new magistrates that were sworn in

portfolio that requires objectivity, neutrality," Prime Minister Phillips emphasised, urging the magistrates to uphold the highest standards of fairness and efficiency.

"All are equal in the eyes of the law," he declared, reminding them of their crucial role in ensuring equal treatment for all citizens. Acknowledging public frustration with

the slow pace of the legal system, Prime Minister Phillips expressed hope that the new magistrates would expedite case resolution. "Justice delayed is justice denied," he

stated, highlighting the government's commitment to addressing the issue. "This addition of nine magistrates will bring greater speed to the conclusion of cases," he said optimistically.

Beyond addition of personnel, Prime Minister Phillips outlined other initiatives aimed at boosting efficiency. "Eight magistrate courts are under construction or renovation," he announced, emphasising the expansion of court infrastructure. "These courts will accommodate more than one court at a single location, further streamlining

the process," he explained.

Technological advancements are also on the horizon, with the planned launch of an "e-filing system to allow for the electronic filing of criminal charges and other proceedings." This initiative promises to significantly reduce processing times and expedite legal proceedings.

Attorney General Anil Nandlall, S.C., and other members of the Judicial Service Commission also attended the ceremony, underscoring the collaborative effort to strengthen Guyana's judicial system.

## 30 GDF OFFICERS PROMOTED

The Guyana Defence Force (GDF) has announced the promotion of 30 officers, effective January 1, 2024. The promotions were approved by President and Commander-in-Chief, Dr. Irfaan Ali, in accordance with the Defence Act. These promotions are as follow:

### ARMY PROMOTIONS

- Major Gordon Nedd – Promoted to Acting Lieutenant Colonel
- Majors Raymond Archer, John Mohanlall, and Jose Ferreira – Promoted to Acting



Acting Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Nedd, the most senior Officer among the promoted, receiving his new badges

Lieutenant Colonel  
 • Captain Lloyd Layne – Promoted to Substantive Major  
 • Captains Stephen Castor, Texine Daw, and Kareem Graham – Promoted to Acting Major  
 • Lieutenants

Garvin Douglas, Britany Van Lange, Berachah Garrett, Hanisi Chandler, Travis Marcellino, Brandi Johnson, and Ivor Semple – Promoted to Captain  
 • S e c o n d Lieutenants Joel Harewood, Rawle

Williams, Delmar Headley, Joel Glasgow, Hakeem David, Seanden David-Longe, Delon Abrams, Joshua Ferdinand, and Jeremy Charles – Promoted to Substantive Lieutenant

### COAST GUARD PROMOTIONS

- Lieutenant Commander Adrian McLean – Promoted to Acting Commander
- Lieutenants (CG) Ronald Mc Intyre and Andre Kwang – Promoted to Substantive Lieutenant Commander
- Sub Lieutenant Gerald Gomes – Promoted to Substantive

Lieutenant (CG)  
 • Mid Shipman Jevon Reid – Promoted to Substantive Sub Lieutenant (CG)

### GUYANA NATIONAL RESERVE PROMOTION

- Lieutenant Sando George – Promoted to Substantive Captain

Following the announcements, GDF held a promotion ceremony at Base Camp Ayanganna, where Chief-of-Staff, Brigadier Omar Khan, decorated the newly promoted senior officers with their badges of rank.

Accompanied by their families, the officers were addressed by Brigadier Khan, who emphasised the significance of senior 'officership'.

Brigadier Khan commended the officers for their dedication and urged them to "Wear your ranks not just on your shoulders, but also in your hearts."

Acting Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Nedd, representing the promoted officers, expressed gratitude for the trust placed in them and reaffirmed their commitment to the GDF and Guyana.

## AG CONDEMNS GREEN'S DIVISIVE REMARKS



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, has strongly condemned

remarks made by former politician Hamilton Green at a recent event. Green, a veteran of

the People's National Congress (PNC), expressed his support for electoral fraud, sparking widespread criticism.

Speaking at the LFS Burnham Foundation's 2024 Commemorative Symposium, Green reportedly stated, "It was Burnham's wisdom which got him into office in 1964... And if they say he rigged elections, I say we should keep rigging to save us from these devils, these bastards, these demons that we have."

Burnham, who served as President of Guyana from 1966 to 1980, faced accusations of electoral manipulation

throughout his rule. Green's comments have reignited concerns about divisive political rhetoric, and its potential impact on the country's stability. Attorney General Nandlall denounced Green's statement, calling it a "racist attack against every other ethnic group in this country" and a "clear strike at the heart of democracy, the rule of law, and the soul of Guyana's constitution." He emphasised the nation's constitutional protections against discrimination and equal treatment for all citizens.

F u r t h e r m o r e ,

Nandlall criticised the lack of condemnation from the opposition APNU+AFC coalition, suggesting their silence implies agreement with Green's views.

The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) also expressed strong condemnation of Green's remarks, highlighting their potential to negatively impact the country's business climate. The GCCCI characterised the statements as "reckless" and "deeply concerning," especially in light of Guyana's experience with rigged elections and the associated social

unrest.

Green's comments have reignited discussions about the importance of responsible political discourse and the need to safeguard democratic principles in Guyana. While condemning the divisive rhetoric, the Attorney General's statement underscores the government's commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring equal rights for all citizens.

# GUYANA ENERGY CONFERENCE

## A GLOBAL STAGE FOR GROWTH AND COLLABORATION



President Ali, Prime Minister Brigadier Mark Phillips and other key officials from other countries cutting the ribbon to open the 2024 conference

The 3rd Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, held from February 19-22 at the Guyana Marriott Hotel, brought together international leaders and industry stakeholders to discuss the nation's burgeoning energy sector, and its potential impact on the region and the world.

### KEY THEMES THAT EMERGED DURING THE CONFERENCE

**REGIONAL COLLABORATION**  
President Ali highlighting



President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali

the importance of "regional transportation and collaboration," emphasised projects like the Corentyne River bridge and the road to Northern Brazil as crucial for market access and fulfilling regional energy needs. He stated "Our future depends on reliable, efficient energy. Currently, we do not have this... We do not have the quantum of energy..."

### GUYANA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo addressing concerns about "exploitation in the oil and gas industry," assured the audience that the government is committed to fair partnerships, responsible resource

management, and a "forward-thinking approach" to create economic links and generate revenue streams.

He emphasised that Guyana is working collaboratively with foreign investors, stating, "The oil and gas sector and the foreign investors in



Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

this same area are not robbing the country, we're working in partnerships with these companies."

### GUYANA'S GLOBAL RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley acknowledged Guyana's growing role in the global energy market, and commended its "comprehensive plan" for sustainable development and "cutting-edge, clean energy solutions. He emphasised the importance of "collaboration" to achieve collective goals, stating "Only by working together can we obtain our objectives..."

Bahamian Prime Minister Philip Davis



Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Keith Rowley

pledged his country's support for Guyana's efforts to industrialise its oil and gas sector, despite resistance.

Prime Minister Davis criticised the historical dominance of the oil and gas industry by the "global north" and expressed strong support for Guyana's self-determined development, stating, "We support Guyana in its quest to boldly fuel its industrialisation on its own terms."

Former US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo delivered a virtual address, and praised Guyana's "economic transformation" fueled by oil and gas, stating, "I saw a country that is well-positioned to realise its promise of incredible prosperity and opportunity."

He urged stakeholders to support the country's development as a major energy producer. He highlighted the crucial linkage between "energy security and national prosperity."

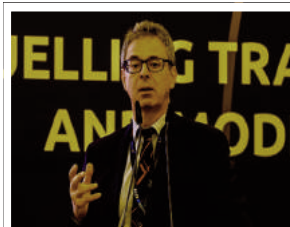
**Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani** also expressed his strong support for Guyana's oil and gas development, emphasising the importance of "collaboration" for "energy security and development."

### GUYANA'S POTENTIAL

Former Colombian Energy Minister Dr. Mauricio Cárdenas recognising Guyana as a top "incremental oil producer" with a unique opportunity due to its "net-negative carbon footprint" potential, predicted that the

country would be a key producer in the future, alongside Brazil and Argentina. He stated, "So, this is your time and you have to take advantage of these opportunities because you never had them before."

**Senior Vice President for Global Energy and International Affairs at S&P Global Commodity Insights** Carlos Pascual, identifying Guyana as one of the top four "incremental oil producers globally," emphasised the significance



Former Minister of Energy and Finance of Colombia, Dr. Mauricio Cárdenas

of understanding geopolitics to unlock its potential. "Understanding it will show you something about the constraints, but it will also show you something about the opportunities as to why Guyana is so important to the world today," he stated.

### LOCAL CONTENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Head of Upstream Americas Research Non-L48, Wood Mackenzie, Mark Oberstoetter** commended Guyana's "robust local content



Head of Upstream Americas (non-L48) Research, Mark Oberstoetter

policy framework," and anticipates a "fruitful economy with Guyanese actively participating in the sector."

