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Major boost to Guyana's culture

SIGNIFICANT developments are on the horizon for 2025, as President, Dr Irfaan Ali has declared the forthcoming introduction of an updated national cultural policy for public review in the early months of next year. This milestone represents a crucial stride towards establishing Guyana as a prominent figure in the realms of culture and creativity within the region.

In his speech to the 12th Parlia-



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SCARBOROUGH 106-1200 Markham Rd. Scarborough, On, M1H 3C3 Tel: 416-439-4000 ment, President Ali emphasised that the new policy framework will prioritise the integration of culture into national development, the preservation of the country's rich heritage and the enhancement of the creative industries.

But the policy is not just about looking back — it's about addressing some of the most pressing issues facing culture today, including the rapid rise of digital platforms and the growing influence of artificial intelligence on art and creativity.

"There has not been a better time for culture and creativity in Guyana than at present," President Ali said.



India says it doesn't trust Canada

India's high commissioner to Canada — who has been expelled from the country — says while the economic relationship between Canada and India will likely be preserved, the political one is now characterized by "mistrust."

In a television interview that will be airing on the Canadian network CTV on Sunday, Sanjay Kumar Verma (pictured) said any decision by India about whether or not to replace him and his expelled colleagues would entail a "discussion" between the two governments.

"Largely given the mistrust that

we have in (Prime Minister Justin)
Trudeau and his team, we'll have concerns, and we'll discuss it very carefully with them," he told host Vassy Kapelos. "Our security and safeties are concerned, so there are so many things."

Verma also accused the Trudeau government of failing to tamp down the Sikh separatist movement operating in Canada, and elements of it that India sees as extreme in nature. The expelled high commissioner pointed to 27 outstanding extradition cases as a significant point of friction for India.

Canada's most recent high commissioner to India, Cameron MacKay, said the federal government is acting on the issue, and that Canada has sought more information from India on 26 of those 27 extradition files.

"It's a diversion tactic to claim that Canada has been uncooperative in these law enforcement matters," he also said. "I consider it to be simply not true."

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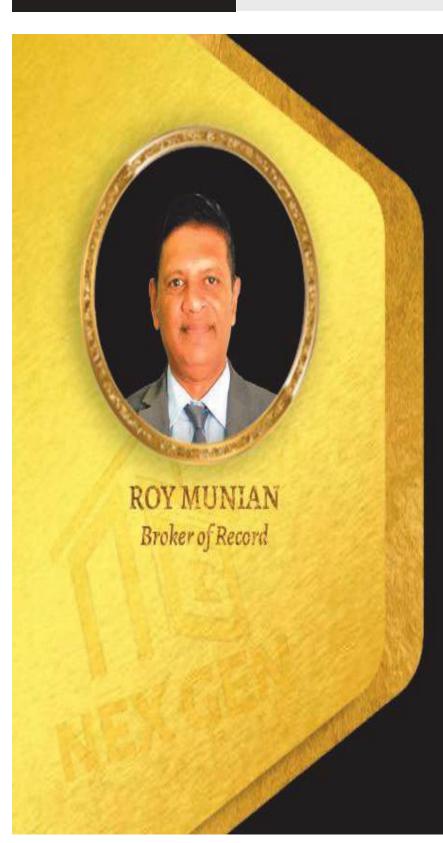


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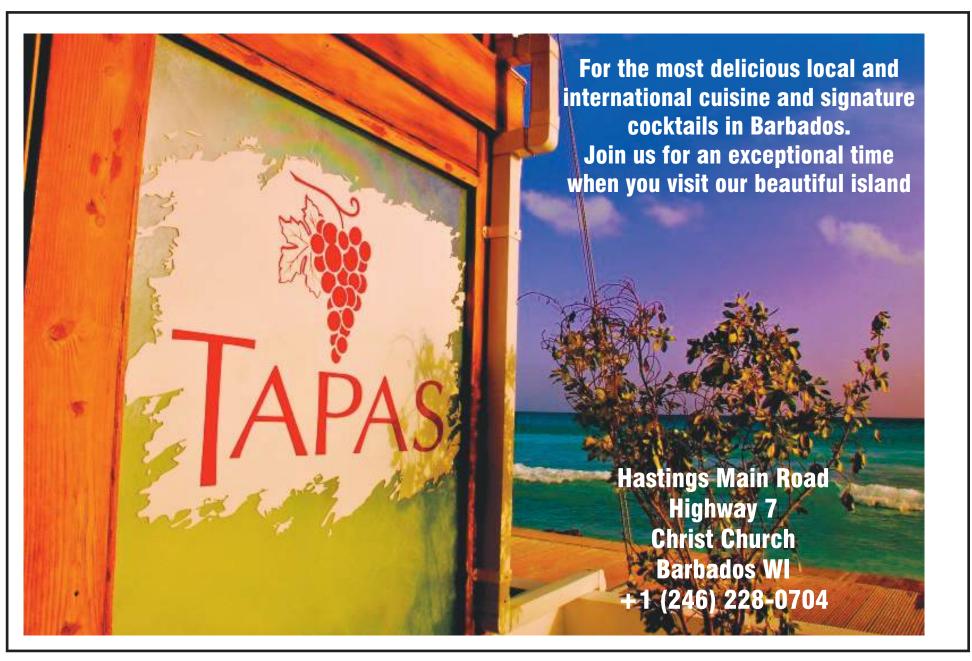
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The India-Canada fallout could affect trade and immigration

After a bombshell accusation from Canadian officials this week - that they believe India government agents were linked to a campaign of murder and extortion in the country - diplomatic relations hit new lows.

That rift is now raising questions over the impact it could have on the deep trade and immigration ties between both countries.

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

The breakdown of relations at this level is uncharted territory, and much of what happens next will depend on how they choose to move forward, experts suggest.

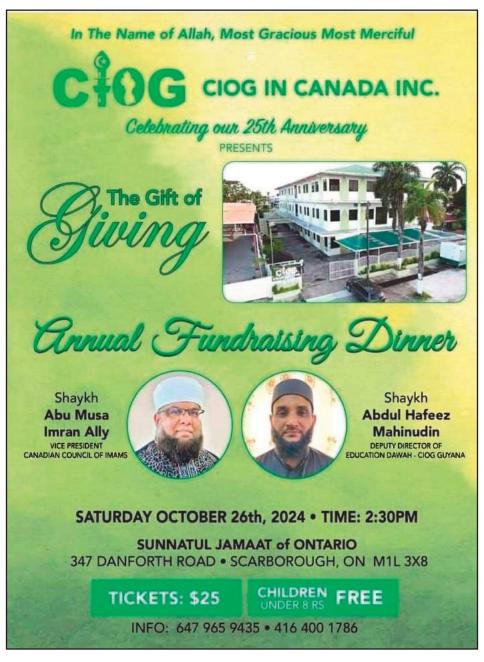
Neither country has imposed tariffs or other economic forms of retaliation, but experts caution that this could change, and that a cooling relationship between India and Canada could hinder further economic growth.

"The biggest challenge, particularly for business and citizens, is going to be uncertainty," Arif Lalani, a senior advisor at government consulting company StrategyCorp and a former Canadian diplomat, said.

The two countries have been negotiating a bilateral trade deal on and off for over a decade, but Canada paused talks last year shortly before Prime Minister Justin Trudeau first made a public accusation against India.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi



In September 2023, Trudeau said that Canada had "credible allegations" linking Indian government agents to the murder of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was shot and killed in Surrey, British Columbia that June.

India temporarily suspended visas for Canadian citizens shortly after, but that move was brief and it resumed visa processing in November.

Trade ties between the two, meanwhile, remained as usual. Bilateral trade is around \$8bn (£6.15bn), according to the latest fiscal figures from India's trade ministry.

Canada's trade minister recently assured business owners that Ottawa does not seek to disrupt commercial ties with India.

Still, with ongoing uncertainty, Mr Lalani said businesspeople from both countries could look elsewhere for opportunities.

"People will be thinking twice in terms of expanding trade, or trying to build on what they already have," he said.

Another big concern is how the rift will alter movement of people between the two countries. India has been Canada's top source of international students since 2018, and about 4% of Canada's overall population is of Indian origin.

"The human connection between our countries is profound," Karan Thukral, a lawyer based in Delhi, said, adding that a big portion of his clientele are people eager to move to Canada.

He said many are now anxious about how the diplomatic tension could affect their plans to work or study in

Immigration processing remains operational, Mr Thukral noted, but he has advised his clients to anticipate potential delays due to the reduction of diplomatic staff in both countries.

Others, especially those in Canada with family in India, are anxious about India reinstating visa restrictions for Canadian nationals, he added.

Any visa restrictions would come with business implications and could have a dampening effect on trade, tourism and investment, said Jeff Nankivell, president of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

"The Indian government has already shown its willingness once to suspend the visa issuance, so it's possible they could do so again," he said, adding the biggest impact will be felt in Canada's large Indian diaspora community.

Mr Nankivell said that he suspects the diplomatic situation will continue to evolve, and the fallout will be felt for a long time as Canadian police pursue legal action against those allegedly complicit in Mr Nijjar's death and other criminal acts.

"That's going to continue to raise the temperature," he said.

Suriname, Guyana could be pivotal players in the energy landscape

Suriname is set to unlock a new potential for offshore oil and gas development and this according to the country's President, Chandrikapersad Santokhi is more than just a monumental milestone

On Tuesday, October 15, Santokhi while addressing the opening ceremony of the International Business Conference (IBC) being held in Guyana said the Final Investment Decision (FID) for Suriname's offshore oil and gas development project is set to provide new economic opportunities through job creation, local capacity-building, and enhanced energy collaboration across borders.

Earlier this month, 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.

"This decision represents more than just an economic or business success. It is a defining moment for the people of Suriname and the future of our country and people. The FID marks the beginning of a major offshore oil production that will bring unparalleled opportunities for growth and prosperity," the Surinamese leader said.

Generating boundless opportunities, this new development will pave the way for thousands of jobs in sectors such as oil and gas, services, infrastructure and manufacturing.

"Our people will benefit from their rights in employment opportunities and an economy that will grow stronger and more diversified infrastructure development."

The revenue generated from oil production will be strategically reinvested into developing essential infrastructure, roads, ports, schools and healthcare facilities that will improve the quality of life for citizens, he ex-



Suriname President, Chandrikapersad Santokhi

plained.

Ensuring that Surinamese benefit, President Santokhi assured that local businesses and workers will be supported by key local content policies.

"The government has already implemented measures to increase local content in key sectors, empowering Surinamese companies to be at the forefront of this new chapter. We will train our workforce, provide skills development, and ensure that all share the benefits of this."

