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FOOD & RUM: Barbados is boasting bigger numbers in tourist arrivals for this year's Food And Rum Festival.

Chief executive officer (CEO) of the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI), Andrea Franklin (inset), said

she was extremely pleased with the response to this year's festival – which ran from October 5 and climaxed on October 27 with Liquid Gold at the Concorde Experience – noting that all the events had record attendance.

The CEO noted that culinary tourism was one of the main pillars which the BTMI promotes: “We try to make what we have owned as Barbados – The Culinary Capital of the Caribbean.



Shubh Diwali: Guyana gov't throws support behind biggest motorcade yet

The Government of Guyana has provided support to over 35 Mandirs and youth groups countrywide towards their participation in the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha's grand Diwali Motorcade which took place as Equality was going to press on October 30.

The Department of Public Information (DPI) in a report says the Diwali Motorcade, a major event on Guyana's national and tourism calendar, is synonymous with the celebration of Diwali in Guyana.

The 2024 Diwali motorcades were

held countrywide with the final grand motorcade on October 30, which saw the largest number of floats in the motorcade's rich history coming from Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice.

Guyana will join the rest of the world in observing Diwali on October 31, as the country joins the Hindu community in welcoming Mother Lakshmi into their homes to bring light, prosperity and blessings.

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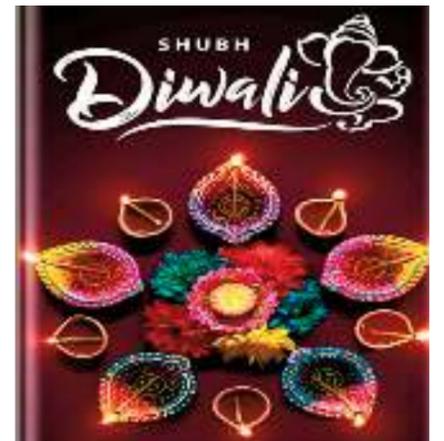
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Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 79

GUYANA STRENGTHENS GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL TIES AT COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT IN SAMOA



ALL GUYANESE OVER 18 YEARS, INCLUDING OVERSEAS CITIZENS, TO RECEIVE \$100,000 CASH GRANT

PAGE 3



LUXURY MEETS LOCAL FLAIR IN GUYANA'S NEWEST HOTEL

PAGE 12

GUYANA STRENGTHENS GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL TIES AT COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT IN SAMOA



President Dr. Irfaan Ali and President of Conservation International, Dr. M. Sanjayan

President Dr. Irfaan Ali engaged in significant bilateral discussions on environmental leadership and sustainable development at the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa. Meeting with UK Prime Minister Sir Keir

Starmmer, Conservation International's President Dr. M. Sanjayan, and Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, President Ali underscored Guyana's commitment to advancing climate resilience, biodiversity preservation, and sustainable economic growth.



President Dr. Irfaan Ali and Prime Minister of Singapore, Lawrence Wong

In a meeting with Prime Minister Starmer, President Ali highlighted Guyana's establishment of the Global Biodiversity Alliance, a coalition dedicated to uniting international efforts against biodiversity loss. They also discussed the two countries' collaboration on the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership, agreeing to deepen ties in trade, climate finance, and biodiversity initiatives.

With Dr. Sanjayan, President Ali outlined Guyana's global environmental role and its pioneering efforts in forest conservation under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), which has garnered international recognition. He shared plans for a

2025 Biodiversity Summit in Guyana to further advance global conservation. Dr. Sanjayan commended



President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali meeting with UK's Prime Minister Keir Starmer

Guyana's leadership and confirmed Conservation International's continued support, acknowledging the efforts of their team in working closely with local communities to implement the LCDS.

In talks with

Singapore's Prime Minister Wong, the leaders focused on four priority areas: carbon markets, low-

carbon development, biodiversity, and private sector growth. They discussed international carbon trading frameworks and future collaboration on sustainable urban planning and green technology. Guyana and

Singapore also explored strengthening their partnership in the oil and gas sector, including the involvement of Singaporean companies in constructing Guyana's Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessels. Both leaders expressed enthusiasm for expanding this collaboration into other sectors and using Guyana as a gateway for regional engagement in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The commitments from these meetings underscore a shared vision among Guyana, the UK, and Singapore for sustainable growth, enhanced economic development, and a resilient future.

PRESIDENT ALI RECOGNISES KING CHARLES' IMPACT, URGES COMMONWEALTH TO FOLLOW HIS LEAD

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali honored His Majesty King Charles III with a tribute at a dinner for leaders attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa. In a toast, President Ali praised King Charles' leadership, emphasizing his profound commitment to global betterment that extends beyond his official duties.

"His Majesty's efforts go far beyond what the public sees," President Ali noted. "There is a very real, personal dedication in his approach to

making the world a better place, and it is truly inspiring."

President Ali recounted his visit to Dumfries House in Scotland, where he witnessed firsthand King Charles' transformative initiatives. "From job training for young people to preserving traditional skills and providing STEM education to children, the work being done at Dumfries House reflects the very best of community empowerment and innovative education," he said.

The President

highlighted other efforts on the estate, including sustainable housing projects and a wellness



Part of King Charles' official dinner for the Commonwealth Heads of Government

centre focused on mental health, now integrated into the National Health

Service. "I share these stories because they reveal, at a very human level, His

Majesty's dedication to bettering the world and a determination

to reach those who might otherwise be overlooked, helping them to transform their lives," President Ali expressed.

He urged Commonwealth leaders to find inspiration in King Charles' work. Reflecting on King Charles' long-term focus, the President highlighted initiatives that promote climate action, biodiversity, and urban development across the Commonwealth. "Guyana is proud to be working alongside the King's Foundation on Sustainable Urban

Development. This collaboration reflects a shared vision for creating cities that are resilient, sustainable, and inclusive," he said, encouraging other Commonwealth nations to join similar initiatives.

In his tribute, President Ali also acknowledged Queen Elizabeth II's legacy of service, noting how King Charles has upheld her values while addressing contemporary challenges. He extended his appreciation to Queen Camilla for her ongoing support of various causes.

PRESIDENT ALI PAYS TRIBUTE TO GUYANA'S ADOPTED SAMOAN VILLAGE



President Ali visiting the Samoa's adopted village for Guyana

President Dr. Irfaan Ali made a special visit to Lalovi-Mulifanua, the Samoan village chosen to represent Guyana at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The village, adorned in Guyana's national colors, welcomed the President with open arms and traditional Samoan hospitality.

As President Ali was

greeted by a large crowd of villagers, including elders and children, he was deeply touched by their warm reception. The village elders shared heartfelt messages of love and unity, fostering a strong bond between the two nations.

In his address to the villagers, President Ali expressed his sincere gratitude for their warm welcome and assured

them that Lalovi-Mulifanua would always hold a special place in the hearts of the Guyanese people. He emphasized the Commonwealth's spirit of togetherness and respect, highlighting the unique connection forged between Samoa and Guyana.



President Ali visiting the Samoa's adopted village for Guyana

ALL GUYANESE OVER 18 YEARS, INCLUDING OVERSEAS CITIZENS, TO RECEIVE \$100,000 CASH GRANT



President Irfaan Ali delivering a live announcement

All Guyanese over 18 years, including overseas citizens, to receive \$100,000 cash grant

In a major policy update, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has announced that every Guyanese citizen aged 18 and above—including those residing

abroad—will receive a one-time \$100,000 cash grant. This shift to an individual-based grant replaces the previously planned \$200,000 per household distribution, addressing potential conflicts and ensuring fairer access to funds for all eligible citizens.

This policy adjustment follows extensive public feedback, with many expressing concerns over challenges with the household-based model. “Thousands of Guyanese have engaged with me and my cabinet, expressing appreciation for the initiative, but highlighting potential issues with implementation,” President Ali stated. “Some worried they might miss out, especially younger people who don’t yet head their own households.”

To facilitate the distribution, the Ministry of Finance is developing a secure software application, through which citizens—both locally and

abroad—can register using identification information, such as name, address, and ID or passport number. General Secretary of the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, emphasised that overseas Guyanese with valid ID or passports can participate by registering in Guyana, as no payments will be made

outside the country. This approach underscores the government’s commitment to fairness, allowing all adult citizens to benefit directly from this historic initiative. The opposition, however, has attempted to claim credit for the initiative, with some members asserting that it was suggested by former Finance Minister Winston Jordan. Dr. Jagdeo dismissed these claims, recalling Jordan’s 2018 statement that a universal cash transfer programme was unsustainable. “The opposition argued that this kind of initiative wouldn’t work under their administration,” Dr. Jagdeo remarked, noting the inconsistency in the opposition’s stance on public financial support.

The \$100,000 individual grant approach aims to reduce administrative hurdles and alleviate potential disputes within households, addressing verification concerns that were raised under the original model. Costing over \$60 billion, the grant will inject considerable disposable income into the economy, supporting local and overseas-based Guyanese alike.

This initiative forms part of the government’s broader effort to enhance citizens’ financial well-being, following measures like eliminating over 200 taxes and fees and implementing cost-of-living relief for public servants, teachers, and other essential workers.



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

INTERNATIONAL FIRMS WIN GUYANA'S CRUDE MARKETING CONTRACTS

The government has awarded lucrative contracts to international firms, BB Energy Trading Limited and JE Energy, to market the nation’s share of crude oil produced from three floating production storage and offloading (FPSO) vessels.

