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Guyanese returning home to invest

Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony believes the brain drain dilemma in Guyana is reversing, with numerous diaspora members returning in significant numbers to contribute to the burgeoning economy. Minister Anthony made the statement during the opening ceremony of the Olmac Medical Hub in Vreed-En-Hoop, West Coast Demerara (pictured).

The hub was founded by Dr Philip McPherson, who hails from El Dorado, Berbice. He moved to the United States to pursue his dream of becoming a physician. He then returned to Guyana. According to the minister, the diaspora can leverage this knowledge to raise the bar for medical care in Guyana. "We are now changing what was a brain drain to a brain gain, where persons like Dr McPherson and his team are coming back, not only offering good quality healthcare, but they also would be involved in teaching, which I think is very fundamental," the minister pointed out, adding that skilled mentors are integral to elevating the quality of healthcare meted out to Guyanese.



TRADE DISPUTE

ERUPTS: Demerara Distillers chairman Komal Samaroo (centre) has condemned a move by Trinidad and Tobago to block shipments of madein-Guyana milk and bottled water. "DDL find these requirements contrary to the spirit of intraregional trade especially since ...Guyana has no such reciprocal requirements for the importation of similar products from Trinidad and Tobago," Samaroo noted.

More stories inside



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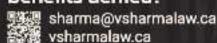
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Trade dispute: GMSA urges Caricom to intervene in spat betwen T&T, Guyana

THE Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) has expressed significant concern over the recent denial of entry for two containers of packaged milk products exported by Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL) into Trinidad and Tobago.

Additionally, two containers of bottled flavored water products have been restricted from sale pending an exhaustive examination. These actions have raised alarms within the GMSA, especially in light of the principles of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which mandates the free movement of goods and services among CARICOM member states.

The GMSA emphasised that such trade barriers undermine the collective efforts of CARICOM Heads of Government to achieve regional food security and reduce the regional food import bill by 25 per cent by 2025. These barriers are counterproductive to the goals of regional integration and equitable market access.

In response, the GMSA has joined DDL in calling for immediate intervention by the Government of Guyana and CARICOM leadership to address and resolve the issue with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The association stresses the importance of adhering to the regional integration framework, which promotes seamless trade within the CARICOM community.

In a detailed statement, DDL revealed that a virtual meeting with Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Trade on May 13 aimed to understand



2 shipments of these milk producs made by DDL in Guyana were rejected by T&T and returned

the reasons behind the rejection of their milk exports and the process for approval of their products, DDL was informed that Trinidad and Tobago's Animal Disease and Importation Act 2020 imposes stringent and onerous requirements on animal and animal-based products, which are not reciprocated by Guyana.

The GMSA highlighted a 2014 Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) ruling in a trade dispute between Suriname's Rudisa Beverages & Juices N.V. and the State of Guyana, which reinforced the principle that states must perform their treaty obligations in good faith. This ruling underscores the importance of compliance with treaty obligations, a principle relevant to the current dispute.

(The Appendix to the CCJ Ruling in that case is attached here for ease of reference. The entire judgement can be

found at https://ccj.org/wp-content/up-loads/2023/03/2014 CCJ 1 OJ.pdf)

The GMSA is actively engaged with the Trinidad & Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) and the Caribbean Manufacturers Association (CMA) to find solutions to the problem. The association urges Trinidad and Tobago authorities to resolve the issue swiftly to avoid further interventions.

Oil Chamber also condemns T&T trade barriers

THE Guyana Oil and Gas Energy Chamber (GOGEC) has expressed significant concern regarding recent media reports from Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL), one of Guyana's largest conglomerates.

According to DDL's Executive Chairman, two containers of packaged milk products were denied entry and returned to Guyana, while bottled water products have been restricted from sale due to an unusually exhaustive examination process.

GOGEC noted that it stands firmly with DDL, denouncing this situation as a clear violation of the spirit of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, a free trade agreement to which both Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) are signatories.

The Chamber highlighted that Guyanese exporters have faced such unfair treatment from Trinidad and Tobago for decades. Despite commitments to resolve these issues, they remain unresolved, with trade barriers seemingly being used as tools of trade protectionism.

Trinidad and Tobago is Guyana's second-largest trading partner for im-

ported commodities, accounting for over 20 per cent of Guyana's total imports in 2023, amounting to US\$1.4 billion. In contrast, Guyanese exports to Trinidad and Tobago are under US\$200 million, leading to a trade deficit of approximately US\$1.2 billion.

Moreover, exports from Trinidad and Tobago to Guyana represent 11 per cent of Trinidad's total exports in 2023 and 53 per cent of its total non-energy exports. If Guyana were to reciprocate by suspending imports from Trinidad, Trinidad could lose more than 50 per cent of its non-energy export earnings.

Additionally, hundreds of Trinidadian nationals and firms operate freely in Guyana, benefitting significantly without facing similar barriers.

In light of these dynamics, GOGEC calls on Trinidadian authorities to address this unacceptable breach of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and ensure fair treatment for Guyanese exports



Oil & Gas Energy Chamber



Mr. Brian Tiwarie, OCM, A.A., Executive Chairman of BK Group Companies was resolute in altering his circumstances and those of his family. He keenly understood the challenges faced by his predecessors who migrated from India during the period of Indentureship to work on the sugar plantations in Guyana.

His grandparents, among the indentured servants to arrive in Guyana, managed to break away from harsh and oppressive conditions of the plantations and relocated to Essequibo, now a major rice producing region. There, they shifted their focus to rice farming, maintaining their connection to the land, and living on their own terms:

Born in Essequibo in 1958, young Brian, now in a second generation of small rice farmers, learned the way of life from his parents, who at an early age instilled in him the value of discipline, hard work and a strong moral character.

Early Lessons

Mr. Tiwarie explained, "I grew up in the final year of colonial Guiana which became independent in 1966, and in the early years of free Guyana. All of these events had a profound impact on me at an early age.". He highlighted the formative influence of historical events on his upbringing.

Brian Tiwarie began his education at Aurora Church of Scotland Primary School in Essequibo. Like many schools established across Guyana at the time, it had significant influence from Christian religious bodies in the UK, with the aim of converting people to Christianity. Despite this, Brian and his family remained steadfast in their beliefs and faith, continuing to uphold Indian cultural values and traditions.

"After primary school and still a teenager, I began working as an apprentice mechanical automotive engineering at a leading Guyaneseowned firm of saw millers and loggers in Essequibo". Mr. Tiwarie recalled that he started his own business in 1984. He excelled in his business and was also able to showcase a natural talent for automotive and mechanical work. His skills in these fields became well known.

Transition to Entrepreneurship. Building a Business Empire

After nearly a decade in the skills sector, Brian Tiwarie decided to venture into entrepreneurship. He recounted that "After ten years of training and honing my craft, I decided to start my own transportation business."

Using a single minibus contracted by the local telephone company and an initial capital investment of \$800 USD, Brian Tiwarie embarked on his entrepreneurial journey.

Equipped with technical skills and knowledge of the transportation business, Brian Tiwarie acquired trucks and began transporting food and fuel to Issano, Kurupung, Isseneru and other interior regions of Guyana.

From this time forward Brian started purchasing equipment and eventually two Cargo Boats. He was the second person to own a cargo service in the Mazaruni River and in 1985 he acquired three dredges.

This marked the start of something bigger. With a bit more investment, BK International Inc. was founded in 1992. One of its initial projects was the construction of the Barama Plywood Factory. With astute leadership, Mr. Tiwarie carved a place for his operations as a business colossus in Guyana.

BK International Inc.
was the first local contractor
to successfully qualified for
major civil construction and
sea defense work funded by
the World Bank, European
Union, Inter-American
Development Bank and the
Caribbean Development
Bank.

The Company has successfully accomplished major projects funded

private, government and international funding agencies. From 1995 to 2002, it has successfully completed several projects mainly in the area of sea defence. BK was the first Guyanese who owned a construction company to undertake a major sea defense project, financed by the United States under PL 480/World Bank at La Belle Alliance Essequibo in 1997 assisted by the then President Dr. Cheddi Jagan. BK managed to win the bid ahead of an international company, Pak Jelfi out of Italy. BK eventually bought all the assets of that company thus expanding its own operations.

In 2003, BK successfully executed a contract for the construction of 2.1 km sea defense at Mon Chosic, West Coast Berbice; the largest to be awarded to Guyanese company. also completed approximately 4 km of sea defense in Regions 2 and 3 funded by the European Union. BK also completed sea defense works at Profit/Belladrum West Coast Berbice. This project was funded by the Caribbean Development Bank and was designed by the Royal Haskoning of the Netherlands, and involved a modern approach of the riprap design. The award of this contract spoke of the enormous capability, professionalism

Group of Companies









and expertise of BK International Inc. under the dynamic leadership of Brian Tiwarie.

With the intervention of Former President Blurrat Jagdeo, Brian Tiwarie acquired Mazaruni Granite which was owned by two Trinidad banks in 2006. The company was renamed BK Quarries Inc. (BKQI), and guarantees the supply of boulders and other quarry products to construction projects nationally. Quarries Inc. acquired over 2000 acres of lease land in the Kamuni Potosie area. BKQI is now the largest fully automated quarry

BK Marine Inc. (BKMI) was established to ensure timely delivery of quarry products by tugs and barges to various locations in Guyana. Today, BK Marine Inc. has the largest privately owned fleet in Guyana. In 2023, Brian Tiwarie purchased the largest integrated tug and barge in the Caribbean, the Mega Motti.

Achieving Milestones
On his diversification
moves, Mr. Tiwarie
decided to invest in the

agricultural sector also, and as such B.K. Farms Inc. was incorporated on February 29, 2008. This expansion and

diversification program was aimed to enhance the overall performance and economic viability of the group.

