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**Thursday May 2 2024. Volume 42, Issue #18** [www.equalitynews.ca](http://www.equalitynews.ca). For advertising, call 647-216-2359

## Palestine says thanks to Guyana

Guyana President Dr. Irfaan Ali on Monday received a courtesy call from non-resident Palestinian Ambassador Dr. Linda Sobeh-Ali; and Head of the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA) and Assistant Minister for International Cooperation, Ambassador Imad Al-Zuhairi at State House.

Ambassador Sobeh-Ali, who was accredited in 2016, expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Government and People of Guyana for their support to the People of Palestine. She also thanked President Ali, as Chair of CARICOM, for the region's support.

President Ali and the Palestinian officials spoke of enhancing bilateral cooperation, especially in the areas of agriculture and health.



**ZOO GETS FACELIFT:** The Guyana Zoo is getting an upgrade. More than 200 people led by the Office of the First Lady and staff and stakeholders are in the midst of beautifying the zoo, located in Georgetown, as well as addressing drainage issues which have been plaguing the facility. British High Commissioner to Guyana, Jane Miller lauded the support of the project.

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**BANNERS FROM CANADA:** Guyana Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, received several banners from UNICEF Guyana and Suriname. The three hundred and sixty (362) banners, funded by the Canadian Government, are part of promoting early childhood development within the regions of Guyana. These banners depict Positive Early Childhood Development messages written in English, Spanish and Warrau languages.

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# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST



KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 66

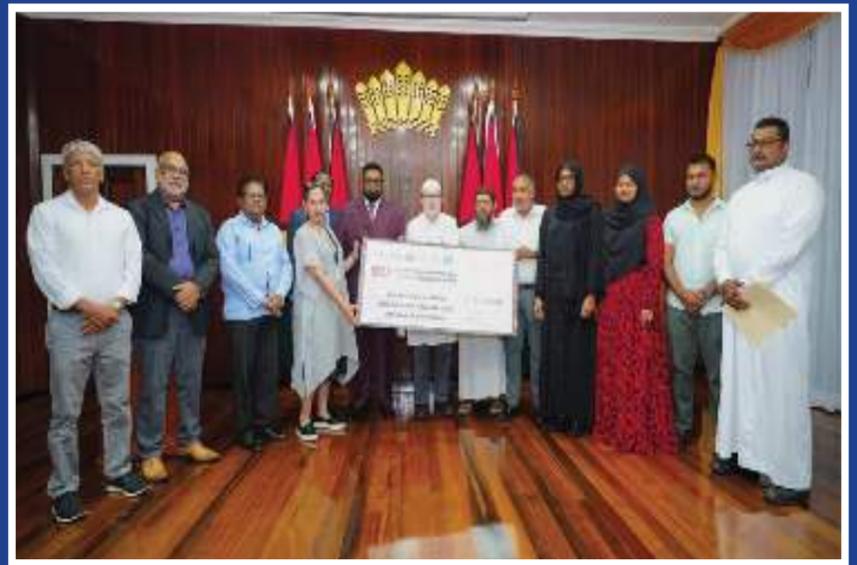
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GUYANA RAISES OVER \$110M IN HUMANITARIAN AID FOR PALESTINE

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## PRESIDENT ALI RECEIVES LEGACY AWARD FOR COMMITMENT TO GUYANA AND THE CARIBBEAN



President Ali receiving award for leadership and vision at UWI Gala

President, Irfaan Ali, was awarded the prestigious Legacy Award (Class of 2024) at the 27th Annual Awards Gala of the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies (AFUWI) held in New York. Guyanese-born American actress CCH

Pounder, who presented President Alil with the award, lauded him for his "commitment to nation building" and his role as a "champion" for regional cooperation.

"I am indebted to the people of Guyana," President Ali said in his acceptance speech, "whose resilience and generosity of spirit have inspired me to dedicate myself to public service." He emphasised the importance of regional unity, stating that "Guyana's prosperity

must and will lead to the prosperity of the region."

The President's speech also highlighted the importance of Caribbean identity and self-reliance. He urged the region to "value more of who we are... value more of what we produce and... value more and utilise more of what we own." Additionally, he emphasised the need for "full reparatory justice" and acknowledged the role of UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary

Beckles in the process.

The Legacy Award (Class of 2024) is the highest honour bestowed at the AFUWI. The Award recognises distinguished individuals or organisations for their remarkable contributions and achievements.

The AFUWI Awards Gala is the signature fundraising event of the AFUWI, held annually to raise funds for scholarships that benefit students attending The University of the West Indies (UWI).

President Ali strongly condemned the Caribbean Guyana Institute for Democracy (CGID) for urging a boycott of businesses owned by Guyanese who met with him during his recent visit to New York.

"These claims are divisive propaganda," President Ali said in a live address. He praised the "hospitality and benevolence" of the Guyanese diaspora in Brooklyn and Queens, calling their reception "the true Guyanese culture."

The CGID had accused the diaspora of "an egregious betrayal of black people." President Ali rejected this accusation, highlighting the achievements of Guyanese-Americans and their potential to contribute to a "more inclusive and

## PRESIDENT ALI REJECTS BROOKLYN DIASPORA BOYCOTT CALL, URGES UNITY

prosperous Guyana." "You are an important part of our future," he declared, urging the diaspora not to be discouraged.

President Ali further

organisations who claim to love can be so divisive," he said. "This cannot be the type of people who put their hands up into the air and call

Jeffries and other elected officials to examine the CGID's actions and "the narratives that it is perpetuating against Afro-Guyanese."

President Ali concluded by emphasising the government's commitment to working with the diaspora for the benefit of Guyana. "Our messages are not founded on hate or racism," he said. "It is founded on national unity, and our collective desire to see our beautiful country prosper."

**MINISTER MCCOY AND VICE PRESIDENT JAGDEO ECHO CALLS FOR UNITY**

Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister Kwame McCoy, echoed the President's message of unity in a letter to the editor. He condemned the CGID's boycott call, orchestrated by Rickford Burke and Mark Benschop, as "destructive" and "contrary to the interests of the Afro-Guyanese community."

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo also joined the chorus of condemnation. "These vile yet predictable actions must be further scrutinised and rejected by all since they only serve to instill fear in people," Dr. Jagdeo

said during a People's Progressive Party (PPP/C) press conference. The Vice President is the General Secretary of the party.

He accused the opposition party of using "a philosophy of fear" in their campaigns, contrasting it with the PPP/C's focus on positive messaging. "They can't say what they will offer to people," Dr. Jagdeo said. He called on more Guyanese to scrutinise the rhetoric being espoused and condemn any untowards actions and statements.

*See more pictures on the President's visit on Pages 12 and 13*



President Ali meeting with Guyanese during his recent visit to New York

criticised the CGID's tactics. "It hurts me to know that people and

themselves leaders." He urged US Congressman Hakeem

## GUYANA RECOGNISED FOR CHAMPIONING INDIGENOUS-LED TOURISM

Guyana's dedication to fostering tourism experiences led by indigenous communities has been rewarded on the international stage. The country secured second place in the "Best Initiatives for Indigenous Communities and/or Traditional Communities" category at the recent 4th edition of the World Travel Market (WTM) Latin America Responsible Tourism Awards.

Speaking with the Department of Public Information (DPI), Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority

(GTA), Kamrul Baksh, highlighted the unique approach Guyana takes to indigenous tourism. "This award is well-deserved," he stated. "Guyana is uniquely positioned as a country that promotes indigenous tourism that is led and owned by the indigenous people themselves. This means they control the land, the assets, the business, and the profits."

This ownership model sets Guyana apart from other community-based tourism initiatives

globally, according to Baksh. "We are really happy about this award," he added, "because it shows our commitment to supporting communities and developing tourism in Guyana."

Guyana's indigenous communities offer a wealth of tourism products and services. Visitors are drawn to the pristine rivers, lush vegetation, and the relaxing natural environment. Recognising this potential, the GTA plays a key role in supporting these communities.

"We help leaders and residents further build upon what the village is already offering," explained Baksh. This includes assessing

local talents and art forms, such as pottery and painting, to create engaging activities for tourists, enriching their village experience.

These initiatives create employment opportunities for indigenous people

and generate foreign exchange within the villages, fueling the growth of these new ventures.

The Guyanese government also plays a vital role by providing financial backing through various grants. These include funds from the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) and Presidential Grants.

These grants empower villages to construct guest houses, equip kitchens, and purchase vehicles, all essential elements for a thriving tourism industry within their communities.



Indigenous people of Guyana celebrating their rich heritage which is enjoyed by tourists when visiting the villages

# GUYANA RAISES OVER \$110M IN HUMANITARIAN AID FOR PALESTINE

President Irfaan Ali has once again been recognised for his exceptional leadership, receiving the prestigious Caribbean Global Leader Award for 2024. This latest honour follows the Global Africa Leadership Award bestowed upon him earlier this year.

The Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) lauded President Ali in a press release, highlighting his **"exceptional leadership qualities and commitment to advancing Guyana's position on the global stage."**

The GMSA

pointed out the rapid succession of awards, including the Order of Freedom of Barbados Award in January, as a testament to President Ali's **"unwavering dedication and remarkable leadership in advancing Guyana's interests while fostering regional co-operation and collaboration."** They further commended Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados for her second-place finish and all recognised leaders.

Halim Khan, Head of the Region Three Private Sector Inc. (R3PSI),

echoed the praise in his own release. Khan emphasised President Ali's commitment to **"unity, inclusivity, and shared prosperity,"** noting its impact not just on Guyana, but across the region.

to constructing a cohesive society under the guiding principle of 'One Guyana' and his "resilience and principled stance" during the Venezuela border dispute.

**"President Ali's resolve during**

**dedication to the welfare of his nation and its citizens,"** Khan concluded, extending his congratulations for the **"well-deserved honour."**

The Caribbean Global Leader Award recognises exceptional

Caribbean community. It celebrates leaders who go beyond national borders and strive for the advancement of the entire region. President Ali won the Caribbean Global Leader Award through a public vote, receiving the most votes (609) out of 10 nominees. The award ceremony will be held on April 28 in London.

President Ali's string of awards underscores his growing international reputation as a leader dedicated to Guyana's advancement, regional cooperation, and a brighter future for all.



President Ali receiving a courtesy visit from representatives of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Khan lauded **adversarial times** leadership qualities and President Ali's **underscores** contributions made by **his unyielding** individuals within the

# GUYANA WELCOMES UN SECURITY COUNCIL'S CALL FOR RESTRAINT IN BORDER CONTROVERSY

The UN Security Council has called on Guyana and Venezuela to de-escalate tensions and adhere to a recent International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling regarding their disputed border territory.

In a statement released on April 15, the Council expressed "concern about the possible escalation of tensions" between the two South American nations. They urged both parties to "exercise maximum restraint" and comply with the ICJ's December 2023 order on

provisional measures. **"The Council also underlined the importance of**



UNSC-1

**maintaining regional peace and security and ensuring that the Latin America and**

**Caribbean region remains a Zone of Peace,"** the statement added.

The ICJ order, issued unanimously, mandated Venezuela to refrain from actions that would alter the status quo in the territory in dispute, that is administered and controlled by Guyana. It further directed both countries to avoid actions that could aggravate the dispute or hinder its resolution through the Court.

The Guyana government welcomed the Security Council's

statement, particularly its emphasis on upholding the ICJ order and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, including respect for territorial integrity and the prohibition of the use of force.

**"The Government of Guyana hopes that the statement by the United Nations Security Council will contribute to the maintenance of regional peace and security and to ensuring that Latin America and the**

**Caribbean remain a Zone of Peace,"** said a government statement issued on April 16.

**"Guyana is committed to the peaceful resolution of the controversy with Venezuela in full accordance with international law through the process of the International Court of Justice,"** the statement added, expressing gratitude to the Security Council for its attention to this critical issue.

The Security Council's statement

also highlighted the importance of regional actors in facilitating a peaceful resolution to the border dispute. In this regard, it commended regional efforts which resulted in the conclusion of the Declaration of Peace and Dialogue of Argyle of December 14, 2023 in which Guyana and Venezuela, inter alia, agreed that any controversy between the two states will be resolved in accordance with international law, including the Geneva Agreement of 1966.

# PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR UPHOLDING OF DIPLOMATIC NORMS AFTER ECUADORIAN EMBASSY INCIDENT

President of Guyana and Chairman of CARICOM, Dr Irfaan Ali, has urged adherence to international law and diplomatic protocols following an alleged violation of the Geneva Convention on Diplomatic Relations in Ecuador.

President Ali's comments came during a virtual emergency meeting of the CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean Countries) Summit. The meeting focused on the recent incident involving the Mexican Embassy in Quito, Ecuador.

**"The member states of CARICOM reaffirm the**

**importance of adherence to the principles of international law and rules of diplomatic engagement enshrined in the Geneva Convention,"** President Ali said, highlighting the treaty's role in guaranteeing the inviolability of diplomatic missions.

He expressed deep concern over Ecuador's actions, which reportedly violated the sanctity of the Mexican Embassy. **"We anticipate that both states seek to resolve the matter through dialogue and access to the relevant multilateral process,"** President Ali

emphasised, advocating for a peaceful resolution through diplomatic channels.

**"This must be**



President Ali during an emergency meeting

**the priority of all of us: to ensure that this region of ours**

**remains a zone and a place of peace and cooperation,"** he concluded.

Jorge Glas, a

in Quito in December 2023. Mexico granted asylum to Glas, sparking tensions between the two countries.

violating international law regarding the sanctity of diplomatic missions.

This action has been widely condemned by the international community, including CARICOM, as a breach of the Geneva Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Mexico responded by severing diplomatic ties with Ecuador and filing a complaint with the International Court of Justice.

The situation remains unresolved, with Mexico demanding an apology and potentially seeking Ecuador's suspension from the UN.

On April 5, 2024, Ecuadorian police raided the Mexican Embassy,

## NEW OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL GDFS SHAHOUD ARRIVES

The Guyana Defence Force (GDF) has bolstered its maritime capabilities with the arrival of its new Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), the GDFS Shahoud. The vessel docked at the GDF Coast Guard headquarters on April 22, 2024.

The GDFS Shahoud, modelled on the American-designed 115 Defiant, was originally scheduled to arrive in October 2023. While its arrival faced delays, the wait comes with



The vessel

a benefit. The vessel underwent adjustments during sea trials to ensure optimal performance.