Emphasizing the shared history and cultural ties between Guyana and Suriname, the two nations through continued bilateral ties are on the verge of being pivotal players.

Already, Santokhi believes the diplomatic and economic cooperation between the two Caribbean states are no longer aspirations but are realities that will shape the future of the region.

"Together, we have an opportunity to lead on the global stage, particularly in oil and gas exploration, where our combined strength position us as pivotal players in the energy landscape. Our histories are intertwined. Our cultures are rich with diversity, and our futures are bright with our potential, we have always stood by each other, supporting and celebrating our mutual successes and achievements."

Earlier this week, Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo met with Albert Ramdin, the Foreign Minister of Suriname, and other neighboring authorities.

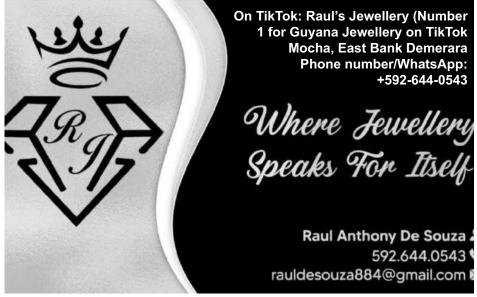
The discussions centered on oil and gas and continued bilateral engagements.

Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hugh Todd, and technical officers from the Ministry of Natural Resources were also present.

It is anticipated that Surinamese and Guyanese businesses will benefit from partnerships in logistics, well services, and the operations of the FPSO and subsea systems.









EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Inclusivity and Fairness

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle. October 19, 2024

IN a commendable move, the Government of Guyana has revised its approach to cash grants for citizens over the age of 18.

The new initiative, spearheaded by President Irfaan Ali and outlined by PPP General Secretary Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, replaces the initially proposed \$200,000 per household grant with a more equitable \$100,000 cash grant per individual.

This decision is not only a response to public concerns, but also a significant step towards ensuring inclusivity and fairness in financial assistance.

At the heart of this initiative is the recognition that the previous proposal risked perpetuating inequities within the society.

The initial plan, which aimed to distribute a lump sum to households, could have inadvertently favoured those with larger families or more formal

By shifting to an individual grant, the government acknowledges the diverse realities of its citizens. There are over 600,000 eligible individuals in Guyana, and distributing funds per person allows for a broader reach and a more just allocation of resources.

One of the most significant advantages of this revised plan is its simplicity. As Dr Jagdeo articulated, identifying and verifying adult citizens is a more straightforward process than determining the head of a household.

This change not only streamlines administration but also reduces the potential for disputes and delays that could arise from household-based assessments. The focus on adult citizens ensures that everyone has access to the financial support they need, thereby promoting social

Moreover, the government has committed to transparency in the distribution of these funds. Dr. Jagdeo empha-

sised the importance of establishing robust systems to prevent corruption and ensure that the grants reach their intended recipients.

The proposed mechanisms, including distribution points for document verification, reflect a thoughtful approach to governance that prioritises the needs of citizens, particularly in remote and underserved communities.

It is also heartening to hear that the government is considering future cash grants as part of a broader strategy to support citizens, while continuing to invest in critical infrastructure. This dual approach recognises the necessity of addressing immediate financial needs, while laying the groundwork for longterm development. The promise of periodic cash assistance alongside ongoing investments in housing, roads, and healthcare is a holistic strategy that aims to uplift all citizens.

However, it is crucial for the government to ensure that the implementation of this initiative is as transparent and equitable as promised. Continuous public engagement and feedback will be essential to fine-tune the process and address any emerging challenges. The commitment to auditing the process and establishing proper systems is a step in the right direction, but vigilance and accountability must remain at the forefront of this initiative.

The revised \$100,000 cash-grant initiative is a commendable effort to foster fairness and inclusivity in Guyana's socio-economic landscape.

By shifting to an individual-based system, the government not only addresses the concerns of its citizens but also sets a precedent for transparent and equitable governance. This initiative has the potential to significantly impact the lives of many, and it is imperative that its implementation remains focused on the principles of equity, transparency and accountability.

Workers Beware of False Promises!

By Donald Ramotar

The August 24, 2024 issue of "Stabroek News" reported that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Aubrey Norton "vouched that if his party was returned to government he would ensure that public servants receive a minimum of 35% increase..." On October 7, 2024 the Kaieteur News reported that the AFC, not to be out done promised to give teachers a 45% increase if they are ever returned to government.

Workers by now should recognise that those two parties always make grand promises whenever they are in opposition but promptly renege on them once in office.

Recall that in the 2011 and 2015 elections those parties promised sugar workers 20% increase in pay. They also promised the workers that they would not close any Sugar estate if

elected.

The reality is that those people did the very opposite. They never gave the sugar workers a single dollar increase. They began the process of shutting factories, Skeldon, Rose Hall, Enmore and Wales were closed! This was done even though a commission which the regime set-up, headed by Dr. Clive Thomas, did not recommend any closure. During the five years they occupied the seats of power they did not give a cent increase to workers.

Up to today the fate of the industry remains uncertain became of what the PNC-APNU/AFC did.

Recall too their opposition to the Value Added Tax (VAT). They argued while in opposition that the 16% was too high and promised to cut it to 8% immediately should they get into of-

Lo and behold when they got into

office they kept the VAT at the same rate. It took them more than three years to reduce it by 2% to 14%. However, they applied it on all the basic food items, education items and medicines, that the PPP/C had zero rated.

In fact, by putting VAT (14%) on the items mentioned above the PNC/APNU/AFC extracted millions of dollars from the pockets of workers in this country.

Workers and farmers of today must recall too the promise those par-

ties made to rice farmers in that same period. They proclaimed that they would give famers \$9,000 per bag of paddy. Needless to say that was another promise honoured in the breach!

These are but the most recent examples of them reneging on promises and agreements reached. Their history is replete with broken agreements and promises.

So workers Beware of those Scammers and tricksters (Three card con men).

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Meet Lawrence Bishnoi, the Indian gangster Canada says India is using as a proxy

By Suruj Singh LJI REPORTER

In recent weeks, a series of violent incidents have drawn attention to Lawrence Bishnoi, one of India's most notorious gangsters.

His alleged involvement spans a high-profile murder of a Punjabi rapper, ongoing death threats against a Bollywood star, and the assassination of a Mumbai politician.

Now, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has added a new dimension, claiming that the Bishnoi gang is targeting pro-Khalistan activists in Canada, purportedly at the direction of the Indian government.

During a significant press conference, RCMP Assistant Commissioner Brigitte Gauvin revealed investigators' belief that Bishnoi's organization is linked to Indian government agents.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also addressed these claims, stating that Indian diplomats collected information on Canadians opposing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and forwarded it to criminal organizations like Bishnoi's gang, leading to violence against Canadians.

Indian officials have dismissed these allegations as "preposterous," countering that Canada harbors violent members of the pro-Khalistan movement.

They assert that the Canadian government is seeking to curry favor with the large Sikh community in Canada.

India's foreign ministry highlighted that there are 26 pending extradition requests for Bishnoi and other gang members, claiming Canada has overlooked these requests.

The RCMP's comments highlight the growing international influence of the 31-year-old Bishnoi, who, despite spending the past nine years in prison, has seen his notoriety expand. Initially involved in student politics in Punjab, his criminal network now spans North America, Europe, and the Gulf states, targeting Punjabi diaspora communities, according to Deepak Bhadana, a journalist investigating Bishnoi.

Bishnoi reportedly controls a gang of 700 members across multiple Indian states, with Punjab police tracking around 2,500 hideouts used by the gang's hitmen.

Despite being incarcerated, Bishnoi is believed to orchestrate major operations from behind bars through cell phones and encrypted communications.

Gurmeet Chauhan, a senior officer in Punjab's anti-gangster task force, noted that Bishnoi manages his operations from prison without needing extensive coordination. His ability to operate at a large scale sets him apart from other gangsters, suggesting he may enjoy protection from influential allies.

Jupinderjit Singh, a deputy editor at



Policemen escort Lawrence Bishnoi, in black shirt, inside a courthouse in New Delhi, India

Tribune, pointed out that Bishnoi's rise is unusual, as he is not from a traditional crime family.

He became involved in violence while studying in Chandigarh and significantly expanded his influence after his first prison term.

Bishnoi has been in various jails since 2015 and is currently held in Sabarmati prison in Gujarat, where he has connected with hardened criminals, allowing him to broaden his network.

Recent events have raised concerns that Bishnoi's gang may be trying to dominate Mumbai's criminal landscape, potentially leading to further violence.

The murder of influential politician Baba Siddique in central Mumbai on October 12 has drawn comparisons to past gangland violence.

A member of the Bishnoi gang claimed responsibility for the hit on social media, raising alarms about a resurgence of organized crime in the city.

In a separate incident last April, shots were fired outside Bollywood actor Salman Khan's home, following Bishnoi's public threat to kill him over an alleged poaching incident.

Bishnoi and his brother are considered prime suspects.

Singh noted that like other infamous gangsters, Bishnoi is cultivating a fearsome reputation, consistently asserting his intention to execute "big" plans, which serves to elevate his notoriety and value with each media report of his ac- with files from CBC tivities.



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The Economy & Finance | JB's Insight

Questions on Dr Gampat's credibility of his estimates on net migration



Joel Bhagwandin

I REFER to Dr Gampat's letter in the Stabroek News edition of October 14, 2024, with the caption, "I reiterate the fundamental point that the difference between arrival and departure cannot serve as an estimate or substitute of net migration."

Dr Gampat sought to defend his thesis on the methodology he utilised in his book to arrive at the net migration rate for the period 2000-2018. The goodly professor intimated that he is uninterested in part II of my essay, which I wrote on the issue citing the World Bank/UN data on net migration and expanding on the context of the argument.

He further stated that he reads only Stabroek News. Unfortunately, Stabroek News did not publish part II of my essay, which is not surprising, but that's fine.

With respect to his "clarifications," I have a few questions for Dr Gampat, since he's taken the time to lend clarity on the methodology he employed in his book.

He explained that to estimate the net migration rate, he employed the



"Beautiful Population Identity" method to solve for [sic] the unknown variable (net migration). To this end, he demonstrated that for the 19-year period from 2000-2018, that the country's population fell by 25,262.

My questions are: what is the source of his population data that

showed the decline in the population for that period, when the latest official census data available was the 2012 census? Did he estimate the population for those years, and if so, what were the bases for his assumptions?

It could not have been that he used the estimated population rate by the Bureau of Statistics for that period, because those estimates showed an increase in the population. Did he conduct his own house-to-house verification to derive his estimate on the population for that period? If so, please publish the report.