To meet the growing demands of Guyana's domestic market, Mr. Brian Tiwarie decided to venture into the aviation industry with the establishment of Jags Aviation Inc. This is the first local company to invest in new aircraft. Jags prides itself with highly qualified personnel and continues to invest in pilot training through Flight Safety in United Sates of America. Jags Aviation continues live up to its motto "exceeding customers expectations" modernized with its Bradley Hangar, With a 350' X 300' structure and a wing span of over 200°, the hangar can accommodate a 737 aircraft. This hangar is the only of its kind located Eugene F. Correia International Airport, Ogle, East Coast Demenini. This has provided a major boost for the Tourism and

Guyana to offer an independence safari into the Hinterlands

IN a bid to showcase the natural wonders of Guyana's hinterland regions and foster connections with indigenous communities, Rainforest Tours Guyana, in partnership with the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and Guyana Beverages Inc., has unveiled the nation's inaugural Independence safari.

During the launch event, Kamrul Baksh, Director of GTA, lauded the collaboration, highlighting the safari's misexplore lesser-known destinations within the hinterlands. The route spans from Linden through Bartica and Madhia, culminating in Region Nine, promising an immersive journey through Guyana's diverse landscapes and cultural heritage.

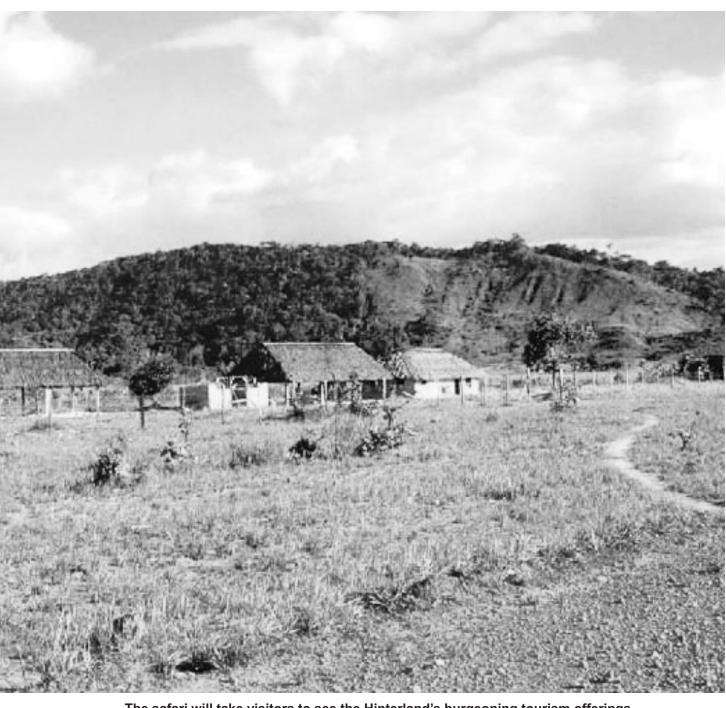
Scheduled from Thursday, May 23 to Sunday, May 26, the safari's itinerary was meticulously crafted based on Rainforest Tours' expertise in navigating the interior regions. Baksh emphasised the safari's role in showcasing Guyana's burgeoning tourism offerings, including new attractions and products in develop-

Region Seven, encompassing Bartica and its surroundings, features prominently in the safari as part of GTA's Discover Essequibo initiative. Moreover, the exploration extends to the untouched terrain of Region Eight, spotlighting communities like Karasabai and their unique attractions, such as the sunfire heat and wave walls.

For Baksh, adventure tourism stands as a cornerstone of Guyana's tourism strategy, with over 52 attractions and products launched in recent years. He stressed GTA's commitment to supporting local tour operators and promotsustainable tourism practices, including initiatives like the anti-littering campaign.

"Going on a safari is not only about the terrain and conquering the terrain, but it also provides the opportunity to see a lot of the hidden gems of Guyana, and we want to bring those hidden gems to light," Baksh explained.

Affordability remains a key consideration, particularly for domestic



The safari will take visitors to see the Hinterland's burgeoning tourism offerings

tourists. GTA and the Ministry of Tourism prioritise cost-effective options, offering discounted trips to encourage local exploration and contribute to the growth of domestic tourism.

Additionally, Baksh said, "While we are encouraging other tour operators to come on board, it is also important for me to mention that we have launched the anti-littering campaign...to try as much for us to reduce the single use plastic products and of course prevent the improper disposal of waste and garbage."

Frank Singh, Managing Director of Rainforest Tours, underscored the significance of the Independence Safari as a pioneering venture. While exploring

Bartica and Madhia, the safari will also pay homage to Guyana's Independence by raising the Golden Arrowhead in the historic Karasabai community, offering participants a glimpse into indigenous

According to him, "Apart from the experience, everyone will get a taste of the indigenous culture."

Lalita Lachman, Marketing Director of Guyana Beverages Inc., expressed the company's enthusiasm for supporting Guyana's tourism sector. Through provision of water and beverages, they aim to ensure travelers remain hydrated and energised throughout the safari experience.

As Guyana's tourism landscape continues to evolve, initiatives like the Independence safari demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development and cultural preservation, inviting both locals and international visitors to embark on a journey of discovery through the country's untamed wilderness and vibrant communities.



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Trinidad & Tobago's Protectionism

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, May 16 2024

TRINIDAD and Tobago's recent rejection of milk shipments from Guyana is not just a mere trade hiccup; it's a glaring symptom of deeper issues plaguing CARICOM's vision of regional integration.

Chairman of Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL), Komal Samaroo, rightfully lambasted Trinidad's protectionist stance, highlighting the hypocrisy of advocating for free trade while erecting barriers to it.

The rejection, based on Trinidad's stringent import regulations, raises serious doubts about the sincerity of CARI-COM's commitment to food-security

It's paradoxical to tout regional cooperation while hindering the movement of essential goods within the community. Such actions undermine the very foundation upon which CARICOM was

Samaroo's frustration is palpable, echoing the sentiments of many entrepreneurs who face similar hurdles in intra-regional trade.

The arbitrary denial of entry for goods that meet international standards and regulatory requirements is not justifiable. It's a slap in the face to businesses striving to expand their markets and contributes to regional prosperity.

Moreover, the lack of reciprocity in trade relations exacerbates the imbal-

ance. While Guyanese products face barriers in Trinidad, similar goods flow freely in the opposite direction. This one-sidedness fosters resentment and undermines the spirit of collaboration that CARICOM aims to foster.

President, Dr Irfaan Ali being engaged on this matter underscores the gravity of the situation. As CARICOM Chair, he must champion the cause of fair trade and hold member states accountable for their actions.

Pursuing legal recourse, even to the Caribbean Court of Justice, is a necessary step to rectify these injustices and ensure equitable treatment for all mem-

Trinidad's outdated legislation regarding honey imports further illustrates the systemic nature of the problem. Despite repeated calls for reform from COTED, Trinidad's reluctance to align with CARICOM's trade protocols persists, impeding the flow of goods and stifling economic growth.

It's time for Trinidad and Tobago to reassess its approach to regional trade. Embracing a more inclusive and cooperative stance is not just beneficial; it's imperative for the survival and prosperity of CARICOM. Protectionism only breeds animosity and undermines the collective goals of the community.

True regional integration requires a paradigm shift towards openness, fairness, and mutual respect. Anything less jeopardises the unity and progress of the Caribbean Community.

Free University Education: PPP keeps its promise

Editorial from Guyana Chronicle, May 15 2024

IN keeping with a manifesto promise to provide free university education, the PPP/C administration has taken a decision to write off debts incurred by university students who have successfully completed their university education and have served the country for a minimum of three years.

It will be recalled that President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali upon taking office had promised that free university education will be provided before the end of the current PPP/C term in office. This has now become a reality with a recent announcement by Senior Minister of Finance Dr. Ashni Singh.

According to Dr. Singh, government will write off all loans owed by Guyanese who can demonstrate that they have completed their course of study and graduated, and subsequent to graduation, were employed or self-employed in Guyana for a minimum of three years as evidenced by a minimum of 156 contributions made to the National Insurance Scheme.

This first phase, according to Dr Singh, could potentially benefit over

13,000 Guyanese who have \$11 billion in student loans.

This is indeed a visionary and forward-looking step by the PPP/C administration which would have a positive impact on the development of human capital, so critical at this stage of the country's development.

Guyana is now on the cusp of unprecedented transformative changes and developments. As experience has demonstrated in countries that have transitioned from underdevelopment to modern societies, it is the availability and application of human capital that has been a critical variable.

Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan have one thing in common, namely, the development and application of a critical mass of human capital which provided the impetus to leapfrog their economies to much higher levels of growth and development, commonly referred to as Asian Tigers.

Education however, is more than a means to an end. Indeed, it is an end in its own right, one of empowering people to live healthier and productive lives. It was such thinking that led to the establishment of the University of

Guyana way back in 1963 under the then Jagan administration, still under colonial rule.

It is significant that the PPP/C administration has now taken that bold and decisive step to make university education free to all Guyanese stu-

Education has always been a top priority of the PPP/C administration. But, as our past experience has shown, it is not enough to provide 'free' education but more importantly to ensure that there is quality education and one that is relevant to the country's developmental thrust.

This is exactly what the PPP/C administration is doing as it seeks to provide a high, world-class quality of education second to none in the region and beyond.

In addition to university education provided on campus at the Turkeyen and Tain campuses, hundreds of Guyanese students are also benefitting from free online tertiary education offered by the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) in a wide array of disciplines offered at universities and colleges across the world.

President Ali and the PPP/C administration must be commended for the emphasis it has been placing on human resource development and the creation of social capital so vital for accelerated development and progress.

Its per capita spending on education compares favourably with that of several countries in the region and with that of many others, both in the developing and the developed world.

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Ontario to fund new way to implement \$10-a-day child-care

Press:

Ontario has told child-care centres that it will implement a new way of funding the national \$10-a-day program — something operators have urgently called for — starting in 2025.