These adjustments are expected to enhance the GDF's maritime security operations.

The GDFS Shahoud boasts modern navigation and communication systems,

making it a valuable asset for the GDF. The vessel is well-suited for patrolling Guyana's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), search and rescue missions, combating illegal fishing, interdicting drug traffickers and honouring a Fallen Hero.

The vessel was originally named GDFS Berbice. However, it was renamed the GDFS Shahoud in honour of Colonel Michael Shahoud, a Guyanese military officer who

tragically died in a helicopter crash in December 2023.

The GDF is also setting its sights on acquiring a larger OPV, the OPV-190, within the next two years. This 190-foot vessel, manufactured by France's OCE S.A., will function as a "mothership" for the GDF. It will provide extended deployment capabilities at sea and support the GDFS Shahoud with resupply missions.

## JOINT SECURITY OPERATION "EYE IN THE SKY" LAUNCHED

In a move to bolster security measures, the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) have joined forces for a month-long operation dubbed "Eye in the Sky."

The initiative, launched on Tuesday, April 16th, will see an increased police presence throughout Georgetown. This includes the deployment of drones

for aerial surveillance, which residents may see flying low in some areas. The authorities urge the public to remain calm and not be alarmed by this.

"Eye in the Sky" aims to deter crime and improve public safety through a range of measures. These include roadblocks, stop-and-search operations to check for illegal activity,

and a focus on enforcing traffic laws to ensure safety on the roads. Roving patrols by Police and GDF personnel will be conducted throughout Georgetown to maintain a visible presence. Additionally, targeted raids based on intelligence will be conducted to disrupt criminal activities, such as narcotics trafficking or illegal firearms

possession.

Officers on motorcycles and bicycles will be deployed for increased mobility and responsiveness. Specific areas may be temporarily cordoned off to allow for thorough searches. Outstanding warrants will also be addressed during the operation.

The Ministry of Home Affairs assures the public that "Eye in



Eyes in the Sky' operation

the Sky" is intended to enhance security and safety for all residents. They encourage cooperation with the

security forces and urge anyone with information about suspicious activity to contact the Guyana Police Force hotline.

In a move to bolster security measures, the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) have joined forces for a month-long operation

## CYBERSECURITY POLICY FRAMEWORK UNVEILED TO BOLSTER NATIONAL DEFENCE

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The Ministry of Home Affairs assures the public that "Eye in the Sky" is intended to enhance security and safety for all residents. They encourage cooperation with the security forces and urge anyone with information about suspicious activity to contact the Guyana Police Force hotline.



NDMA's General Manager, Christopher Deen and Deputy Manager Orson Smith

## 70 TEACHERS TRAINED FOR AFTER-SCHOOL CLASSES - TO SUPPORT OVER 1,000 MIGRANT CHILDREN

The Ministry of Education's Migrant Education Support Unit (MESU) is investing in the success of migrant students in Regions Three, Four, and Georgetown. A two-day workshop equipped 70 teachers with the skills to deliver after-school ESL (English as a Second Language) classes alongside SEL (Social & Emotional Learning) programmes.

This initiative targets 1,100 migrant children enrolled in nursery, primary, and secondary schools across 60 institutions. The after-school ESL classes aim to bridge the language gap and empower students to thrive in a multicultural environment. The SEL programme complements this by fostering emotional intelligence, resilience, and empathy – valuable

life skills that extend beyond academics.

The Ministry is committed to ongoing support for these programmes. Schools will receive continuous training, resources, and guidance. MESU Coordinator, Ms. Rampattie Bisanuth, emphasised the programme's focus on inclusion and tolerance. By creating a welcoming and respectful

environment that celebrates diversity, the Ministry aims to ensure every child feels valued and supported.

Mr. Jermaine Grant, Project Director of PADF (Pan American Development Foundation), applauded the Ministry's dedication to ensuring a smooth integration for migrant children in Guyanese classrooms.



Ministry of Education boosts support for migrant children with ESL training

# GUYANA TO BOLSTER POWER GRID WITH POWERSHIP RENTAL - NO INCREASE IN ELECTRICITY COSTS

Guyanese consumers can expect a more reliable electricity supply with the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) securing an additional 36 megawatts (MW) of power from a powership. This rental agreement with Urbacon Concessions Investments, W.L.L. (UCI) is a temporary solution to bridge the gap until the government's gas-to-energy project comes online.

The 36 MW powership is expected to arrive in Guyana by May 1, 2024, weather permitting. Preparatory

work for the site at Everton, Berbice is already underway, with full operation and electricity delivery anticipated by May 8. The powership will operate at 96% availability rate, according to GPL. The contract includes operation and maintenance provided by UCI.

President Ali has acknowledged the challenges of electricity outages but defended the decision to purchase temporary power. **"We have to meet the demand,"** he asserted.

**"To meet the demand, you have to buy power. It's a simple equation."** He blamed the lack of investment in the past for the current situation. **"They did not maintain the investment,"** he said, referring to the previous administration.

General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Bharrat Jagdeo, has assured the public that electricity costs will not increase while the powership is operational. **"There will be no increase in the price of electricity**

**because of this rental,"** he declared. The government has already been subsidising electricity costs, and this approach will continue.

While the powership offers short-term relief, the government's long-term goal is to add 300 MW to the grid next year through the gas-to-energy project. Additionally, the Amaila Falls Hydropower Project is being revisited, with proposals currently under evaluation.



President Ali engaging the media on the outskirts of the Local Content Summit

## PM PHILLIPS MEETS WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON POWER SUPPLY, OPPOSITION A NO-SHOW



Stakeholders at the meeting

Prime Minister Mark Phillips convened a meeting to discuss Guyana's power supply situation with stakeholders. The meeting, held at the Prime Minister's

Office, saw attendance from parliamentary committee members, private sector representatives, and executives from the Guyana Power and Light Corporation (GPL).

Members of the opposition APNU/AFC party were however, noticeably absent, including the Chair of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Economic Services, Shurwayne Holder, who had originally requested the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update from GPL on the company's current capacity and its short and long-term plans to improve reliability. GPL's Acting CEO, Mr. Kesh Nandlall, explained that electricity demand has grown significantly since 2008. The number of customers has grown by over 60%, annual generation has doubled, and peak demand has more than tripled.

To address these rising demands, Mr.

Nandlall outlined several initiatives including a 36-megawatt power ship arriving in May, which will be brought online in Everton, Berbice, a 6.9 MW generation unit expected in May, and a 5.5 MW generation unit coming online in July after maintenance at Kingston. These additions are expected to bring GPL's total generation capacity to over 230 megawatts.

The government also addressed concerns about electricity costs.

Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar, emphasised the government's commitment to keeping rates stable.

While the government outlined its plans, the absence of the opposition party was a major point of contention. Their decision not to attend leaves questions unanswered about their own proposals for addressing Guyana's power woes.

## GUYANA ADVOCATES FOR SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT, REPARATIONS JUSTICE AT UN FORUM

Guyana has emerged as a strong advocate for extending the International Decade for People of African Descent, and for more concrete action on reparative justice at the UN Forum in Geneva, Switzerland..

The first International Decade for People of African Descent, established in 2013 by the UN General Assembly, will conclude at the end of 2024. Guyana, along with other nations, are behind extending this critical initiative.

**"Guyana looks forward to contributing to the efforts toward improving the conditions of people of African descent,"** declared Minister Oneidge Walrond at the Third Session of the Permanent Forum

on People of African Descent.

Minister Walrond emphasised Guyana's unwavering commitment to racial equality within its multicultural society. **"We are ensuring our entire population enjoys the best possible quality of life,"** she stated. She pointed to Guyana's "One Guyana" philosophy, which promotes inclusion and rejects discrimination. **"Credible evidence of discrimination will be dealt with swiftly,"** she declared.

The Guyanese government is actively supporting the development of Afro-Guyanese communities and cultural heritage. Minister Walrond outlined various initiatives that benefit these communities, including financial

contributions to cultural events, educational programs, and community projects.

**"These investments aim to raise awareness of African culture for all Guyanese,"** she explained.



Guyana's representatives at the forum

Guyana's focus on education was further underscored by Minister of Labour, Joseph Hamilton. He highlighted equal access to education as a fundamental right

and acknowledged the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world.

Guyana prioritises education, offering free education from nursery to secondary levels and aiming for universal secondary education by 2026. Additionally, every

also emphasised the growing importance of job-relevant skills and provided examples of successful government initiatives in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes.

Stronger action on reparative justice

Guyana also used the UN Forum as a platform to urge the international community to step up efforts towards achieving reparative justice for people of African descent.

Vanessa Benn, a Guyana's representative at the forum, acknowledged the progress made during the first International Decade for People of African Descent, but emphasised the need for continued focus. **"We cannot achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals**

**without addressing all forms of injustice and inequality, including those experienced by people of African Descent,"** Benn remarked.

Benn called for a renewed commitment to reparations. **"Concrete actions have been identified for the Second Decade, and these need to be undertaken,"** she declared. **"Our commitment to reparative justice must be resolute, honoured, and delivered."**

Guyana National Reparations Committee Chairman Eric Phillips, and Ethnic Relations Commissioners Deon Dick (Ras Khafra) and Neaz Subhan were also among Guyana's representatives at the forum.



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

People's Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, has cast doubt on the credibility of the International Decade for People of African Descent Assembly – Guyana (IDPADA-G), accusing the group of spreading misinformation.

Dr. Jagdeo's comments come after a representative of IDPADA-G alleged "institutionalised racial discrimination" against the government at a recent United

Nations forum.

"The credibility of IDPADA-G is not a new question," Dr. Jagdeo said, pointing to a 2018 Demerara Waves article where concerns were raised about the group's formation and decision-making processes.

Jagdeo further emphasised that no formal complaints of racial discrimination had been filed with the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC), a legally constituted body specifically designed to

## GS JAGDEO QUESTIONS IDPADA-G'S CREDIBILITY

address such issues.

**"ERC Commissioner Neaz Subhan confirmed this while participating in a UN forum,"** Dr. Jagdeo noted. **"He pointed out that the ERC exists for this very purpose, and if IDPADA-G has evidence, they should utilise this mechanism."**

Subhan himself appearing before the UN forum stated, **"If you think there are so many cases of discrimination, you can use this [ERC]... they can't do that because they don't have evidence of institutionalised racism in the**

**government."**

Dr. Jagdeo went on to claim that IDPADA-G's accusations are politically motivated. **"They go there and complain about discrimination because it can't resonate here,"** he said, referring to international forums. **"This is part of the opposition's propaganda arm."**

In contrast, Subhan highlighted government support for groups like IDPADA-G. **"Over GY\$1.8 billion has been distributed in the last three years to promote African-Guyanese culture,"** Subhan revealed, specifying that

IDPADA-G received the largest allocation of GY\$360 million.

Subhan also emphasised Guyana's constitutional protections against discrimination. **"Our Constitution prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including culture,"** he said.

He concluded by underscoring the importance of cultural preservation in Guyana's diverse society. **"The tapestry of Guyanese society is enriched by the culture of African descendants,"** Subhan said. **"We must recognise and preserve this heritage."**



ERC Commissioner Neaz Subhan

## UG'S PETROLEUM ENGINEERING PROGRAMMES RECEIVE INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION



UG's first batch of Petroleum Engineers at their graduation in November, 2023

The University of Guyana (UG) has achieved a significant milestone for its Faculty of Engineering and Technology. The Associate of Science in Petroleum Engineering and the Bachelor of Science in Petroleum Engineering programmes have been awarded their first international accreditation by the London-based International Energy Institute.

This accreditation follows a successful evaluation visit in February 2024 by a five-

member team from the International Energy Institute. The positive verbal report during the visit was recently confirmed with formal notification.

UG's petroleum engineering programmes were launched in collaboration with the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) in the 2017/2018 academic year. These programmes have seen significant interest, graduating two batches in the associate programme and the first bachelor's degree class of 30 students last November. The

programme's focus on energy, oil, and gas aligns with Guyana's developing needs and attracts a diverse student body, including a large number of young women.

**"The achievement of international accreditation... assures graduates of international mobility and stronger recognition for their degrees,"** UG highlighted in a press release. This accreditation will enhance the marketability of UG petroleum engineering

graduates and facilitate their pursuit of opportunities abroad.

The accreditation process was led by Dean Verlyn Klass, programme head, Assistant Dean Basheer Khan, and UTT's Professor Neal Alleyene.

This achievement underscores UG's commitment to quality assurance in teaching and learning. The university is actively engaged in accreditation exercises for several programmes beyond petroleum engineering.

## GOVT TO APPEAL HIGH COURT RULING IN TEACHERS' UNION CASE

The Government of Guyana has announced its intention to appeal a recent High Court decision that favoured the Guyana Teachers Union (GTU) regarding a recent strike and the collection of union dues.

The ruling centred on a five-week strike undertaken by the GTU in February 2024. The Union argued that the strike was justified due to the government's failure to properly engage in collective bargaining regarding wages, salaries, and other benefits. The government, on the other

hand, contended that the strike was illegal and docked striking teachers' pay. Justice Sandil Kissoon's decision sided with the GTU.

**"The Government is appalled at the decision,"** a press release issued by the government stated. Justice Kissoon's ruling dismisses that the **"no work, no pay"** principle no longer applies to Guyana in strike situations. The government vehemently disagrees with this interpretation. **"The exercise of the freedom [to strike]**



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, SC represented the government during the hearing

**would have allowed the principle of 'no work no pay' to apply,"** the press release stated. It noted that the judge **"ignored existing legislation"**

and created "new law" through his decision.

The government further expressed concerns that the decision would disrupt industrial relations in

Guiana. **"Workers now can strike with impunity and they will have to be paid,"** the release stated, suggesting the ruling could incentivise strikes without consequence.

The release also criticised Justice Kissoon's handling of a separate aspect of the case, regarding the automatic deduction of union dues from teachers' salaries. The judge also debarred the government from deducting pay from the teachers who were on strike.

The government

called this decision **"a quantum leap!"** The government argued that **"millions of unions around the world are collecting their own union dues, surviving without any government collection service."**

While the government maintains its commitment to addressing teachers' concerns, it plans to appeal the decision. **"The appeal will be pursued for the larger implications the decision will have on the industrial climate in our country and to attempt to restore the law to its proper course,"** concluded the release.