Dr Gampat would appreciate that the integrity of his data is as equally important as the integrity of the methodology employed, as well as the results derived therefrom. As such, Dr Gampat's clarification on his book raises concerns about the integrity of his data source and/or method of assumption, and more so, the quality of the end result of his analysis.

I would appreciate some clarifications on these questions for the benefit of the readers.

Critics will gladly collect the gov't cash grant

Dear Editor,

I SHALL be highly obliged if you could provide me the opportunity to share my thoughts on the recent announcements made by President Irfaan Ali during his address to a special parliamentary sitting.

I must say those announcements are welcoming and will be of great benefit to all Guyanese, particularly the \$200,000 one-off cash grant to every household.

The \$200,000 grant brings great relief to the family and countless others who were affected by the post-COVID-19 inflation and other economic impacts created primarily by global conditions.

They would finally get that TV they needed because the old one was



going bad, or the computer and printer combo for the children's school assignments, or a car repair that would help the taxi or bus driver to get back on the road to feed his family. I could vividly recall the days when the APNU+AFC was in office, they imposed taxes on essential services, imposed restrictions on the importation of older vehicles, applied VAT to utilities and education, and a range of other essential services that previously didn't attract tax or were zero rated, and they also took away the children's \$10,000 cash grant, just to name a few.

It is totally disgusting to hear some people saying \$200,000 is nothing. If it were \$1,000,000, the people telling you that \$200,000 is nothing would be telling you that \$1,000,000 is nothing.

Most of them saying \$200,000 is nothing have never had a poor person's expenses nor were ever in need in their entire lives, and rest assured they will turn up and quietly collect that same \$200,000, while they are encouraging you to reject it.

Yours truly, Quincy Anderson





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Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO

Former UG students will benefit from debt write-off, Jagdeo affirms

PEOPLE'S Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo on Thursday affirmed that former students who had not applied for a student loan, but are still in debt to the University of Guyana (UG) are eligible to benefit from the government's debt write-off initiative.

This was Dr. Jagdeo's response to a question on whether a person who has no loan agreement with the institution, but is indebted to it will also be eligible for a write-off.

"Once they owe the University of Guyana, then they are eligible for the write-off, too. You don't have to have a loan at the bank or to the student agency," he said while responding to questions posed by the Guyana Chronicle at a news conference.

The delivery of free tertiary education has been a hallmark of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)'s Manifesto.

Back in May, the government had announced Phase One of its plan to erase loans of UG students. The government had said it would write off all loans owed by Guyanese who can demonstrate that they have completed their studies, graduated, and were employed in Guyana for a minimum of three years.

Further, the General Secretary explained that there will be a commitment



Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo

at a minimum to ensure that resources are delivered to the institution no less than what is being allocated now.

"We would have to look at money coming in from private sources in the past, what was from the public source, the subvention. And we had a \$3 billion subvention already to UG per year," he said.

The General Secretary emphasised that there will be no cutting of the budget for UG or the technical and vocational institutions.

"We also need a management

seized with a sense of urgency, and you have to have structures there like the councillors at UG have, to push for better a quality education and better use of the money," he added.

Dr. Jagdeo affirmed that the government will ensure that UG is provided with all the resources it needs, but would not underfund, or overfund the institution.

He further charged the administration and the Ministry of Education to ramp up efforts to improve education delivery. "We have to get output for it; more efficiency and better quality tuition for the [people] who go to UG... I am hoping that the Ministry of Education will play a greater role on quality; bringing in people from abroad," Dr. Jagdeo said.

Last Thursday, during a historic address to the National Assembly, President Dr. Irfaan Ali announced that as of January 2025, all tuition fees at UG will be abolished.

"Starting from the January 2025 semester, tuition fees will be completely abolished at the University of Guyana. This will continue the advancement of our human capital for a more prosperous future for our country, and for all of the young people who will benefit from this initiative and their family.

"This measure will benefit in excess of 11,000 current students immediately, and, of course, all the new entrants in the future," President Ali said, adding that the initiative would cost the government in excess of \$18 billion.

It was also later revealed that tuition fees for all government technical and vocational institutions will also be abolished. These include Guyana industrial training centre, the Carnegie of Home Economics, the Guyana School of Agriculture.

Berbice Expo and Trade Fair vital platform for fostering cooperation

The eighteen Berbice Expo and Trade Fair which was opened on Friday night at the Rose Hall Community Centre Ground, East Canje Berbice is a vital platform for fostering cooperation among local businesses.

This was stressed by Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha during his feature address at the expo.

"This event is a cherished annual tradition and a vital platform for celebrating the dynamism of local businesses and industries. It allows us to forge new partnerships, foster collaboration, and explore the boundless opportunities for driving economic growth," the minister stated.

He added that the expo which is being held under the theme "Innovation in oil, gas, and agriculture for a sustainable future," showcases the strength and diversity of Region Six.

The region's resources play an important role in advancing the country's agriculture sector, aiding in food security, employment, and sustainability.

Minister Mustapha said Berbice's rich agricultural heritage and hardworking people have been a cornerstone of Guyana's economy for centuries.

"It's fertile lands and resilient communities have shaped the development of our nation, making it a region that exemplifies both potential and perseverance," the agriculture minister said.

Additionally, to achieve Guyana's and CARICOM's food security bill by 25 per cent by 2025, the government has invested large sums to modernise and transform agriculture.

According to the minister, Berbice has been instrumental in driving innovation and growth to achieve food security.

As a result, the government will continue to make targeted investments to ensure the region remains committed to leading agriculture activities.

Currently, the region is seeing an increase in the production of brackish water shrimp from 10,000 kilogrammes monthly to approximately 100,000 kilogrammes.

Last year the industry brought in \$1.8 billion to the rural economy in Region Six.

Other agricultural interventions include rebuilding the rice processing facility at Black Bush Polder and reviving the Rose Hall Sugar Estate.

The PPP/C government is adamant about building a resilient agriculture sector in all regions across the country to ensure Guyana remains the food basket of the Caribbean.



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha delivers his feature address at the Berbice Expo and Trade Fair

Medical cooperation between China, Guyana fosters sustainable development

AS Guyana continues to work towards delivering world-class healthcare, one cannot ignore how China's continuous support, through medical cooperation, is helping the country foster sustainable development, Guyana's Ambassador to China, Anyin Choo highlighted.

During a recent visit and exchange at the Affiliated Hospital of Xuzhou Medical University, the Ambassador reflected on China and Guyana's long-standing friendship that has produced success in various sectors, not just in the medical field.

With over 30 years of cooperation in the health sector, the ambassador did not hesitate to express appreciation on behalf of the Guyanese government and its people.

"You have sent your best doctors to Guyana, who have worked side-by-side with our local doctors and nurses," she said, adding that despite the challenges posed such as the language barriers, among other obstacles, the Chinese medical professionals did not allow this to stagnate progress.

"You have made lots of miracles, and you have saved lots of lives during your tenure in Guyana," she boldly said

Notably, the ambassador shed light on Jiangsu's medical team being instrumental in working with Guyana's local medical professionals, while creating long-lasting friendships, and even acting as a bridge of cultural exchanges.

Additionally, although Guyana is geographically very far away from China, the ambassador said that the bilateral, friendly relations between the two nations have stood the test of time.

"And even though we are so far



Guyana's Ambassador to China Anyin Choo (centre-left) among other officials

away, my presence here today, and also the presence of three medical brigade teams from Xuzhou is a testimony that it is possible, even with distance," she noted.

Additionally, owing to the remarkable achievements made by the Jiangsu Medical Team in Guyana, Vice-Principal of Xuzhou Medical University, Lv Ling underscored how medical services are being improved, how the development of bilateral relations are being promoted, and how the friendship between the two countries is being deepened.

He said: "The remarkable achievements made by our hospital in the medical field, cooperation with your country, the in-depth discussion on medical technology and public health policies, etc., all bear witness to the deep friendship and mutual trust

between the people of China and Guyana.

"We are well aware that medical assistance is not only a technical cooperation, but also a bridge between the hearts of the two peoples. The work of our medical team in Guyana not only provides high-quality medical services to the local people, but also promotes mutual understanding and respect between China and Guyana in the medical field."

In July 1993, according to the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the governments of China and Guyana, Jiangsu Province was designated to undertake the task of sending medical teams to Guyana.

So far, Jiangsu Province has sent 20 batches of medical teams, with 295 person-times to Guyana to carry out medical work.

The current medical team is the 20th medical team to Guyana organised by Nantong City, with a total of eleven members working at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), and five at the Linden Hospital Complex.

Notably, last year, it was published that because of Guyana and China's relationship in the health sector, this resulted in bountiful success, with thousands of surgeries conducted locally in partnership with Chinese medical teams.

Further, it was said that Guyana was able to conduct its first-ever open-heart surgery, and its first-of-its-kind minimally invasive laparoscopic surgeries among other unique procedures.

US, UK trade missions set for separate visits

AS Guyana continues to expand its relationships with its diplomatic partners, the hosting of trade delegations to advance investment and business prospects continue to be paramount.

During the recently concluded International Business Conference (IBC), which was held at the Guyana Marriott Hotel in Georgetown, diplomats stationed here revealed that trade missions from their home countries are expected to visit Guyana soon.

This was disclosed during a panel discussion which focused on collaboration frameworks and potential opportunities from essential bilateral partners.

It was against this backdrop that United States Ambassador to Guyana, Nicole Theriot, said that a trade delegation from the United States is set to arrive in the country next week.

At the same time, Theriot took the time to highlight that US businesses invest in all sectors and even noted that the oil and gas industry is a key area of collaboration between the two countries.

British High Commissioner to Guyana, Jane Miller, also told the gathering which consisted of



US Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot

business leaders, members of the diplomatic corps

and other private sector stakeholders, that a United Kingdom trade mission is set for November.

At that time, Miller noted that UK businesses have been involved in several sectors in the country, including agriculture but unlike the US, the oil and gas sector is not one.

As of recent, ties between Guyana and the United Kingdom have grown significantly, trade between the two countries topping some £1.9 billion and further putting Guyana as the UK's largest trading partner in this region.

However, in relation to the ties between Guyana and the US, earlier this year Theriot stated that commercial ties between the two countries are stronger than ever with over 100 companies currently operating in Guyana.

At that time, Theriot also pointed to the over US\$4.6 billion in trade recorded last year between the two countries.

With that, she highlighted the significant contributions of US businesses to Guyana's economic growth which sustains the employment of thousands of locals.

Ali hails Caribbean's economic resilience amid global crises

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali has celebrated the Caribbean region's remarkable economic resilience in the face of ongoing global crises.