The companies were selected following a competitive bidding process that attracted significant interest from global energy players. The process commenced in September 2024 and saw twenty-seven (27) bids being submitted to National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB). In keeping with the Request for Bids, the evaluation was made on a lot basis where the most substantially responsive bidder in



The government has identified the marketing firms to market Guyana’s share of crude

relation to the combined lots was determined in keeping with the evaluation criteria. The government secured a substantial premium of US\$1.85 per barrel for the crude from the Liza Unity, Prosperity, and Destiny FPSOs, representing a 93% increase compared to the previous contract. This new agreement, which will be in effect for twelve months, is expected to generate significant revenue for Guyana and contribute to the country’s economic development. The government’s strategic approach to marketing its crude resources has resulted in a significant uplift in the premium received, demonstrating its ability to negotiate favorable terms with international partners.

US BPO COMPANY BRINGS HUNDREDS OF JOBS TO LINDEN

The government’s efforts to promote job creation and economic development have yielded positive results with the establishment of a new Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) company in Region Ten. Prochant, a US-headquartered BPO company, has partnered with the government to open a new facility in Linden, that will create an estimated 100 jobs by the first half of 2025. The company is focused on medical billing and revenue cycle services and plans to expand its operations in Guyana in the future. Senior Minister Dr. Ashni Singh welcomed



Scores of Lindeners at Prochant Job Fair at Watooka House

Prochant to Guyana and urged them to ramp up their operations. He highlighted the government’s commitment to supporting the BPO sector and creating a conducive environment for businesses to thrive.

“This is not a one-off or isolated occurrence,” Dr. Singh said, referring to the government’s efforts to revitalise the BPO industry in Guyana. “We have been working hard to create a competitive environment and attract international companies to our shores.”

The government has been actively promoting the BPO sector through various initiatives, including the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, construction of new call centre facilities, and providing training and support to

businesses. Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill encouraged Lindeners to take advantage of the training opportunities offered by Prochant and to work diligently to ensure the

success of the company’s operations. “The success of this initiative will depend on the quality of work put in by the employees,” he said.



Senior Minister within the Office of the President with Responsibility of Finance and Public Service, Dr Ashni Singh delivering remarks at a job fair

TEACHERS RECEIVE SALARY INCREASES



The Ministry of Education and the Guyana Teachers Union inked the agreement back in August

In a significant initiative to support educators, the Ministry of Education has announced that teachers nationwide have received salary increases and adjustments in their October pay, following a memorandum of agreement signed with the Guyana Teachers' Union in August. This move highlights the government's commitment to honouring the dedication of educators.

A total of 14,786 teachers are benefitting from these changes, recognising their vital role in shaping the

nation's future. The 10% salary increase and adjustments inject over \$2.5 billion into the education sector, providing much-needed financial relief. Notably, the increase is retroactive to January 2024. Additionally, as part of the agreement, teachers will receive an 8% salary increase in 2025 and a 9% increase in 2026.

"We extend our heartfelt thanks to our teachers for their tireless commitment to our children, and for fostering a brighter future for Guyana," stated the



Over 14,000 teachers benefitted from increases

ministry. This financial support reaffirms the government's dedication to enhancing the education system and ensuring that educators are appropriately compensated for their essential contributions.

GOVT RESOLVES LONG-STANDING PANAMA RICE DISPUTE, PAYS OUT \$1.5B TO MILLERS

Nineteen rice millers received approximately \$1.5 billion as part of outstanding payments from a 2018 rice shipment to Panama, following the resolution of a long-standing issue caused by a flawed deal under the previous APNU/AFC administration.

The Government of Guyana, through the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) and the Ministry of Legal Affairs, recently settled the matter with Panamanian officials. As a result, the funds owed for rice shipped in 2018 were transferred to the GRDB, allowing the payments to be

disbursed to the affected millers.

Minister of Agriculture, Zulfiqar Mustapha, while addressing the millers, criticised the former government for failing to ensure timely payments to Guyanese millers after the rice was exported.

"When this agreement was signed on August 14, 2014, under the former PPP/C administration, we had a smooth arrangement. Any issues were handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture.



Minister Mustapha with the millers

However, in 2018, six or seven mills were forced out of business," Minister Mustapha explained. "Today, we are here to hand over payments to the millers who were owed. This demonstrates our government's commitment to the rice industry."

Unlike the previous government, which saw rice as a private business, we consider rice to be the country's business."

The agriculture minister also urged millers to settle any outstanding balances owed to the GRDB and small farmers.

In 2018, two shipments of rice, each weighing approximately 20,000 tonnes, were sent to Panama on credit. Upon taking office, the current government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, promised to pursue the issue and recover the funds owed to the millers.

GEORGETOWN'S FUTURE: A WALKABLE, HISTORIC CITY

President Irfaan Ali has outlined his administration's ambitious plans to transform the capital city into a more pedestrian-friendly, culturally rich, and business-oriented hub. The plan, which includes improving drainage and promoting walking and cycling, aims to create a more people-centric urban environment.

Speaking at the opening of the Aiden by Best Western Hotel, President Ali emphasised the need for a **"political culture"** that supports development. He called on the private

sector to take the lead in revitalising the city, citing the support of the UK's King's Foundation.

The transformation plan focuses on several key pillars: culture and heritage, green walkways, city park connectivity, industry and commerce, and waterfronts and markets. The government envisions creating a network of walking paths, connecting iconic landmarks like the National Park, a modernised zoo, and the boardwalk.

President Ali expressed hope that the modernised markets

will reflect the city's culture, history, and art. He highlighted the importance of creating a safe, welcoming, and usable environment for both residents and visitors.

Despite challenges with the City Council, President Ali reaffirmed the government's commitment to moving forward with the Georgetown development plan. The plan aims to create a city that is not only more aesthetically pleasing but also more functional and sustainable.



Georgetown's transformation plan to promote walking, fewer vehicles, history, culture, business

\$6.5B STATE-OF-THE-ART HOSPITAL COMING TO LETHEM

A historic milestone was reached in Region Nine with the groundbreaking ceremony for the new \$6.5 billion Lethem Regional Hospital. This state-of-the-art facility represents a significant investment in healthcare infrastructure and a testament to the government's commitment to improving the lives of its citizens.

President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, in his address, emphasised the importance of providing exceptional healthcare services to all Guyanese, regardless of their location. He highlighted the new



The sod turning for the new \$6.5 billion Lethem Regional Hospital

hospital's modern amenities, including two operating rooms, an emergency department, diagnostic imaging services, and specialised clinics, which will enable the delivery of high-quality care.

"What more can

we do to demonstrate that we love you, care about you, and want the best for each and every one of you?" President Ali asked, underscoring the government's dedication to the well-being of its citizens.

In the past four years, the government has invested close to \$8 billion in the healthcare sector of Region Nine. This significant investment has resulted in tangible improvements, such as a reduction in

patient referral rates to Georgetown and Boa Vista hospitals from over 20 percent to 2.7 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively.

"In many developed countries in the world, they would never invest this quantum of resources for 33,000 people. What this tells you is that geographic location or size of the population is not the bar in which we place our development. It is quality of life and making meaningful changes for every single citizen," the president noted.

President Ali

also highlighted the improved connectivity between health centers and the main hospital through the provision of vehicles, including ATVs, ambulances, and SUVs. This has not only enhanced healthcare delivery, but has also reduced the costs associated with medical evacuations.

The construction of the hospital falls under a US\$97 million IDB loan that aims to strengthen Guyana's health care network. It is the first operation under a conditional credit line for investment projects (CCLIP).

GUYANA TO ESTABLISH UNIVERSITY OF WEST INDIES MEDICAL SCHOOL

The government of Guyana is set to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of West Indies (UWI) to establish a medical school in the country. The announcement was made by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali at the sod-turning ceremony for a new state-of-the-art Lethem Regional Hospital.

President Ali stated that the aim is to ensure that tuition fees for the UWI medical school in Guyana are the same as in Trinidad. This will provide incentives for innovation and improved quality, complementing

the University of Guyana's existing School of Medicine.

Meanwhile, a group of investors in the Brazilian state of Roraima is interested in establishing a medical school in the Rupununi. President Ali has expressed a desire for the University of Guyana (UG) and the University of the West Indies (UWI) to be involved in this project.

"Let us do it," President Ali said. **"Let us build in this region, with the support of UWI and University of Guyana, a medical school that can service the**



The announcement was made by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali at the sod-turning ceremony for a new state-of-the-art Lethem Regional Hospital

State of Roraima, this region, and all of Guyana so that we can produce global medical practitioners

from right here in this region."

He told Brazilians present at the ceremony that attending a medical

school where tutelage would be provided in English would make them competitive and **"move on to global**

certification." **"We're ready to partner with you and make this happen,"** he added.

The government's investment in healthcare infrastructure and education aligns with its vision of ensuring that Guyanese citizens have access to quality education and healthcare services. The establishment of the UWI medical school will further strengthen Guyana's healthcare sector and empower countless Guyanese with the necessary qualifications to compete in the global environment.

QATAR SPECIALISTS TO ADDRESS CARDIAC SURGERY BACKLOG IN GUYANA

President Ali has announced that a team of cardiac specialists from Qatar will soon be arriving in Guyana to address the existing backlog of cardiac surgeries.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Lethem Regional Hospital, President Ali emphasised the government's commitment to providing high-quality healthcare services to all Guyanese. He stated

that the Qatar specialists will play a crucial role in eliminating the waiting list for cardiac surgeries, particularly pediatric procedures.

The President attributed this achievement to the government's active diplomacy and international partnerships. He highlighted the importance of preventing a recurrence of the backlog by focusing on primary healthcare, public health education,

and mental health initiatives.