He stated, "I'm excited to watch Guyana because I think they are well positioned to tackle it in some unique ways that we have never seen before."

**Former Colombian President Ivan Duque** highlighting Guyana's potential for "environmentally friendly investments," including "voluntary carbon credit markets" and "biodiversity bonds," commended its "expanded low carbon development strategy (LCDS) 2030" and its focus on sustainable practices. He stated, "Every dollar that is invested in Guyana ... is also contributing effectively to environmental preservation."

**CARICOM Secretary-General Dr. Carla Barnett** emphasised the Caribbean Community's focus on building a "sustainable and resilient energy landscape." She stated the region aims to transition towards "renewable energy sources" while acknowledging the importance of "clean

energy infrastructure" and collaboration.

She stressed, "We hold the opportunity right in our hands to influence this energy security conversation taking place across the world."

**Minister of Energy, Trinidad and Tobago Stuart Young** urging developing countries to "unleash the exorbitant potential that they have," emphasised the significance of collaboration among developing nations like Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago to influence global energy security. He stated, "We hold the opportunity right in our hands to influence this energy security conversation taking place across the world."

### EXXONMOBIL'S COMMITMENT

**ExxonMobil's Vice President, Liam Mallon**, highlighting their commitment to Guyana's long-term development, emphasised their focus on "building a sustainable future beyond oil and gas" through initiatives like the Greater Guyana Initiative and training programmes. He stated, "we will continue to develop Guyana's financial, human and energy resources providing truly sustainable benefits for generations to come."

The Guyana Energy Conference showcased the country's ambitious plans and its potential as a key player in the global energy landscape.



A section of the gathering at the conference



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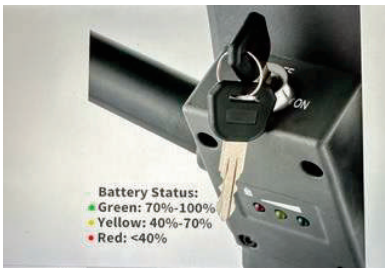


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# Be aware of HPV: Health Minister warns of dangers of cancerous virus

*Message from Hon. Minister Dr Frank Anthony, Minister of Health*

Today, Guyana is joining the rest of the world in observing International HPV Awareness Day 2024, commemorated annually on March 4th. This day is dedicated to raising awareness about the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). There are more than 200 types of HPVs, which can infect humans. This virus can cause various health issues, such as cervical cancer, genital warts, skin warts, and other types of cancer.

People can get infected with HPV through sexual activities. Individuals who have had multiple sexual partners have an increased likelihood of contracting a Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection. HPV can often go unnoticed, with many people who have the infection being unaware of it, leading to an increased risk of unintentionally spreading the virus to their partners.

It's important to note that individuals who have a long-lasting HPV infection are at a higher risk of developing other health problems. Different types of HPV virus can lead to different complications, some of which can be severe. For instance, an HPV infection in the genitals can cause cancer of the cervix, vagina, or penis, whereas certain types of HPV can cause genital warts. Moreover, an HPV infection around the anus can lead to anal cancer, while an HPV infection in the mouth and throat can cause cancer of the mouth and throat. Importantly, these complications typically occur several years after the initial infection.

It is possible to test for certain types of HPV, but not all of them. There are several screening tests that women can take to detect HPV infections, including Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA), Pap Smears, and HPV tests. The screening tests are gen-



Guyana Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony

erally recommended based on your age and the results of your previous tests.

- If you are between the ages of 21 and 29, you should have a Pap test every three years. Alternatively, if your doctor recommends HPV testing, you should have a test every five years, starting at age 25.

- If you are 30 or older, you can have a Pap test every three years. Other options include an HPV test every five years or a combination of Pap and HPV tests every five years.

- If you are 65 years of age or older, you may no longer require Pap tests if you have met the following cri-

teria:

- You have undergone regular Pap tests until you turned 65.

- You have had three consecutive normal Pap tests or two normal combinations of Pap and HPV tests in the past ten years, provided that the most recent test was within the last five years.

- You do not have any other medical conditions that may weaken your immune system, such as HIV or taking certain medications.

We have introduced HPV testing in the public sector. By the end of the year, it will be widely available in all

our regional hospitals.

The best way to protect against HPV is by getting the HPV vaccine. The vaccine is ideal for children aged 9 to 15 but can also be given to individuals aged 16 to 45. The HPV vaccine is highly effective in preventing the types of HPV infections that can lead to cervical and vaginal cancer. Additionally, it can also lower the risk of other types of cancer. This vaccine can also prevent the types of HPV that cause genital warts. This year the Ministry of Health will intensify its efforts to increase vaccination coverage for children between the ages 9 to 15 and for women 16 to 45. We are confident with increased HPV vaccination coverage; we will be able to protect the Guyanese population against HPV infection and the cancers that they cause.

By spreading awareness and promoting preventive measures, we can protect ourselves and our loved ones from HPV-related diseases. Let's encourage everyone to get vaccinated, practice safe sex, and attend regular screenings. Together, we can reduce the burden of HPV-related diseases and improve the health and well-being of our communities.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to public health and collective action. We must stand united in our resolve to build a healthier and more resilient society for generations to come. Every one of us has a civil responsibility to champion the cause of vaccination and advocate for the well-being of our communities.

On this International HPV Awareness Day, let us renew our commitment, improve our efforts, and forge ahead with unwavering determination to make HPV vaccination our prevention strategy. We can and will make a difference if we work together.

## Start of electoral fraud trial delayed again

THE start of the trial for those accused of electoral fraud has been put off again, despite the prosecution having witnesses in court on Monday who were ready to testify.

This latest development was due to defence attorney Nigel Hughes's impromptu request for the Guyana Elections Commission's (GECOM) minute books and decision-making documentation.

People's National Congress/Reform (PNC/R) activist Carol Smith-Joseph; former Health Minister under the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance for Change (APNU+AFC) government, Volda Lawrence; former Chief Elections Officer (CEO) Keith Lowenfield; former Deputy CEO Roxanne Myers; former District Four (Demerara-Mahaica) Returning Officer Clairmont Mingo; and GECOM employees Shefern February, Enrique Livan, Denise

Babb-Cummings, and Michelle Miller are accused of a number of offences, including misconduct in public office, uttering forged documents, and plotting to deceive the electors of Guyana by declaring a false account of votes.

It is alleged that the defendants inflated or facilitated the inflation of results for Region Four, the country's largest voting district, to give the APNU+AFC coalition a majority win at the March 2020 elections, when, in fact, the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) had won by over 15,000 votes.

All the defendants are on cash bail pending the hearing and determination of their matters.

Hughes' request has caused another delay in the trial, which was scheduled to begin on Monday before Senior Magistrate Leron Daly in the Georgetown Magistrate's Court.

Hughes submitted that even though

these records are essential to support the case of his clients—especially Lowenfield, Myers, and Mingo—GECOM is not allowed to disclose them according to Section 140 (2) of the Representation of the People Act (RoPA). Therein reads: "No evidence of any deliberations of the Elections Commission or communications between members of the Commission regarding its business shall be admissible in court."

He pointed out that this prohibition goes against Article 144 of the Guyana Constitution, which states that every person is entitled to a fair trial within a reasonable amount of time and to all the resources necessary to question witnesses on their own or with the assistance of a counsel.

He so contended that RoPA's Section 140 (2) is unconstitutional and asked Magistrate Daly to forward this matter to the Chief Justice for a defini-

tive decision.

His contention is that the trio's fundamental right to a fair trial is "impaired" by Section 140 (2) of RoPA.

The Constitution is the supreme law of Guyana and, if any other law is inconsistent with it, that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

Hughes added that Mingo, Myers, and Lowenfield were "directed" to carry out specific decisions made by GECOM, such as "posting of results on spreadsheets."

He stated that these records are required for cross-examination in the event he or other defence lawyers wish to refute the testimony of the GECOM commissioners and GECOM Chairperson Justice (ret'd) Claudette Singh, who are scheduled to testify on behalf of the prosecution.

# MASHRAMANI LIVE - A CELEBRATION OF GUYANA



This year's Mashramani truly lived up to its name, as Guyana's streets erupted in a vibrant display of culture and national pride. Hundreds of citizens, revellers, tourists, cabinet members, and even overseas based Guyanese joined the festivities, creating a kaleidoscope of colours, costumes,

and music. President Ali himself joined the revelry, walking among the crowds and interacting with participants in the dazzling costume and float parade. He, like everyone else who braved the streets, was captivated by the spectacle of Guyanese creativity and cultural expression.

This year's celebration, held under the theme "Celebrating Our People and Our Prosperity," served as a powerful reminder of Guyana's resilience, its welcoming nature, and the vibrant spirit of its people. Spectators and officials alike lauded Mashramani as a "beautiful event," showcasing the best of

Guyanese culture, art, and style. Mashramani meaning "Celebration after hard work" remains a pivotal event in Guyana's annual calendar, serving as a vibrant celebration of the country's rich heritage, its diverse population, and its unwavering spirit.





