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Visitors to Barbados to Sleep in Comfort

Comfort Sleep Inc., a premier Caribbean manufacturer of luxury mattresses with an expanding regional footprint, proudly announces its collaboration with the Government of Barbados in support of the island's tourism sector. In an exciting development, Comfort Sleep will provide its superior luxury sleep solutions as part of the refurbishment of the Hilton Barbados Resort, a flagship property owned and managed by the government.

During a recent meeting, Comfort Sleep's Owner, Mr. Dennis Charran, alongside Mr. Bhaskar Sharma, CEO of Equality NewPaper, discussed this initiative with the Honourable Minister of Tourism and International Transportation Mr Ian Gooding -Edgehill. This collaboration underscores Comfort Sleep's commitment to enhancing the local tourism market by delivering world-class comfort to travelers visiting the island.

Mr. Charran shared his excitement about the project: "We are de-

lighted to partner with Hilton Barbados Resort. Our luxury sleep solutions, crafted with innovation and excellence, will offer guests an unmatched rest experience, contributing to the success of our island's tourism industry."

As part of its continued growth, Comfort Sleep took the initiative to expand their operations to Barbados. Mr Charran opened their distribution and retail store in 2023, these local operations are aimed at better serving both the Barbadian public and the island's tourism operators. This new facility, which is managed by Mrs Helene Bovell offers easier access to Comfort Sleep's high-quality mattresses for local residents, hotels, boutique hotels, and the increasing number of Airbnb operators.

Comfort Sleep has already established successful strategic partnerships with long-standing Barbadian retailers such as GAJAH and Standard Distributors. These collaborations have positioned the company to serve the growing luxury tourism market more effectively, ensuring that operators have access to premium products that elevate their guest experience.

The Honourable Minister of Tourism Mr Gooding-Edgehill wel-



Ian Gooding-Edghill with Bhaskar Shurma and Dennis Charran

comed this development: "The tourism sector benefits greatly when regional companies like Comfort Sleep invest in quality products that enhance the visitor experience. We look forward to seeing the positive impact of this collaboration on our hospitality industry."

Comfort Sleep's advanced mattress designs incorporate orthopedic support and eco-friendly materials, catering to the needs of high-end hotels and other hospitality providers. The Hilton Barbados refurbishment project is the latest example of the company's efforts to align with Barbados' goal of offering unparalleled luxury to travelers.

For more information about Com-

fort Sleep Inc. and its luxury mattress products, visit www.comfortsleepbarbados.com.

Equality expands to Barbados

Equality News, Canada's largest publication dedicated to the Guyanese and wider Caribbean community, is excited to announce its expansion into Barbados and the surrounding Caribbean region. This initiative aims to highlight the island as a key tourism source market and a potential export market for Barbadian products.

With a strong presence in Ontario, Montreal, and Edmonton—areas that together comprise a market of nearly 5 million people—Equality News serves as a vital platform for the Caribbean diaspora. Its online presence at www.equalitynews.ca further amplifies the voices of the Caribbean community in Canada.

Continued on Page 2

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Equality News expands to Barbados, collaborates with manufacturer

From Page One

The publication, which is released weekly, is committed to multiculturalism and representation, aligning perfectly with the rich cultural tapestry of Barbados.

In a step toward this exciting expansion, Equality News is pleased to welcome Mr. Gavin Bovell as Associate Editor in Barbados. A seasoned academic and consultant, Mr. Bovell has been actively involved in the Barbadian and Guyanese business communities, bringing a wealth of experience and in-

sight to the publication.

In addition to its expansion, Equality News has already begun supporting the local Barbadian manufacturing sector through a partnership with JS Enterprise, the manufacturer of the Superb Blends line of seasonings and condiments. This collaboration underscores Equality News's commitment to fostering local businesses and showcasing the quality products that Barbados has to offer the Canadian market.

“This is a developing effort between us, and we hope to make Barbados proud, just as we have done for



Barbados editor Gavin Bovell with Bhaskar Sharma

Guyana,” said Mr. Bovell. “Barbados is a vibrant multicultural nation, and it is crucial to showcase its diversity and potential to a wider audience.”

The expansion of Equality News will not only promote Barbados as a premier tourism destination but also highlight local products, fostering economic growth and export opportunities. With its rich cultural heritage, Barbados is a beacon of multiculturalism in the Caribbean and beyond.

“We are confident that our platform will provide valuable exposure for Barbadian businesses and tourism operators, facilitating connections that can

lead to mutual growth,” added Mr. Bhaskar Sharma, CEO of Equality News.

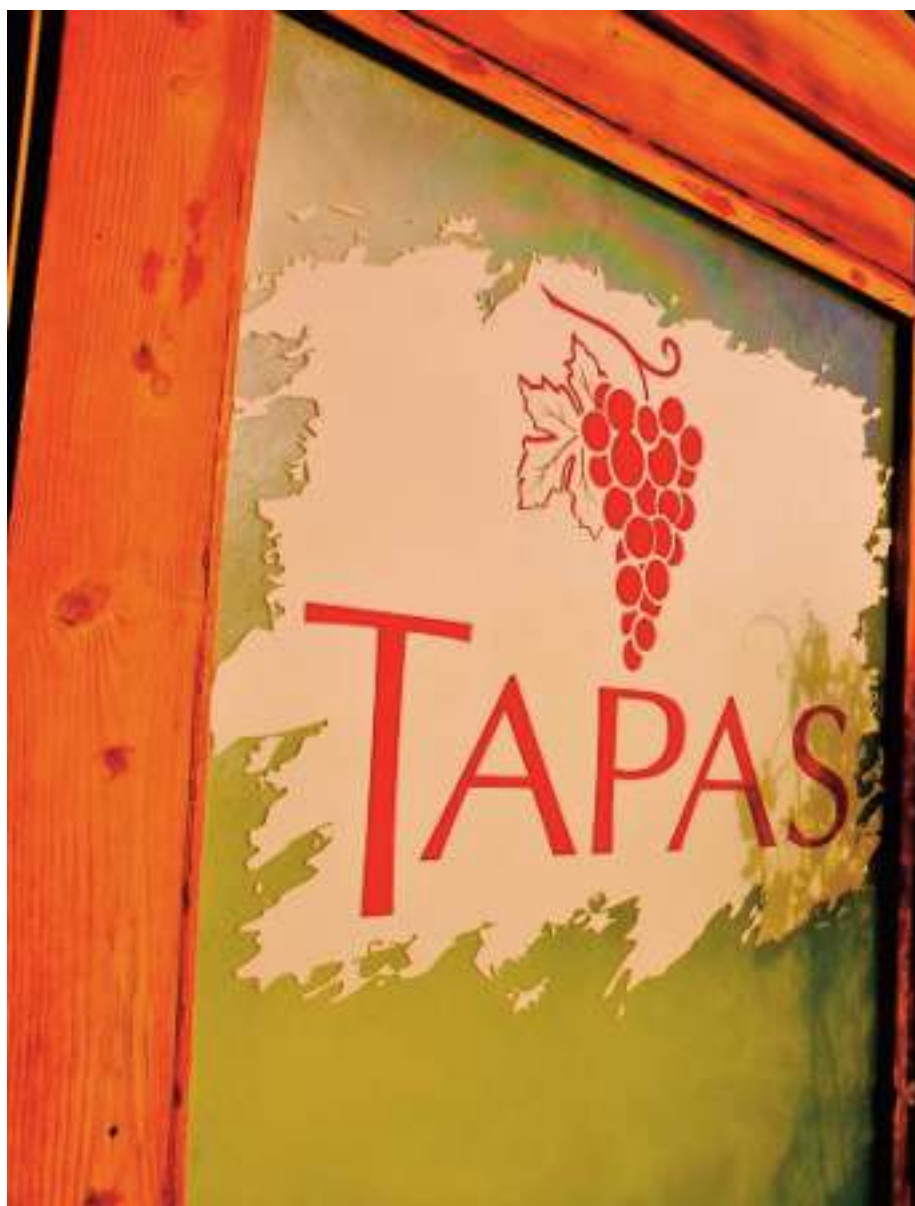
The initiative has garnered attention from various stakeholders, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who appreciates Equality News's efforts in providing a platform for Barbados in Canada.

Equality News invites the community to support this endeavor by spreading the word and engaging with the publication. For inquiries or further information, the publisher can be reached in Barbados at 246-845-6206 or via email at equalitygroup@rogers.com.



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Guyana expends \$1.4B to enhance non-traditional crop cultivation

The government has expended \$1.4 billion to support non-traditional crop cultivation and diversify the country's agricultural sector in the first six months of 2024.

This investment has facilitated the construction of several tissue culture and micropropagation facilities.

These facilities enable farmers to multiply genetically identical crops year-round, ensuring a steady supply of disease-free crops and boosting overall production levels.

Additionally, the facilities allow for the local production of previously imported produce, bringing the country closer to reducing its food import bill.

The National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) plans to further this initiative by distributing 20,000 breadfruit plantlets to farmers in Region One.

Efforts to cultivate other non-traditional crops such as onions, red beans, and blackeye peas are steadily advancing.

There is also a strong focus on growing high-value crops, including bell peppers, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chilli peppers, cilantro,



Crops being cultivated in a shade house

curly kale, garden beets, garlic, hot peppers, lettuce, mint, parsley, sweet peppers, and tomatoes.

By locally cultivating these crops, the government aims to make Guyana self-sustainable while expanding its export potential.

In partnership with the private sector, the government has also made significant investments in hydroponic

systems and shade houses.

Since assuming office, the government has established 445 shade houses, benefitting 227 farmers nationwide.

Of this number, 75 shade houses were constructed in the first half of this year alone.

As a result of these investments, high-value crop production has surged to 5.9 tonnes for the first half of 2024.

This significant increase contributes to the 35.5 tonnes of high-value crops produced since 2020.

Amidst global concerns over food security and climate challenges, the government remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing and sustaining the country's agricultural sector, ensuring the continued provision for its citizens. (DPI)

Guyana eyes shared oil exploration with Suriname

GUYANA is keen on perusing a joint natural gas development and shared infrastructure with its eastern continental neighbour Suriname, as the country is set to unlock a new potential for offshore oil and gas development.

This is according to People's Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary and Guyana's Vice-President. Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo.

"We are looking forward to working with Suriname on synergies," Dr. Jagdeo told reporters on Thursday at a press conference at the PPP's Freedom House, Georgetown headquarters.