Child-care centres, including the YMCA, the largest operator in the province, have been warning about the risk of closures if the funding formula isn't soon updated to cover the actual cost of providing care, rather than just replacing the revenue they've lost from the now-discounted fees.

After several delays, the province told them in a memo last week that the new structure will be in place for next

"The priority for us is to provide certainty to the operators," Education Minister Stephen Lecce said in a recent interview.

"We've given lots of time now, half a year of certainty to prepare for that transition because the priority is to make sure we keep operators in the system so that we can provide affordable child care to hundreds of thousands of families."

Traditionally, child-care centres have raised parent fees when they faced rising expenses such as staffing costs, catering, rent, heating and supplies. However, any operator that wanted to

with files from the Canadian sign on to the national plan had to freeze their fees in March 2022, and many had voluntarily frozen them since 2020, not wanting to raise rates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

> That means the government's revenue replacement model is based on rates that don't reflect the true current cost of providing child care, and the amount Ontario has factored in for inflation — 2.1 per cent for 2024 and 2.75 for 2023 — is not cutting it, some operators

> The province has put more than \$98 million this year toward "emerging issues" for when operators aren't able to cover non-discretionary costs such as rent increases.

> YMCA of Greater Toronto Chief Operating Officer Janie Romoff said the increases will address what's needed in the short term, but hopes the new funding formula will truly cover operators' costs so the program is sustainable into the future.

> "This is a critical step to ensure that providers — including our charity can continue to deliver high-quality child care under the new \$10-a-day system," Romoff wrote in a statement.

> "We appreciate the complexity of this type of change and, while disappointed with the delay, recognize the need to get it right."



Education Minister Stephen Lecce



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The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

Another Misleading Comparison by Kaieteur News' Publisher



Joel Bhagwandin

Trinidad & Tobago (TT) has recently launched their "natural gas audit results" for the year ended 2022. In view of this, the publisher of Kaieteur News (KN), Glenn Lall, sought to sell a misleading story, viz-à-viz, a so-called comparison, suggesting that the Guyanese Government has failed to uphold a similar standard as regards Guyana's natural gas resources. The story by the KN publisher, however, lacked context

According to TT's "Gas Master Plan (2015), TT has been a commercial pro-

ducer of natural gas since 1953 (71 years to date), and it has only started to conduct audits of this kind annually since 2001—that is, forty-eight (48) years later since becoming a commercial producer of natural gas (1953).

In the case of Guyana, natural gas has so far been established in the Liza-1 field that is sufficient to monetize. ExxonMobil is still conducting feasibility studies in other fields to determine whether those fields have natural gas that could be commercialized. In fact, the Government of

Guyana is currently finalizing a "Gas Strategy" for the country. It is important to note that the natural gas resources from the Liza-1 field that is associated with the gasto-energy (GtE) project, will be derived as a byproduct from the drilling of crude oil. As part of Guyana's gas master plan, the Government has to consider whether natural gas production will be pursued as a separate development, as in the case of TT.

Therefore, considering Guyana's current state in terms of natural gas produc-

tion, it is premature to conduct "gas audits" of a similar nature as in the case of TT. The natural gas resources in Guyana have not yet been fully explored and Guyana has not yet started to produce its gas resources. It is unfortunate and more so mischievous that media entities are omitting context altogether when putting out these stories. The omission of context and facts is becoming the norm of the day in some sections of the media fraternity. It is also improper to compare and contrast a 100+ years old industry with a 4-years-old industry.

Letters to the Editor

Agriculture must never fail again

Dear Editor,

GONE are the days when agriculture in Guyana struggled. Under the PNC, struggling was a word often heard and echoed amongst our people. I bring attention to the APNU+AFC's 2015 manifesto. I would like to say it is timely, considering the opposition is hot on the path of making empty promises and creating mischief to discredit the work of the PPP/C, all for

the 2025 General and Regional Elections.

Make no mistake, they will try their utmost, but I want the people to remember that promises were made in their manifesto in 2015, many of which lacked substance. It is tragic that they dedicated an entire section to sugar and how they planned to develop it once they were in government, but quickly resorted to shutting

the estates down and sending thousands into unemployment and poverty.

One of their "action plan"[sic] was to "enhance the quality of sugar workers within their communities through better facilities, sports and social amenities." I kid you not, that was an actual, proposed plan. Can the sugar workers highlight if such was done for them under the APNU+AFC administration?

I do hope that when these workers choose to protest/strike they also remember that they were fired under the previous government, they hadn't a job, they could not earn, they could not support their families, their children were forced to stay home from school because they could not afford to send them, they could not afford to eat three square meals a day, it was a

struggle.

I am not saying persons do not have a right to go out there and demand better when it comes to their livelihoods, but we must never forget the atrocities of the APNU+AFC government that forced thousands of Guyanese into "punishment." It is timely to remind the public of the nonsense that was done under the failed coalition regime.

I can and will never forget because I saw the tears, I heard the painful stories of families struggling to survive and that alone is enough for me to make a decision of never lending support to APNU+AFC. Agriculture suffered tremendously, but we are making strides thanks to Minister Zulfikar Mustapha.

Sincerely, Nigel King



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Entrepreneur offers Canadian Olympians a bump in prize money

From the CBC:

Canada's medallists in Paris will get a bump in podium prize money.

A donation by Canadian health-care technology entrepreneur Sanjay Malaviya of Hespeler, Ont., will make a gold medal worth a total of \$25,000, silver \$20,000 and bronze \$15,000 to athletes.

The 2024 Olympic Games open July 26 and close Aug. 11 followed by the Paralympic Games from Aug. 28 to Sept. 8.

Malaviya has renewed grants of \$5,000 per medal, which he gave retroactively in 2022 to Canada's 130 Olympic and 53 Paralympic medallists in that year's Beijing's Winter Games and also in Tokyo's Summer Games in 2021.

"During COVID, I woke up and read the news early. It was during the last Olympic cycle and an Australian businessman had given \$5,000 for every summer Olympic Australian athlete because he was just so happy that the team went to the Olympics and did so well," he said. "I just wondered 'wow, who is doing that in Canada?"

The continuation of his Team Canada Podium Awards at both the Paris Games and the 2026 Winter Games in Milan-Cortina, Italy, adds to the \$20,000 for gold, \$15,000 for silver and \$10,000 for bronze given to athletes by the Canadian Olympic and Para-



Canadian health-care technology entrepreneur Sanjay Malaviya

lympic committees.

"I really wanted the dollars to go directly to the athletes," Malaviya said. "I've had a lot of calls from Olympians and Paralympians who really appreciated the recognition and acknowledgment. I was overwhelmed by that. I didn't really expect that.

"It just showed it made a difference for them which in the bottom of my heart was really what I was trying to do."

For comparison, the U.S Olympic and Paralympic Committee's "Project Gold" doles out \$37,500 for gold,

\$22,500 for silver and \$15,000 for bronze.

Malaviya was also a driver behind the recent announcement that Canada's Paralympic medallists will be financially rewarded for the first time in Paris, and at the same level as Olympic athletes who have received medal bonuses since 2006.

Malaviya committed \$4 million to an \$8-million endowment fund to sustain medal money for Paralympians into the future.

The 56-year-old founder and chief executive officer of RL Solutions also

renewed a \$100,000 contribution to NextGen athletes.

"He really, really cares about helping Team Canada athletes on the path to the podium," said Jacqueline Ryan, chief executive officer of the Canadian Olympic Foundation.

"He is a nation builder, he cares about the role that these athletes play, so he wants to help fund them and make sure that they have all the resources they need on the path to the podium because they inspire us all."

Malaviya founded RL Solutions in 1997 in Toronto to design health-care software for patient feedback, incident reporting and risk management.

The company merged with a London-based firm in 2018 to become RL Datix. Malaviya continues to be a board member of a company with 3,000 clients and a staff of 2,000 in 19 countries.

Between grants for medals and his donation to the Paralympic committee's foundation for medal money, Malaviya's committed over \$6 million to Canadian athletes since 2022.

"When you think of the calibre of people who compete at that level on the world stage, there's just no other way to get there than to be resilient, than to be persistent, than to know how to deal with failure, than to get up when you get knocked down and start again," Malaviya said.

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Sheriff General Hospital continues to bring cutting-edge services

IN just over a year of operation, the Sheriff General Hospital at Leonora in Region Three continues to deliver on its commitments towards changing the way the healthcare system is seen in Guyana by bringing cutting-edge services to Guyanese at an affordable cost.

One of the proprietors of the Sheriff Group of Companies and the new managing partner of Sheriff General Hospital, Ameir Ahmad, gave this newspaper an exclusive interview in which he credited Guyanese for inspiring them to make investments to introduce "redefined beauty" services to Guyana and elevate healthcare to new heights.

The managing partner said: "I am grateful and proud of what we have been doing and what we have accomplished in just a year at the Sheriff General Hospital, but we could not have done it without the people of Guyana. Their trust and belief in us continue to motivate us to want to do better and offer the best services to them."

Acknowledging Guyana's revolutionary path and the evolution of Guyanese culture and worldview, Ameir said that making healthcare more widely accessible and providing plastic surgery operations at their facility are game changers for the expanding economy.

According to him: "We have



implants, liposuction, tummy tucks,

recognised that there is no longer a stigma attached to plastic surgeries as much as it once was. In this present era, people are spending their money travelling to countries such as the Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Brazil to have treatments like buttock



One of the ads from Sheriff Hospital that is attracting attention

The Sherrif General Hospital in Leonora

and breast lifts, just because they may be less expensive than in the United

"So, at Sheriff, we have decided to invest in some of the best surgeons from Cuba and Colombia to perform any type of plastic surgery at a safe and affordable price."

