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## Mia Mottley for top UN job?

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Historically, there has been a geographical rotation for the position, so it seems likely the next UN leader will be from the Latin America and the Caribbean region – and many advocates say it is time for a female candidate,

after 78 years of only male leaders.

In the hallways and backrooms of the United Nations headquarters in New York, Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley is one of several names being floated as likely contenders.

The charismatic and outspoken Mottley often generates the most excitement. Though she has not yet said she will run, one UN diplomat said “I would jump up and down” with excitement if she did.

Ralph Gonsalves, prime minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a neighboring island, said she would have his vote if she chose to campaign.

Full story on Page 4



## Modi congratulates ‘friend’ Trump

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday joined other leaders to congratulate his “friend” Donald Trump on winning the 2024 US Presidential election. Donald Trump will be the 47th President of the United States.

PM Narendra Modi said he is looking forward to renewing their collaboration to further strengthen the India-US partnership. The Indian prime minister also urged Donald Trump to promote “global peace, stability and prosperity” amid Middle East conflicts and Russia-Ukraine war.

Strong diplomatic ties, strategic

cooperation, and visible personal camaraderie have marked the relationship between Donald Trump and Narendra Modi. Their friendship was showcased in large events like “Howdy, Modi!” in Houston in 2019 and “Namaste Trump” in Ahmedabad in 2020, where they addressed huge crowds, highlighting their mutual admiration.

“Heartiest congratulations my friend @realDonaldTrump on your historic election victory. As you build on the successes of your previous term, I look forward to renewing our collaboration to further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership. Together, let’s work for the betterment of our people and to promote global peace, stability and prosperity,” PM Narendra Modi posted on X.

More on Trump win, see editorial on Page 6

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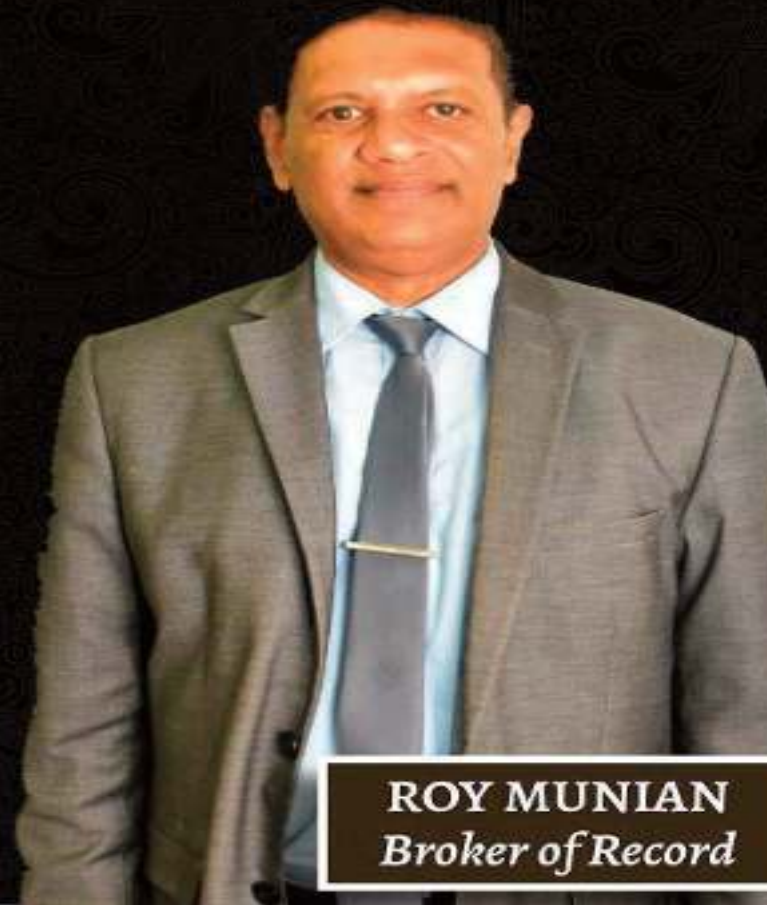


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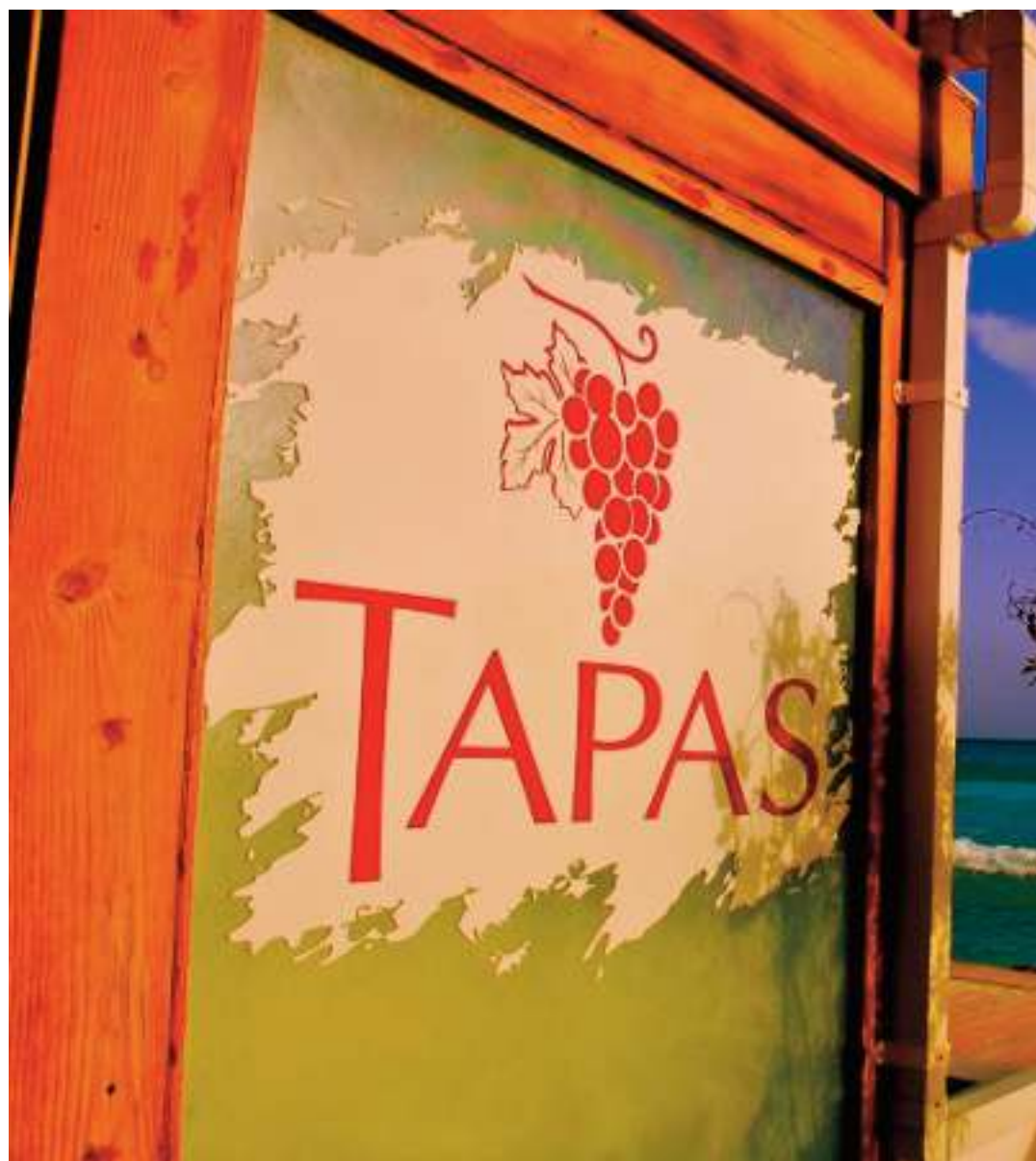


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# B'dos PM Mia Mottley tipped as next UN Secretary General

Asked last week if she will run to become the United Nations' next Secretary General, Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados gave a thumbs up, smiled, and walked away. Unofficially, however, UN insiders say she's a likely front-runner.

The 2026 selection process is still far off, but talk of who is best-positioned to win the powerful job has already begun.

Historically, there has been a geographical rotation for the position, so it seems likely the next UN leader will be from the Latin America and the Caribbean region – and many advocates say it is time for a female candidate, after 78 years of only male leaders.

In the hallways and backrooms of the United Nations headquarters in New York, Mottley is one of several names being floated as likely contenders. Two sources said former Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos – a Nobel peace Prize laureate – will launch a campaign soon, though a representative for Santos denies it.

Among others, Argentinian diplomat Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, is also a recurring name in discussions of who might succeed current UN Secretary-General António Guterres, as are Alicia Bárcena, Mexico's foreign affairs secretary; Rebeca Grynspan, a high-level UN official and former vice president of Costa Rica; and Maria Fernanda



Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley

Espinosa Garcés, a former president of the UN General Assembly and former minister of Ecuador.

But it is the charismatic and outspoken Mottley whose name often generates the most excitement. Though Mottley has not yet said she will run, one UN diplomat said "I would jump up and down" with excitement if she did.

Ralph Gonsalves, prime minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a neighboring island, said she would have

his vote if she chose to campaign.

"I think she would make a great Secretary-General," he said, "Whatever she does, I will support her."

Mottley became prime minister of Barbados in 2018 and won a second term in a landslide election four years later.

Internationally, she has been noticed for cutting her country's post-colonial ties to the British monarchy, and for her powerful rhetoric on slavery reparations, climate change, and the need to reform global financial institutions through the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral banks.

Mottley does not mince her words when it comes to big powers, either. In her address to the General Assembly last week, she asked: "How is it possible for Chevron and the European Union to access the oil and gas of Venezuela, but the people of the Caribbean cannot access it at the 35 percent discount offered by the people of Venezuela?"

In 2022, Mottley spearheaded the Bridgetown Initiative, a political plan to reform the global financial architecture and development finance to be more equitable, particularly in the face of climate crisis. The initiative would change the way money is loaned to developing countries and set up a special emergency fund for climate disasters.

In April, Mottley also joined forces with current UN chief Guterres and announced a revamping of her venture, called Bridgetown 2.0, putting forward six development priorities for development finance that will be discussed on the world stage at the annual meeting of the IMF-World Bank group in October, COP28 in November and the Summit of the Future in 2024.

Many diplomats in New York City and outside said they believe in Mottley's potential to represent issues affecting the developing world as leader of the

UN – but also in her capacity to bring her unique style of leadership to the role.

"I don't think I recall another leader in recent history other than Obama that had the attention of the international community like she does," a UN diplomat said.

Still, some warn that that she is taking political risks. Considering the initiative significantly challenges the status quo for international finance, UN expert Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group says that Mottley has to carefully plan her next steps.

Other observers point out that trying to upend existing systems risks angering at least one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, who hold a final word on the Secretary-General selection process.

Mottley's office did not respond to multiple interview requests.

The UN's next Secretary General would take office in January 2027. Is four years too early to start talking about who the next leader of the organization will be? For some, it's a necessary discussion to have for an institution that is at its turning point, as it grapples with criticism and geopolitical paralysis in the powerful Security Council.

"I don't think it's early at all," Elina Valtonen, Finland's foreign minister, said, "It's very important to start discussing that because I think it's also very much a question of what the future should look like for the UN and the Security Council."

