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INDIAN PM SET FOR HISTORIC STATE VISIT TO GUYANA

At the invitation of His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Prime Minister of India, the Honourable Shri Narendra Modi will pay a State Visit to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana from November 19 to 21, 2024.

The visit underlines the historically strong relations between India and Guyana. It may be noted that H.E. Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, visited India in January 2023 as the Chief Guest at the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, where he was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman.

During his State Visit, Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will engage in summit-level bilateral discussions

with His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, the President of Guyana. He will also co-chair the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit in Georgetown, Guyana, alongside the Honourable Prime Minister of Grenada, Mr Dickon Mitchell, and President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

The Honourable Prime Minister is also scheduled to address the National Assembly of the Parliament of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Also on his agenda is an address to the Indian community and the Indian diaspora in Guyana.

Additionally, the Honourable PM will offer a floral tribute at the Mahatma Gandhi statue at the Promenade Garden in Georgetown, which was installed in 1969 during the Mahatma Gandhi centenary celebrations.

He will also visit the Indian Arrival Monument in the Monument Garden, which commemorates the



Guyana President Irfaan Ali with Prime Minister Narendra Modi

arrival of the first ship carrying Indian indentured labourers to the Caribbean. The ship arrived on the shores of the then British Guiana in 1838.

“Modi Ji's visit to Guyana significantly affirms the solid and enduring historical cultural bond between these two former British colonies. It is opportune that this meeting by President Ali and Modi

Ji will, no doubt, positively impact the Indian diaspora. The civilizational ethos and traditions of India are now firmly cemented in the fabric of every aspect of life in Guyanese society.

“This historic meeting is a momentous step in reconnecting our shared heritage and advancing bilateral ties in trade, technology, energy and capacity building for both countries' mutual benefit and progress. As Modi Ji proudly proclaims: *Vasu Dhaiva Kutumbakam* - The world is one family,” noted Cliff Rajkumar, the Indian Diaspora Council's National Coordinator, Canada.

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Ravi Dev on extreme left, Narendra Modi extreme right

Modi has a special place in heart of Indo-Caribbeans

By Dr. Vishnu Bisram

I had several memorable encounters with Modi in New York, New Jersey, Trinidad, and India before he became General Secretary of the BJP and Chief Minister of Gujarat in late 2001 and subsequently as CM and PM. Modi came to Guyana extending a trip he had made to Trinidad at a Hindu conference at which several Guyanese were present including this writer. He was guest of Ravi Dev, Swami Aksharananda, and others. Much water has flown under the bridge since his only visit to Guyana in 2000. Little would Modi have known that his next visit would be as the head of the world's largest democracy. His visit to Guyana is eagerly anticipated with grand welcome planned at several events.

Modi encountered Guyanese and other Indo-Caribbean people when he was a student and a pracharak (volunteer) in India and when he attended programs of Gujaratis in New York and New Jersey that Dharamdatt Durjan (formerly of Mahaica) and a few other Guyanese, including this writer, would patronize; he was a deeply religious man, a devotee of Goddess Durga. Modi was a devoted social worker (a Hindu pracharak) who volunteered his time to assist others as was his training and commitment to the organization he belonged. When others blanked him, treating him as a pariah and bashing him with a lot of anti-Modi propaganda, I visited the Gujarat booth at PBD in January 2003 (Delhi), 2004 (Delhi), 2005 (Mumbai), and several other PBDs when he was CM as well as PM. Bharrat Jagdeo was the Chief Guest at PBD 2004. Gujarat had one of the largest booths at PBDs and Modi engaged everyone including critics and detractors. (As an aside, I stand to be corrected that Narendra Modi is the only individual who attended all PBDs – a gathering of Indians from the diaspora; next January would be the 18th edition).

Modi's rise as PM was predicted by ARSP Pracharak Chaman Lall, VHP Leader Ashok Singhal, Trinidadians Raviji Maharaj

and Dr. Vijay Naraynsingh, and Guyanese as well. Singhal, who visited Guyana a couple times, revealed to Ravi Dev that Modi had (has) all the qualities of a leader and would one day become PM. Naraynsingh latter after his encounter with Modi at the Washington conference had described Modiji as erudite, charismatic, brilliant and Prime Ministerial material; Naraynsingh related his views to Pandit Raviji Maharaj. Naraynsingh would meet Modi again twice in Trinidad before he became CM, the last time in 2000, at Hindu conferences. Modi came to Guyana after the 2000 Trinidad conference and was hosted by several prominent figures not the least being Ravi Dev and Swamiji Aksharananda. I remember a conversation with Swamiji around 2009 in which he said that Modi should be the PM's candidate; the great LK Advani led the BJP in the election and lost. Modi, a disciple of Advani, would become the PM candidate in 2014 carrying the BJP to a landslide victory and re-elected again by a landslide in 2019. Swamiji knew Modiji quite well and had encounters with Modiji in India when the former was a student there as did Ravi-ji Maharaj and Pandit Dr Indrani Rampersad (currently teaching courses on Indian diaspora and Hinduism) at Benaras Hindu University where she did stints of studies. Several Guyanese and other Indo-Caribbeans studied at BHU; this writer was a guest lecturer on multiple occasions at BHU with another appearance planned for early January. Modi also came to New York at the UN Millennium conference in August 2000 and interacted with Gujaratis including Dr. Mukund Mody, a close and dear friend of Indo-Caribbean Hindus. Dr. Mody facilitated encounters with Modiji.

My multiple encounters of Modi found him to be charming, personable, affable, remarkable, telegenic, articulate, brilliant, a star, and a man of substance. In NY and New Jersey, Gujaratis flocked to him. As CM and at Gujarat booth in India, he knew what he wanted for his state; he was development oriented and encouraged peo-

ple to invest in Gujarat. There were beautiful glossy brochures advertising the state that was open for investment. Modi himself appeared at ease interacting with guests or the public who visited the booth. He made comments that evoked laughter or smile and he laughed quite a lot. I visited Gujarat several times and was very impressed with the development of the state under CM Modi leadership. Under his tenure (2001-14), Gujarat was and remains the most developed state with the highest standard of living and quality of life. It was also the safest state in

India. Women used to fear going out during the dark prior to Modi becoming PM. During his tenure and till now, females have felt safe going out at all hours of the day or night. He was an outstanding politician, a man who cares for his people and who is not about self.

Modi has become the most followed political personality on social media. Modi has carved a place in the minds, thoughts, and heart of Guyanese and other Indo-Caribbeans who engaged him.

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GUYANA'S FIRST AIRPORT HOTEL
WORKS TO BE COMPLETED BY MARCH 2025



Works ongoing on the Courtyard by Marriott International Hotel



CARIBBEAN AIRLINES BEGINS DIRECT FLIGHTS TO SURINAME
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PRESIDENT ALI CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP, LOOKS FORWARD TO STRENGTHENED U.S.-GUYANA RELATIONS
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GUYANA'S FIRST AIRPORT HOTEL TAKES SHAPE

President Dr. Irfaan Ali recently visited the construction site of the Courtyard by Marriott hotel, Guyana's first major airport hotel.

Located just a minute away from the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), the six-story hotel will feature 150 rooms, including five

executive suites. **"We are very pleased with the progress of this project,"** President Ali stated during the

inspection. **"This hotel will not only enhance the travel experience for visitors but also contribute to the growth of our tourism industry."**

The project, undertaken by Cardinal Investments Inc., is expected to be completed by March 2025. To ensure environmental sustainability, the hotel will incorporate solar panels to supply heated water. **"This is a green initiative that will help reduce energy consumption and promote a more sustainable future,"** said Jonathan Mohal,



President Ali inspecting ongoing work



President Ali inspecting ongoing work

the project manager. The hotel is expected to create over 200 jobs and will be managed by Marriott International. **"Marriott starts like six months before the opening date, so they are here with us getting the team together to manage the hotel,"** Mohal added. This development aligns with the government's broader vision of modernising Guyana's infrastructure and positioning the country as a premier tourist destination. The construction of the Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute in Port Mourant will further support the industry by providing skilled professionals.



This new route will be served by the airline's ATR 72-600 aircraft

Caribbean Airlines (CAL) has strengthened regional connectivity by launching direct flights between Guyana and Suriname. The inaugural flight from Eugene F Correia International Airport (Ogle Airport) to Paramaribo took off on Sunday, November 3, 2024. Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, hailed the new route as a significant milestone in Guyana's tourism development. He emphasised the government's efforts

CARIBBEAN AIRLINES BEGINS DIRECT FLIGHTS TO SURINAME

to position Guyana as a premier tourism destination and highlighted the role of increased connectivity in achieving this goal. **"This shows that we're not just talking and engaging, but people are believing, trusting us, and they're making the necessary investments,"** he stated.

The minister also linked this development to the ongoing construction of the Ogle to Eccles four-lane highway, emphasising the government's vision to make Guyana a

regional transportation hub. Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond, echoed the importance of increased connectivity for Guyana's tourism sector. She said, **"As a government, we have seen a push for more connectivity because that is what will undergird our tourism thrust for the world to see that Guyana is indeed a premier eco-tourism destination."**

Caribbean Airlines Country Manager for Guyana and Suriname, Renatha Marshall,

expressed the airline's commitment to Guyana and its people. The new route will be operated by the airline's ATR 72-600 aircraft, ensuring efficient and comfortable travel between the two countries.



Caribbean Airlines begins twice weekly flights to Suriname

OGLE AIRPORT EXPANSION PLANNED TO MEET GROWING DEMAND

Guyana's Eugene F. Correia International Airport (Ogle Airport) is set for expansion to accommodate the surge

in air travel and tourism. The airport, which has seen a significant increase in operations, now handles over 200

landings per day. Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, announced the expansion plans during the launch of Caribbean Airlines' inaugural flight to Suriname. He highlighted the need for additional facilities to handle the growing number of flights and passengers.

"We're having more aircraft, more flights, with the possibility of exploring new areas. One of the things that we have to do is to

create more space," the minister explained.

The airport's Board of Directors has already submitted a development plan outlining the proposed expansion. This includes increasing seating capacity, expanding duty-free shopping options, and potentially building an executive lounge.

Minister Edghill also emphasised the importance of a longer runway to accommodate larger aircraft. This, along with the planned expansion of the Cheddi



Ogle Airport to be expanded to meet growing demand



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill

Jagan International Airport, will solidify Guyana's position as a regional aviation hub.

PRESIDENT ALI CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP, LOOKS FORWARD TO STRENGTHENED U.S.-GUYANA RELATIONS

In the wake of the recent U.S. presidential election, His Excellency President Dr. Irfaan Ali extended his congratulations to President-elect Donald Trump on his victory, emphasising Guyana's commitment to maintaining and enhancing the partnership between the two countries.

“On the behalf of the people and government of Guyana, I extend heartfelt congratulations to President-elect Donald Trump on his victory in Tuesday’s election in the United States,” President Ali stated. **“Guyana looks forward to working closely**

with the incoming administration to further strengthen the already robust ties between our two nations.”

President Ali’s message reflects the long-standing relationship between Guyana and the United States, rooted in mutual respect, economic collaboration, and shared democratic values. With this gesture, the Guyanese government expresses optimism for continued collaboration in areas such as trade, regional security, and sustainable development.

President Ali highlighted the importance of U.S.-Guyana relations in the current global landscape, noting that a strong partnership is



President-elect Donald Trump

essential in addressing shared challenges and opportunities. He expressed confidence that President-elect Trump’s administration would build on the foundation of cooperation established over many years.

VICE PRESIDENT JAGDEO SIGNALS INTENT TO ENGAGE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION

Meanwhile, Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo indicated that

the Guyana government intends to use the Trump administration’s transition to address misinformation spread by political opponents. Speaking at a news conference at the People’s Progressive Party (PPP) headquarters, Dr. Jagdeo stated, “We’re looking forward to debunking all of the lies, particularly with the new administration when it takes office in January.”

Dr. Jagdeo accused the opposition of attempting to tarnish the PPP/C administration’s reputation by portraying it as corrupt, racially biased, and overly aligned with Chinese interests rather than with the United States. He singled out activist Rickford Burke, stating that the government

would be providing U.S. officials with information about Mr. Burke’s alleged “transgressions” and “criminal acts,” while noting that these actions were separate from criticism of the administration or racial commentary.

Looking ahead, Dr. Jagdeo recalled a productive relationship with the previous Trump administration, which had supported Guyana’s democratic process following the contested 2020 election. “We had a good working relationship with his administration in the past, and we’re looking forward to growing that relationship,” he added.

GUYANA WELCOMES AMBASSADORS FROM PORTUGAL AND BAHRAIN, OPENING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

President Dr. Irfaan Ali formally received the Letters of Credence from His Excellency João Pedro Vasconcelos Fins do Lago, the Non-Resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain, during ceremonies at the Office of the President.

In welcoming

Portugal, and His Excellency Bader Abbas Al Hulaibi, the Non-Resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain, during ceremonies at the Office of the President.

In welcoming

Ambassador Fins do Lago, President Ali highlighted Guyana's commitment to fostering deeper ties with Portugal. The two leaders discussed potential collaborations in sport, energy, food security, tourism, climate change, and the construction sector. President Ali also extended an invitation to Portugal's private sector to explore the diverse investment opportunities available in Guyana's rapidly growing economy. Diplomatic relations between Guyana and Portugal were established on February 14, 1979, marking a longstanding partnership that both nations are eager to expand.