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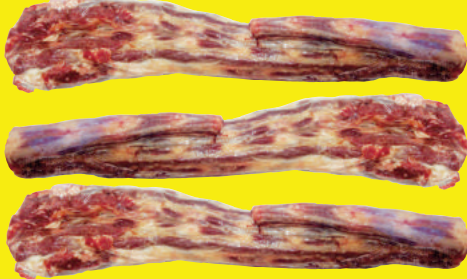


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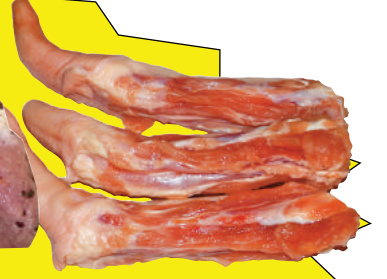
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Sunday 9 am to 7 pm

# PRESIDENT ALI URGES GUYANESE TO 'ZEALOUSLY GUARD' SOVEREIGNTY IN REPUBLIC DAY ADDRESS



The ceremony held to mark Guyana's 54th year as a Republic

President Ali delivered a message of unwavering commitment to Guyana's development, territorial integrity, and national unity as the nation celebrated its 54th Republic Anniversary on February 23.

Speaking at the flag-raising ceremony held at the Public Buildings, Brickdam, President Ali emphasised the importance of collective responsibility in protecting the nation's territorial integrity and democracy.

"We, the

**custodians of the Republic must zealously guard our nation's sovereignty, promote its development, and safeguard democracy,"** the President declared. He highlighted the concept of territorial integrity extending beyond geographical boundaries, representing the autonomy of the Guyanese people.

President Ali reaffirmed the government's unwavering stance against any threats to

national sovereignty, emphasising, "Guyana will never cede national sovereignty."

Shifting his focus to national development, the President pledged the government's dedication to implementing policies that benefit all Guyanese.

**"The next three - and - a - half years will see the expansion of our economy, and with that, will come better conditions of work, better conditions for our farmers, more investment**

**in our resource potential, and of course, more investment in the welfare, salaries and conditions of work of all the people of our country,"** he assured the nation.

President Ali reiterated his vision for "One Guyana," a nation built for a prosperous future beyond 2030. He acknowledged the need for hard work and sacrifice, pledging the government's unwavering support and guidance in this collective endeavour.

The President also took a strong stance against those promoting election rigging, calling it "the epitome of moral bankruptcy" and a threat to the nation's democratic foundation. He emphasised that Guyana will never return to the era of a tainted republic and stressed that rigged elections are a closed chapter in the nation's history.

The Republic Day celebration commenced with a traditional marching band performance by

an all-women unit, followed by a series of cultural presentations showcasing steelpan music, songs, and dances. The event also featured a military band display, adding grandeur to the momentous occasion.

This year's Republic Day celebration was held under the theme "Celebrating our people and our prosperity."



The ceremony held to mark Guyana's 54th year as a Republic



The ceremony held to mark Guyana's 54th year as a Republic



The ceremony held to mark Guyana's 54th year as a Republic

# Thousands reaping benefits of Guyana's growing production

THOUSANDS of Guyanese are now able to reap more benefits from the nation's productive sectors because of the governing People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) Government, according to President Dr. Irfaan Ali.

The president made the observation on Saturday, during a live address to the nation on his Facebook page.

"We returned thousands of workers back to work; we reopened and rebuilt the mining sector, we reinvested in agriculture, we reinvested in drainage and irrigation, building our productive capacity and capability," Dr. Ali said, adding:

"We inspired confidence; brought back the bauxite industry, creating 1,000s of jobs... That is the government you elected."

The Head of State also stressed that the economic transformation of Guyana is visible everywhere, along with the social transformation of the ordinary citizens.

And, according to Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and Public Service Dr. Ashni Singh, in January, during a broadcast with President Ali, the bauxite industry was most successful during the PPP/C's tenures in office.

From 1979 to 1992, when the then People's National Congress (PNC) held the governing office, the industry's production levels were significantly low when compared to the PPP/C during 1993-2014.

Thereafter, a decline was recorded when the A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) held office from 2015-2020.

President Ali and Dr. Singh had presented a graph which showed that there was a higher average of production under successive PPP/C governments compared to the PNC/APNU+AFC's.

According to the minister, during 2015-2020, several operators had suspended operations, which saw hundreds of workers being laid off.

He said that the economic life of communities at Kwakwani, Ituni, Linden and New Amsterdam had col-

lapsed under the 'Coalition', as these were the communities that were hubs for bauxite production.

Now, the government is making significant investments to increase production, and support the modernisation of the industry, and this has led to the projection of a massive production increase.

"I want us to look at the facts, results and reality. This is a time for hard work; this is the time for debates and ideas, critical analysis ... We have a lot of work ahead of us; we are not slowing down. This year we are going to step harder on the accelerator to bring prosperity to every home in our country," President Ali said.

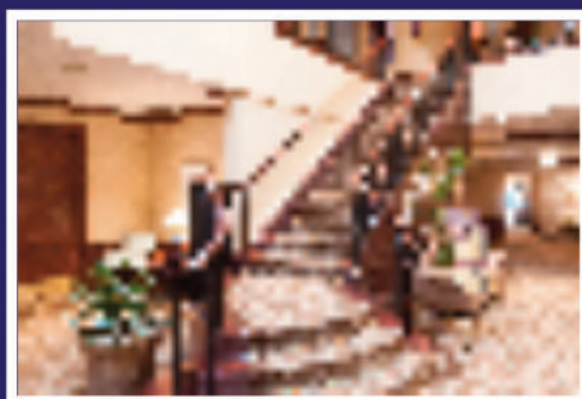


Guyana President Dr Irfaan Ali

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## EBD ROAD TO RECEIVE MAJOR UPGRADE, TO BOOST SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY



Permanent Secretary, Vladim Persaud signed on behalf of the government, while China Road and Bridge Corporation's Senior Engineer, Bo Zhang signed on behalf of the company

The East Bank Demerara (EBD) road, a vital artery connecting communities and facilitating trade, is finally set for a much-needed upgrade. The Ministry of Public Works (MOPW) has signed a contract with China Road and Bridge Corporation to improve the 23.7 km stretch from Good Success to Timehri.

This project, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), promises significant improvements in safety and efficiency for all users.

Permanent Secretary, Vladim Persaud signed on behalf of the government, while China Road and Bridge Corporation's Senior Engineer, Bo Zhang signed on behalf of the company. The signing took place in the ministry's boardroom in the presence of Bishop Juan Edghill, Minister of Public Works.

The project is funded through the IDB

Loan Programme – Programme to Support Climate Resilient Road Infrastructure Development (US\$117 million). The overall cost of the project is US\$75,887,907.67.

The upgraded road will feature dedicated sidewalks and cycle lanes, alongside wider shoulders, to enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists. While, improved drainage, road markings, and LED street lighting will contribute to smoother traffic flow and reduced congestion.

Existing bridges and culverts will be reconstructed and

widened, further improving the road's overall resilience. The project is expected to be completed within 36 months.

During the signing, Minister Edghill stressed the importance of completing the project within the stipulated time frame.

“I would expect that the contractor from day one engages the possibility of working at night, and in the early hours of the morning when there is less traffic,” he stressed.

While acknowledging the potential disruption caused by construction,

the Minister emphasised ongoing community engagement to minimise inconvenience. He urged all stakeholders to work together and address any arising issues collaboratively to ensure the project's success. **“Should there be cause for conflict or disagreement or we don't see eye to eye on a particular item or approach, I am asking that we don't allow these things to hinder our work. In keeping with the terms and conditions of this contract, let's find mechanisms to resolve issues that may arise,”** he stated.

## CONSUMERS TO SEE SIGNIFICANT POWER SUPPLY BOOST- 28.9 MW GENERATORS TO BE INSTALLED

People's Progressive Party's General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has confirmed the imminent completion of a major project aimed at boosting the country's power supply. The full installation of generators totalling 28.9 megawatts (MW) is expected to be completed by March, providing a much-needed increase in electricity available to the coastal region.

This announcement comes in response to concerns raised by the opposition regarding the use of taxpayer funds for the project. Dr. Jagdeo emphasised that 10 MW

of the total capacity is already operational, with the remaining 18.9 MW to be brought online within the next few weeks. He clarified that a one-month delay in the project's completion was due to procurement challenges, including late delivery of transformers caused by issues at the Panama Canal.

The additional generating capacity is expected to provide significant relief to the national grid, which has faced strain due to increasing power demand. Dr. Jagdeo highlighted

the government's commitment to addressing this issue, contrasting it with the previous administration's limited efforts. He noted that the previous government only made a purchase of 47-50 MW of power after losing office, which the current administration had to install. **“They basically did nothing for five years. Now while we're working on the gas-to-energy project, we have to bring in emergency power,”** he noted.