Valtonen and others also say that the time for the organization to have its first woman leader was yesterday. "This position should very much be merit-based," she said, "but I think it'd be very remarkable if again, it's not a woman who is chosen."

The selection process has long been secretive, but opened up a bit in 2016. To be considered, candidates need to first be nominated by a country, usually their own, and then recommended by the Security Council to the General Assembly.

During the last selection process in 2016, a group of countries pledged to only bring forward women candidates – an initiative is currently being revived for the next selection process. In 2016, thirteen candidates ran, seven of whom were women. But Guterres – a Portuguese diplomat long considered the frontrunner for the role – was ultimately elected. "There's always lots of men that want to run," said Ben Donaldson, head of campaigns at the United Nations Association of the United Kingdom.

This year, he said, "I'm hoping the message is coming through loud and clear from the majority of states and from civil society that no state should be putting forward male candidates. We are all working to increase the stigma around this, hopefully we can nip it in the bud."

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# President Ali: Gov't working to create better path for Guyanese

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali has said that the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government is working towards overcoming obstacles, and creating a better path for all Guyanese.

The Head of State made this remark on Wednesday evening while addressing a mammoth crowd gathered at the La Bonne Intention Community Centre Ground to witness the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha's annual Diwali motorcade and cultural show.

He noted that as the government continues its work of laying a better path, a renewed sense of optimism has been seen in citizens.

"Over the last four years, we have seen the renewal of hope in our country; we have seen the renewal of optimism in our country. We have seen the renewal of the Guyanese spirit of believing in Guyana; believing in who we are, and believing and feeling that we can have and will continue to have a more prosperous life here in Guyana," Dr. Ali said.

He indicated that he is pleased to lead a government filled with dynamic persons like General Secretary of the PPP Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, who works daily to ensure that obstacles are overcome, and a better life is created for Guyanese.

He added, "In creating that better path, we have to look at what constitutes good, what constitutes light, and the most important thing that we sometimes don't examine is our consciousness. Our consciousness of our environment, our consciousness about our society, our consciousness about those people in our society who will seek to divide us; the people in our society who will seek to take us down a non-productive path."

With this, he indicated that it is important that citizens open their consciousness and become aware of what the government is doing to ensure that



Suriname President, Chandrikapersad Santokhi

all citizens have a better life; to ensure there is better access to healthcare and education among other things.

These, he said are important elements of goodness, and that light spoken about in relation to the celebration of Diwali.

"The light is about creating a path that ensures that we are successful; ensures that our aspirations are met. And if you look today, and you examine what we are doing, it is in keeping with ensuring your aspirations, and the aspirations of every Guyanese are met," he expressed.

Further to this, he indicated that sometimes, people may not see the hands and the people who work every day in crafting policies and creating measures; putting in work behind the scenes to ensure that Guyanese can enjoy great benefits.

Meanwhile, earlier in the week, President Ali, at the Diwali Mahotsav, urged citizens to tune out the noise of those who seek to be divisive and look around society to see who are the individuals or groups that are pursuing

peace.


He added that some people make it their duty to go on social media with the sole objective of creating disorder and distractions.

"Their narrative is one that does not support the peaceful existence of society and of people, but you, as individuals, must understand that the pursuit of peace begins with an understanding and embracing of what

peace is. And, in our small society, you will see the distractors of peace who try every day to use division and divisive methods," he said.

To this end, Dr. Ali expressed that we must learn to live positive lives, as it is positivity that will help to remove the obstacles we face.

With this, he noted that goodness is about unifying people and not dividing them, and sharing joyfulness.

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# Trump and the world

The impact of a new Donald Trump presidency on the world is left to be seen, as the 47th President will not be sworn into office until January 2025.

But it is not without some trepidation that countries around the world are viewing Trump's second term, which he won decisively on Tuesday after an historically close election.

Trump won in spite of political pundits predicting that his opponent, Kamala Harris, had the edge, not just as the first black/Indian female to contest the post but also because Harris had been pushing a positive message of unity.

Trump, conversely, stuck to his red agenda, pushing back on challenges against abortion rights and his anti-migrant stand.

But where his win in this race concerns the globe is his promise to be more protectionist in terms of trade. Trump has said time and again that he will impose tariffs on imports, and given that Canada is the USA's largest trading partner, that could spell trouble for our economy as it will directly affect our exports.

Imposing tariffs could reduce trade significantly, leaving many industries on this side of the border struggling.

During his term, Trump will also be renegotiating the North American Free

Trade Agreement (NAFTA), known today as the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

The USMCA replaced NAFTA under negotiations during the last Trump presidency, though its goals of promoting trade in North America by eliminating most tariffs on trade between the three countries remained largely the same.

Trump's promise to impose tariffs could undermine the USMCA completely, and could hold the economies of Canada and Mexico to ransom.

The other area of concern is the new President's promise to deport all illegal immigrants in the USA, putting them in detention camps if necessary, in an effort to stem the tide of illegal migration.

The night of the election on Tuesday, the most searched item on Google was "how to move to Canada", no doubt initiated by those migrants who see their time in the USA coming to an end and looking at other options.

Readers may recall that there was a surge of migrants to Canada across our borders during the last Trump presidency.

Indeed, it has already started.

U.S. Customs and Border Protec-

tion says it recorded a record-high number of encounters with migrants between border posts on the Canada-U.S. border between October 2023 and July of this year.

It's a pattern experts say could be a problem for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government as the question of illegal immigration heats up in the close-fought U.S. election. It is possibly going to be a bigger problem between now and when Trump takes office in January.

Reports are the Canadian government is preparing for another influx at its largely open southern borders as migrants flee the USA.

For countries like Guyana, the potential impact of a Trump administration could affect economic relations, climate change, human rights, immigration, and security.

The Trump administration's "America First" approach could mean stricter trade terms for Guyana, particularly concerning its oil exports. Trump's administration has been known to take a more transactional approach, meaning Guyana's access to the U.S. market could come with conditions that benefit American energy companies and workers.

This could cause problems for the Ali administration, as will the impact of a Trump administration on climate change policies, which is key to Guyana's net-zero carbon emission plans which found favour with the Biden administration.

Trump's first term was marked by a rollback of environmental regulations, and his administration consistently downplayed the threat of climate change. Should he succeed in reversing Biden's clean energy agenda, Guyana could benefit in the short term from reduced international pressure on environmental standards. This might allow Guyana to accelerate oil exploration and extraction without the immediate constraints of global climate agreements. However, the long-term impact of such a reversal could leave Guyana vulnerable to future economic and environmental shocks as global markets shift toward clean energy.

At the end of the day, what will happen under a new Trump government is left to be seen. But we do know he's a bull in a China shop when coming to global relations.

All we can do at this stage is hope for the best.

## Trained teachers have a profound impact

Dear Editor

I BELIEVE the stage is being set for improved performance by our students as teachers are strategically trained for our classrooms. Among the numerous factors influencing educational outcomes, the role of a trained teacher is paramount.

Trained teachers have a profound impact on student performance, as they possess the skills, knowledge, and methodologies needed to facilitate effective learning. Trained teachers are the cornerstone of an effective education system.

According to Darling-Hammond (2000), trained teachers who possess strong pedagogical skills and subject-

matter expertise significantly improve student performance, as they can effectively address learning gaps and employ strategies that enhance understanding.

Research done by Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) revealed that students taught by well-trained and prepared teachers consistently achieve higher academic outcomes, demonstrating the critical role of teacher quality in educational success.

The crux of the matter is, teacher training programmes equip educators with essential pedagogical skills, subject-matter knowledge, and classroom-management techniques. Such programmes prepare teachers to understand diverse learning needs, adapt

teaching methods, and create engaging learning environments.

They effectively identify and address gaps in student understanding, employ evidence-based strategies, and create engaging, interactive lessons that boost motivation. Their ability to teach critical thinking and problem solving prepare students for real-world challenges, while their strong classroom management skills ensure a structured and supportive learning environment.

Additionally, trained teachers are equipped to support diverse learners, providing inclusive education that meets the needs of all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

I wish to extend congratulations to

the 2024 graduate teachers of the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) on reaching this significant milestone in their journey as educators!

Your dedication, hard work, and passion for teaching have brought you to this moment, and now you have the privilege and responsibility to shape the future of our children.

Remain true to your calling, always striving to inspire, uplift, and guide your students toward success. To the staff of CPCE and the leadership team of the Ministry of Education, I commend your efforts and commitment to this cause.

Yours truly,  
Dr Marcel Hutson



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# Protest at Hindu Temple in Brampton turns violent, cops warn public to stay alert

By Suruj Singh  
LJI REPORTER

Peel Police issued a public safety alert on Monday evening after reports of weapons being seen among demonstrators at a protest near a Hindu temple in Brampton, following violent clashes the day before.

Residents were urged to avoid the area around The Gore Road and Tyler Avenue, which is near the Hindu Sabha Mandir temple, where violence broke out between opposing protest groups on Sunday.

The police warned that weapons had been spotted in the crowd and confirmed that their Public Order Unit had been deployed to manage the situation.

"This is now an unlawful assembly, and we will be clearing the area," police stated, adding that officers had instructed demonstrators to disperse.

Reporters witnessed an incident in which a protester kicked a car trying to pass through the intersection of Gore Road and Don Minaker Drive, after the driver honked at the crowd.

Some protesters, carrying Indian flags, had blocked traffic after marching from the temple.

Toronto police also confirmed late Monday that they were assisting Peel Police with managing the demonstration.

The protest came just hours after police announced charges against three men following violent altercations between rival groups at demonstrations in Brampton and Mississauga on Sunday.

The initial clash took place outside the Hindu Sabha Mandir temple during a visit by Indian consular officials.

Later, tensions escalated outside the Malton Gurdwara when dozens of protesters, some draped in or waving Indian flags, marched toward the Sikh place of worship.

Videos from the scene outside the Hindu temple showed demonstrators carrying banners in support of Khalistan, a proposed independent Sikh homeland, as they clashed with Hindu worshippers.

Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown spoke about the demonstration, condemning participants who attempted to "incite violence and hatred."

He emphasized the need for de-escalation, noting that protests should not occur at places of worship.

"There is the right to protest, but it doesn't need to be in the vicinity of a place of worship. Everyone has the right to go to their place of worship to pray, free of harassment, intimidation, and violence," he said.



A young person taking part in a march kicks a car after its driver honked at demonstrators

Brown also revealed that Peel police had diverted the demonstrators, who were attempting to reach a nearby Sikh gurdwara. He expressed concern that protests near places of worship could escalate further, mentioning similar clashes outside a Hindu temple in Surrey, B.C.

"What I've been saying is, we need to make sure there's a clear line in the sand," he continued. "If we don't say that, this will continue to spiral."

Mayor Brown announced plans to bring forward a motion at city council to explore the possibility of banning protests outside places of worship. He pointed to Vaughan's similar bylaw, which has not been challenged on constitutional grounds, as a potential model.

"I believe it is needed to protect a foundational value in our country, which is religious freedom," he said.

The protests in Peel and B.C. come amid rising diplomatic tensions between Canada and India.

Ottawa has accused Indian officials of involvement in attacks on Canadian Sikhs, a claim India denies.

Last month, Canada expelled six Indian diplomats over allegations that they were involved in intelligence-gathering activities related to the pro-Khalistan movement in Canada, which allegedly led to criminal activity target-

ing individuals.

Meanwhile, India has repeatedly accused Canada of harboring pro-Khalistan separatists and has requested their

extradition, though Canadian officials argue that these requests lack sufficient evidence.