"We must promote healthy lifestyles and avoid unnecessary surgeries," President Ali said. **"The new hospital will serve as a last resort, not a first option."**

Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, echoed the President's sentiments, emphasising the need for lifestyle changes and the importance of baseline health data for future planning.

"By collecting data on the health of our population, we can anticipate future healthcare needs and invest accordingly," Dr. Anthony stated.

The partnership between Guyana and Qatar has been strengthening in recent months. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed last month, paving the way for increased cooperation in various fields, including healthcare.



Qatari specialists to perform cardiac surgeries on Guyana

FREE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FROM JANUARY

In a significant move aimed at expanding access to education and skills training, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has announced that all fees for government-run technical and vocational institutions will be abolished starting in January 2025. This initiative is expected to benefit an additional 3,000 individuals, further enhancing opportunities for Guyanese to gain valuable skills for the workforce.

The abolition of these fees aligns with President Ali's broader commitment to education reform and follows his recent announcement that the University of Guyana (UG) will also be



This initiative is expected to benefit an additional 3,000 individuals across the country.

tuition-free from 2025, benefiting approximately 11,000 students. These decisions reflect key promises from the PPP/C's 2020 Manifesto and are part of the government's broader strategy to ensure access to higher education for all.

UG debt write-off to benefit former students

In addition to abolishing fees, the government is also making strides to ease financial burdens for former students. A total of \$8 billion in student loans has already been written off, with the debt forgiveness programme expected to reach \$18 billion. This initiative will benefit over 13,000 Guyanese who were

previously struggling to repay their student loans.

Importantly, former students who owe UG money but did not sign up for a student loan will also qualify for the debt write-off. This clarification was provided by People's Progressive Party General Secretary Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo during a recent press conference, emphasising the government's commitment to providing widespread financial relief.

With the removal of tuition fees at UG, concerns have been raised about maintaining the quality of education at the institution. Dr. Jagdeo assured the public that

the government remains committed to not only maintaining but also improving the quality of education at UG.

"There will be no reduction in

of Education is also considering bringing in international experts to help enhance the quality of tuition and administrative processes at UG.



UG debt write-off to benefit former students

funding," Dr. Jagdeo stated, adding that the administration is keen on ensuring that the resources provided are used efficiently to deliver better educational outcomes. The Ministry

These changes are part of a broader government effort to expand educational opportunities across the country.

1,500+ NEW TEACHERS GRADUATE, EDUCATION MINISTER URGES QUALITY EDUCATION

Over 1,500 newly trained teachers graduated from the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) at the 90th graduation ceremony held at the Guyana National Stadium. This year's cohort saw a significant increase in graduates from the hinterland regions.

Of the 1,502 graduates, 1,297 were women and 205 were men. The graduates were trained in various disciplines, including Primary Education (602,) Early Childhood Education (447,) Secondary Education (169,) Pre-Vocational Education (251,) GTE/TTE (32) and Special Education Needs and

Disabilities (51)

Education Minister Priya Manickhand urged the new teachers to leverage their training to deliver high-quality education to students. She emphasised the importance of dedicated and skilled teachers in shaping the nation's future.

"Every trained teacher that we put in front of the classroom ought to give us a higher quality of delivery of education to the children," Minister Manickhand stated. **"In any large enough component of human beings, you will find those who are excellent and interested in learning and doing better and**

bringing out the best of those under their care and you will find some lazy people."

The Minister

access to education and smaller class sizes.

"So, I hope you understand that the large training that we



E-gates installed at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport

highlighted the government's significant investments in teacher training and development, which have led to expanded

are investing in are having an impact on how we teach and the quality of education that we are supposed to deliver," she added.

CPCE Vice Principal Tasmin Henry attributed the increased number of graduates to the introduction of technology, which has made education more accessible to teachers in remote regions. She noted that teachers from far-flung areas, who previously had limited opportunities, are now able to access the college's Moodle platform and receive learning materials.

"Through these initiatives, teacher trainees at Monkey Mountain, for example, are now accessing the college's Moodle platform," Henry explained. **"Additionally, systems have been**

instituted for the delivery of learning materials and resources to CPCE centers across the country, specifically those with limited access to the college's learning management system."

The graduating teachers were encouraged to focus on their professional development and to resist distractions.

Fiona Sharma, the recipient of the President's Award for Excellence, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to receive a quality education. **"I am very honored first of all and I must say thank you to the Lord Jesus Christ because without him, I cannot do it,"** she said.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips has reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to the United Nations (UN) and its mission to address global challenges. Speaking at an event commemorating the UN's founding, PM Phillips emphasised the organisation's crucial role in fostering international cooperation and addressing issues such as peace, sustainability, and human rights.

"The beacon of hope which the

GUYANA STANDS UNITED WITH UN IN PURSUIT OF GLOBAL PEACE AND PROSPERITY

UN symbolises has no match among international organisations. Nor can any other equal its convening power around issues of global concern," the Prime Minister stated.

Guyana, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, is actively engaged in addressing global issues such as climate change,

food insecurity, and the protection of children in armed conflict.

"We welcome your support for and responsiveness to the aspirations of our country and people for peace, sustainable development, the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and the guarantee of human rights

and fundamental freedom for all," Prime Minister Phillips added.

The event, held at Parc Rayne, brought together UN officials, diplomats, and other dignitaries to celebrate the UN's significant contributions to global peace and development.



United Nations Resident Coordinator Jean Kanau, Prime Minister of Guyana Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips and Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony making a toast

AVIANCA LAUNCHES NEW DIRECT ROUTE BETWEEN GUYANA AND COLOMBIA - CARIBBEAN AIRLINES ADDS SURINAME TO GUYANA ROUTE

Avianca has announced the launch of a new direct route connecting Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Georgetown, Guyana, with El Dorado International Airport in Bogotá, Colombia. The service will commence on December 11, 2024, offering two weekly flights operated by Airbus A320 aircraft.

The new route will provide over 700 seats

per week between the two cities, offering a more convenient and efficient travel option.

Passengers will have the flexibility to choose from a range of personalised service options, paying only for the amenities they require. Flights will operate on Wednesdays and Sundays from Georgetown to Bogotá, and on Tuesdays and Saturdays from Bogotá



For the first time in the company's history, Caribbean Airlines (CAL) will link Guyana and Suriname

to Georgetown.

David Alemán, Avianca's Sales Director for Colombia and South America, expressed his excitement about the new service, stating,

"We are very happy to announce our arrival in Guyana with high expectations for Georgetown. With this new route, we continue to provide

a convenient and efficient service for our customers, supported by one of the largest route networks in the Americas."

In another significant development for regional connectivity, Caribbean Airlines (CAL) has announced plans to link Guyana and Suriname for the first time in its history. Starting in December, CAL will add

a twice-weekly Suriname sector to its flights out of Guyana's Eugene Correia Airport. This will provide a convenient connection between the two countries, offering travellers more options for their journeys.

These new additions, will undoubtedly boost tourism and trade between Guyana, Colombia, and Suriname, fostering closer economic ties.

GOV'T MULLS ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT LETHEM - SECOND TERMINAL TO BE ESTABLISHED AT CJIA

The government is exploring the establishment of a new international airport in Lethem, Region Nine, and expanding the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) to accommodate the growing number of visitors to Guyana. These initiatives are part of the government's efforts to boost the country's tourism sector and attract more investment.

President Ali announced these

plans during a special sitting of the National Assembly. He stated that the government is committed to building a visionary economy that promotes environmental stewardship, cultural enrichment, and economic inclusivity through tourism.

The government has been actively pursuing initiatives to position Lethem as a major commercial hub, including the construction of new

hotels and a planned food processing facility.

The expansion of CJIA includes the addition of an extended boarding corridor with two additional boarding bridges and an extended runway to accommodate larger aircraft. The government is also working to digitise the customs and immigration system.

Guyana has experienced a significant surge in tourism, welcoming 801,000

visitors in the first nine months of 2024. The country is on track to surpass one million passengers by November.

Several new airlines have recently started operating flights to Guyana, including British Airways, and United Airways. The government is also in discussions with Abercrombie and Kent, a renowned luxury travel company, to enter the Guyana market.



Lethem Airport serves the town of Lethem in the Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo region of Guyana

Guyana has received numerous awards for its tourism offerings, including the Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) Destination of the Year award in the Ecological Tourism category. These accolades solidify the country's position as a key player in the global tourism industry.

To support the growth of the tourism sector, the government is investing in infrastructure development, human capacity building, and standardisation and regulations. These efforts aim to ensure that Guyana can effectively cater to the increasing number of visitors and maximise the benefits of tourism for the country.

The Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) has taken a significant step towards modernisation with the installation of new e-gates. These advanced technology systems are designed to streamline the immigration process for incoming passengers, offering a more efficient and secure experience.

The e-gates feature automated passport scanning and biometric verification, allowing for faster and more accurate identity checks. They are compatible with a wide range of passports and support international standards for chip

CJIA INTRODUCES E-GATES FOR MORE EFFICIENT SERVICE FOR INCOMING PASSENGERS



E-gates installed at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport

passport validation. In the future, the system will be expanded to include Guyana's e-ID and facial recognition

technology. Integrated with the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS), the e-gates

provide real-time passenger updates and automate checks for the accuracy of immigration forms. This helps to prevent errors and inconsistencies, ensuring a smoother and more efficient process.

The e-gates are designed to handle six passengers simultaneously, overseen by a single immigration officer. This reduces processing times and allows for a

more efficient flow of individuals on watchlists. travellers.