This week, a staggering US\$10.5 billion was invested in Suriname's Block 58 oil and gas project. The total recoverable resources of the Sapakara and Krabdagu fields, called "Gran Morgu," are expected to exceed 700 million barrels. TotalEnergies and APA

intend to develop these fields.

Dr. Jagdeo pointed out: "The project will focus a lot on oil, so we still need to look at the development of gas, and that is what we are trying because Suriname they found quite a bit of gas, and our discoveries closer to the Suriname border had more gas in them. So, we still need to try to collaborate in the context of our project, or aim to monetise this gas."

Suriname is pushing forward with its massive offshore project, and Guyana is hopeful that the two countries can co-operate more in a variety of areas, including oil and gas development.

Jagdeo disclosed that he has already engaged Suriname's Foreign Minister Albert Randim about meeting soon to talk about the Guyana-Suriname partnership.



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Cricket in Guyana

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, October 9, 2024

CRICKET is much more than a game of sports. It is a regional institution, uniting all nationalities and cultures in the Anglo-phone Caribbean. Nowhere is this fact more manifested than in the recently concluded Caribbean Premier League (CPL).

Both the finals and semi-finals were played in Guyana at the Providence Stadium which was transformed into a sea of entertainment, the likes of which were unmatched in any other region of the world.

Such was the extent of the success of the tournament that a new variant of the games have been launched- the Global Super League-which is the first of its kind in the Caribbean and Latin America.

There is a positive correlation between sports and economic develop-

ment. This was particularly evident during the CPL matches in Guyana. Almost all of the hotels in and around Georgetown were filled to the full limit of their capacity. The same was true for restaurants and other places of entertainment. The mood was one of festivity with a Carnival-like atmosphere.

It is this reality that no doubt influenced the decision to have a global super league scheduled for November this year. Chairman of the Global Super League, former Captain of the West Indies cricket team Sir Clive Lloyd has correctly observed that the passion for cricket in Guyana rivals that of fans anywhere. In a real sense, the setting up of this cricket league is a celebration of our love for the game of cricket and our rich culture.

Guyana's President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has pledged the government's full support for the new Global Super League which will include the Amazon

Warriors and several other teams from around the cricketing world.

This undoubtedly is a major development which will bring this country of ours on the international spotlight. Guyana is already making a name for itself as a regional powerhouse and the introduction of the games will further catapult Guyana in the league of the bigger cricketing nations.

In all of this, full credit must be given to President Ali who has been instrumental in the hosting of the CPL finals and semi-finals for three consecutive years including 2025.

It will be recalled that the political opposition was critical of the construction of the Marriot Hotel and had disparagingly described the hotel as a 'white elephant'. They have all been proven wrong and even with the addition of a number of new hotels and the construction of several more, finding suitable accommodation in Georgetown still

remains a challenge for tourists.

Vision, it is said, is the ability to see beyond the immediate. Both President Ali and Vice-president Jagdeo has displayed visionary leadership qualities which have had and continues to have a transformative impact on the country.

Indeed, the future of Guyana is in safe hands especially at this time of significant challenges at the international level as a consequence of wars, conflicts, climate change and the Covid-pandemic. Despite of this all, Guyana's economic remain robust and resilient. The country's international profile has never been higher. Guyana is today playing a lead role on critical global issues such as climate change and food and energy security. The CPL games may be over but the celebrations continue. The coming global super league matches scheduled for next month will certainly provide fresh impetus to the celebratory mood of the Guyanese people.

LETTERS

Criticisms should be rooted in facts

Dear Editor,

IN response to the claim that Vice-President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo is ignoring corruption in GuySuCo and the Ministry of Agriculture, I must disagree.

While concerns about the sugar industry are legitimate, the challenges GuySuCo faces stem from decades of mismanagement, inefficiencies, and global shifts in sugar demand. Blaming Jagdeo for failing to address corruption assumes that reforms and recovery efforts are simple when, in fact, they are complex and require time. Additionally, accusing him without providing concrete evidence undermines the constructive dialogue needed to move forward.

Efforts have been made to restructure GuySuCo, including re-opening estates, promoting agricultural diversification, and securing funding for modernisation.

While progress may be slower than expected, the government's willingness to engage in these reforms re-

flects a commitment to reviving the industry rather than turning a blind eye to corruption. Broad accusations do not advance solutions. Instead, what's required is more transparent, fact-based engagement to address specific areas

of concern and ensure accountability.

In conclusion, criticism is vital in holding public officials accountable, but it should be rooted in facts, not broad generalisations. The future of GuySuCo requires thoughtful, con-

structive efforts from all stakeholders, rather than dismissive rhetoric that fails to acknowledge the full complexity of the situation.

Sincerely,
Fawaz Harry

Empty vessels make the most noise

Dear Editor,

THE proverb "Empty vessels make the most noise" was physically demonstrated at the press conference held last Wednesday by a shepherd in search of a flock.

Dismantled by those who have lost confidence, disbanded by those seeking alternatives, and disenchanted by those refusing to listen to the monotony of cluelessness, he stands short of a length, alone on slippery ground and surviving in a vacuum.

He badly and sadly relies on an ailing aide who is limping and lamenting as a lost and croaking lark. The ever faithful "man's best friend" to round up the flock, is grappling on any straw to re-

paint a darker shade of dignity in his dusking days with slivers of "spinning yarns."

As a man fighting for survival at the helm, the figure-head's leadership is in jeopardy as his "empty rhetoric and no action" was dismissed as "substanceless!" Adding nothing new with foresight, he continues to meander in hindsight and mingles with meaninglessness as he meddles without purpose, pride or priority.

His political past-time is past bedtime as he professes the proficiency of a disillusioned professional. Drained for ideas, he has nothing refreshing to invest in innovation and thus, his initiative to intimate any interest, implores him to attempt to impress others while intoxi-

cated with impoverished innocence!

In the good, old days, those growing up on the sugar plantations would recall fearlessly running after cane carts filled with canes and pulled by tractors, while being transported from the fields to the factories.

The clean, fresh air would invigorate you as you would pay attention to the teacher seated on a chair in front while at times, being disturbed by the persevering red or black ants running on your exposed legs and penetrating your skin with a sting. Yes, a usual sight was the site of pit-latrines for us students. It was a natural norm! There was no indecency in such decency!

Yours respectfully,
Jai Lall



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Man guilty of murdering his wife, trying to kill his daughter

By Suruj Singh
LJI REPORTER

A man who killed his wife and attempted to murder his daughter has been found guilty by a jury of his peers for first-degree murder.

Hamid Ayoub was also found guilty of the attempted murder of his daughter in 2021.

Both sides in his trial agreed that on June 15, 2021, he parked his car near the home Hanadi Mohamed, 50, shared with their two children, about 20 minutes after getting an email from a tracking device he had hidden months earlier in a vehicle used by the children.

With murderous intent — and after years of physical and emotional abuse that caused his family to leave him and call 911 multiple times — he stabbed Mohamed 39 times in broad daylight on busy Baseline Road.

Then he turned the knife on their 22-year-old daughter, stabbing her 12 times before jogging back to his car and driving away.

Ayoub was arrested hours later at The Ottawa Hospital's General campus while

seeking treatment for a cut he sustained during the attack.

The jury was asked to decide whether Ayoub's murder of Mohamed was planned and deliberate, or committed amid a pattern of criminal harassment — the two routes to first-degree murder the Crown argued for — or, as the defence contended, an impulsive explosion of rage and violence that favoured a finding of guilt for second-degree murder.

As for the attack on his daughter, the jury was going over whether to accept the Crown's theory that Ayoub meant to kill her (attempted murder), or the defence theory that he was enraged when she tried to stop him from killing her mother (aggravated assault).

Jury deliberations began Monday and the verdict was reached just minutes after they resumed Tuesday morning.

Ayoub, 63, pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder and attempted murder in Ottawa Superior Court at the beginning of his trial on Sept. 16.

Crown prosecutors Louise Tansey and Cecilia Bouzane rejected his guilty pleas to the lesser charges.

— with files from the CBC



Hamid Ayoub — found guilty on Tuesday

Shiver Me Timbers! Doctors warned to look out for scurvy

Scurvy is a disease that likely conjures up images of sickly sailors from hundreds of years ago, but doctors in Canada are being warned to look out for the condition now, as a result of growing food insecurity.

A report published Monday in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) details the case study of a 65-year-old woman diagnosed with scurvy at a Toronto hospital last year.

The authors say the case points to the need for physicians to consider the possibility of scurvy, particularly among patients at higher risk for nutrient deficiencies, including people with low socioeconomic status and isolated older adults.

"This isn't the first case of scurvy that I've seen in my career so far," said Dr. Sally Engelhart, the study's lead author and an internal medicine specialist at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

Scurvy results from having a severe deficiency of vitamin C. Natural sources of vitamin C — also known as ascorbic acid — include citrus fruits, such as oranges and lemons, and vegetables such as broccoli and spinach.

The CMAJ report draws links between scurvy and food insecurity — when low income forces someone to skip meals or reduce the nutritional value of the food they eat.

While there are no clear statistics that show whether the incidence of scurvy is on the rise in Canada, recent research suggests it's a growing problem in the U.S.

A study published in July that examined hospital records of some 19 million children in the U.S. found the incidence of scurvy tripled in a four-year period. The rate went from 8.2

cases per 100,000 children in 2016 to 26.7 cases per 100,000 children in 2020.

Engelhart says she thinks most physicians in Canada would not expect to see cases of scurvy.

"Really, if you're not thinking about scurvy, then there's no way that you're going to be able to diagnose it," Engelhart said in an interview.

Her report says the case "presents a complex example of food insecurity manifesting as an uncommon diagnosis."

The woman — socially isolated, with little family support and limited mobility — had been living almost entirely on canned soup, canned tuna, white bread and processed cheese, with no fresh produce.

Symptoms of scurvy can be seen within eight to 12 weeks of inadequate intake of vitamin C, and can include fatigue, large patches of bruising, bleeding gums, as well as hemorrhages that make hair follicles appear bright red.

Left untreated, it can lead to spontaneous internal bleeding, the destruction of red blood cells and, eventually, death.

The authors of the CMAJ report say scurvy "should not be considered only an archaic diagnosis of 18th-century seafarers."

Researchers at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont., found 52 patients hospitalized between 2009 and 2017 whose charts showed vitamin C levels low enough to cause scurvy, 13 of whom were actually diagnosed with the disease.

Health advocates in the U.K. have been warning for years about the risk of scurvy in poorer communities.

A 2008 study published in the Journal of Public Health of 1,300 people from low-income households across the U.K. found 25 per cent of men and 16 per cent of women had deficient levels of vitamin C.