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# Vincent Alexander's claims of "incontrovertible evidence" are fallacious



Joel Bhagwandin

I write in reference to Mr. Vincent Alexander's letter in the Kaieteur News edition of November 3, 2024, with the caption "Nandlall's insistence that GECOM's systems are perfect is baseless". According to him, "the Chief Immigration Officer verified that the names extracted from the list of names of persons who cast votes, which was sent for verification, consisted, to the extent of approximately 75% of names of persons who were out of the country on elections day' day".

Mr. Alexander goes on to state that "...The Chairperson of the Elections Commission on May 20, 2020 wrote to the Commissioner of Police requesting the verification of the presence or absence of named persons in the country on elections day. On May 27, 2020 the Commissioner responded verifying that of the 307 names submitted for verification 172 were out of the country and 35 were in the country. This is but one sample. The truth be told: the Chairperson of GECOM had not brought to the attention of the CARICOM Observer Mission the existence of the aforementioned information, although they were in the country at the time of its receipt".

If I am not mistaken, I believe Mr. Alexander is a trained attorney, therefore, he ought to know that he cannot present unsubstantiated claims as "incontrovertible evidence". It is not! Yet, he has evidently prostituted the term "evidence", vis-à-vis, his loose usage of the word. For him to make such claims and, if at all he is to be believed, it means that he would have been privy/aware of the existence of same, he has seen and verified the evidence, thus; he should be in possession of the evidence to present to the general public. But one wonders why after more than four years have elapsed, that he has failed to make those "evidence" that he claims exist, to the public.

If one were to treat Mr. Alexander's ludicrousness with an iota of seriousness, then anyone could say

anything for that matter, publicly and call that evidence. Unfortunately, no sensible person would accept that.

On the contrary, when the PPP/C claimed that they won the 2020 national election, they presented the evidence to the world at large by making their copies of the Statements of Polls (SOPs) public. Moreover, the national recount confirmed that the PPP/C had indeed won the 2020 election, which means the Statements of Recount (SOR) corresponded to the SOPs. This is evidence!

With respect to Mr. Alexander's claims of dead votes and migrants voting who were not in the country, this is what the report of the CARICOM Observer Team had to say: "The team viewed much of the exercise as a fishing expedition designed to gather data for a possible election petition and which resulted in considerable time being wasted during the recount. Furthermore, the net was cast extremely wide in the hope of at least making a small catch and at times the anticipated harvest ended in slim pickings. In only one observed recount of a ballot box was the number of queried serials confirmed as having voted in fact significant relative to the queried number. The Team did not view the objections raised by the APNU/AFC as materially relevant to the recount of the ballot... Moreover, we simply have no evidence as to who were the ultimate beneficiaries of the alleged "ghost voting" and voter impersonation" (Pg. 8). This is evidence!

The CARICOM Observer Mission concluded that "the national recount process then, despite some of its administrative failings, despite some of the minor flaws, is not an indictment of the 2020 polls and the team categorically rejects the concerted public efforts to discredit the 2020 poll up to the disastrous Region 4 tabulation...nothing that we witnessed, warrants a challenge to the inescapable conclusion that the recount results are acceptable and

should constitute the basis of the declaration of the results of the March 02, 2020, elections" (CARICOM Observer Mission Report, 2020; Pg 10). This is evidence!

Further, on the 13th of September 2022, an International Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the General and Regional Elections of Guyana on March 02, 2020, was sworn in by the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. The COI completed its work in 2023, and a report was handed over to the President in April 2023. In summary, the findings of the report of the COI revealed that "there were, in fact, shockingly brazen attempts by the [CEO], [DCEO] and Returning Officer, Clairmont Mingo to derail and corrupt the statutorily prescribed procedure for the counting, ascertaining and tabulation of the votes of the March 2, 2020, election as well as the declaration of the results of that election, and that they did so to put unvarnished language of the ordinary man for the purpose of stealing the election." Again, this is incontrovertible verifiable evidence!

It might be interesting to note that in 2020, this author was an employee of the Private Sector Commission (PSC), the Manager and Economic Analyst for the PSC at that time. The PSC coordinated the largest local observer mission, covering nearly 100% of the election and more so the national recount. This author was the coordinator for that mission and held the responsibility for analyzing all of the observer reports, together with our own independent tabulation of the result using the SOPs.

With that in mind, presented hereunder is the executive summary of a report prepared originally by this author, which was a "review of the report on the National Recount of the General and Regional Elections by GECOM's Chief Elections Officer, Keith Lowenfield".

The findings contained therein

were derived from having conducted a thorough examination and analysis of the Observation reports for all regions, which were in stark contrast to the number of anomalies reported by the Chief Elections Officer for all ten districts. To this end, having reviewed the report prepared by Chief Elections Officer, it appears that he did not scrutinize to verify for himself, the observation reports – given that the reported anomalies mirror those allegations submitted by the APNU+AFC. It is important to note that when the agents were calling out hundreds of random numbers, in many instances only two or three were confirmed to have been ticked and according to the instructions given by the Commission and the gazetted order, only those that were confirmed ticked ought to have been taken into consideration as alleged anomalies. Clearly, the report submitted did not reflect this, which can be verified from examining the observer reports and conducting an exercise of random sampling. Interestingly, where the Chief Elections Officer reported exactly which party's votes were affected by the anomalies, it is important to point out that it is almost impossible to ascertain who voted for which party since the ballots cast are secret ballots. As such, there is absolutely no way in which one can ascertain which political party these alleged illegal voters—voted for. The Chief Elections Officer, in view of this aspect contained in his report, ought to explain the methodology through which those numbers were derived to determine which party votes were affected and justification of same which is absent from the report.

Further, it is noteworthy to mention that the alleged ticks confirmed by the GECOM supervisor of the recount, was not done in a transparent manner, where both political party agents and local observers were denied, when asked to verify this claim.



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# First Lady: 'Guyana offers blueprint for sustainable growth'

AS Guyana continues to attract international attention as a new petroleum producing state, First Lady Mrs Arya Ali promoted the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) as a blueprint for sustainable growth.

The First Lady was at the time participating in a panel discussion at the International Year of the Family +30 Conference which was hosted by the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) in Doha, Qatar, on October 30, 2024.

The conference sought to examine the impacts of megatrends – such as climate change and technology – on families across the globe.

During her presentation, Mrs Ali highlighted some of the impacts of climate change on families in Guyana; including displacement due to flooding, and droughts which have affected farming communities.

However, she noted that Guyana is equipped with a modern and dynamic policy – in the form of the LCDS – which outlines how the country can responsibly exploit its resources and use the proceeds to build a resilient economy and country. 'Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy offers the world a blueprint for sustainable growth,' she said.

Among the things Mrs Ali drew attention to in the LCDS, was Guyana's



First Lady, Mrs Arya Ali, promoted the country's LCDS as a blueprint for sustainable growth

prudent management of its forests which has allowed for US\$1 billion in agreements to be signed for its continued protection. "Earning money from the preservation of our forests, which the world benefits from, has allowed us to provide critical support to the same communities which have been most affected by climate change," Mrs Ali told the gathering.

She highlighted Guyana's groundbreaking efforts to use climate finance, through the sale of carbon credits, to support 242 Indigenous communities, enhancing livelihoods and promoting

sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Climate finance, and even oil revenues, have also allowed for increased investments in climate adaptation and mitigation – including through renewable energy, climate smart agriculture, and flood management and other infrastructure development.

"Important in all of this, too, is education and capacity building as critical components in combating climate change and promoting sustainable practices," the First Lady explained.

She added, too, that Guyana is

also committed to the conservation and sustainable use of its terrestrial and oceanic resources, ensuring that these are leveraged for economic, social, and environmental benefits.

The panel also included: H.E. Dr. Lydia Abela, First Lady of Malta; H.E. Mahinur Özdemir Göktas, Minister of Family and Social Services of Türkiye; Mr. Mohamed Behnaasi, President & Senior Environmental Expert at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, Morocco; and Jenna Spitzer, DIFI-Duke Report Author "Climate Change and the Family".

## Guyana Central Bank has enough forex to stabilise exchange rate

THE government is carefully monitoring the foreign exchange to ensure there is a stable exchange rate and balancing Guyana's currency's value to prevent excessive appreciation or depreciation.

According to General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, over the recent years, the exchange has fluctuated between \$212 and \$222, with adjustments when Guyana's central bank – the Bank of Guyana – injects foreign currency into the market.

"But we believe that the floor of foreign currency, in aggregate sense, is matching the demand in aggregate sense, but (what) you have is a balkanised market. And that's what we try to help with from time to time," he informed reporters.

Dr. Jagdeo addressed the management of the foreign currency market in response to questions posed by members of the media at his Wednesday's press conference at Freedom House in Georgetown.

The increase in economic activities, particularly capital investments, are key factors that have led to an increased in demand for foreign currency.

Jagdeo pointed out that these investments are real transactions and es-



The Central Bank of Guyana

sential for the economy's expansion.

Looking forward, he noted that the Christmas season can push up demand as businesses procure goods and make payments. Nonetheless, the Bank of Guyana

has the capacity to intervene, should there be a significant demand.

"We have enough reserves to do that, but it has to be not when one person moves the system... But when we assess

that the aggregate demand is exceeding aggregate supply to the market; that's when there is cause for intervention," he noted, emphasising the bank's continued role in stabilising the market, if needed.



Ambassador to Guyana, H.E. René Van Nes (second from left), Press and Information Officer of the EU Delegation to Guyana, Javin Singh (extreme right) with GCCI officials that includes Senior Vice President Kathy Smith, Secretary and Councillor Melisa McRae-George, and Councillor and Executive Member Richard Rambarran

## GCCI emphasises stability, democratic processes in talks with EU Ambassador

The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) has met with European Union Ambassador to Guyana, H.E. René Van Nes, to discuss preparations for Guyana's upcoming 2025 General and Regional Elections.

The meeting, held on Monday, focused on the importance of preserving law, stability, and democracy during the electoral process, as well as potential areas of collaboration, such as voter education and election observation.

Representing GCCI at the meeting were Senior Vice President Kathy Smith, Secretary and Councillor Melisa

McRae-George, and Councillor and Executive Member Richard Rambarran. Press and Information Officer of the EU Delegation to Guyana, Javin Singh, also participated in the discussions. During the meeting, the GCCI highlighted the Chamber's longstanding commitment to electoral oversight, having fielded observer missions in Guyana since 1992. Mr. Rambarran underscored the need for timely and transparent election results, emphasizing that a repeat of the protracted results period seen in the 2020 elections could damage investor confidence—a crucial consideration as Guyana undergoes rapid economic development. He

also noted the critical role of the media, civil society, and the diplomatic community in supporting a fair and peaceful election process.

Ambassador Van Nes outlined the EU's plans to support the 2025 elections, which include deploying an observer mission comprising approximately 70 observers, including local support staff. The EU observers are expected to arrive about two months prior to election day to monitor the pre-election period closely. The EU also plans to launch voter awareness initiatives, provide media training for both state and private news outlets, and offer support to civil society organiza-

tions preparing for the elections.

"Elections work best in democratic societies with strong institutions," Ambassador Van Nes stated, reaffirming the EU's commitment to promoting democratic processes in Guyana. Through its initiatives, the EU aims to contribute to a credible, transparent, and efficient election in 2025, enhancing stability and confidence within the country.