While Sheriff Group of Companies aims to advance in every sector of their business, Ameir related that their ultimate aim is to boost the country's

"In everything that we do as a company, obviously we are aiming at making money; however, we also take pride and joy in knowing that we are contributing to our country's economy. This is a huge accomplishment for us, but as a country, we are further motivated to ensure that Guyana becomes the hub for plastic surgeries," he said.

Ameir also shared that the construction work on another ultra-modern specialty hospital at Aubrey Barker Road, South Ruimveldt, Georgetown (New Four Lane Highway) is moving

According to him: "Because of the type of service that we are planning to offer at this facility, a state-ofthe-art structure is required. Right now, we are looking at the various sectors that are flourishing in Guyana, and we know that this type of competition, even though it is good for the country, also pushes us to bring our A

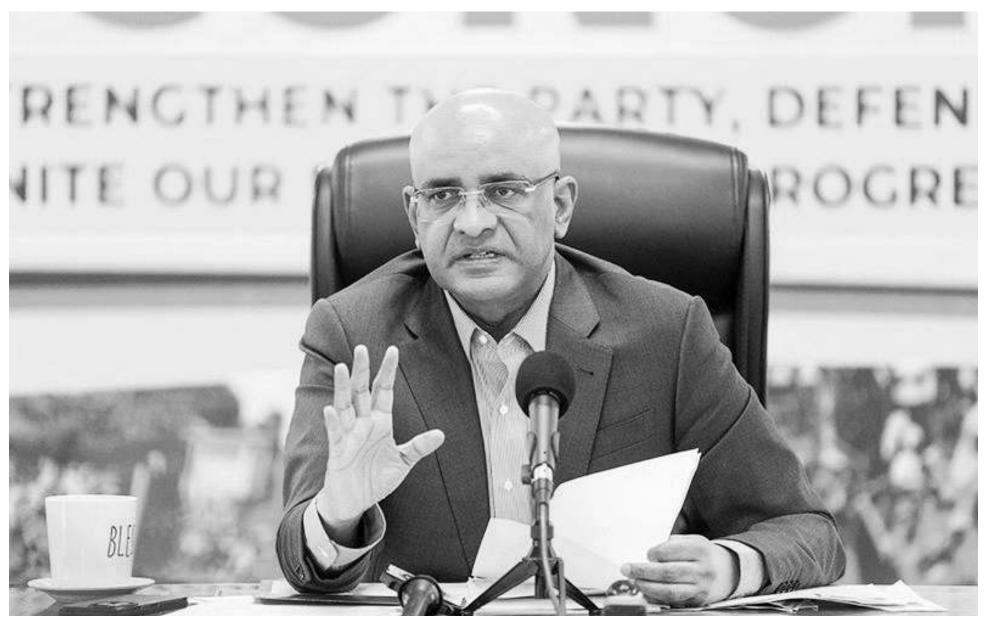
Reflecting on what he shared

with this publication sometime last year, Ameir said: "For us, medical tourism refers to the recognition of Guyana, and we are going above and beyond to ensure that the Sheriff Hospitals provide a less expensive option for healthcare for Guyanese as well as people from the Caribbean and other nations.

"Having to remove a tumour or doing brain surgery may cost you an arm and a leg abroad; however, we are working with you to ensure that the cost is only one-third of what you were going to pay, and to make it even simpler, we are also accepting insurance from all around the world," he said.

Among the services offered, Ameir said that the new facility will also offer cardiac surgery, organ transplants, cancer screening and treatment, bone reconstruction surgery, surgeries related to the retina and eyes, neurology, dialysis, urology, psychotherapy and counselling, plastic surgery, dental services, internal medicine, and myriad laboratory tests, including biopsies and culture tests.

Sharing his plans for the healthcare sector, Ameir said that their intentions are to open smaller medical facilities in Region One (Barima-Waini) and Region Two (Pomeroon/Supenaam), a medical centre in Lethem, Region Nine (Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo), and Linden, Region 10 (Upper Demerara-Upper Berbice).



Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo as he announced new benefits for Guyanese students

Proof of employment, NIS not necessary to access student loan write-off

PERSONS who are interested in benefiting from the government's student loan write-off initiative are not mandated to provide proof of employment or contributions to the country's National Insurance Scheme (NIS), People's Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary and Guyana's Vice-President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo has clarified.

Dr Jagdeo, during a news conference at the party's Georgetown headquarters, told reporters that the government is aware that some graduates of the University of Guyana (UG) might have been unemployed and might have not made a certain amount of contributions to NIS.

He highlighted that this is not a requirement to benefit from the government's initiative.

"You don't have to provide that evidence of a 156 contributions made to the NIS, we want to make this easy for our people who have outstanding loans. We don't want to put in conditions that will create or minimise the impact of this initiative, which we believe can help a lot of people," Dr Jagdeo said.

Further, he related that the government will be examining a mechanism to assist those students who would have already paid their dues to the university, but are currently repaying loans to commercial banks.

Earlier this week, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, announced Phase One of the government's plan to write off the loans of University of Guyana (UG) students.

The initiative is in keeping with the government's manifesto commitment to deliver free tertiary education by 2025.

This first phase, Dr. Singh said, could potentially benefit over 13,000 Guyanese who have \$11 billion in student loans.

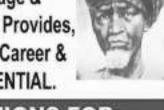
"In keeping with our One Guyana vision, and in line with our party's people-centred approach to development, and our manifesto, the government remains committed to providing free tertiary education to Guyanese by 2025," Dr. Singh had said.

Back in December 2023, President Dr. Irfaan Ali had announced that a phased programme will be implemented to achieve free tertiary education at the country's premier institution.

The Head of State had disclosed then that persons who currently have loans at the university will be the first group of the student population the phased approach will target.

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EPA's capacity being enhanced to monitor oil, gas sector

GENERAL Secretary (GS) of the People's Progressive Party, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, has assured that the government is working to build capacity of the Environmental Protection Agency to better monitor the activities within the oil and gas sector.

Dr. Jagdeo acknowledged the need for significant improvement in integrating more technology into the sector. According to the GS, the government has already made headway in this regard.

"We have independent satellite monitoring now to detect any sheen in the water so that even small quantities of oil leaks can be detected because of high resolution satellite imaging and monitoring," he told reporters at his weekly press conference at Freedom House on Thursday.

Through its Monitoring Recording Verification System (MRVS), the EPA, in conjunction with the Ministry of Natural Resources, also has the capacity for real-time monitoring and reporting of environmental discharges aboard the Floating, Production, Storage and Offloading Vessels (FPSOs).

This technology also allows them to monitor how much oil is being extracted by ExxonMobil and its partners from the Stabroek Block.

Added to this, Dr Jagdeo said that independent thermal imaging systems are in place to detect any flaring.

Flaring is the controlled burning of excess natural gas, preventing dangerous buildups that could lead to explosions.

This process occurs during oil production, where natural gas is often extracted alongside crude oil.

However, the gas needs to be separated and treated before it can be used as a fuel source. It requires processing and infrastructure for transport, which may not be available or economically feasible in all locations. While flaring offers a safety measure, it's not an ideal solution.

To hold the contractor accountable



Street vendors in Georgetown

for maintaining an environmentally acceptable state, the government has put in place a fine of US\$30 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent for flaring on the FPSOs.

"There is a live feed for discharge water, and they do independent samples of the water to be discharged. They test it to ensure that the water meets the standards that are outlined in the environmental permits they received. We have strengthened those standards, and they are international standards," the General Secretary added.

Although existing systems effectively monitor offshore activities, the GS highlighted the government's commitment to continuously strengthen its capabilities in this area.

"We need to continue building capacity at the EPA and in government itself, independent capacity and with government itself to do greater monitoring. We are working on it, but we do have some capacity to deal with this issue," he said. (DPI)



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UG gets international accreditation for Petroleum Engineering

THE University of Guyana's Faculty of Engineering and Technology has received its first international accreditation for the Associate of Science in Petroleum Engineering and the Bachelor of Science in Petroleum Engineering from the London-based International Energy Institute.

The university in making this disclosure on Sunday said that it hosted the five-man accreditation evaluation visit and team in February, when the favourable verbal report was given ahead of the formal notification to the university, recently.

"The University of Guyana began offering programmes in petroleum engineering in 2017/2018 academic year in collaboration with the University of Trinidad and Tobago. The programme graduated two batches in the associate programme and the first batch of thirty (30) in the bachelor's degree last November. The programmes in energy [and] oil and gas are among the highestdemand new programmes in the Faculty of Engineering, attracting a large number of young women as well," UG said in a press release.

It added that the accreditation exercise was led and executed by Dean Verlyn Klass, who is heading the programme, along with Assistant Dean Basheer Khan and UTT's Professor Neal Alleyene.

"The achievement of international



UG's first batch of Petroleum Engineers at their graduation

accreditation for the programme assures graduates of international mobility and As part of its forward-looking blueprint,

stronger recognition for their degrees.

the University of Guyana has set high goals for quality assurance in teaching and learning and several new accreditation exercises have been undertaken in addition to others already achieved," the release added.

It said that the offices of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Paloma Mohamed, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the Senior Management Team of the University of Guyana extend their delighted congratulations to the faculty and students on achieving this significant milestone.

Graduates of the programmes in petroleum are in high demand in Guyana and are employed within five months of graduating, if not before, the release said.

The university said it is currently aligning its programme offerings to the national, regional and international development context.

The university's application process for the Academic Year 2024/2025 is currently open. The degrees being offered by the University of Guyana are internationally recognised, marketable and affordable.

Interested persons are asked to access the following link to explore proofferings https://turkeyenonline.uog.edu.gy/srms/ student/prospective/application/login.p

More nurses from Cuba expected in Guyana

IN an effort to mitigate the shortage of nurses that exists in Guyana's healthcare system, approximately 50 more nurses from Cuba are expected in Guyana this week.

This was disclosed by Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, on the sidelines of a recent event where he stated that so far this year, 50 nurses from Cuba have arrived in the country, with more on the way.