"Health professionals need to be aware that poor vitamin C status is relatively common among adults living on

a low income," said the authors of the U.K. study. Dr. Andrew Boozary, a primary care physician at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health, says people who have higher degrees of food insecurity are at much higher risk for many chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular disease and mental health conditions.

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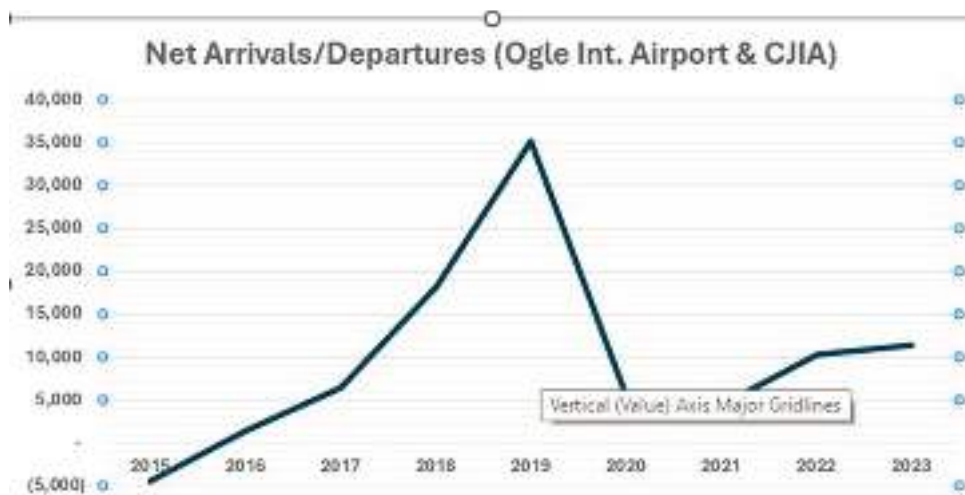
Immigration data disproves the notion that Guyanese are migrating



Joel Bhagwandin

There is a notion propagated by some commentators and aspirational political leaders alike, that despite Guyana's high GDP growth rates, the long lines at the passport office daily is indicative of people migrating. While it may be true that people are still migrating to other countries, this is not a phenomenon unique to Guyana. People migrate all the time even from the developed countries to other countries in pursuit of their goals and ambitions or better opportunities.

Thus, what is important in our case, however, is to what extent are persons migrating; is it in the thousands as it were historically during the periods of political instability and when the country was bankrupt in the 1980s-1990s? And how can we determine how many Guyanese are migrating annually? It's quite simple: we can extrapolate using arrivals and departures data for the two international airports, namely, Ogle International Airport and the Cheddie Jagan International Airport (CJIA). What are we looking for? We are looking for the net arrivals or departures for the various years available.



What will that metric tell us or how do we interpret it? If the net arrivals is positive, it means that there are more persons coming/returning to Guyana than those leaving the country. On the other hand, if the net departures is positive (negative net arrivals), then this means that there are more persons who are leaving Guyana than those arriving or returning. Now, let's look at the result.

The chart below shows the net arrivals and departures data published by the Guyana Bureau of Statistics for the period 2015-2023. According to this

data, there was only one year in which there was a positive net departures of 4,488 persons in the year 2015; whereas for the years 2016 through 2023, there were positive net arrivals amounting to, cumulatively for that period, 88,027 or an average of 9,781 annually.

One may question how many of those persons are Guyanese and how many are expatriates associated with the oil and gas sector. In this regard, according to publicly available data, the sector employs approximately 6,000-10,000 persons, 90% of whom are

Guyanese, which means that just about 10% of the employees in that sector are expatriates. As such, the large number of net positive arrivals (88,027) for the period 2015-2023 are not expatriates, since they only account for a relatively small percentage of the petroleum industry's workforce.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that most of the persons returning to Guyana annually are either Guyanese from the diaspora returning home, visiting or travelling frequently to conduct business, and/or Guyanese residents visiting other countries, whether it's for vacation/tourism purposes or for business purposes. More importantly, this analysis of the immigration data for the period 2015-2023, has empirically disproven the implicit notion that a large number Guyanese are migrating. The data evidently shows that the reality is the inverse of that notion, wherein thousands of persons are coming to and/or returning to Guyana annually, nearly 10,000 annually, more than those who are perhaps leaving the country permanently.

Residents of Kumaka are grateful

Dear Editor,

I AM writing to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture for its unwavering commitment to the agricultural sector, particularly with the recent commissioning of agro-processing facilities at White Water and Kumaka in Region One.

This remarkable \$51 million investment, with \$39 million allocated to the White Water facility, is set to profoundly benefit both farmers and agro-processors in the region.

The facility's cutting-edge equipment, designed to enhance the production of high-demand products like cassava bread, farine, tuma water, and cassareep, will undoubtedly provide valuable economic opportunities for the 3,000 residents across eight satellite



Kumaka is grateful to the investment by the Ministry of Agriculture

villages. The potential to process 140 kilograms of cassava daily, amounting to approximately 50,400 kilograms an-

nually, is a significant step forward for the region. Additionally, the facility's capacity to produce 24,000 litres of

cassareep each month is truly impressive, and will greatly contribute to the livelihoods of the local population.

This initiative will not only increase the efficiency of agricultural production, but also help boost the income of those involved by adding value to their products. Your leadership in recognising and addressing the needs of our agricultural communities is highly commendable, and this facility represents a beacon of hope and growth for farmers and agro-processors alike.

Once again, I extend my sincerest thanks for the Ministry's continued efforts at empowering rural communities and ensuring the sustainability of our agricultural sector.

Yours sincerely,
Jacob Roberts



Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO



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An aerial view of Guyana in the night

Celebrities, Influencers spark renewed interest in Destination Guyana

GUYANA'S tourism industry continues to shine, with international and regional travellers drawn to the country's diverse cultural and ecological offerings. Recently, an influx of influencers and celebrities, particularly those with Guyanese heritage, has added new energy to the destination, thanks in large part to the efforts of His Excellency, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, described as Guyana's "greatest" tourism ambassador.

Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA), Kamrul Baksh, praised President Ali's dedication to promoting destination Guyana on the global stage. According to Baksh, President Ali's proactive approach, paired with GTA's marketing strategy, has been instrumental in capturing the attention of influencers and celebrities, further amplifying Guyana's appeal. The President capitalises on every opportunity to showcase the country's charm, encouraging the world to explore its rich culture and landscapes.

"The recent wave of influencers and celebrities visiting Guyana has contributed significantly to the increased interest in our country," Baksh explained. "Through their expansive social media platforms, they help reach new audiences eager to experience the



Director of GTA, Kamrul Baksh

warmth of our people and the wonders of our land."

Among the notable visitors is British actor Jacob Scipio, known for his role in *Bad Boys*. Scipio recently toured several of Guyana's top tourist destinations, including his grandfather's home on Leguan Island. Baksh highlighted Scipio's ability to connect with young people during his visit, sharing his expertise with students and

leaving a lasting impression. "These interactions not only promote our tourism but also inspire the next generation," Baksh noted. "Our youth see the success of these global figures and realise that their own dreams—whether in acting, fashion, or travel—are within reach."

Adding to the star power, American actress and television personality, Cynthia Bailey, is currently visiting

Guyana. Baksh expressed excitement about the attention her presence will bring, especially as she participates in a fashion show that features local designers and models. This collaboration, he said, further enhances Guyana's reputation as a sustainable and fashionable tourism destination.

Guyana witnessed record-breaking tourist arrivals in July and August of 2024, with Baksh confident that September will set another milestone. "While I am thrilled that hotel rooms, tours, and restaurants are booked, it's equally important to note that this boom has a ripple effect, benefitting small and micro-businesses across the country," Baksh stated.

He also credited President Ali's visionary role in creating the highly successful Cricket Carnival, which has attracted international tourists and enriched local communities. "The activities surrounding the CPL have given both tourists and locals an unforgettable experience, showcasing Guyana as a top-notch destination."

As influencers and celebrities continue to shine a spotlight on Guyana, the country is poised to welcome even more visitors, further cementing its position as a must-visit location on the global tourism map.

Guyana set to surpass 1 million passenger mark by November

GUYANA'S tourism industry is experiencing a meteoric rise, driven by strategic government initiatives and robust economic growth. The country is on track to welcome its one millionth passenger by November 2024, a testament to its growing allure as a destination for both leisure and business travellers.

Ramesh Ghir, CEO of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, has announced that Guyana has welcomed over 801,000 passengers in the first nine months of 2024. This significant increase in tourism is a direct result of government initiatives to promote the country as a destination of choice for visitors.

Events like the CPL and Cricket Carnival have also contributed significantly to the surge in tourist arrivals. Ghir confirmed that the country's passenger traffic has increased by 18% year-over-year, with an additional 125,000 passengers processed compared to the same period in 2023.

He noted that the growth is fuelled by increased airline connectivity, with several new airlines adding routes to Guyana and offering more than



Over 1 million people will have arrived at the Cheddi Jagan Airport by November

200,000 additional seats. President Mohamed Irfaan Ali has been instrumental in driving the tourism sector's development.

His efforts to market Guyana to major airlines have resulted in negotia-

tions for additional carriers to enter the market soon.

According to a press release issued by the airport, this significant milestone underscores Guyana's emergence as a vibrant and attractive desti-

nation for travellers worldwide. The country's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and growing economic opportunities are attracting visitors from near and far.

Major upgrades to Georgetown Public Hospital

WITH a modern concept already in mind, massive enhancement to the infrastructure of Guyana's largest hospital – the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) – is imminent.

This was, on Thursday, revealed by People's Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary and Guyana's Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo who told reporters that several new health facilities will come on stream in the first and second quarters of 2025.

There are 12 new facilities that are under construction, simultaneously, in Guyana, and, of these, one will be a state-of-the-art maternal and paediatric hospital in Ogle, East Coast Demerara.

Dr. Jagdeo explained that when the new facility comes on stream it would replace the existing maternal unit at GPHC.

"As soon as we move out that children and maternity unit from the Georgetown Hospital, we will then focus on upgrading the Georgetown hospital itself, but modern with little parks there. We already have a concept with parks, recreational areas within the hospital and all that..." Dr. Jagdeo explained.

Out of the 12 upcoming hospitals, six of them will be replacement facilities.

A new hospital is being constructed by the government in Region Six, specifically at No. 75 Village. The objective of this project is to replace the existing Skeldon Hospital and enhance the range of services available to the community.