The introduction of e-gates at CJIA marks a significant improvement in the airport's infrastructure and services. This is just one of the many upgrades being implemented as part of the CJIA Modernisation Plan, which also includes an expanded runway, a new air traffic control system, and other improvements to the airport's facilities.

FRENCH SCHENGEN VISAS NOW AVAILABLE LOCALLY

Guyanese citizens can now conveniently apply for Schengen visas to France right here in Guyana. This significant development eliminates the need for the previous arduous journey to Suriname to obtain these travel permits.

The Honorary Consulate of France in Georgetown has introduced a streamlined process that greatly reduces the hassle and expenses associated with visa applications. To apply, individuals can complete

the online application form on France-Visas and schedule an appointment.

Once scheduled, they can visit the Honorary Consulate located at 46 First Avenue, Subryanville, Georgetown, to submit

their application in person. To ensure a smooth application process, applicants must bring the completed and signed Schengen visa application form, proof of payment for the application fee, a valid passport, a passport-



A Schengen visa allows travel within 27 European countries for up to 90 days within a 180-day period.

sized photo, supporting documents as outlined on the France-Visas

website, the visa application fee, and a pre-stamped FedEx envelope for passport return.

This new service offers Guyanese a more accessible and convenient way to obtain Schengen visas, opening up opportunities for travel to 26 European countries.

GRDB UNVEILS PROMISING NEW RICE STRAIN

The Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) has launched a new high-yielding rice variety, 'GRDB 18'. The variety was unveiled at a rice field in Nooten Zuil, East Coast Demerara, where a successful trial was conducted by farmer A. Sabastian.

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha praised the GRDB for its commitment to innovation and technology in the rice industry. He said,

the new variety is a testament to the government's dedication to modernising and sustaining agriculture. GRDB 18 is highly tolerant to water lodging and offers superior grain quality, making it a valuable asset for both local and international markets.

Minister Mustapha noted that the GRDB has successfully launched two new rice varieties in just four years. GRDB 16 was introduced in 2020,

and GRDB 18 is the latest addition to the country's rice portfolio. The minister challenged the board to develop another high-yielding variety by next November, further boosting rice production.

Madanlall Ramraj, the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, emphasised the importance of varietal development for increasing rice production in Guyana. He highlighted the significant economic

value of the rice industry, which is valued at \$100 billion.

Mahendra Persaud, Chief Scientist at GRDB, reported that extensive trials have demonstrated the new variety's exceptional yield potential. GRDB 18 has shown an average yield of around 7.2 tons per hectare, or 45 bags per acre. Additionally, it is highly resilient to drought and can withstand late harvesting.



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, Director General of the ministry, Madanlall Ramraj, and Chief Scientist at GRDB, Mahendra Persaud inspecting the rice that was harvested

RICE PRODUCTION ON TRACK TO MEET 2030 TARGET



Rice yield on target for 8 tonnes per hectare by 2030

Guyana's rice industry continues to thrive, with a total of 90,713 hectares cultivated during the last crop season. This significant increase brings the country closer to its ambitious goal of achieving a rice yield of 8 tonnes per hectare by

2030.

The General Manager of the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB), Badrie Persaud, announced the positive development during the launch of the new high-yielding rice variety, 'GRDB 18'. The event took place in

Nooten Zuil, East Coast Demerara.

Persaud highlighted that Guyana's rice production is concentrated in five main regions: Regions Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six. Despite being a relatively small player in the global rice market, the country cultivates rice on approximately 92,000 hectares.

As of September, the national average rice yield was recorded at 6.5 tonnes per hectare, or about 40 bags per acre. This figure is steadily approaching the government's target of 8 tonnes per hectare, which would translate to approximately 50 bags

per acre.

Persaud noted that certain areas within Guyana are already exceeding the national average yield. For instance, the Cane Grove area in Region Four is currently producing at a rate of 7.1 tonnes per hectare. Additionally, Black Bush Polder in Region Six, with 25,000 acres under cultivation, is averaging 7 tonnes per hectare.

The GRDB is actively working to raise the overall production yield to meet the 2030 target. This includes promoting the adoption of high-yielding rice varieties like GRDB 18 and providing farmers with technical

support and training.

In addition to GRDB 18, the GRDB has also introduced the bio-fortified rice variety GRDB 17. Over 5,000 acres of this nutrient-rich rice are currently being cultivated in Guyana. Developed

in collaboration with CARICOM and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), GRDB 17 is poised to make a significant impact on both domestic and international markets.



Rice yield on target for 8 tonnes per hectare by 2030

TWO WOMEN BREAK BARRIERS AS EXCAVATOR OPERATORS

Two young women from Region Five have made history by becoming mini-excavator operators. The women were hired by the Mahaica Mahaicony Abary Agriculture Development Authority (MMA-ADA) after completing a training programme under the Ministry of Labour's Board of Industrial Training (BIT).

The women's employment comes as the MMA-ADA received two new excavators, valued at \$27 million, to support internal drainage works within the scheme. The excavators were handed over by Minister of



Divya Ragbir

Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha.

One of the recipients, Venita Chatergoon, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity, saying it was a dream come true. "I want to say thank you because this was an opportunity that wasn't there before for females," she

said. "I want to show them that once you take that first step, nothing is beyond you."

The other beneficiary, Divya



Venita Chatergoon

Ragbir, also expressed her hope to contribute to the betterment of her community. Together, the two women plan

to construct dams and improve access to fields for farmers, boosting the country's food production.

The government's investment in training has been instrumental in preparing women like Chatergoon and Ragbir for successful careers. Since 2020, over 12,000 individuals have received training under the BIT programme, with a focus on equipping women with the skills necessary for various professions.

Minister Mustapha emphasised the significance of this initiative in creating positive change and empowering women. He noted that the two



The handing over of the tractor keys to the Director of MMA-ADA

graduates would be valuable assets to the MMA-ADA, and serve as role models for others.

The MMA-ADA has been actively working to improve drainage facilities across Region Five. Through the construction and

clearance of canals, dams, and new farming areas, the authority is contributing to the development of the region's agriculture sector.

GUYANA AND SURINAME AIM TO CREATE WORLD-CLASS TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS HUB

Guyana and Suriname have the potential to create a world-class transport and logistics hub, benefiting both countries. President Ali highlighted



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali speaking about the opportunities that exists between Guyana and Suriname

this opportunity at the International Business Conference 2024, at the Marriott Hotel in Kingston, Georgetown. The two countries have been collaborating to integrate their economies and populations through infrastructure development and policy alignment. President Ali mentioned the possibility of merging gas resources and deploying them as a regional asset, which could provide competitive energy prices and support data centers focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Guyana is already working to procure a

second gas-to-energy power plant to meet growing energy demands. This development aims to create a favourable environment for manufacturing, industrial growth, and AI-related activities. **“And if we are able to position our markets and marry our energy capacities with AI data centres, then we will be bringing 2050 technology here in 2027, and we are positioning the countries as a new nerve for strategic development and investment,”** President Ali stressed.

President Ali emphasised the need



Attendees at the International Business Conference 2024 at the Marriott Hotel

to examine the policy matrix between Guyana and Suriname to achieve their shared goals. He noted that the Guyana-Suriname Chamber of Commerce plays a crucial role in facilitating

strategic dialogue between the two nations.

The region’s vast bauxite reserves offer significant opportunities for both countries. By ensuring reliable and competitive

energy, Guyana and Suriname can enhance the value chain and create opportunities in transport and logistics.

To facilitate this, Guyana is committed to building a modern deep-water port facility, which will require an investment of over US\$1 billion. This project will contribute to creating a world-class transport and logistics hub that can serve the entire region.

President Ali encouraged businesses to collaborate and benefit from the opportunities presented by this partnership between Guyana and Suriname.

SMES FROM THE UNITED STATES FLOCK TO GUYANA

Guyana’s investment climate is rapidly improving, attracting significant interest from international investors, including the United States (U.S).

The Ambassador of the U.S to Guyana, Nicole Theriot, highlighted the nation’s growing appeal at the Inaugural International Business Conference.

Beyond the oil and gas industry, Guyana offers promising opportunities in sectors such as hospitality, security, and tourism. The government’s

efforts to strengthen the economy and develop key sectors have created a favourable investment environment.

U.S small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have played a crucial role in Guyana’s economic growth. Over 3,000 US SMEs exported to Guyana in 2023, are contributing significantly to the country’s development.

“It’s not just our large Fortune 500 companies that are making an impact,” Ambassador Theriot emphasised.



U.S. Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot and British High Commissioner to Guyana Jane Miller

“Small and medium long-term diverse enterprises trading economic growth.” In the past four years, Guyana has received approximately

US\$14.5 billion in U.S foreign investments, representing a substantial portion of its foreign direct investment (FDI) rates. Ambassador Theriot expressed confidence in Guyana’s potential to become a leading exporter in the Caribbean region.

“As Guyanese companies diversify and hone their offerings, I know many more of them will begin to export to the United States,” she said.

Guyana’s exports have seen significant

growth in 2024, with a recorded increase of US\$4,163.1 million in the first half of the year. This trend is expected to continue throughout the year.

In addition to economic investments, the U.S has been actively involved in supporting Guyana’s human resources and security. The government recently signed a contract to acquire advanced rotary wing aircraft, and the U.S has deployed flight instructors to assist Guyana’s air corps.

GUYANA TAKES PART IN XVI BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAS

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips led a Guyanese delegation to the XVI Biennial Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) in Mendoza, Argentina.