# GUYANA POISED FOR FURTHER ECONOMIC BOOM - WHIPTAIL OIL PROJECT APPROVED

Guyana is on the cusp of a significant economic and social transformation, with the potential to generate billions of dollars in revenue. The government recently granted a license for the Whiptail Project, the sixth development in the Stabroek Block, further solidifying the country's position as a major oil producer.

The US\$12.7 billion Whiptail Project, operated by ExxonMobil, will significantly boost Guyana's oil production capacity. With an estimated daily output of 250,000 barrels by the end of 2027, Guyana's total production is expected to reach a staggering 1.3 million barrels per day. The

project involves up to 10 drill centres and 48 production and injection wells.

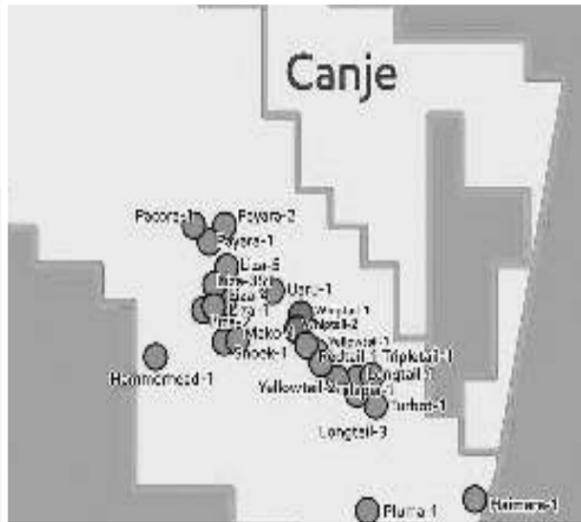
Construction of the Jaguar FPSO vessel, specifically designed for the Whiptail Project, is already underway. This new addition joins the existing Liza Destiny, Liza Unity, and Prosperity FPSOs, currently producing over half a million barrels of oil daily. Developments on the Yellowtail and Uaru projects are also progressing, with production expected to begin in 2025 and 2026 respectively.

The Whiptail Project is anticipated to have a substantial positive impact on Guyana's economy. The project is expected

to create significant employment and business opportunities for Guyanese citizens.

representing nearly 70% of the workforce.

The Guyana government remains



The Whiptail project is adding capacity of 250,000 barrels per day

Currently, around 6,000 Guyanese are already employed in the oil and gas industry,

committed to ensuring the oil and gas sector benefits its citizens. The landmark Local Content

Act, currently under review to address any loopholes, is a key part of this strategy. The Act aims to prioritise Guyanese businesses and workers for employment opportunities, goods, and services within the oil sector. Senior Minister in the Office of the President, Dr. Ashni Singh, has projected an additional 1,600 Guyanese will be hired in the oil and gas sector between 2024 and 2026.

The government has also renegotiated the 2016 Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) with ExxonMobil, securing a more favourable deal for Guyana. The revised agreement includes a 10% royalty rate, a 65% cost recovery ceiling for oil companies, and

a maintained 50/50 profit-sharing structure between the government and contractors. Additionally, a new 10% corporate tax has been implemented.

The People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government has prioritised transparent and accountable management of the oil and gas industry. This is reflected in a series of legislative reforms, including the Local Content Act, the modernisation of the Petroleum Activities Act, and a Natural Resources Fund Act that adheres to the Santiago Principles for Sovereign Wealth Funds.

## KITTY SEAWALL VENDORS WITH PERMITS CAN STAY, SAYS MINISTER EDGHILL, BUT MUST FOLLOW RULES



Minister Edghill during the meeting with the vendors

Minister of Public Works, Juan Edghill, has assured vendors with proper permits that they

can continue operating at the Kitty Seawall, but only if they adhere to specific guidelines.

"We are not removing vendors," Minister Edghill emphasised during a meeting with vendors. "Any misinformation that the government is removing vendors is clear mischief-making."

The clarification comes amidst an enforcement exercise by the Sea Defence Board to address non-compliance with vending regulations.

The Minister outlined the key concerns: permanent structures, exceeding designated vending space, improper waste disposal, and noise

pollution.

"The Sea Defence reserve they use temporarily for vending, must be easily accessible in the event of an emergency," Minister Edghill explained. He added that vending structures must be "mobile, aesthetically pleasing and modestly sized," not exceeding 100 square feet.

The Ministry noted that over 20 pit latrines and unauthorised concrete structures have already been removed. Vendors who were previously operating

the Kitty roundabout and the monument, an undesignated area, have been relocated to a designated vending area west of the monument.

"We have already cleared that area," Minister Edghill said, referring to the previously unauthorised zone. "Arrangements were being put in place for them to fit in with the other vendors west of the monument so that they would not be left out of business as well."

The Ministry highlighted its commitment to working with vendors. "The

PPP/C government is not in the business of displacing anyone nor in the business of taking bread out of their mouths. But rules are in place for a reason and all of us, regardless of who we are must adhere to these," Minister Edghill concluded.

The Sea Defence Board will continue its enforcement efforts and has assured continued engagement with vendors to ensure a sustainable and aesthetically pleasing vending environment at the Kitty Seawall.

## GUYANA SECURES INVESTMENT FOR OKO WEST GOLD PROJECT

The Government of Guyana (GoG) has signed a significant agreement with Canadian Gold's Guyanese gold exploration company Reunion Gold Corporation, paving the way for the development of the Oko West gold project, in Region Seven, while prioritising local hiring, environmental responsibility, and social programmes.

A release from the Ministry of Natural Resources stated that the

agreement establishes a stable operational environment for Reunion Gold's Guyanese subsidiary. This includes clear terms regarding royalty payments on produced gold, adhering to Guyana's established mineral agreement fiscal regime.

A key aspect of the agreement focuses on supporting the Guyanese workforce. Reunion Gold has committed to prioritising qualified Guyanese employees

and implementing training programmes. This initiative aims to equip local personnel with the necessary skills to contribute at all levels of the Oko West project, fostering long-term career opportunities for Guyanese citizens.

Furthermore, Reunion Gold will establish a US\$1 million annual social responsibility programme that will target environmental sustainability initiatives

and address social needs within the communities surrounding the project. The programme's timeline is linked to the project's commercial production or mining license issuance, whichever comes first.

Both the GoG and Reunion Gold emphasise their commitment to sustainable mining practices. This translates to minimising environmental impact, fostering positive relationships with

local communities, benefits for Guyana's and generating lasting development.



The agreement includes royalty payments on produced gold

## OVER 1,000 FAMILIES GRANTED HOUSE LOTS ON EAST COAST; NEARLY 400 RECEIVE LONG-AWAITED LAND TITLES

Over 1,000 families are celebrating becoming landowners after receiving house lots at a distribution exercise held by the Ministry of Housing and Water and Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA,) at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC) at Liliendaal.

The lots are located at Phase II of the Enterprise and Non-Pareil Housing Schemes on the East Coast of Demerara in Region Four. The two schemes together provide nearly 3,000 house lots and will include essential amenities like schools, recreational spaces, a magistrate's court, and areas for small businesses.

"I am excited to own my own property. It is my first time doing this," said Samantha Bourne, a beneficiary who waited 24 years for her lot. "My next step is to build my own home."



A recipient receiving his land title

development in the new communities this year. This includes areas like Good Hope, La Bonne Intention, Lusignan, and Two Friends.

Despite the recent distribution, Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, announced that approximately \$18.2 billion will be spent on infrastructural

he highlighted that over 19,400 lots have been allocated in Region Four since the government took office in 2020.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, assured those waiting that the government is committed to clearing the backlog.

The government's overall aim is to deliver 50,000 house lots within its first term in office.

In addition to the house lots, nearly 400 residents on the East Coast of Demerara also received their Certificates of Title at the event.

"I feel good because I have been looking forward to this for a very long time," said Keshan

Denbichan, who waited over 20 years for his certificate.

Additionally, 50 families also received vouchers through the government's Steel and Cement Subsidy initiative. The subsidy provides steel and cement to help homebuilders get started on their foundations.

"I get a start. This will help me a lot to start building," said James Novreja, a recipient of the voucher.

Minister Croal revealed that over 430 vouchers have been distributed in Region Four to date, with an injection of \$107 million into the programme.



A recipient receiving his land title

## PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER ORDERS REPAVING OF NAAMRYCK BACKDAM ROAD

The Ministry of Public Works is taking swift action to address concerns about the recently paved Naamryck Backdam Road in Parika, East Bank Essequibo. The \$96 million project fell short of expectations, prompting a visit from Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill.

"This cannot be accepted the way it is," Minister Edghill declared after inspecting the road. "This has failed the test." He directed the contractor,

Extreme Construction Inc., to completely repave the road to meet ministry standards and, most importantly, to ensure residents' satisfaction.

Minister Edghill outlined a clear plan for the contractor. "This got to be used as a levelling course and now you got to get it proper, quality asphalt for the entire road," he instructed. The existing surface will be overlaid with two inches of high-quality

asphalt to create a durable road surface.

The minister also addressed concerns regarding speed humps. "Further addressing the concerns of residents," he said, "the minister instructed that the speed humps must be modified to allow for smoother passage, particularly for farmers transporting produce."

Minister Edghill emphasised the importance of

prioritising the people who use the road.

"Whenever we do work in any community, one thing we have in mind is the people," he underscored. "The beneficiaries are the ultimate goal, their satisfaction is important."

The ministry has requested that farmers avoid using tractors on the road while the repaving is underway. Ministry engineers will be on-site to

oversee construction and ensure the project meets its 1,000-meter specification.

This prompt action by the Ministry of Public

Works demonstrates their commitment to delivering quality infrastructure projects that meet the needs of the Guyanese people.



Road works in Naamryck Backdam Road, Parika

## 100TH CORE HOME DELIVERED TO LOW-INCOME FAMILY

Four more families are celebrating a fresh start after receiving keys to their new homes from the Ministry of Housing and Water. This brings the total number of core homes distributed under the Adequate Housing and Urban Accessibility Programme (AHUAP) to 100.

The initiative targets vulnerable families, providing them with improved living conditions in 20 x 20 feet concrete units featuring two bedrooms, a kitchen,



Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal handing over keys and document to Pauline Nedd

and essential washroom and is built with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank

(IDB).

The handover ceremony, at the ministry's Camp Street office in Georgetown, was a momentous occasion for the recipients. Pauline Nedd, one of the proud homeowners, expressed her relief and excitement, stating, "It's a great feeling... This means a new era for my family." Nedd's comments echoed the sentiments of Claud Cyrus, another recipient who highlighted the struggles his family

faced due to financial constraints. "I am feeling quite relaxed and happy to know that eventually the government is doing something for the elderly," Cyrus said.

The programme offers significant benefits to residents. Beyond the improved living quarters, recipients only contribute \$100,000 towards the cost and receive a five-year termite treatment certificate and a ten-year electrical certificate.

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, emphasised the programme's success and offered reassurance to the remaining beneficiaries. "We expect the smooth flow of the completion of your houses... That is why we can commit that the 34 of you present, that all 34 is to be completed before the end of May," he said.

# BACK CIRCLE RESIDENTS WELCOME GOV'T'S INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

West Ruimveldt residents, particularly those in the "Back Circle" area, are about to witness a major transformation thanks to a collaborative community development project.

The initiative began with resident Raulex Adams' vision for a more positive environment for both the young and old in his community.

Adams contacted Commissioner of Police (ag) Clifton Hicken, known for his engagement in community development efforts. Recognising the project's potential, Commissioner Hicken brought in Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, to provide expertise and collaboration. Minister

Edghill wasted no time, visiting the community to assess areas needing improvement and listen to residents' long-standing concerns.

This collective effort will bring real improvements to the community, including upgraded drainage systems, a new playground for children, and much-needed pavements for senior citizens.

Resident Orin Allen expressed his appreciation for the minister's direct involvement. "This hands-on approach shows the government's commitment to responsive, inclusive, and sustainable development," Allen



Orin Allen

told the Department of Public Information (DPI).

Allen highlight the challenges the community has faced, "For a long time we've been in this situation. The pavements are low, and there's no proper drainage. Even a little rain floods the area. So, I'm glad the minister took the initiative to come and get it done."

Loydia Ross, another

resident, echoed Allen's sentiments, emphasizing the impact of flooding and the project's potential benefits. "I'm happy for this because it will help us a lot, especially the children. They'll

Floyd Stewart added to the chorus of approval. "I feel proud that Mr. Hicken, the Minister, and Mr. Raulex are cooperating with us. I feel proud to know that my community is enhancing," Stewart said.

Engineers from the Ministry of Public Works will be conducting assessments to determine the best course of action.



Loydia Ross

have a playground to play in instead of being on the road where cars pass by. So, I'm happy for the development," she expressed to DPI.



Floyd Stewart



Residents showing areas for improvement to Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill

Over the past three years, the Better Hope/La Bonne Intention (LBI) Neighbourhood

# BETTER HOPE AND MONTROSE THRIVE WITH EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENTS



The Better Hope Health Centre that was built in 2021

Democratic Council (NDC) has witnessed a significant boost in education and healthcare thanks to collaborative efforts between the NDC and the government. This growth comes in response to the rising population of both adults and children in the area.

Babita Dhanpaul, a veteran teacher with 33 years of experience at Montrose Primary School, celebrates the transformation within the education sector. "Teaching has become even more enjoyable for both teachers

and students," she exclaims.

Dhanpaul credits the current administration for providing "textbooks in abundance" and "more furniture" for the school. Recent improvements include a resurfaced play area and a building extension with fresh paint and new windows.

The addition of a new nursery school next door has also brought relief. "The nursery school was previously housed within the primary school, creating overcrowding,"

explains Haroon Khan, Deputy Chairman of the NDC. "This dedicated facility allows for a more manageable environment for both younger and older students."

Zaman Khan, NDC Chairman, highlights the positive changes in healthcare since the PPP/C government took office in 2020. He recalls a letter sent to Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony, who subsequently visited the site that now houses the new Better Hope Health Centre.

Residents

can now access healthcare services more easily," Khan says. For many years, the only option was a GuySuco dispensary limited to serving their employees. The new health centre is a tremendous

improvement. These advancements demonstrate the successful collaboration between the NDC and the government, working together to elevate the quality of life for all citizens in Better Hope and Montrose.