Additionally, the construction of



The Georgetown Public Hospital — getting major upgrades

new hospitals at Anna Regina, Region Two; De Kinderen, Region Three; Diamond and Enmore, Region Four; Bath, Region Five, and Skeldon Region Six, is in progress.

Dr. Jagdeo pointed out, too, that the existing New Amsterdam Hospital was being replaced with another, more modern facility that costs about US\$161 million. The current hospital will be transformed into a better facility to provide mental health services.

Dr. Jagdeo further disclosed that some 3000 skilled persons will be needed when the new facilities come on stream.

These figures were determined following the government's undertaking of

a comprehensive 'manpower survey' to evaluate the demand for qualified and skilled personnel.

"We will need about 3000 persons, about 500 per hospital which will include cleaners, porters, drivers — a whole range of people."

"When the remaining hospitals are completed, the other six hospitals, will be large like the maternal and children hospital here in Georgetown and the one in New Amsterdam. Those will require more people but then there would be smaller ones, like the ones in the hinterland. They will need 100 persons, because those will be mainly diagnostic centres."

The General Secretary also pointed

out that the manpower survey is not only limited to the health sector; the government has been evaluating its need for skilled personnel in other sectors, such as tourism and hospitality.

The government has initiated the recruitment and training of individuals to support the 12 hospitals.

Some \$129.8 billion was been budgeted in this year's fiscal plans for the continued transformation of the health sector into one which meets world-class standards.

Of that, \$10.3 billion was allocated to continue construction of the world-class paediatric and maternal hospital in Ogle.

Guyana's music festival leaves its mark on Cricket Carnival again

VIBRANT rhythms of steelpan and the pulsating beats of soca transformed Kingston Beach on Thursday evening, as hundreds gathered to experience the Pan Brass and Soca festival. Now in its third year, this signature event has become an integral part of Cricket Carnival, attracting both Guyanese nationals and international tourists alike.

Hosted by Trinidadian personality Daniel Loveless alongside Guyana's own Gabriella Chapman, the festival showcased a stellar lineup of performers from across the Caribbean. Yet Pan Brass and Soca aims to be more than entertainment. According to Director of National Events, Andrew Tyndall, it represents a celebration of Caribbean music and has emerged as just one part of Guyana's flourishing tourism industry.

The festival featured performances from four distinguished steelpan groups, with three representing local talent while some of Guyana's best musicians took the stage. Tyndall, the event coordinator, emphasised that this eclectic mix was by design and resonated strongly with attendees.

"We had four steel bands, the Kunjazz Steelpan group, The Guyana Police Force Band, and the Pan Groove Steel Orchestra. We had one group from Trinidad, which was the La Brea Nightingales," he explained.

He further added, "Then we had a mixed medium band from the U.S. called Epic Tone, featuring pan, keyboards, drums, and bass player with percussion." The local talent was equally impressive, as Tyndall noted,



The La Brea Nightingales from Trinidad were part of the fun

"We had the Heatwave Band along with a brass quartet, and our local performers like Nekeita, Omaiah Hall, O.K.C., Calvin Burnett, and Adrian Dutchin." The event's highlight came from a feature performance, from the Temperature band from Trinidad and Tobago.

As the festivities continued into the early hours of Friday, the crowd swelled with both locals and tourists who had come for Cricket Carnival. This mix of sports and culture is a key strategy for Pan Brass and Soca, recognising that entertainment events play a crucial role in tourism development.

Tyndall explained that, "Entertain-

ment is a huge part of determining the success of your tourism brand. People will come to see the Kaieteur Falls and bird watching, but, at the end of the day, they want to be entertained as well. They want to know a bit of your culture. These are the experiences that they will take back with them when they leave. So, organising events like these and the carnival in general provides an opportunity for us to showcase our culture, offering visitors another aspect of the Guyanese lifestyle to soak up and enjoy. We see it as a very crucial contribution to our tourism product," Tyndall said.

The electric atmosphere at Pan Brass and Soca was the result of considerable efforts by the organising team and their sponsors. With robust support from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Republic Bank, One Communications, and newcomer Hess, the event has evolved significantly since its inception three years ago.

Tyndall emphasised that the festival aims to reintroduce people to the immersive experience of Caribbean music, particularly steelpan. "When people come to an event now, yes, it's a concert, but they also want to have an experience. The country's opening up, developing. People are travelling more, and when they go to events overseas, the experience starts the moment you reach the venue – from the decor to the atmosphere. People now have that expectation when they come to events locally."

The vision for Pan Brass and Soca extends beyond entertainment. Tyndall and his team are committed to learning from regional counterparts and elevating Guyana's musical offerings. "I try to attend other events around the region, especially in Trinidad, to see what's new, how they're doing it, and how we can improve," Tyndall shared.

He also emphasised a broader mission. "It's not just Pan alone. We're trying to reintroduce the brass band concept to Guyana. In the 60s and 70s, we were known for having top-class brass bands."

As tourism in Guyana continues to flourish, events like Pan Brass and Soca not only entertain but also create lasting memories for visitors.

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

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

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Guyana honours Cubana air disaster victims on anniversary of tragedy

GUYANA renewed its commitment to maintaining and preserving peace within the region as it honoured the victims of the Cubana Air Disaster on Sunday at a wreath-laying ceremony.

The event, which was held at the Cubana Air Disaster Monument on the Turkeyen campus of the University of Guyana, commemorated the 48th anniversary of the tragic incident.

In brief remarks, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Hugh Todd asserted that the last 48 years have strengthened the country's determination to maintain the region's peace.

He added that the monument erected in honour of those innocent lives stands as a sobering reminder that the world must intensify its drive to fight against all threats to humanity.

"On this CARICOM – Cuba Day Against Terrorism, the 48th anniversary of this heinous act, we pledge as a nation that we shall never forget the price they paid. In their honour, we shall spare no effort, working with the international community in the fight against terror and in the enduring struggle for peace, justice, progress, and freedom for all," the foreign affairs minister vowed.

Given the prevailing global conflicts, the minister stressed the importance of upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter.

"As members of the international community, we cannot waver in our commitment to universal peace even as we continue to encourage the peaceful settlement of disputes and peaceful co-existence among states," Minister Todd added.

On Wednesday, October 6, 1976, Cubana Airways Flight CU-455 was en route from Guyana to Havana, Cuba, with stops in Trinidad, Barbados, and Jamaica.

Tragically, nine minutes after taking off from Barbados' Seawell International Airport, two bombs exploded on board, causing the plane to crash into the Atlantic Ocean.

All 73 people – 57 Cubans, 11 Guyanese, and five North Koreans – perished in the disaster.

The 11 Guyanese were: Raymond



The 73 victims of the Cubana Air Disaster were on Sunday remembered in a simple wreath-laying ceremony

Persaud, Rawle Thomas, Jacqueline Williams, Rita Thomas, Harold Norton, Gordon Sobha, Ann Nelson, Margaret Bradshaw, Violet Thomas, Sabrina Harrypaul, and Seshnarine Kumar – all of whom were heading to Cuba to study medicine, engineering and other disciplines.

In 2022, during the Eighth CARICOM-Cuba Summit in Bridgetown, Barbados, the CARICOM-Cuba Day Against Terrorism was established in memory of the 73 people who lost their lives in the tragedy.

This observance also provides a powerful opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of both regions to combating terrorism in all its forms. The ceremony also saw the attendance of Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport Charles Ramson Jr, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Guyana Jorge Francisco Soberon Luis, Chinese Ambassador to Guyana Guo Haiyan, and other members of the diplomatic corps.



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Canadian group hosts awareness event in support of the University of Guyana

Dr. Ken Singh along with his wife, Jessie Singh, hosted a “Meet and Greet Reception” on Saturday September 28th in support of the University of Guyana and the University of Guyana Foundation, which was attended by Honorary Consul, Mani Singh, along with Consulate Team members Mr. Robert Bazil (UG Alumni) and Ms. Devina Richmond.

This event was not a fundraising event but was focused on creating awareness and building support in Canada for the University of Guyana.

This was the first major event for the Canadian arm of the UG Foundation. There were over 200 guests in attendance with both the Chancellor, Prof. Edward Greene, and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paloma Mohamed Martin, giving remarks.

Vice Chancellor Prof Paloma Mohamed Martin also presented a video of the University’s Blueprint 2040 and beyond showcasing the impressive work and progress of the University.

Here are some photos from the event.



Dr. Ken Singh addressing the gathering along side his wife, Jessie Singh.



Prof. Paloma Mohamed Martin, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Guyana addressing the audience



Prof. Edward Greene (Chancellor of the University of Guyana) addresses the audience



Chairman of the World Guyana Congress, Mark M. Persaud, LL.B., and Prof. Mohamed



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Guyana's Health Minister elected President of PAHO Exec Committee

The Honourable Dr. Frank Anthony was elected as President of the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Executive Committee at the 61st Directing Council Meeting.

Dr. Anthony, Guyana's Minister of Health, was nominated as the President of the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) Executive Committee during the 61st Directing Council meeting held in Washington, D.C from September 30th to October 4th, 2024.

Dr Anthony will serve as the President of PAHO Executive Committee for a one-year term, during which he will lead the Organisation's mission to improve and safeguard the health and well-being of the peoples of the Americas. PAHO's work spans critical areas such as combating infectious diseases, enhancing health systems, and promoting universal health coverage, particularly in vulnerable communities.

Upon accepting the nomination, Dr Anthony expressed his gratitude to PAHO member states for their trust in his leadership. He reiterated his commitment to enhancing the Organisation's ideals, stressing the importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing urgent public health issues, including pandemic preparedness, equitable healthcare access, and health system strengthening.

Dr Anthony has been at the forefront of health policy reform in Guyana and is credited with spearheading various health initiatives, including ongoing national campaigns to eliminate neglected tropical diseases such as lymphatic filariasis.



Dr Frank Anthony

His leadership at PAHO is expected to bring fresh perspectives and a continued emphasis on health equity, sustainability, and innovation.

The Ministry of Health of Guyana extended its heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Anthony on this prestigious role.

The Ministry is confident that his presidency will significantly advance the health priorities of the Americas during this crucial period.

The Pan American Health Organisation, established in 1902, is an international public health agency working

to improve the health and living standards of the Americas' countries. PAHO serves as the specialised health agency of the Inter-American System and is the World Health Organisation (WHO) regional office for the Americas.