This collaborative approach between GCCI and the EU highlights the significance of strong institutional support and international partnerships as Guyana approaches a pivotal election year.

## Teachers will see increase in pay by 57% by 2026

THE People's Progressive Party (PPP) administration has proactively boosted salary increases for teachers annually. By 2026, Guyana's public school teachers will benefit from a 57 per cent increase in their salaries, based on the effect of annual increases dating back to 2021.

This would result in an untrained graduate teacher, whose salary in 2020 was \$157,443, benefitting from a salary of over \$248,000 by 2026 — an increase of over \$90,000.

The annual increases so far were 7 per cent in 2021, 7 per cent in 2022, and 6.5 per cent in 2023. The compound effect of these increases so far were approximately 22 per cent. With the recent agreement between the government and the Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU), increases will be granted at 10 per cent this year, 8 per cent in 2025, and 9 per cent in 2026.

The 57 per cent salary increase represents the minimum increase teachers could expect in the period. Given that the government has made various adjustments to allowances, positions on salary scales, and other benefits, many teachers will benefit



Teachers hard at work in Guyana

from increases in excess of 57 per cent.

President Irfaan Ali has explained that the adjustable clause in the agreement with the GTU indicates that teachers can get even higher increases than stated, if the government grants such increases in its annual public service salary revision. This indicates that the government is considering similar or even higher increases for ALL public servants, who there-

fore could benefit from a similar compound increase of 55-60 per cent over the 2021-2026 period.

The government of Guyana has committed to raising salaries of teachers, nurses and other public servants to levels not unlike those enjoyed in the developed world. The country's increasing wealth will be used to improve the quality of life of all Guyanese.

# Tourism Awareness Month 2024 launched at Mainstay Resort

THE Ministry of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, alongside the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), has officially launched Tourism Awareness Month 2024 at Lake Mainstay Resort under the theme, “A People-Centred Tourism Product: Elevating Our Profile.”

Kamrul Baksh, Director of the GTA, highlighted the significance of launching the event in Region Two, a first for the area.

He explained that the region was strategically chosen due to its thriving tourism development and praised the region’s tourism association for its outstanding work in promoting the area, noting that Mainstay/Whyaka is globally recognised for its organic pineapples.

Baksh emphasised that the industry’s success relies on the dedication of its people, which was the inspiration behind this year’s theme which seeks to acknowledge those within the tourism sector.

He highlighted the Government of Guyana’s efforts to support business in the region, with over 300 individuals signing up for tourism training programmes. Numerous training sessions have already been completed, with more planned for the future.

Baksh noted that Region Two stands out for its high level of hospitality, cleanliness, and substantial private-sector investment.

He mentioned the daily organisation of tours, the rise of micro-enterprises, and the GTA’s commitment to collaborating with local stakeholders to continue building the sector.

Meanwhile, Region Two Chairperson and the tourism association chair,



Tourism stakeholders at Mainstay Resort in Region Two for the launch of Tourism Awareness Month 2024

Vilma De Silva, warmly welcomed the launch, describing Region Two as a destination of unparalleled hospitality and rapidly growing tourism.

She acknowledged the high volume of visitors drawn by Essequibo’s unique offerings, asserting that tourism holds significant potential for economic growth in the region.

De Silva added that private-sector investment is driving the region’s tourism sector forward.

She noted that Region Two now boasts four new black-water lakes, enhancing its tourism appeal, and acknowledged the Ministry of Agriculture’s improved drainage infrastructure in the Pomeroon, which could support agri-tourism development. Region Two, she assured, remains eager to welcome all who want to visit.

The event saw attendance from several other key figures including the Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority

and President of the Tourism and Hospitality Association of Guyana, Omadele George, Anna Regina Mayor, Devin Mohan, other tourism officials and stakeholders.

The month will feature a range of activities designed to highlight Guyana’s tourism offerings, including school talks, product launches, expos, media familiarisation trips, a junior tourism cooking showcase, and a Tourism Awards Ceremony, among others.

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

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To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit [www.wgc-org.com](http://www.wgc-org.com)

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:

Email: [mail@wgc-org.com](mailto:mail@wgc-org.com)  
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# New four-lane road offers alternative access to Georgetown

THE newly constructed four-lane road stretching from Conversation Tree to Dennis Street in Georgetown is set to provide Guyanese citizens and visitors with a critical new access point into the city.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, highlighted this development as part of the government’s ongoing efforts to alleviate traffic congestion and expand key roadways to benefit communities across the region.

Minister Edghill, in an interview with the Guyana Chronicle, emphasised the importance of expanding infrastructure to facilitate smoother travel. “The new four-lane road from Conversation Tree to Dennis Street is a major improvement for people trying to get into the city,” he stated. “Prior to this, alternatives were limited to Sheriff Street, Vlissingen Road, and Camp Street. Now, people can avoid traffic bottlenecks and make use of this new route to reach destinations like the airport or Region Three more efficiently.”

The new route will also feature a fully lit concrete walkway and benches for residents to use for evening strolls and exercise, providing a boost to community well-being and connectivity. “The road offers a significant improvement in accessibility for residents,” Edghill noted, pointing to benefits for both local property access and general quality of life.

Minister Edghill acknowledged challenges in project execution but praised the work ethic of many local contractors who have stepped up to ensure timely delivery. The Conversation Tree project had initially been managed by a Trinidadian contractor, Kallco Guyana Inc., which faced multiple delays and was subsequently demobilised due to unfulfilled obligations. In its place, the government enlisted local contractor S. Jagmohan and Sons to complete the remaining eastern section of the project. S. Jagmohan & Sons, he said, demonstrated “dependability and efficiency,” completing their assigned work on schedule.



Aerial view of the newly constructed four-lane road from Conversation Tree to Dennis Street

Despite a slight delay caused by utility pole removals, Minister Edghill confirmed that the road’s final paving would be completed by the end of this week, and all work on the project is expected to be finished before Christmas.

Looking ahead, the Minister reiterated the government’s commitment to Guyana’s infrastructure and commended contractors who have risen to meet national needs, stating, “While some contractors underperform, there are those who go above and beyond, and we recognise and applaud their dedication to our country’s development.”

With the addition of this new route, Georgetown residents and visitors alike can look forward to more convenient travel options, reinforcing the government’s commitment to ongoing infrastructure improvement across Guyana.



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# Ogle Airport to be expanded to meet growing demand

THE government plans to expand the facilities at the Eugene F Correia International Airport (Ogle Airport) to accommodate the massive development underway in Guyana’s aviation and tourism sectors.

The airport is already blossoming into a major travel hub, accommodating more than 200 landings per day.

This is according to the Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, during the launch of Caribbean Airlines’ inaugural flight from Ogle Airport to Paramaribo, Suriname on Sunday.

Ogle Airport is now one of the busiest airports in the Caribbean.

According to Minister Edghill, every operator there has applied for and been granted permission to expand their fleet to meet the growing demand.

“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,” he explained.

The minister disclosed that the air-



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill

port’s Board of Directors has already submitted their development plans for the expansion.

Outlining some of the potential changes, he said passengers will soon benefit from more seating accommodations and a wider range of duty-free options.

“We need possibly an executive lounge to facilitate executive travel out of Ogle, because more executive jets are now landing at Ogle, and eventually we have to see a bigger or longer runway [so] that we could have take-offs of bigger aircraft. So, [for] the overall plan of development, this provides yet another threader or another pillar,” Minister Edghill said.

He underscored the importance of regular maintenance and expansion to keep the country’s aviation sector modern and its airports capable of handling large aircraft and delivering top-notch service. The government also plans to build a second terminal at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) as part of this vision.

## CA commences non-stop flights between Guyana, Suriname

CARIBBEAN Airlines on Sunday morning began non-stop flights between Eugene F. Correia International Airport in Guyana and Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport in Suriname.

Speaking at the launch, Oneidge Walrond, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, said the flight represents a significant step forward for both Guyana and Suriname, enhancing connectivity and fostering stronger ties between the two nations.

She added that the flight also helps expand Guyana’s role as a regional hub by opening more travel options for our residents and supporting the country’s growing tourism sector.

“It exemplifies our shared vision of expanding connectivity, opening economic and cultural doors, and further enhancing tourism and trade,” Minister Walrond noted.

The minister stressed that the expanded air connectivity aligns with the government’s strategy to attract more



Caribbean Airlines will now fly between Guyana and Suriname

visitors and provide them with seamless access to Guyana’s tourism offerings.

“Each new airline increases our reach, and each new route strengthens our position as a rising destination for

travellers seeking unique and diverse experiences, she told the audience, including passengers for the inaugural flight.

She said while the government continues to pursue additional airlines

and new routes, it is simultaneously enhancing the nation’s travel infrastructure, expanding accommodation options, and developing more experiential travel products and tourism circuits to enrich visitor experiences.

“These strategic initiatives demonstrate to airlines that Guyana is a valuable and credible addition to their networks,” she reiterated.

Minister Walrond highlighted Guyana’s relations with Suriname, noting that bridging the two countries reinforces our shared heritage, supports cross-cultural experiences, and offers new possibilities for tourism and trade.

The Minister thanked Caribbean Airlines for its commitment to the Guyana market and urged the airline to maintain consistency with this service. She proposed joint marketing efforts with Caribbean Airlines.

The flights will operate twice weekly, on Fridays and Sundays, using the airline’s ATR 72-600 aircraft.

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# Guyana, Japan strengthen partnership in water sector

In a significant celebration of international cooperation, Guyana's Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, highlighted the enduring partnership between Guyana and Japan, focusing on their collaborative efforts in the water sector.

Speaking on Monday at the Japan-CARICOM (Caribbean Community) Friendship Year 2024 Event at the Marriott Hotel, he underscored Japan's contributions to CARICOM nations, emphasising the vital importance of sustainable water access in the face of escalating climate change challenges.

Minister Croal pointed out that water is the lifeblood of our planet and, of our own lives.

He, however, noted that for many nations, access to clean, reliable, and sustainable water sources remains a profound challenge. The minister said: "In the Caribbean, where communities depend on consistent water supplies for agriculture, public health, tourism, and overall economic development, the growing impacts of climate change—such as rising sea levels, intensified storms, and prolonged droughts—only amplify these challenges."

Recognising this, he said CARICOM nations have long prioritised water resilience, but true progress is only possible with collaborative partnerships.

This situation, he emphasised, necessitates strong partnerships like that between Guyana and Japan, which has evolved over more than five decades.

"Today we are celebrating and strengthening a friendship and partnership that exemplify international cooperation, a commitment to sustainability and shared values – Japan's collaboration with CARICOM, in the vital water sector," Croal stated.

As an island nation, he said Japan understands the unique vulnerabilities and resilience required of countries encircled by water.

In recent years, he said Japan has offered technical assistance, capacity building, and innovative solutions to support CARICOM's water management goals.

He added: "Through our partnership, Japan has brought not only technological expertise but a spirit of solidarity, grounded in mutual respect and shared interests. Our shared initiatives have emphasised the protection and sustainable use of water resources, climate resilience, and the efficient delivery of water services—objectives that are essential for both immediate needs and long-term development."

The collaboration has produced tangible results in Guyana.

Minister Croal explained that since 1989 Japan has provided extensive grant aid and training programmes



Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal

aimed at improving various sectors, including health, water, and energy.

Significant projects include the reconstruction of the New Amsterdam Hospital and the construction of the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters in Georgetown, both of which have had lasting impacts on local infrastructure.