President Ali also welcomed Ambassador Al Hulaibi, sharing his enthusiasm for strengthening ties with Bahrain. Discussions centered on collaborative opportunities in Guyana's thriving sectors, including energy, agriculture, mining, forestry, and tourism. President Ali underscored the significance of engaging private sector entities from both countries to enhance economic cooperation and shared prosperity. Diplomatic relations between Guyana and Bahrain date back to November 19, 1997, and both nations have expressed a



President Ali accepting the Letters of Credence from HE Bader Abbas Al Hulaibi, the Non-Resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Guyana.



President Ali greeting HE João Pedro Vasconcelos Fins do Lago, the Non-Resident Ambassador of the Republic of Portugal to Guyana

commitment to building a stronger bilateral relationship. These diplomatic meetings reinforce Guyana's dedication to expanding global partnerships,

inviting international investment, and advancing mutual interests in key development areas.

GUYANA LEADS UN'S PACT FOR THE FUTURE

Guyana has emerged as a leading nation in implementing the United Nations’ Pact for the Future. This global initiative aims to create a sustainable world characterized by peace, security, and youth empowerment.

UN Resident Coordinator in Guyana, Jean Kamau, praised the country’s efforts, stating, **“I am hugely inspired as an UN official to see Guyana**

leading in many of the commitments that were made in the Pact for the Future.”


One key area of focus for Guyana is youth empowerment. The country has been actively involved in training young people, particularly in the field of technology. A recent initiative saw 40 young Guyanese receive training in robotics, equipping them with valuable skills for the

future. Additionally, mentorship programs have been established to support young people and guide their development.

Guyana has also made significant strides in climate action and sustainable development. The country’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 provides a roadmap for balancing economic growth with environmental

protection. By prioritizing sustainable practices and investing in renewable energy, Guyana is setting an example for other nations.

As Guyana continues to embrace the principles of the UN’s Pact for the Future, it is poised to become a global leader in sustainable development and youth empowerment.



UN Resident Coordinator in Guyana, Jean Kamau

PRESIDENT ALI TOURS ENMORE REGIONAL HOSPITAL, PROJECT EXPECTED TO CREATE 1,000+ JOBS

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali visited the construction site of the state-of-the-art regional hospital in Enmore. The hospital, slated for completion early next year, is expected to generate employment for over 1,000 individuals.

“For this facility, [we will need] more than 1,000 staff to manage it for 24 hours,” President Ali stated during the inspection. The government’s investment in healthcare training programmes, such as the Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Assistant, and Lab Technician

programmes, is aligning with this growing demand for skilled healthcare professionals. Additionally, thousands of nurses are undergoing upskilling through a partnership with Coursera Inc.

The modern hospital will be equipped with cutting-edge technology and will offer a range of services, including a 24-hour Accident and Emergency department, a fully equipped laboratory, advanced imaging services, 75 inpatient beds, a modern birthing room, and two state-of-the-art operating theatres.

“It is not the big



A state-of-the-art regional hospital is underway at Enmore

open-ward system anymore. This is up to international standards. Each room will carry five beds, with its own washroom facility.

Basically, everything that Georgetown offers will be here,” President Ali emphasised.

Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony,

elaborated on the specific staffing requirements for the hospital, noting that approximately 30 doctors, 400 nurses, 400 nursing assistants, and additional clerical

and technical staff will be needed to ensure its smooth operation.

The \$6.6 billion facility, constructed by China CAMC Engineering Co Ltd, is part of the government’s ambitious healthcare development plan. It is one of two regional hospitals being built in Region Four, with the other located in Diamond. Additionally, four more hospitals are under construction in Regions Two, Five, and Six, along with a state-of-the-art paediatric and maternal hospital in Goedverwagting.

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR INCREASED PACE ON OGLE HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali visited the construction site of the modern Maternal and Paediatric Hospital in Ogl. Expressing dissatisfaction with the current pace of work, the President urged the Austrian contractor, VAMED, to accelerate efforts to meet the mid-2025 deadline.

“We are not satisfied...and we are not going to shift our deadline on the completion of this hospital,” President Ali emphasised.

While external works are progressing as planned, the project



The modern Maternal and Paediatric hospital being constructed at Ogle, East Coast Demerara

manager, Diana Lopes, informed the President that internal works are scheduled to conclude by October 2025. This timeline was deemed unacceptable by the

President, who insisted on a faster pace.

“That’s not going to fly with us. That is far behind the project deadline, and we are going to be charging

liquidated damages. We cannot accept this going to October,” the President stated firmly.

To expedite the process, President Ali directed the contractor to increase manpower and implement a shift system.

“You have to do a lot of the work simultaneously, and you have to have far more subcontractors here,” he urged.

The state-of-the-art hospital, once completed, will be the first of its kind in the Caribbean, offering advanced medical services for mothers and babies.

“This is a level five facility, one of the highest standards you would get for paediatric care. So, the construction and the design take into consideration the most modern equipment to match what the hospital is expected to deliver,” President Ali highlighted.

To ensure the hospital’s smooth operation, the government plans to bring in specialised medical professionals to train local staff.

“We have already started looking at areas that we will

need specialists to come into so we can train our locals. This hospital and the other regional hospitals tell the story of how rapidly we have to train our nurses and medical technicians,” he noted.

The 256-bed hospital, spanning 24,000 square meters, will feature a modern laboratory, an imaging suite with CT scans, X-rays, and MRI equipment, and four operating theatres, including one dedicated to cardiac surgeries.

GUYANA SECURES US\$22M FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH

Guyana has secured a significant boost to its healthcare research capabilities with a US\$22 million funding package. The funding, comprising a US\$15 million grant from the Pandemic Fund, facilitated by the World Bank and World Health Organization (WHO), and an additional US\$7 million in co-funding from the World Bank, will be used to strengthen health surveillance over the next three years.

Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, announced the news

at the 17th Medical Research Conference 2024, held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. He emphasised the importance of research in improving patient outcomes:

“I would like to see more research that can help to change the outcomes of patients and that is ultimately one of the reasons we are here. There are lots of things we can look at to advance care such as new treatments that are being made

available,” the Minister stated.

To further enhance the country’s research capacity, the government will award scholarships to 30 doctors to pursue advanced studies at McMaster University in Canada. Upon their return, these doctors will be well-equipped to conduct groundbreaking research in Guyana.

The government is also actively working on legislative reforms to create a conducive environment for medical research. A new

medicine act, slated for passage in the National Assembly next year, will introduce provisions for clinical trials in Guyana. Additionally, a revision of the 1974 Food and Drug Law is underway to strengthen regulatory oversight.

By investing in research, training, and legislative frameworks, Guyana is taking significant strides towards building a world-class healthcare system that prioritizes innovation and patient well-being.



Attendees at the 17th Medical Research Conference 2024, at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC), Liliendaal

50,000 TREES FOR EBD, LINDEN HIGHWAY AND GEORGETOWN

Guyana is embarking on an ambitious beautification project to transform its urban landscape. The government, in collaboration with the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), plans to plant **50,000 flowering trees over the next five years.** The initiative, a key component of the Low Carbon Development Strategy

(LCDS) 2030, will see these trees grace the streets of the East Bank Demerara, the Soesdyke-Linden Highway, and Georgetown. The first phase will involve planting 5,000 trees sourced from the hinterland regions. In addition to the tree-planting project, the government, under the leadership of President Dr. Irfaan Ali, is collaborating

with the King Charles III Foundation to revitalise Georgetown. This partnership aims to create pedestrian-friendly spaces, including cycling and walking lanes, and beautify the city's canals. These initiatives are expected to enhance the city's aesthetics, improve air quality, and create more recreational spaces for citizens. The government

has already made significant strides in urban beautification, with projects like the revitalisation of the Kingston Seawall and the creation of new walkways in various neighbourhoods. The transformation of the National Botanical Garden and Zoo is also underway, with the aim of creating a world-class attraction. This ambitious project



A total of 50,000 flowering trees will be planted over the next five years

is being spearheaded by Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo. By investing in these projects, the government is demonstrating its commitment to sustainable development and improving the quality of life for all Guyanese.

The government is set to embark on an ambitious project to develop a safari-style zoo. Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo announced plans to issue a prospectus to attract private investors for this venture during a public consultation at the Zoo and Botanical Garden. The safari-style zoo will offer visitors a unique opportunity to observe animals in a more natural setting, similar to a real safari. **"We believe that you can have a safari-type zoo in the country, where animals are just out in the open,"** Dr. Jagdeo explained. This initiative is part of a broader plan to revitalise Guyana's tourism sector and promote wildlife conservation. The government recognises the potential of a safari-style zoo to attract tourists from around the world, particularly those seeking unique and immersive experiences. While the government is committed to restoring the National Zoological Park and Botanical Gardens, the safari-style

SAFARI-STYLE ZOO PLANNED



Part of the gathering at the public consultation on the restoration of the Zoo and Botanical Gardens

zoo will offer a distinct experience focused on wildlife encounters and conservation education. **"This [national zoo] has a slightly different purpose, so it is not one where we have a large number of animals, and keep them in cages and things like that,"** Dr. Jagdeo clarified. The government's vision for Guyana's urban landscape extends beyond the safari-style zoo. The Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 includes plans to plant 50,000 flowering trees along the East Bank Demerara, the Soesdyke-Linden Highway, and Georgetown. This initiative aims to beautify the country's cities and improve air quality.



NEW LAWS TO SAFEGUARD GUYANA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

The government is taking steps to strengthen its commitment to environmental conservation and biodiversity protection. The country is currently working on improving the Protected Areas Act to enhance the protection of its natural heritage. **"We are working here locally on improving the laws, expanding the number of areas in the country to put under some form of protection for preservation of biodiversity,"** said Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP). The government aims to increase the percentage of protected areas from the current

17% to 30% by 2030. To achieve this goal, Guyana is collaborating with international partners and seeking financial support through the Global Biodiversity Alliance, as announced by President Irfaan Ali at the UN General Assembly. **"The world is losing biodiversity at a rapid pace and we don't want that to happen here in Guyana,"** Dr. Jagdeo emphasized. Guyana's vast rainforests, which cover over 85% of the country, are critical to global biodiversity and climate regulation. The Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 provides a roadmap for sustainable



Government working on improving laws to expand protected areas

development, implementing effective prioritizing forest conservation measures, conservation and climate Guyana aims to safeguard its natural heritage for future generations. By investing in protected areas and



Director of Guyana Tourism Authority Kamrul Baksh, Professor Hitesh, President of THAG Omadele George, Senior Consultant and Advisor on the Environment and Climate Change Shyam Nokta

RENOWNED ECOTOURISM EXPERT VISITS GUYANA TO ELEVATE ECO-LODGES

Renowned ecotourism expert Professor Hitesh Mehta recently visited Guyana to share his expertise and help elevate the country's eco-lodge industry. The Ministry of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, in collaboration with the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), hosted the professor to conduct a series of workshops and develop tailored guidelines for eco-lodge development. Professor Mehta, a leading authority in sustainable tourism and eco-lodge design, has worked with numerous countries to promote responsible tourism practices. His visit to Guyana aims to strengthen the country's position as a premier ecotourism destination by providing valuable insights and practical advice to local stakeholders.

During his stay, Professor Mehta focused on key aspects of eco-lodge development, including incorporating eco-friendly building materials and energy-efficient practices, empowering local communities through job creation and cultural preservation, and designing educational experiences that enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the natural environment. By implementing these principles, Guyana can create world-class eco-lodges that offer unique and unforgettable experiences for visitors while minimising their impact on the environment. This initiative aligns with the government's broader goal of diversifying the economy and promoting sustainable tourism.

US DELEGATION VISITS GUYANA TO BOOST BILATERAL TIES

Guyana and the United States have reaffirmed their strong bilateral relationship, with both countries emphasizing cooperation on key issues such as investment, security, and governance.

A high-level delegation from the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led by Senior Foreign Policy Advisor J.C. Jain, met with Guyana's Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud and other senior officials to discuss the deepening partnership between the two nations.

The US delegation expressed strong bipartisan support for Guyana's development



Guyana-USA bilateral relations continue to enjoy bipartisan support of the United States Congress

and acknowledged the country's significant role in regional security. Both sides agreed to continue working together on issues such as combating money laundering and corruption, enhancing security cooperation, and promoting sustainable development.

The meeting underscored the importance of democratic institutions and rule of law in fostering economic growth and stability. The US delegation assured Guyana of continued support in these areas.

US delegation also included Senior Advisor on Western Hemisphere and International Law

Enforcement Mr. Victor Cervino, and Deputy Staff Director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Mr. Andy Olson.

As Guyana continues to emerge as a key player in the region, the strong partnership with the United States is expected to further strengthen the country's position on the global stage.



GUYANA WELCOMES DIASPORA CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Guyana's Consul General to New York, Ambassador Michael E. Brotherson, has extended the government's gratitude to diaspora groups for their invaluable contributions to the country's development.

Speaking at the commemorative service of the Bishops' High School New York Tri-State Chapter, Ambassador Brotherson emphasised the government's recognition of the diaspora's role in shaping Guyana's future.