The project represents a US\$27

million investment by the government to address the immediate need for emergency power while the longer-term gas-to-energy project is under development. The generators, procured

from Apan Energy Service, arrived in Guyana in late December 2023, and are currently undergoing installation at the Columbia, East Coast Demerara substation.

This significant addition to the national grid is expected to improve the reliability and availability of electricity for residents and businesses across the coastal region.



The new generators arriving in December to boost generation capacity in the Demerara-Berbice Interconnected System

## NEW \$25.6M BRIDGE CONNECTS GEORGETOWN COMMUNITIES OF ALBOUYSTOWN AND SUSSEX ST.



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# GUYANA HAS ENDLESS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES - GO-INVEST CHIEF

Guyana's booming economic landscape presents a plethora of opportunities for investors to be part of the nation's growth story from the very beginning said Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of the Guyana Office for Investment (Go-Invest).

During his address at the recently concluded Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, he urged investors to seize the moment, and participate in the first wave of Guyana's economic expansion.

**"Don't ask me where you should invest,"** Dr. Ramsaroop declared to a room filled with hundreds of eager investors. **"If you know agriculture, if you know the oil and gas industry, if you know the mining sector, whatever sectors you're interested in... Our government has described very transparently, what we're doing."**

Guyana is aiming to become a leader in food, energy, and climate security, and the government is allocating significant resources to



Investors are being urged to participate in the first wave of Guyana's economic expansion

develop these sectors, opening doors for a wide range of investments.

**"Guyana is leading the Caribbean region in agriculture, to cut the region's food import bill of nearly**

**US\$5 billion by 25 per cent by the year 2025, especially since the country has vast arable lands,"** Dr. Ramsaroop highlighted.

He further revealed plans to develop a

thriving pharmaceutical industry in Guyana, stating, **"The country will be moving to advance this area."**

With the development of a transport link connecting Guyana and Northern Brazil, the transport and logistics sector is also poised for significant growth. Dr. Ramsaroop emphasised the potential, stating, **"You're talking [about] thousands of 18 wheelers or containers coming through Guyana to a deepwater harbour. What does**

**that entail? Who is thinking of the largest laydown yard on the Lethem border? ...These are all real, bigger opportunities in the next two years. That's where the focus should be."**

The Go-Invest chief assured potential investors of the government's commitment to supporting their business aspirations, stating, **"We will work in tandem with the investors to ensure their business aspirations are realised."**

# PRIVATE SECTOR ONBOARD WITH GOVT'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PUSH

## -STARR COMPUTERS LAUNCHES EV INITIATIVE



Chief Executive Officer of Starr Computers, Mike Mohan with Chief Investment Officer at Guyana Office for Investment, Dr Peter Ramsaroop

Guyana's transition to renewable energy received a boost from the private sector as Starr Computers unveiled its Sustainable Initiative, promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs) in the country.

The initiative, launched at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, aligns with the government's "thrust

for a renewable energy transition," as stated by Chief Executive Officer of Starr Computers, Mike Mohan.

As part of this initiative, the company is introducing free electric vehicle (EV) charging for its customers, in addition to hosting monthly seminars to educate the public on these initiatives.

**"We plan on**

**doing that so the general public can learn more about electric vehicles, and about the good energy initiatives the government has come out with. The government is very concerned with helping the people to develop,"** Mohan told media operatives.

The CEO said the company aims to inspire other businesses to join the EV movement and integrate electric vehicles into their operations. Mohan acknowledged the importance of both oil exploration and carbon neutrality, advocating for a balanced approach.

**"We support the oil exploration**

**projects that are going on, but at the same time, we also support carbon neutrality. It's important that we make both things work together because, believe it or not, transportation is actually the highest carbon polluter. If we could do something about reducing that carbon in the transportation industry, it could make a very big difference as we move forward,"** he said.

Mohan noted that the government is already offering incentives like duty and VAT exemptions

for imported EVs and chargers, along with tax write-offs for EVs on annual returns. As such, it is up to the private sector to swiftly grasp these opportunities and invest in profitable and eco-friendly ventures.

Meanwhile, Chief Investment Officer at Guyana Office for Investment, Dr Peter Ramsaroop, praised Starr Computers' initiative, highlighting its contribution to a "greener and cleaner economy."

"This is a great initiative that Starr computers has taken on and it will become more and more relevant as we encourage the build out of these electric

vehicles in Guyana. So, the more and more we get these things out in our nation, the more and more we will move to that green technology that all of us want for a cleaner economy," Dr Ramsaroop said.

The Guyana Energy Agency has also installed electric vehicle charging stations in several areas for public use.

The government's ambitious drive to shift to renewable energy sources forms part of the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, which offers a blueprint for the cultivation of a sustainable economy.

# NEW CASSAVA PROCESSING PLANT TO BOOST FOOD SECURITY, CREATE JOBS

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Kumasi and Globaltec Dessarollos e Ingenieria S.A. promises to bring exciting developments to Guyana's agricultural sector.

The signing was facilitated on the sidelines of the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo 2024 at the Marriott Hotel, Kingston Georgetown.

The initiative will see the construction of a cassava processing plant, creating over 100

jobs and contributing significantly to the country's food security goals.

Kumasi's Vice President, Loida John-Nicholson, expressed enthusiasm about the project, stating, **"The initiative reflects a commitment to sustainable development, community empowerment, and environmental stewardship. The project aims to create over 100 jobs and empower Guyanese**

**youths."**

The plant will produce high-quality cassava flour, aligning with the government's pursuit of food security and economic diversification, and the "25 by 2025" initiative, aiming to reduce food import costs by 25% by 2025.

Globaltec, renowned for its expertise in agriculture and agro-industrial sectors, will be responsible for the plant's construction. The company is also exploring additional

ventures in Guyana, including shade houses for herbs and tropical flowers with downstream packaging processes.

Kumasi's President, Ian Nicholson, expressed his happiness in contributing to Guyana's development. **"We are looking forward to the partnership and we expect that the building of this cassava processing plant will significantly impact the prosperity in Guyana,"** she expressed.

This project exemplifies Guyana's leadership in the Caribbean Community's food security efforts. By promoting local

production and reducing reliance on imports, Guyana is paving the way for a more sustainable and self-sufficient future.



Vice President of Kumasi, a Guyanese-descendant and, Loida John-Nicholson

# GUYANA SECURES INCREASED ACCESS TO UK FINANCING



Dr Ashni Singh, and UK Minister for the Americas, Caribbean and Overseas Territories, David Rutley, among other prominent officials at the event

The government and private sector have gained access to significantly more financing from the United Kingdom (UK) Export Finance (UKEF), signalling confidence in the country's economic management. The announcement came from UK Minister for the Americas, Caribbean, and Overseas Territories, David Rutley, who stated: "This effectively enhances the level of potential

new business that UKEF can support in Guyana... It is also a reflection of the confidence the UK has in the stewardship of the economy of Guyana by the government."

Previously, the UKEF's Market Risk Appetite (MRA) for Guyana sat at £750 million. This has now been increased to a substantial £2.1 billion.

UKEF plays a crucial role in assisting overseas buyers in securing financial support for procuring goods and services from the UK. This increased MRA allows Guyanese entities to access competitive, long-term financing for various national priority projects, including those in infrastructure, healthcare, education, and transportation.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President

with responsibility for Finance and Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, expressed his appreciation for the UK's confidence in the Guyanese economy. He highlighted that both the government and private sector companies in Guyana will now have the opportunity to access loans from the UK.

**"I want to urge the Guyanese private sector...to avail themselves of this opportunity to access financing and this opportunity to do business with British companies,"** Dr. Singh said, emphasising the initiative's

potential to strengthen the longstanding partnership between the two nations.

This development marks a significant step forward in the UK-Guyana relationship, fostering collaboration and economic growth for both countries.

British High Commissioner to Guyana, Jane Miller, members of the private sector, and other officials were also present at the event, which was held at the British High Commissioner's Residence in Bel Air, Georgetown.

# LOCAL CONTENT APP SET TO CONNECT GUYANESE BUSINESSES AND WORKERS WITH OIL AND GAS OPPORTUNITIES

The government, through its Local Content Secretariat, is developing a mobile app specifically designed to connect local businesses and individuals with opportunities in the oil and gas sector. This initiative, expected to launch by the end of the third quarter of 2024, aims to address existing challenges and enhance local access to employment and contracts.