One of the standout projects cited by Minister Croal is the 2008 completion of the Japanese-funded water treatment plant in Queenstown, Corriverton, Berbice.

He pointed out that this has brought safe water access to over 15,000 residents.

He explained that the project involved rehabilitating existing wells, constructing new treatment facilities, and installing necessary infrastructure, demonstrating Japan's commitment to addressing urgent water supply needs in the region.

He said this project followed the completion of the first phase, which involved the construction of a treatment plant at Number 56 Village in Corentyne. The Minister said that Japan has helped Guyana with the rehabilitation of the East Demerara Water Conservancy Project.

Additionally, he pointed out that the private sector benefited substantially from the procurement of goods and spares, which were critical to the revitalisation of its productive capacity.

While Guyana has never been a recipient of a Japanese Loan, in recent years having been categorised as an Upper Middle-Income Country, he disclosed that the country recently received a concessional loan aimed at refurbishing the Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI).

According to him, this new financial support comes at a crucial time as the government collaborates with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Japan on plans for a new water treatment plant at Diamond on the East Bank of Demerara (EBD).

"Once implemented, this project will reduce our dependence on some of our water sources while providing a more reliable supply of water to residents on the East Bank of Demerara."

Minister Croal expressed gratitude for Japan's unwavering support, highlighting its importance in helping Guyana meet its water-related targets. "Your support has helped us to meet water targets that we have set for our

country through the years, and we are grateful," he remarked, noting that such collaborations are vital as the Caribbean faces increasing climate risks.

Looking ahead, the minister called for continued collaboration.

"Climate forecasts indicate that the Caribbean will continue to face increasing risks, and water scarcity will become an even more pressing challenge. We hope that you will continue to share with us your advancements in water saving technologies, particularly in the areas of eco-friendly infrastructure and digital monitoring tools," he said.

The partnership between Japan and CARICOM nations is not just about technology or infrastructure, according to Croal; it is about the lives impacted by access to clean and reliable water. "Access to clean, safe, and reliable water means greater opportunities, improved health, and resilience needed to thrive in an uncertain future," he stated, urging all stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to building a future where every community has access to essential water resources.

# Agriculture Sector soars with 8.9 per cent growth in first half of 2024

IN a recent address in Berbice, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, celebrated the agriculture sector’s remarkable 8.9 per cent growth in the first half of 2024, attributing the success to increased resilience, strategic investments, and a focus on sustainable development. The sector’s growth is transforming rural livelihoods and strengthening Guyana’s role in regional food security.

“The agriculture sector would have grown by almost 8.9% for the first half of 2024,” Minister Mustapha announced. “This is very important for us because we are helping ordinary people to supplement their income.”

Under Mustapha’s leadership, the government has prioritised modernising agricultural practices and expanding infrastructure. The minister detailed ongoing projects, such as the development of a \$14 million food hub along the Soesdyke/Linden Highway, alongside significant investments in drainage and irrigation to protect farmlands from flooding. “We are investing \$6 billion in Hope-like canals in Region Six,” he shared, describing new dams and canals designed to divert water away from residential and cultivation areas, ensuring drainage around the clock and reducing flood risks during heavy rains.

In addition to flood prevention, the government is constructing pump stations across Corentyne to aid farmers. “We have built one at Adventure, and others are underway at Black Bush Polder, Letter Kenny, and Chesney,” Mustapha said. To further strengthen drainage, the government has rehabilitated sluices nationwide and is procuring 40–50 additional pumps. Plans to acquire dredges for regular clearing of silted outfalls are also underway, enhancing water flow and preventing backlogs.

The sector’s achievements include a historic milestone in rice production, which has surpassed 700,000 tonnes for the first time in the country’s history. “Since we started planting rice in Guyana, we have never produced over 700,000 tonnes. This year, we’ve exceeded 710,000 tonnes,” said Minister Mustapha, noting that another 15,000 acres remain to be harvested, which will further boost production totals.

As Guyana’s agriculture sector continues to flourish, Minister Mustapha emphasised that the nation’s vision for agriculture extends beyond domestic needs, positioning the country as a regional leader in food security. With support for sustainable farming and infrastructure improvements, the government is committed to enabling growth that benefits both local farmers and the wider Caribbean region.



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha

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## Antiguan MP found dead at home

Police are at the home of the independent legislator, Asot Michael, who was reportedly found dead in a pool of blood at his house on Tuesday morning.

Police have made no statement regarding the discovery of the body of the Member of Parliament for St Peter, but his death has sent shockwaves across the nation, with several people gathered outside his Dry Hill Resi-

dence on the outskirts of the capital.

Michael, who was born in the French island of Guadeloupe on December 21, 1969, and had served as a minister in a previous administration of Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

He contested the last general election in January 18, 2023 as an independent candidate after he left the ruling Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP).



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# Barbados consumers warned about looming increases in food prices

Barbadian consumers were on Monday put on alert for a potential increase in the price of produce due to a scarcity of food, as the spokesman for the island's vendors called for urgent action to address rising import dependency.

The Barbados Association of Retailers, Vendors and Entrepreneurs (BARVEN) on Monday demanded a stakeholder consultation amid warnings that the situation could worsen ahead of the Christmas season.

Market vendors at Cheapside said there were severe shortages in both local produce and regional imports, exacerbated by disrupted shipping schedules from neighbouring islands following recent hurricane damage.

"The boat that used to come from St Vincent every week, it coming now every other week, cause down there don't have the amount of food like before since the bad weather," said Althea, a vendor at the market.

BARVEN Vice President Erskine Forde said that farmers are struggling with mounting operational costs.

"The food is very scarce, the price of the food is very high," he explained. "The farmers have a big problem, too, where they don't have the different components that you need to get their farms running properly — fertilisers, chemicals; can't really get labour as you would like either; even the water price is very challenging."

Wholesale prices have surged dramatically, with boxes of imported tomatoes now costing \$135 and oranges starting at \$100. Local production has been particularly affected by current weather conditions, with lettuce and cucumber yields hampered by the rainy season.

Vendor Selvin Evelyn highlighted the impact on consumer behaviour: "The food is very expensive and people don't seem to have the money to be able to shop. So you have to be very selective as to what you buy and what you don't buy because things that carry a short shelf life you would tend to avoid because purchasing power is not really here."

Forde criticised the allocation of agricultural land for housing developments, arguing that Barbados has sufficient land to boost domestic food production: "We have enough land in Barbados to produce this food that we need. It takes all the players to come together to make this thing happen."

Chris Harris, another vendor, noted the global nature of the crisis: "It's something that's all over the world, it's not just Barbados; food gone up, you hardly getting food and then the demand real high."

The situation has prompted some farmers to abandon agriculture for more profitable sectors such as construction, further straining local food production capacity, Forde said.

Whilst seasonal produce like breadfruit remains relatively affordable



Vendors in Barbados are worried about shortages in the coming Christmas season

at \$6 to \$7 each, other staples such as sweet potatoes have become increasingly scarce and expensive.

Forde warned that the challenges faced by farmers will lead to higher prices and an increase in food imports during the Christmas season to meet demand.

"Certain things we're not going to get—we don't have them. Tomatoes and

sweet peppers, those are things we're going to have to import, and the price is going to be so high to bring in those foods. As a vendor, you have to be careful; you gotta buy just enough to last you for the day, get it off your hands," he said.

Storage is another issue for some of these farmers and vendors, with Forde explaining: "Most of those ven-

dors don't have a cooler, so they have to sell it as soon as they get it."

He is also advocating for security measures for farmers.

"We need that encouragement, that buffer there so you can breathe. And right now we see too many deep waters," the BARVEN official said.

## B'dos cricket mourns former captain

The Barbadian and regional cricketing fraternity was on Monday sent into mourning, when it was announced that former national captain Kenroy Da Costa Williams had died.

Born in Harlington, St Philip, Williams passed away at the age of 40 after a brief battle with cancer.

The Barbados Cricket Association (BCA) was swift to share sympathies with the family and friends of the late Barbados and West Indies B batting all-rounder, who was also a member of the St Catherine Sports and Social Club in his home community of St Philip. He was an employee at the Ministry of Agriculture.

For St Catherine, he was named Best All Rounder in the Sagicor Super Cup, during which he excelled with bat and ball.

An aggressive and powerful right-handed batsman and offbreak bowler, Williams, a graduate of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic played 15 years at the regional level. He compiled 915 runs in 29 First Class matches, including four half-centuries and a career-best knock of 82. He also took 47 wickets in that format, with a best of 5-50.

In 19 List A fixtures, Williams amassed 240 runs and took seven wickets. He also played a solitary match for the Jamaica Scorpions in the 2019 regional T20 competition. He last played as a wicketkeeper for Charlotte Strikers in the Vincy Premier T10 League in 2020.



Kenroy Da Costa Williams: lost battle with cancer

Among the career highlights for Williams would have been his Player Of The Match award against the Windward Islands in the 2017-2018 West Indies Cricket Board Professional Cricket League Regional 4-Day Tournament. His 55 runs and seven wickets (3-21 and 4-36) helped hand the victory to Barbados.

The West Indies Players' Association (WIPA) also shared the sentiments of its members and leadership.

"We are deeply saddened by the passing of Kenroy Williams," said Wavell Hinds, WIPA president and CEO. "Kenroy was an exemplary sportsman on and off the field, he fought a good fight. May his soul rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon him. To Kenroy's family, friends, and the entire cricketing fraternity, please accept our deepest condolences",

# Ali calls on contractors to ‘pick up the pace’ at new hospitals

CONTRACTORS have been advised to hasten the construction process at the state-of-the-art maternal and pediatric hospital in Goedverwagting, East Coast Demerara.

During a visit to the construction site for the country’s maiden pediatric facility, President Dr. Irfaan Ali lamented his dissatisfaction at the current pace of works.

Pressing the respective technical personnel on site, President Ali quizzed both the contractor and consultant on the deliverables of the external and internal infrastructure of the facility.

It was disclosed that the structural frame is 99 per cent complete, while cladding works have also begun.

Sub-contractors also have begun mobilising to commence works on the internal infrastructure soon. However, President Ali pointed out that the project is already behind, and more manpower and simultaneous work are needed.

“We are not satisfied with the pace at the moment, and we will have to shift our deadline. It is important that we get this hospital.”

The contractor informed the president that internal works could be completed by October next year, however, the Head of state said: “That is not going to fly with us; that is far beyond the project time. We are going to be charging liquidated damages.”

The facility will have 256 beds, covering 24,000 square meters gross floor areas, and an imaging suite, which will include CT scans, X-rays, and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanning equipment.

“This is the highest standard that you will get for pediatric care. The design and construction take into consideration the most modern equipment to match what the hospital is expected to deliver,” President Ali said.

President Ali keenly pointed out that the government has already begun discussions to train the personnel needed for the state-of-the-art facility.

“We will definitely have to import some specialised skills in the first phase of management of the hospital. We have already started that, looking at various areas that we will need specialists, so they will train our locals, of course. This hospital and the other regional hospitals tell the story of how rapid we have to train our nurses and medical technicians and so on,” he said.

While featuring many newer technologies, a key component of the facil-



President Ali on a site visit at one of the new hospitals being constructed

ity will be its unique infrastructure, which is envisioned for creating an ambient and conducive environment for children.