"The Government of Guyana remains

mindful of the interests and contributions of diaspora bodies like yours towards the country of your birth," he stated.

The Consul General also highlighted President Irfaan Ali's call for diaspora members to seize the numerous investment opportunities available in Guyana. He noted that the President's "One Guyana" initiative embodies the government's vision for a united and prosperous nation.

"His Excellency's vision and leadership

have now cemented his 'One Guyana' philosophy as an integral aspect of Guyana's development aspirations," Brotherson said.

The Ambassador commended the Bishops' High School New York Tri-State Chapter for its active engagement with Guyana and its commitment to education. He underscored the government's significant investment in education and the crucial role of alumni associations in supporting educational institutions.



Ambassador Michael E. Brotherson, Consul General of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, (third from right) with executives of the Bishops' High School Alumni Association New York Tri – State Chapter

GUYANA PRESENTS COPYRIGHT STUDY AT WTCA



World Trade Center Georgetown Finance Director, Vasudeo Singh (left) presenting a summary of the copyright study to World Trade Centers Association Chairman John Drew at the forum in New York

A delegation from World Trade Center Georgetown (WTCG) has presented a comprehensive study on copyright laws in Guyana at the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA) Member Forum. The study, commissioned by WTCG, aims to modernise Guyana's copyright framework and bolster the creative industries sector.

The study identifies the potential benefits of a robust copyright system, including economic growth, job creation, and cultural

preservation. It also highlights the need for a modernized Copyright Act, the establishment of a Federation of Creative Industries, and stronger linkages between the creative industries and the tourism sector.

WTCG Executive Director Wesley Kirton announced plans to share the study with the Government of Guyana and host an international conference on creative industries in the first half of 2025.

The study was conducted by Neville Bissember, a legal expert with extensive experience

in international law and intellectual property. The presentation of the study's summary was made by DDL Deputy CEO and WTCG Finance Director Vasudeo Singh to WTCA Chairman John Drew.

The WTCA Member Forum provided a platform for discussions on global trade, human capacity building, artificial intelligence, and data management. The WTCG delegation, comprising Singh, Kirton, and IT Specialist Ryon Samaroo, actively participated in these discussions.

GUYANA HOSTS SECOND DIASPORA JOB FAIR IN SURINAME

The government of Guyana, in collaboration with the private sector, successfully hosted its second diaspora job fair on Saturday, November 2nd, 2023, in Nickerie, Suriname. The event aimed to connect Guyanese diaspora members with potential employers and government agencies, highlighting the numerous opportunities available in Guyana's rapidly growing economy.

The job fair featured a diverse range of companies from various sectors, including construction, agriculture, and



Attendees interacting with various agencies at the job fair

technology. Attendees had the opportunity to directly engage with representatives from these companies, as well as government ministries and agencies such as the Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Housing and Water.

Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud emphasised the government's commitment to harnessing the skills and expertise of the Guyanese diaspora. **"This second job fair is a testament to our dedication to connecting with our diaspora and**

facilitating their return to Guyana," he said. **"We are determined to create a conducive environment for our citizens to contribute to the nation's development."**

The event also provided information on various government initiatives, including housing programmes, investment opportunities, and educational resources for returning citizens. Supporting agencies like the Central Immigration and Passport Office, General Registrar Office, and the Board of Industrial Training were

present to offer services and guidance.

This job fair, a direct response to President Dr. Mohamed Ali's recent meeting with the Guyanese diaspora, underscores the government's commitment to fostering a strong connection with

its citizens abroad. By providing a platform for networking and career advancement, the event aims to inspire and empower the diaspora to contribute to Guyana's future. The inaugural job fair was held in New York in July.



A section of the gathering at the job fair

GO-INVEST LAUNCHES AI-POWERED INVESTMENT ASSISTANT: "ASK HENRY"

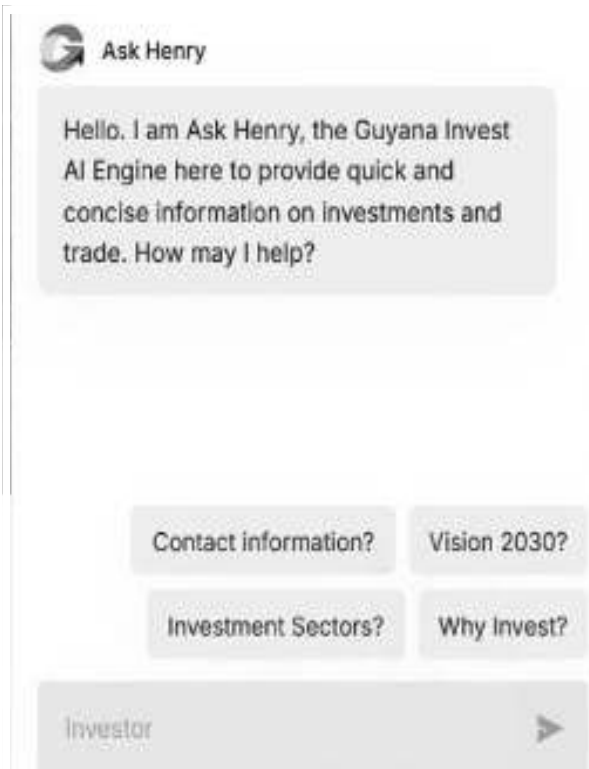
The Guyana Office for Investment (GO-Invest) has unveiled its latest innovation, an AI-powered chatbot named **"Ask Henry."** This cutting-edge tool is designed to revolutionise the way investors interact with the agency, providing 24/7 support and streamlining the investment process.

As Guyana continues to emerge as a global investment destination, particularly in sectors like oil and gas, agriculture, tourism, and technology, GO-Invest aims to create a seamless and efficient experience for potential investors. **"Ask Henry"** is a significant step towards achieving this goal.

Investors can access real-time information and assistance around the clock. The AI chatbot provides detailed information on investment regulations, tax incentives, and sector-specific opportunities.

"Ask Henry" can also offer tailored recommendations based on individual investor needs and preferences. The tool can guide investors through the necessary documentation and application processes.

By automating many of the information-seeking processes, **"Ask Henry"** aims to reduce response times



Investment advisory services now available around the clock

and enhance overall investor satisfaction. This innovative approach aligns with the government's vision of creating a more transparent and investor-friendly environment.

Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, Guyana's Chief Investment Officer, emphasised the significance of this initiative, stating, **"With 'Ask Henry,' we are making it easier for investors to navigate the investment landscape in Guyana. This AI-powered tool will help us attract more investment, create jobs, and drive economic growth."**

As GO-Invest continues to evolve, the agency plans to further enhance **"Ask Henry"** with advanced features such as voice recognition and predictive analytics. By embracing technological advancements, Guyana is positioning itself as a forward-thinking nation, ready to capitalise on the opportunities of the 21st century.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

LEARNING LAB EMPOWERS OVER 100 PWDS IN 2024

The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security's Learning Lab has successfully trained another 15 persons with disabilities (PWDs) in garment construction.

This intensive course, held from October 1st to 10th, 2024, equipped participants with practical skills in measuring, cutting, and sewing, opening doors to potential employment

and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Learning Lab goes beyond garment construction, with a focus on empowering PWDs across various disciplines. In 2024 alone, the Lab has upskilled over 108 individuals through a diverse course offering. Programmes include basic computer training, intermediate adult literacy and numeracy, video and audio editing, and beginner social media marketing.

These courses, delivered in intimate



A participant undergoing practical training during the Learning Lab's Garment Construction Course

classes of 15-18 participants, ensure personalised attention and maximise learning.

The Ministry's commitment to inclusion extends beyond skills training. They recently launched a "Interacting

with Persons with Disabilities" programme, developed with support from the Canadian Development Agency (Catalyste+). This two-day programme promotes better communication and

inclusive practices, fostering a more supportive environment for all.

This initiative aligns with the government's manifesto pledge to create equal opportunities and resources for PWDs. The Learning Lab actively encourages individuals with disabilities to reach out and explore their potential. For more information, contact the Ministry at 592-259-3710 or pwdlearninglab@mhsss.gov.gy



Participants of the Learning Lab's Garment Construction Course

GOVT DELIVERS OVER 600 HOUSE LOTS IN BERBICE



Recipient and nurse, Tricshana Charles selecting her lot number

Over 600 residents of Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice) have taken a significant step towards homeownership, receiving house lots in the Plantation Block ‘A’ Bath and Plantation ‘B’ Experiment housing schemes. The distribution ceremony, led by Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, and Minister within the Ministry, Susan Rodrigues, was held at the Bath Community Centre Ground. Excited beneficiaries shared their joy and gratitude. Ann Mars, a resident of Hopetown, expressed her relief

after receiving a lot she applied for in 2020: **“I was so happy. I called my daughter right away to [tell] her. I’m happy to have a land of my own.”** Nurse Trishana Charles, another recipient, emphasised the long-term benefits of owning land, particularly for her daughter’s future: **“As a young individual, acquiring a house lot feels very good. This is basically setting a legacy for her. And from here, we can just move forward to building our own home...”** Minister Croal highlighted the government’s significant investments

in infrastructure to support these new housing schemes. **“Development costs for the Experiment housing scheme near half a billion dollars, with an additional \$820 million allocated for Burma, \$2 billion for Shieldstown, and \$612 million for Balthyock,”** he stated. In the past four years, nearly 2,000 lots have been distributed in Region Five, and over 38,000 lots have been allocated nationwide. The Ministry is actively working to secure additional lands to meet the growing demand for housing in the region. Minister Rodrigues

emphasised the transformative impact of the government’s housing programme, stating, **“We are very proud of the work and will change your lives tremendously.”** Over \$8 billion has been invested in developing housing areas and upgrading



A recipient selecting his lot number

accomplishments in the housing sector... This is a big day for all of you. You will leave here today as an asset owner. It community roads in the region, including Burma, Experiment, Shieldstown, and Blairmont.

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN MAHDIATO BEGIN SOON

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, has announced that construction on a new housing development in Tracts A and B, Four Miles, Mahdia, will commence shortly. This ambitious project, backed by a \$1 billion investment, aims to provide 309 residential house lots to local residents by mid-2025. Speaking at a housing outreach event at Campbelltown Benab, Minister Croal emphasised the government’s commitment to addressing housing



A map of the new housing development at Mahdia, Region Eight

needs in the region: **“In Mahdia, you have two areas. The old scheme and the other [scheme] which has 172 acres. But all of that is not going to be about**

housing. As part of the government’s regional plan, [we are also] focusing on the enhancement of sport and recreation...We will position [a] major stadium for Mahdia in that area that we were able to acquire.” Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai, echoed this sentiment, highlighting the importance of housing development in hinterland communities like Mahdia. She encouraged young families to take advantage of this opportunity to secure their future: **“Today’s housing outreach is evidence that Mahdia and other hinterland communities are no exception to**

the government’s massive housing programme.” The housing outreach event provided a platform for residents to inquire about their applications, submit new ones, and conduct interviews. Ministers Croal and Sukhai, along with a technical team, also conducted a site visit to the new housing area. Residents from Mahdia at the housing outreach at Campbelltown Benab



Residents from Mahdia at the housing outreach at Campbelltown Benab

HUNDREDS TO RECEIVE LAND TITLES IN ANN'S GROVE AND WALTON HALL

Hundreds of families in Ann’s Grove, East Coast Demerara, and Walton Hall, Region Two, are set to receive legal ownership of land they have occupied for generations. This significant development is part of the government’s ongoing land regularisation programme. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, SC, announced that over 400 families in Ann’s

Hall will be issued land titles. This move aims to provide security of tenure and foster community development. The government has already made significant strides in land regularisation, with over 180 residents in Cotton Tree, West Coast Berbice, receiving land titles. The programme is expected to benefit many more communities in Regions Five and Three. **“Numbers One, Two, Three, Four, and**



Coast Berbice]... are all included in the process. We are going to deliver another three or four hundred more titles,” Minister Nandlall stated. The land surveying process is currently underway, and residents are expected to receive their land titles upon completion. This initiative demonstrates the government’s commitment to providing affordable housing and secure land

GUYANA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO CLEAN ENERGY AT OLADE MEETING

Prime Minister Mark Phillips reaffirmed Guyana's dedication to sustainable energy development during the 54th Meeting of Ministers of the Latin American



PM Phillips reaffirms Guyana's commitment to clean energy transition at OLADE meeting

Energy Organization (OLADE) in Paraguay. He highlighted the country's progress in transitioning to a low-carbon economy, as outlined in the Low

Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030.

While Guyana has significantly expanded its energy infrastructure following the 2015 oil discovery, the government remains committed to diversifying energy sources and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. The country is actively pursuing renewable energy options, including solar, hydro, wind, biomass, and natural gas.

Key initiatives undertaken by Guyana include construction of a 300 MW combined cycle gas turbine power



PM Phillips reaffirms Guyana's commitment to clean energy transition at OLADE meeting

plant, which is expected to reduce electricity generation emissions by 70% and lower costs by 50%; a 224% increase in solar power capacity since 2020, with plans

for additional solar PV installations and micro-grid developments; elimination of taxes on electric vehicles and establishment of public EV charging stations

to promote sustainable transportation; and the implementation of LED lighting projects to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Prime Minister Phillips emphasised the importance of regional and international partnerships in driving clean energy development and climate resilience. Guyana remains committed to working with other countries in the region to achieve a sustainable energy future.