**"We will introduce the local content app,"** announced Martin Pertab, Director of the Local Content Secretariat, during the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo. **"We have**

**already started. Work is ongoing, and hopefully, by the end of the third quarter, we should have an app which connects local suppliers with oil and gas companies."**

Pertab acknowledged the difficulties faced by many Guyanese in accessing information about oil and gas opportunities. **"We have received over the past years a lot of complaints whereby locals will say that they are not seeing the RFIs [Request for Information],"** he explained. **"The issue with the 14 days is that most times locals would see the RFI on**



Director of the Local Content Secretariat, Dr Martin Pertab

**the last day. For them to get the documents up and participate, is difficult."**

The app aims to address this accessibility issue by providing a centralised platform

for companies to post opportunities and for locals to find relevant information and apply. **"Most companies would advertise on our portal, but I don't think the traffic**

**we are receiving indicates that a lot of locals are visiting our portals,"** Pertab noted.

This app development complements the existing Local Content Registry, launched in 2022, which serves as a similar portal for connecting locals with opportunities. The Local Content Act, enacted in 2021, aims to ensure the oil and gas industry fosters economic growth and benefits for Guyanese businesses and individuals.

**"The act has led to the employment of more than 6,000 locals in the industry and lays out 40 areas in the services sector**

**that oil and gas companies and their subcontractors must procure locally,"** Pertab said.

To further connect locals with these opportunities, the Local Content Secretariat is also actively pursuing awareness campaigns and workshops across the country.

The Secretariat highlighted its achievements in 2023, with approximately US\$560 million spent on local services under the Local Content Act, a 25% increase from 2022, and the creation of 975 new jobs.

# GUYANA EXPANDS HINTERLAND ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY

Prime Minister Mark Phillips announced significant progress in Guyana's efforts to provide reliable electricity access to hinterland communities.

As of February 2024, 66% of hinterland communities have access to reliable electricity, representing a substantial increase from 50% in 2022, the Prime

Minister announced at the recently concluded Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo.

He also noted continued efforts to bring this number closer to 90% by the end of 2024 and achieving full coverage for the entire hinterland population by 2025.

The Solar Home System project plays a crucial role in achieving this goal, providing each household in hinterland, rural, and riverine communities with a solar home system unit.

Each unit includes a solar panel, battery, LED lights, and a fan.

The project has been instrumental in bridging the energy gap and empowering indigenous communities.

Considering its success, the government is considering acquiring an additional 10,000 units, the Prime Minister announced.

He stated that this project aligns with the government's broader goal of minimising the country's carbon footprint and transitioning towards a renewable energy mix that includes hydropower, natural gas, and solar power sources.

Several other transformational

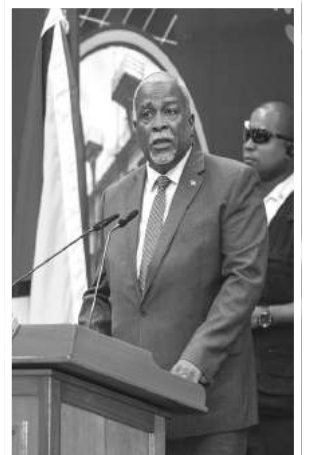
projects are underway, such as the 300-megawatt gas plant, national grid upgrades, the Amaila Falls Hydropower project, and the installation of solar and wind systems.

He noted the targeted approach for hinterland communities, which is to eliminate the energy gap between coastal and hinterland regions, and the government's effort to build solar-powered mini-grids in these communities.

The 2024 budget allocated \$95.7 billion to the energy sector, supporting various initiatives like expanding baseload capacity,



The Solar Home System project provides each household in hinterland, rural, and riverine communities with a solar home system unit



Prime Minister Mark Phillips

advancing the gas-to-energy project, and completing several renewable energy projects.



# 300 REGION FIVE RESIDENTS RECEIVE OWNERSHIP DOCUMENTS

Excitement filled the air at the Guyana Water Corporation's (GWC) compound in Fort Wellington as 300 families from Region Five received their ownership documents for residential lots in the Experiment Housing Scheme. This milestone brings them one step closer to building their own homes, a long-awaited dream for many.



Distribution exercise for ownership documents

**"Breath-taking!"** exclaimed Arifa Khan, a mother of four from Bath/Experiment who applied in 2011. **"This is the first house and land for me and my family, and I am very thankful,"** she told the Department of Public Information (DPI). Khan, along

with countless others, expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to finally have a place of their own.

The recipients can now use their titled documents to apply for a loan at the bank to aid with the construction of their homes. Also, the beneficiaries can

capitalise on the steel and cement subsidy programme.

**"It's one step closer to owning your own home,"** echoed Sonia Nicholas Grundall, another beneficiary from Perth Village, Mahaicony. **"That makes me very happy because**

**my entire family will be comfortable, knowing that we will have our own home."**

Clifton Sobers, from No 9 Village, West Coast Berbice, commended the government for providing the land title. **"I am so very grateful,"** he said. **"My next step is to start getting my property built on it and developing the area."**

Kennisha Alonzo, who was previously burdened by rent payments, emphasised the relief she felt. **"I am tired of paying rent for so many years,"** she shared. **"My kids would feel very happy knowing that we have our own home and we don't have to rent**

**anymore."**

Nolan Williams, from Hopetown Village, saw this as a long-awaited opportunity. **"It will benefit us a lot because it is something we have been waiting for,"** he stated. **"My next step involves applying for a loan at one of the financial institutions to start building my house."**

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, acknowledged the need for housing and highlighted ongoing efforts to address it. **"As housing needs continue to expand countywide, investments for infrastructural expansion are**

**ongoing in new and existing housing areas,"** he said. **"We are very close to acquiring a portion of land that will allow us to allocate another 315 lots in Region Five this year."**

Currently, over 1,053 house lots have been allocated in Region Five, with heavily subsidised infrastructure development in place. **"When you look at the Experiment, Burma, Shieldstown, and Balthyock housing areas, we have \$4 billion investment in infrastructure for the development of those areas and counting,"** Minister Croal highlighted.

# LAING AVENUE FAMILIES RECEIVE SECOND ROUND OF HOUSING GRANTS, UPLIFTING LIVING CONDITIONS

Approximately 30 families in Laing Avenue, Georgetown, received a much-needed boost to their living conditions with the distribution of \$250,000 housing grants. This second batch of vouchers follows the initial distribution to 60 families in January, fulfilling Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo's commitment to improving their quality of life.

Presented by Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, and Central Housing and Planning Authority

(CH&PA) officials, the grants provide families with the means to acquire building materials for essential repairs. This initiative aligns with the government's broader efforts to promote home ownership, including the Steel and Cement Housing Subsidy and the home construction programme.

Minister Croal emphasised the transformative impact of these grants: **"This is part of our multifaceted approach to**

**encouraging homeownership, empowering families to create safe and secure living spaces."**

Sherwyn Greaves, CH&PA CEO, echoed this sentiment, highlighting the programme's potential to serve as a model for future national housing initiatives.

Beneficiaries expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the government's support. Renwick McDonald, a recipient, stated, **"I think it's a good initiative... I'm going to use it to fix the**



A beneficiary collecting a housing grant from Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal

**ceiling and floor, and raise the floor so water doesn't seep in."** Sandra Primo, facing mobility challenges, expressed

her joy at being able to upgrade her sanitary facilities for herself and her family.

The Laing Avenue Housing Grant

programme exemplifies the government's commitment to improving the lives of its citizens.

# MABARUMA TO GET NEW HOUSING AREA

Residents of Mabaruma, Region One, can look forward to a new housing development this year, according to Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal. The announcement was made during the flag-raising ceremony at Mabaruma Settlement Ground, commemorating Guyana's 54th Republic Anniversary.

**"A new housing area, similar to the one in Kokerite Hall, will be developed this year in the Mabaruma sub-district,"** Minister Croal revealed.

This development is part of the government's ongoing efforts to

transform its housing programme and provide **"safe and sustainable housing solutions, infrastructural and amenities to Guyanese countryside."**

The minister highlighted the ongoing construction of houses in various hinterland communities through the Hinterland Housing Programme, including Smith Creek, Arukamai, Imbotero, Savannah Blackwater, Warapoka, Hairamuni, Arakaka, Baramita, and Canal Bank.

The implementation of the housing projects, Hinterland Housing

Project, and various economic projects that are also funded through the carbon credit grants are contributing to the economic upliftment

of this region, Minister Croal emphasised.

The minister reiterated the government's commitment to its

ambitious goal of allocating 50,000 house lots by 2025. He pointed to various initiatives, such as subsidies and easier financing options,

that have already helped "thousands of Guyanese first-time homeowners" achieve their dream of owning a home.

**"I am pleased to report that the target we have set for allocation of lots, for example, across the country is within our reach,"** Minister Croal stated.

This new housing development in Mabaruma is a welcome addition to the government's wider efforts to address the housing needs of Guyanese communities across the country, particularly in previously underserved areas.