When asked by the Guyana Chronicle to provide details on this, he said: "So we had some nurses that came in from Cuba already. I think we had about 50 that came in and later this month we have another 50 that are coming."

Late last year, the minister announced that efforts were being made to increase the number of nurses in the system here. As a result, he said that the local authorities had asked the Cuban government for nurses to aid with the shortage.



Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony

At that time, he said at least 200 nurses were expected early this year as part of an arrangement with the Cuban government.

Meanwhile, the minister said that this second batch is expected this week and they will be distributed to different hospitals across the country.

"Basically, when they come in, we would put them at different institutions, so we would not put them all at one place," Dr Anthony said while adding that of the set that came initially, they are spread out at the Georgetown Public Hospital, New Amsterdam hospital, Linden Hospital and Suddie Hospital.

Previously, the health minister indicated that, based on a manpower audit that was done, approximately 4,000 more nurses are needed for the new health structre that is being built.

As a result, increased training in this area has begun with over 1,100 persons currently enrolled in the hybrid nurses training programme which commenced in 2022.

Further to this, a nursing assistant programme will see some 1,000 persons entering the health system by the end of this year.

This level of increased training will continue to fit whatever need there is in the current system.

Bartica poised to become important development hub

AS Region Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni) continues to stand as an important player in the expansion of a number of sectors, President Dr Irfaan Ali has said that Bartica is poised to become an important development hub.

He made those remarks during an outreach in Agatash village on Friday, when he laid out the development plan that will take place in not only the community, but the region, overall.

As he outlined the government's vision in continuing to enhance the various sectors such as health and education, in order to benefit the Guyanese people, the Head of State stated: "One of the priorities of the government is to create an environment in which the people are included in their own decision-making.

"The people are included in identifying their priorities and what can advance life in their community, because the most important thing for us in this government is to build prosperity to every single community, regardless of how small that community is and how large that community is."

He added: "We have been working with every single community across the country to enhance productivity, build livelihood options, bring prosperity and advance the development of people all across our country."

As he reflected on the lack of investments under the previous coalition



President Ali during an outreach in Region Seven

government, Dr Ali, with evidence, showed that the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration is a government that fulfils its promises and even goes beyond, all in the name of bringing betterment to the citizens.

"Today, I could stand here and say with a clear conscience, we have fulfilled all our manifesto commitments and we are working on bonus now," he told the scores of residents.

Since returning to office, the PPP/C

government has not only restored the 'Because We Care' grant, but it has also invested heavily in agriculture, human services and health, among other things.

With that said, the President told the villagers that their children have gotten more than \$25 million in the 'Because We Care' grant, which the APNU+AFC government had terminated.

Noting that the PPP/C government understood the difficulties in attaining learning materials, Dr Ali disclosed that \$2.8 million was given to the schools within the village to support learning.

Additionally, close to \$12 million was expended to improve drainage and irrigation and rehabilitate drainage networks within the village.

Notably, Dr Ali spent some time highlighting how the country's landmark Low-Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 is directly benefiting the villages.

For Agatash, \$24 million was transferred and this aided them in carrying out a number of community initiatives and projects, such as purchasing a school bus

"This is not fairytale story. This is the real story of development. This is the real story of your government developing and delivering to you," the President said



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36-megawatt power ship connected to Guyana's national grid

IN a significant step towards enhancing the nation's energy stability, the newly connected power ship has started supplying electricity to the national grid.

The Guyana Power and Light (GPL) announced on Saturday that 18 megawatts (MW) of electricity generation from the vessel is now being integrated into the Demerara-Berbice Interconnected System (DBIS) at Everton, Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne).

This marine-based energy solution boasts the capacity to generate up to 36 megawatts of electricity, powered predominantly by heavy fuel oil (HFO).

According to the power company, the remaining 18 MW will be added to the grid incrementally during the course of the coming week.

GPL thanked the government, the National Data Management Authority (NDMA), E-Net, GAICO Construction Incorporated and its dedicated Transmission and Distribution and Protection and Instrumentation employees for their invaluable contribution towards realising this timely initiative. The company has also thanked its customers for having patience and understanding.

The power ship arrived in Guyana on May 1. This addition is expected to alleviate the pressure on the national grid, particularly during peak consumption hours, and reduce the frequent power outages that have plagued various regions across the country.

The vessel last operated in Cuba and has two engines which produce 18.5 megawatts each. Moreover, it will operate at a remarkable 96 per cent availability, and is integrated into GPL's grid at 69 kilovolts (kV).

On April 13, GPL signed a contract with Urbacon Concessions Investments, W.L.L (UCI) to charter the power ship for a period of two years, with US\$1



million paid as a mobilisation fee.

The contract includes the provision of operational and maintenance services as part of the agreement.

UCI is a subsidiary of UCC Holdings, a company incorporated in the State of Qatar. UCC Holdings has a strategic alliance with Karpowership International, a Turkish company.

Under the terms of the agreement, GPL will pay a monthly charter fee of 6.62 US cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) for the power ship, along with a 0.98 US cents per kWh operation and maintenance fee based on electricity generation.



The 36-megawatt power ship

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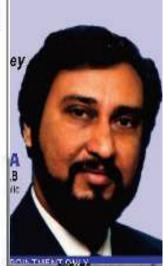
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Holness to address school violence in JA with social strategies

Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness has underscored that the issue of violence in schools extends beyond the confines of educational institutions, labeling it a "social problem" that requires multifaceted responses from his government.

Holness emphasized the necessity of employing various social intervention strategies and programs to address the rising incidence of deadly confrontations among students.

During a recent meeting with Custos of Manchester Garfield Green, Holness articulated his stance on the matter, highlighting the inadequacy of solely relying on security-oriented solutions.

"The truth is that the children are coming out of households which are not always reinforcing the values of society or reinforcing what is being taught in the schools, and many of these children are without guidance and direction," Holness asserted on Wednesday.

Acknowledging the prevalence of bullying in some schools, Holness also emphasized the need for comprehensive social interventions, particularly targeting young males susceptible to gang culture. He outlined plans for one-on-one direct interventions aimed at steering individuals away from adopting such detrimental behaviors.

"We will have the necessary social interventions (for that), both from the level of the security point-of-view, but more so from the engagement, particularly with our young males who are caught up in gang culture, even if they are not part of a gang, they try to model and adopt this gang culture, and the only way to treat with that is the one-on-one direct intervention," Holness explained.

Furthermore, Holness pledged government support for the Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes (BVA) program, which facilitates interactions between Justices of the Peace (JPs) and students within school settings. He expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the announced measures in swiftly curbing the escalation of school violence.

"I am certain that we can bring school violence – the increase that we are seeing – under control very rapidly with the measures that I've announced," Holness stated.

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GTA fostering local tourism, cultural engagement by hosting media

IN significant steps towards promoting Guyana's vibrant culture and pristine ecosystems, the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) has launched several initiatives designed to enhance the visibility and long-term sustainability of tourism in Guyana.

From April 25 to May 2, the GTA, in collaboration with Wilderness Explorers, hosted a Familiarisation (FAM) Tour for North American media representatives, providing them with a firstexperience of Guyana's spectacular natural beauty and cultural heritage.

The media guests explored multiple key attractions, including the Waikin Ranch, Caiman House, Yupukari Village, Karanambu Lodge, and the breathtaking Kaieteur Falls, among others.

Their journey also included culturally enriching experiences like the Bourda Market Tour in Georgetown and a Demerara Sunset Cruise, offering a full spectrum of Guyana's tourist offerings.

In a parallel effort to integrate agricultural development with tourism, the GTA has also thrown its support behind the Agri-tourism Policy and Roadmap Development initiative led by the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA).

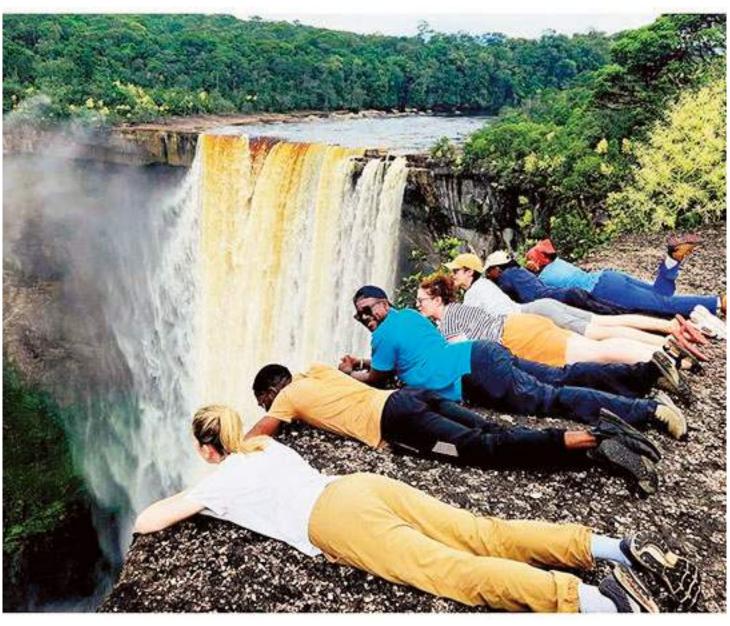
This initiative aims to align with the National Strategic Development Policy to foster agri-tourism in Region Nine, enhancing the local economy and the tourism sector's sustainability.

Adding to its list of projects, the GTA recently facilitated another Familiarisation Trip under the Discover Essequibo Circuit Development Project.

This project, a collaborative effort with the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana and regional tourism committees, included distinguished participants such as Jane Miller, the British High Commissioner to Guyana, and Mark Berman, the Canadian High Com-

The trip showcased new tourism products and facilitated engagements with local stakeholders, highlighting the potential of the Essequibo and Bartica

Additionally, the GTA also celebrated the conclusion of the "Scaling Up Community-led & Owned Tourism



North American media representatives enjoying the legendary Kaieteur Falls

Development in Guyana" project, funded by the European Union.