The delegation

included Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Omar Khan, Head of Defence Secretariat Colonel Ronald Hercules, and other Guyana Defence Force (GDF) officers.

The CDMA, a platform for fostering

collaboration and enhancing regional security, brings together defence leaders from over 30 member states. Its primary objectives are to address shared challenges and bolster collective security in the Americas.

Prime Minister Phillips emphasised the importance of Guyana’s participation, stating, **“Our involvement in this conference underscores Guyana’s dedication to fostering robust diplomatic relations, strengthening our defence diplomacy, and enhancing our national defence**



PM Phillips leading Guyana’s delegation at the CDMA XVI

capabilities. The dialogue and partnerships formed here will contribute significantly to our nation’s security and development.”

The conference provided a valuable opportunity for Guyana to demonstrate its commitment to democratic values and international

cooperation. It also served as a vital forum for discussing strategies related to defence diplomacy, disaster response, and transnational threats.



PM Phillips leading Guyana’s delegation at the CDMA XVI

PRESIDENT ALI CALLS FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN CARIBBEAN EDUCATION

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has urged Caribbean education leaders to embrace technology-driven methods to

education, reducing administrative burdens, and providing personalised learning experiences.

“By incorporating

learning, reduce the digital divide, and make AI a tool of progress rather than a source of fear.”

President Ali acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for digital solutions in education, as many countries were unprepared for the shift to remote learning. He emphasised that the Caribbean region risks falling behind if it fails to harness AI as a tool of progress.

“This is a gap that we must close quickly,” President Ali said. **“It is not just a question of access, but of quality and equity.”**

The President called for heavy investments in building smart classrooms, integrating

technologies, and ensuring educators receive training to operate a digital classroom. He emphasised that the cost of inaction will be greater than the initial investment in technology.

“For many countries that have limited fiscal space, the cost of reducing the digital divide in

education will create financial pressures on their budgets, but will represent an investment in future development,” President Ali explained.

President Ali urged education leaders to be proactive in addressing challenges and ensuring that the skills and analytical skills provided by the education system

are not undermined. **“Our goal should be to prepare our students to thrive in a world where technology is evolving while ensuring that they remain critical thinkers, capable of navigating a future full of complexity and change,”** President Ali underlined.



Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand attending CXC's 4th Ministerial Summit in Trinidad and Tobago

address challenges in education delivery.

Speaking virtually at the 4th Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Ministerial Summit, President Ali emphasised the importance of digital solutions and artificial intelligence (AI) in improving access to

AI responsibly, we can empower our students to become not just consumers of technology, but achieve ethical participants in its development and use,” President Ali asserted. **“Let us focus on how we can accelerate digital**



President Dr Irfaan Ali virtually delivering the feature address



The school as of Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Despite facing political mischief and challenges during construction, including material shortages and rising costs, the Bamia Primary School in Linden, Region 10, is close to completion.

St8tment Inc., the construction company

overseeing the project, has firmly dismissed rumors suggesting that the school is far from finished.

The company received an extension to complete the school by late 2024 and is on track to meet this revised deadline, with only

BAMIA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN LINDEN NEARS COMPLETION

minimal work remaining in the areas of electrical and plumbing.

Akannie Blair, the Project's Chief Foreman, stated, **“This will be one of the region's most modern and advanced schools, creating a great environment for learning.”** The facility will feature state-of-the-art amenities, including a gymnasium, a main building with 44 spacious classrooms, an auditorium with a performance stage, a

sick bay equipped with showers, two smart classrooms, modern restroom facilities, a library, a music room, a science lab, and a staff room.

The awarding of the contract has drawn criticism from some opposition members and their media outlets. Contractor Mr. Rawle Ferguson highlighted the irony in their stance, noting that while these critics have historically advocated for government



Inside the school

support of Black-owned businesses, they are now undermining projects that promote such support and hinder growth and development.

Ferguson reiterated that, despite the speculation, the project continues as planned.

GSA GRADUATES READY TO SHAPE GUYANA'S AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM

The 2024 graduating class from the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) is poised to play a pivotal role in driving the nation's agricultural food system forward. Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha emphasised this during the school's 59th graduation ceremony held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

A total of 87 students received diplomas and certificates in various agricultural disciplines, including Agriculture,

Animal Health and Veterinary Public Health, and Forestry. Minister Mustapha encouraged the graduates to leverage the opportunities within the sector to improve their livelihoods and contribute to Guyana's economic growth.

With government investment enhancing the resilience and competitiveness of the agriculture sector, the minister highlighted the need for young people to embrace innovative technologies

and approaches to increase efficiency and sustainability.

Several top performers were recognised for their outstanding achievements. Shelby Williams was awarded the Gold Medal and Matron's Prizes, while Delvin Dryer received the Chairman's Prize. Other notable recipients included Tina Bhimsain, Jomal Campbell, Akeem Williams, and Jasmin Richardson.

The GSA has a proud

history of producing skilled agricultural professionals, with over

4,220 graduates to date.



Part of GSA's 2024 graduating batch

RECONSTRUCTED NORTHWEST SECONDARY SCHOOL CAN HOUSE 575 STUDENTS



The commissioning of a new state-of-the-art North West Secondary School in Mabaruma

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali emphasised the government's commitment to ensuring equitable access to quality education for all children in Guyana. "Every teacher in the hinterland who is a trained teacher must have the opportunity to become a trained graduate from right where you teach," he stated.

The government is not only focused on providing educational infrastructure, but also on ensuring that trained teachers are available to deliver quality instruction. President Ali noted that the government is investing in teacher training and development to improve their skills and competencies.

The government recognises the importance of providing a conducive learning environment and has invested in screening pupils for health conditions such as vision problems, dental issues, and hearing impairments. President Ali

highlighted the government's goal of ensuring that every child in the hinterland has access to quality education and technical

training by 2030. The government has invested significantly in the region's education sector, including the

Practical Instruction Department (PID) at Northwest Secondary and encouraged students to take advantage of the opportunities it offers. She also announced plans to construct a multipurpose court at the school.

While in Region One, the president visited the Hosororo Hill Secondary School campus, which is under construction.

The school, once completed, will feature state-of-the-art facilities and house students from several riverine and far-flung areas in the region. It will also be equipped with housing quarters for up to 30 teachers.



The commissioning of a new state-of-the-art North West Secondary School in Mabaruma

Minister of Education Priya Manickchand emphasised the importance of the

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL BEGINS IN TABATINGA

Construction has commenced on a new secondary school in Tabatinga, Region Nine, as part of the government's ongoing efforts to expand educational opportunities in the region. The \$182 million facility is expected to provide much-needed additional capacity to accommodate the growing student population.

President Irfaan Ali, who participated in the groundbreaking ceremony, emphasized the importance of education in driving regional development. "The PPP is about creating and giving opportunities that you never had before



The sod turning ceremony for the construction of the Tabatinga Secondary School in Lethem, Region Nine

to build stronger, better, more viable, sustainable, and resilient communities," he said.

Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, explained that the new school is part of a larger plan to expand secondary education in Region Nine. "The 1100

children that are overflowing in Saint Ignatius will have comfortable seats in Tabatinga," she noted.

The minister also highlighted the government's efforts to improve teacher training and ensure that all teachers in the region are qualified. She announced that 540

teachers from Region Nine have graduated or will soon graduate from the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE).

In addition to the new secondary schools, the government has also built 18 new nursery schools and seven primary schools in Region Nine since 2020. These investments are

part of the government's broader plan to improve education access and quality in the region.

While in the region, the President inspected the ongoing construction of the Karasabai Secondary School. He issued a stern warning to the contractor to ensure that the project

is completed within the contract timeline. Once completed, the school will house over 500 students and include learning blocks, scientific laboratories, a cafeteria, teachers quarters, male and female dormitories, and other amenities.



The sod turning ceremony for the construction of the Tabatinga Secondary School in Lethem, Region Nine 2

TEXILA AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDY CENTRE OPENS IN REGION TWO



The commissioning of the Texila American University Study Center in Suddie, Region Two

Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, officially commissioned the Texila American University Study Center in Suddie, Essequibo Coast. This new facility will provide a dedicated space for students in Region Two pursuing higher education through the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) programme.

Minister

Manickchand, joined by Dr. Jacob Opadeyi, Director of GOAL, celebrated the opening of the study centre, emphasising the government's commitment to expanding educational opportunities across Guyana. "This study center aligns with our mission of ensuring every student, regardless of where they live, has the

tools and support necessary to pursue their educational dreams," she stated.

Dr. Opadeyi highlighted the significance of the study centre in strengthening GOAL's efforts to provide accessible, quality education to all regions of Guyana. Since 2021, over 2700 people from Essequibo have pursued degree, master's, and PhD programmes at no

cost through the GOAL scholarship programme.

The Texila American University Study Centre will offer students in Region Two the resources and environment needed to successfully complete their studies. This new facility is a testament to the government's dedication to enhancing educational opportunities and promoting regional development.

Guyana's first 'airport hotel' to be completed by March

PRESIDENT Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali on Monday inspected ongoing works on Courtyard by Marriott Hotels International, which is being constructed at Timehri.

The proposed East Bank Demerara hotel is just one minute away from the entrance of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA).

When completed, it will serve as

Guyana's first major "airport hotel", accommodating airline crew, staff, business personnel, diplomats, and other travellers.

President Ali expressed satisfaction with the scope of work.

The six-storey edifice is being constructed on 2.5 acres of land that was leased from the government, and will feature 150 rooms, including five



President Ali (2nd from left) inspects the hotel construction site

executive suites.