One of the houses that was handed in Kokerite Village in November 2023

## VP JAGDEO DISCUSSES DEVELOPMENT PLANS, INITIATIVES WITH GEORGETOWN RESIDENTS

In a series of community engagements, Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo visited East Ruimveldt-Back Circle, West Ruimveldt-Joint Services Ground, and Alexander Village directly connecting with residents and discussing plans for Georgetown's development. Accompanied by Housing and Water Minister Collin Croal, Central Housing and Planning Authority's CEO Sherwyn Greaves, and technical staff, the Vice President outlined the government's vision for Georgetown's revitalisation. This includes addressing accessibility and safety concerns within

the communities by upgrading community roads and footpaths. He also spoke about investing in the rehabilitation of 34 recreational facilities as part of the government's effort to create community spaces to promote physical activity and social interaction. Further, Dr. Jagdeo encouraged residents to actively participate in these initiatives, and take advantage of other government programmes aimed at improving their lives, such as the part-time job initiative, that is providing employment opportunities and additional income, and the GOAL Scholarship programme, which enables access

to educational advancement.

The CH&PA team actively engaged with residents, offering housing services on the ground. They documented specific queries and concerns, aiming to provide tailored solutions and address immediate needs.

By directly engaging with communities and highlighting development plans, Vice President Jagdeo demonstrated the government's commitment to

improving the lives of all Georgetown residents. These initiatives aim to create a more vibrant,



Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo addressing residents at one of the meetings

accessible, and equitable capital city.



Guyana's infrastructure is receiving a major boost, with over 4,300 community roads built across the country in the past three years, according to the Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar. This impressive figure highlights the government's commitment to creating an "enabling environment for investment" and promoting "further growth

## GUYANA PAVES THE WAY FOR GROWTH WITH OVER 4,300 NEW COMMUNITY ROADS

prosperity" in Guyana. "We are building highways on the East Bank...on the East Coast of Demerara and Berbice," Minister Indar explained at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo. "We are building a new Demerara River bridge so we can connect the two main economic hubs of the country...so that large and heavy-duty weighted items can be transported from one side to the other," he explained. Beyond major highways, the government is prioritising smaller community roads, recognising their significant impact on residents' lives and economic opportunities. This focus on infrastructure

development is reflected in the 2024 budget, which allocated \$204.1 billion to roads and bridges.

Addressing energy experts, officials, and businesspersons, Indar declared, "Guyana is brimming with investment potential." He urged them to seize the moment and capitalise on the diverse opportunities arising from the nation's

development trajectory. Minister Indar emphasised, "With the kind of wealth that will be generated in Guyana, there are opportunities for everyone."

He encouraged potential investors to explore various sectors, ranging from transportation services to construction and logistics.

## WORK MOVING APACE ON STATE-OF-THE-ART MATERNAL AND PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

Construction of the highly anticipated \$31.9 billion Maternal and Paediatric Hospital in Ogle is moving smoothly, with key milestones achieved and future steps outlined. Project Manager Walter Puhlinger of VAMED, the construction company, provided an update during a recent meeting with Dr. Lesile Ramsammy, Advisor to the Minister of Health, and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Deputy Managing Director Kenji Okamura. Site clearing, fencing, and construction of temporary facilities for over 400 workers are finished while the foundation and basement are on track. These critical components are expected to be completed within the next six weeks, paving the way for steel

structure installation in March 2024. The exterior structure, including doors and windows, will be finalised within a year, allowing for interior finishing and equipment installation. Dr. Ramsammy emphasised the hospital's role in Guyana's healthcare transformation, highlighting the government's investments in



Construction of modern maternal and paediatric hospital progressing well

telemedicine and other technologies to improve access and quality of care, especially in remote areas. "To improve maternal and child health and to extend access to remote and hinterland

communities, we have introduced to our system telemedicine, telepsychotherapy, teleophthalmology, and teleradiology," he disclosed.



An example of the Hope-like Canals that will be built in Region Six

Good news for farmers in Region Six! The region is set for a major overhaul as the Ministry of Agriculture unveiled ambitious plans for infrastructural development in drainage and irrigation. This initiative promises to positively transform the region, bringing much-needed relief to residents and boosting agricultural productivity. "We will see massive

## REGION SIX EMBARKS ON MASSIVE D&I TRANSFORMATION

transformational development in Region Six in agriculture," declared Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, during a recent outreach in the region. "We know for a fact that areas like these suffer tremendously when we have heavy rainfall. All the cultivation areas oftentimes suffer a lot," he added. Key projects on the horizon include three

"Hope-like canals." These large-scale canals will be constructed in strategic locations (between Number 51-52 villages, Bengal Village, and Whim-Letter Kenny), equipped with pump stations for enhanced water management. An embankment will be built from Number 66 village to the Canje Creek. This protective barrier will shield cultivation areas from backland flooding, improving

agricultural resilience. "The contract will be out very shortly," Minister Mustapha revealed. "We already have 35 persons from Region Six who have expressed their interest to start work in those areas." Meanwhile, individual pump stations will be installed in various villages. These targeted pumps will address specific drainage needs in different communities.

Additionally, a new pumping station will be constructed at Chesney. This upgraded infrastructure will significantly improve drainage capacity in a historically flood-prone area. These projects highlight the government's commitment to supporting Region Six, where over 60% of the population relies on agriculture for their livelihood.

# GUYANA MAKES HISTORY IN FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

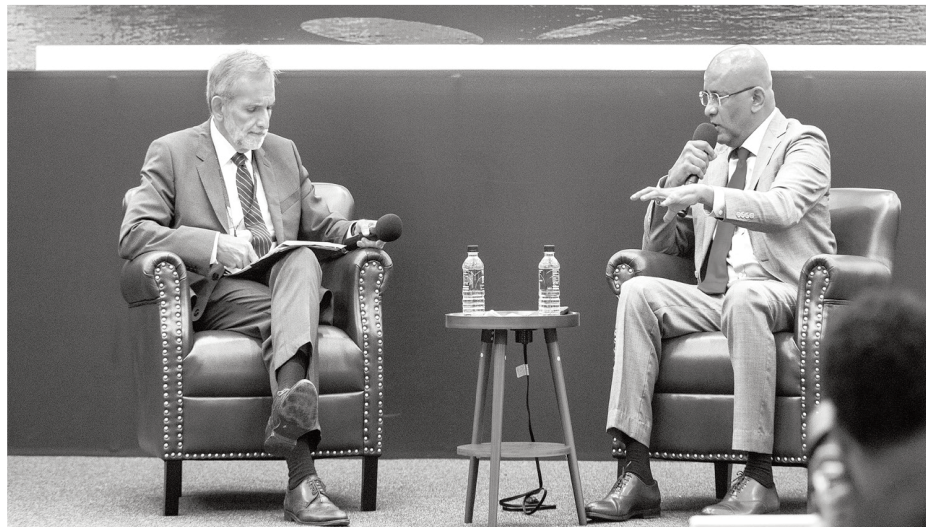
## -ISSUES WORLD'S FIRST PARIS AGREEMENT-ALIGNED CARBON CREDITS

Guyana has emerged as a leader in the fight against climate change by issuing the world's first carbon credits specifically designed for airlines participating in the global emissions reduction programme for aviation, CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation).

This achievement also marks a historic first with Guyana reporting the world's first corresponding adjustment under the Paris Agreement.

**"Guyana's issuance of CORSIA-eligible issuance marks the latest milestone in a journey that we began in 2009,"** said Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, in a press release issued by the government, highlighting the country's long-standing commitment to building a low-carbon economy and serving as a model for protecting tropical forests.

These "CORSIA Eligible" credits allow



airlines to offset their emissions and comply with regulations set by CORSIA. This paves the way for a more sustainable aviation industry.

**"We must protect the world's remaining intact forests if we are to achieve global climate goals,"** emphasised Chair of the ART Advisory Board John Verdieck. **"By working at a country-wide level, we can truly achieve the scale needed. We hope this encourages other countries to follow Guyana's**

**lead."** Guyana's success story lies in its issuance of 7.14 million 2021 vintage carbon credits under the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) programme. These credits are available for various uses, including meeting climate commitments and voluntary corporate initiatives.

**"ART was established to unlock finance at scale for countries that successfully protect and restore their forests,"** said Executive Director of ART, Mary Grady. **"We**

**are very pleased to have worked with the Government of Guyana to help navigate the Paris Agreement and ICAO processes and achieve the issuance of the first post-2020 CORSIA eligible credits in the market."**

Guyana's leadership extends beyond the issuance of credits. The country is also the first to report a corresponding adjustment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This crucial step ensures transparency, and

prevents the double counting of emission reductions, upholding the integrity of the system.

Beyond environmental and economic benefits, this initiative empowers Guyana's indigenous communities, which play a vital role in forest conservation. These communities directly benefit from the financial rewards generated through carbon credit sales, allowing them to invest in development priorities identified by their villagers.

**"For us, the Indigenous people of Guyana, the forests are our lifeblood, but we have not always been rewarded for protecting them,"** stated Toshao Derrick John, Chair of the National Tosaos' Council.

**"Now, every village receives payments from the sale of carbon credits, making standing trees more valuable. That means our people can invest in development priorities that were identified by**

villagers themselves. Already, I can see the tangible positive impacts of carbon finance in my village and across the other communities that are part of this programme," he stated, underscoring the positive impact of carbon finance on indigenous communities.