GOVT WARNS AGAINST LOCAL CONTENTACT ABUSE

The government has issued a stern warning to local businesses against exploiting the Local Content Act to provide subpar goods and services at inflated prices.

Speaking at the second Local Content Forum, Natural Resources Minister Vickram Bharrat emphasized that while the Act is designed to prioritise Guyanese businesses, it should not be a license for mediocrity. **"The local content legislation is in no way protection**

to provide poor services or poor-quality goods at inflated prices," Minister Bharrat stated. **"We should guard against that and ensure that we use it to up the kind of standard and quality that we can produce and to show that we can compete with regional and international companies."**

Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo during a recent press conference, echoed these sentiments, expressing concern



Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat addressing the forum

about companies circumventing the law, particularly regarding the requirement for

Guyanese to hold 75% of management positions. "We are now drafting legislation that will

cover that loophole," Dr. Jagdeo stated.

The government is committed to ensuring that the Local Content Act is implemented effectively and that local businesses are provided with the necessary support to thrive. However, it is clear that the government will not tolerate abuse of the Act.

The Local Content Act sets minimum requirements for foreign and local companies operating in the oil and gas sector to hire Guyanese and source local materials. In the

first half of 2024, over 454 new hires were recorded within the 40 sub-sectors covered by the Act.

The government is now working to further strengthen the Act through amendments, which will expand its scope and address compliance issues. The aim is to maximise local content and ensure that Guyanese businesses benefit from the country's burgeoning oil and gas sector.

OVER 160 GRADUATE FROM GOVT'S INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW COURSE

Over 160 individuals successfully completed the government's International Human Rights Law certificate course. The programme, facilitated by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, aimed to educate Guyanese on human rights, international conventions, and Guyana's domestic laws.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, emphasised the significance of the program, stating, **"It was a daunting undertaking, but we believe we have developed a comprehensive**



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira presenting a certificate to a graduate

course that allows Guyanese to understand the intricacies of the UN system."

The intensive course, which ran from July to October 2024, featured a combination of local and

international experts. Renowned legal minds, including Attorney General Anil Nandlall, SC, shared their knowledge on various aspects of human rights law. To accommodate

participants from diverse backgrounds and locations, the programme was delivered virtually, allowing for flexibility and accessibility.

Minister Teixeira expressed the government's intention to expand the programme to other Caribbean nations, recognising the region's need for similar initiatives. She noted, **"CARICOM countries, as far as we know, do not offer such programs. We aim to share this valuable knowledge with our Caribbean sister countries."**

The ministry also plans to extend the program to

remote communities within Guyana and neighbouring countries over the next two years.

The graduation ceremony was attended by British Ambassador to

Guyana Jane Miller, UN Resident Coordinator Jean Kamau, diplomatic corps members, private sector representatives, and regional officials.



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira presenting a certificate to a graduate

MINISTER PERSAUD ADVOCATES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE JUSTICE

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, has called for an accessible and inclusive justice system for women, particularly in conflict and post-



The school as of Wednesday, October 23, 2024 1

conflict situations. Speaking at the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly's Forum of Women Parliamentarians, Minister Advocates for Gender-Responsive Justice, Dr. Persaud emphasised the importance of gender-responsive legislation and supportive systems to protect women's rights.

"Justice must be inclusive and accessible," Dr. Persaud stated. **"We must continuously review, amend, and when necessary, repeal legislation to combat violence and**

injustice by aligning national laws with international human rights standards."

Guyana has taken significant strides in this regard, implementing measures such as the 'Imatter' app and 24-hour hotline to provide confidential support to survivors of gender-based violence. The country has also introduced the gender-neutral Family Violence Act and is working on a new harassment bill to further strengthen legal protections for women.

Dr. Persaud highlighted the importance of innovative, survivor-



(Left to right) Member of Parliament, Geeta Chandan-Edmond, Speaker of the National Assembly, Manzoor Nadir, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall; Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud and Ms Carleita Glasgow

centered approaches. Guyana's 'Hope and Justice Centre' offers integrated support services, including medical, psychological,

legal, and socio-economic assistance. By advocating for accessible justice and implementing effective policies, Guyana is

setting an example for other countries in the region and beyond.

NIS UNDERPAYMENTS TO BE RECTIFIED

The government recently announced a significant \$10 billion allocation to compensate Guyanese who have been underpaid or deprived of their National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions.

Speaking at a press conference, People's Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, explained that many Guyanese, particularly older citizens, have not

received the full benefits they are entitled to due to various reasons, including employer negligence. **"Some of those people were not to be blamed because many times their employers never deducted or deducted and never transmitted their deductions to the NIS on their behalf,"** he stated.

The one-time lump sum payment will be

distributed to eligible individuals who have been shortchanged by the system. The government is currently finalising the specific criteria and disbursement process for this initiative.

In addition to the compensation package, the government will also inject a substantial amount of funds into the NIS to ensure its long-term sustainability. **"That puts the fund at risk. So... when all of**

you retire, you would also be able to receive your pension and the NIS will not go bankrupt," Dr. Jagdeo emphasised.

To address concerns about pension increases, Dr. Jagdeo noted that the government's priority is to stabilise the NIS fund. Once the fund is strengthened, the government will explore options for increasing pension benefits. In the meantime, the



It will be a one-time lump sum payment

government has already increased pensions for government workers from \$20,500 in 2020

to \$36,000 in 2024, with a planned increase to \$41,000 in 2025.

JOINT EFFORT TO COMBAT CHILD LABOUR AND STRENGTHEN LABOUR RIGHTS



Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr Vindhya Persaud

A two-day training workshop, bringing together over 60 employees from various child protection agencies and departments, was held at the Regency Suites Hotel. The event aimed to strengthen collaboration and develop effective strategies to combat child labor and promote



Minister of Labour Joseph Hamilton

labor rights. Minister of Labour, Joseph Hamilton, emphasised the significance of a unified approach to address this pressing issue: **"A unified approach is crucial to ensure the safety and education of all children. We must conduct regular follow-ups**

on children removed from harmful situations."

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, called for a holistic approach, considering the individual needs of each child and their family: **"We need to look at this issue from a very deep level, considering the family's situation as well as the child's."**

Since its establishment in 2020, the Ministry of Labour has made significant strides in addressing labor-related issues. Key achievements include increasing its workforce from 16 to over 25 labor officers, establishing regional offices to improve accessibility

and service delivery, and implementing numerous training programmes

cash grants, school construction, and meal programmes, aimed at

and education in schools. Children need to understand the dangers of child labour."

The government's initiatives, such as the Board of Industrial Training (BIT) and the Women Innovation and Investment Network (WIIN), provide training opportunities in various fields, empowering youth with skills and opportunities.

By strengthening collaboration, implementing effective strategies, and prioritising education, Guyana is taking significant steps to combat child labour and create a brighter future for its children.



Persons attending the workshop

to equip workers with essential skills and knowledge about workplace safety.

The government has also allocated \$400.6 million to support initiatives like

reducing child labour through education.

Minister Persaud highlighted the crucial role of education in reducing child labor: **"Education is key, both public education**

PRESIDENT ALI CHAMPIONS 'GOOD OVER EVIL' AT DIWALI CELEBRATION



Scene from the Diwali Mahostav, at the Leonora Track and Field Stadium

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has emphasised the government’s commitment to the principles of “good over evil,” a core tenet of the Diwali festival. Speaking at the Diwali Mahostav, at the Leonora Track and Field Stadium, the President highlighted the government’s efforts to create a better future for all Guyanese.

“We know how to give, because we never took away the Because We Care cash grant. We never closed the sugar industry,” the President said. He emphasised the importance of sharing and giving to build a strong and united society.

The President also stressed the significance of hope and empathy in creating a positive impact on society. **“We have not only restored hope, we have brought meaning to**

that hope,” he stated. The government’s investments in healthcare, education, and infrastructure are seen as tangible examples of its commitment to improving the lives of Guyanese. The President assured citizens that these essential services are no longer distant hopes but are now readily accessible.

Attorney General Anil Nandlall highlighted the government’s dedication to unity and inclusivity. He urged citizens to appreciate the freedom to practice their religion, a right that is not afforded to many people around the world.

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag echoed the President’s vision of a united Guyana, emphasizing the importance of human prosperity and the well-being of future generations.

The Diwali Mahostav, a vibrant celebration of Indian culture, showcased the diversity and unity of Guyana. The event featured cultural performances, traditional food, and fireworks, bringing together people from all walks of life.



250 REGION SIX RESIDENTS SEE BRIGHTER FUTURE WITH NEW GLASSES

Over 250 residents in Region Six are now seeing the world more clearly, thanks to a government initiative providing free eye exams and spectacles. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security has invested \$5 million to bring this vital service to the region.

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

attended distribution events in various communities. One recipient, Kamini Persaud, a security officer, expressed her gratitude, stating, **“Thank you so much for the glasses. I can now see all the fine words that I couldn’t see before.”**

The programme extends to children, with parents and guardians able to collect glasses

on their behalf. Navita Sewah, a parent, praised the initiative, saying, **“The initiative will benefit the children because they stay a lot on their devices... and in their younger ages it will protect their eyes more.”**

Even senior citizens like 68-year-old Chendrakumar Ramlall are reaping the benefits. **“The brand-new glasses would assist**

in completing my important everyday tasks such as reading, writing, and signing documents,” he explained.

By providing free eye care, the government is alleviating financial burdens for many families. This initiative underscores the ministry’s commitment to improving the lives of all Guyanese, particularly the vulnerable.



Residents trying on their new glasses for the first time

New medical professionals urged to embrace Guyana’s health sector

MINISTER of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, on Sunday delivered an inspiring speech at the University of Guyana School of Medicine’s White Coat Ceremony, encouraging the graduating students to embark on a lifelong journey of growth, compassion, and dedication to healthcare.

Addressing the new cohort of medical professionals, Dr Anthony extended heartfelt congratulations, expressing the significance of their transition from university to a demanding yet rewarding career.

“Your graduation is a remarkable achievement, and you are entering healthcare at an extraordinary time when unprecedented advancements are opening new opportunities that past generations could only dream of,” Dr Anthony noted.



Scenes from the University of Guyana School of Medicine's White Coat ceremony held on Sunday

Reflecting on his own experience and the evolving landscape of healthcare in Guyana, Dr Anthony highlighted the transformative projects underway that are reshaping the nation’s healthcare infrastructure.

“Back in the 1990s, resources were limited, and healthcare conditions were far from ideal but today, we are making leaps and bounds to create facilities and opportunities that can enable you to provide top-quality care across all regions of Guyana”, he said.

The Minister elaborated on plans

for new hospitals, specialised services, and upgraded healthcare facilities that will provide newly trained doctors with advanced resources and improved working conditions, emphasising the Ministry of Health’s commitment to equipping healthcare facilities with cutting-edge technology and robust digital systems, including the upcoming implementation of digital patient records and telemedicine capabilities.

“We want you to be ready to work in a digital environment that allows you

to provide better, more efficient care, even in remote areas”, Dr. Anthony said.

In closing, Dr Anthony reminded the audience of the importance of humility, and empathy, when delivering health care.

“This white coat is more than a symbol; it is a reminder of the responsibility you carry to treat each patient with respect and compassion. Remain humble, continue to grow, and serve the people of this country with dedication.

Your journey has only just begun, and we are here to support you every step of the way”, the Health Minister explained.

The White Coat Ceremony, attended by relatives, faculty members, and distinguished guests, marked a pivotal step for medical students, symbolising their commitment to the values of medicine as they prepare for the challenges and rewards of clinical practice. (MoH)

Guyana Veterans get a \$\$ boost

PRIME Minister, Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips has announced that the Government of Guyana will donate \$2 million to the Guyana Veterans Legion to help the organisation continue to provide support to veterans.

The Prime Minister made the announcement on Sunday during his remarks at the annual Remembrance Day ceremony at the Guyana Veterans Legion (GVL) headquarters on Carifesta Avenue.

Reaffirming the government’s commitment to Guyana’s veterans, the Prime

Minister also announced that each surviving World War II veteran would receive \$100,000 from President Dr Irfaan Ali.

He said the government is also committed to continuing to provide other brianual support.

In addition to the \$2 million donation, the Prime Minister will present the Legion with a sum of money as a personal gesture to support its work.

Meanwhile, he reiterated the government’s pledge to ensure veterans have access to healthcare, rehabilitation, and other

vital resources, underscoring its dedication to supporting veterans beyond their years of service. “Our veterans embody the highest ideals of service, and as a society, we must ensure they receive the care and opportunities they deserve.”

PM Phillips signalled his intention to see the Veterans Legion building rehabilitated.

He committed to working with Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Omar Khan and the Guyana Defence Force to secure funding for the building’s restoration.

The World Guyanese Congress (WGC) is a federally incorporated non-partisan global organisation that represents the interests of citizens of Guyanese heritage around the world. The organisation focuses on the successful development of our communities globally with an emphasis on leadership development and collaborative activities in diaspora communities to strengthen the community worldwide.