Cardinal Investments Inc is the company executing the project.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Roy Bassoo disclosed that works are expected to be completed by March 2025. This new completion date will allow for the execution of additional works.

Project Manager Jonathan Mohal told the Department of Public Information (DPI) that the added works include the installation of solar panels, so as to help supply heated water to the hotel.

"The conventional way is that we would use electricity to supply heated water to the hotel, but this is a 'green' initiative. By doing this, it increases the energy-saving capacity at the hotel, and promotes a 'green' environment," he explained.

This 'greening' of the hotel aligns with the government's push towards cleaner, renewable energy sources, and offers greater efficiency.

The hotel's water-storage capacity has been expanded to approximately 20,000 gallons.

"Additionally, we would have had some issues with transporting, in terms of bringing the long-lead items from China. You can't really control the shipping routes, and the delays when it comes to weather and things like that. So, that also played a major role in

terms of affecting the progress," the project manager added.

Back in 2021, the government signed a US\$20 million Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cardinal Investments Inc to design and build the hotel. Funds are also sourced, in part, through syndicated financing led by Republic Bank.

Construction is being led by Bassoo Building and Civil Engineering Contractors, with support from Chinese construction and engineering firm, Qing Jian Group Company [CNQC].

When operational, the hotel is expected to create employment for more than 200 persons, and already, Marriott International is facilitating hospitality training

"Marriott starts like six months before the opening date, so they are here with us getting the team together to manage the hotel," Mohal said.

The government is constructing a state-of-the-art Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute at Port Mourant, on the Corentyne, to meet the growing demands of the sector.

The facility will provide hands-on training in a diverse range of areas within the services sector, so as to prepare persons for careers in hotels and restaurants, among other related industries.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

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



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

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
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Bulacan Grated Cassava 木薯粉 454g Reg: \$1.99 2/\$3.00	Fiesta Hamonado Longanisa 375g 臘腸 Reg: \$5.99 4.99	Swan Delight Thai Red Curry 750g 咖喱 Reg: \$11.99 10.99	Activa Yogurt Series 400g 12x100g Reg: \$9.99 5.99	Sarangani Bay Milkfish Series 400g 牛奶魚 Reg: \$5.99 5.99	No Name Cheese Series 2x1-400g Reg: \$7.99 5.99

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Merlin Dried Mushroom 冬菇 400g Reg: \$3.99 7.99	Bin Bin Rice Crack Series 200g 米線 Reg: \$3.99 1.88	Sky Flakes Crackers 250g 餅乾 Reg: \$3.99 1.88
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Laura's Scones Drop Cookies 250g 餅乾 Reg: \$2.99 1.99	Mona Biscuits Cookies 600g 餅乾 Reg: \$3.99 2.99	Coldkiss Matcha Latte Series 2x500ml 100% 抹茶拿鐵 Reg: \$5.99 3.59
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LUXURY MEETS LOCAL FLA

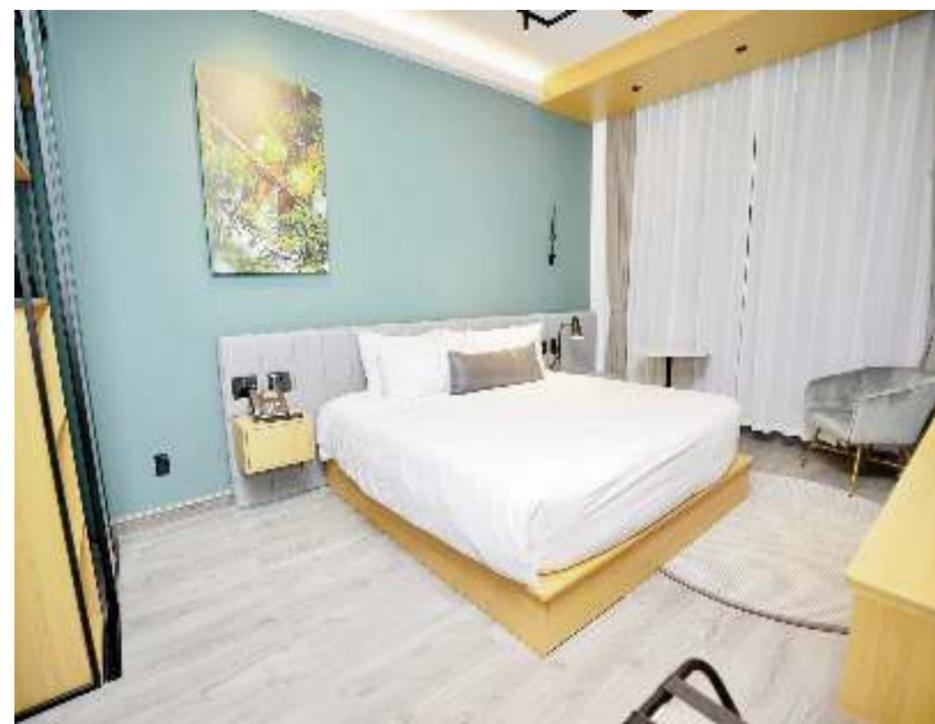
A new hotel has officially opened its doors in Guyana, marking a significant milestone in the country's tourism industry and economic development. The Aiden by Best Western, a luxurious 138-room property showcasing the nation's rich flora and fauna, is the latest addition to Guyana's hospitality sector.

President Irfaan Ali, who attended the hotel's grand opening, emphasized the importance of world-class infrastructure in attracting visitors and driving economic growth. "Our goal is to create an economy that attracts at least three million people annually by 2030," he stated. The Aiden by Best Western, located at Oronoque and Robb streets, Georgetown, is a crucial step towards achieving this ambitious target.

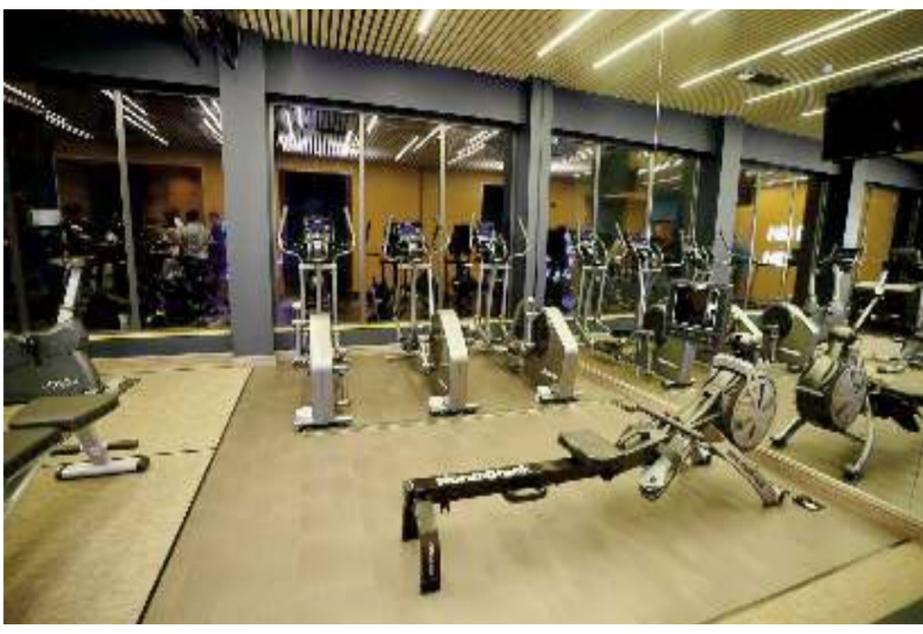
Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce Oneidge Walrond praised the partnership between the government and the private sector in developing the hotel. She expressed confidence that this investment will yield long-term benefits for Guyana's tourism industry and economy.

Geraldo Alphonso, Director of Arimu Investments Inc., the local company behind the Aiden by Best Western franchise, acknowledged the challenges faced during the hotel's development but expressed immense pride in its completion. "I encourage all investors to seize the opportunities that Guyana offers," he said.

The Aiden by Best Western hotel not only provides a luxurious accommodation experience but also contributes to job creation and showcases Guyana's natural beauty. It serves as a testament to the government's commitment to fostering a conducive environment for investment and economic growth.



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MORE FAMILIES RECEIVE HOMES IN LETHEM

Five more families from Lethem have received the keys to their new homes, thanks to the Lethem Housing Support Programme. This brings the total number of completed homes to 32, with approximately 70 more in various stages of construction.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, presented the keys to the recipients. Each housing unit is approximately 550 square feet and includes two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and sanitary facilities.

The recipients expressed immense gratitude for their new homes, which will provide much-needed stability and improved



Five families to take up residence in Culvert City under the Lethem Housing Programme

living conditions for their families.

"I'm very happy about the new home. I can't find words to say but deep down, I'm very grateful," said Brenda Welcome, one of the recipients. **"We didn't have this opportunity before... to have our own home."**

Regional Chairman

Bryan Allicock and his wife also thanked the government for providing them with the opportunity to own their own home in Lethem. **"I feel blessed because we waited a lot a whole year to get this [home],"** Allicock said.

Another recipient, Clare Ignacio, a single parent, was overwhelmed with joy at

becoming a homeowner. **"I didn't expect to be handed over a home today,"** she said. **"It is a very significant day for me."**

Terrance LaRose, another recipient, expressed relief at no longer having to worry about living in a rented apartment. **"The burden and stress have eased now,"** he said. **"I am encouraging young couples who don't have a house to apply for a house too."**

The Lethem Housing Support Programme, initiated by President Ali, aims to provide affordable housing options to 600 Lethem residents. Each home is constructed at a cost

of \$3 million, with \$1 million provided by the ministry and the

activity. **"The housing programme has**



Five families to take up residence in Culvert City under the Lethem Housing Programme

remaining \$2 million financed through loans from local banks.