Pungalunks Factory signs Canadian-Guyanese singer

Congratulations to Pooja Sutram the first female Guyanese Solo Artist in Canada to Be Featured out of Big Rich and D Pungalunks Factory. With her Bollywood Hit Song "Kasam Se"

Born in Guyana in a Chinese/Indian family, Pooja loves Bollywood songs, as she was growing up hearing her father playing it on Radio Demerara in Guyana. She then learnt to sing with tabla, harmonica, orchestra, and keyboard, Pooja has shared her musical talents in her bhajans and film songs in Mandirs and Events for over 20 years.



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Guyana's records significant increase in rice production: Bank of Guyana

GUYANA'S rice production has expanded by 19.8 per cent to a total of 362,029.5 tonnes, compared to 302,295 tonnes one year ago, the Bank of Guyana has said in its 2024 half year report.

According to the report, in the first half of the year, 84,973 hectares were sown, an increase of 9,553 hectares or 12.7 per cent when compared to one year ago.

Hectares harvested amounted to 84,590 hectares, an increase of 12.7 per cent when compared to end-June 2023.

Additionally, compared to 6.2 tonnes per hectare a year ago, the yield of rice has improved to about 6.6 tonnes per hectare.

Earlier this month the Ministry of Finance had revealed that of the \$97.6 billion allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture in 2024, some \$28.9 billion was spent on developing Guyana's expanding agricultural sector during the first half of 2024.

Notable initiatives undertaken by the government to enhance the agricultural sector, included the building of 75 new shade houses for high-value crops.

These crops are cultivated using hydroponics farming.

Some high-value crops include bell peppers, celery, broccoli, cilantro, carrots, lettuce, mint, cauliflower, chili peppers, and tomato. This investment benefitted 43 farmers.

Additionally, in the sugar industry, over 2,000 hectares of land were converted to cultivate and harvest sugar cane at the Rose Hall, Albion, Blairmont, and Uitvlugt Estates.

A sugar dryer budgeted at \$60 million will be installed by the end of the year. This will enhance the quality of the sugar and guarantee increased production within the industry.

Additionally, by the end of the year, the number of employees within the sugar industry is expected to increase to 8,300 persons.

Favourable results were also noted in the rice industry for the first half of the year.

Technical services and training were provided to rice farmers along with the introduction of advanced technological mechanisms which yielded benefits of higher productivity at lower operational costs.

A total of \$526.5 million was spent by the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) to support the industry.

Meanwhile, \$60.7 million was spent to accelerate the expansion of the coconut industry within the past six months. About 13,000 seed nuts of the hybrid variety were imported from Brazil.

With the expansion of large-scale

farming and the increased export of agricultural products, alongside the training of farmers in various agriculture disciplines, Guyana continues to solidify its position as the food basket of the Caribbean. The government remains steadfast in its commitment to bolstering the agriculture sector by investing towards its advancement, and efficiency.

The Guyanese economy remained buoyant, with a real oil GDP growth of 49.7 per cent and non-oil GDP growth of 12.6 per cent.

Accelerated crude oil production contributed to real oil growth, while robust performance in construction, agriculture, and the services sectors influenced real non-oil growth.



Rice production has increased by almost 20%

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Caricom Secretary Dr Carla Bennett with the African Union representative

CARICOM, African Union sign MoU

THE Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the African Union (AU) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance effective cooperation and collaboration between the organisations and its peoples.

Signed in the margins of the recently concluded 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the MoU envisages the creation of a conducive environment for investment on the African continent and in CARICOM.

In addition to promoting investments, the MoU seeks to deepen relations by creating platforms for closer people-to-people interaction and solidarity through initiatives including a diaspora volunteer exchange as a framework for associating people with development. The MoU also outlines modalities for cooperation and collaboration, information sharing, as well as its implementation.

The MoU was signed by the CARICOM Secretary-General, Dr. Carla Barnett, and the Deputy Chairperson (DCP) of the African Union (AU) Commission, Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, on behalf of the African Union. (CARICOM)

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Gov't focused on ensuring every citizen benefits - President Ali

PRESIDENT Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has made it clear that his government's success is not rooted in financial wealth but in the fundamental principle of serving humanity.

The Department of Public Information (DPI) noted that the Guyanese leader stressed that a defining hallmark of the PPP/C Administration is to ensure its actions produce results that would significantly benefit every citizen countrywide.

"The teachings of this great faith which entails serving humanity is the principle through which this government operates. Ensuring that people are the core of everything we do," the Head of State emphasised while attending a service in observance of Navratri on Saturday, at the Better Hope Mandir, East Coast Demerara.

He said through strong faith, his government has been able to achieve various important goals for Guyanese.

"I am pleased to be able to lead a government that is working every single day for the upliftment of humanity, so that your children can have a better future and the older folks in our society can have greater benefits," the president stated.

As a result, Guyanese must seek



President Ali on Saturday attended a service in celebration of Navratri

to distill the negative thoughts that may come their way during these times, since they create a lot of challenges.

"Negativity is something that must be overcome not only by personal growth or personal strength but also by knowledge. That is why com-

ing out during this period is important," President Ali said.

He noted that when persons become more knowledgeable about their environment and serious about their faith, this allows them to be better human beings.

To this end, the president encour-

aged the members present at the mandir to become more intertwined with their beliefs and live according to the scriptures of their "holy book."

With a unified society, the Head of State believes that challenges become easier.

Gov't broadening international reach for economic growth

WITH the government's strategic foreign policy initiatives enhancing the country's global standing, Guyana must solidify its international visibility and engagement.

This was asserted by Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Hugh Todd during a recent airing of the 'Energy Perspectives' podcast.

The country's recent success in securing visa-free travel to the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Anguilla, and the United Arab Emirates is a testament to this growing international standing.

This achievement opens doors for tourism and trade, as well as signals that Guyana is a reliable and attractive partner for foreign investment.

According to the foreign affairs minister, these agreements are a direct result of Guyana's comprehensive foreign policy, which focuses on protecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, strengthening regional integration, and achieving energy, food, and climate security.

"[President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali] has been very strong on democracy and democratic values, the rule of law, transparency, [and] accountability. When you look at all that he's been doing, we have improved our visibility, we have improved our standing, we have improved the predictability that we have as a democratic nation-state, and countries want to embrace that," the minister said.



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Hugh Todd

Since assuming office, the PPP/C Administration has intensified its engagement with its traditional partners, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the European Union.

Through initiatives like the US-funded Caribbean Basin Security Initia-

tive (CBSI), the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), and advanced trade relations, Guyana is cementing its position as a key player in the international arena, forging partnerships that ensure mutual development.

The government's vision extends

beyond traditional partnerships. Guyana is actively expanding its global footprint in sectors like energy, tourism, and infrastructure.

"And there you see us engaging with countries in the Middle East, in Asia, and also in Africa. Because if you really want to be a global player, your economic diplomacy has to be global. You have to be able to figure out globally how you need to position yourself. And I think the president has done that very effectively," Minister Todd emphasised.

Recently, President Ali expounded on the government's plans to boost local production within the agriculture sector, through partnerships with the Middle East and Indonesia.

This strategic approach aims to meet domestic needs and position Guyana as a significant global supplier.

"If you think about what we do now, we sell primary products and then we buy it back in finished products. We need to be able to get to the point where we can also manufacture for the world. And that is why the president talked about our agricultural sector and moving it into an ecosystem where we are able to achieve food security not only here in Guyana but in the region," Minister Todd said.

He added that the country's rising global stature is a testament to its government's commitment to economic development, regional co-operation, and a strong democratic foundation.

Soil Laboratory commissioned at National Agriculture Institute

Guyana’s Ministry of Agriculture’s National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) is now better equipped with modernized equipment to conduct time-sensitive soil testing.

On Monday, Agriculture Minister, Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha commissioned the soil laboratory which is located at NAREI’s Mon Repos office. The soil laboratory was rehabilitated to the tune of

Through funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to the tune of over \$57 million under the ministry Agriculture Sector Development Unit’s Sustainable Agriculture Development Program (SADP), the newly refurbished laboratory, now equipped with cutting-edge tools such as soil grinders, total organic carbon analyzers, and nitrogen analyzers, will dramatically improve the soil testing capabilities of NAREI. Additional equipment was also procured through funding by the Government of Guyana to the tune of \$26.4 million.

While offering remarks at the event, Minister Mustapha said that the transformation of the lab represented a shift towards science-driven agriculture.

“For nearly a decade, despite limited resources, NAREI has worked tirelessly to conduct soil testing and analysis to provide essential recommendations to farmers, on key analyses such as pH, Electrical Conductivity, Organic Carbon, Phosphorus, and so on. With these tools, in addition to an Atomic Absorption Spectrometer funded by the Government of Guyana, costing \$26.4 million, NAREI can expand its range of soil tests to include critical elements such as Nitrogen, Potassium, Magnesium, Iron, Copper, Zinc, and more. This allows for greater precision in advising farmers on nutrient management, enhancing crop yields, and promoting sustainable farming practices. The total transformation of the lab is more than just physical — it represents a shift towards science-driven agriculture,” he explained.

Minister Mustapha also said farmers will now be able to make informed decisions about nutrient management and other critical issues relating to good crop management.

“By enabling precise soil testing, farmers will now be empowered to make informed decisions about nutri-



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha at the commissioning of the new soil laboratory

ent management, enhancing crop yields and driving sustainable agricultural practices. This directly aligns with our national goal of reducing the food import bill by 25% by 2025, contributing to regional food security and a stronger agricultural economy for Guyana,” he added.

Anton Edmunds, General Manager, Country Department Caribbean Group and IDB Country Representative in Jamaica while offering remarks at the commissioning, said the rehabilitation of the soil laboratory will play a crucial role in providing accurate soil analysis to farmers which is fundamental for making informed decisions in soil management and crop production.

“A primary focus of our investment is to enhance Guyana’s agriculture research and extension services. This is crucial for supporting farmers and achieving national and regional food security goals. This event is not just about upgrading a facility. It is about empowering the agriculture sector with the tools and knowledge necessary to improve soil health, increase crop yields, and ensure food security. The soil lab will play a crucial role in providing accurate soil analysis which is fundamental for making informed decisions in soil management and crop production and for NAREI to be able to enhance public services and support improving farmers’ outputs,” he explained.

Minister Mustapha also disclosed that an additional \$66.5 million was invested to procure specialized equipment to improve the delivery of extension services in Guyana.

“Our regional extension officers are critical in taking these advancements directly to the farmers. To enhance their capabilities, we have invested about \$66.5 million in specialized equipment that will revolutionize the delivery of agricultural extension services across Guyana. These tools, which include soil meters, nutrient testers, and portable ultrasound machines for livestock, are essential for rapid, on-site analysis and diagnostics.