A total of 126 countries are voluntarily participating in CORSIA's first phase, covering roughly 80% of annual emissions from the aviation sector. All participating airline operators with annual emissions over 10,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent of greenhouse gas emissions must monitor and report their emissions, and then purchase carbon credits to offset any remaining emissions that exceed a percentage of their 2019 baseline emissions.

Currently, 19 other countries and large sub-national jurisdictions are working toward their own issuances of TREES credits.

## VP JAGDEO TO HEAD CARICOM GROUP ON UNLOCKING RESOURCES FOR CLIMATE FINANCING, DEVELOPMENT

VP Jagdeo to head CARICOM group on unlocking resources for climate financing, development

Following a series of vigorous discussions between the 15-member bloc Caribbean Community (CARICOM), a decision was taken to appoint Guyana's Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, to lead a working group, that will be responsible for unlocking financial resources under the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF).

This was announced during the closing press briefing for the 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of CARICOM Heads of Government at the Guyana Marriott Hotel, Georgetown.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of CARICOM, President Ali stressed mutual agreement among member states to unite efforts towards regional

financing that will promote growth and enhance resilience.

**"We just don't want to look at raising financing but we want to align the financing that comes into the region now, to the growth and development and prosperity of the region while at the same time, we ensure we coordinate our financing through a common mechanism to deal with adaption and resilience,"** the head of state articulated.

Barbadian Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, who serves as the lead PM for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) in CARICOM explained that the CDF was developed to assist disadvantaged countries prone to climate change.

And now that the third replenishment of the fund has been agreed to, PM Mottley believes that the funds

garnered will not meet the optimum capacity to fund the region's needs.

This is where VP Jagdeo, a former head of state and finance



President Ali and Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

minister, comes in and he will be working alongside the Barbadian Prime Minister.

**"Vice President Jagdeo will chair that working group look into see how we will unlock the liquidity from the private banking system and**

**how they a win-win situation,"** Mottley said.

Further, she informed media operatives that in the

**that liquidity and to allow those countries that need access to concessional funding, as is available under the CARICOM Development Fund, to be able to access them so that we can build up the systems to promote growth, rather than treating to it just purely for the adaptation and resilience aspect of it,"** she noted.

Additionally, CARICOM leaders have pledged to support the Blue Green Investment Bank – an institution that aims to inject investments in climate-prone countries and regions.

Commitments have already been made by the Governments of Guyana, Bahamas, and Barbados, with each country pledging US\$15 million and the Green Climate Fund committing a similar amount.

**"It is our view that the region is full of liquidity but what is missing is the appropriate mechanism to unlock**

**THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) HAS ALSO PLEDGED US\$2.5 MILLION.**

**"We hope that we can reach at least \$100M in seed capital. Barbados has the draft bill for the institution and we hope to operationalise this institution as a matter of urgency to service the needs of the CARICOM with respect to resilience and adaptation,"** the prime minister highlighted.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

## VICE PRESIDENT JAGDEO URGES STRIKING TEACHERS TO RETURN TO WORK

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, confident in the government's legal standing, encouraged striking teachers to return to work, claiming their continued absence could result in harsher consequences.

**"We will continue to collect information of those absenting themselves from the classroom,"** Dr. Jagdeo warned, at his weekly press briefing. He expressed concern that teachers were **"being misled into believing that the matter is resolved."**

Dr. Jagdeo emphasised a principle established by regional courts: **"People will not be paid if they do not work."** He clarified that the temporary court orders preventing salary

deductions wouldn't last and reiterated the government's legal opinion: **"Laws confirm if you don't work you will not be paid,"** citing a relevant historical case.

**"Explicitly put by the highest court for many Caribbean jurisdictions,"** Dr Jagdeo urged teachers not to be misled and return to work until the court makes its final decision.

**"My fear is that teachers are being misled... and then deductions will be harsher for teachers,"** Dr Jagdeo reiterated his concerns.

The Vice President's statements come amidst a four-week teachers' strike and ongoing court proceedings. The Guyana Teachers' Union

(GTU) challenged the government's decision to deduct salaries and stop

collecting union dues, resulting in temporary court orders. The case

is set for a substantive hearing on March 20, 2024.



Striking teachers are being urged to return to classrooms until court action is determined

## GUYANA SLASHES FOOD IMPORTS BY 14%, AIMS FOR REGIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Guyana's agricultural revitalisation efforts are paying off, with the country witnessing a significant 14% decrease in food imports between 2021 and 2022. This achievement comes as Guyana strives to achieve regional self-sufficiency in key food items.

**"We have prioritised several high-import commodities... From 2021 to 2022, we were able to reduce imports by 14 percent,"** said Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha, expressing confidence that this trend will

continue. **"That tells us that we are doing something good,"** the Minister stated on the sidelines of the 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown.

Attributing the success to various initiatives like cultivating spices, high-value crops, and implementing breeding programmes, Minister Mustapha highlighted ambitious goals for the future.

**"His Excellency, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that**



Some of the agriculture commodities that were on display at the Ministry of Agriculture's booth at event at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown

**by the end of 2024, Guyana will become self-sufficient in the production of red beans and black-eye peas and will**

**be able to supply all of CARICOM's needs with these commodities by 2025,"** he stated.

Guyana also targets

self-sufficiency in corn and soybeans by 2025, aiming to meet the entire regional demand by 2027. These efforts hold the potential to

significantly reduce the region's US\$6 billion annual food import bill and contribute to regional economic development.

**"We are talking about 25 per cent of US\$6 billion annually and how much money will remain in the region to do other things,"** Minister Mustapha emphasised.

With Guyana achieving 82% of its food production target last year, the country is on track to become a key player in ensuring regional food security.

## GUYANA LAUNCHES ONLINE PORTAL FOR OLD-AGE PENSION, PUBLIC ASSISTANCE APPLICATIONS



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud

The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security has launched an online portal for citizens to apply for old-age pensions and public assistance, aiming to improve accessibility and support for vulnerable populations.

**"It is my pleasure to launch a transformative initiative...one that will change the way in which our services are accessed,"** Minister

of Human Services, Dr. Vindhya Persaud said, at the launch ceremony. **"This portal is inclusive, accessible, and harnesses the power of information communication technology."**

The online portal, currently in pilot operation in Regions One, Four, and Seven, will eventually be available nationwide.

**"Persons can visit the ministry's**

**website, select which application they are interested in, fill up the form, and hit send,"** explained Dr. Persaud, emphasising the portal's user-friendly design.

The Ministry is committed to ensuring inclusivity, and **"special features will be introduced soon to cater to persons who are blind and deaf,"** Dr. Persaud announced. Additionally, **"officers**

**are being trained... to collect data from applicants who are interested in using the old route of applying in person."**

To further support the transition, the Ministry will conduct a nationwide verification exercise starting March 1, and launch a public awareness campaign to encourage citizens to utilise the new online platform.

# LAW OFFICE

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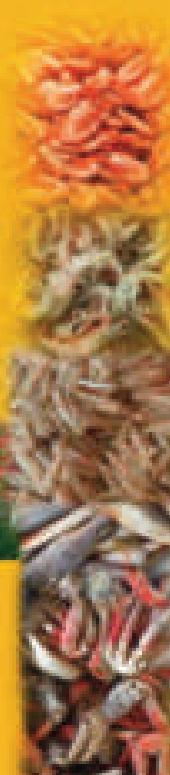
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# COMMEMORATIVE STAMP UNVEILED TO HONOUR GUYANESE AVIATION PIONEER, CAPTAIN ROLAND DASILVA

In a ceremony held at Base Camp Ayanganna, the Guyana Post Office Corporation, in collaboration with the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), officially unveiled a \$500 commemorative stamp honouring the late Captain Roland DaSilva.

The stamp marks the first of its kind for 2024, and is already available to the public.

Prime Minister Mark Phillips, delivered



Acting Postmaster General Tiffany Williams presenting Prime Minister Mark Phillips with a copy of the stamp

the keynote address, DaSilva's remarkable achievements. He hailed

him as a "military mind" and a skilled pilot, emphasising his crucial role in planning successful operations with the GDF.

Captain DaSilva was the first Guyanese to join British Guiana Airways as a pilot, the first Guyanese to hold a commercial pilot's license, the first Guyanese to qualify as a captain on a DC3 aircraft, and the first Guyanese,

alongside Tony Man-Son-Hing, to fly the Twin Otter aircraft.

Prime Minister Phillips also recognised Captain DaSilva's exceptional courage, noting that he was the first and only Guyanese to be awarded the Cacique Crown of Valour, for his bravery in defending Guyana.

Chief of Staff of the GDF, Brigadier Omar Khan, expressed the

organisation's deep honour in recognising Captain DaSilva's legacy.