“Because it’s a children’s hospital, we will have a lot of natural lighting, a lot of gardening, a lot of fountains to make it conducive for children, thus making the healing process far easier,” the President said.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony noted that the facility will be outfitted with 24-hour accident and emergency services, alongside several primary care services.

According to the health official, the new hospital will have many new features for the first time in the history of the country.

“This, of course, will be a 24-hour service that we will be providing. The imaging suite here is much more extended, so, apart from CTs and ultrasounds and so forth, this hospital will be the first public hospital with an MRI, and, in terms of the theatre, we have four operating theatres, one of which would specialise in cardiac surgeries,” Dr. Anthony said.

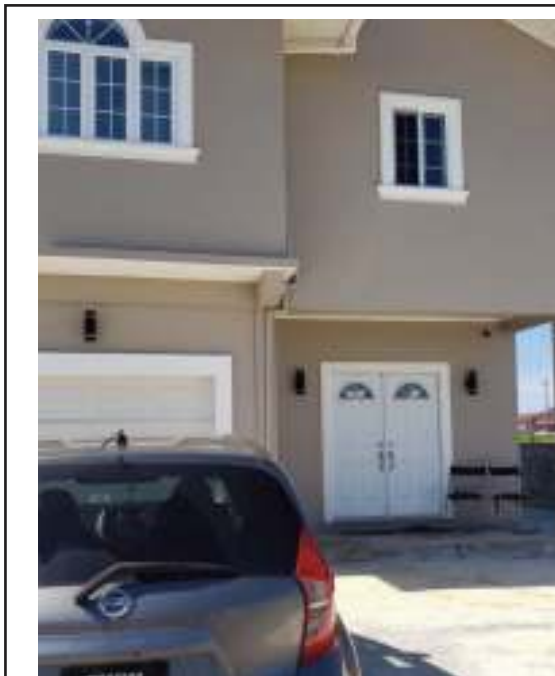
It is the first project to come out of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Guyana and Austria, which was first signed in 2018, while the EUR\$149 million (G\$31.9 billion) contract for the hospital was signed on June 8, 2022.

The new facility is expected to not only serve Region Four (Demerara-

Mahaica), but will be a Level Five referral centre for women and children of all regions in Guyana who are referred for specialised healthcare not available in their region. The three patient-care groups that will be referred to the hospital will be maternal mothers, neonatal care, and pediatrics.

The project also marks Guyana’s first UK Export Credit Agency financing, and is being done in accordance with the FIDIC yellow book standards, a standard contract where the design is carried out by the contractor.

The hospital is being built by VAMED Engineering, which was appointed by the Government of Austria and is a global provider for hospitals and healthcare facilities.



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Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

## Modi slams temple violence in Brampton after 'diplomatic row' with Canada

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has criticised the "cowardly attempts to intimidate our diplomats" in a deepening diplomatic row with Canada.

Both countries expelled each other's top envoys last month after Canadian officials accused India of being involved in violent acts targeting Indian dissidents on Canadian soil, something the country denies.

Modi's comments came after violence broke out at a Hindu temple in the Canadian city of Brampton on Sunday, which he has called a "deliberate attack".

"Such acts of violence will never weaken India's resolve. We expect the Canadian government to ensure justice and uphold the rule of law," he wrote on X.

Local police said three people have so far been arrested and charged over the incident in Brampton, near Toronto, but did not provide further details.

The force said "several acts of unlawfulness continue to be actively investigated" by its officers.

Unverified video posted online appeared to show people carrying yellow flags of the Khalistan movement - which demands a separate Sikh homeland in India - clashing with others holding Indian flags.

India's foreign ministry said "extremists and separatists" were behind the violence, calling on the Canadian government to "ensure that all places

of worship are protected from such attacks".

The North America-based activist group Sikhs for Justice, meanwhile, described the incident as an "unprovoked violent attack on peaceful pro-Khalistan demonstrators".

Justin Trudeau wrote on X that Sunday's violence was "unacceptable", adding that "every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely".

Relations between India and Canada have soured since Ottawa accused the Indian government of being behind the 2023 killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a naturalised Canadian citizen who is labelled a terrorist in India.

India has vehemently denied this and other allegations and maintained that Canada has provided no evidence to support its claims.

Mr Nijjar had been a vocal supporter of the Khalistan movement and publicly campaigned for it.

The rift between Canada and India has raised questions over the impact it could have on the deep trade and immigration ties between both countries.

Bilateral trade is worth billions of dollars, and Canada is home to nearly 1.7 million people of Indian origin.

Neither country has yet imposed tariffs or other economic forms of retaliation, but experts caution that this could change, and that a cooling relationship between India and Canada could hinder further economic growth.

## Indian fashionista Rohan Bal passes on

Rohit Bal, one of India's most celebrated fashion designers, has died aged 63 after a long period of illness.

The Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) announced his death in a post on Instagram, saying that his work "redefined Indian fashion".

One of India's first designers, Bal popularised fashion designing as a viable, glamorous profession in the 1990s and

many who came after him credit him for their success.

He had been forced to take a prolonged break due to ill health but made an emotional comeback just weeks ago.

"We will always need a Rohit Bal around to show what classic elegance is - and why it crosses the generational divide," said an article in The Indian Express newspaper after Bal, looking frail but delighted, appeared

alongside his models at the grand finale of the India Fashion Week in October.

Bal's designs won acclaim for his deep understanding of Indian textiles and meticulous attention to detail.

His innovative creations were worn by Hollywood stars and supermodels and he became synonymous with blending India's rich cultural heritage with a contemporary flair.



**ARIES (March 21 - April 20):** You don't have to be sociable if you don't feel like it. Saturn in one of the more introverted areas of your chart suggests you may be happier if left to your own devices today. You will be more in the mood for fun and games later in the week.

**TAURUS (April 21 - May 21):** If you are the sort of Taurus who always likes to be in control the next 24 hours could be a little uncomfortable. You are not the only one with a stubborn streak and someone you deal with at home or at work won't give you an inch.

**GEMINI (May 22 - June 21):** You have worked so hard of late that you deserve a break, so slow down and take life at a more leisurely pace. Social activities will be a lot of fun but they could also be tiring, so be choosy about the events you grace with your presence.

**CANCER (June 22 - July 23):** Artistic activities will go well for you over the next few days but they will go even better if you join forces with people who share your creative vision. The universe doesn't want you to be a recluse shut away alone in your studio.

**LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23):** This could be and should be one of the best times of the year for you and with Mars moving through your sign what you get out of life will be in direct proportion to what you choose to put in - so choose to give 100 per cent.

**VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23):** The more you are on the move the more you will enjoy yourself, so stop pretending that you cannot spare the time to get out and about and head off some place special to have fun with your friends. There is romance in the air as well.

**LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23):** Money matters should go well for you between now and the end of the week, so stop worrying that you won't be able to make ends meet and act as if you know your needs will be met - and, miraculously, most of them will be.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22):** Whatever you turn your hand to over the next few days will go amazingly well, so aim high and don't listen to those who say you could be biting off more than you can chew. The more you expect from life the more life will give you.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21):** Everyone can see that you are super confident but those who know you best also recognize that you sometimes go to extremes. The message of the stars today is that you need to tone down your act a bit - but only a bit, don't stifle your genius!

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20):** Your horizons may seem limited at the moment but that is an illusion caused by the constant negativity you've been getting from other people. Find a quiet place where you can be alone with your thoughts and reaffirm your life's purpose. Then really go for it!

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19):** You are determined to make your mark on the world and if that means you have to deal harshly with people who stand in your way then so be it. Make it clear you mean business now and you will get a lot less opposition in the future.

**PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20):** Others can sit around waiting for things to happen if they so choose but you must get off your rear end, get your act together and get busy making a name for yourself. With so many cosmic influences now in your favor you cannot afford to be lazy.

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# PM Gonsalves announces a Cost of Living boost for Vincentians

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves has announced a cost-of-living initiative aimed at supporting 3,000 vulnerable households over three months. Beginning in December 2024, eligible households will receive a monthly allowance of \$175, referred to as “COLA Special.”

This announcement was made during his address on the 45th anniversary of the country’s independence from Britain. Gonsalves emphasized that the initiative is means-tested and targets those particularly in need. “This will cost for the three months, EC\$1.575 million (One EC dollar=US\$0.37 cents) or EC\$525 monthly,” said Gonsalves, adding that the program will be executed by the Ministry of National Mobilization.

Prime Minister Gonsalves said the government will evaluate this program after the initial roll-out, with a view to a possible continuation further into 2025.

As has been the case for over a decade, Gonsalves used the speech to make a series of “announcements”, several of which were not new.

The independence address could be the second to last before general elections, which are constitutionally due by February 2026 but are widely expected before the end of 2025.

Political observers often use the speech to gauge when the general elections are likely to be called.

Gonsalves also announced that his ruling Unity Labour Party (ULP) government would be ramping up its surveillance of “those unscrupulous retailers.

“We have some good retailers, and we have some want to gouge us — as you say on the road, ‘dig out we eye’. We have some unscrupulous ones who are reportedly engaged in price gouging,” he said.

Prime Minister Gonsalves said the government would use the Consumer Protection Act and the Price and Distribution of Goods Act “to the fullest to



St Vincent PM Ralph Gonsalves

curtail price gouging, especially in the unusual circumstances, occasioned by Hurricane Beryl”.

Among the other new initiatives announced by the prime minister was the indefinite continuation of the policy that people who use less than 250 units per month will not pay any value added tax (VAT) on their bills.

He also said the duty-free concession on cement will be extended indefinitely.

“I am resolved to make cement in this country the most affordable in the entire OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States).”

He said the EC\$600 income support monthly for unemployed, heads of households, owners of micro-enterprises, farmers, farm workers, fishers and their crew and the workers laid off in the tourism sector as a result of Hurricane Beryl will continue for a period in 2025.

Gonsalves also announced that 368 recipients of loans from the National

Student Loan Company will receive one month’s relief in their repayment in December. He said these recipients have graduated from university and are current with their loan payments.

“I want them to spend a little better Christmas in post-Beryl,” he said referring to the category 4 hurricane that devastated parts of the country, mostly the Southern Grenadines on July 1, before leaving a trail of destruction in other Caribbean countries.

“This will cost the government just over EC\$200,000,” Gonsalves said, adding that the relief is additional to the reduction of the interest rate on student loans to 4.5 per cent annually, as he announced last year and was implemented in Budget 2024.

In 2020, Gonsalves dismissed as “opportunistic” a policy announced by the main opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) that if elected to office it would have halved to 4.5 per cent the interest students pay on loans from the

state-owned company.

Gonsalves also announced that second-year students of the community college and all teachers at all primary and secondary schools owned or assisted by the government will receive brand-new laptops.

“We estimate that there will be about 2,500, maybe slightly more. You will get them courtesy of the government in early 2025,” he said, adding that this is expected to cost more than three million dollars.

He further said that all 320 new applicants for the one-year Support for Education and Training (SET) program who qualified have been approved for employment from November.

Further, SET employees who are Community College graduates will receive EC\$200 more monthly on their existing stipend while those who are university graduates will receive \$300 more.

## Accused in ‘Slickianna’ murder goes to trial January 31

A new trial date of January 31, 2025, has been set for Rushawn Patterson, who faces charges in connection with the October 2022 murder of social media influencer Aneika ‘Slickianna’ Townsend.

The decision was made during Patterson’s appearance at the St. James Circuit Court on Thursday.