In his address as the guest speaker at the Barbados Labour Party's (BLP) 85th Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony held in Christ Church on Friday, he expressed admiration for the approach taken by Barbados under the stewardship of Prime Minister Mia Mottley, the leader of BLP.

He highlighted her significant role in shaping global discussions aimed at establishing fairer and more resilient economies.

"Today, Barbados' leadership in Prime Minister Mottley has contributed significantly to global discussions on creating fairer, more resilient economies. Her leadership has emerged as one that is persistent, whether it's on climate change [and] crime...," President Ali emphasised.

He emphasised how, despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, and climate change, Caribbean nations have demonstrated a strong capacity to adapt and recover.

In the past four years, he said, small economies like Barbados and others in the Caribbean have faced "a perfect storm" of challenges related to climate, food, and energy security.

These countries, Dr. Ali noted, already vulnerable due to their size and dependency on external factors, had to navigate a series of crises that tested their resilience.

He pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic alone stripped two years of policy and financial space from these na-



President Dr. Irfaan Ali and Prime Minister Mia Mottley

tions, as governments redirected efforts to managing public health emergencies.

Simultaneously, he said, the region endured two hurricanes. On top of this, Dr. Ali noted that the highest transportation and logistics costs in the history of the Caribbean dramatically increased the cost of imported goods. Global events outside the region only exacerbated these difficulties.

According to him, the highest imported inflation on food prices in the region's history stemmed from international disruptions, compounded by the effects of wars, which impacted the global supply of grains.

He noted that Barbados' ability to maintain a steady Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, even amidst economic downturns, is indicative of sound fiscal management and innovative policy-making.

"So, you navigated that as a country. But you did not only navigate this as a country, you navigated through an economy where your debt-to-Gross Domestic Product ratio [in 2017] was 158.3 per cent. You navigated these challenges in 2017, when your import cover was 5.3 weeks. You navigated these challenges in Barbados when your fiscal deficit, expressed as a percentage of your GDP,

was 7.6 per cent. The average employment rate between 2009 and 2017 was 10 per cent," Dr. Ali said.

As a region, however, Dr. Ali emphasised the importance of developing a successful strategy for the future, highlighting that technology integration is crucial.

He said: "The future is a digital future. For too long, as a region, we have taken an individual approach to development. If, by policy, we haven't done what we were supposed to do by now, trust me, the digital world will force us to do it digitally."

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.

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

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Guyana making strides in healthcare delivery, says Health Minister

Guyana's Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, attended the Caribbean American Hindu Issues Inc (CAHII) Conference at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre on Saturday.

In his speech, Dr Anthony updated the attendees on the country's many strides in improving healthcare and addressing communicable diseases, including malaria, HIV/AIDS, and filaria, through the implementation of new strategies and expanded services.

He stressed the importance of being vaccinated with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which is available free of cost and at all health centres across the regions.

He warned that if left untreated, HPV can cause cervical cancer in women and penile and anal cancer in men.

"This is something that is preventable; we have the vaccine, its available in the country but the uptake of the vaccine is not very good", he stated.

The health minister requested the support of the religious group in enhancing the HPV public health initiative and promoting all health campaigns.

"Our intent is that we want to take this (HPV vaccination) up to 90 per cent. So, to all the leaders here, this is my plead [sic] to you; we can work with you so we can improve the update [sic] of HPV vaccination in our country", he emphasised.

Currently, the HPV vaccines are being administered to anyone 9-45 years of age.

Dr Anthony also informed the audience of the newly launched Cervical Cancer Screening Voucher Programme which he says is currently recording a low uptake.

"Right now, we have the voucher that the government is paying for, it will cost \$8000 if you had to go and do an HPV test on your own. The government is giving you a voucher free of cost to ensure you go and get this test done, but the uptake has been very low," he said.

According to Dr Anthony, recent statistics from the Guyana Cancer Profile show that cervical cancer remains the second most prevalent cancer among women in the country, hence



Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony (r) with participants at the conference

early screening can aid in detecting precancerous lesions which can be treated early.

"We can work with all of your organisations to make sure that we explain this to people, and they go get the voucher and they get the test; and if they test positive, we can take the next steps to prevent complications from this cancer from happening," he explained.

The Cervical Cancer Screening Programme has been rolled out across the 10 administrative regions. Anyone 21-65 years of age can uplift a voucher from their nearest health centre and get screened at any of the private hospitals listed on the back of the voucher.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women globally, with around 660,000 new cases and around 350,000 deaths in 2022. (MoH)





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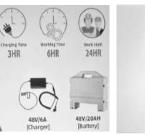
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PM Phillips urges reflection on Diwali's core values to achieve a strong Guyana

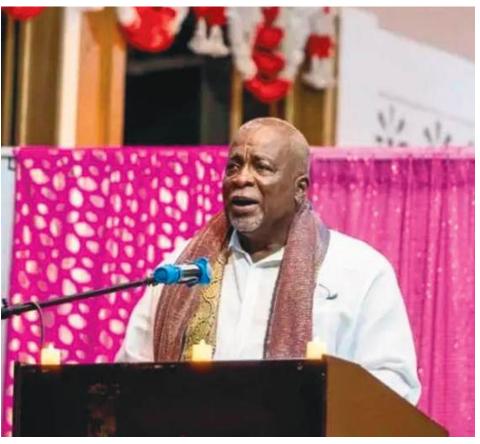
AS the Festival of Lights (Diwali) celebrations draws nearer, the Indian Commemoration Trust organised a Diwali (Deepavali) Mela on the lawns of the Monument Gardens on Camp Street in Georgetown.

The event, hosted on Saturday evening, featured an exciting line-up of cultural performances including dance and music, art, cuisine and other items on display. It brought together families and the Hindu community to enjoy the festivity in unison.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips joined patrons and the Indian community, on behalf of the government, for the auspicious celebrations. While there, he participated in the lighting of the Diya, after which he delivered remarks pertaining to the symbolic meaning behind Diwali.

PM Phillips highlighted that the festivity is one that transcends the boundaries of religion, serving as a universal message of hope, light and renewal and the eternal triumph of good over evil.

"This timeless message resonates deeply within our Hindu community, as



PM Phillips addresses the Diwali Mela

well as across all of Guyana; a nation built on the values of diversity and

unity," he underscored. He went on to emphasise that the

light of the diya embodies qualities such as compassion, understanding and kindness, that encourages everyone to spread positivity and bring people in

According to him, these celebrations are a chance for reflection and renewal, encouraging every individual to embrace love, unity and forgiveness to build a strong and prosperous nation.

"Let the light of the diya inspire us to overcome the challenges we face both as individuals and as a country, he said, adding, "May we live out the principles of Diwali principles such as kindness, generosity, and righteousness so we can continue to nurture peace, understanding and prosperity in our beautiful country."

The Indian Commemoration Trust is an organisation involved in promoting the rich Indian culture. As customary, they organise melas for every unique celebration, including Diwali, Phagwah and other festivities. Furthermore, it has been involved in several projects, the most notable being renovation of the Indian Monument Gardens.

'Brand Guyana' attracting new international franchises

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali emphasised the importance of aligning 'Brand Guyana' with the world's leading global brands, as he delivered remarks at the grand opening of the Aiden Hotel.

The hotel, located at Oronoque and Robb Streets, Georgetown, was inaugurated on Saturday evening.

The Aiden Hotel in Guyana, part of Best Western's global portfolio and the brand's first property in South America, was developed by Arimu Investments Incorporated.

Arimu Investment is operated by the Alphonso family, a prominent business family from Pomeroon, in the County of Essequibo.

During the launch of the boutique luxury hotel, President Ali highlighted the role of high-quality investments like Aiden in boosting the country's international image.

He stressed that such develop-



President Ali opens the Aiden Hotel in Georgetown

pete on the global stage and attract both investors and tourists, ensuring that the nation is synonymous with excellence.

"We have welcomed to our shores

ments are essential for Guyana to comthe best in eco-tourism businesses [and] premier companies. What this allowed is for 'Brand Guyana' to be associated with the best brands in the world; the best markets in the world. It allows

'Brand Guyana' to be marketed in the top-tier tourism hub globally," he em-

According to Dr. Ali, the investment in the hotel is linked to the country's vision of building a world-class economy by 2030, aiming for three million people to pass through the country annually.

He related that the hotel's quality has led the brand owners to adjust their model upwards. The president stressed the importance of predictability in brand pricing, service, and value to build long-term clientele trust.

President Ali also spoke about Aiden's testing stage, noting that during the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), the hotel welcomed real guests.

He urged the Aiden Hotel to actively promote Essequibo, particularly the Pomeroon region, highlighting its rich cultural heritage as key attractions for tourists.



Sod turned for new \$6.5B Lethem Regional Hospital

WITH bold targets set to transform Guyana's health sector into one that is world-class, access to healthcare in every corner of the country is of paramount importance to achieving this goal.

In line with this, the sod was turned on Sunday for the construction of a new Lethem Regional Hospital in Region Nine to the tune of almost \$6.5 billion.

Delivering the feature address at the sod-turning ceremony, the President Dr. Irfaan Ali indicated that this new health facility serves as another major investment in the country's healthcare sector and Region Nine.

"Our investment across this country, in every village is to ensure accessibility, quality, equity, sustainability and possibility. Investing to bring out the greatest possibility that we can have in our human resource asset," he said.

The Head of State indicated that the cost for construction of the hospital amounts to almost \$6.5 billion and will be of the same standard as hospitals constructed in urban centres in Georgetown.

He used the opportunity to urge contractors to complete the project before the 24-month timeline.

In providing some details about the new hospital, Dr Ali said that the hospital will have two fully functional operating rooms, a modern Emergency Room with a procedure room for minor surgery, diagnostic imaging services, digital x-rays, a CT machine and three ultrasound machines.

Additionally, the regional hospital will offer laboratory services, outpatient specialised clinics, pharmacy services, two dialysis chairs and a digital health control room among other things.

He highlighted that investment in primary healthcare is important and the government will continue to make these investments.

While plans are underway for the commencement of the construction of the hospital, President Ali said that the directive has been given to the Minister of Health for the facility to be a teaching hospital.

Subsequently, he disclosed that very soon, the government will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the West Indies (UWI) to establish a UWI medical school, pharmacy school and nursing school here in Guyana.

Additionally, he added that regional authorities in Region Nine have indicated to him that there are a group of investors from the state of Roraima who want to invest in a medical school and medical facility here.

He said: "I have this to say to all



President Ali interacts with nursing student at the simple yet significant sod turning ceremony on Sunday

of you, let us do it; let us build in this region with the support of UWI and University of Guyana, a medical school that can service the state of Roraima, this region and all of Guyana so that we can produce global medical practitioners from right here."