The organisation is headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and led by a Chairman and Executive Committee supported by an Advisory Council and various Committees as well as a Board of Governors that acts as ambassadors for the organisation. It has nine national and regional chapters:

Key priorities of the WGC include:

- Build a globally cohesive community with a focus on youth and women in business and civic leadership worldwide.
- Support social entrepreneurship and civic engagement in communities around the world.
- Engage diaspora communities in the social and economic development of Guyana.

World Guyanese Congress
5200 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2N 5P6



To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit www.wgc-org.com

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
Email: mail@wgc-org.com
Telephone: [1-800-317-0804](tel:1-800-317-0804)



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Roma Tomato 罗马番茄
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Red Pepper 红椒
Reg: \$3.99 **3.59**

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Reg: \$5.99 **5.99**

Yellow Plantains 黄大蕉
Reg: \$1.59 **99¢**

Cactus Fruit 仙人掌果
Reg: \$1.99 **1.59**

Envy Apple 爱恩苹果
Reg: \$2.99 **1.99**

Morocco Sweet Tangerine
摩洛哥甜桔
Reg: \$2.99 **1.99**

Red Plum 红布林
Reg: \$2.99 **1.99**

Red Seed Grape 大粒提
Reg: \$3.99 **1.99**

Young Coconut 椰青
Reg: \$3.99 **2.99**

Vietnam Red Meat Pomelo
越南红肉柚子
Reg: \$4.99 **4.99**

Spanish Honeydew Persimmon
西班牙蜜梨
Reg: \$2.99 **1.99**

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Reg: \$3.99 **4.99**

SH Chopped Spinach 750g 菠菜碎
Reg: \$2.99 **1.99**

Cool Ocean Frozen White Shrimp 30/40 400g 白虾仁
Reg: \$7.99 **4.99**

Choysai Fried Squid Cake 鱿鱼丝 454g
Reg: \$3.95 **5.99**

98 Baby Clam Meat 340g 鲜贝肉
Reg: \$5.99 **3.99**

Uncooked Chinese Style Pork Sausage 350g 东北腊肠
Reg: \$8.59 **6.99**

Bulacan Shredded Young Coconut 454g 椰丝
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Reg: \$2.59 **1.59**

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Reg: \$5.99 **3.99**

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Bamboo Tree Vietnamese Blue Noodle 500g 越南蓝粉条
Reg: \$12.99 **9.99**

Hue's Rice Vermicelli 400g 越南米粉
Reg: \$2.99 **1.59**

Regent Tempura Shrimp Snack 100g 天妇罗虾
Reg: \$2.59 **1.29**

Sunasa Chicken Fried Pork Ribs 70g 炸鸡排
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Reg: \$5.99 **4.99**

Frozen Fresh Head-on White Shrimp 新鲜白虾 35.99
Reg: \$5.99 **4.99**

Live Blue Crab 活蓝蟹 3.99
Reg: \$3.99 **4.99**

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50 YEARS OF DI



Guyana's 50th Diwali Motorcade was a spectacular event, drawing thousands of spectators and showcasing the rich cultural tapestry of the nation. Organised by the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha, the motorcade featured a record number of creatively designed floats, each a testament to the ingenuity and artistry of the participating groups.

The government's support for over 35 Mandirs and youth groups nationwide contributed to the success of the event. Regional motorcades held in Essequibo, East Bank Demerara, West Coast Demerara, and Berbice led up to the grand finale in Georgetown.



The main motorcade commenced from the Shri Krishna Mandir in Campbelville, winding its way through the traditional route along Sandy Babb Street and Vlissengen Road, and culminating at the LBI Community Centre Ground. A captivating cultural programme featuring renowned Indian singer Nachiket Lele and local talents like Vishale Samlall and Bunt Singh entertained the crowd.

The Diwali Motorcade is not just a celebration of light and hope; it is a testament to the enduring spirit of Guyana's diverse culture



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3 49 each	3 99 each	8 9¢ each	2/ \$ 3
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6 9¢ each	9 9¢ each	3/9 99	3 49 each
 <p>Grace Mackerel in Tomato Sauce Assorted 155 g</p>	 <p>Sabina Green Gungo Pigeon Peas 425 ml</p>	 <p>New Treasure White Rice 2 kg</p>	 <p>Cedar Yellow Corn Meal #40 907 f</p>
9 9¢ each	1 39 each	2 99 each	2/ \$ 5
 <p>Carib Carbolic Germicidal Soap 125 g</p>	 <p>Old Dutch Liquid Bleach 2.4 L</p>	 <p>Vim Cream with micro-crystals 500 ml</p>	 <p>Laurentide Windshield Washer -40 3,78 lt</p>
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MAIN STREET AND STATE HOUSE GLOW AS DIWALI LIGHTS BRING JOY NATIONWIDE

In a beautiful celebration of Diwali, diyas shone brightly at the State House, along Main Street, and across the country, symbolising the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. President Dr. Irfaan Ali joined community members at the State House, lighting diyas that cast a warm glow over the historic grounds. The radiant scene extended along Main Street, where rows of flickering lights adorned trees and pathways, adding an enchanting touch to the

capital city. Communities nationwide joined in, lighting up their homes, streets, and temples. The glowing diyas brought people together in a heartfelt display of unity and hope, reinforcing the values of peace, kindness, and compassion that Diwali celebrates. With laughter and joy in the air, Guyanese of all backgrounds shared in the festival, bringing colour, light, and warmth to every corner of the country.



RING IN THE SEASON OF GIVING WITH THE SALVATION ARMY

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips officially launched the Salvation Army's 2024 Christmas Kettle Appeal, urging the public to support this noble cause. The Prime Minister emphasised the significance of the Salvation Army's work in providing hope and assistance to those in need. He called on individuals, businesses, and government entities to generously contribute to the Christmas Kettle Appeal. "This occasion marks the beginning of an essential



PM Phillips launching the Salvation Army's Christmas Kettel Appeal

time when we as a community come together to support those most in need," Prime Minister Phillips said. He added that the Salvation Army

embodies the highest forms of benevolence and serves as a beacon of hope for the vulnerable. The Christmas Kettle Appeal is a well-known annual campaign where

volunteers stand outside businesses, ringing bells and collecting donations. The funds raised from this campaign are used to provide essential services such as food, shelter, and rehabilitation programmes. Major Mireille Saint Lot, Divisional Leader of the Salvation Army, shared the organisation's goal of distributing 2,000 food hampers, hosting festive parties, and providing toys for children this Christmas season. The Salvation Army will also be conducting home visits to offer support and assistance to those in

need. By supporting the Salvation Army's Christmas Kettle Appeal, individuals can make a significant difference in the lives of others and spread the spirit of giving during the holiday season.



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips giving the first donation for the Salvation Army's 2024 Christmas Kettel Appeal

Clear strategy in place to achieve Guyana’s healthcare vision

WITH rapid transformation taking place across Guyana’s healthcare system, President Dr. Irfaan Ali has emphasised that the changes are part of a clearly defined strategy and the result of solid partnerships that seek to give Guyanese access to world-class health services.

The Head of State was at the time participating in a panel discussion titled, “Empowering Healthcare: Strategies and Collaboration for Transformative Change in Guyana” which was held at the Concordia Annual Summit in New York City. The discussion was posted on his official Facebook page on Sunday.

President Ali during the discussion focused on the ongoing efforts to transform the country’s healthcare landscape with partners, Mount Sinai and Hess Corporation.

He said that with all that has taken place thus far, there must be a clear vision. “I think you have to have a very clearly defined strategy, and, as a government, we had a clear strategy as to what we want the healthcare system to look like.”

President Ali added that healthcare cannot be delivered without a system and the system must ensure efficiency and reliability as it must also ensure that there is a mechanism to support healthcare provision procedurally and systematically.

“We are very clear that what we wanted to develop [is] a healthcare ecosystem, and that ecosystem is about everything that surrounds quality healthcare provision,” he added.

That, he noted, involves ensuring that the population is healthy and that there are available tools to guarantee that the healthcare system responds to the needs of the people in a proactive way.

Building this out, he explained is not simple as Guyana is starting from a baseline now with the development of a patient care management system and a health management information system.

While many people may believe that this would be easy, he indicated that there must be adequate legislative provisions in place before such is done.

These provisions, he indicated would protect patient information, ensure doctors are professional and set standards and regulations for the systems.

“So, that is where the complication came. [However], Mount Sinai, being in this business for so long, working in Kenya, was the partner that helped us to unlock all of this; and a process that would have taken maybe four or five years in getting those legislations, those regulations, those standards in place, we were able to do in months.” President Ali said.

It was then that he highlighted that the partnership between the Government of Guyana, Hess Corporation and Mount Sinai has brought tremendous, accelerated success.

President Ali indicated that significant strides have been made in several

spheres of the sector so far, as more than 70 per cent of nursery children have been screened and received care as a part of the school health programme.

Additionally, there have been significant investments made in telemedicine and digitisation as Dr. Ali noted that Guyana possibly has the highest number of telemedicine stations per capita in the region.

With this, comprehensive, centralised pathology and laboratory services have been established across the country even in remote communities.

He added, “I just want to take some time to salute the partnership that we’ve been able to build between Mount Sinai and the Ministry of Health, and also the local health providers, who have dedicated the time



President Irfaan Ali

and are willing to go through the re-training and retooling, because there’s

a lot of that going on.” The Head of State told the gathering that the work continues on the entire ecosystem which consists of the human resource side, the legislations and regulations bringing together the rules and the procedures to ensure that improvements are made and bring even better results.



The Government of Guyana, in 2022, signed a monumental contract with Mount Sinai Health System and Hess Corporation to aid in overhauling Guyana’s entire health system.



At that time, President Ali noted that the signing was part of the government’s mandate to position Guyana as a destination of choice for healthcare services globally and transform services in both the public and private sectors locally.


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LIMA SANDS HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRESSING RAPIDLY

The construction of the \$6.6 billion Lima Sands Hospital is progressing rapidly, with the majority of the structure already completed. Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony recently visited the site and expressed satisfaction with the construction pace.

“They have been making continuous progress and we expect by March or April we should be substantially completed,” Minister Anthony stated.

Once completed, the hospital will offer a wide range of services, including inpatient care, emergency services, outpatient clinics, imaging, and laboratory services. Notably, it will house the region’s first CT scanner, eliminating the need for patients to travel to Georgetown for advanced imaging.



Multi-Billion-dollar Lima Sands Hospital’s construction moving rapidly apace

“This will help the physicians here to make a diagnosis,” the Minister explained.

The hospital’s modern design and advanced equipment aim to provide high-quality healthcare services to residents of Region Two and surrounding areas. The government’s investment in this project is part of a broader effort to improve healthcare access and outcomes across the country.

The Lima Sands Hospital is one of six new hospitals being constructed across Guyana, with a total investment of \$37.2 billion. These facilities will significantly enhance the country’s healthcare infrastructure and provide better access to medical care for all Guyanese.



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony and Region Three’s Health Officer, Dr Ranjeev Singh conducting a walkthrough of the hospital

NEW SIMULATION CENTRE TO BOOSTS NURSING TRAINING IN SUDDIE

The Suddie Public Hospital has unveiled a new state-of-the-art simulation centre to enhance nursing training in the region. The \$5 million facility will benefit approximately 150 nursing trainees.

Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony officially opened the centre, urging trainees to make the most of this valuable resource. **“I do hope that you use it wisely and to the best of your ability,”** he said.

The minister emphasised the importance of effective communication skills in nursing and encouraged trainees to collaborate with their lecturers to gain a comprehensive understanding of their studies.

“We are spending a lot of money in this region...About three years ago we have



Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony and a trainee nurse cutting of the ribbon to open the new Simulation Centre at the Suddie Public Hospital



Patient simulators that are being used by the trainee nurses

given about \$100 million, last year we gave \$200 million and this year we have for the region about \$500 million,” Minister Anthony stated, highlighting the government’s significant investments in healthcare.

Regional Health Officer Dr. Ranjeev Singh echoed the minister’s

sentiments, urging trainees to seize the opportunity to improve their skills. **“We are making the sacrifices and the resources available, so you must now do your part by making your personal sacrifices to uplift yourself,”** he said.

The new simulation centre is part of the government’s broader effort to modernise the healthcare sector and provide quality training opportunities for healthcare professionals.

NEW NURSING SCHOOL AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT ESSEQUIBO COAST HEALTHCARE EXPANSION

The Essequibo Coast is poised for a healthcare transformation, with the impending completion of the new Lima Hospital and expansions at other facilities in Region Two. However, this growth necessitates a significant increase in nursing personnel.

Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony projects a demand for 600 nurses to adequately staff these healthcare institutions. To meet this need, the government is actively investing in nursing education and training programmes.

“If we are going to improve the quality of services, then we have to get more nurses that are qualified into the system,” Minister Anthony emphasized.

One key initiative is the Professional Hybrid Nurses Programme, which has enrolled nearly 1,200 participants since its launch last year. This programme combines online and in-person learning to accelerate nursing training.

To further expand



Approximately 600 nurses needed in Essequibo Coast amid healthcare expansion

nursing education capacity, a new nursing school is under construction within the Lima Hospital compound.

“Our intention is to have more students coming in to have that in-person experience... We are planning to have a computer room in the new nursing school and lecture theatres to make learning easier,” Minister Anthony explained.