This project focused on empowering Indigenous communities through sustainable tourism, culminating in a closing ceremony at the Lethem Business Incubator Centre.

Some 15 participants from communities including Sand Creek, Aishalton, and Shulinab completed an extensive learning route, gaining skills in various aspects of tourism at established enterprises like Toka and Manari

These initiatives collectively aim to not only promote Guyana as a top-tier tourist destination but also to foster socio-economic development through sustainable, community-driven efforts.



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More EV charging stations coming across Guyana, says PM

PRIME Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips over the weekend emphasised the need for continued support and investment in renewable energy to achieve a sustainable future.

The Prime Minister was at the time delivering remarks at an "EV Show and Tell" hosted by the Guyana Energy Agency at the University of Guyana Berbice Campus.

While emphasising the need to embrace renewable alternatives, he said: "The world is transitioning from non-renewable to renewable energy. Greater usage of renewable energy will lead to greater resilience against climate change and reduce the carbon footprint on the entire world and help us to be greater in terms of the resilience against the effects of climate change."

Against this backdrop, he indicated that the government will lead by example and will soon acquire an electric vehicle fleet. He added that while six EV charging stations have already been set up including one in Berbice, there are plans for more to be put in place.

Addressing the need for continued support and investment, he highlighted the government's efforts to promote



Guyana Prime Minister Mark Phillips

solar technology in both urban and hinterland regions, as the government has distributed household solar systems benefitting hinterland residents.

"28,000 household solar systems

have changed the lives of 120,000 people throughout our hinterland and riverine areas... it is our intention to distribute an additional 10,000 household systems," he said.

To this end, he urged those present at the show and tell to embrace renewable solutions like solar power and electric mobility, noting that electric vehicles are environmentally friendly and cost-effective in the long term.

Prime Minster Phillips noted that clean energy is pivotal in Guyana's energy transformation and long-term sustainability goals.

Earlier this year, he highlighted the government's adoption of robust policies, cost-effective technologies and energy-efficient solutions. These initiatives, he said, aim to provide equitable and affordable access to clean and renewable energy.

Significant strides are being made through the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 which focuses on the use of innovative clean energy solutions using natural resources.

As part of the broader strategy, plans are in place to expand renewable energy capacity, specifically solar PV, hydropower and wind. This energy mix which the government is pursuing, he noted, will result in more than 500 megawatts of capacity over the next five years.

First Lady calls on Guyanese to stand with Gaza

FIRST Lady Arya Ali, on Saturday evening, hosted a candlelight vigil in support of the Palestinian mothers affected by the atrocities in Palestine.

The vigil which was held at the Kingston Seawall Esplanade, saw hundreds of persons attending to show their support for mothers who have lost their children and continue to suffer due to the crisis.

The First Lady encouraged Guyanese citizens to stand up for the humanity of the Palestinians.

"We must act, we must speak out against the atrocities being committed in Gaza, we must demand accountability from those who perpetrate these crimes against humanity," she implored.

The human rights advocate stressed that Guyana continues to show its unwavering commitment to supporting Palestinians in various ways such as sourcing funds and awareness programmes, among other interventions.

"The \$110.8 million raised recently to support humanitarian efforts in Palestine is another testament to Guyana's commitment to support our

sisters and brothers...," First Lady Ali pointed out.

Also present at the vigil was Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud who noted that since taking a seat at the United Nations Security Council, Guyana has advocated for the safety and peace of Palestinians.

"Guyana unequivocally stands with the people of Palestine.

Guyana at the United Nations Security Council would have raised its hand consistently for justice, immediate

seize fire, humanitarian aid for these people," the Human Services Minister said.

Minister Persaud noted that many persons have joined the movement and called for immediate ceasefire.



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He's only 115 cm tall, but Abdu Rozik is a big star on social media and in the movies

Height doesn't matter: Abdu Rozik announces plans to marry

Social media influencer and Bigg Boss 16 fame Abdu Rozik recently made headlines after announcing his engagement with fiancé Amira. The singer revealed that they will tie the knot in July and Salman Khan will grace the ceremony. While not much is known about Amira, Abdu had said that she is from Sharjah and is studying Business Administration.

In an interview with Etimes, the 20-year-old singer said that he met Amira at a food joint and it was love at first sight. Abdu also clarified that their engagement is not a PR strategy or any promotion of music video. "Maybe people find it hard to believe that a small guy like me has found love," he added.

Abdu, who is shorter than his fiancée Amira,

says their height difference hasn't affected their love. Abdu said that he is 115 cm and Amira is 155 cm and added that he used to worry about finding a partner due to his height, but now he's grateful to have met Amira. He said that while Amira is taller than him, but it has never come between their relationship.

A few days ago Abdu took to his social media handle and shared pictures from the engagement ceremony. He did not reveal Amira's face, but gave a glimpse of the heart shaped diamond ring.

Sharing the news, he wrote, "I never imagined in my life that I will be so lucky to find a love who respects me and is not burdened by the obstacles in my life 7th of July save the date!! I cannot express to you in words how happy I am."

Rivals turn up the heat using AI on Modi

An AI video shows an ecstatic Narendra Modi sporting a trendy jacket and trousers, grooving on a stage to a Bollywood song as the crowd cheers. The Indian prime minister reshared the video on X, saying "such creativity in peak poll season is truly a delight."

Another video, with the same stage setting, shows Modi's rival Mamata Banerjee dancing in a saree-like outfit, but the background score is parts of her speech criticizing those who quit her party to join Modi's. State police have launched an investigation saying the video can "affect law and order."

The different reactions to videos created using artificial intelligence (AI) tools underscore how the use and abuse of the technology is increasing and creating worries for regulators and security officials as the world's most populous nation holds a mammoth general election.

Easy to make AI videos, which contain nearperfect shadow and hand movements, can at times mislead even digitally-literate people. But risks are higher in a country where many of the 1.4 billion people are tech challenged and where manipulated content can easily stir sectarian tensions, especially at election time. According to a World Economic Forum survey published in January, the risk to India from misinformation is seen higher than the risk from infectious diseases or illicit economic activity in the next two years.

"India is already at a great risk of misinformation - with AI in picture, it can spread at the speed of 100X," said New Delhi-based consultant Sagar Vishnoi, who is advising some political parties on AI use in India's election.

"Elderly people, often not a tech savvy group, increasingly fall for fake narratives aided by AI videos. This could have serious consequences like triggering hatred against a community, caste or religion."

The 2024 national election – being held over six weeks and ending on June 1 – is the first in which AI is being deployed. Initial examples were innocent, restricted to some politicians using the technology to create videos and audio to personalize their campaigns.

But major cases of misuse hit the headlines in April including deepfakes of Bollywood actors, opens new tab criticizing Modi and fake clips, opens new tab involving two of Modi's top aides that led to the arrest of nine people.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Something that just a week or two ago looked like a setback now looks like a triumph. Take that as a reminder that even when some issues appear to be over and done with there is often still a chance to change them for the better again.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): No matter how much fun you've had in recent weeks the excitement factor will surge up another notch, of three, over the next few days. There has never been a better time to express yourself creatively to the absolute full – so what are you waiting for?

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): You may not realize it yet but there is a luck factor building up in your favor and when the Sun moves into your sign a week from now so many of those obstructions that have been holding you back will come tumbling down. So be patient.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): You may possess strong likes and dislikes but you must also strive to understand why certain people act the way they do. Look honestly at what's going on around you today and recognize that very few people are actually bad or evil.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): You won't just be moving up a rung or two on the work front over the coming week, you will be soaring skyward at a rate of knots. Cosmic activity in the career area of your chart is about to propel you way out into the professional stratosphere.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): The most important thing for you over the next few days is that you know when to stop. There is so much great stuff going on in your fellow Earth sign of Taurus that it's inevitable you will get carried away. Slow down before you fall down!

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): This could be and should be a profitable time for you and with so much cosmic activity taking place in the wealth area of your chart over the next few days those profits could be much bigger than you expected. Enjoy your good fortune – you've earned it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): With the Sun, Venus, Jupiter and Uranus all moving through the partnership area of your chart at the moment you will find it ridiculously easy to win people round to your way of thinking and acting. Your powers of persuasion are truly irresistible.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): You have so much enthusiasm for life at the moment, and so much raw primal energy to go with it, that you could easily find yourself doing a dozen things at once. Imagine what you could accomplish if you channeled all that energy in a single direction.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): If you are not aiming to be the biggest and the best at what you do in life then you are operating way below your true capacity. Cosmic activity in the most dynamic area of your chart can make anything and everything happen now – so use it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Some things matter and some things do not. Are you clear in your mind which is which? If you waste time and energy on matters of a trivial nature today you will kick yourself later on when you realize how much more you could have accomplished.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): The more you are on the move today the more likely it is you will encounter people who can make the kind of difference to your lifestyle that you have so often dreamed of and so rarely experienced. Don't slow down for even a moment – in fact, speed up!

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JA declares zero-tolerance for crimes, violence against students

In response to a recent incident that left one student dead and another injured, Jamaica's Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, has declared a zero-tolerance stance on crime affecting students and the educational environment.

The incident occurred as two students were returning home from sports day activities, leading to a 16-year-old boy's death and injuries to his 15-year-old female companion.

Dr. Chang emphasized that the government would respond forcefully to protect students from being caught in criminal activities.

Accompanied by the Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams, Dr. Chang was part of a ministerial delegation that visited Grange Hill High School in Westmoreland.

The visit aimed to reassure school administrators, students, and residents that the government's commitment to maintaining safety and order is unwavering.

Minister Williams highlighted the Ministry's dedication to supporting the school with guidance and counseling resources to prevent future incidents.

The Commissioner of Police, Dr.