Montrose Primary School

# NEW PARK BRINGS FUN AND FAMILY TIME TO CARACAS, BERBICE

Residents of Caracas, West Canje Berbice, now have a new place to relax and connect with loved ones thanks to the commissioning of a \$6.4 million recreational park.

The park, a collaborative effort between the Guyana government, the Regional Democratic Council (RDC), and the Government of China, provides a much-needed space for residents of Vryheid and surrounding communities.

"The children

of this community will now have a park where they can come, play, and enjoy fun times with each other," said Regional Chairman David Armogan at the commissioning ceremony. "This is an important pillar of development for any developing country."

Armogan praised the park's contribution to the region's modernisation and highlighted its potential to strengthen family bonds.

Chinese Ambassador



\$6.4M recreational park commissioned at Caracas, Berbice

to Guyana, Guo Haiyan, emphasised the strong relationship between the two nations. "The Government of China has been actively supporting Guyana's development, including the development of Region Six," Ambassador Haiyan said. "This park represents the profound friendship between the Chinese and Guyanese people."

The new park joins a growing network of

green spaces in Region Six. In March, First Lady Arya Ali commissioned parks in Brothers and Lonsdale villages, and President Irfaan Ali opened the New Amsterdam Recreational Park last year.

These parks are expected to foster a greater sense of community, improve mental well-being, and provide opportunities for residents to connect and unwind.

## EAST COAST RESIDENTS ENGAGED ON FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY PROJECT

Residents from Cummings Lodge, Industry, Better Hope, Beehive, Blygezight and surrounding areas along the East Coast corridor recently met with Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, to discuss the ongoing four-lane highway project stretching from Sheriff Street to Orange Nassau (railway embankment).

The 30.8-kilometer road project, which began in June 2023 and is expected to be completed in July 2025, is being undertaken by China Railway First Group.

While acknowledging the potential for disruption during construction, Minister Edghill emphasised

the government's commitment to minimising residents' inconvenience.

**"We understand that development projects can cause temporary issues,"** Minister Edghill said. **"The government is committed to working with everyone to lessen these issues. We govern through a consultative approach, and that's why we're holding these meetings."**

Minister Edghill reiterated that the ultimate goal of such projects is to improve residents' lives. **"Whatever we do, if it adversely affects someone, we will**

**find a way to address it,"** he explained. **"Our goal is not to make your life harder, but to make it better."**



*The meeting at Better Hope*

**We are doing this project to improve people's lives, and the beneficiaries' satisfaction is paramount."**

Residents raised various concerns during the meetings. Minister Edghill assured them that any bridges, fences, or

emphasised. **"While construction is ongoing, if we have to break anything, we will provide temporary access. When construction is finished, everything will be restored to the same quality or better than before."**

For residents in Beehive concerned about dust, Minister Edghill outlined a plan for dust suppression. A water truck will be assigned to the construction site and will sprinkle water twice daily to minimise dust.

The Minister also met with residents of Doch Four whose properties will be impacted by the project. They will be duly compensated for any damages.

In response to inquiries about improvements to local roads, Minister Edghill shared positive news. **"We are currently upgrading over 300 roads along the East Coast,"** he announced. **"All the internal streets will be done eventually."**

The East Coast Road Project goes beyond the four-lane highway. It also includes the rehabilitation of the existing public road from Belfield to Orange Nassau, spanning 5.3 kilometres. Construction of bridges, culverts, and drainage networks is also part of the project, along with a new bridge across the Hope Canal.

## CJIA EXPANSION PROJECT PUSHED FOR TIMELY COMPLETION

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, has called for an increase in

staff from contractors working on the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA)

Expansion Project. The minister emphasised the importance of **"getting the work done promptly"** and meeting **"contractual obligations"** during a visit to the project site.

Minister Edghill inspected several ongoing endeavours including the replacement of the asphaltic concrete pavement with rigid pavement for the international apron, the construction and rehabilitation of the new and existing commercial centre and VIP section, the construction of a new administrative

office building and the rehabilitation of the baggage make-up area.

**"Each contractor will be held accountable for their project delivery,"** Minister Edghill remarked. He advised some contractors to **"increase their labour force and implement a shift system" to ensure timely completion.**

This project aligns with the PPP/C government's plan to modernise Guyana and establish it as a "pivotal connectivity hub" for various regions.

**"We are working to bring more options to ensure there is greater ease of travel in and out of Guyana,"** explained Minister Edghill.

The project focuses on expanding the airport's infrastructure to enhance its commercial viability. New features include restaurants, concession areas, business services, airline offices, and upgraded VIP lounges to support Guyana's growing events tourism sector. Additionally, the over 300 CJIA staff will be relocated to a more

comfortable facility.

The total budget for the 2024 modernisation project is approximately \$1.1 billion. The specific contractors and their allocated budgets are K&S General Contractors Inc., -upgrading the baggage make-up area (\$81,158,185,) Avinash Contracting and Scrap Metal Inc., -constructing the administrative building (\$890,440,820) and installing the rigid pavement (\$703,176,270,) and PD Contracting - working on the commercial centre (\$874,265,155)



*Minister Edghill during the site visit*

## \$30M REPAIRS CONDUCTED ON PARIKA STELLING LINKSPAN BRIDGE

The Parika Stelling linkspan bridge is back in business after a successful \$30 million repair project, according to Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill. The linkspan, a crucial drawbridge for vehicles using the MV Sabanto ferry, sustained significant damage and required immediate attention, Minister Edghill highlighted during a site inspection.

The good news for commuters is that the repairs were efficient. **"We are happy to**

**announce that the remedial works were completed... restoring the MV Sabanto ferry's daily operations of transporting passengers and cargo,"** said Minister Edghill.

The repairs were a collaborative effort, according to Superintendent of Parika Stelling, Tamesh Persaud. The repairs were carried out by a joint effort between the Demerara Harbour Bridge (DHB)

Corporation and private contractors, Persaud revealed. This teamwork aimed to **"swiftly restore ferry operations and alleviate disruptions caused by the damaged linkspan,"** he explained. The good news is that it seems to be working. **"We are in a better position in terms of repair, smooth flow of traffic, no complaints at this point,"** Persaud said.

While the linkspan bridge repairs are complete, there's more

to be done at Parika Stelling. The ministry, together with the DHB Corporation, will soon begin the tender process for catwalk

rehabilitation. The catwalk's condition has become a safety concern, prompting the need for immediate action. The project will involve



*Repaired linkspan bridge at Parika Stelling*

relocating and repairing the catwalk, along with driving fender piles to strengthen its structure.

These infrastructure projects highlight the government's focus on maintaining essential transportation hubs. These interventions underscore the government's commitment to maintaining crucial transportation infrastructure for the efficient operation of essential services, and more importantly, the welfare of passengers.

# PRESIDENT ALI VOWS TO BUILD EQUITABLE SOCIETY AT FIRST FAMILY'S EID CELEBRATION

President Irfaan Ali addressed hundreds of Guyanese Muslims and others at the Eid-ul-Fitr dinner hosted by the First Family on the lawns of the Muslim Youth Organisation along Woolford Avenue, Thomas Lands, Georgetown.

He reaffirmed the government's dedication to core principles like social, economic, and political justice, respect for the rule of law, and gender equality. These principles, he said, guide the government's

development plans.

The President emphasised the importance of respect for women and children, strong communities, and ethical leadership. He highlighted the PPP/C administration's focus on creating a fair and inclusive society where every Guyanese family has the opportunity to own a home, no child lacks education, and no one goes hungry.

President Ali cautioned against those who spread misinformation and try



The Eid-ul-Fitr dinner

to divide the country. He urged Guyanese to challenge each other with good deeds and acts of kindness, fostering a spirit of cooperation over

competition. He stressed the importance of acknowledging past injustices and seeking forgiveness to move

forward. **"True democratic forces take responsibility for their mistakes and past wrongs,"** he stated.

President Ali emphasised that the presidency is not just a ceremonial role but a profound responsibility to serve the people and leave behind a stronger, more united nation. He pledged to utilise all resources to create a stronger, more unified Guyana where people care for one another.

Guyana's diverse

culture and heritage, the President declared, are the nation's greatest symbols of strength, hope, peace, and love.

The celebratory dinner included a diverse group of attendees from various religions, ethnicities, government officials, business leaders, legal professionals, and members of the diplomatic corps. Muslim community members were also recognised for their contributions to education, business, and religion.

# FIRST SON ZAYD ALI'S LEMONADE SALE RAISES \$6M FOR ANIMAL SHELTERS



The event's primary goal was to raise funds for animal welfare initiatives

The sunny lawns of State House were buzzing with activity as First Son Zayd Ali hosted his third

annual fundraising event for animal welfare. The 4-year-old's lemonade sale, accompanied by a

variety of fun attractions, brought in a remarkable \$6 million to support six animal shelters and welfare groups in Guyana.

Hundreds of patrons attended the event, enjoying refreshing homemade lemonade, delicious snacks, and sweet treats. Children were treated to games, pony rides, and face painting, creating a festive atmosphere for the entire family.

The event's primary goal was to raise funds for animal welfare initiatives. Six organisations – Tails of Hope, Paws for a Cause, GSPCA, Rosewood Foundation, Hope for

Animals Inc., and Fureva Hope Alive Animal Rescue Sanctuary – each received a generous donation of \$1 million. These funds will directly support vital services offered by these shelters and groups, such as vaccinations, deworming, spaying and neutering, and other essential veterinary care.

**"In just a few hours, thanks to the incredible support of the Guyanese people, we were able to raise \$6 million for our animals,"** said First Lady Arya Ali on behalf of her son. **"We are overwhelmed with gratitude for this outpouring of**

**generosity."**

Mrs. Ali highlighted the positive impact these events have on Zayd. **"His love for animals is a reflection of the values we emphasise in our home – care and compassion,"** she explained. **"We teach him to treat others, including animals, with the same kindness and respect he expects for himself."**

The First Lady added that these fundraising activities serve an educational purpose for Zayd. **"Events like this allow him to learn about responsibility at a young age,"** she said. **"They help him**

**develop a mindset where he sees himself as part of the solution to challenges, including those faced by animals in need."**

The substantial donations from Zayd Ali's lemonade sale will provide a significant boost to animal welfare efforts in Guyana. The recipient shelters and groups can now offer vital medical care and services to a greater number of animals, improving their overall well-being and promoting a more compassionate society.

# FIRST LADY AND MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TREAT 300 CHILDREN TO UNFORGETTABLE CIRCUS EXPERIENCE



The First Lady enjoying the show

In a heartwarming display of collaboration, First Lady, Mrs. Arya Ali, and Mexico's Ambassador to Guyana, H.E. Mauricio Vizcaíno Crespo, treated nearly 300 children to a magical day at the Suarez Brothers' Circus.

The event, which saw children from orphanages and special

needs schools across Guyana, was part of the First Lady's ongoing "Adopt-an-Orphanage" initiative, focused on providing financial and emotional support to children in institutional care.

The children were mesmerised by the dazzling display of acrobatics, performing

arts, and of course, the hilarious antics of the clowns.

**"The children's faces beamed with joy throughout the show,"** according to press release from the First Lady's Office.

Adding to the excitement, the children were treated to popcorn and Mexican snow cones, making the entire experience even more special.

**"Providing vulnerable children with opportunities like these is very important for their holistic development,"** Mrs. Ali said. **"It improves their emotional**

**well-being and their social skills, which impact their ability to lead independent, successful lives."**

The First Lady stressed the importance of inclusion, a cornerstone of the President's "One Guyana" platform.

**"Our children, regardless of their circumstance or situation, must be included in activities which ordinary Guyanese are able to enjoy,"** she said. **"They must be able to share similar experiences and feel included in our society."**

Ambassador Vizcaíno expressed his

delight in being part of this impactful initiative.

**"For Mexico, it is a great honour to share the talent and work of the artists of the Suarez Brothers' Circus with all our Guyanese friends, but especially**

**with this group of wonderful girls and boys,"** he said.

The Ambassador commended the First Lady's office for partnering with the Mexican Embassy to create this special event for Guyana's children.



One of the acts in the circus



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# WARM WELCOME IN NYC: PRES WITH GUYANESE DIASPOR



Over \$80 million has been invested to improve critical roads in Charity, Region Two, bringing much-needed relief to residents and businesses alike.

One of the key projects involved the complete paving of Nursery School Street with asphalt concrete. This 300-meter stretch, completed by Payless General Store for \$30.1 million, provides easier access to the local school

for children and eases commute for motorists.

Khanai Street in New Road Charity has also seen a significant upgrade. R79 Mining and Construction rehabilitated a 405-meter section for \$34.4 million, significantly improving the flow of traffic and access to goods and services.

Another area benefiting from the project is Burial Ground Road, where

Wild Oats Civil and Mechanical Engineering completed a 250-meter upgrade for over \$20.2 million. This not only improves accessibility for residents but also provides a crucial link for Pomeroun residents to conduct their business in a more convenient environment.

The improved roads are a plus for Charity's agricultural sector. Farmers now have a smoother ride

transporting their crops and livestock, streamlining their operations and potentially increasing efficiency.

These upgrades fall under the Ministry of Public Works' miscellaneous road project for the Essequibo Coast. This initiative aims to transform both rural and urban areas by rehabilitating and expanding community roads.



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**7<sup>99</sup>** each



Benjamin's Rose Water Flavoring 480 ml

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**99¢** each



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Mr. Goudas All Purpose Flour 8 kg

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Hereford Luncheon Meat 340 g

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Marshall's Pacific Mackerel Assorted 425 g

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Heavy Duty Aluminum Foil 25 Sq Ft

**99¢** each



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**5<sup>99</sup>** each



Vim Cream Cleaner Assorted 500 ml

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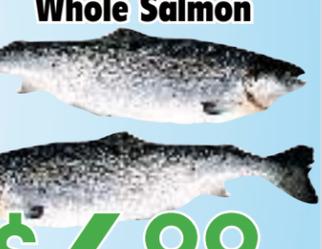
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<p><b>Frozen King Fish Steaks</b></p>  <p><b>\$6.99</b> lb</p>	<p><b>Salted Extra Large Cod Fish</b></p>  <p><b>\$7.99</b> lb</p>	<p><b>Fresh Turkey Neck</b></p>  <p><b>\$1.99</b> lb</p>	<p><b>Fresh Large Chicken Feet</b></p>  <p><b>\$1.99</b> lb</p>	<p><b>Fresh Exceldor Chicken Leg Quarters</b></p>  <p><b>66.99</b> ≤ 18 kg box <small>With Purchase of 2 cases or More Thursday To Sunday Only</small></p>

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# CENTRAL GOVT STEPS UP AMID CITY COUNCIL'S STRUGGLES - SPENT \$20B ON CITY



The Kingston seawall transformed

Georgetown, Guyana's capital city, is undergoing a significant transformation, with the central government taking the lead on numerous infrastructure and beautification projects. This comes amidst criticism directed at the Mayor and City Council (M&CC) for what many perceive as a lack of initiatives and management failures.