The court heard that while the postmortem report is now available, a crucial DNA report remains outstanding. In light of this, the Crown requested the January date, which was granted by Supreme Court Judge Bertram Morrison. Patterson’s bail was also extended during the proceedings.

Representing Patterson in court

was Senator Charles Sinclair, standing in for his attorney Dionne Mayler Barrett, who was absent. The case had previously been delayed on October 18 when all scheduled cases were unexpectedly brought forward a day earlier, setting the stage for Thursday’s hearing.

Delays in the case have largely been attributed to the pending post-mortem and DNA reports, which had previously caused an adjournment on September 23. Once all outstanding reports are submitted, a trial date is expected to be finalized.

The case revolves around the death of Townsend, whose body was found in the sea at Reading, St. James,



Slickianna: murdered

on October 21, 2022. According to police reports, Townsend traveled from Kingston to Montego Bay on October 20, where she was picked up by Patterson. The two reportedly visited a restaurant in Hanover and a guest house in St. James that evening. An argument allegedly broke out between them, leading to Patterson being accused of strangling Townsend and disposing of her body.

Patterson was named a person of interest the day after the body was discovered and was captured by authorities on November 2, 2022, at a guest house in Hanover after failing to meet deadlines to turn himself in.

# Fayval Williams is Jamaica's new finance minister, replaces Clarke

Jamaica's Minister of Education Fayval Williams has been appointed as the new Minister of Finance, taking over from Nigel Clarke, who resigned to assume the position of Deputy Managing Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Prime Minister Andrew Holness announced the appointment on Wednesday, coinciding with Clarke's departure from Jamaica to begin his tenure at the IMF.

To fill the vacancy at the Ministry of Education, Prime Minister Holness has appointed Senator Dana Morris Dixon as the new Minister of Education and Youth. Additionally, Matthew Samuda will return to the Cabinet as Minister without portfolio for Water.

"These appointments are designed to maintain stability and minimize disruptions in the functioning of the government, but at the same time, pivot toward a growth-oriented economic policy," Holness said in his announcement.

Fayval Williams, who is also a Member of Parliament for St. Andrew Eastern, brings an extensive background in finance to her new role. A Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), she holds an MBA with a finance concentration from the Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania,



**Fayval Williams: replaces Nigel Clarke as Jamaica's Finance Minister**

and a cum laude BA in Economics from Harvard University.

Her professional experience spans both the public and private sectors. Before her political career, Williams was Executive Director of Kingston Properties Limited and served as Chief Investment Officer at JMMB Limited, overseeing investment research, trading, and pension portfolios. Williams

also consulted with JMMB on market risk management and investment research, helping to shape the company's investment research strategies and lead valuation efforts for public offerings. Her advisory work extended to the Financial Services Commission (FSC) in Jamaica, where she contributed to policy and research initiatives.

Williams' investment expertise

was honed through leadership roles in the U.S., where she served as Senior Vice President at Putnam Investments in Boston, managing equity portfolios and spearheading the development of a market-neutral hedge fund. Earlier in her career, she held positions at Wellington Management Company, where she focused on fixed-income investments, and Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, where she helped manage a \$3 billion fixed-income portfolio. Williams' professional foundation also includes roles at Equitable Real Estate Investment Management and Morgan Stanley, where she specialized in valuation analysis and information systems.

Williams' political journey began in 2016 when she was appointed State Minister in the Ministry of Finance under then-Finance Minister Audley Shaw. She was later promoted to full minister in 2018, joining Clarke at the Ministry of Finance before taking on the Science, Energy, and Technology portfolio in 2019, following the resignation of Dr. Andrew Wheatley. She is the first female to be a minister in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, and also the first female minister of science, energy and technology.

She has served as Minister of Education and Youth since 2020.

## New policy for JA hospitals after US backlash

After recent criticism from a U.S.-based surgeon regarding the inadequate infrastructure in Jamaica's hospitals, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has announced plans to introduce a new policy to improve equipment repair and maintenance across the island.

The backlash came after Dr. Robert Brady, a section chief at Norwalk Hospital in Connecticut, reported that poor operating conditions forced his team to delay a crucial surgery for an 11-year-old girl. Dr. Brady, who has been traveling to Jamaica for nearly two decades to perform life-changing orthopedic surgeries for children with severe health challenges, including scoliosis, called this recent trip "terrible." His team, usually able to complete 12 to 16 surgeries, managed only five on this visit—four at BHC and one at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI).

Dr. Brady attributed the delay to inadequate infrastructure at BHC, describing the operating theater as plagued with mold, faulty air conditioning, and a lack of essential equipment.

In response to these concerns, Dr. Tufton announced a draft plan to engage a private entity skilled in engineering, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical services for comprehensive facility



**Jamaica's Minister of Health and Wellness Dr. Christopher Tufton**

maintenance.

"I have asked for a draft terms of reference to engage a private entity that possesses a suite of skill sets, like engineering, mechanical, plumbing, electrical... has the experience where we would contract them to coordinate the overall maintenance of the plant of our health facilities," Dr. Tufton stated.

He explained that long-term service contracts would require suppliers to maintain a stock of basic parts and carry out routine equipment servicing and replacement to prevent breakdowns. Highlighting existing issues, Dr. Tufton noted that a previous supplier contracted to repair the Bustamante Hospital's central air conditioning unit failed to do so after

five months, leading to the supplier's termination. A new contractor was hired but has yet to fulfill their commitment despite promising repairs within two weeks and hiring an overseas professional to assist. "There is no lack of money," Dr. Tufton emphasized, acknowledging that the problem lies within a systemic maintenance issue. "The culture and the history of how we operate within this environment has been suboptimal," he continued, adding, "as we build out and modernise, which we are doing, a lot of money is being spent and we have to be careful that we transition into a more efficient culture."

The Minister explained that implementing long-term supplier contracts, which would include well-stocked inventories for hospitals, could lead to a more efficient healthcare system. "Once we insist on extended service, whether through leasing, which we are going to... they will automatically be required to repair and to replace after the equipment depreciates through its usefulness," he said. Dr. Tufton expects a draft of the policy within the next month, after which it will be submitted to Cabinet, with public updates provided as the policy progresses.



# CCJ overturns decisions regarding Guyana's Parliamentary Secretaries

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) has upheld an appeal from the Attorney General of Guyana and two members of the ruling People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP). In a unanimous decision, the CCJ overturned prior rulings from the Guyana High Court and Court of Appeal, confirming the lawful appointments of Vikash Ramkissoon and Sarah Browne as parliamentary secretaries in the National Assembly.

Both individuals were included in the list of candidates presented by the PPP/C for the general and regional elections held on March 2, 2020.

But their membership and participation in the Assembly had been challenged by A Partnership for National Unity+ Alliance For Change (APNU+AFC) parliamentary and Opposition Chief Whip, Christopher Jones on the grounds that they ought not to do so because they are PPP candidates.

The Guyana Court of Appeal had upheld the High Court's decision by Chief Justice Roxane George-Wiltshire that Brown and Ramkissoon's participation and placement in the House was unlawful because they could not have done so other than by extraction from the list of candidates.

But in its ruling, the CCJ said that it agrees with counsel for the appellants



The Caribbean Court of Justice: upheld an appeal from the Guyana Attorney General

that Browne and Ramkissoon were presumptively qualified to be elected as members of the National Assembly since, as candidates on the PPP/C list, they were each required to swear that they were qualified to be so elected and that the respondent adduced no evidence that they were not qualified to be elected.

"The appeal is allowed and the orders of the courts below are vacated.

This appeal enabled the court to address a constitutional issue that has posed challenges in the past, making its resolution significantly important to the public," the CCJ said.

It said in the circumstances, each party shall bear their costs at the CCJ and the courts below.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall in welcoming the CCJ ruling, told the Demerara

Waves Online News in Guyana that the decision meant that "constitutionalism has triumphed.

"The constitutional provisions in relation to this matter have now been finally and conclusively interpreted.

Whatever ambiguities and equivocations that may have existed, they have now been removed by a clear and precise judgement from our final court," he said.

## PAHO alert for measles cases in the Caribbean

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has issued an epidemiological alert due to the rise in measles cases across the Americas, including the Caribbean.

As of October 5, over 14,000 suspected cases and 376 confirmed cases have been reported in eight countries, with the majority occurring in the United States (267 cases), Canada (82), and Argentina (11). Most of these cases are linked to importation. PAHO is urging intensified vaccination and surveillance efforts, especially since the region was certified free of endemic measles in 2016 and rubella in 2015.

Globally, it said measles remains one of the leading causes of death in young children, despite the existence of a safe and effective vaccine to prevent it.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), up to October 15, 2024, more than 502,000 suspected cases of measles were reported in 182 member states of the six WHO regions, of which more than 283,000 (56 percent) were confirmed.

PAHO said it is committed to supporting countries in implementing effective measures to control the spread of the virus and protect the most vulnerable populations.

It described measles as a highly contagious viral disease that primarily affects children and can cause serious complications, including severe diarrhea, ear infections, blindness, pneumonia, and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

Some of these complications can be fatal, PAHO

warned, adding that the most affected age group includes children aged one to nine years and young adults aged 20 to 29 years.

PAHO said 57 percent of confirmed cases were unvaccinated, and in 28 percent their vaccination status was unknown, highlighting the urgent need to address gaps in vaccination coverage.

"Although there has been an increase in cases since mid-February of this year, the overall trend shows a decrease in the weeks following late March. However, cases have continued to be confirmed in subsequent months," PAHO said.

PAHO warned in January and June about the decline in vaccination coverage against measles, rubella and mumps (known as MMR or measles-mumps-rubella vaccine).

In 2023, it said the regional coverage for the first dose of the MMR vaccine was 87 percent and 76 percent for the second dose, below the ideal threshold of 95 percent recommended to prevent outbreaks.

In response to the situation, PAHO urged member states to implement active search strategies to detect cases, as well as to carry out complementary vaccination activities to close existing immunity gaps and strengthen communication with communities to promote vaccine acceptance.

PAHO also urged travelers to get vaccinated before visiting areas where measles transmission has been documented.

Additionally, PAHO urged countries to continue



Measels cases are on the rise in the region

strengthening surveillance systems, rapid response to any imported cases of measles, and achieving adequate vaccination coverage.



The new international airport, Jamaica's fourth, will make the region's tourist attractions more accessible to foreign visitors

# JA Airports Authority identify site for new Negril Int'l Airport

The Airports Authority of Jamaica (AAJ) has identified a site for the country's fourth international airport, set to be located in Negril, Westmoreland.

This announcement comes in the wake of Prime Minister Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness' recent declaration to develop an international airport in the popular resort town.

Speaking at a JIS Think Tank on Tuesday, October 29, President and CEO of the AAJ, Audley Deidrick, provided details on the project's progress. He explained that the government directed the AAJ to assess the feasibility of upgrading the Negril Aerodrome into an international facility. To this end, consultants were engaged to draft a comprehensive

master plan.

"We engaged consultants to do the necessary studies and out of those studies it has emerged that the present aerodrome is not suitable for development of a major international airport, taking flights using aircraft the size of a Boeing 737, which is now the most common aircraft utilised by airlines for transport," Mr. Deidrick stated.

In light of these findings, the consultants identified an alternative site within close proximity—15 to 20 minutes from Negril's main tourism hub and the iconic seven-mile beach. According to Mr. Deidrick, this strategic location is poised to support tourism growth and reduce pressure on Montego Bay's Sang-

ster International Airport. "This is to alleviate the challenges that tourists flying into Montego Bay face getting into Negril, a long journey which, at times, can become longer depending on traffic and road conditions," he noted.