Minister Rodrigues emphasised the positive impact of the programme on the local economy, creating employment opportunities and stimulating economic

been a driving force in creating employment," Minister Rodrigues said. **"The construction sector has grown tremendously from the time we took office."**

VULNERABLE SHIRIRI FAMILIES RECEIVE NEW HOMES



Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues and the beneficiaries

Ten vulnerable households in Shiriri Village, Region Nine, have received the keys to their new homes through the Hinterland Housing Support Programme.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing

and Water Susan Rodrigues presented the keys, emphasising the government's commitment to providing safe and stable housing for vulnerable populations.

The beneficiaries

expressed their gratitude for the new homes, which would significantly improve their living conditions. Clarita Saba, a recipient, said, **"My father is happy with the house. It is better than this [previous] one."**

Senior Councillor of Shiriri, Ramkission Johnson, expressed his appreciation for the government's efforts to transform his community. **"I want to thank the ministry for giving these houses to us,"** he noted.

Violet Duncan

and her husband, Christopher Duncan, were also among the recipients. They had applied for a house in 2017 but were denied. **"But now, we feel so proud [for the house],"** Christopher expressed.

Minister Rodrigues explained that the houses were constructed in a sustainable manner to ensure their longevity. She committed to continuing the housing programme in 2025 to address the housing needs of the vulnerable population.

"We have 120

houses under construction in Region Nine," she added. **"This programme is fully funded by the Government of Guyana... We will expand this**

programme next year to see where the gap is."

Additionally, 100 houses are under construction in Region Nine. The Hinterland Housing Support Programme not only provides housing but also strengthens village economies by utilising local labour and building materials.



Senior Councillor of Shiriri, Ramkission Johnson and his family at their new home



Isaac Thompson's new home

The Men on Mission (MOM) initiative has once again demonstrated its commitment to helping vulnerable families in Guyana. Two families have recently received new homes, thanks to the generosity of the organization and the support of the government.

Isaac Thompson, a

63-year-old resident of Greenwich Park, East Bank Essequibo, was the most recent recipient of a two-bedroom home. Thompson's family was left homeless after a devastating fire destroyed their previous dwelling.

"I never expected to get a house like this," Thompson

said. **"It was six of us sleeping in a 13 x 20, and we made ourselves comfortable. That was our hall, our kitchen, our bedroom, everything."**

His daughter, Monica Thompson, expressed her gratitude for the support. **"The PPP/C government and the Men on Mission have given my father the opportunity to have a place he can call home again,"** she said.

Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar, presented Thompson



Isaac Thompson

with the keys to his new home. Indar emphasized the government's commitment to supporting vulnerable groups in society.

Another family that

received a new home through MOM is that of Rasheed Mohamed. Mohamed, who suffers from a congenital branchial fistula, has struggled to maintain stable employment.

"I feel so happy that I have my own home," Mohamed said. **"We don't have to rent anybody's house."**

Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony, who presented the Mohamed with their key, commended MOM for its efforts to support vulnerable communities. **"It doesn't matter where you're living,**

It doesn't matter what you look like. We want people in this country to have the benefits of the prosperity that this country is undergoing," Dr. Anthony said.

The MOM initiative, launched by President Ali, aims to reintegrate men into society and promote positive change within communities. In addition to building homes, the group has implemented youth empowerment and mentorship programs and received \$500 million in funding from the government in 2024.

Clear strategy in place to achieve Guyana's healthcare vision

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

President Ali indicated that significant strides have been made in several

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

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

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

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



President Irfaan Ali

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

a lot of that going on."

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

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

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

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LINDEN WATERFRONT TO RECEIVE \$100M UPGRADE

The government has announced plans to invest \$100 million in upgrading the waterfront in Linden. This initiative

is part of a broader effort to improve infrastructure and enhance the quality of life for residents in the region.

the importance of these improvements, stating, **“Bringing development to Linden, we are going to spend another \$70 million, maybe close to \$100 million, on waterfront development in Mackenzie and Wismar.”**



Upgrade of sea and river defence

In addition to the waterfront development, the government has allocated \$13 million for a new landing in Malali and Muritaro. This landing will include a shed, waiting area, and washroom facilities.

The government's commitment to

improving infrastructure in Linden is evident in the allocation of \$6.9 billion for sea and river defence infrastructure in Budget 2024. In the first half

of 2024, approximately \$3.2 billion was spent on sea defences.

Recent projects include the construction of a fortified river

defence structure along the Wismar shore to the tune of \$95.7 million. This structure will help protect the area from erosion and flooding.



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill during an interview with 104.3 FM, Linden

According to Public Works Minister Bishop Juan Edghill, the River and Sea Defence Department will begin improvements on the stellings and landings along the Berbice River. This follows a recent assessment of these facilities.

The upgrades will include the construction of revetments and the rebuilding of all the stellings in the region. Minister Edghill emphasised

TEMPORARY BRIDGE TO FACILITATE TRAFFIC DURING CONSTRUCTION OF MACKENZIE-WISMAR BRIDGE



Drone shot of the current Wismar-Mackenzie Bridge, Region Ten

bridge, similar in design to the Demerara Harbour Bridge, is erected, construction will proceed with pile driving as the first step.

Minister Edghill emphasised the importance of the project, noting that although it was not originally included in the government's manifesto, its need became evident. He assured residents that the government is committed to completing the bridge before the expected timeline.

Addressing concerns raised by the Mayor of Linden regarding potential harmful minerals in the laterite of Noitgedacht Road, Minister Edghill dismissed these fears. Tests conducted by the

Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) found no evidence of harmful materials.

In addition to the bridge project, the government plans to upgrade Noitgedacht Road to accommodate increased traffic during construction. The upgrade will include removing problematic areas, reinforcing the base, and paving the 1.4-kilometer stretch with asphalt.

The Mackenzie-Wismar Bridge, being constructed by China Railway Construction Corporation Limited, will be a 220-meter-long precast concrete structure featuring modern safety measures, including lighting. With

a maximum horizontal clearance of 32 meters and a vertical clearance of 11.5 meters, the bridge is designed to improve access and reduce traffic congestion in the area.

This project is a major milestone in the government's

infrastructure development agenda. It is expected to boost trade between Guyana and Brazil, stimulate economic growth, and position the region as a key player in international commerce.

A temporary bridge will soon be installed to minimise disruptions for commuters as construction begins on the US\$35 million Mackenzie-Wismar Bridge.

Public Works Minister Bishop Juan

Edghill announced the plan during a radio interview in Linden. The existing bridge will remain operational, and a bypass via Noitgedacht Road is currently in place to ensure traffic flow continues.

Once the temporary



Noitgedacht road being used as a bypass for ongoing construction

FLOOD MITIGATION EFFORTS BOLSTERED IN REGION 10

The government is taking steps to address flooding concerns in Region Ten by hiring 20 local residents to enhance cleaning and maintenance operations in the mining town. These new staff will join the existing workforce of 10 core workers under the Ministry of Public Works.

The combined team of 30 workers will focus on desilting creeks and

key drainage areas to prevent future flooding. Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill emphasised the government's commitment to finding solutions to the flooding issue and announced plans to purchase two rubber-wheeled excavators for ongoing maintenance.

Minister Edghill urged the workers to maintain discipline



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill with the workers in Linden

and take pride in their work, stressing the importance of teamwork and efficiency. The new workers were selected through a rigorous interview process and will begin their tasks immediately as part of the ongoing flood mitigation project in the Mackenzie/Wismar area.

NEW FILM COMMISSION ON THE WAY

President Ali has announced that the government is working to establish a national film commission to promote Guyana as a world-class destination for film production.

The President made this announcement during a special sitting of the 12th Parliament. He stated that the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport is currently negotiating a co-production agreement with an international partner, which will pave

the way for the creation of the film commission.

The government has also been supporting other cultural initiatives, such as the Guyanese Prize for Literature and the Creative and Cultural Industries Grant. These initiatives have recognised and rewarded local literary talent and provided financial assistance to artistes and entrepreneurs.

President Ali emphasised that there has never been a better time for culture and

creativity in Guyana. He noted that local performing artistes have become a prominent feature in state events, gaining both income and exposure.

Looking ahead, the government plans to launch a public consultation in 2025 on a revised National Cultural Policy. This framework will address issues such as integrating culture into development, heritage preservation, and the growth of the creative industry.



Guyana is gearing up to become a global film hub with the launch of a National Film Commission

In relation to Guyana's diverse history, President Ali reaffirmed the government's commitment to honouring its diverse history. He made reference to last year's commemoration of the 200th anniversary

of the 1823 Demerara Rebellion, which played a significant role in advancing the fight for emancipation.

Future investments will focus on projects such as the first regional cultural market at Palmyra, the development of music and entertainment synergies, and the creation of recording studios to nurture local talent.

NEW BOOK CELEBRATES JANET JAGAN'S LEGACY



Book launch honouring the outstanding legacy of Janet Jagan

A new book, "Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana" was launched to honour the indelible contributions of Janet Jagan to Guyana's history.

The book, authored by Professor Patricia Mohammed, was unveiled at the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre. Notable guests included Minister of

Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira, Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag, former President Donald Ramotar, Janet Jagan's daughter Nadira Jagan-Brancier, and other dignitaries.