"The dismal state of the structures in the capital city reflects the subject failures of the city council," said Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), during a press conference. "But it seems as though every single thing that should be done in the city...the central government has to take over. And we don't begrudge that support," he added, highlighting the government's

commitment to the city's well-being.

Dr. Jagdeo pointed out the substantial financial resources being allocated by the central government for Georgetown's development. Overall, he said, "We have spent over 20B in the city and it's counting all the time."

"The government has undertaken a key responsibility of the city, which is infrastructure, roads," he explained.

"Every road in this city will be done by the central government. That runs into billions of dollars."

This commitment extends beyond roads. "The whole city eventually going to be redone, the roads

and drainage, etc.," Dr. Jagdeo said. He cited ongoing development projects funded by the government in various Georgetown neighborhoods, including Sophia, East and West Ruimveldt, Alexander Village, Albouystown, and Queenstown.

The government

These projects include the Kingston Seawall Beautification Project, the construction of recreational facilities in 34 community grounds, and the development of green spaces like the "Safe Space" along the Lamaha Corridor.

"We have undertaken all the beautification of the

the government, the planting of trees."

Solid waste management is another area receiving significant government attention. This year's budget allocated \$2.6 billion specifically for this purpose, with a portion dedicated to improving infrastructure and community clean-up programmes in Georgetown.

"We've spent \$15 million to take the dump site out of the city," Dr. Jagdeo pointed out. "We are clearing drains. We are putting additional pumping capacity in the city. What does the city do? So if we're doing drainage, grounds, beautification, etc., they're literally doing very little."



The \$1.4 billion makeover of Independence Boulevard has increased Albouystown's value

is also spearheading beautification initiatives aimed at enhancing the city's aesthetics and residents' quality of life.

city, the sidewalks, the boardwalks, and everything else," Dr. Jagdeo emphasised. "It's being done by

## ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY STABROEK MARKET WHARF COLLAPSE BEING CONDUCTED

Clearing of debris left in the wake of the collapsed Stabroek Market Wharf has been completed, a crucial step towards restoring normalcy after the unfortunate incident.

The cleaning exercise was a collaborative effort among the Ministries of Local Government and Regional Development, and Public Works, and the Mayor and City Council (M&CC). An 85-member team worked

diligently, with the support of the Guyana Police Force and Guyana Fire Service. Their use of heavy machinery was limited due to the wharf's condition, but a Ministry of Public Works' barge stationed at the rear facilitated debris removal without disrupting market operations.

Now that the cleanup is complete, a comprehensive assessment of the

damage is being conducted. This will provide valuable insights for the next steps in the restoration process. The government has pledged its commitment to collaborating with the M&CC to develop strategies for the wharf's full restoration and a safe return to normal operations.

In the wake of the collapse, President Ali had expressed serious concerns about

infrastructure safety in Georgetown. He blamed "technical incompetence" at the M&CC for neglecting critical maintenance and posing a threat to public safety. President Ali had assigned ministers to conduct an immediate assessment and develop a plan for safety improvements and rebuilding efforts.



The cleaning of the debris

## NATIONAL PARK TO RECEIVE MAJOR UPGRADE WITH DEDICATED ZONES AND ECO-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES

Georgetown residents can rejoice as the National Park is set for a significant makeover! The Protected Areas Commission (PAC) unveiled a new

zone plan during a recent launch ceremony and consultation held at the park itself.

"The zoning plan aims to ensure the country's green

space is developed and offers various activities for the meaningful engagement of citizens, particularly youths," said Foreign Secretary, Robert Persaud, emphasising the government's commitment to maintaining and improving recreational spaces.

The exciting revamp will introduce 27 designated areas, offering a diverse range of activities for all ages and interests. From a playland and equestrian area for families to a fitness

zone and rugby field, there's something for everyone. Nature lovers can explore the manatee boardwalk and the 1.5-kilometre walkway, while those seeking a touch of whimsy can visit the Jurassic theme promenade.

But the upgrades go beyond just fun and games. PAC Commissioner, Jason Fraser, assured the public that the park will remain free to enter. "There might be some amenities for maintenance, there might be a small fee attached...It is not for profit but pure

maintenance," he clarified.

Sustainability is also a key focus of the project. Foreign Secretary Persaud stressed the importance of responsible behaviour from park users, highlighting the negative impact of pollution on the environment, public health, and the economy.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is also lending a hand. "We are looking into developing a systematic mapping on how plastic is generated and handled and

exploring ways to restore recycling," said UNDP Resident Representative in Guyana, Gerardo Noto. He also mentioned plans to collaborate with the PAC on setting up recycling bins and potentially supporting small eco-friendly projects within the park.

This isn't the only green space getting a facelift. The government and PAC are joining forces with the Chinese Government to modernise Joe Vieira Park, while improvements are also underway at the Botanical Garden.



Outdoor gym at the National Park

# PNC slams Rickford-Burke's 'unwarranted attacks' on President Ali

CENTRAL Executive Member of the Peoples National Congress-Reform (PNC-R) and Vice-Chairman of the Region Four Regional Democratic Council (RDC) Samuel Sandy has condemned the "unwarranted" attacks by known detractors who are calling for boycotts against Guyanese-owned businesses in New York, which welcomed President Dr. Irfaan Ali during his recent visit.

The calls for boycotts originated from Rickford Burke of the Caribbean-Guyana Institute for Democracy (C-GID) and activist Mark Benschop, both of whom are known critics of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C).

Sandy, however, highlighted the importance of solidarity and constructive engagement within the Guyanese community, particularly in the context of welcoming elected leaders like President Dr. Ali.

He stressed that boycotting fellow Guyanese, especially in support of the elected president, was not only "unwarranted but counterproductive".

"It is imperative to underscore the fundamental principle that calls for boycotting our own people, particularly in the context of showing solidarity with an elected president, are entirely unwarranted and counterproductive," Sandy said

He urged the community to recognise President Ali's position as the duly elected leader of Guyana, deserving of respect regardless of personal political affiliations.

"Foremost among our responsibilities is the recognition that Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali holds the position of duly elected President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, deserving of the respect inherently associated with his office.

"The warm reception extended to him by our brothers and sisters in the diaspora should be interpreted as a gesture of hospitality rather than an endorsement of his governance. It is incumbent upon us to separate the individual from the office they hold, welcoming leaders with the courtesy they deserve while maintaining a critical stance on their policies and actions," Sandy said.

He highlighted the importance of separating personal opinions from respect due to the office of the president.

Sandy warned that resorting to measures such as boycotts "only serves to breed animosity and hinder progress towards a more unified and prosperous future".

Addressing the disparity in treatment between President Ali and previous opposition leaders, Sandy pointed out that such double standards undermined efforts for unity and progress within the community.

"This underscores the need for our collective efforts to focus on uplifting our community morally and economically, rather than perpetuating divisions that only serve to exacerbate existing challenges.

"Our allegiance to our nation necessitates support for its elected repre-

sentatives, albeit with the understanding that constructive engagement and accountability are essential components of a healthy democracy," he said.

Sandy called upon the Guyanese community to "unite in embracing the values of unity, camaraderie, and patriotism."

He pointed out that regardless of personal affiliations or political preferences, at the end of the day, it is incumbent upon Guyanese to extend love, protection, and respect to President Ali until such time as the democratic process determines otherwise.

"Let us channel our energies towards fostering a society where dialogue and cooperation prevail over division and discord," he said.

Another senior member of the

PNC-R, Jermaine Figueira recently added his voice and lashed out against the call for the boycott of Guyanese-owned businesses, deeming it as just "plain stupid."

Figueira, who is also a sitting Member of Parliament (MP) for APNU+AFC, said Dr Ali's visit to Brooklyn underscores the importance of engaging with diaspora communities and recognising their contributions to national development.

"Boycotting Guyanese businesses, "we own" people in a foreign land is just plain stupid. How is that going to achieve anything good? We have hundreds of foreign-owned supermarkets popping up in every part of Guyana and no Guyanese is calling for a boycott of their businesses so why the self-hate...?"



Samuel Sandy

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## GUYANA'S LOCAL CONTENT LEGISLATION CREATES JOBS AND BOOSTS ECONOMY, SAYS PRESIDENT ALI



President Ali addressing the Local Content Summit

President Irfaan Ali announced at the opening of this year's Local Content Summit that Guyana's robust local content legislation has resulted in an estimated 6,000 jobs.

"These activities," the President underscored, "represent the creation of an estimated 6,000 jobs across several sectors."

The Summit, held at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre, under the theme "Creating Value. Driving Economic Expansion,"

aimed to bring together stakeholders to discuss the impact of local content requirements on the Guyanese economy.

President Ali pointed to a significant increase in value through local participation from 2022 to now, representing an increase of US\$84

million and a total of US\$524 million.

"There has been a 20% increase in value through local participation from 2022 to now," he stated.

The President explained that the Local Content Secretariat estimates procurement activities will increase to US\$550 million this year, a 5% increase from 2023 and a 25% increase from 2022.

President Ali also announced a review of the local content legislation to improve its effectiveness.

"Let me say that we have currently asked the local

content secretariat to commence the review of the different areas we have under local content," he said. "The aim is to look at areas in which we have built capacity as a country, and to see how we can further accelerate those areas."

The President noted that local content legislation has allowed Guyana to build local capacity, but there is a need for change in business models to facilitate further expansion and value creation.

"We saw companies coming together, we saw

consortiums being built, we saw a partnership being created," he said. "Summits like these are important because they provide a level of networking."

President Ali emphasised that local content is not just about building local capacity but also about positioning local companies to compete regionally and worldwide.

"That is what local content allows us to do," he said. "It allows us to accelerate local growth and local development to meet regional and international needs."

## GUYANA DRILLS UP FIRST HOMEGROWN OFFSHORE TALENT - DENZEL SOUTHWELL MAKES HISTORY

Denzel Southwell isn't your typical offshore driller. Hailing from the small village of Sandvoort in Berbice, Guyana, this 27-year-old has shattered barriers to become the first Guyanese Auxillary Assistant Driller on an offshore drillship. Southwell's achievement is more than just a personal win; it embodies the aspirations of a nation on the precipice of an oil-fueled future.

Southwell's foundation was built in local schools, Sandvoort Primary and Tutorial Secondary. After graduating with eight CXC subjects, he opted for a technical path at the New Amsterdam Technical Institute, specialising in Electronics and Electrical Insulation. He

began his professional journey as a clerk at the New Amsterdam municipality, but his ambition craved a more dynamic career.

"In January 2021, Southwell embarked on a life-altering odyssey," a release from El Dorado Offshore (EDO) states. That odyssey began when he stepped onto the Noble Tom Madden drillship. Starting as a Roustabout, his talents were quickly recognised.

"His meticulous nature and work ethic shone brightly," the release continues, leading to a promotion to Rig Administrator.

When the Operations Management Development Programme (OMDP) was launched, Southwell's dedication earned him a coveted spot. The

programme demanded a deep understanding of drilling operations, and Southwell wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty. "He began as

a Floorhand, then steadily progressed to Shaker Hand and Drilling Fluid Operator," the release details.

This relentless pursuit of growth culminated in January 2024 when Denzel Southwell joined the EDO team. At EDO,



Denzel Southwell receiving an award from Ms Thalia Wilson of EDO

Southwell contributes his expertise at the forefront of Guyana's oil boom. Today, he stands as Guyana's first Auxillary Assistant

Driller, a pioneering achievement.

The road to success wasn't easy. Being away from family, especially his newborn daughter, was a significant hurdle. Southwell also faced challenges adapting to a new field and overcoming language barriers. Yet, he persevered, drawing strength from his parents' words: "Your attitude determines your altitude," the release quotes. This mantra fueled his resolve and helped him conquer every obstacle.

Southwell's accomplishment goes beyond personal triumph. It ignites hope for aspiring Guyanese in the oil and gas sector. "This journey as a driller has been a blessing for my family and I know it'll make a great

impact on my fellow Guyanese," Southwell shared, according to the release. "Being the first Guyanese to be a Driller shows that we as Guyanese can do anything as long as we work hard and be willing to be dedicated."

Southwell's success paves the way for a future where Guyanese talent flourishes within the oil and gas industry. A passionate advocate for increased local content, he urged his countrymen: "The oil is here, the time is now... So that together we all can develop this beautiful country we call home," the release concluded.

## GUYANESE PRIVATE SECTOR EXPLORES FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES WITH AFREXIMBANK

The Guyanese private sector is looking to tap into new financing avenues with the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank). A roundtable discussion, led by Senior Minister Dr. Ashni Singh, brought together representatives from both sides to explore how Afreximbank's

financial instruments can support local development projects and trade transactions.

This meeting comes on the heels of successful utilisation of financing from other international institutions like the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through its private

sector arm, IDB Invest. Dr. Singh highlighted that IDB Invest has approved US\$173 million for private sector projects since 2020, demonstrating the potential for collaboration with financial institutions.

Afreximbank's Acting Chief Operations

Officer (Caribbean Office), Okechukwu Ihejirika, presented a comprehensive overview of the bank's available instruments to the Guyanese private sector. This paves the way for potential partnerships that could fuel Guyana's economic development.



Some of the representatives that attended the meeting

# GUYSUACO TO GET NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM SOON

Guyana's sugar industry is undergoing a major overhaul as the government pushes for modernization and revival. President Irfaan Ali announced a new management team will take the helm of the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo), including a new CEO.

**"We have been working aggressively at modernising GuySuCo,"** President Ali said. "This initiative fulfills a key promise from the PPP/C Administration's 2020-2025 manifesto to revive the sugar industry."