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A recent government survey says one in 25 women have faced sexual violence from their husbands

India government says criminalising marital rape 'excessively harsh'

The Indian government has opposed petitions in the top court that seek criminalisation of marital rape, saying it would be "excessively harsh".

The federal home ministry told the Supreme Court that "a man does not have a fundamental right" to force sex on his wife, but there were enough laws to protect married women against sexual violence.

The top court is hearing petitions seeking to amend a British-era law that says a man cannot be prosecuted for rape within marriage.

Violence within marriage is rampant in India - according to a recent government survey, one in 25 women have faced sexual violence from their husbands.

Marital rape is outlawed in more than 100 countries, including Britain which criminalised it in 1991.

But India remains among the three dozen countries - along with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia - where the law remains on the statute books.

A number of petitions have been filed in recent years calling for striking down Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, which has been in existence since 1860. The law mentions several "exemptions" - or situations in which sex is not rape - and one of them is "by a man with his own wife" if she is not a minor.

Campaigners say such an argument is untenable in modern times and that forced sex is rape, regardless of who commits it.

United Nations, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have also raised concerns about India's refusal to criminalise marital rape.

But the Indian government, religious groups and men's rights activists have opposed any plans to amend the law saying consent for sex is "implied" in marriage and that a wife cannot retract it later.

The courts have given contradictory judgments, sometimes allowing a husband to be tried for rape while at others dismissing the petition.

The case came to the Supreme Court after the Delhi high court in 2022 delivered a split verdict. The top court began hearings in August.

The state's response in their 49-page affidavit

submitted in the Supreme Court on Thursday has not come as a surprise in a country rooted in patriarchal traditions and where marriages are considered sacrosanct.

The report says that marriage is a relationship of a "different class" and has an "entire ecosystem" of laws, rights and obligations.

Criminalising marital rape "may seriously impact the conjugal relationship and may lead to serious disturbances in the institution of marriage", it stated.

The affidavit noted that in a marriage, there was a "continuing expectation to have reasonable sexual access from one's spouse" and while this did not entitle a husband to coerce his wife into having sex, including marital rape under anti-rape laws would be "excessively harsh" and "disproportionate".

It added that there were existing laws that dealt with domestic violence, sexual harassment and assault that protected a married woman's rights.

The home ministry also said that marriage was a social institution and the issue raised in the petitions was more social than legal and hence it should be left to the parliament to formulate policy.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): The next few days should be a lot of fun but before you hit the town there is a relationship issue that needs to be dealt with. Whatever disagreements there may be between you and a loved one you must put them behind you once and for all.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Don't allow yourself to be intimidated by people who act tough but really are not that formidable. As a general rule of thumb, the more someone threatens you today the less of a danger they actually are. Ignore them and move on.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Mercury, your ruler, links with Jupiter today, which among other things means you can allow yourself to indulge in some wishful thinking. It's always good to have something to look forward to and on this occasion that something may be closer than you think.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): The tasks you have been working on these past few weeks may have taken a toll on your energy but with Mars in your sign you are nowhere near your limit, so keep working and keep dreaming and keep achieving what others say cannot be done!

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): If you want to resolve a problem of some kind you need to approach it from a different angle. If you continue to use methods that are so obviously out of date you will get nowhere fast and your frustrations will keep growing. Move with the times!

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): Why are you so fearful about the future? Despite what some people might be saying the end is not nigh and there is no reason why you should believe the worst is going to happen. Strive to be a voice of optimistic reason in a pessimistic world.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You may be inclined to forgive someone who has been taking liberties but what kind of signal might that send to other people? Put your foot down and make sure rivals get the message that you are not the soft touch they think you are.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): No matter what you may have planned for the next few days you would be wise to take life at a less hectic pace for a bit. Yes, of course, there are personal and professional commitments that must be honored but don't overdo it. Be kind to yourself.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Your financial situation may be giving you some concern but if you are smart you can find ways to improve your cash flow between now and the end of the week. Join forces with people who share your commercial ambitions. Make some money together.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): Mars in your opposite sign has been throwing a harsh light on both personal and professional relationships of late but as Venus is part of the picture today there will be some good news for a change. Not everyone thinks of you as the enemy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): What happens today will remind you that it is a mistake to take people for granted. You may think you know everything there is to know about a friend or relative but they have secrets just like you. Don't dig too deep to find out what they are.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Venus and Mars join forces across the most dynamic angles of your chart today, making this the ideal time to let loved ones know how much you appreciate their efforts. Don't just say the words, find ways to prove to them you think they're the best.

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Grenada teachers not paid for months, Government confirms

The Grenada government has confirmed that several teachers on temporary contracts have not received their salaries for several months, while some permanent staff have not been paid for the previous month. This situation has raised significant concerns among educators, particularly as public sector workers are typically paid on a bi-monthly basis.

Acting Prime Minister Andy Williams addressed the issue, expressing optimism that the matter would be resolved by next week. “We are doing our best,” he stated, emphasizing that both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance are actively working to ensure teachers are compensated promptly.

In Grenada’s public service framework, the Ministry of Finance handles payment processing, but several other entities, including the Public Service Commission and the Department of Public Administration, also play key roles in ensuring compliance with payment protocols.

While Williams did not provide specific reasons for the delays, he noted that the Ministry of Education and the Public Service Commission are collaborating to address the issue. He further mentioned that upon learning about the situation, he promptly organized a meeting with the Grenada Union of Teachers (GUT) to facilitate a resolution.

The government’s swift response



Teachers in Grenada have not received their wages for several months

underscores the importance of ensuring that educators receive their salaries on time, as many depend on this income to support their families and fulfill their professional obligations.

GUT president, Jude Bartholomew, criticized the government’s inability to pay teachers on time, expressing concern over the broader economic implications.

“Even if the contractual period ends, the information is already there, and we cannot understand the delay. The

teachers cannot understand it; the nation cannot understand it,” said Bartholomew.

He spoke of the detrimental effect on teachers’ morale and the country’s economy.

“A teacher comes into the system for the new school year, motivated and ready to teach, but when they don’t get paid, it frustrates the teacher and, ultimately, the economy.”

Following an emergency meeting

on Tuesday with the teachers, a decision was taken for them to begin industrial action by wearing red t-shirts and to take a few minutes during their lunchtime on Friday to raise the issue using placards.

Offering an apology for the late payment, Williams said that his government will work to ensure that this problem does not recur in the future.

“It is a case where we have to call all stakeholders involved to review the process,” he said.

Jamaica wins bronze medal in world robotics

Jamaica’s nine-member team at the Robotics Olympics in Athens, Greece, secured a bronze medal in the competition, which concluded on Sunday. The team, returning to the island today, was awarded the Dr. Mae Jemison Bronze for International Unity. This honor is given to the team that exemplifies the best qualities of FIRST Global by breaking down barriers, demonstrating gracious professionalism, and fostering connections with fellow teams.

In addition to the bronze medal, the Jamaican team won the Social Media Challenge Award, recognizing teams that actively participated in a majority of online social media challenges throughout the season. They also received an award for the best storytelling video, which adhered to the guidelines for creating an impactful team profile.

Overall, Jamaica finished 58th out of 190 countries participating in the Robotics Olympics. The delegation consists of five students, two coaches, one additional student, and one additional coach. The schools represented in the 2024 team included the American International School of Kingston (AISK), Champion College, Hillel

Academy, Immaculate Conception High School, Kingston College (KC), and Wolmer’s High School for Boys.

The students who represented Jamaica at the Robotics Olympics included Alwyn Brown from Kingston College (KC), Ojani Chung from Champion College, Emily Zhu from Hillel Academy, Abigail Cato from Immaculate Conception High School, Sean-Michael Williams from the American International School of Kingston (AISK), and Jordon Williams from Wolmer’s High School for Boys, who served as the support student.

Team Jamaica Robotics has been guided for years by Head Coach Gavin Samuels, a Jamaica College alumnus, though he was unable to attend this year. Long-time coach Paul Pounall also contributed to the team’s preparation but had to stay behind to address family matters.

FIRST Global assisted the core team by covering airfares and hotel expenses for the five main students and two coaches. Last year, the 10-member Jamaican Robotics team was honored with the Katherine Johnson Award for engineering documentation, named after the renowned African-American mathematician who significantly con-



The nine-member team representing Jamaica

tributed to aeronautics and played a key role in ensuring the safe return of

astronauts John Glenn and Alan Shepard from space.

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United Oil and Gas applies for licence to explore Jamaica's seabed for oil

United Oil and Gas Plc is in the process of obtaining a license to start sampling beneath Jamaica's seabed as part of its oil exploration efforts. CEO Brian Larkin emphasized that the company's primary focus remains on Jamaica, which they see as having significant potential. The planning and permitting for piston core sampling is advancing, with approvals anticipated by early 2025.

Larkin also noted that discussions are ongoing with potential partners for a farm-out process, aimed at sharing the financial risks of drilling. The piston core sampling equipment will reach depths of hundreds of meters, extracting core samples up to 18 meters deep for hydrocarbon analysis.

The company hopes these samples will yield vital data to enhance the prospects of discovering oil offshore Jamaica. Current estimates suggest a 25 percent chance of a commercial find, which the company aims to increase to 33 percent based on previous evaluations.

"Jamaica remains our primary

driver for growth, with the licence offering significant exploration potential. Our focus is now firmly on advancing the project and progressing the ongoing farm-out process to unlock its value, and currently working with a number of interested parties," said Larkin.

United Oil's previous efforts included conducting 2D and 3D surveys of the exploration area, which revealed subsurface structures that resemble oil deposits. An independent assessment valued the company's most promising reservoir at approximately \$23 billion, with extraction potential over a 25-year period. The company holds licenses to explore 22,400 square kilometers of offshore territory along Jamaica's southern coast, known as the Walton-Morant zone.

Currently, United Oil's operations in Jamaica are overseen by Herona Thompson.

In recent months there have been several rumors about the discovery of oil in Jamaica but Energy Minister Daryl Vaz says no oil has been discovered yet. United Oil and Gas (United



United Oil & Gas is an independent oil company

Oil) has valued the largest repository within its wider zones of oil exploration offshore Jamaica as being worth J\$3.5 trillion, or US\$23 billion, at current oil prices.

It still, however, needs to prove that substances that resemble oil are indeed oil, and will require investments to dig the ocean floor for core samples.