Meanwhile, Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony said that the People's Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) administration has made simple yet strategic investments to improve the lives of Guyanese.

"We have been seeing that we recognise that we can't just do hospital care, we have to also do primary healthcare meaning that we have to get care closer to where people are living," Dr Anthony said.

Turning his focus to the new hospital, the health minister added that with all of the amenities set to be in this modern facility, there will be no need for persons to be sent out to Georgetown for treatment as everything will be done at this facility.

He added, "You would have seen the transformation in health in this region in all its facets... but we are not satisfied with that, we want to take it up another notch and this hospital is going to help us to take it up that other notch so that it would be comparable with anything that we have in Georgetown."

The Lethem Regional Hospital is being built in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

In her remarks, IDB representative, Lorena Solorzano-Salazar, stated that the bank is proud to support the health sector in Guyana.

Salazar stated that the hospital is more than just another piece of infra-

structure, but rather it is a critical investment in the future of Region Nine's citizens' well-being.

She went on to add that it also reflects the government's commitment to enhancing public services provided to the hinterland.

"This new hospital demonstrates how targeted infrastructure investment can significantly improve the healthcare access to quality, leading to better outcomes," she said.



Guyana closer to self-sufficiency in egg, dairy, meat production

WITH major targets set, Guyana is anticipated to lead the Caribbean's meat and poultry industries, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha has said.

During a recent exclusive interview with the Guyana Chronicle, Mustapha said the country is on the brink of achieving self-sufficiency in egg, dairy and meat production, following setbacks with an outbreak of hepatitis.

"We are now recovering; we are moving back [to] where we were. We have already had discussions with the banks to reduce capital expenditure so that we can implement these new, modern tunnel houses, so that farmers can have better practices, a more modern way of doing poultry rearing," Mustapha explained.

The government, he noted, has been working closely with local farmers to increase egg production and for the first time in Guyana's history, the country has been able to consistently produce hatching eggs.

The minister keenly pointed out that with newer technologies, the country successfully produced some 27,000 hatching eggs and already in 2024, Guyana has produced 94,000.

"Last year, we produced 27,000 and this year, for the first half, we produced 94,000 and ... we have started a massive programme in the production of hatching eggs. We are producing a lot of table eggs, but for the first time in our history in our country we are producing hatching eggs."

Meanwhile, Mustapha noted that work is being done to catapult the dairy industry. To this end, the government has been supporting public-private initiatives which will see the construction of a modern milk plant.

He explained that once this facility comes on stream, it is expected that the country can become a main exporter.

The Demerara Dairies Incorporated, an extension of Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL), is investing some G\$4 billion to build a state-of-the-art milk plant, thereby creating a market for liquid, ready-to-use milk.

"What DDL is doing is very good for us and the government is supporting it."

He added: "Over the last three-four years we have been working with the farmers around the country. As a matter of fact, we have been importing breeding animals so they can have better animals to breed, both in the dairy and the beef industries."

During a recent address to the National Assembly, President, Dr Irfaan Ali had highlighted the government's push to solidify Guyana as the prime agricultural hub, pointing to the government's strategic policies and investments to achieve many food-production targets.

"Agriculture is one component of the food ecosystem that we are developing. The food ecosystem is a much wider, complex undertaking that includes financing for agriculture, insurance for agriculture, issues of climate change; it's about bringing together all the factors to ensure a viable food production," President Ali said.

To achieve this, President Ali believes that focus must be placed on standard certification, infrastructure, subsidies, transport, technology, and research and development.

In this regard, he announced that in the new fiscal year, the government will introduce new rules for the poultry industry. These include the acceleration of capital investments by farmers, reducing costs and incentivising growth.



Agriculture Minister points to massive production of hatching eggs

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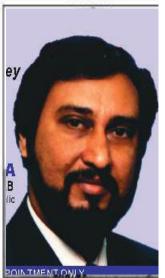
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ADS IN EQUALITY WORK!





Bhaskar Sharma (I) and Prime Minister Mark Phillips

The PM and the Publisher

Equality Publisher Bhaskar Sharma recently met with Guyana's Prime Minister Mark Phillips.

During their discussion, they delved into various issues concerning the diaspora, highlighting the importance of maintaining connections and addressing the needs of Guyanese communities abroad. They also explored other mutual areas of interest, focusing on collaboration and support for initiatives that benefit both the diaspora and the home country.

This meeting underscores the significance of dialogue between leaders and the diaspora in fostering growth and development.

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Guyana President Irfaan Ali outlines Vision 2030 ahead of next election

A new session of the National Assembly commenced in Guyana on Thursday, during which President Dr. Irfaan Ali unveiled an array of measures and policies designed to lay the foundation for the "Vision 2030" initiative being championed by the ruling People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government, ahead of the upcoming general elections next year.

In a comprehensive presentation to the Assembly, President Ali outlined ambitious plans for fostering a digital economy, emphasizing that this initiative represents a shift toward a modern economy distinct from those of previous generations. He articulated a vision for a "smart and agile economy," which aims to deliver a wide range of services and enhance efficiency across various sectors

The Vision 2030 framework envisions a "dynamic society" in which a significant number of citizens actively contribute to the socio-economic development of Guyana. Ali's proposals reflect a commitment to innovation and modernization, positioning the country to capitalize on emerging opportunities and drive sustainable growth in the years to come.

Ali said that the first-ever Guyana Digital School will soon be established as part of national plans to create a fully functional digital economy,

"The digital school will be resourced like any brick and mortar facility, with the added benefit of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support learning," Ali said, noting that the school will cover nursery education all the way to Grade 12 and that tutors will be part of the venture to support teaching Guyana's curriculum.

But he said there will also be a focus on nursing, accounting, entrepreneurship and remedial education in the



Guyana President Irfaan Ali

evenings as well as various extracurricular activities to be done via the online platform.

"In fulfilling our promise of ensuring that our propensity redounds to the prosperity of the region, this Guyana Digital School will also be available for CARICOM citizens," he said.

Ali said the government hopes to vastly transform service delivery through this ongoing digital transformation, telling legislators, "We want to lead efforts in the delivery of effective, secure government services across every sector and to mitigate the risks of being left behind."

Ali said he was looking forward to a new Guyana that would require all persons coming together "requiring a new thinking...hard work and faith in the government and people we serve".

Ali, who addressed the National Assembly for the second time since assuming office in 2020, told legislators, who had been on recess since August, that every household across Guyana

will receive a one- off GUY\$200,000 (One Guyana dollar=US\$0.004 cents) cash grant this year and that distribution is expected to commence instantly.

He said that the grant is part of the government's determination at reducing disparities in the country and guaranteeing that the people of Guyana have more disposable income.

He told legislators that altogether, it is expected that about GUY\$60 billion will be infused into the economy through this cash grant.

Health Minister, World Bank discuss readiness for health emergencies

On Monday, at his Brickdam Headquarters, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, Minister of Health, held a meeting with the Team from the Pandemic Fund World Bank. The discussions focused on strengthening Guyana's preparedness and response to global health emergencies, particularly in the wake of recent pandemics. The Ministry of Health remains committed to safeguarding public health and ensuring that the nation is well-prepared to face any emerging health challenges.



Guyana introduce new variety of rice on initiative to modernize agriculture

Guyana has introduced a new highyielding rice variety called 'GRDB 18' as part of its initiative to modernize agriculture through innovation and technology. Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha highlighted the variety's resilience, stating, "This variety is very tolerant to waterlogging, which is crucial for maintaining high-quality harvests. It also boasts superior grain quality, enabling us to compete effectively in both local and international markets."

Mahendra Persaud, chief scientist at the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB), noted that after 120 trials, there has been no decline in rice recovery rates. "From our trials, the average yield is around 7.2 tons per hectare, which is about 45 bags per acre. This candidate variety shows great yield potential," he explained.

Launched at a rice field in Nooten Zuil, East Coast Demerara, GRDB 18 can withstand late harvesting by 10 to 15 days and endure challenging conditions like drought, promising greater resilience for the rice sector. Mustapha also mentioned that in just four years, the GRDB has successfully introduced two rice varieties, with GRDB 16 making its debut in 2020.

He urged the board to develop an-



GRDB 18 is a highly tolerant to waterlogging, says Agriculture Minister Zulkifar Mustapha (inset)

other high-yielding rice variety that offers better quality and that will increase rice production by next November.

"We have to ensure that we work and commit ourselves to include best practices to transform the rice industry...In the coming years, I am hoping that we can extend our market to about 50 more countries," he said. Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Madanlall Ramraj, said that varietal development is crucial for increasing rice production in the country, noting that the rice industry is valued at GUY\$100 billion (One Guyana dollar=US\$0.004 cents), with over GUY\$42 billion worth of seed paddy sold to mills last year.

He said that exports from mills to other countries amounted to GUY\$44 billion, with billions of dollars more in local sales, drainage, irrigation, and machinery.

"We will continue to work to ensure that the farming community benefits from the intervention of the Ministry of Agriculture," Ramraj added.

Guyana Airport installs e-gates system

A new e-gate system has been installed at Guyana's Cheddi Jagan International Airport to enhance the immigration process for travelers. President Dr. Irfaan Ali announced this upgrade, highlighting that the system will adhere to International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards.

Key features of the e-gates include: Autonomous immigration processing: Capable of performing global security checks on passports.

Chip passport validation: In compliance with ICAO standards, with future integration for Guyana's e-ID and facial recognition.

Integration with ABIS: Allows realtime passenger updates and automated checks for ED form correctness.

Simultaneous processing: Can handle six passengers at once with oversight from a single officer.

Enhanced security measures: Prevent unauthorized access and enable visibility for officers through glass panels.

Monitoring station: Facilitates effective passenger flow management and automatic detention of watch-listed indi-

viduals.

These improvements aim to significantly reduce processing times and enhance overall airport efficiency.

The installation of the new e-gates at Cheddi Jagan International Airport aligns with the Guyana Government's initiative to digitize public services, moving towards a paperless operation. Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo recently announced plans for an automated border management system to be implemented first at CJIA, with a rollout to other entry points, including Eugene F. Correia International Airport.

This automated system will enable

travelers to complete customs and immigration forms online, replacing the current printed customs declaration forms. Information from arriving passengers will be stored in a central database, allowing authorities to track overstays and identify individuals seeking employment without permits.



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Karan Johar, one of India's top producers and directors, will retain 50% of the stake in his company

Top vaccine maker buys stake in major Bollywood studio

India's top vaccine maker has bought a 50% stake in a major Bollywood production company known for making popular films.