Other dignitaries, including National Security Advisor Captain Gerry Gouveia, Acting Postmaster General Tiffany Williams, former Chief of Staff Major General (Ret'd) Norman McLean, and Captain DaSilva's family, also attended the ceremony, paying their respects to this aviation pioneer.

## GOV'T PUSHES HPV VACCINATION TO ELIMINATE CERVICAL CANCER

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), hosted a two-day scientific conference at the Pegasus Hotel and Corporate Suites in Kingston, Georgetown, to accelerate the country's HPV vaccination programme.

"I think if we focus a lot of our energy on HPV vaccination that

in a couple of years, maybe in a decade, we can see the effects of that," Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony said. "We may be on a pathway to eliminating cervical cancer as one of the first cancers in the country."

Dr. Anthony highlighted the importance of HPV vaccines in preventing

cervical cancer, emphasising, "We can make a big difference." He acknowledged the high immunisation coverage in Guyana, but noted the challenge with HPV vaccination specifically.

"When it comes to HPV vaccination, we are way down at the bottom... We don't understand the implications or



PAHO Representative in Guyana, Dr Luis Felipe Codina

how this is going to help people, and if we don't understand that then maybe that's why we are lagging," he explained. "We want to change that because if cervical cancer is the number two cancer

among women and this is preventable by a vaccine, then we want to make sure that every child in this country is protected."

The Ministry has outlined a comprehensive plan to achieve 100% HPV vaccination coverage. The vaccine is currently available for females aged 9-45 and can also benefit males.

PAHO / WHO Representative in Guyana, Dr. Luis Felipe Codina, stated that the conference's aim was to "show

evidence and other activities related to the elimination of cervical cancer in the next few years, as well as to exchange experiences between Guyana, Chile, and Argentina."

This initiative signifies Guyana's commitment to improving public health and potentially eliminating cervical cancer through widespread HPV vaccination.

The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, has launched a survey to understand public knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding mosquito-borne diseases (MBDs) in Guyana.

This initiative, that started on February 21, aims to inform targeted public education, policies, and strategies to combat Zika, Chikungunya, and Dengue.

The International Federation of Red



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will conduct the survey in Guyana

Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will conduct the survey in Guyana and five other Caribbean nations. Red Cross teams will engage with diverse community members -

adolescents, women of childbearing age, men aged 18-45, individuals over 45, and community leaders - through focus group discussions and questionnaires.

The insights gathered from this survey will be used to develop targeted public education campaigns to raise awareness and promote preventive measures, inform policy decisions and strategies aimed at reducing the

spread of mosquito-borne diseases, and ultimately, improve the health and well-being of Guyanese citizens and contribute to sustainable development in the region.

Mosquito-borne diseases pose a significant public health and economic threat, causing an estimated 700,000 deaths globally each year. Recent outbreaks of Chikungunya in 2013 and

Zika in 2015, including associated neurological complications, highlight the urgency of action.

Recognising the Caribbean's dependence on tourism and unique vulnerabilities, CARPHA and regional partners are crafting strategies specifically tailored to the needs of the people. This survey will provide valuable data to inform effective interventions and improve national capacities to prevent,

control, and respond to MBD outbreaks.

By collaborating with CARPHA and the IFRC, Guyana is taking proactive steps to address the challenges posed by mosquito-borne diseases. This survey initiative demonstrates the country's commitment to evidence-based public health interventions and its dedication to protecting the health of its citizens.

## ENERGY SERVICES COMPANY LNDCH4 GUYANA OPENS OFFICE

LNDCH4 Guyana, an energy services company officially inaugurated its office in Georgetown marking a significant step forward for the company's involvement in Guyana's oil and gas sector.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips who delivered the keynote address emphasised the government's commitment to fostering "maximum local content

participation" in the oil and gas industry, highlighting the importance of Guyanese involvement in the nation's development.

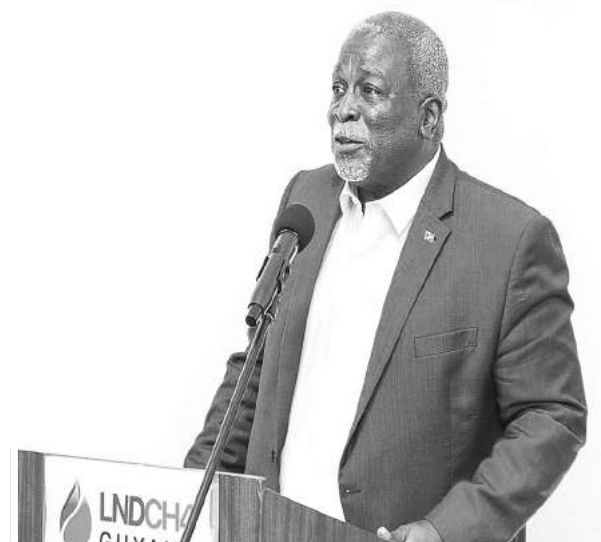
Prime Minister Phillips commended LNDCH4 Guyana, a joint venture between CH4 and Lindsayca, for prioritising the identification and utilisation of local vendors and suppliers for their operations. He described this approach

as "a commitment to building a sustainable and mutually beneficial partnership with Guyana."

LNDCH4 Guyana is currently executing a critical project valued at US\$759 million, awarded in November 2022. The project involves constructing an integrated gas processing facility at Wales -West Demerara, playing a crucial role in Guyana's oil and gas infrastructure

development.

The Prime Minister urged other companies to explore opportunities in Guyana's oil and gas sector. He further encouraged collaboration between public and private entities to promote local content participation and ensure a thriving future for the sector and all Guyanese involved.



Prime Minister Mark Phillips welcoming LNDCH4 Guyana

# GUYANA, ST. LUCIA CAN FORGE MODEL FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION - PRESIDENT ALI IN ADDRESS TO ISLAND'S PARLIAMENT

Speaking at the 45th Independence anniversary of St. Lucia, President Ali emphasised the need for deeper systemic integration between the two nations, calling for a model that connects education, healthcare, technology, and security.

“Systemic integration requires our education and healthcare systems and technological platforms to be integrated,” President Ali declared. **“Connectivity is not just the movement of people, goods, and services. Connectivity is about the movement of ideas, policies, and the integration of systems.”**

He proposed collaboration in security, stating, **“This would pave the way for the states to propel their relationship to new heights.”** This, he believes, would demonstrate the commitment to creating opportunities for the private sector and fostering an enabling business environment.

President Ali highlighted the potential of regional integration to address systemic disparities. He pointed to St. Lucia’s annual food import bill of 2,345 metric tonnes, suggesting local production systems could eliminate this dependence.

**“Investment in shade houses and hydroponics,”** he advised, **“would help the country in reducing its food import bill by almost 70 percent.”** He cited Guyana’s model of using technology, research, and youth and women’s involvement to create innovative agro-business opportunities.

**“Both nations need to work out the mechanism through which the bureaucracy and barriers can be removed,”** President Ali urged, emphasising the need for political and bureaucratic will. He envisioned a regional food hub that not only serves St. Lucia’s needs but also positions it as a distribution hub.



President Ali at the special sitting of Saint Lucia's Parliament



President Ali at the special sitting of Saint Lucia's Parliament



President Ali at the special sitting of Saint Lucia's Parliament

## PRESIDENT ALI CONNECTS WITH DIASPORA IN ST. LUCIA, SHARES DEVELOPMENT VISION

President Ali met with fellow citizens residing in St. Lucia during his recent visit to the island nation. The meeting served as a platform for President Ali to share his vision for Guyana’s development and engage directly with the diaspora community.

President Ali outlined the government’s ambitious agenda, focusing on key areas like attracting skilled workers. Recognising the diaspora’s potential, he emphasised programmes designed to welcome back skilled Guyanese.

He highlighted efforts to move beyond traditional industries and explore new opportunities in sectors like agriculture, technology, and tourism. Additionally, the President emphasised the importance of improving access to

quality education and healthcare for all Guyanese, both within and outside the country. Upgrading roads, bridges, and other infrastructure projects was cited as crucial for facilitating economic development and improving lives.

The President also detailed various initiatives aimed at supporting vulnerable populations and ensuring a more equitable society. Following his presentation, President Ali actively engaged with the diaspora community, answering

their questions and concerns. This open dialogue allowed for a deeper understanding of the challenges and aspirations of Guyanese living abroad.



The meeting held with Guyanese living on the island



The meeting held with Guyanese living on the island





# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST



KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 62

## HISTORIC GEORGETOWN LANDMARK GETS A FACELIFT

The iconic Round House, a landmark on Georgetown’s seawall, has received a much-needed makeover. Once neglected, this 19th-century lookout point, considered the oldest section of the city, has been restored to its former glory. Originally built by the Dutch, the Round House sadly fell into disrepair over time. However, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Public Works and the Office of the First Lady’s National Beautification Project, the structure has been revitalised. With its facelift, the Round House recently played a significant role in hosting a breakfast meeting for CARICOM leaders attending the 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in Guyana.



Before

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