Suriname to hold General Elections in May

President Chandrikapersad Santokhi announced that general elections in Suriname will take place on Sunday, May 25, 2025. In a two-hour address to the National Assembly, he emphasized the significance of this upcoming election, stating that it will be a historic moment for the nation as citizens will vote under a renewed and fairer electoral system.

Santokhi highlighted that preparations for the elections are already underway, stressing that organizing the elections is a national responsibility. This election will be the first to implement a national electoral system, moving away from the previous district system where seats were allocated based on district populations. The new approach will ensure that every citizen's vote carries equal weight, regardless of their location in the country.

Additionally, officials noted that amendments to the Constitution were necessary to align the Electoral Regulation with a ruling from the Constitutional Court, which found some provisions of the Electoral Regulation to be in conflict with the Constitution and international treaties.

"Mr. Chairman, this subject has always been sensitive, and this unjust system has been maintained because of its many advantages. Historically, all factions within the National Assembly reached an agreement on national proportionality. This gives all political parties, large and small, a fairer chance to be represented in Parliament," Santokhi told the National Assembly.



Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi.

President Santokhi stated that the shift to national proportionality will encourage political parties to create programs that

resonate with the entire nation, rather than focusing solely on specific districts. He emphasized that this change fosters na-

tional unity and cohesion, as parties will need to appeal to all voters.

To enhance oversight of the electoral process, Santokhi announced the establishment of a presidential monitoring team. This team will provide him with a comprehensive view of the election preparations and enable prompt action when necessary.

The new electoral framework also includes the creation of the Independent Electoral Bureau of Suriname, which will supervise the elections and manage the Central Polling Station. Santokhi reassured citizens that the government is committed to ensuring the elections are fair, free, and orderly. He also mentioned plans to invite international observers to guarantee the integrity of the electoral process and to ensure that the voices of the people are fully represented.

In the 2020 elections, no party won an outright majority in the 51-member National Assembly, with Santokhi's Progressive Reform Party (VHP) winning 20 seats, four more than the then ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), led by Desi Bouterse.

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Miami Carnival to continue in spite of threats from Hurricane Milton

As Hurricane Milton approached the West Coast of Florida, the Miami Broward One Carnival Host Committee is reassuring the community, patrons, and supporters that the South Florida region, while experiencing rain, is not expected to take a direct hit from the storm.

The committee is actively monitoring weather updates and will provide timely information if any operational changes are necessary.

On Wednesday, Florida's storm-battered Gulf Coast is racing against a Category 5 hurricane, with workers scrambling to clear heaps of appliances and other debris left over from Hurricane Helene two weeks ago. Highways are clogged with people fleeing ahead of the storm, and evacuation orders have been issued in several areas.

The center of Hurricane Milton could make landfall on Wednesday in the Tampa Bay region, which has not experienced a direct hit from a major hurricane in more than a century.

While scientists expect the storm to weaken slightly before landfall, it could retain hurricane strength as it moves across central Florida toward the Atlantic Ocean. This trajectory may largely spare other states still recovering from Helene, which resulted in at least 230 fatalities from Florida to the



Revellers on the streets of Miami during the annual Caribbean carnival

Appalachian Mountains. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis emphasized the importance of clearing debris from Helene ahead of Milton's arrival to prevent any projectiles during the storm.

Forecasters are warning of a potential 8- to 12-foot storm surge in Tampa Bay and widespread flooding, with rainfall amounts ranging from 5 to 10 inches in mainland Florida and the Keys. Some areas could see as much as

15 inches of rain.

"Our primary concern is the safety and well-being of our attendees, performers, and the community," said a representative from the committee. "In the event of any changes, we will make prompt announcements to ensure everyone has sufficient time to adjust their plans."

The committee also addressed circulating false reports on social media

claiming that Miami Carnival 2024 has been canceled, stressing that this information is not true. They encourage everyone to rely on official social media channels and their website for accurate updates regarding all Miami Carnival activities.

As preparations for the celebration continue, attendees are advised to stay informed about potential flight changes or delays due to the hurricane.



Guyana Cabinet to decide on LIAT application

The cabinet is preparing to review the application of the new LIAT 2020 airline to commence operations in Guyana within the next few weeks. This airline was established in the wake of the collapse and closure of LIAT 1974, and it has already begun serving multiple Caribbean destinations. As part of its growth strategy, LIAT 2020 is actively exploring additional routes to expand its service offerings throughout the region.

Egbert Field, the head of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), confirmed to Guyana News

Source that the airline's application has been formally received and is currently being processed at the GCAA level. To ensure transparency and gather community input, the GCAA recently published a public notice regarding the airline's application. This notice invites the public to submit any representations or objections they may have concerning the proposed operations.

Reports indicate that a number of objections have been received, although it is important to note that these concerns were primarily related to the oper-

ations of the previous LIAT airline, rather than the new entity. LIAT 2020 is based in Antigua and Barbuda, where the government maintains majority ownership. This new airline aims to revitalize air travel in the Caribbean and provide reliable service to both passengers and cargo, addressing some of the gaps left by its predecessor. As the review process unfolds, stakeholders and the public are keenly watching to see how this development will impact regional air travel and connectivity.

Trini snack company defends naming JA's Shenseea as ambassador

DESPITE social media criticism of Sunshine Snacks selecting dancehall artiste Shenseea as its newest brand ambassador, deputy chairman and CEO of Trinidad's Associated Brands Group Nicholas Lok Jack defended it, saying her charitable efforts during Hurricane Beryl played a pivotal role in the company's decision.

Lok Jack said Shenseea's commitment to giving back to her home country, Jamaica, aligns with the brand's values.

On September 25, the company said Shenseea and her eight-year-old son Rajeiro "Raj" Lee will be the brand's regional ambassadors.

On July 1, a category 4 hurricane devastated parts of Jamaica, the Grenadian islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and several islands in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

After the hurricane hit Jamaica, Shenseea returned to her hometown of St Elizabeth to assist those severely affected. Accompanied by her son, she distributed tarpaulins and food packages.

"We chose Shenseea – and it's not just her, but it's also her son Raj – particularly for her community work as well as for her ability to bring awareness to the brand," said Lok Jack.

He said moving forward she would help with the company's "charitable side of things" in Jamaica as well as being the brand's regional ambassador.

He said the intent is not for Shenseea to represent the brand in its entirety, but she will represent the snacks that cater to the adult market such as Sun Mix peanuts. Lee will represent the kid-friendly aspect of the brand.

"I don't think that Sunshine Snacks is exclusively a children's brand. We have a lot of sub-brands that attend to different segments of the market. We attend to different markets depending on the level of sensitivities.



Shenseea and her son Rajeiro "Raj" Lee with Sunshine Snacks combo packs

"We have cheese balls and corn curls, which are very 'kiddy' in its context.

"And how we use the Shenseea personality will be according to the brand and the positioning – which specific brand we tie the product itself to."

On October 3, Trinidad and Tobago activist Umar Abdullah, leader of the First Wave Movement, described Shenseea's music as "hypersexualised" and said he was "deeply appalled" by the brand's choice of her as an ambassador, saying it was a "reckless endorsement

that demonstrates an alarming lack of moral, ethical, and family values that should form the foundation of any reputable company."

Lok Jack denied the brand was trying to sexualise children's snacks.

"By no means do we intend to try to use sexuality to try and sell snacks. However, if you've ever been to Jamaica in a Jamaican context, you see the context of a Red Bull or peanuts or Magnum – it is not uncommon in that market, and that's a big market for us."

In an Instagram carousel post on

October 3, with photos from last month's Sunshine Snacks media launch, Shenseea expressed her excitement for the partnership saying it will be a long and prosperous.

"How ironic is it that the biggest snack company in the Caribbean took interest in my philanthropic desire to give back to Jamaica after the hurricane, (and) has now chosen my son and I to represent the brand globally?"

"We are looking forward to helping you spread the Sunshine everywhere we go," she said.

Online blows for T&T's Hyatt over 'US\$' plan

The Trinidad-owned Hyatt Regency hotel had to delete a social media post and apologise after it announced that effective November 1, local currency was not going to be accepted as payment for services.

The post sparked a firestorm of criticism online even though it had been edited several times before it was taken down.

General manager Michael Hooper in an e-mailed response said the message regarding cashless payment options was "prematurely distributed with inaccurate information."

He said the hotel would not be implementing any changes to its payment processes "at this time" and apologised for any confusion or inconvenience.

The offending original post said, "We're going cashless! Effective No-

vember 1, 2024, all transactions at Hyatt Regency Trinidad will be mainly cash-free for a faster, smoother and more secure experience. We accept all major credit cards and only US dollars, British Pound Sterling, and Euro dollars, so you can focus on enjoying your stay!"

People commenting on the post called for a boycott of the hotel and other negative reactions as people questioned why other foreign currencies, such as US, UK and Euros, were accepted if transactions were to be cashless and the legality of a local establishment refusing to accept the currency of the country in which it operated. The post was edited several times, adding debit cards to the list of accepted payments, removing the word "cashless" and deleting the last phrase.

The last iteration read, "Effective

November 1, 2024, all transactions at Hyatt Regency Trinidad will be mainly cash-free for a faster, smoother, and more secure experience. We accept all major credit cards, debit cards and only US dollars, British Pound Sterling, and Euro dollars."

Some comments said the hotel should just say it was not accepting TT dollars, that it should lose 90 per cent of its business because of the "stunt," anyone doing business with Hyatt should only accept payments in US dollars, Euros and pounds, and it should just say locals were not wanted. The post was then deleted around noon, about two hours after it was posted. Similar posts were also removed on X, formally Twitter, and on Instagram.

According to the Britannica website, "A cashless society is one in which

cash, in the form of physical banknotes and coins, is not accepted in any financial transaction. Instead, people and businesses transfer money to one another digitally—via credit or debit cards, electronic money transfers, cryptocurrency, or online and mobile payment services such as PayPal and Apple Pay."

A 2024 survey by the United Nations Capital Development Fund said about 25 per cent of TT's adult population did not have access to a basic transaction account, and so did not have access to credit or debit cards.

In December 2021 John Outridge CEO of TT International Financial Centre said a 2020 survey done by the Development Bank of Latin America estimated there were 700,000 debit cards and 200,000 credit cards in use in TT.

T&T remembers victims of 1976 Cubana airline terrorist attack

T&T Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Amery Browne says while there is a symbolic plaque at the Piarco International Airport in honour of the people killed during the 1976 Cubana Airlines terrorist attack, something must be done to ensure more pay attention to it. He said it is a "very important symbol" that represents a moment that shook the region.