Adar Poonawalla's Serene Production will invest 10bn rupees (\$119m; £91.3m) in Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Dharmatic Entertainment, his company said.

Poonawalla also heads the Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine maker by number of doses, which produced millions of Covid-19 shots for India and many other countries during the pandemic.

Poonawalla's investment in the entertainment company is a significant move at a time when Bollywood is struggling to overcome lean times since the Covid-19 pandemic shut cinemas.

The industry is also facing competition from dozens of local and global streaming platforms in India.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to partner with one of the most iconic production houses in our nation, along with my friend Karan Johar," Poonawalla said in a press release. "We hope to build and grow Dharma and scale even greater heights in the years to come."

Johar is one of India's top producers and directors who is also known for his popular TV shows. His four-decades-old production house has produced iconic movies such as Kuch Kuch Hota Hai and Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham, featuring top star Shah Rukh Khan.

But in recent years, many of the films made by the production house have failed to generate enthusiasm at the box office.

Earlier reports had said that Johar was in talks with India's top conglomerates Reliance and RPSG, which owns music label Saregama, to invest in his firm.

Commenting on the partnership in which he will retain a 50% stake, Johar said, "This partnership represents a perfect blend of our emotional storytelling prowess and forward-thinking business strategies."

"This collaboration opens up a world of possibilities for creating content that will resonate across borders and generations," he said.

US charges Indian intelligence officer in Sikh separatist murder plot

The United States has charged a former Indian intelligence officer for allegedly directing a foiled plot to assassinate an American citizen who advocates for Khalistan - an independent Sikh state that would be carved out of India.

The US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York said on Thursday that it had registered "murder-for-hire and money laundering charges" against Vikash Yadav for trying to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

The indictment of Yadav, for the first time, implicates the Indian government directly in the attempted assassination of a dissident. The Indian government has said it is co-operating with the ongoing investigation in the US. It has not responded to the specific charges against Mr Yadav yet.

The development comes after Nikhil Gupta, an Indian national also charged in the case, was extradited to the US from a prison in Prague earlier this year.

The FBI has accused Indian agents of involvement in an assassination attempt on Pannun, a dual US-Canadian citizen, saying Pannun was targeted for exercising his "First Amendment rights" to free speech.

"The FBI will not tolerate acts of violence or other efforts to retaliate against those residing in the U.S. for exercising their constitutionally protected rights," said FBI director Christopher Wray in a statement.

India has labelled Pannun a terrorist, though he denies the allegation, claiming to be an activist advocating for Khalistan.

According to the US indictment, Yadav was the mastermind behind the plot to murder Pannun and he recruited Gupta in May 2023 to orchestrate the assassination in exchange for getting a case against him in India dismissed.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Some of your colleagues may be opposed to what you are doing but that won't stop you for a single second. It is not in your nature to put other people's interests ahead of your own without a very good reason, and they have no reason at all.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Like it or not you will be forced to make certain changes over the next 24 hours, but the good news is if you buckle down and make the most of them they may actually work in your favor. Don't be so stubborn Taurus, say Yes to progress.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Get involved in some kind of cause or social movement that can make a difference today. If you help those who cannot help themselves you will not only do them a lot of good but you will look good too in the eyes of the world.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): It's time for a serious clear-out of all those things in your life that have been holding you back. That doesn't just mean material things such as possessions but emotional things too. Are there any outdated relationships that can safely be junked?

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Everything seems to be up in the air at the moment and no doubt you are running here, there and everywhere trying to stay in control. But why bother? According to the planets it won't make any difference to you personally if it all comes crashing down.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): You have never been the sort to give up on something just because it is difficult and you have no intention of changing your ways now. The more others say you should leave it and move on the more determined you will be to see it through to completion.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Don't take it personally if people you usually get along with seem to be avoiding you today. It doesn't mean that you have done anything wrong — on the contrary, it's more likely they have made a mistake and are afraid you will criticize them for it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): A project you have been working on for weeks, maybe months, has to be completed either today or tomorrow. After that there will be more pressing matters for you to deal with, so make one final effort to see it over the line.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): There is a sense of urgency about your activities, because you know this will be the last chance you get to reach an important objective. The Sun's change of signs tomorrow will take you off in a new direction, so chase after that goal today!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): Changes on the work front may not be to your liking but the fact is you don't have the power to resist them, so be smart and go with the flow. These changes have been on the cards for quite some time, so you should already be prepared.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): If you aim to get a dozen tasks finished today most likely just two or three of them will work out well for you. As for the rest, not even an Aquarius can do everything at once, so put them on hold and come back to them later on.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): The more you try to force people to move in one direction today the more they will do their utmost to move in a different direction. Try a double bluff instead: nudge them in the opposite direction to where you want them to go. It could work.

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Unusual Heat Signal at St Vincent's La Soufrière Volcano Subsides

The thermal anomaly detected at La Soufrière volcano in St Vincent has dissipated, based on recent observations by monitoring experts. Initially spotted by NASA's FIRMS hot spot detection system on October 6, the anomaly did not persist beyond October 8, as reported by the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO). After a field visit from the NEMO Soufrière Monitoring Unit (SMU), no unusual activity was observed in the crater. Additionally, data collected on October 4 indicated no significant changes in gas composition from the vents

Officials have offered several potential explanations for the heat detection recorded at La Soufrière volcano on Sunday. They suggest that this anomaly is "likely associated with temporal changes in the summit," which could include several phenomena. These might involve a sulfur fire occurring within the crater, an increase in gas emissions from fumaroles, or a small phreatic (steam) eruption that may have uncovered hotter underlying rocks.

While the thermal readings have returned to normal, authorities are still issuing warnings about the ongoing risks. The National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) has emphasized that potential hazards linked to the presence of gas emissions at the crater vents



La Soufriere last had a major eruption in 2000

could remain for an extended period. As the volcano goes through periodic fluctuations in background activity, these risks need to be taken seriously.

To ensure the safety of the public, officials are reinforcing the message that unauthorized visits to the summit of the volcano are strictly prohibited. This is a critical measure to prevent any acci-

dents, as the area can be unpredictable and hazardous.

Ongoing monitoring efforts are being carried out by NEMO's Soufrière Monitoring Unit in collaboration with the Seismic Research Centre (SRC). Their work involves thorough visual inspections of the crater to identify any ongoing changes, such as landslides or more vigorous fumarolic activity. Additionally, they are utilizing instrumentation from all seismic stations to track any significant developments. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure that any changes in the volcanic activity are detected promptly, allowing for timely alerts and necessary safety measures.

Suriname and Guyana to jointly exploit gas reserves

Suriname and Guyana are taking significant steps toward jointly exploiting gas reserves off their coasts. Staatsolie director Annand Jagesar stressed the importance of this collaboration, acknowledging that while immediate outcomes are unlikely, both countries are committed to developing a shared approach.

In a recent meeting with Guyana's Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, Jagesar discussed the potential of the Makka and Kwaskwasi discoveries in Suriname, as well as the Haimara and Pluma discoveries in Guyana. He emphasized that collaboration could enhance operational scale, but many logistical and technical challenges still need to be addressed before progressing.

Jagesar was in Guyana as part of a Suriname delegation that included Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation Minister, Albert Ramdin that met with Guyana's Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo.

Ramdin said that the meeting in Guyana "took place in a very pleasant and open atmosphere," and that both countries recognise the importance of cooperation in the field of gas.

He said there are possibilities and the two countries will tackle them together with Staatsolie with the stateowned oil company now engaged in exchanging information with the authorities in Guyana at a technical and business level and record what the joint potential is.

Ramdin said based on this, strategies and scenarios will be made on how the intended cooperation can take shape.

"In any case, this will have a high priority in the coming two to three months and the intention of this conversation was to clearly agree at government level that this must be part of the strategic cooperation in oil and gas between Suriname and Guyana."

He said the technical details will be discussed in the coming weeks.

Immediately after Staatsolie, To-talEnergies and Apache Corporation announced on 1 October that the final investment decision (FID) for the production of oil reserves in Block 58 had been taken, Jagdeo contacted the Surinamese government, requesting that discussions be held soon about jointly exploiting the gas reserves of the two neighbouring countries.

Meanwhile, Staatsolie is moving towards a second FID, namely in Block 52, where Malaysian Petronas has discovered recoverable oil reserves.

There are reports that Malaysian Petronas has found an amount equal to more than 400 million barrels of oil there, allowing for a project that would



Guyana and Suriname will jointly exploit gas reserves off their coasts

utilise 100,000 barrels of oil daily.

Last week, Staatsolie began discussions with Petronas to get this project off the ground and Jagesar

explained that they could announce the FID as early as 2027 and begin oil production in Block 52 by 2030.

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Ground breaking for Dominica's International Airport set for November 9

November 9, 2024, will mark the official groundbreaking ceremony for the long-awaited international airport in Dominica. Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit announced on Friday.

The airport project has been a central element of the nation's development plans for many years and gained significant momentum following the signing of a one-billion-dollar contract between the Government of Dominica and Montreal Management Consultant Establishment (MMCE) on June 9, 2021.

Skerrit says the airport is long overdue after years of failed promises "Every government in the history of Dominica both pre and post-independence have made an international airport the center of their development plan. So, Dominicans were weary with politicians and governments and parties and rightly so, who said they would build an international airport.

Skerrit says he delayed the ground breaking ceremony to prove to Dominicans that the construction is really happening this time around 'I delayed the groundbreaking, because as you know groundbreaking is supposed to be done before you start work. I felt that it's a while we have talked about an international airport. I said people will have hesitation, so don't go and break ground, let's start. Let us bring it to a point where you can see the alignment of the runway."

The Prime Minister encouraged the public to attend the ceremony, highlighting the airport's importance as a national project. "Just imagine the possibilities of night landings and the extended runway at Douglas-Charles; consider what the international airport will bring to Dominica," he remarked.

The Dominica International Airport Project is the biggest contracted project not only in the history of Dominica but also in the history of the Eastern Caribbean region, to date.

Set to be completed in 2025, the Dominica International Airport will be the game changer for the "nature island" – opening up a world of opportunities for socio-economic growth.

Protestors force closure of Martinique Airport

Hundreds of passengers are stranded on the French Caribbean island of Martinique after its international airport was forced to close due to protesters overrunning the tarmac and attempting to break into the facility, according to local authorities.

The International Airport of Martinique, Aimé Césaire, announced on Facebook Thursday night that "no departing or arriving flights will be operated" until further notice.

Earlier that day, protesters stormed the airport in Fort-de-France, trying to force their way through the main entrance, where many passengers had taken shelter. Videos shared on social media show police securing the entrance, fending off assaults from demonstrators, and deploying what appears to be tear gas in response.