The AAJ President emphasized the potential economic benefits, highlighting how the new facility could stimulate growth across western Jamaica. "In addition to catering to tourism traffic for the Negril facilities and properties, we posit that an airport in that part of Jamaica will also open up the western part of Jamaica to various forms of further economic development," Mr. Deidrick said. He also pointed out the airport's potential to serve residents in nearby

parishes. "It could also be an alternative for persons in the parishes of St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, Hanover and even parts of St. James," he explained.

Mr. Deidrick expressed optimism about the project's future, noting, "That's the power of that airport as we see it, and when that time comes and the Government gives the necessary approval to move into the construction phase, I am pretty certain that Jamaica will be happy to hear that announcement."

Plans for the new international airport aim to bolster tourism and ease travel within the region, marking a significant step in enhancing Jamaica's infrastructure and supporting its economic development.

# US deportations to Caribbean on the rise

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been facilitating removal flights for single adults and family units to several Caribbean and Central American countries.

Between October 28 and November 1, ICE coordinated these flights in partnership with US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), targeting destinations such as Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Jamaica, and Mexico.

"If a noncitizen arrives and has no legal basis to remain in the United States, they are processed and removed quickly, consistent with US law," ICE said.

Since June 5, when the Presiden-



tial Proclamation and Interim Final Rule took effect, DHS has removed or returned more than 160,000 individu-

als to over 145 countries through September. This excludes repatriations from airports and the northern border.

ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) operated more than 495 international repatriation flights during this period. DHS tripled the percentage of southwest border encounters processed for expedited removal.

Preliminary data shows DHS completed over 700,000 removals and returns in fiscal year 2024 – the highest since 2010. This included record removals to non-Mexican countries.

DHS has halved the processing time for removing individuals without legal basis to remain.

In fiscal year 2023, ERO conducted 142,580 removals and 62,545 Title 42 expulsions to more than 170 countries worldwide.

# Ex-PNM Minister attacks Finance Minister over bank's forex inquiries

FORMER T&T finance minister Karen Nunez-Tesheira says an alleged breach of privacy by Finance Minister Colm Imbert, in inquiring about whether or not an importer approached the Exim-Bank for a foreign exchange (forex) request, is unacceptable.

She also said this is part of the well known political strategy of deflection, to divert the public's attention from the main issue of forex distribution.

Imbert and Nunez-Tesheira served together in the cabinet of the Patrick Manning administration from 2007-2010. Nunez-Tesheira is now a deputy political leader of the HOPE party.

In a statement issued on October 30, Ramsaran Dairy Products (RDP) founder Rajnanan Ramsaran said Imbert may have breached his company's right to privacy by asking the bank whether or not the company had asked for foreign exchange (forex).

He expressed concern this could leave his family, company and its employees vulnerable to exploitation by criminal elements.

Ramsaran has asked his attorney to investigate the legal ramifications of this breach and what can be done to address it.

In a post on X on October 29, Imbert said he checked with the EximBank and was told Ramsaran had "never applied to the EximBank for access to



Karen Nunez-Tesheira, left, and Colm Imbert

forex."

Imbert was responding to letters Ramsaran wrote to the Central Bank, Auditor General and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on October 25 about the lack of information on the distribution of forex.

The letters also follow a judicial review challenge over the inability to source foreign exchange to import paper-based cartons for a new water product.

In a statement via WhatsApp on November 1, Nunez-Tesheira said, "The MoF (Minister of Finance – Imbert) should realise by now that the righteous

indignation, coupled with the apparent breach of confidentiality by the MoF, is unacceptable."

She described Imbert's comment that Ramsaran never applied to the EximBank for forex as "a classic time-worn case of deflection.

"The central issue raised is the modus/ criteria for determining an equitable, transparent and accountable distribution of what is clearly a critical shortage of forex."

She hoped the Central Bank would shed much-needed light on this issue, which has negatively affected ordinary

citizens.

"That is more than fair and reasonable as it appears that significantly greater forex is available to a few."

Nunez-Tesheira said there should be a clear understanding of the criteria for forex distribution.

Such criteria, she continued, "should include the national economic objectives – to what extent; and the variables used; to increase our forex earnings potential as opposed to consumption (merchant vs producer); the number of high- or middle-end jobs which could be created; and the extent to which the repatriation of forex is effectively monitored."

Nunez-Tesheira said the letters Ramsaran had sent merely provided "the launching pad for much-needed answers in line with international standards."

In a statement on October 31, Oropouche West MP Davendranath Tancoo called on Imbert to state exactly what information he requested of Eximbank, how the request was made and on what basis the bank provided the information to him.

Tancoo, who is also UNC chairman and chairman of the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee, also called on the EximBank to provide an unambiguous explanation of the conditions under which Imbert was able to access information about its clientele.

## School poll: Youth want to leave Trinidad and Tobago

IN a school hall filled with 200 pupils, about half of them indicated they wished to leave Trinidad and Tobago to study, and of these only one said she would come back to TT afterwards.

These were the startling findings of an impromptu poll of pupils done by economist Dr Indera Sagewan on November 4 at Hillview College, El Dorado.

Economist Dr Marlene Atz, Barataria/San Juan MP Saddam Hosein and Patriotic Front leader Mickela Panday, along with Sagewan, gave brief presentations on the national budget and then answered pupils' questions.

The occasion was a post-budget panel discussion, chaired by journalist Akash Samaroo and staged by the education committee of the college's PTA.

Sagewan polled pupils present by a show of hands as to their desire to attend university abroad and then to return to TT.

Asking pupils to explain themselves, she then surmised crime, a declining economy and fears of joblessness were to blame for their



Mickela Panday with students who participated in the impromptu poll

wish to migrate.

Referring to the total budget spending of the two terms of Dr Keith Rowley's administration, she scoffed, "After \$500 billion, we are spinning top in mud."

She said the Government advocated food security, yet allocated just

\$1.1 billion to agriculture.

"You have no money to grow the sector."

She also warned, "Most of the skilled people we trained in renewable energy are working outside of TT."

Sagewan said the Government had failed to use the budget to indicate

where new jobs could be made or to diversify the economy.

"This budget is another \$59 billion, but we are no closer to achieving sustainable development."

She advised the Government to seek foreign help to fix crime.

"Fifteen per cent of the budget has gone to national security, but where is crime?"

A pupil asked why she blamed youngsters for wishing to leave TT.

She replied she was not blaming them, as she herself had two youngsters studying abroad, amid concerns about crime and job prospects in TT.

Sagewan said TT's natural gas production was half of the 2011 volumes, saying the Government was hoping to access Venezuelan gas by 2027.

Atz remarked that diversification had some prerequisites, such as a capable workforce trained in the new sectors. "It is also a lack of political will.

"Because so much money is from oil and gas, it is a comfortable space for us."

She lamented an insufficient strategising for diversification.

# West Indies Women to make return to Test cricket after 20 year hiatus

WEST Indies women will make a welcome return to Test cricket after a 20-year hiatus from the sport's longest format.

This was confirmed on November 4, when the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced its line-up for the Blockbuster Women's Future Tours Programme (FTP) for 2025-2029.

The maroon women reignite the region's Test status when they play host to Australia for one match in 2026; 50 years after the Caribbean team made their Test debut against the Australians in 1976.

England women play against the Windies in 2027 and this will be the first meeting between the squads in this format since 1979. It was also confirmed that the WI women will travel to South Africa for an away Test in 2028.

WI women have not played a Test match since 2004. Their short record from four Test series stands at three draws and one loss to England. The maroon team played Australia (0-0) in 1976, India in 1977 (1-1), lost to England (2-0) in 1979 and drew against Pakistan (0-0) in 2004. The 1976 match against Australia was the last time West Indies played a Test match at home.

Former West Indies and TT women's captain Ann Brown-John expressed elation with the West Indies' reintroduction to Test cricket and said it can bring all-round benefit to the region and its players to improve their overall competitiveness.

"It's a very positive step for West Indies women's cricket to be a part of world Test cricket. It augurs well for our cricketers that they can get back into playing the longer format of the game," said the former West Indies women's lead selector.

"I believe once you're playing the longer format it will also assist us with 50-over cricket, learning to stay and bat long at the wicket."

Browne-John believes this new dimension of cricket will be an eye-opener for the region's new generation of players, who have never competed at such a level.

"It will also help the younger players because most of them have been exposed a lot to T20s, so it would be good to get back into the traditional form of cricket and building from there. I only see positives about (it) and am looking forward to the first Test match in 2026 and all other which follow."

Browne-John added that WI women would have to start to play some longer forms of the game here, whether two-day or three-day cricket, to prepare for these Tests. She relished the opportunity to return to such an elite level of competition.

She expressed confidence that Cricket West Indies had already begun looking into these steps towards prepar-



West Indies women celebrate a wicket against Pakistan

ing a well-equipped squad for the 2026 opener.

"I've looked at Test players all over the world within recent time, and I've seen even some of the players who have been (playing) limited overs cricket, they were able to somehow transfer that knowledge and change into the Test cricket style.

"I am sure we would be able to do that and it also gives the opportunity for some young ones to come through. And even if they are not T20 or ODI crick-

eters, we're developing for Test cricketers...will give more players opportunities to think that I can make a West Indies team. There are only positives that come from this."

A November 4 BBC report said Johnny Grave, whose tenure as Cricket West Indies CEO ended last week, raised the prospect of the Windies playing a Test at the iconic Kensington Oval, Barbados.

"When you have an iconic player, who will go down in history of our

game, in Hayley Mathews (Barbados), it seems right she will have the opportunity to wear a maroon Test cap and lead her team out, hopefully at her home ground of the Kensington Oval at some point in a Test," he told the Stumped podcast.

"Our philosophy has been that red-ball cricket is where you can build your technique, hone your defence and look to score all around the wicket. If that is what we believe for the men then it has to be the case for the women," Grave said.

## Man U striker Yorke new coach of T&T Football

THE Trinidad and Tobago Football Association (TTFA) has announced the appointment of former Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke as head coach of the men's national team.

In a media release on November 1, the TTFA described the signing as "a new chapter for Trinidad and Tobago football, as Yorke returns to lead the nation's journey with a primary focus on upcoming World Cup qualification efforts."

TTFA president Kieron Edwards said Yorke's "experience, leadership, and commitment to the red, white, and black are exactly what we need to inspire our players and our nation."

Yorke, a former national captain, said he was proud and privileged to get the nod for his first international head coaching position.

He said, "The opportunity to work with this talented, close-knit group of players is something I look forward to."

"Having helped TT to the semi-finals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup in 2000, captained the side at the 2006 World Cup and been assistant manager, my love and commitment to my national team is well documented."

Yorke said he looked forward to building on the good work done by his predecessors Angus Eve, with whom he played national football, and caretaker coach Derek King.

Yorke was captain of the TT 2006 World Cup squad



Dwight Yorke: new T&T Football coach

during an illustrious playing career that saw him enjoy spells at Manchester United, Aston Villa, Birmingham City, Sunderland, Blackburn Rovers and Sydney FC.

He has served as head coach of Australian Premier Club Macarthur FC most recently and assistant coach at Sunderland for a brief period in 2008/2009 as well as serving as assistant coach of TT in 2009.

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