He was speaking at a wreath-laying ceremony at the airport on Sunday to commemorate the 48th anniversary of the October 6 attack.

On that day in 1976, a total of 73 people aboard Cubana flight 455 – including people from Cuba, Guyana and Korea – were killed as bombs were planted on the aircraft.

The flight began in Guyana and was destined for Cuba, but had stops in TT, Barbados and Jamaica.

The two Venezuelan terrorists left the flight in Barbados and returned to TT, where they were arrested.

Browne said he is "quite pleased that our society, on an annual basis, has



Amery Browne (c) with other officials at the Cubana plaque at Piarco

found it important to pause for a moment and to commemorate an absolute tragedy that didn't occur on the other side of the world, but occurred right here in our region.

"It's a reminder of not something academic or hypothetical, but real-life

events that destroyed lives right here within our region."

He said younger generations may not be aware of this. He said the people on board were "completely innocent, much like people who were boarding flights during his speech in Piarco.

"This was not an air force flight, these people were not military personnel, they were not bearing arms, they were not wearing uniform...and in one instant of terror and death, they were removed from this earth."

He said members of Cuba's national fencing team were also on board, adding, "And if you know anything about sport in Cuba, you might suspect this was not an ordinary sporting team. This was a gold-medal-winning team."

On board that flight, he said, were not just lives but dreams and aspirations which were all cut short.

"We honour their memory as we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters from Cuba.

"(That was) a watershed moment for all of us, when the zone of peace was assaulted. We in TT will not allow the legacy of that day to fade. "You will not find many airports in the world with something like this."

Browne also renewed his call for Cuba to be removed from the US' list of state sponsors against terrorism.

T&T cricketers on the hook for bar tab

Trinidad and Tobago cricketers Sunil Narine and Terrence Hinds are on the hook for a breach of a business arrangement with their former landlord over rent for a bar they ran in Oro-poune Gardens, Piarco.

In all the two will be made to pay a total of \$123,636.61, representing \$68,253.10 in rent owed to landlord Dave Kangal: \$9,021 in interest and the remainder in costs.

Justice Ricky Rahim delivered the ruling on October 3. In his decision, Rahim said it was "somewhat unfortunate" that Narine found himself liable in the case, since the evidence showed "little or no participation on his part perhaps only to finance Terrance.

"His involvement therefore is by virtue of him having been named as a tenant on the agreement.

"Notwithstanding this, the chips must lie where they fall."

Kangal was represented by attorney Richard Jaggasar.

Rahim was critical of Hinds and his sister Annastezier Hinds.

"On the other hand, the court was taken aback by the tenor of the dealings between Terrance and Anna on one hand and the defendant on the other.

"There is a strong inference that they sought to take advantage of the apparent lack of understanding and naiveté to a certain extent of the defen-

dant to his disadvantage and to their benefit."

The dispute stemmed from a tenancy agreement dated July 1, 2020, between the two cricketers and Kangal. Initially, the two filed a lawsuit for breach of the tenancy agreement, while Kangal filed a counter-claim, contending the cricketers were the ones in breach.

The agreement was that Narine and Hinds would rent Kangal's property for five years with the option of the contract being renewed for an additional two-year period.

For the first month, the rent was to be \$5,000, and from August-December 2020, \$11,000 per month had to be paid. From the beginning of January to the end of December 2021, it was to be \$13,000 monthly, then \$14,000 monthly in 2022 and \$15,000 each month for the remainder of the contract.

It was also agreed that Narine and Hinds would pay the electricity bill and that Kangal would incrementally reimburse them for renovations to his property. Hinds claimed he spent \$100,000 but was unable to provide some of the receipts to support this.

"As the evidence stands it is grossly poor..."

After covid19 pandemic restrictions led to a shutdown of bars in October 2020, Hinds claimed he asked for



Sunil Narine — went into business with Terrence Hinds

a reduction in rent and Kangal agreed. The shutdown continued until November 2021, and Hinds further claimed that Kangal agreed to \$3,000 in rent until the bar could be reopened.

The bar reopened in late Novem-

ber 2021, but Hinds and Kangal could not agree on the amount to be paid. Hinds also contended he discovered he was paying electricity not only for the bar but Kangal's father's home next door, and a shop.

Prime Minister Pierre lauds new CPL champs on historic achievement

Prime Minister of St Lucia Philip J. Pierre has lauded new Caribbean Premier League (CPL) champions, the St Lucia Kings on capturing their maiden title.

The Kings won their first title by defeating defending champions Guyana Amazon Warriors by six wickets in a thrilling final at the Providence Stadium last Sunday night.

In a statement issued by the Office of the Prime Minister on Monday, October 7, Pierre congratulated the Kings on their historic performance.

“Prime Minister Hon. Philip J. Pierre on behalf of the government and people of Saint Lucia congratulates the Saint Lucia Kings on their impressive achievement in securing the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) title. This victory has brought immense pride to our island nation,” it read.

“The Saint Lucia Kings have demonstrated remarkable resilience and teamwork throughout the tournament.

Their success further amplifies Saint Lucia’s achievement in sports on the world stage, with Julien Alfred blazing the trail.

“This victory is an inspiration, showcasing the potential of our athletes to excel on all platforms,” the statement added.

Pierre maintained that the Kings’ achievement “not only uplifts the spirit



St Lucia Kings were congratulated by Prime Minister Pierre on their CPL victory

of our nation but also encourages young athletes to strive for greatness in their pursuits.

“As we celebrate this milestone, let us rally behind our teams and recognize

the dedication that fuels their success.

Once again, congratulations to the Saint Lucia Kings for this significant accomplishment.

“Their triumph has united us in cel-

ebration, and we eagerly anticipate their continued success in future competitions,” the statement further added.

Guyana, Barbados to host CPL finals

THE Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) final will be hosted in Guyana in 2025 and Barbados in 2026.

CPL has agreed to a one-year deal for the final to be held in Guyana in 2025. For 2026, the final will be held at the iconic Kensington Oval in Barbados for the very first time.

His Excellency Mohammed Irfan Ali, President of Guyana, said: “I want to take this opportunity to wish Guyana Amazon Warriors all success on behalf of all Guyanese as we try to make it two in a row. To all the other teams we wish you well as we play together in unity. I am also very delighted to announce that Guyana will be hosting [the] CPL 2025 finals.”

The Honourable Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, said: “I am so happy to say that the CPL finals 2026 will be in Bridgetown at Kensington Oval. As you prepare for the long march to Bridgetown let’s hope my own team, Barbados Royals, can take it to the finals this year. If we don’t we will catch you next year, and for sure we are going to catch you in Bridgetown in 2026.”

Pete Russell, CPL’s CEO, said: “Guyana and Barbados have been amazing partners for CPL over the last 12 years and it is really exciting to be able

to announce that they will be hosts for the finals in 2025 and 2026 respectively.

We would like to thank the governments of both Guyana and Barbados who have

agreed to play host to the conclusion of CPL.”

CWI announces squad for Sri Lanka tour

CRICKET West Indies (CWI) has announced the squads selected for the eagerly anticipated West Indies Senior Men’s T20 International (T20I) and One Day International (ODI) series against Sri Lanka. The teams are set to compete in three (3) T20Is and three (3) ODIs from 10 to 27 October 2024.

The T20I squad will take on Sri Lanka from 10 to 17 October 2024. After a resounding 3-0 series sweep against South Africa earlier this year, the West Indies have climbed the rankings, moving to fourth place, and established themselves as serious contenders on the world stage. Several senior players, including Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell, Akeal Hosein and Shimron Hetmyer have opted out of the tour for personal reasons, opening the door for newer faces and returning players. Captain Rovman Powell will lead the side, with Roston Chase continuing in his role as Vice-Captain.

Head Coach Daren Sammy, who now leads on selection under the revamped selection system, noted the importance of this series in evaluating players for key roles and understanding the conditions ahead of future ICC tournaments. On the T20 squad, Coach Sammy said, The tour of Sri Lanka gives us a chance to test our depth and assess players in different situations, especially with several senior players missing out for various reasons, including a need for rest and rehabilitation from injury. We are confident in the

squad’s ability to compete strongly against Sri Lanka.

West Indies T20I Squad: Rovman Powell (Captain), Roston Chase (Vice Captain), Fabian Allen, Alick Athanaze, Andre Fletcher, Terrance Hinds, Shai Hope, Alzarri Joseph, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Evin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd, Shamar Springer.

The series will begin on 13 October 2024, with the first match at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium, followed by two more matches on 15 and 17 October.

The ODI squad is set to face Sri Lanka in a three-match series from 20 to 27 October 2024. Shai Hope will continue as Captain, with Vice-Captain support from Alzarri Joseph. This series provides an opportunity for CWI to focus on building its ODI team ahead of the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2027.

A notable inclusion is Jewel Andrew, the young Antiguan wicketkeeper-batsman who has impressed and earned his place in the squad. The squad also sees the return of several key players, including Brandon King and Sherfane Rutherford. West Indies ODI Squad: Shai Hope (Captain), Alzarri Joseph (Vice-Captain), Jewel Andrew, Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Evin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Sherfane Rutherford, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd, Hayden Walsh Jr.,



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Save the Dates



Events
Calendar

October - December 2024



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October


- 1 CPL Eliminator Match
- 1 CPL Party in Linden & Berbice
- 2-6 Regional Food Festival
- 2 CPL Qualifier 1
- 2 CPL Party in Linden & Berbice
- 3 Pan-on-the-beach Concert
- 3-5 Caribbean Content Creators and Influencers Summit
- 4 CPL Qualifier 2
- 4 CPL Party in Linden & Berbice
- 5 Super Concert
- 6 CPL Cricket Finals
- 6 Cricket Finals after party
- 6 Essequibo Drags Racing
- 8-9 2nd Regional Investments & Capital Market Conference
- 18-21 Berbice Expo
- 19 Conference on Hindu issues in the Caribbean & Diaspora
- 26 Monster Mash Halloween Fair and Fundraiser
- 27 Tapas Rum & Wine
- 30 Diwali Motorcade
- 31 Diwali - 'Festival of Lights'

November

- 1-30 Tourism Awareness Month
- 10 Circuit Racing Series 3
- 12 Entrepreneurship Conference
- 14-17 GuyExpo
- 16-17 Tourism Month Golf Putting Contest
- 16-17 Nature & Savannah Linden Hike
- 23 FumaCon 2024
- 24 Chutney Show Washiba Resort
- 25-30 Pakaraima Mountain Safari

December

- 13-15 Main Street Christmas Village
- 25 Christmas
- 26 Boxing Day



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