The initiative includes a significant



GuySuCo's Blairmont Estate

government investment of \$6 billion allocated in this year's budget. The aim is to boost production and efficiency within the sugar sector.

A key aspect of the modernisation plan is the conversion of land for mechanised cane harvesting, according to Agriculture Minister

Zulfikar Mustapha.

**"To date, we have close to 5,000 hectares of land which have already been converted into mechanisation,"** Minister Mustapha highlighted during a recent interview on the Guyana Dialogue. **"These things are already in place to modernise GuySuCo."**

The focus isn't just on increasing production. GuySuCo is also looking to capitalise on value-added products and high-yielding cane varieties.

**"The plan is to produce more**

**than just raw or bulk varieties,"** said Minister Mustapha. Guyana is looking to sell **"over 2,000 tonnes of refined sugar"** within the Caribbean.

High-yielding cane varieties are another key strategy. **"When I became minister of agriculture, they had just about 35 to 40 tonnes of canes per hectare, which you cannot survive in an industry,"** explained Minister Mustapha. **"The two current cane types are already showing promising results" in increasing yields.**

Guyana is also

seeking external support for its sugar industry revival. A recent visit by a team from India included a study of GuySuCo's operations. Minister Mustapha expressed optimism that this collaboration could extend to technical personnel from India joining GuySuCo.

The revitalisation efforts include the September 2023 reopening of the Rose Hall Sugar Estate. Production has also seen a steady increase, rising from 47,000 tonnes in 2020 to 60,000 tonnes in 2023.

# CANAL NUMBER ONE PUMP STATION NEARING COMPLETION

Farmers and residents in Canal Number One, West Bank Demerara, can expect improved drainage and irrigation access soon. Construction on a \$650 million pump station is progressing rapidly and is slated for completion within three months, according to Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha.

**"The development is part of a broader initiative to enhance D&I infrastructure in the region,"** Minister Mustapha highlighted during a recent inspection visit to the pump station. This initiative includes

projects at Belle Vue, A-Line sluice, and Meten-Meer-Zorg.

The Canal Number One pump station will boast two powerful, mechanically driven units, each capable of discharging a significant 150 cubic feet of water per second. This increased capacity will significantly improve drainage capabilities in the area.

The Canal Number One pump station is just one piece of the puzzle. **"A total of 19 pump stations are under construction nationwide,"** Minister Mustapha shared, expressing optimism

about having them all operational by mid-2025.

The government is looking beyond individual pump stations and aiming for a more comprehensive solution. **"We also will be building a Hope-like canal in this area by the B-Line structure,"** explained Minister Mustapha. The Hope Canal on the East Coast Demerara has proven successful in mitigating flooding, and the government hopes to replicate that success across Regions Three, Five, and Six.

National Drainage and Irrigation Authority



The \$650M Canal pump station

(NDIA) Chairman, Lionel Wordsworth, echoed the sentiment of a nationwide effort. He pointed out that works are advancing

on pump stations in Charity, Cottage, Cozier, Jimbo Grove, and Letter Kenny, with additional investments planned for other locations.

Several other drainage improvement projects in various communities are also underway.

These initiatives are part of a larger \$115 billion investment by the government to improve Guyana's drainage and irrigation systems over its term in office. This investment aims to strengthen the country's resilience against climate change-induced flooding.

By implementing these projects, Guyana is taking proactive steps to safeguard its agricultural sector, residents, and infrastructure from the threats of flooding.

# ALBOUYSTOWN RESIDENTS LAUD SMOOTH ROADS

Residents of Albouystown are beaming with joy after the long-awaited upgrade of several key roads in their community. The five kilometres of newly paved asphalt road represent a significant improvement over the previously rough and dilapidated conditions.

This project fulfils a recent commitment made by the People's Progressive Party Civic Government, particularly Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo. Residents expressed

appreciation for the swift action taken.



Kenneth Charran

Kenneth Charran, a resident, commended the Vice President for keeping his word. **"The road was messy [and] rough,"** he recalled. **"Now, Mr. Jagdeo when he promises,**

**he always fulfils. So, it is good; big changes. Everything is developing, [and] getting better."**

Estelle Williams, a resident for 45 years, highlighted the dramatic improvement. **"The road was terrible,"** she said. **"Now, you can see a lot of improvement and people driving on smooth roads. Children can come out and play. Before they couldn't. So, it is a very good initiative they doing for Albouystown."**

Patrick King, a resident for 29 years, expressed his gratitude for the government's intervention. **"The road is looking fantastic,"** he said, crediting the Vice President for his responsiveness. **"It goes to show that he**



Patrick King

**(the vice president) listened to what the people had to say and he acted accordingly. As soon as possible they came and started to do their necessary repairs and make the place look good."**

Resident Devon Schultz echoed the positive sentiments and acknowledged the impact on local businesses. **"We had very poor roads with a lot of potholes, and it was hard to travel on,"** he said. **"This improvement brought about by the government is**



Devon Schultz

**a good thing for us. Me and all the other businessmen get to move around much easier now that the road is done."**

Schultz, however, also offered a suggestion for further development. **"With much interest in youths and community development,"** he said,

# CARICOM PRIORITISES INDIGENOUS YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

## - GUYANA CHAMPIONS RIGHTS AT UN FORUMS

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Guyana delivered strong statements at the 23rd UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, highlighting their commitment to Indigenous rights and empowerment.

Guyana's Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai, speaking on behalf of CARICOM, emphasised the importance of empowering Indigenous youth. **"Genuine partnership, mentorship, and capacity-building initiatives"** are crucial, Minister Sukhai asserted. **"CARICOM**

**recognises that empowering Indigenous youth as agents of change requires more than just token representation,"** she explained.

Investing in education, leadership development, and culturally relevant skills training will equip them to be effective advocates and future leaders within their communities. Existing programmes like the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors were highlighted as examples of this focus on youth development.

Minister Sukhai also delivered a statement

on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC). While acknowledging some progress, GRULAC stressed that significant

Minister Sukhai said, and face issues like limited access to education and healthcare. GRULAC called for renewed commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights

communities. **"Their land and resource rights are recognised and protected, and their cultural heritage preserved,"** Minister Sukhai urged.

Meanwhile, Guyana reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to protecting Indigenous rights. Minister Sukhai highlighted that all Indigenous villages in Guyana have legal ownership of their lands.

**"We must empower indigenous peoples to play a leading role in conservation efforts,"** Minister Sukhai concluded. A dedicated Ministry of Amerindian Affairs

works closely with the NationalToshaosCouncil to promote sustainable resource management and improve the well-being of Indigenous communities. Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS2030) also respects Indigenous rights by following the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).

These statements demonstrate a multi-pronged approach from CARICOM and Guyana to empower Indigenous communities, protect their rights, and ensure their voices are heard on the global stage.



Minister Sukhai at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

challenges remain. **"Indigenous Peoples are among the poorest globally,"** of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and urged increased collaboration with Indigenous

# DEMOCRACY UNDERPINS PEACE, STABILITY, AND DEVELOPMENT IN GUYANA SAYS MINISTER TEIXEIRA

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, reaffirmed the importance of democracy for peace, stability, and economic development in Guyana.

Speaking at a session facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the University of Guyana (UG), and the European Union (EU), Minister Teixeira emphasised the link between these elements, stating: **"Without democracy, we can't have peace. Without peace, we can't have democracy. Without democracy, we cannot**

**have sustainable development. They are all interlinked."**

Minister Teixeira's

the ongoing challenges faced by developing countries. **"We're still in a world of**

**that perpetuate inequalities and provide ground for conflict, abject poverty, contradictions and extremism,"** she said.

The Minister also stressed the citizen's responsibility in safeguarding democracy. **"One of the lessons [that come from] democracy is that it is our duty as citizens... to protect and guard and preserve human rights and democracy. Constitutions can give you those rights. But if you don't protect them, they're**

**just on a piece of paper,"** she posited.

Addressing young people in the audience, Minister Teixeira urged them to be active participants in Guyana's democratic future. **"Your generation now, the younger generation, carries the mantle and responsibility of building on the shoulders, that you walk on the shoulders that came before you...as I did when I was in my 20s on those who went before me,"** she reminded them.

Marcela Rios Tabar, Regional Director for

Latin America and the Caribbean at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), also delivered remarks at the event. Tabar commended Guyana's progress on gender participation in politics, highlighting it as a positive step for democracy in the region.

The event was attended by Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy, members of the diplomatic corps, Vice Chancellor of the University of Guyana, Dr Paloma Mohamed-Martin, and students from the University of Guyana.



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira addressing the session

presentation focused on the global state of democracy, highlighting

**inequalities, unfair trade, unfair global financial systems,**

President Ali, highlighted the success of the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) programme during his address at the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies' (AFWI) 27th Annual Awards Gala in New York.

**"My government has been working assiduously to enhance access to quality education,"** President Ali declared. The GOAL programme is a key initiative in this effort, aiming to achieve universal access to education across Guyana.

The programme's

success is evident. **"We continue to surpass our goal of providing 20,000 scholarships during our tenure,"** the President revealed. This commitment to education is reflected in the impressive number of beneficiaries.

**"Today, under the GOAL scholarship programme, we have over 345 programmes from 19 universities,"** President Ali stated. **"More than 30,000 students are on this**

**programme in just three -and -a -half years, 75 percent of whom are women."** This statistic underscores the programme's inclusivity and its impact on empowering women through education.

Some 2,229 graduated from the UWI programmes, the President announced, highlighting a significant achievement for Guyanese students and the programme's effectiveness.

Looking ahead, President Ali emphasised continued investment. In this year's budget, a sum of \$6 billion was allocated for the GOAL programme to support 6,000 new students and 3,967 continuing students, he revealed. This ensures the programme's sustainability and growth.

In 2024, GOAL will introduce 160 new programmes in general and vocational,

bachelor's and master's degrees. This programme expansion

caters to a wider range of educational needs and career aspirations.



GOAL scholarships are providing citizens with international knowledge and qualifications for self- and economic development

# FACTOR PORT MOURANT TRAINING FACILITY PREPARING MORE GUYANESE FOR OIL AND GAS SECTOR

The Guyana Technical Training College Incorporated (GTTTCI) and its Facility Simulator (FACTOR) training facility in Port Mourant, Berbice are on a mission – to equip young Guyanese with the skills needed to thrive in the nation's booming oil and gas sector. This initiative fulfills President Ali's commitment to empowering Guyanese to take advantage of this industry's abundant opportunities.

Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud, a former Natural Resources and Environment Minister, recently visited FACTOR.

Professor Clem Sankatt and FACTOR Training Centre Manager Shaagul Hameeth provided updates on the facility's operations and plans. Notably, the first group of 25 trainees is currently undergoing intensive training to prepare them for FPSO (Floating, Production, Storage and Offloading) vessel operations – a significant milestone in Guyana's local content drive.

FACTOR is more than just a training centre; it's a secure, fully functional replica of a real-life oil and gas processing plant. It boasts a

Central Control Room, with the latest DCS marshalling cabinet, control systems. This



Foreign Secretary Robert M. Persaud during the visit to the facility

and motor control immersive environment centre, all equipped allows trainees to gain

practical experience in crucial areas like plant operations, troubleshooting, and essential maintenance tasks.

Trainees have the opportunity to perform loop testing, stroke checks, and calibration, mirroring real-world scenarios. They also learn to follow permit-to-work systems and adhere to established procedures and work orders, ensuring they follow a Safe System of Work – an industry standard.

This comprehensive programme, developed in collaboration with

Exxon and SBM, serves as the final preparation for GTTCI and FACTOR graduates to seamlessly transition into FPSO careers offshore.

Foreign Secretary Persaud sees this initiative as a catalyst for not only boosting Guyanese participation in the oil and gas sector, but also attracting skilled Guyanese from the diaspora back home. The expanding opportunities created by this industry can serve as a powerful draw, encouraging second-generation Guyanese to contribute to their nation's growth.

# GUYANA INSISTS ON "ARM'S LENGTH" RELATIONSHIP WITH EXXON, SEEKS OPTIMAL OUTCOME IN OIL DEAL

Guyana's government is emphasising transparency and accountability in its dealings with oil giant ExxonMobil and is prioritising Guyanese interests in the oil and gas sector. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, assured that contracts and Guyanese law govern their interactions.

"I can assure you that it is a relationship that is arm's length," Attorney General Nandlall told the Department of Public Information (DPI). "The government uses this approach to ensure, having regard to the given parameters, that the people of Guyana get the best possible deal from the oil and gas sector."

TRANSPARENCY

## AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Several measures underline this commitment. A new Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) with a fairer profit distribution for Guyana and adjustments to environmental licenses to meet legal requirements demonstrate this focus on transparency and accountability. The government contrasted this approach with the prior administration's actions. "The APNU+AFC government allowed Exxon to operate without any financial assurances," Attorney General Nandlall said. He highlighted a particularly concerning practice: "Even more telling, the APNU+AFC Coalition granted Exxon a 20-year environmental

permit, even though the law only permits a five-year duration. This meant the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wouldn't have had the opportunity to review the operation or impose stricter conditions."

## MAXIMISING BENEFITS FOR GUYANA

While acknowledging the limitations of the 2016 Exxon deal signed by the previous administration, the current government is taking steps to maximise benefits for Guyana. "We don't have on record, and no one has ever placed on record any expert advice, any expert service sought or offered," Attorney General Nandlall critiqued the negotiation process of the original deal. The Local Content

Act prioritises Guyanese businesses for oil and gas services, and a new model PSA with a higher royalty rate is used for future deals. Investments are also being made in training programmes to equip Guyanese workers for the industry. Attorney General Nandlall pointed out the job creation resulting from the Local Content Act: "Over 6,000 jobs have already been created."

Attorney General Nandlall further explained, "We are seeing investors here from all parts of the globe... Do you think these investors... would have come to Guyana if they were not satisfied that there is stability?"

## BALANCING DEVELOPMENT AND

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The government has assured the public that environmental

emergencies. Robust data-sharing systems and well monitoring mechanisms have also been implemented. "We insisted on a cable



The deal was signed with ExxonMobil in 2016

safeguards are in place. Subsequent licenses incorporate stricter environmental conditions, a US\$30 per tonne fine on carbon dioxide emissions, and a requirement for oil companies to develop capping stacks to prevent oil spills in

connection from the offshore operations directly feeding real-time data to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of Natural Resources," explained Attorney General Nandlall.