The new school will also offer the Continued Nursing Education course, a recent requirement for nursing professionals.

Beyond infrastructure development, the government is also focusing on specialized training for registered nurses. This includes programmes in critical care, neonatal care, and surgical nursing.

“If we are going to do critical care here in Essequibo, then we will need critical care nurses. If we are going to offer better neonatal care then we need neonatal care nurses. This also goes for surgical care and so forth,” Minister Anthony stated.

With these investments in infrastructure and training, the government aims to significantly enhance the standard of nursing care across the country.



Minister Anthony conversing with the trainee nurses at the Suddie Public Hospital in Region Two

PTCCB EXPANDS OPERATIONS WITH NEW BUILDING



The exterior of the building

The Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board (PTCCB) has officially opened its new administrative building located within the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) compound in Mon Repos, Region Four. This \$115 million investment

is part of the Ministry of Agriculture's broader strategy to modernise the agriculture sector and enhance its regulatory capabilities. The new building will enable the PTCCB to streamline its operations and more effectively carry out its crucial role in managing pesticides and toxic chemicals. This includes overseeing the import, distribution, sale, use, storage, and disposal of these substances. Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, highlighted

the significance of the PTCCB's work in ensuring food security and environmental protection. He emphasised that the new building is a testament to the government's commitment to investing

in the agriculture sector and safeguarding public health. In addition to its traditional role in the agriculture sector, the PTCCB is expanding its responsibilities to include the mining,

manufacturing, industrial, and oil and gas sectors. The government has also allocated \$43.8 million for equipment to monitor lead levels in paints and is planning to implement regulations for the transportation of toxic chemicals on roadways in 2025. These initiatives underscore the government's dedication to ensuring the safe and responsible use of chemicals while promoting sustainable development in Guyana.



The interior of the building

MORE GUYANESE TAKING TO THE SEAS

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, has lauded the crucial role of marine officers in driving Guyana's booming economy. Speaking at the MATPAL Marine Institute Inc.'s graduation and awards ceremony, at Herdmanston Lodge in Queenstown, the minister highlighted the seafarers' contribution to the nation's rapid economic growth. "Seafarers are the silent guardians of

the global economy," Minister Edghill stated, emphasising the reliance on maritime transport for the movement of 90% of the world's goods. He congratulated the 15 graduating officers

and underscored the increasing demand for skilled maritime professionals in Guyana. The minister highlighted the significant role of marine officers in supporting the oil and gas sector, a key driver of the country's economic expansion. He also emphasised the government's commitment to developing Guyana's maritime infrastructure, including the planned construction of a deep-water port. This strategic investment aims to



MATPAL graduates with their certificates

position Guyana as a regional trade hub and reduce reliance on food imports. MATPAL Marine Institute Inc., celebrating its 25th anniversary, has played a vital role in nurturing local maritime talent. The

institute has provided numerous internship opportunities within the oil and gas sector and collaborated with organisations such as the Guyana Police Force and Guyana Defence Force to enhance the country's maritime capabilities.



Minister Edghill congratulating Safina Lutchman, the only female graduate

GUYANA SWEEPS CARIBBEAN CSEC AND CAPE AWARDS



Aniyah Couchman

Guyana has once again cemented its position as a regional academic powerhouse, securing top honours in the 2024 Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) exams. Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, announced the nation's outstanding performance, highlighting the exceptional



Dave Chowtie

achievements of Guyanese students across various subjects. From Sciences and Humanities to Business and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Guyanese students dominated the regional stage.

TOP PERFORMERS

- CAPE Top Overall Student: Anaya Couchman, Queens College
- CAPE Most



Asiyah Karim

- Outstanding Student in Natural Sciences: Anaya Couchman, Queens College
- CSEC Top Overall Student: David Chowtie, Queens College
- CSEC Most Outstanding Student in Humanities: David Chowtie, Queens College
- CSEC Most Outstanding Student in Business: Asiyah Karim, ISA Islamic School



Venisha Lall

- CSEC Most Outstanding Student in TVET: Venisha Lall, Anna Regina Secondary School
 - CSEC Most Outstanding Student in Sciences: Chitra Parbhu, Saraswati Vidya Niketan School
 - CSEC Most Outstanding Student in Agricultural Science: Carlana Alexander, St. Rose's High School
- Minister Manickchand expressed immense



Chitra Parbhu

pride in the students' accomplishments, stating, "No one school is dominating the list. Students from various regions, including Essequibo, Region 3, and Georgetown, have excelled." She emphasised the government's commitment to educational equity and the crucial role of teachers, parents, and families in supporting student success.

"I am incredibly proud to announce that Guyana has once again topped the Caribbean in both CSEC and CAPE

exams. Our students have excelled not just in individual subjects but in comprehensive areas like humanities, business, science, TVET, and agriculture," the Minister said. "This is a testament to the hard work of our students and the dedicated efforts of their teachers and families."

As the nation celebrates this remarkable achievement, it is clear that Guyana's educational system is thriving. The outstanding performance in the 2024 CSEC and CAPE exams is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment of students, teachers, and the entire education sector.

REGULARISATION PROCESS UNDERWAY FOR BLOCK 42 RESIDENTS IN LINDEN

The Ministry of Housing and Water has initiated the regularisation process for approximately 200 families residing in Block 42, Amelia’s Ward. This move aims to provide secure land tenure and enhance the living

conditions of residents in the area.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, announced that a new survey plan will be conducted to ensure all homes in Block 42 are included in the regularisation process. Once completed, residents will be issued land titles, enabling them to access loans and improve their homes.

“I want the regularisation process to be

completed for the sake of your families and children. This is an important day for Block 42,” Minister Rodrigues emphasized.



Block 42 residents at the meeting

The government is committed to developing the area by constructing essential infrastructure, including roads, recreational spaces, a nursery school, and a health center. Additionally, efforts are underway to acquire more land to address the region’s housing demand.

With over 4,000 housing lot applications in Region Ten, the government plans to allocate 1,600 house lots in Fitz Hope and Wismar within the next two weeks.



Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, engaging the Block 42 residents

SINGLE MOTHER RECEIVES NEW HOME FROM MOM

A 28-year-old single mother of three, Anisa Deoraj, has received a new home from the Men on Mission (MoM) initiative. The home was handed over by Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar.

Deoraj, who previously resided in a challenging living situation in Tuschen, expressed deep gratitude to President Irfaan Ali and the MoM team for this life-changing

opportunity. She shared, “I am hoping to move into my new home as soon as possible. I would like to say a huge thank you to President Ali and the MoM team for providing this home for me and my children.”

Minister Indar emphasised the government’s commitment to supporting vulnerable citizens. “We are here as a region, as

a government, and as a community to support you and your children,” he stated. He encouraged Deoraj

to take advantage of government initiatives to further improve her family’s future.

Regional Chairman



The new home



MoM has impacted at least seven families in the region thus far

Inshan Ayube praised the MoM initiative, highlighting President Ali’s dedication to the welfare of the people. “Guyana and by extent, the citizens are blessed to have a leader who is concerned about

the welfare of the people,” Ayube said.

The MoM initiative has positively impacted numerous families in Region Three, providing much-needed support and improving their living conditions.



Road upgrade in North East La Penitence, Georgetown

\$75.2M INVESTMENT BOOSTS NORTH EAST LA PENITENCE INFRASTRUCTURE

An investment of \$75.2 million has been made to upgrade roads in North East La Penitence, Georgetown. This initiative aims to improve accessibility for residents and commuters in the area.

The Ministry of Public Works’ Special Project Unit (SPU) oversaw the project,

which involved upgrading approximately 3,825 meters of roads. The work included scarification, the application of crushed aggregates, and asphalt surfacing.

Several key roads, including Toucan Street, Lord Street, Savage Street, and Ackee Tree Street,

underwent substantial improvements. Additionally, roads like Papaya Tree Street, Palm Tree Street, Harpy Drive, Green House Street, Powis Street, Kiskadee Drive, Freeman Street, and Walkers Terrace were upgraded to enhance connectivity within the community.

The project,

which commenced on October 1 and concluded on October 14, 2024, demonstrates the government’s commitment to addressing infrastructure needs in communities across Guyana.

PARIKA MARKET NEARS COMPLETION

The construction of the new Parika Market is nearing completion, with approximately 85% of the work already finished. The two-story steel structure will accommodate around 110 stalls and will be equipped with essential firefighting systems to prevent future incidents.

Regional Chairman Inshan Ayube expressed satisfaction with the progress of the project. “It is a steel structure and consists of two stories. All the stalls have already been erected. The upstairs will be completed soon as well,” he said. Once completed, the

market will prioritize vendors who were affected by the fire that destroyed the old market in February 2023. The regional chairman also revealed plans to establish a food court on the upper floor of the market, following the guidance of the Minister of Local Government and

Regional Development. To address traffic congestion, the roadside vending area will be relocated to within the market compound. The new market is designed to provide a modern and safe shopping environment for both vendors and customers.



The Parika Market on the East Bank of Essequibo, Region Three

GOVT MOVES TO STRENGTHEN INTEGRITY COMMISSION ACT, TIGHTEN ANTI-CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK IN COLLABORATION WITH PRIVATE SECTOR



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira

The government is set to intensify efforts to promote accountability and combat corruption through a comprehensive review of the Integrity Commission Act, which has been in place since 1997. This move, according to Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, will clamp down on public officials who fail to declare their assets honestly, reinforcing the government's commitment to transparency.

Speaking at an anti-corruption workshop held with representatives from 26 private sector organisations, Minister Teixeira emphasized the importance of strengthening the Integrity Commission Act to deter corruption and reinforce public trust. **"When we look at the Integrity Commission Act... people have felt they could disobey [it], and that's changing,"** she stated, addressing an audience at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre.

The proposed amendments to the Act include formal guidelines for electronic asset declarations and enhanced cybersecurity measures to protect submitted data. Among the key changes, she noted, is a shift in the reporting period to align with the fiscal

calendar year, which will simplify the process for declarants. **"A simple amendment we are making... is to put it on a fiscal calendar year,"** said Minister Teixeira, explaining that it will streamline reporting by synchronizing it with income tax submissions.

The government is also exploring stricter penalties for non-compliance. **"The screws, as they say, are tightening on people who hold public office and refuse to declare and honestly declare their assets,"** Minister Teixeira asserted, adding that a public shaming mechanism, such as publishing names of defaulters, may also be introduced to encourage compliance.

The minister confirmed that these amendments are expected to be presented in Parliament by year's end. The anti-corruption workshop highlighted the collaborative approach between the government and private sector in advancing Guyana's anti-corruption agenda. The workshop familiarised private sector representatives with

Convention Against Corruption, and the Lima Commitment for Democratic Governance Against Corruption.

Minister Teixeira underscored that corruption deprives the public of essential resources. **"Every dollar that is passed under the table to win**



Attendees at the anti-corruption workshop

Guyana's obligations under international anti-corruption conventions, including the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, the United Nations

a contract or to make someone wealthy denies an ordinary person maybe access to a good road, or to a school, or to a health centre, or to more

pharmaceutical drugs," she remarked, linking anti-corruption measures to the protection of human rights.

Noting that the fight against corruption is a national priority, Minister Teixeira added that the government has fortified its procurement system and warned public servants involved in corrupt practices. **"We want a fair procurement system. We want people to obey the laws regarding that,"** she said, stressing that officials found guilty of corruption will face termination and legal consequences, regardless of personal affiliations. **"We have to show that we mean business... despite who may be our friends and family."**

DR. JAGDEO CRITICISES HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND MEDIA FOR ALLEGED DOUBLE STANDARDS

Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), has publicly criticised certain human rights activists, accusing them of holding double standards in their responses to recent housing and development issues. Speaking at a press conference, Dr. Jagdeo voiced frustration over what he perceives as selective advocacy, particularly in relation to the relocation of squatters by different administrations.

Dr. Jagdeo pointed to the recent displacement of squatters by the APNU+AFC-controlled Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) in Mocha/Arcadia, noting the

absence of public outrage from activists. **"The same APNU [NDC leaders] went in and broke down homes of squatters who were there long before on these lands, which the NDC does not even own... not a word from the human rights activists, not a word about discrimination,"** he remarked, contrasting it with the criticism faced by the PPP government over a similar issue.

According to Dr. Jagdeo, the PPP government provided alternative housing and compensation to squatters affected by a highway project, yet still faced allegations of discrimination from



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

activists. **"It became a global issue,"** he said. **"They raised this as discrimination by the PPP government,"** calling the reaction **"excessive and biased."**

Dr. Jagdeo also highlighted an alleged incident of discrimination targeting a Black-owned construction company in Region Ten

due to its perceived affiliation with the PPP. **"They targeted this company because they are Black and perceived to be close to the PPP... these are the same people who say we don't give young, Black companies an opportunity,"** he said, pointing out the apparent inconsistency in activists' positions. He described the perceived double standards as **"shocking and nauseating,"** challenging activists to maintain consistent principles in their advocacy.