Three planes carrying approximately 1,000 passengers were diverted



The International Airport of Martinique, Aimé Césaire

to the nearby island of Guadeloupe on Thursday, according to a statement from the Martinique local prefecture. Additionally, around 500 passengers who were scheduled to board those flights found themselves stranded at Fort-de-France airport.

The prefecture noted that the surge of protesters at the airport was triggered by "rumors" circulating on social media garding the imminent arrival of hundreds of French police officers by plane. "This completely false information is at the origin of the gatherings and the invasion of the airport runway," the statement explained.

Since Monday night, Martinique has been engulfed in protests over the high cost of living, which have escalated into violence, resulting in at least one fatality. Demonstrators have set fire to a police station, vehicles, and road barricades, leading to clashes with law enforcement.

This week, nearly a dozen officers have been injured as protesters hurled bottles and rocks, prompting police to respond with tear gas. Reports indicate that some demonstrators even opened fire, further escalating tensions. In response to the violence, the government has imposed a curfew and reiterated that demonstrations on public roads are prohibited.

These protests are part of a broader wave of unrest that began in early September, leading France to deploy special anti-riot police to the island and impose bans on demonstrations in specific areas. Martinique has experienced similar protests in recent years, driven by frustrations over economic, social, and racial inequalities.

Grenada to build shrine to Bishop, others killed in October 1983 coup

Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell has revealed plans to construct a shrine at Fort George in memory of deceased Revolutionary leader Maurice Bishop and others who lost their lives on October 19, 1983, amid internal conflicts within the Revolutionary Government.

Originally named Fort Rupert to honor Bishop's father during the revolution, the site was renamed Fort George after the revolution's collapse and the island's return to democracy. The fort is currently undergoing restoration as part of a tourism initiative.

In his address during the National Heroes Day celebrations, attended by hundreds at Progress Park and many more via live broadcast, Prime Minister Mitchell emphasized the importance of honoring those who fell on that tragic day. "We can assure you that once the restoration is complete, your administration will ensure that a proper shrine is established to commemorate our martyrs," he stated. He acknowledged that for the past 40 years, there has been little recognition of the tragedy that occurred at Fort Rupert.

"But as we reclaim our history, as we reclaim and comes to term with our pass, we will do what is right in ensuring that the necessary shrine to commemorate the tragic loss of our prime



Fort George, Grenada, is the site for the new memorial. It is also where Bishop and several others were executed

minister, members of cabinet and other citizens of Grenada is properly erected on that site, to ensure that our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren appreciate and sacrifice made by our forebears," he said in his National Heroes Day address.

However, since October 1993 a plaque was erected at the site where the military killings of Bishop and his cabinet along with others who died on that day. The plaque says that it was erected with the cooperation of the Government of Grenada by the Maurice Bishop and Martyrs Foundation.

As Grenada observes its second year of National Heroes Day, the Foundation previously collaborated with the government for the 2023 events, which included an ecumenical service at Fort George and a wreath-laying ceremony. However, the Foundation chose not to

participate in the government-organized activities for 2024.

Terrence Marryshow, a founding member of the Foundation, expressed dissatisfaction among the families of those killed on October 19, 1983, regarding the government's decision to relocate the event from Fort George. "It's there where the tragic events occurred, and we should always remember that."

US imposes sanctions on Suriname companies

The United States has imposed sanctions on three Surinamese companies—Strong Roots Provider, Glazing Future Management, and Engen Management—citing their alleged involvement in facilitating trade with Iran's oil sector.

The move comes as part of a broader effort by Washington to target companies with links to the Iranian oil industry, following Iran's October 1 missile attack on Israel, during which approximately 180 missiles were fired at the country.

The sanctions, announced under the Stop Harboring Iranian Petroleum Act, form part of the US Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024. This legislation allows for punitive measures against foreign individuals and entities involved in the trade of Iranian oil and petroleum products. Alongside Suriname, sanctions were also imposed on companies in India, Malaysia, and Hong Kong that reportedly assist in the sale and transport of Iranian oil.

According to US officials, the three Surinamese firms function as commercial managers for companies involved in the maritime transport of Iranian oil. The US Treasury and State Departments, tasked with enforcing these sanctions, stated that these actions are designed to limit Iran's access to resources that could fund missile programs and terrorist activities.

Suriname's Foreign Affairs, International Business, and International Cooperation Minister, Albert Ramdin, confirmed that the affected companies are

registered in the country. However, he noted that the Surinamese government is still gathering information about its operations and potential involvement in the Iranian oil trade.

Ramdin emphasized that Suriname has not taken a stance on the US sanctions imposed on Iran, stating, "This is a matter for the United States of America. If these sanctions affect certain companies in their operations, then these companies will have to seek justice in America and file their complaints there."

The Santokhi administration is currently conducting an investigation into the companies' activities, though Ramdin mentioned that no formal approach has been made by the businesses regarding the sanctions. Reports suggest that the firms are engaged in international maritime transport with ships that do not dock in Suriname. Ramdin added, "We want to know exactly what kind of goods are being shipped, to which countries they are going, and where they are coming from," and that the government is working with US authorities to obtain more information.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen indicated that Washington is prepared to impose additional sanctions, stating, "We will not hesitate to take further measures to hold Iran accountable." US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan echoed this, saying the new sanctions aim to restrict Iran's financial resources used to support missile programs and terrorist activities that pose a threat to the US and its allies.



Suriname Foreign Minister Albert Ramdin

The situation in Suriname remains fluid as the government continues its investigation into the matter



Negril set to get International airport, PM Holness announces

Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness has unveiled plans for a new international airport in Negril, alongside a new terminal at Sangster International Airport (MBJ) in Montego Bay, as part of his government's continued investment in Jamaica's transport infrastructure.

Speaking at the Sandals Jamaica Love Tour on Wednesday, October 16, Holness highlighted his administration's efforts to improve the island's connectivity, noting that upgrades to Norman Manley International Airport (NMIA) in Kingston are also already underway.

The development of an interna-

tional airport in Negril has been long anticipated. Transportation Minister Daryl Vaz hinted at the project last year but did not provide a timeline. In October, Vaz shared more details, stating, "In Negril, there is a consultant that has been brought on board to do a master plan for the expansion of the Negril Aerodrome to become an international airport. That also will have a huge impact in relation to taking some of the pressure off of the MBJ airport."

Additionally, the government is considering designating Negril as its own parish.

In addition to the airport projects,

Holness outlined several other major infrastructure developments, including the ongoing US\$320 million South Coast Highway, which will connect Harbour View in East Kingston to Port Antonio, Portland. He also mentioned the US\$225 million perimeter road being constructed in Montego Bay, and the planned Lucea bypass in Hanover, which will require significant investment.

Holness emphasized that these projects would enhance the ease of travel for visitors across the island, boosting tourism in less developed regions like Portland and St. Mary, known for their natural beauty.

During his address, the prime minister reflected on his administration's achievements over the past eight years, crediting the Jamaican people for their resilience and sacrifice in achieving record-low unemployment of 4.2%, halving the country's external debt, and creating a more stable economic environment.

"We are at an inflection point where we can turn our potential into reality, where our results can be greater than our efforts to achieve them," Holness said, expressing gratitude to the tourism sector and visitors for their role in Jamaica's progress.

Jamaican Tik Tok star shot in Florida

Jamaican TikTok influencer
Akeem Dunbar, known as "World
Dawg," was seriously injured, and his
cousin was killed in a shooting last
Tuesday morning outside a Dunkin'
Donuts in Miramar, Florida. According
to police, the incident occurred around
3:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the 6200
block of Miramar Parkway.

A 911 call from the scene captured a man, believed to be Dunbar, frantically telling the dispatcher, "I got shot, I got shot... My friend died," according to a report by UrbanIslandz. Officers rushed to the scene but found only shell casings when they arrived, with no sign of the victims or vehicles involved. Miramar police Sgt. Tiffany Roy told WPLG that officers were un-

able to locate any victims at the scene.

Local resident Patricia Riviera, who lives near the Dunkin' Donuts, told WPLG that she heard the gunshots. "At 3:29 exactly, I hear multiple gunshots, one after the other after the other," she recalled. "I was like, 'Oh my God, those are gunshots, those aren't fireworks.""

Shortly after the shooting, authorities received additional calls from Memorial Regional Hospital, where a man with gunshot wounds—later identified as Dunbar—had been admitted. In another 911 call from State Road 7 and Southwest 23rd Street, police were alerted to more developments in the case.

During an inspection of the vehi-

cle involved in the incident, police discovered the body of Dunbar's cousin, 34-year-old Kevern Flynn. Family members were called to identify Flynn's body, and his death was reportedly so devastating for his pregnant wife that she collapsed and had to be assisted by EMS. Neighbor Alexis Nazario told CBS News Miami, "She fainted over here, and we gave her a seat... The whole family started coming over. This is really sad. He was a young guy."

A second cousin, who wished to remain anonymous, told reporters that Dunbar, Flynn, and another influencer, Swiiss Lee, had attended a party prior to the shooting. Swiiss Lee, also a Jamaican influencer, has since denied

any involvement in the World Dawg shooting, addressing rumors circulating online.

"Right after my birthday, bro, my friend got shot in his hand, broke his bone... and all you talk 'bout is sacrifice and setup," Lee said in a statement, dismissing the rumors. "Just a spread bad rumor, bro." Lee later fired back at another influencer, saying, "How I did set up my friend, bro?... It hurts me to hear that my friend got shot in his hand and the next dawg dead."

Police confirmed that Dunbar is expected to make a full recovery from his injuries. The investigation into the shooting remains ongoing, with no official charges filed at this time.

Kamla Persad-Bissessar: Great nations must respect women

Trinidad and Tobago Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar says no country that ever disrespected its women ever became great.

She made the comment at a Divali celebration at her Siparia constituency office on October 20.

Persad-Bissessar told her audience that over the last two months, there has been an alarming increase in the rise of domestic violence and bullying.

She added this has resulted in the deaths of many women and children.

Persad-Bissessar did not refer to any specific event as she said there was a veritable crisis when it came to crimes against women and children.

Earlier this month, Persad-Bissessar attended the funeral of 15-year-old Jayden Lalchan, who died by suicide after years of alleged bullying at St Stephen's College.

The issue of bullying also surfaced during the recent budget debate in the House of Representatives, with Energy Minister Stuart Young making comments on October 10 which were described as derogatory and potentially bullying towards opposition MPs.



Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar partakes in puja

The opposition called for Young to be referred to the Privileges Committee.

Young apologised for his remarks in the House on October 17 and in a Facebook post days earlier.