# GECOM WARNS PUBLIC OF FAKE REGISTRATION



The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) issued a public warning on April, 2024 regarding a group called "Future Forward Foundation" claiming to be GECOM representatives and collecting information from residents in the Wismar Registration area, Region 10.

GECOM emphasised that they are not currently

conducting any house-to-house registration and have not authorised any individual, group, or organisation to collect information on their behalf.

The release clarified the legitimate registration verification process. GECOM staff and accredited scrutineers from political parties may visit

applicants' residences only to verify the accuracy of the provided addresses. Applicants are always informed about this verification step beforehand.

GECOM staff and scrutineers will always display their official identification and accreditation badges. The public is advised to be cautious of anyone claiming to be a GECOM representative who does not have proper identification.

The release

advised that if they are approached by someone claiming to be a GECOM representative but are unsure of their legitimacy, they are not to provide them with any information. Instead, they should contact GECOM directly at 223-9653, 225-5808, or 225-5868 to report the incident or clarify any concerns.



PUBLIC INFORMATION

## WE LIFT 4 CELEBRATES WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES AND INNOVATION



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud

The National Aquatic Center in Liliendaal, Guyana, buzzed with entrepreneurial energy over the two days of the "WE LIFT 4" exposition. This event provided over 250 women-owned businesses and fashion designers a platform to showcase their talents and goods. Officiating the

empowering women. "Women are eager for opportunity, and we are providing it in so many ways," she stated. "We want to influence and inspire future generations of women to recognise their self-worth and potential, and to translate that potential into action, as you see happening here today in such creative ways."

The Department of Public Information spoke with several exhibitors, all enthusiastic about showcasing their ventures. Felicity Sonaram, owner of the crochet business "Pixie Hallow Makes," expressed her delight. "This is fantastic," she

exclaimed. "It allows small and upcoming businesses like mine to get exposure. I'm thrilled for this opportunity to show people what I do."

Amirah Ally, owner of "Rads Custom Rugs," echoed Sonaram's sentiments, underlining the expo's importance for businesses in their early stages. "This is a

great opportunity," she said. "It allows us to put ourselves out there, and get people to know about our products. As a home-based business, I rely on these events for exposure."

Even young entrepreneurs found a place at WE LIFT 4. Eight-year-old Ashiana Singh, with a burgeoning

seasoning business, seized the opportunity to showcase her products. She expressed her gratitude for connecting with potential customers, and promoting healthy eating.

Among the diverse businesses was The Sea Moss Sanctuary, owned by Abeda Alexander. The sanctuary offers sea moss products, including juices and natural health infusions. Alexander underscored the value of platforms like WE LIFT 4. "This is a great way to empower women," she explained. "It encourages them to step out, expand their horizons, and explore new possibilities."



Scene from WE LIFT 4

## EDUCATION MINISTRY STAGES "TWELFTH NIGHT" TO BOOST LITERARY APPRECIATION

The Ministry of Education is taking an innovative approach to engage students with literature by staging a production of William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" at the National Cultural Centre.

The production by Gems Theatre Production, directed by Ron Robinson, was staged on April 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17.

This initiative aims to inspire a deeper appreciation for literary works, particularly relevant for students preparing for the upcoming CSEC English

Literature exams in May. Twelfth Night was

chosen for its inclusion in the Caribbean

Examinations Council's CSEC@ curriculum.

life on stage fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for the written word.



The play was produced by Gems Theatre Production and directed by Ron Robinson.

Minister of Education, Priya M a n i c k c h a n d , highlighted the Ministry's commitment to fostering a well-rounded education that goes beyond traditional classroom settings. She emphasised the value of this production in providing students with a dynamic and immersive experience with literature.

Educator Ingrid R i c h a r d s - F u n g echoed the Minister's sentiments, stating that bringing these texts to

Phyllis Euscibo, a student from St. Ignatius Secondary School, Region Nine, highlighted the value of witnessing the play firsthand. "It was very exciting and the enthusiasm was there," Euscibo said. "In the end, it was very enjoyable and intriguing... It is going to be very beneficial since we witnessed the actual play instead of reading the books."

David Hackett, a

student at Bishop's High School, was equally impressed. "The play was beyond amazing and a good exposure to Shakespeare's works of art," he declared. "I would like to thank them for showing how you can put all of the elements of drama into one and portray it into a lovely show like how Shakespeare did his type of shows."

Feeling confident after the performance, Hackett added, "I think I will be able to write the CSEC right now looking at this play."

The Ministry plans to expand this initiative by incorporating other literary works from the CSEC syllabus into future productions.

The Ministry of Education, along with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) recently joined forces to improve education in Region Nine.

A team from the Ministry, led by Deputy Chief Education Officer for Amerindian and Hinterland Education

## EDUCATION MINISTRY AND IDB TEAM VISIT REGION NINE TO CHART EDUCATION PATH

Development Marti De Souza, met with IDB representatives including Education Specialist Sabine Aubourg. During their visit, they met with

teachers, school leaders, and regional officers to understand the region's educational strengths and challenges.

The IDB team also gained firsthand experience of the unique culture of the hinterland communities.

A key focus was on promoting bilingual education in Wapichan communities. Three nursery schools were chosen to participate in a pilot programme offering bilingual teacher training through the University of Guyana. This initiative reflects the Ministry's

commitment to inclusive and culturally relevant education.

The IDB team also gathered valuable information through discussions with school leaders and teachers. This data will be used to improve resource allocation and strengthen leadership at both the district and school levels, in collaboration with regional education officials like acting Regional Education Officer Ms. Francine Gomes.

U p g r a d i n g infrastructure was



The team met with teachers, school leaders, and regional officers

another priority. The IDB team assessed primary schools slated for renovation, such as Aishalton and Awarewanau Primary Schools. Additionally, discussions were held

on building a new primary school in Tabatinga, showcasing the Ministry's dedication to providing students with modern learning environments.



Education Officers, and IDB Representatives conducting the visit to Region Nine

# OVER \$1B IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR SOPHIA

The community of Sophia in Georgetown is set for a major makeover, with the government awarding over \$1 billion in contracts for critical projects. This initiative aligns with the PPP/C government's commitment to improving the lives of Guyanese through targeted development.

**"This investment is about vital improvements that directly affect residents' well-being,"** Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo emphasised during a community engagement with residents.

He underscored the government's proactive approach to

**elections to take action,"** he declared. The awarded

improvements already underway in Sophia, with billions of dollars

these improvements to encompass the entirety of Sophia, with assessments for 'D' Field Sophia already totalling \$1.3 billion.

The focus extends beyond infrastructure, with the government aiming to create employment opportunities through these community-based projects. **"Thousands of Guyanese are already benefiting from the construction boom across the country,"** Dr. Jagdeo stated. He emphasised the government's clear vision for development. While investments

and improvements are crucial, the Vice President stressed the importance of community participation and responsibility.

**"We need to work together,"** he urged residents. **"Maintaining these improvements is essential for long-term success."**

Dr. Jagdeo assured residents that this is just the beginning of ongoing community engagements across the country.



Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo accompanied by several government ministers

development, guided by a long-term plan. **"We don't wait for**

contracts represent an addition to infrastructural

being invested. Vice President Jagdeo revealed plans to extend



A glimpse of Canal No Two bridge

Construction of two key bridges at Canals Number One and Two in Region Three is back on schedule for completion by the end of May. The project faced delays due to design changes requested by the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) to ensure proper water flow and canal cleaning.

Public Works Minister Juan Edghill met with residents to address their concerns

and explain the new plans. The bridges will now have four piers and four pile caps instead of the originally planned three, to accommodate a wider span. This change has also been reflected in the contract value.

The bridge at Canal No Two, which is being built by Rim Construction Inc., has been widened to 30 feet, and the northern pier has been redesigned to allow for better water flow.

# BRIDGES IN CANALS NO ONE AND TWO ON TRACK FOR MAY COMPLETION

Minister Edghill has directed the contractors to prioritise residents' concerns. They have removed a temporary dam to ensure water flow is not obstructed and are expediting the backfilling work while waiting for a crane to arrive.

Once completed, these bridges will significantly improve mobility for residents in the area, making it easier to travel, access essential services, and participate in new economic opportunities.

## BELLE VUE BRIDGE FACES DELAY - PENALTIES FOR CONTRACTOR

While progress is underway at Canals One and Two, the \$78.4

million Belle Vue bridge project in Region Three is experiencing delays. The contractor, Hanbel Garnett, faces financial penalties (liquidated damages) due to exceeding the deadline.

Minister Edghill visited the site and identified the holdup as Hanbel Garnett waiting on concrete slabs from the supplier.

**"I don't care if the slabs come tonight or tomorrow, but I want this bridge finished and it is past the deadline,"** Minister Edghill asserted. **"We will deduct any delays caused by removing the power lines, but beyond that, we start charging liquidated damages."**

These penalties,

outlined in the contract, are a deterrent against exceeding agreed-upon timelines.

The project, awarded in May 2023, initially had a completion target of February 2024. Although extended to March, the bridge remains unfinished.

Minister Edghill's firm stance reflects

the government's commitment to timely project completion and upholding construction standards.

The completion of the Belle Vue bridge will significantly improve access to essential services, ease travel for residents, and contribute to the region's economic growth.



Works ongoing on the Canal No One bridge

# MV HERCULES EASING TRAFFIC FLOW ON ESSEQUIBO COAST

Public Works Minister, Bishop Juan Edghill, has addressed recent confusion surrounding the MV Hercules vessel. Images circulating in the media, particularly during the Regatta period, show passengers seated on the exterior of the MV Hercules. Minister Edghill explained the vessel's primary function.

**"There seems to be some misunderstanding,"** Minister Edghill told the Department of Public Information (DPI). **"While the**

**MV Hercules can seat up to 40 passengers inside, its main purpose is to transport vehicles."**

Minister Edghill emphasised the MV Hercules' role in reducing pressure on existing ferry services. **"This vessel wasn't designed to be a primary passenger ferry. It carries vehicles,"** he explained. **"The regular ferries can only take 32 vehicles. Once that limit is reached, people have to wait until the next day. The MV Hercules sails behind**

**them, making a big difference in people's lives."**

The MV Hercules was President Irfaan Ali's initiative in response to

requests from residents along the Essequibo Coast. Traffic flow had

increased significantly on key routes like Leguan, Wakenaam, Supenaam, and Bartica.

The introduction of the MV Hercules, along with the convenience of online booking, represents a major upgrade to Guyana's transportation infrastructure. This is designed to address the needs of both farmers and residents.

With its capacity to carry 54 vehicles and 40 passengers, the MV Hercules steps in when traditional ferries are full, particularly during peak periods. This ensures smoother travel and shorter waiting times for passengers.



The MV Hercules

# GUYANA'S HEART HEALTH ON THE RISE



Minister Anthony addressing the symposium

Guyane se citizens can take heart! The country's cardiology services have seen significant improvements in recent years, according to Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony.

"Over recent years, and more particularly three-four years, we have seen substantive improvements in medicine generally in Guyana," Dr. Anthony declared at the Annual

Cardiology Symposium 2024 held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. "But particularly in cardiology, we would have seen a lot of developments."

This progress, the Minister explained, stems from the government's increased investment in the healthcare sector, with a particular focus on cardiology. "We have been making lots of investments in the area of health and particularly in the area of cardiology," he emphasised.

A key driver of these improvements has been the emphasis placed on primary healthcare and preventative medicine.

"We have seen a lot of developments... because we have placed much emphasis on primary health care and preventative medicine to reduce the burden of complications," Dr. Anthony explained.

One successful initiative is the implementation of the "HEARTS" protocol across 171 health centres nationwide. This protocol helps medical professionals deliver better cardiovascular care to patients.

"We are very proud of the advancements that we have made," Dr. Anthony said, pointing

to improved laboratory testing and diagnostics at the primary level. "EKG's and Ultra Sounds are widely available," he noted.

These advancements extend to the Georgetown Public Hospital (GPHC) as well. Dr. Anthony highlighted the increase in patients accessing cardiology services there, with numbers jumping from 80 in 2019 to 825 in 2023.

Another positive development is the revival of the Pediatric Cardiac programme. "The programme, which was stopped between 2015-2020, was restarted," Dr. Anthony announced. "Last year we did 18

surgeries, this year already we have finished eight, and with two more teams coming in during the year, we are hoping that at least 30 pediatric surgeries would be completed during this year."

The Ministry of Health isn't stopping there. Partnerships with universities abroad are facilitating the training of Guyanese medical professionals in cardiology and other specialities. Additionally, work is underway to develop national guidelines for standardised cardiovascular care across the healthcare system.

## REGIONS THREE, FOUR AND FIVE RESIDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED MEDICAL IMAGING

The Ministry of Health recently deployed ultrasound and digital X-ray machines valued \$49.2 million to Regions Three, Four and Five that will see improvements in the quality of medical imaging.

A ceremony held at the Ministry of Health's headquarters in Brickdam, Georgetown, marked the official handover of the equipment. Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, presented the equipment to the Regional Health Officers (RHOs) for Regions Three, Four, and Five.

The equipment includes both portable and fixed ultrasound and X-ray machines. This variety will allow healthcare workers to provide diagnoses even in remote areas

with limited access to healthcare facilities.

"We welcome this donation to expand the quality of care and our services," said Dr. Gavinash Persaud, RHO for Region Four. "I commit that we're going to put this equipment into use immediately [so that] we can render quality healthcare to all patients who would visit this hospital." Dr. Persaud highlighted that the equipment will be used at the Diamond Diagnostic Centre, expanding the range of services available to residents in the area.

Region Five's RHO, Dr. Theresa

Sargu, echoed Dr. Persaud's enthusiasm. "The new machine will significantly expand the hospital's capacity," she explained. "Now we'll be able to do outreaches with the portable ultrasound [for] example, to Moraikobai [and] Mora Point and other areas. This will increase the region's diagnostic capacity for our patients."

Minister Anthony emphasised the government's commitment to improving healthcare delivery across the country. "We're taking a proactive approach

to improving the quality of medical imaging across the

this recent donation. "We are also investing millions to acquire

these three regions, we have also bought additional machines. So, every region would benefit from new ultrasound, both in terms of portables and in terms of machines that will be in the various institutions... We hope that they would use it to its optimum."