Turning his attention to media bias, Dr. Jagdeo criticised Kaieteur News and its publisher, Glenn Lall, whom he accused of undermining

the newspaper's objectivity by entering the political arena. **"He [Glenn Lall] has not distanced himself from the paper,"** Dr. Jagdeo asserted. **"He regularly features in the newspaper himself, the editorials are cleared by him, et cetera. So, the Kaieteur News is a political newspaper. It's not designed any longer to share information."**

Dr. Jagdeo also questioned the silence of the Guyana Press Association (GPA) on these issues, particularly concerning what he described as biases and distorted reporting. He argued that while state-owned media often face accusations of bias, the

GPA has failed to address alleged imbalances at privately owned outlets. **"Shouldn't there be some self-regulation to maintain some standards, if they are interested in standards?"** he asked, adding, **"Should they not call this out for distortion?"**

In closing, Dr. Jagdeo underscored that the PPP government respects press freedom but called for a more balanced approach from both activists and media organisations, urging them to uphold consistent standards in their advocacy and reporting.

NEW BILL TO COMBAT HARASSMENT

Guyana is taking proactive steps to address the issue of harassment, particularly gender-based violence. Public consultations are currently underway for the new Protection from Harassment Bill 2024, which aims to provide comprehensive protection for individuals

in both public and private settings.

The proposed bill defines harassment as any conduct that causes harm, fear, or disturbance, including stalking, unwanted communication, and surveillance. It also addresses sexual harassment in

workplaces, schools, and other institutions.

To ensure effective enforcement, the bill outlines penalties for harassment, including fines and imprisonment. It also establishes an independent tribunal to handle harassment and sexual harassment complaints, comprising

legal professionals, mediators, and gender experts.

The public consultation process is crucial in shaping the final legislation. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security encourages citizens to participate and provide feedback

on the draft bill. Legal representatives are available to clarify any questions and address concerns.

By implementing this comprehensive legislation, Guyana aims to create a safer and more equitable society for all.



Stop Harassment

GUYANA'S TEACHERS TO SEE 57% SALARY INCREASE BY 2026

The People's Progressive Party (PPP) government has set a target to raise teachers' salaries by 57% by 2026, building on a series of proactive annual increases. This initiative will significantly raise earnings for public school teachers in Guyana, who have already seen cumulative salary gains since 2021. For instance, an untrained graduate teacher earning \$157,443 in 2020 can expect a salary exceeding \$248,000 by 2026, a boost of over \$90,000.



Minister Priya Manickchand with recent graduands of the Cyrill Potters College of Education

Teachers' Union (GTU), outlines annual increases of 10% in 2024, 8% in 2025, and 9% in 2026. Combined with previous raises—7% in both 2021 and 2022, and 6.5% in 2023—teachers are set to achieve a minimum cumulative increase of 57% by 2026. However, due to adjustments to allowances and changes within salary scales, some educators are likely to see increases that exceed this figure.

Below is a snapshot of the projected salary progression for key teaching positions by 2026:

Untrained Graduate Teacher: \$157,443 (2020) →

\$248,574 (2026)

Trained Graduate Teacher: \$175,995 (2020) → \$277,882 (2026)

Graduate Head of Department: \$210,340 (2020) → \$332,110 (2026)

Graduate Headmaster of a Grade B School: \$261,843 (2020) → \$413,429 (2026)

Graduate Head of a Sixth Form School: \$294,913 (2020) → \$465,644 (2026)

President Irfaan Ali has highlighted a flexible clause within the GTU agreement that allows for even higher increases if future public service salary revisions exceed

the planned rates. This provision indicates the possibility of parallel increases for all public servants, who may benefit from an overall compound increase of 55-60% during the 2021-2026 period.

With Guyana's growing economy, the government is committed to elevating salaries for teachers, nurses, and other public servants to approach levels seen in developed nations, using the country's expanding wealth to enhance the standard of living for all Guyanese.

365 WOMEN AWARDED ROAD CONTRACTS

The government is making significant strides in empowering women through its nationwide road development project. Over 365 women have been awarded contracts to date, particularly in Regions 4, 5, and 6.

Shevon Parks, a female contractor, expressed her enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "It is an excellent initiative that the government is doing, targeting small contractors, especially women. Often, small contractors



Female contractors at the recent contract signing held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

are deemed inexperienced. Now that we are gaining experience, it will elevate us."

Leanna Yearwood, another female

contractor, shared similar sentiments: "It is giving women the opportunity to flourish in a male-dominated field. This initiative will help

me build my business and provide for my children."

Alison Mohamed, another beneficiary of the program, highlighted the transformative impact of this initiative: "You know there was a time when women were not open to this field of construction, and now we are given an opportunity to grow more. So, I am excited to be a part of this venture."

The government's commitment to quality and transparency is evident in the implementation of

stringent quality control measures. Contractors are required to adhere to specific standards, including conducting strength tests on concrete. Additionally,

community involvement is encouraged to ensure transparency and accountability.



Female contractors at the recent contract signing held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

HOME AFFAIRS AGENCIES TO UNDERGO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The Ministry of Home Affairs is set to embark on a major digital transformation initiative to modernise its operations and enhance public services.

General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, announced that agencies such as the Guyana Prison Service, Guyana Fire Service, and General Register Office will be fully cross-automated by August 2025. This move will streamline processes, improve efficiency, and strengthen security.

"We're developing that and hopefully by

August next year, a lot of those modules will start coming on stream," Dr. Jagdeo stated.

The digital transformation will involve the creation of a centralized database that will store information from various agencies, including firearm licenses, TIN permits, and criminal records. This database will facilitate cross-referencing and enable law enforcement agencies to conduct more effective investigations.

In addition to the digital transformation, the government is also



Home Affairs agencies to be fully automated by August 2025

investing in technology to enhance the Guyana Police Force's crime-fighting capabilities. The Safe Country

Programme, which involves the installation of CCTV cameras across the country, is a key component of this

initiative.

"Right now, there are a number of people in these regions who are

sitting in front of cameras watching what's going on right now behind the scene. But they are watching what's going on around the country, over 600 cameras to see if there are transgressions, etc," Dr. Jagdeo disclosed.

By modernising its systems and leveraging technology, the Ministry of Home Affairs aims to improve public safety, enhance law enforcement, and provide efficient services to citizens.

OKO WEST PROJECT TO CREATE JOBS AND WEALTH

A significant milestone in Guyana's mining sector is on the horizon with the upcoming Oko West gold project. This US\$1.5 billion venture, slated to commence operations in 2027, is poised to breathe new life into the industry.

Located 95 kilometers southwest of Georgetown, the 44-square-kilometer mine is fully owned by G Mining Ventures Corp. Home Affairs Minister Robeson Benn highlighted the project's potential to



Minister of Home Affairs, Robeson Benn

create numerous job opportunities and stimulate economic growth, at an education forum held at the Pegasus

Corporate Suites.

"This new development at Oko West will broaden the opportunities for people," Minister Benn said. **"We have kept our promise in relation to re-energising and developing the natural resource sector in relation to mining."**

Minister Benn emphasised the need for additional mining projects to sustain the nation's development trajectory. **"This time will not come again**

easily," he cautioned.

The Oko West project is expected to generate over 350,000 ounces of gold annually and create



Country Manager of G Mining Ventures, Bjorn Juene

approximately 1,700 jobs during its construction phase.

Bjorn Juene, Country Manager of G Mining Ventures, expressed optimism about the project's impact. **"The Oko West project will offer employment to many of these trainees thereby enhancing the local workforce,"** he said.

As part of its corporate social responsibility initiatives, G Mining Ventures has partnered with the Board of Industrial Training (BIT) to provide training to local workers. Additionally, the company has established a scholarship program with the University of Guyana to support geology students.

Juene concluded by stating, **"I truly believe that this project will transform not only the local economy but the country, bringing sustainable development, meaningful employment, and long-lasting benefits to Guyana."**

PPP EXPOSES APNU+AFC'S HYPOCRISY ON OIL AND GAS

General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Bharrat Jagdeo, has accused the APNU+AFC Coalition of attempting to rewrite history regarding Guyana's oil and gas sector. Speaking at a press conference, Dr Jagdeo criticised the opposition for their distorted narrative and shifting blame for the controversial ExxonMobil oil contract, which was signed under their tenure.

Dr Jagdeo specifically targeted former Natural Resources Minister Raphael Trotman, AFC Leader Nigel Hughes, and former Public Security Minister Khemraj Ramjattan,

highlighting their involvement in the deal and subsequent attempts to distance themselves from accountability. He emphasised that despite the opposition's criticisms of the PPP's management of the sector, they themselves failed to implement basic measures like a Local Content law during their time in office.

"If someone were to come to Guyana today and listen to the nonsense, particularly from the Kaieteur News, you would somehow think that the PPP was responsible for that agreement," Dr Jagdeo said. He further noted that the



The PPP government is committed to maximising benefits for the Guyanese people

APNU+AFC Coalition's hypocritical stance on accountability is evident in their failure to file integrity reports while in power.

The PPP General Secretary highlighted the significant strides made by the current government in the oil and gas sector, including

the establishment of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) with a transparent and independent board. The NRF ensures the prudent and

accountable utilisation of oil revenues, a stark contrast to the previous administration.

Dr Jagdeo emphasised the importance of preserving historical accuracy and ensuring that future generations are aware of the past actions of political leaders. He stressed that the PPP government is committed to transparency, accountability, and maximising benefits for the Guyanese people. As Guyana's oil industry continues to grow, the battle over the narrative surrounding its management is likely to intensify.

AG CHALLENGES PNCR'S ELECTION FRAUD CLAIMS, POINTS TO VERIFIED VOTING PROCESS

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, has refuted renewed claims of voting fraud related to the March 2, 2020, General and Regional Elections. These allegations, consistently raised over the past four years by the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR), question the election's integrity, with PNCR's Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) representative, Commissioner Vincent Alexander, alleging that votes were cast for



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

On his weekly television programme, 'Issues in the News,' Minister Nandlall

challenged the credibility of these claims, questioning how such irregularities could have occurred given the checks in place. **"How could a ballot be cast in the name of someone not there? For that to happen, someone would have had to impersonate the voter, which is impossible with the systems in place,"** he noted, referring to the requirement for a valid national ID or passport for voting. These documents are verified by GECOM officials on-

site, adding a layer of security to prevent such impersonation.

Minister Nandlall highlighted that, international and local observers, including the Commonwealth, Organization of American States (OAS), United Nations, the Carter Center, and Private Sector Commission (PSC), were invited by GECOM to monitor the process, ensuring it was transparent and democratic. He expressed frustration with Alexander's repeated allegations,

which he said are unsupported by evidence. Additionally, he pointed out that the same voter list was used

in previous elections, including 2015, when the APNU+AFC Coalition, backed by PNCR, won.



The list under scrutiny is the same list that was used in the last two elections

CARIBBEAN LEADERS URGED TO UNITE ON CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Prime Minister Mark Phillips has called for a united Caribbean front to address climate change and enhance disaster resilience. Speaking at the 14th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, he emphasised the importance of disaster preparedness and the need for a comprehensive approach to managing risks.

PM Phillips highlighted Guyana's experience with severe weather events, including the 2021 floods and the 2023-2024 wildfires, as evidence of the urgent need for action. He noted that

while disasters cannot be prevented, their impact can be mitigated through deliberate steps and preparedness measures. To strengthen Guyana's disaster management capabilities, PM Phillips mentioned the Disaster Risk Management Bill, currently under review, which aims to establish a legal framework for

managing natural and human-induced hazards. He also highlighted the ongoing enhancements to the country's Early Warning Systems (EWS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as well as the adoption of the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction's (UNDRR) Early Warning for All (EW4All) initiative.



Prime Minister Phillips representing Guyana at the meeting



Prime Minister Phillips, responsible for disaster management in Guyana, is accompanied by Colonel (Ret'd) Nazrul Hussain, the Director-General of the Civil Defence Commission

Community-based strategies, PM Phillips emphasised, are crucial to building resilience. Guyana is focused on empowering communities through initiatives like Community-Based Disaster Management and the Community Risk Assessment Tool (CCRIT). Beyond disaster management, the Prime Minister underscored the importance of environmental protection and sustainable development. He highlighted Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 and the steps taken to safeguard the environment, including the establishment of the Petroleum Commission of Guyana and the implementation of

a National Oil Spill Contingency Plan. PM Phillips urged Caribbean leaders to prioritise resilience across all sectors and integrate disaster preparedness into development strategies. He emphasised the need to engage communities, especially young people, in building a culture of preparedness and resilience. Looking ahead, PM Phillips expressed optimism about regional cooperation and resilience-building efforts. He called for continued collaboration to create a Caribbean region that is resilient in the face of adversity.

MINISTER TEIXEIRA HONoured WITH PRESTIGIOUS COMMONWEALTH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Guyana's Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, has been recognised with the prestigious Commonwealth Parliamentarian Lifetime Achievement Award. This honour was bestowed upon her at the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) held in Sydney, Australia.