In a ruling on this matter on October 17, Persad-Bissessar said, "Any member who actively participated in, supported or passively encouraged such

crass discourse has also failed in this duty and cannot escape the focus of this reprimand. Thankfully, one neighbouring member rose to the highest traditions expected of members of this House by showing his disdain for what he heard."

She added, "If we are conscious of our roles as leaders in society, we would understand that the remarks were even more damaging given their misogynistic and homophobic character, as well as their criminal insinuations."

During the function, Persad-Bissessar appealed to the members of the diplomatic corps who were present to increase the outreach programmes undertaken by their respective embassies to help at-risk women and children.

She asked for those programmes to be spread throughout all parts of Trinidad and Tobago.

Persad-Bissessar said there should be no discrimination with respect to where these programmes are located.

She also acknowledged the presence of former St Kitts & Nevis opposition chairman Chelsey Hamilton in the audience.

Persad-Bissessar said the last time Hamilton was in Trinidad and Tobago was before the May 24, 2010, general election, which was won by the former UNC-led People's Partnership coalition.

She hoped his visit on this occasion would lead to a similar outcome "on the eve, on the cusp of another election."

The next election is constitutionally due in August 2025.

Speaker reprimands Young for 'despicable behaviour'

T&T Speaker of the House Bridgid Annisette-George has censured Port of Spain North/St Ann's West MP Stuart Young for his controversial remarks against members of the opposition. She said the reprehensible statements generated much public criticism and brought the House into odium and disrepute.

Speaking in Parliament on October 17 after the conclusion of the standing finance committee and the passing of the budget, Annisette-George said she was compelled to address the matter.

She said when the remarks were uttered, the Chair was being handed over to her by the Deputy Speaker and she did not hear them. She said based on the video footage, the opposition members also did not hear them as there was no outcry nor denouncement. She said the statements were not captured on the Hansard but were labelled "cross-talk."

"However, like the rest of Trinidad and Tobago, I was deeply troubled by the improprieties uttered during a period when the nation should have been focused on the business before the House."

Annisette-George said the freedom of speech enjoyed by members was to enable them to discharge their functions, but it was a privilege which was subject to the standing orders of the House and to the well-established general rules regarding parliamentary debates as developed by the Practice and Procedures of Parliament.

"It is not to be abused in a manner that distracts members, and the public, from the business before the House, or even worse, in a manner that undermines the dignity of the House of Representatives.

"While it is emphasised that the speech of members cannot be challenged in a court of law, parliamentary privilege is not a licence for offensive, insulting and/or unparliamentary language. Therefore as Speaker, I am not constrained in issuing to any member a reprimand commensurate with the severity of his/her degree of unparliamentary, objectionable, abusive, insulting or offensive language."

She said while younger people might not have been initially familiar with the meaning of one of Young's remarks, its connotation and meaning have since been explained in the public space.

"Such crass and distasteful references to other members of this House have no place in this august chamber and have rightly been subject to public contempt.

"I exhort us all not to resort to the obscene and the lewd... It will not be



Speaker of the House Bridgid Annisette-George

tolerated in this chamber by any member."

Annisette-George said she did not object to light banter across the aisle and would be naïve to expect anything less in a parliamentary setting. "However, vulgarity can never be considered banter and rude, unparliamentary language and expletives in particular, certainly do not meet the standards expected of each member of this House."

Windies coach on World Cup exit: We lived and died by the sword

WEST Indies women's coach Shane Deitz said his team "lived and died by the sword" in their heartbreak eight-run loss to New Zealand in the second semifinal at the 2024 International Cricket Council T20 Women's World Cup at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium, United Arab Emirates on October 18.

Battling for a spot to face South Africa in the final on October 20, the Windies women did a fantastic job with the ball as they restricted New Zealand to 128 for nine.

However, the modest total proved insurmountable as early wickets put WI behind the eight-ball. Despite a late surge by star allrounder Deandra Dottin (33 off 22 balls), West Indies posted just 120 for eight in their reply.

"It's been a pretty emotional few days. It was a great win over England in the last group game," Deitz said, at the post-match presentation.

"The emotions were high and we tried to get our emotions level before we played again...The girls are passionate about playing cricket for the West Indies and they put their bodies and passion on the line all the time. I'm really proud of them."

After battling a side strain for most of the tourney, Dottin, who came out of international retirement just three months ago, put in a splendid bowling effort for the Windies as she grabbed four wickets for 22 runs. Dottin was well-supported by leg-spinner Afy Fletcher who grabbed two for 23.

The West Indies top-order stuttered through the first ten overs as skipper Hayley Matthews (15), Qiana Joseph (12), Shemaine Campbelle (three) and Stafanie Taylor (13) all struggled to find their rhythm.

And when the dependable Matthews skied a catch off Lea Tahuhu (one for 33) to leave West Indies on 51 for four, the hopes of the region were placed on Dottin's shoulders. After being dropped in overs number 13 and 14, Dottin appeared to be swinging the game in West Indies' favour when she slammed Tahuhu for three sixes over the midwicket boundary in the 16th over.

The final turning point in the game came in the very next over, though, as Dottin top-edged an Amelia Kerr (two for 14) delivery to short fine-leg where she was caught by Fran Jonas.

"Deandra was taking control of the game and it really looked like she was going to bring it home. She probably needed to get through that over," Deitz said.

"Deandra got a ball she would normally hit for four...You live by the sword and die by the sword. We were trying to win the game and the margins were fine."

With West Indies slipping to 97 for seven after Dottin and new batter Chedean Nation (duck) were dismissed



West Indies' Deandra Dottin plays a shot during the ICC Women's T20 World Cup

in quick succession, the pair of Afy Fletcher (17 not out off 15) and Zaida James (14 off eight) tried to guide their team home as they stitched together a 22-run stand

However, with boundaries hard to come by and the Windies needing 15 off the last over, James was bowled by Suzie Bates (one for six) as New Zealand held their nerve to clinch the victory.

Deitz hailed the performance of the New Zealand spinners, and he said they did an excellent job of limiting the scoring possibilities for the Windies batters. Player-of-the-Match Eden Carson (three for 29) was the chief destroyer for New Zealand, and her off-spin broke the back of the Windies batting with the early wickets of Joseph, Campbelle and Tay-

lor

The Windies were unable to advance to the final and get the opportunity to repeat their T20 World Cup title win from 2016. But Deitz, who was appointed head coach last July, believes this tourney is a sign of good things to come for the team.

At 26, Deitz said Matthews' leadership continues to be an inspiration for the future generation of players, and he believes veterans Dottin and Taylor, both 33, will bounce back and return stronger.

"We're just racing to get back to those roots of entertaining cricket and backing ourselves to win games and not hoping the other team plays badly," he said. "It's only been a year, but we've improved a lot. The next T20 World Cup in 2026 I think we'll be ready to take on the world again."

Deitz praised the work being done to harness young talent in the region, and he said the fruits of the West Indies Academy should bear fruit internationally in five-ten years.

New Zealand will now meet South Africa in the final at the Dubai International Stadium.

Summarised Scores: NEW ZEALAND: 128/9 from 20 overs (Georgia Plimmer 33, Suzie Bates 26; Deandra Dottin 4/22, Afy Fletcher 2/23) vs WEST INDIES: 120/8 from 20 overs (D Dottin 33, A Fletcher 17 not out; Eden Carson 3/29, Amelia Kerr 2/14). New Zealand won by eight runs.

New Zealand crowned T20 World Cup champions

DUBAI: New Zealand won the Women's T20 World Cup for the first time, beating South Africa by 32 runs on October 20 after a standout performance from Amelia Kerr with bat and ball.

South Africa's chase was held to 126-9 in 20 overs at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in reply to New Zealand's 158-5 in the final of the 18-day tournament.

The White Ferns added to their one-day title at the 2000 Cricket World Cup and became the first New Zealand team to win a T20 World Cup, with the men's team – the Black Caps – yet to achieve this feat.

South Africa were also seeking to become a first-time T20 champion. It was a second successive heartbreak for South Africa, after they had lost the 2023 final on home soil to six-time champions Australia.

After South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt won the toss on Sunday and opted to bowl, Kerr top scored for New Zealand with a 38-ball 43. Brooke Halliday hit 38 runs in 28 deliveries and opener Suzie Bates scored 32 in 31. Nonkul-

uleko Mlaba took 2-31 in four overs for South Africa.

South Africa made a strong start to their chase, reaching 51-1 in 6.5 overs but never really threatened afterward, reaching the halfway stage of their innings at 64-3.

Wolvaardt top scored for South Africa with a 27-ball 33. Kerr took 3-24 in her four overs, including Wolvaardt's wicket.

Kerr was named player of the match and also player of the tournament, finishing with a record 15 wickets in six games.

"I am a little bit speechless and so stoked to get the win, considering what this team has been through. It's what dreams are made of," the all-rounder said. "The wicket was pretty good and I thought 140-plus would get us in the game. It was an outstanding contribution from everyone to finish the job."

New Zealand had previously finished runners-up, losing to England in 2009 and Australia in 2010.



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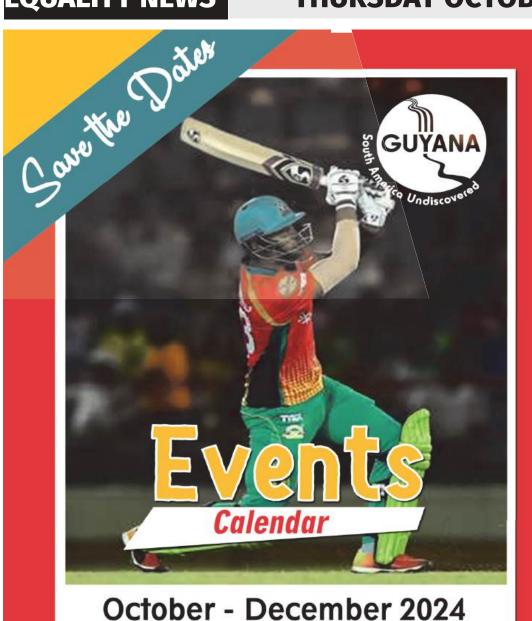
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- 6 CPL Cricket Finals
- 6 Cricket Finals after party
- 6 Essequibo Drags Racing
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- 18-21 Berbice Expo
- 19 Conference on Hindu issues in the Caribbean & Diaspora
- 26 Monster Mash Halloween Fair and Fundraiser
- 27 Tapas Rum & Wine
- 30 Diwali Motorcade
- 31 Diwali -'Festival of Lights'

November

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- 10 Circuit Racing Series 3
- 12 Entrepreneurship Conference
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- 16-17 Tourism Month Golf Putting Contest
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