Minister of National Security, Dr. Horace Chang

Kevin Blake, reassured the community of the police's resolute approach to protect students and combat criminality.

He stressed the importance of community cooperation and the role of law enforcement in safeguarding the future of the youth, urging them to steer clear of criminal activities.

During the visit, Samuel Williams, the Board Chairman, addressed the school community with a heartfelt message about overcoming challenges and violence.

He called on the community to re-

flect on their legacy and work together towards a peaceful future.

Emphasizing the importance of spiritual guidance, Mr. Williams expressed hope for a shift in the youth's mindset towards positivity and faith in God

Grenada eyes cannabis industry development

The Grenadian government is taking significant steps toward establishing a cannabis industry focused on medical and industrial applications.

This initiative aligns with their commitment to exploring the potential benefits of cannabis.

The primary goals include addressing medical and scientific uses, boosting employment, and increasing foreign exchange revenue.

A comprehensive strategy is being crafted to support the eventual enactment of specific cannabis legislation.

In response to the expired term of the previous commission in November 2023, the Grenadian Cabinet has formed a streamlined Cannabis Working Committee to enhance decisionmaking processes.

The Committee was established in April 2024 and consists of the following:

- Anselm Clouden, Attorney at Law
- Dr Shawn Charles, Chief Medical Officer
- ACP Vannie Curwen, Acting Commissioner of Police
- Tonja Alexander, a cannabis expert and Rastafarian representative.
- Betty Ann Lazarus, Public Relations, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Forestry, and Marine Resources

One of the committee's primary tasks is to conduct extensive community consultations to gauge public opinion on cannabis usage and its legal reclassification.



A committee has been established to guide the process to develop the cannabis industry

These consultations aim to shape the legislative and regulatory landscape for cannabis by advising on necessary legal adjustments and frameworks.

The committee is actively working on several fronts to gather data and steer the national conversation on cannabis.

Their efforts include publishing a policy statement to clearly articulate the government's stance on cannabis,

organizing national panel discussions with regional experts to clarify misconceptions about cannabis, and collaborating closely with the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

This collaboration focuses on researching and proposing legislative changes aimed at decriminalizing cannabis use as an initial measure.

Recognizing the growing public interest in cannabis legalization, the

Grenadian government values the insights from individuals affected by current laws and is eager to integrate public enthusiasm into its approach.

Nevertheless, the government emphasizes the importance of a responsible and informed approach to cannabis legislation, ensuring that the development of this sector is beneficial and sustainable for all stakeholders involved.

Venezuela criticizes U.S. fighter jet flyover in Guyana

The Guyana government has approved a defense cooperation exercise with the United States, allowing two U.S. Navy F/A-18F Super Hornet fighter jets to fly over Georgetown and surrounding areas.

The exercise was organized by the Guyana Defence Force and coordinated with the U.S. Southern Command.

According to Guyana's government, the purpose was to deepen the ongoing security cooperation between the two nations.

Venezuela criticized the exercise, accusing the U.S. and Guyana of conspiring to provoke regional instability.

Caracas viewed the move as a direct threat to peace and stability in the region.

Venezuela's Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino denounced the flyover as a "repeated provocation" by the Southern Command, supported by Guyana, which he likened to "a new North American colony."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Yvan Gil condemned the exercise as evidence of U.S. provocation towards Venezuela, emphasizing that Guyana was violating its international commitments.

He argued that Guyana's cooperation with the U.S. Southern Command breaches the Argyle Declaration reached between the Guyanese and Venezuelan governments in December 2023.

The longstanding border dispute between Guyana and Venezuela, currently before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), involves the Essequibo region, which Caracas claims ownership of.



US fighter jets were engaged in an exercise over Guyana

The region comprises about twothirds of Guyana's territory and is home to 125,000 of its 800,000 citizens.

In the December 2023 Argyle Declaration, President Irfaan Ali of Guyana and President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela agreed not to use or threaten force against each other while resolving the border dispute.

Both nations also vowed to avoid escalating conflicts in any form.

However, Venezuela contends that Guyana violated the agreement by allowing the U.S. military exercise.

Gil further accused ExxonMobil of seeking to destabilize the region and violate the Peace Zone established by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

The U.S. Embassy in Guyana described the exercise as an extension of the "routine security cooperation and expanding bilateral defense partnership" between Guyana and the U.S. The diplomatic mission highlighted that the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS George Washington and Carrier Strike Group 10 were in the region as part of a

two-month transit to the Pacific.

During the transit, the USS George Washington is set to conduct military exercises with defense partners to increase interoperability, strengthen capacity, and support regional security and stability.

The U.S. Embassy reaffirmed its commitment to partner with nations aligned with democratic values, emphasizing General Laura Richardson's commitment to "Team Democracy."

Sharks facing slaughter in Tobago after attack

Jamaica is embarking on a significant modernization of its school boards following the establishment of revised operational procedures.

These updates are rooted in the recommendations of Professor Orlando Patterson-chaired Jamaica Education Transformation Commission (JETC), which proposed 365 actions to enhance the country's education sector.

Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams, emphasized the importance of the revamped measures during the 2024/25 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on May 8.

She highlighted that these new procedures mandate a performance review of school boards at the end of each cycle, alongside the implementation of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework.

The updated measures also call for comprehensive training of school board members, streamlining existing governance structures, and acknowledging



Minister of Education, Youth and Information in Jamaica, Fayval Williams

the contributions of board members.

Minister Williams underscored the

direct correlation between effective governance and student achievement.

She stressed the pivotal role of good governance in managing a young and complex educational system like Jamaica's, with diverse actors playing varied roles.

Jamaica's school board members represent one of the nation's largest groups of volunteers, with nearly 10,000 individuals dedicating countless hours and often their own resources to support schools. They play a crucial role in upholding the Education Act and Regulations.

The National Council on Education, responsible for overseeing the governance portfolio, is actively working to fortify school boards nationwide.

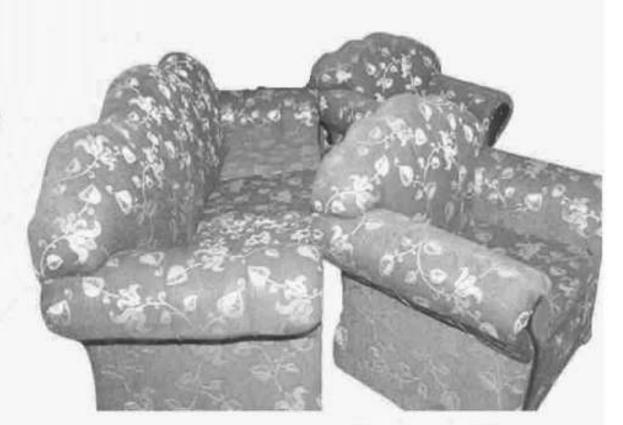
Minister Williams mentioned that the Council is currently undergoing a strategic review to enhance its impact on the education system.

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New murtis donated to Trinidad after vandal attack

Devotees of the Bharatiya Vidya Abhyas Mandali, whose temple was vandalised after six murtis were beheaded, said there has been an outpouring of love since the horrific incident.

On Sunday, a board member who did not wish to give her name said members were touched and moved by the good wishes the temple has been receiving.

"People have been coming forward to donate new murtis, it's a beautiful thing to witness, in the midst of the devastation, this love."

On May 8, during the wee hours of the morning, an unknown assailant hopped the temple walls, which are secured by barbed wire and smashed the murtis

A murti of Lord Shiva that had been on the temple grounds for 32 years was also destroyed. Images of the destructive scene have gone viral on social media, prompting many users to condemn the heinous act.

Speaking via phone, the woman said Sunday is usually their worship day and while they remained horrified by the act, temple leaders were holding prayers to keep worshippers' spirits up.

The woman said despite the donation, she was unsure when they would begin work to replace the murtis and reopen the temple.

"Our spiritual head has that project in his hand. He'll be dealing with those matters."

At around 4 and 5.30 am, devotees showing up to clean and for morning worship made the discovery. When Newsday spoke with the temple's treasurer, Zolika Ramdehal, on May 8, she



Scene of destruction inside the temple

described the destruction as losing something sacred. She said the vandals did not try to break into the temple and she believes their sole intent was to cause destruction.

There are no CCTV cameras on the premises, temple leaders were hoping to install cameras in June.

When reporters visited the temple on May 8, temple members were busy removing the remaining damaged murtis as a pile of broken murti heads lined the right wall.

President of the Inter-Religious Organisation, pundit Lloyd Sirjoo, strongly condemned the attack in a phone interview with Newsday on May 8, calling it heinous and saying no such act at any religious place cannot and should not be condoned.

He questioned why anyone would desecrate any religious site and believes not enough is being done to safeguard religious spaces. He called for police to be proactive in their work and said if the people responsible for the act were not held and convicted, it would not deter others from doing similar.

"Criminals will think it is okay to do this because nothing will happen to them.

"When it comes to religious institutions, it seems every creed and race do not find an equal place."

Caribbean braces for record heat season

The Caribbean is currently experiencing an unusually warm period, and it seems this trend is set to continue, possibly until October.

Near-record temperatures, particularly high in August and September, are anticipated across the region.

The Barbados-based Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF) has released its Heat Outlook for May through October.

The report forecasts that the period from May to July, which marks the early phase of the Caribbean Heat Season in the Caribbean Islands and Belize, will be significantly hotter than usual.

The forecast highlights intense, nearly record-breaking levels of nighttime and daytime heat, compounded by rising humidity levels from June to September.

With the increasing temperatures and humidity, there are growing concerns about the impact on vulnerable populations and small livestock.

The conditions could lead to frequent, intense, and possibly prolonged



Near record high temperatures are anticipated across the region in August and September

episodes of heat stress throughout these are expected in The Bahamas, Barbamonths.

dos, Trinidad, and the wind-sheltered

The typical number of heatwave days varies across the region.