The award recognises Minister Teixeira's exceptional contributions to

parliamentary democracy and governance over a career spanning more than three decades. Her commitment to public service, leadership, and advocacy has been instrumental in shaping Guyana's political landscape. Teixeira's political journey began in 1992, where she served as the Minister of Health. She has held various ministerial positions, including Minister of Culture, Youth and



Prime Minister Phillips representing Guyana at the meeting

Sports, Minister of Home Affairs, and her current role as Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance. Her

dedication to public service is evident in her unwavering commitment to the people of Guyana. As a seasoned parliamentarian, Minister Teixeira has played a pivotal role in shaping Guyana's legislative framework. She has served as both Government and Opposition Chief Whip, demonstrating her ability to bridge political divides and foster cooperation. Her contributions to parliamentary committees, including

the Parliamentary Constitutional Reform Human Rights Task Force and the Public Accounts Committee, have been invaluable. Minister Teixeira's leadership extends beyond her parliamentary duties. She has been a strong advocate for good governance, human rights, and social justice. Her efforts in promoting democratic principles and strengthening institutions have earned her respect

both domestically and internationally. The Commonwealth Parliamentarian Lifetime Achievement Award is a testament to Minister Teixeira's extraordinary career and her enduring legacy. Her dedication to public service, her commitment to democratic values, and her tireless work for the betterment of Guyana have set a high standard for future generations of parliamentarians.

SILICA CITY HOUSING PROJECT REACHES 50% COMPLETION

Construction of the initial 110 homes at Silica City, a modern housing development along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway, is currently 50% complete. This ambitious project, spearheaded by President Dr. Irfaan Ali, aims to provide young professionals with affordable, high-quality housing.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, recently visited the site and expressed satisfaction with the progress. All essential



First 110 houses at Silica City 50 per cent complete

infrastructure, including roads, drainage, and utility services, has been finalised. "We are on track to complete these homes within the next few months," Minister Rodrigues

stated. "The next step is to ensure reliable water supply, so residents can move in immediately upon completion." The housing units are a mix of 75 flat homes and 35 elevated

homes, offering a range of options to suit different preferences. The flat homes are priced between \$25.2 million and \$25.3 million, while the elevated homes are priced between \$33.9 million and \$34.5 million. Minister Rodrigues highlighted the modern design of the homes, emphasizing the focus on aesthetics and quality. "The recipients of these Silica City homes will be delighted with the design and the high standard of

construction," she added. Silica City is envisioned as a cutting-edge development, incorporating smart home technologies for energy efficiency, water

conservation, and waste management. The city will also feature recreational parks, community centers, a state-of-the-art healthcare facility, and a robust electricity grid.



Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues and a technical team from CHPA during a site visit to Silica City

GUYANA TO BUILD STATE-OF-THE-ART SHOOTING FACILITY



President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has announced plans to construct a new, state-of-the-art shooting facility in Timehri to support the development of fullbore shooting in the region. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the West Indies Fullbore

Shooting Championship 2024, the President highlighted the need for a modern facility to accommodate the growing demands of the sport. **"We want to build a facility that will be a home for the region,"** he said. The new facility will feature advanced training equipment, comfortable accommodations, and eco-friendly amenities. It will also serve as a venue for regional and international competitions, attracting shooters from around the world. **"This facility will not only benefit**



The participating countries include Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the USA.

Guyana but also the entire Caribbean region," the President added. **"It will allow us to nurture young talent and elevate the sport to new heights."** The President

commended the Guyana National Rifle Association (GNRA) for their dedication to the sport and their efforts in hosting the West Indies Fullbore Shooting Championship. He also acknowledged

the support of the Guyana Defence Force in promoting and developing fullbore shooting. The event is a testament to the growing popularity of the sport in the Caribbean. The event is a testament to the growing popularity of the sport in the Caribbean.



President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali fires off the first shot, indicating the start of the competition

shooting. The West Indies Fullbore Shooting Championship, which is being held in Guyana after a seven-year hiatus, brings together top shooters from across the Caribbean. The event is a testament to the growing popularity of the sport in the region.

GOVT FUNDS SDA YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

The government has pledged its support for the development of young athletes by allocating \$1 million to the Guyana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for their annual Ashton Alleyne Memorial Athletic Championships in 2025. Culture, Youth, and Sport Minister Charles Ramson Jr. made the announcement during the 2024 championship, held at the National Track and Field Centre. He commended the SDA youth for their dedication and faith, emphasising



Scene from the Ashton Alleyne Memorial Athletic Championships at the National Track and Field Centre

the importance of these qualities in all aspects of life. Minister

Ramson highlighted the government's commitment to youth empowerment, citing

initiatives like the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) scholarships and the upcoming tuition-free policy at the University of Guyana. These programmes aim to provide young people with opportunities to reach their full potential. He urged the young athletes to seize these opportunities and strive for excellence. The minister emphasised that true power lies not only in physical abilities but also in intellectual and spiritual growth.



Scene from the Ashton Alleyne Memorial Athletic Championships

TOP CARIBBEAN CYCLISTS BATTLE IT OUT IN GUYANA

Guyana made history by hosting the prestigious Caribbean Elite and Under-23 Cycling Championship for the first time. The event, organised in collaboration with the Caribbean Cycling

Union (CCU) and the Pan American Cycling Confederation, brought together top cyclists from 20 Caribbean nations. Minister of Culture, Youth, and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr., expressed his pride



Cyclists participating in the Caribbean Elite and Under-23 Cycling Championship in Guyana

in Guyana's ability to host such a major cycling event. **"While this is our first time hosting this event, it won't be our last,"** he said. **"We encourage all participants to make the most of this opportunity and**

strive for greatness." The two-day championship featured a variety of events, including road races and time trials. Guyanese cyclist Briton John made the nation proud by securing a bronze medal in the grueling Men's

Elite Road Race. This achievement marks a significant milestone for Guyana, as John became the fourth Guyanese cyclist to medal at the Senior Caribbean Championship since 2001. Horace Burrowes, President of the Guyana Cycling Federation, expressed his gratitude for the government's support and highlighted the potential for future growth of the sport in Guyana. **"This country is capable of promoting sports, and this event would not be possible without the unity of our executive members,"** he stated.

The successful hosting of this championship showcases Guyana's commitment to developing cycling and its potential to become a cycling powerhouse in the Caribbean region.



Cyclist participating in the Caribbean Elite and Under-23 Cycling Championship in Guyana



A beaming Briton John proudly displays the bronze medal on the Heroes Highway (News Room Photo)

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CULTURAL ICON DAVE MARTINS HONoured IN NATIONAL TRIBUTE

A national tribute was held to honour the legendary Guyanese musician, Dave Martins. The event, titled “Dave Martins is We Own – A Musical and Visual Journey,” celebrated his significant contributions who rendered Martins’ classic hits. A video tribute showcasing his life and career journey was also presented.



The national tribute saw local artistes and award-winning Tradewinds Caribbean string band entertaining attendees

Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce Oneidge Walrond, speaking on behalf of to Caribbean culture. The Arthur Chung Conference Centre was filled with family, friends, and admirers who gathered to pay homage to the man whose music has touched countless lives. The evening featured performances by local artists and the iconic Tradewinds band, President Dr. Irfaan Ali, highlighted Martins’ unique ability to capture the essence of Guyanese and West Indian identity through his music. She stated, “**Dave wasn’t just a songwriter; he was a storyteller who made us laugh, made us remember, and made us proud of**



Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond

who we are.” Minister Walrond emphasised that Martins’ music served as a rallying cry during challenging times, offering comfort and hope. “His songs brought laughter, appreciation to all who heard his music,” she said. The minister concluded by



The national tribute saw local artistes and award-winning Tradewinds Caribbean string band entertaining attendees

acknowledging the folk, and pop influences. His songs, such as “Not a Blade of Grass” and “Is We Own,” became



The national tribute saw local artistes and award-winning Tradewinds Caribbean string band entertaining attendees

and unite generations to come. Martins was a legendary Guyanese musician and songwriter whose music resonated throughout the Caribbean. He was best known as the frontman of the band Tradewinds, which he formed in 1969. Martins’ music often reflected the social and political issues of the time, blending calypso, anthems for Caribbean people, expressing their pride and resilience. Sadly, Martins passed away on August 18, 2024, at the age of 90. His legacy, however, lives on through his music, which continues to inspire and unite people across the Caribbean.

NEW PLAYPARK BRINGS JOY TO NATIONAL PARK

A new \$95 million children’s playpark was officially opened at the National Park. This state-of-the-art facility, developed by the Office of the First Lady, is equipped with a range of amenities including swings, slides, game boards, sanitary facilities, free Wi-Fi, concession shops, and Guyana’s first public splash park. First Lady Arya Ali emphasised the importance of parks as spaces for community gathering and well-being. “Parks provide a sense of identity and belonging for our people,” she said. “They are a filter point in communities where people of different ethnic groups, religious backgrounds, and even social classes converge.” Minister of Public Works, Juan Edghill, highlighted the project’s goal of transforming the National Park into a vibrant, family-friendly space. “The enhancements that



First Lady Arya Ali and Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill unveiling the sign for the newly commissioned playpark



The newly commissioned park

we are introducing today represent a fresh and modern design tailored to the needs of our community,” he stated. The project also generated employment opportunities for local contractors, contributing to the local economy. Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud noted that this is just one of many planned developments to create safe and enjoyable public spaces across the country. “This is one reminder of how serious our government is about preserving safe spaces for children and their families,” he said. The National Beautification Project has already transformed five playparks and public spaces nationwide, fostering social cohesion and community spirit.



The newly commissioned park



The newly commissioned park



Guyanese
DIASPORA DIGEST

 KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 80

**GUYANA ZOO TO BECOME
WORLD-CLASS ATTRACTION**

The Guyana Zoological Park is embarking on a significant transformation, promising a world-class experience for visitors and a more comfortable and enriching environment for its wildlife inhabitants. This ambitious project will see the modernisation of enclosures, creating spacious, natural habitats that mimic the animals' natural environments. A state-of-the-art veterinary care centre will be established, providing advanced medical treatment and research facilities. The visitor experience will be enhanced with interactive exhibits, educational programmes, and improved facilities. Additionally, the park will serve as a conservation hub, fostering wildlife research and conservation initiatives. This transformation aims to position the Guyana Zoological Park as a premier tourist destination and a vital resource for wildlife conservation in the region.



Transforming our agri-food systems is imperative – Min. Mustapha

On Monday, while addressing officials during the annual meeting of the United Nations Food and Agriculture (FAO) Representatives in Latin America and the Caribbean, Agriculture Minister Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha said that transforming the agri-food system has become imperative and that regional collaboration is key to achieving a Zero Hunger status.

“Transforming our agri-food systems has become imperative, with the global population exceeding 8 billion and demand for food rising. It calls for aggressive actions toward achieving Zero Hunger and all SDGs as we address challenges such as increasing inequalities, economic volatility and climate change. The issues we face have significant regional implications, and our solutions must be regional as well. Regional collaboration is key to overcoming the challenges of hunger and malnutrition. The stark reality is that though progress is being made in Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2023 some 41 million people faced hunger,” he said.

Minister Mustapha also said climate change remains an existential threat to food security in the region, specifically among small island states.

“Climate change remains an existential threat to food security, as demonstrated by the impact of Hurricane Beryl on CARICOM countries such as Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Jamaica, where significant damage occurred in the fisheries and agriculture sectors. All



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha

Small Island Developing States and countries with low-lying coasts where much of its agriculture is concentrated like Guyana, remain vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Soon to come on stream, CARICOM countries, including Guyana will benefit from the engagement of Lynch Insurance Brokers, towards the provision of a parametric insurance product as we work towards the derisking of the agriculture

sector,” the minister explained.

Furthermore, Minister Mustapha said that in an effort to ensure Guyana’s agriculture sector remains resilient, the government through the Ministry of Agriculture has been implementing climate-smart agricultural practices. He also said that modernization, expansion, and innovation remain at the core of Guyana’s agriculture strategy.

“In Guyana we are also imple-

menting climate-smart agricultural practices, including drought-resistant crops, efficient water management systems, and renewable energy solutions in agriculture. Our aim is to build resilience in our agricultural systems while reducing the carbon footprint of food production. Importantly, at the core of our agricultural strategy are modernization, expansion, and innovation. Our agriculture sector is transforming with a clear vision: to increase production, improve efficiency, and adopt cutting-edge technologies. Through this transformation, we aim to reduce our reliance on imports, create sustainable livelihoods for our farmers, and establish Guyana as a key player in regional and international food systems,” he said.

Minister Mustapha also said countries’ budgetary allocations must reflect our political will as a region. We must take the necessary policy actions and interventions. He also said financing and insurance are critical components of the food production system.

“Financing and insurance are critical components of the food production system. We must find alternative financing arrangements. Guyana is committed to sharing its experiences and learning from its regional neighbors. The Latin America and Caribbean region face critical issues that require us to work together to: Advance our fisheries and aquaculture towards sustainability under the Blue Transformation approach,” he said.

Canadians open new medical store in Guyana

GEREE ‘Gigi’ Misir-Dwarkaprasad, an overseas-based Guyanese, along with her husband, Canadian Mahesh ‘Vishal’ Dwarkaprasad, has opened the doors to MGN Medical Equipment and Supplies in Mainstay, Region Two.

Geree said that it was always her dream to return to the community where she was raised, to do something impactful. She said the store which is named after herself, husband and their only child Nianna, will be offering affordable and accessible medical supplies to residents and medical professionals.

“Through our MGN care programme we provide vital assistance to low-income seniors, helping them access essential mobility devices and medical equipment needed for daily living,” she said.

who resides in Canada said it was her dream to return to her roots in Essequibo to make a meaningful difference in healthcare.

She explained that she left Region Two for Canada 24 years ago to pursue studies in healthcare.



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