The Ministry of Health is also planning for the future by developing a training programme for ultrasound technicians. This initiative aims to reduce the burden on doctors, who traditionally perform ultrasound diagnoses in Guyana.



Regions Three to Five receive new imaging equipment

country by procuring portable ultrasound modern pieces of equipment," he stated.

The government's investment goes beyond

portable ultrasound systems to improve diagnoses," Minister Anthony added. "While we're doing this for

## NATIONAL ACTION PLAN UNVEILED TO ERADICATE CERVICAL CANCER

Guyanese women can expect a significant decline in cervical cancer cases with the launch of a new National Action Plan (2024-2030).

The initiative, unveiled by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), and Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company (GTT) at the Pegasus Corporate Suite, aims to eliminate cervical cancer.

"The mortality, morbidity, and

disability associated with cervical cancer are set to decline significantly," said Dr.



The initiative was unveiled at the Pegasus Corporate Suite in Kingston, Georgetown.

Frank Anthony, Minister of Health, emphasising the programme's comprehensive approach that tackles cancer from prevention to treatment.

Women now have easier access to screening for the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), the primary cause of cervical cancer. "Screening is absolutely important. We are going to make it as easy as possible," Minister Anthony declared. "We will be explaining to people how the testing will be done and giving

them the kits."

The action plan also prioritises increasing HPV vaccination coverage for girls aged nine to 45 to prevent HPV infection and significantly reduce cervical cancer risk.

Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, echoed the importance of early intervention through school-based programmes. "We are fully committed at the Ministry of Education to help you roll this programme out," she asserted.

"We will make all the medical information available to every school child in Guyana."

Minister Manickchand urged parents to combat misinformation and prioritise their children's long-term health by ensuring they receive the HPV vaccine.

This initiative aligns with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) strategic goals for cervical cancer elimination.

PAHO's Specialist in Non-communicable Diseases and Family Health, Karen Roberts, applauded the health ministry for developing this holistic strategy.

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## GPHC TACKLES JOINT REPLACEMENT BACKLOG WITH WEEKEND SURGERIES

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) took a significant step towards reducing the waitlist for joint replacement surgeries on April 13th. The Orthopaedic Department successfully performed procedures on several patients, alleviating some of the burden they've been facing.



The Orthopaedic Department successfully performed procedures on several patients

This initiative reflects the GPHC's commitment to providing timely healthcare services

despite the high demand for emergency and critical procedures in other specialties. Recognising the need for elective surgeries, the hospital is strategically scheduling them on weekends, a departure from the traditional approach.

The successful surgeries showcase the expertise of the GPHC's

medical staff. Patients, previously limited by joint conditions, are now on the path to recovery with comprehensive care including physiotherapy.

One patient, who travelled from Antigua due to limited access to these procedures there, expressed his eagerness to return to work. Another patient shared her story of dependence due to mobility issues but now anticipates regaining her independence post-surgery.

All six patients are currently recovering under close supervision. This marks a turning point in their lives.

In 2023, the GPHC conducted an impressive 3562 surgeries, averaging nearly 300 procedures per month. The hospital remains dedicated to providing high-quality healthcare and will continue to tackle the backlog of patients requiring surgery.

## PM PHILLIPS LAUDS TEXILA AMERICAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES AS KEY PLAYERS IN GUYANA'S HEALTHCARE FUTURE

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips delivered the keynote address at Texila American University's 14th graduation ceremony at the Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he congratulated the graduating class of 2024 and underscored their vital contribution to Guyana's healthcare sector.

"Guyana's healthcare sector is experiencing rapid growth due to the country's economic boom," the Prime

Minister highlighted. "Your expertise," he declared to the graduates, "is crucial to this development. This is an exciting time to embark on your medical careers, and your passion and commitment will play a defining role in shaping the future of healthcare in Guyana."

Prime Minister Phillips emphasised the vast career paths available in medicine. "The medical field offers a multitude

of opportunities for professional growth and fulfilment," he stated. "From groundbreaking research to clinical practice and public health leadership, the possibilities are endless." He encouraged the graduates to embrace lifelong learning and stay adaptable in this ever-evolving field. "Stay informed," he urged, "so you can effectively navigate the complexities of healthcare and

contribute to positive change in your communities and beyond."

The Prime Minister

the healthcare sector. These plans encompass the establishment of six new regional hospitals and the upgrading of



Prime Minister Mark Phillips with Texila American University's 14th graduation ceremony

also outlined the government's plans for further investment in

the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. These initiatives signal

the government's commitment to strengthening Guyana's healthcare infrastructure and ensuring access to quality medical care for all citizens.

Prime Minister Phillips concluded his address by commending Texila American University for its dedication to providing quality education. He acknowledged the university's positive impact on Guyana's higher education landscape.

## \$80M UPGRADE IN CHARITY IMPROVING LIVES AND BOOSTING ECONOMY



The new asphaltic Burial Ground Road in Charity

Over \$80 million has been invested to improve

critical roads in Charity, Region Two, bringing much-needed relief to residents and businesses alike.

One of the key projects involved the complete paving of Nursery School Street with asphalt concrete. This 300-meter stretch, completed by Payless General Store for \$30.1 million, provides easier

access to the local school for children and eases commute for motorists.

Khanai Street in New Road Charity has also seen a significant upgrade. R79 Mining and Construction rehabilitated a 405-meter section for \$34.4 million, significantly improving the flow of traffic and access to goods and services.

Another area benefiting from the project is Burial Ground Road, where Wild Oats Civil and Mechanical Engineering completed a 250-meter upgrade for over \$20.2 million. This not only improves accessibility for residents but also provides a crucial link for Pomeroun residents to conduct their business in a more convenient environment.

The improved roads are a plus for Charity's agricultural

sector. Farmers now have a smoother ride transporting their crops and livestock, streamlining their operations and potentially increasing efficiency.

These upgrades fall under the Ministry of Public Works' miscellaneous road project for the Essequibo Coast. This initiative aims to transform both rural and urban areas by rehabilitating and expanding community roads.

Residents in Wales and surrounding communities can expect a significant improvement in their water quality by November this year. The construction of a \$1.3 billion water treatment plant in the Region Three community is progressing well and is currently 60% complete. "If you live in proximity to those areas, your complaint is the quality of the water that is coming through the taps," acknowledged Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, while addressing residents during a recent housing drive. "So, all

## WALES WATER TREATMENT PLANT TO DELIVER CLEAN WATER TO 16,000 RESIDENTS BY NOVEMBER

of that will be things of the past. We ask for your patience."

Once operational, the Wales plant is expected to benefit approximately 16,000 residents in Nismes, Wales, La Retraite, Stanleytown, Belle West, Goed Intent, and Sisters Village. The treated water will be delivered through newly installed transmission mains, ensuring efficient distribution throughout the targeted communities.

The Wales plant is

part of a much larger government initiative. Four such facilities are under construction in Region Three alone, with additional plants planned for Parika, La Parfait Harmonie, and Vergenoegen.

"These initiatives are part of a broader strategy to increase the coverage of treated water along the coast to 90 percent by 2025," Minister Croal explained. This ambitious plan involves the development of 13 water treatment plants

nationwide, with a total investment of \$30 billion.

Residents in various other areas can also look forward to improved

water access. Treatment plants are planned for Six Miles (Region Seven), Maria's Delight, Leguan, Wakenaam, Bush Lot, Tain to No

50 Village (Corentyne Coast), and the Hope Canal facility (East Coast Demerara). Additionally, work is ongoing on plants in Cummings Lodge, Caledonia, Bachelor's Adventure, and Onderneeming.

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is providing funding for five of these treatment plants, and the Hope Canal project.



Works ongoing on the treatment plant in Caledonia, East Bank Demerara

## CARICOM CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCES NEW CRICKET FRANCHISE FOR THE REGION, PUSHES FOR GLOBAL BRAND EXPANSION



Guyana to launch World Premier League to elevate regional cricket brand

Guyanese President and CARICOM Chairman, Irfaan Ali, has announced a bold initiative to revitalise West Indies Cricket. During a virtual address at the opening ceremony of the CARICOM Regional Cricket Conference in Trinidad

and Tobago, President Ali revealed plans for a brand-new cricket franchise – the World Premier League (WPL). Bstated President Ali. He envisions the WPL building upon the legacy of the Champions League, offering a premier Twenty20 (T20)

cricket experience. President Ali emphasised the importance of a comprehensive approach to elevate West Indies Cricket's global standing. "We need to redefine this brand and ask some important questions...[like]

who owns the brand, and how are we going to protect the brand, expand the brand, position the brand, and create global ownership?" he said.

This concept of "global ownership" extends to potentially renaming the governing body. "I believe that we need to examine whether we need to move West Indies cricket from the West Indies Cricket Board to the American Cricket Board. Because we have to now work towards owning cricket in the Americas," President Ali suggested.

The conference theme, "Reinvigorating West Indies Cricket," reflects a collective desire to address current challenges. President Ali also highlighted the need for improved infrastructure, including "smart stadiums" that provide a unique and engaging fan experience.

The CARICOM Regional Cricket Conference signifies a collaborative effort to strategically develop all formats of the game – Test matches, One-Day Internationals, and T20s. This inaugural event is a testament to the commitment made by CARICOM leaders to

revitalize West Indies Cricket and solidify its position on the global stage.



President Irfaan Ali

## GUYANA HARPY EAGLES RECEIVE HERO'S WELCOME AFTER REGIONAL FOUR-DAY CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY



Scene from the Guyana Harpy Eagles hero's welcome

Scenes of jubilation erupted at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport as the triumphant Guyana Harpy Eagles, champions of the CWI Four-day tournament, returned home to a throng of cheering supporters. The rhythmic beats of tassa drums set the celebratory mood as the victorious team arrived just past 11 pm on April 21.

A hero's welcome awaited the Harpy Eagles, greeted by an enthusiastic crowd that included representatives from the Guyana Cricket Board (GCB), government officials like Public Works Minister Bishop Juan Edghill and Minister of Sport Charles Ramson Jr., and their families and friends.

Minister Ramson Jr., beaming with pride,

addressed the team's remarkable achievement. "Defending your title is always tougher," he



Scene from the Guyana Harpy Eagles hero's welcome

remarked, highlighting the significance of their consecutive championship wins.

Concerns about delayed prize money were quelled by GCB President Bissoondyal Singh, who lauded the players for their outstanding performance. "Under my watch, you will receive 100% of what you are entitled to," Singh affirmed, assuring them of receiving their

full compensation.

Head Coach Ryan Hercules expressed his gratitude to the Ministry and the National Sports Commission for their support. He

one loss. This culminated in the retention of their championship title with a commanding total of 103.8 points.

As the celebratory atmosphere continued,



Scene from the Guyana Harpy Eagles hero's welcome

also acknowledged the players' dedication and hard work, which ultimately led to their on-field success.

The Harpy Eagles' path to victory was paved with an impressive campaign marked by five wins, one draw, and only

it was clear that the Harpy Eagles' triumph transcended the game itself. Their victory not only brought glory to Guyana but also united the nation in a shared sense of pride and admiration for their cricketing heroes.

## \$30M AWARDED IN CULTURAL GRANTS

The Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport is fueling a creative boom with its Cultural and Creative Industry Grant Programme. At a recent ceremony, 30 individuals received grants of \$1 million each (approximately US\$5,000) to support their artistic endeavours.

"This grant programme is actively paving the way for Guyanese citizens to access a plethora of opportunities," said Minister Charles Ramson

Jr. He emphasised the grants' dual purpose: Each grant aims to assist individuals in expanding existing businesses within the arts industry or establishing new ventures that contribute to Guyana's growing entertainment and entrepreneurial landscape.

Minister Ramson further highlighted the program's role in fostering a culture of self-sufficiency and global recognition. "You are using this support, this investment [to]



Minister Charles Ramson Jr and members from the ministry presenting the grant certificate to one of the new recipients

create something that you can build for yourself and can now invest in other people," he expressed. Recipients

of the grant will become ambassadors supporting and promoting Guyana's diverse culture.

This year marks the programme's third

successful year, with over 500 applications received. The grants cover a wide range of creative fields, including publishing, filmmaking, music, and architecture. The Ministry's annual allocation of \$30 million demonstrates a strong commitment to nurturing the nation's cultural identity.

Past recipients shared powerful testimonies about the programme's transformative impact. Published author Chevon Lim described the grant as a bridge between dream and reality. "In 2019, I published my first book, but there was no clear

path forward," she said. "The grant application appeared, and I was fortunate to receive it."

Another recipient, Joel Browne, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to elevate his filmmaking capabilities. "After hearing about the grant, I knew I had to apply," he said. "The grant afforded me the opportunity to buy new equipment, allowing me to compete on the international level. In the world of production, knowledge and assets are king."



# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 66

## PRESIDENT ALI CELEBRATING EID AL-FITR IN HIS HOMETOWN

President Irfaan Ali celebrated Eid al-Fitr in Leonora, his hometown. The President opened his residence to community members, sharing sweets and finger foods. He also visited other Muslims in the area to spread the joy of the holiday.

Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting observed by Muslims worldwide. President Ali later hosted a lunch for government officials, members of the military and civil society at his residence.



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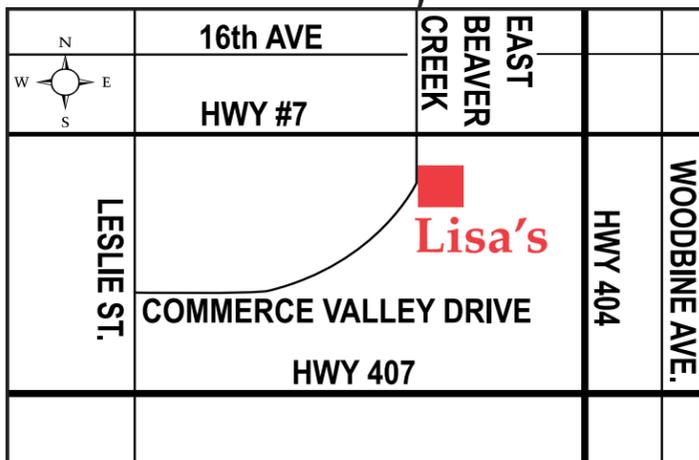


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