Historically, there are 15 to 20 such days in Puerto Rico and the northern Leeward Islands, and 5 to 10 in Belize and the wind-sheltered areas of the Lesser Antilles.

However, this year's projections are alarming: 30 to 50 heatwave days

are expected in The Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad, and the wind-sheltered areas of the Windward Islands, with at least 30 days anticipated in The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad.

Various Caribbean islands have already started issuing heatwave advisories in response to the soaring temperatures.

They have highlighted concerns

over light winds and high humidity, which can lead to dangerously hot conditions.

In Belize, the National Meteorological Service issued a Heat Alert for May 8, warning that temperatures could exceed 97°F.

Residents, particularly those inland, are advised to stay hydrated and limit outdoor activities during the hottest parts of the day.

Mass shooting leaves 4 dead, 8 injured in west Port of Spain

Residents of Phase One, Powder Magazine, Cocorite west of Port of Spain, Trinidad say stigmas about crime in the area are unfounded as the community is all about "goodness and love."

A shooting in the community on Saturday night left four men dead and eight more wounded.

At the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) apartment complex on Monday, armed police officers were patrolling the street outside and a tent with members of the police Victim and Witness Support Unit near the gate.

Residents were hesitant to speak with the media. The few who did all said they were shocked to hear the gunshots so close to the compound.

"Since I come inside here to live, me ent know this kind of thing going on. I know inside of here is a peaceful community," said one woman. She added, "I can't see no motive for people coming here to do that."

Another woman, whose relative was shot, said she is angry as shootings are not a common occurrence in the area.

"Is goodness in here. Everybody does come to lime. Any hour, you can see people liming and children outside playing. All the shots fire and nobody ent even fire back because nobody in here on that."

Another nearby woman said there was no gang issue in the area.

"It don't have that in here. Nobody who dead by those buildings was in anything. In here is a love. Is just a love. All of we was one."

One man said he appreciated the police presence but called for a more permanent solution to addressing residents' concerns.

"We feel much safer because we don't know if the guys (gunmen) could come back.

"I don't know how long the police could (stay here)...but otherwise, we have so much to do and we wouldn't let that stop us (if they leave)."

He suggested a card-controlled barrier to limit access to the compound.

Police Victim and Witness Support officer Christine Forde said residents have embraced the services they are offering.

"They have accepted the intervention, so there will be follow-up conversations with them where we could help them deal with it and help them give them coping strategies that will help them regain some sort of normalcy in their lives."

Forde said the unit is also referring them to state agencies which may be able to assist with grants.

Forde said any member of the community who felt uncomfortable speaking with them in public could visit the Four Roads, Carenage or West End police stations and ask to speak with a victim and witness support officer.



A police vehicle leaves the scene of the shooting in Cocorite

Police are working on the theory that the 12 people – four dead and eight wounded – who were victims of a shooting at Phase 1 Powder Magazine, Cocorite on May 4, were attacked by gunmen over turf.

Commissioner of Police Erla Harewood-Christopher confirmed that initial intelligence indicated that it was one of the possible motives behind the shooting as she spoke to reporters while visiting the scene of the shooting on

Christopher said the police is taking a zero-tolerance stance on gang violence and assured that all resources will be applied to ensure that a proper investigation is done and the perpetrators are brought to justice.

"Clearly these young persons have no regard for life and this is not a situation that we will continue to condone. We will not condone this. That is why we are here – to get a first-hand experience of what transpired." she said. "The criminals cannot and will not control any turf. Communities control their turf."

She called on the community to make it known that illegal activity is not welcome.

Police say at about 11 pm on May 4, the group of people including Shaquille Ottley, 22, Antonio Jack, 57, Sadikki Ottley, 31 and Jonathan Osmond, 36, all of Phase 1 Powder Magazine, were liming at Building F, when a dark-coloured car, make, model and registration number unknown, drove into the compound, turned and stopped at the entrance.

Two men in dark clothes got out of the car and opened fire on the group before escaping.

Shaquile and Sadiki Ottley, as well as Jack were taken to the St James Medical Facility, but they died. Shaquille Ottley and Jack were declared dead on arrival and Sadiki Ottley died shortly after. Osmond died at the scene.

The other eight victims – six from Powder Magazine, one from Diamond Vale, and another from Cocorite Terrace – were also injured, and taken to the St James Medical Centre by residents.

Senior Supt of the Western Division Garvin Henry said while seven of the wounded people were treated and their wounds were not life-threatening, the police are now praying for the life of one person who is in a stable but serious condition at hospital.

He told reporters he was taking the shooting incident personally.

"The fact is, and the community knows, that there are elements of gang activity in these areas. Yes, the area has been quiet for a while. It is not only sad, but it is unexpected that we had that level of violence directed at this community (last night).

"This crime that took four lives and injured eight citizens will not be tolerated. As commander, I am taking this wanton act personally."

Both Harewood-Christopher and Henry said the police will be actively engaging the community to curtail crime activity in the area. Henry said police presence, direct exercises, investigations and other actions by the police serve to deter criminals from taking control.

"There is no turf here. This is a community and it belongs to the residents. It is important for us to partner and collaborate with them in order to find (the criminals)."

He said one of the key components to the police's strategies is speaking to people in the area and addressing their concerns.

Harewood-Christopher already started her community engagement on the scene as she was seen speaking to a young man. She said speaking to the public was of a high priority.

"We try to focus on scientific evidence, but we still need the help of eye witnesses; we still need information from the community," she said.

She said the man speaking to her, identified as Jerome Smith complained that police catch criminals, interview them and release them but they are not charged. She explained that information alone cannot convict a criminal.

"If we don't have the evidence, we cannot charge them," she said.

Henry said the Western Division plans to not only ramp-up police activity in the area, but will also improve engagement, as he has noticed that some in the community may be too shy to come out to town hall meetings to speak.

"We have not had a town hall meeting in the St James district for this year as yet, but what we found was that the last one we had in Lions Club, you would find communities such as this to be kind of shy to come out and interact with us," he said. "Our intention is to come to this community – if we have to pitch tents and invite the community – to talk to us. That will happen in the near future."

Harewood-Christopher said police will also be ramping up searches in the next couple months to increase the rate of recovery of illicit firearms transported throughout the country.

"We would have said our challenges are guns, drugs and gangs. We recognise that obviously firearms don't have wings or legs, so we know that firearms are being transported. So within the next couple months I will ask citizens to bare with us because there will be some inconvenience expected."

In a media release sent on Sunday, Harewood-Christopher condemned the actions of the criminals.

WI women begin T20 World Cup campaign vs SA on October 5

WEST INDIES women will begin the October 3-20 International Cricket Council (ICC) Twenty/20 women's World Cup in Bangladesh with a clash against last year's runners-up South Africa in Dhaka on October 5.

Winners of the 2016 T20 World Cup, the West Indies women have been placed in group B alongside the Proteas women, Bangladesh, England and Scotland, who sealed their passage to the World Cup after finishing as runners-up to Sri Lanka in the T20 World Cup qualifiers which concluded in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

Record six-time winners Australia begin their title defence against Sri Lanka in group A on October 4, with India, New Zealand and Pakistan rounding off the group.

After playing South Africa, Hayley Matthews and the Windies team will play Scotland and hosts Bangladesh on October 7 and 9 respectively, before ending the group phase with a meeting against England. West Indies will play all of their group games in Dhaka.

After the four-match group phase, the top two teams in either group will advance to the semifinals which will be



West Indies Women's captain Hayley Matthews

played on October 17 and 18 respectively. The final will be played in Dhaka on October 20.

West Indies are currently sixth on the ICC's T20 rankings, and they romped to a 4-1 series victory in their last series against Pakistan which concluded last week.

Matthews, who was named as the ICC women's T20 Player of the Year for 2023, continued her sublime form in the format and she walked away with the Player of the Series award after scoring three half-centuries in five matches and

amassing an aggregate of 205 runs.

The Caribbean team will play warm-up matches against India and Pakistan on September 28 and October 1 respectively before starting their World Cup campaign.





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MEAT

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RED HEN * ROOSTER

ALL MEATS ARE 100% HALAL

MANY MORE

AVAILABLE

GREY SNAPPER CATFISH BANGAMARY BUTTERFISH HASSA WHITE BELLY SHRIMP BLACK SHRIMP CRAB SMOKE FISH

SEAFOXOD

GILLBAKA

& FROZEN

3160 EGLINTON AVENUE (1 BLOCK WEST OF MARKHAM ROAD)



REPAIRS EXPERTS

Full Roofs
Missing Shingles
Racoon Problems

Skylights Minor/Major Leaks Eaves & Downspout

416-820-3852









SAT, 1 JUNE DALLAS







SUN, 2 JUNE GUYANA







SUN, 2 JUNE







MON, 3 JUNE NEW YORK







MON, 3 JUNE GUYANA







TUE, 4 JUNE BARBADOS







TUE, 4 JUNE DALLAS







WED, 5 JUNE NEW YORK



All Your Dental Needs

Dentists: Dr. Clive R. Jagan, Dr. Shane A. Jagan, Dr. Kyle V. Jagan, Dr. Ian N. Jagan

We at JDC have one objective in mind: To make sure you get the professional and personal attention you deserve. So be ready for a relaxed and pain free dental experience.

> 11 Lamaha and Light Streets, Georgetown, Guyana Tel: (592) 226-0400 e-mail: info@jagandentalcentre.com www.jagandentalcentre.com

CLINICAL SERVICES OFFERED:

- O Teeth Whitening
- O Laser Dentistry
- O Cosmetic Dentistry
- Implantology (Implants)
- Endodontics (Rootcanals)
- Prosthodontics (Dentures, Crown & Bridge, Veneers, etc.)
- O Pedodontics (Kiddy Dentistry)
- Periodontics (Gum Surgeries, Deep Scaling, De-pigmentation, etc.)
- Oral Surgery (Extractions)