Professor Mohammed emphasised the importance of highlighting Janet Jagan's untold story, stating, "Janet Jagan's life and deeds are still of crucial relevance both to her memory and to the political battles for democracy that we continue to

wage currently, not only in Guyana, but in every society today."

The book provides a comprehensive biography of Janet Jagan, delving into her life, contributions to Guyana's prosperity and human rights, and her role as a central figure in the country's political landscape.

Minister Teixeira praised the book for restoring Janet Jagan to her rightful place in Guyana's history. "It restored and reclaimed Janet Jagan to her rightful place in the broader history of Guyana

and its political struggles," she said.

Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana not only contributes to the historical record but also aims to inspire future and current women

leaders. All proceeds from the book's sales in Guyana will go towards funding the work of the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre.



Book launch honouring the outstanding legacy of Janet Jagan

ZOO AND GARDENS TO GET SUSTAINABLE MAKEOVER

President Ali has unveiled a plan to transform the National Zoo and Botanical Gardens, bringing them up to international standards as part of the government's Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030 (LCDS 2030). The project aims to expand green spaces in the capital city, enrich citizens' quality of life, and boost eco-tourism.



Vice-President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo visiting the Zoo and Botanical Gardens

During a special sitting of the National Assembly, President Ali emphasised that the upgrades align with the broader environmental goals of LCDS 2030.

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, who will oversee the Botanical Gardens' enhancements, elaborated on plans to create interactive spaces,

a learning center, and explore the possibility of a safari-type zoo, ideally driven by private sector investment.

"This project not only beautifies our capital city, but creates a green, educational environment where our children and

visitors can learn about and experience our country's diverse landscapes and ecosystems," Dr. Jagdeo noted.

The envisioned safari-style zoo would provide a more immersive experience, allowing visitors to engage with animals in a setting

replicating Guyana's natural habitats. The government expects this initiative to attract eco-tourists, capitalising on Guyana's abundant biodiversity.

"We believe that a safari-type zoo can be a major attraction for tourists seeking eco-tourism experiences," Dr. Jagdeo said. "They'll have the chance to see the beauty of Guyana's hinterland landscapes showcased right here in Georgetown."

The project includes significant expansions to the National Zoo. Dr. Jagdeo noted that the expansion would likely extend to the eastern edge of the Botanical Gardens, near the

Embassy of the People's Republic of China. Planned additions feature a tram for visitor transport, new green spaces, and recreational areas, making the zoo and gardens more accessible and enjoyable.

"We're creating a space for our children to learn about Guyana's flora and fauna, and the challenges we face with issues like climate change," Dr. Jagdeo added. "We want this to be an educational experience that raises awareness about our country's environmental priorities and sustainable development goals."

Gardens will feature miniature landscapes of Guyana's diverse ecosystems, providing an opportunity for coastal residents, particularly children, to experience the natural beauty of the country's interior without travelling.



Plans for an expansion to include more interactive spaces and a learning centre

OVER 190 ROADS FOR UPGRADE IN REGION FIVE

The government has allocated a total of \$15.59 billion for the upgrade of community roads in Georgetown, Region Five, and Wakenaam. This initiative aims to improve road networks across the country, benefiting thousands of residents and creating new opportunities for small contractors.

In Georgetown, \$11.5 billion has been



Small contractors gathered at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

equal opportunities. Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha further emphasised that 35% of the workforce in agricultural projects must be women and youths, ensuring that all sections of the population benefit from national development efforts.

On the island of Wakenaam, the government has invested \$1.39 billion for the upgrade of 9.138 kilometers of roads to rigid concrete pavement. Forty-eight small contractors were awarded contracts for the project during a signing ceremony at San Souci Secondary School. Local contractors praised the government's commitment to supporting small businesses and fostering development on the island. Minister Edghill reiterated the government's commitment to the 'One Guyana' initiative, aiming to ensure



Contractors signing the contract



Contract being stamped

"We have a vast amount of work to do and limited capacity in some areas, so we are giving smaller contractors a chance to grow," Dr. Jagdeo explained. He also warned that poor workmanship will not be tolerated, stressing the importance of quality work.

In Region Five, \$2.7 billion has been allocated for the rehabilitation of 191 roads spanning 33 villages. This large-scale project is set to improve the quality of life for citizens. Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill highlighted the unprecedented scope of these works, stating, **"This scale of work has never been done in your region before, and it's being executed now under the PPP/C Administration."**

Minister Edghill also acknowledged the increasing participation of women in the construction sector, noting the government's efforts to empower women and create

set aside to upgrade 947 community roads. A total of 673 contracts were awarded to small contractors during a signing ceremony at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo emphasised

the significance of these projects, noting that thousands of residents will benefit from improved infrastructure. He also encouraged contractors to take advantage of this opportunity for growth within the industry.

equitable development across all regions.

These road upgrades, being carried out in phases to minimize disruption to residents, reflect the government's dedication to improving infrastructure and expanding economic opportunities throughout the country.



Contract being stamped



Contractors signing the contract



\$1.39B injected to upgrade roads in Wakenaam

TWO-LANE SOLUTION FOR EAST BANK ROAD



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill during the consultation engagement held at Supply Primary School

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, has announced that the Supply to Soesdyke corridor along the East Bank Demerara will remain a two-lane road. This decision was made to balance

development with the rights of property owners and the constraints of existing infrastructure.

During a public consultation, Minister Edghill emphasised the importance of maintaining two lanes of traffic at all times, while also incorporating additional provisions for bus stops, parking, and sidewalks, especially for school children. Public safety, he noted, is a top priority in the government's road and transport infrastructure projects.

The Supply to Soesdyke section is part

of a larger development initiative for the East Bank Demerara corridor, extending from Diamond to the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA). This route is crucial for Guyana's infrastructural growth, serving passenger vehicles and connecting the hinterland regions.

To address potential traffic congestion during and after construction, the government is building an alternative route connecting Georgetown to the Soesdyke-Linden Highway.

The US\$75.8 million

East Bank Demerara Road Improvement Project, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and executed by China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), is being supervised by

an American company. The project includes the construction of new sidewalks, cycle lanes, thermoplastic road markings, LED lighting, traffic signs, and the reconstruction and widening of over 58

bridges and culverts.

To minimise traffic disruptions, at least one lane of traffic will remain open during construction. A traffic management plan and real-time updates will be provided through the RESOLV 75 app, and the Guyana Police Force will be deployed to maintain order.

For transparency and accountability, an unpriced bill of quantities will be made available on the Ministry's website, allowing the public to track the project's progress and expenditure.



Design of the upgrades from Supply to Soesdyke as part of the East Bank Improvement project

NEW ROADS VALUED \$1.6B TO BOOST ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN BLACK BUSH POLDER

A total of 108 thoroughfares are set to be transformed from mud dams to concrete in Black Bush Polder, Region Six. The \$1.6 billion project, expected to be completed by December 15, will significantly improve accessibility for residents of this agricultural community.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, announced the commencement of the works during a community engagement focused on the distribution of the Bill of Quantities. While acknowledging that some residents may perceive the pace of progress as slow, Minister Edghill



Upgraded Road in Black Bush Polder

assured them that the government's goal is to eventually upgrade all roads in the area.

"We can't have the entire Black Bush Polder locked down," he stated. **"What is not done in this phase will be done in the next phase. Ultimately, every street in every community must be fixed."**

The four polders of Black Bush Polder will benefit from this road rehabilitation programme. Lesbeholden will see the rehabilitation of 43 roads, while Mibicuri will have 44 roads upgraded. Yakusari South and Johanna North will see 12 and three roads rehabilitated, respectively.

Additionally, six roads in the Zambia area will also be done.

All roads will be constructed using rigid pavement concrete, designed to withstand the harsh conditions of the area, including mud and heavy agricultural equipment. The construction process will involve excavation, a 12-inch layer of white sand, compacting, cement and sand binding, and the placement of BRC steel. The roads will be reinforced with six inches of concrete at 4600 PSI, with joints every 12 feet for durability.

The new roads will be 12 feet wide to accommodate large agricultural vehicles,

such as combines, and drainage and shoulders will be rehabilitated. Minister Edghill warned residents of potential inconveniences during the construction period,

He also urged community members to help safeguard the newly built roads.

Since returning to office in August 2020, the government has



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill handing over Bill of Quantities to community representative

but assured them that alternative routes would be provided to maintain access to their homes.

rehabilitated over 4,000 community roads across Guyana.

NEW ROAD PROJECT TO ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY IN WHITE WATER VILLAGE

President Ali has announced the construction of an additional one-kilometer road in White Water village, aimed at improving accessibility for residents. This project follows the recent completion of a 1.2-kilometer concrete

road in the area. The new road project is being executed by the village council with technical support and resources from the Ministry of Public Works' Special Project Unit (SPU). The project is expected to be completed within two months.

President Ali emphasised the economic benefits of the project, noting that it would create jobs for approximately 60 skilled concrete road builders. The project has already employed 50 community members. **"This is a real example of building community capacity and investing in communities not only for infrastructure, but for people,"** President Ali stated.

Upon completion, the new road will significantly reduce travel time between White Water and Mabaruma, improving accessibility and boosting economic opportunities for the community. The President highlighted



Toshao of White Water Andrew Cox providing an update for the road project to President Ali

the potential for increased agricultural production, such as ginger and pineapple, due to improved access to markets.

The Ministry of Public Works' Special Projects Unit has provided training and resources to the

community members involved in the project. Despite some setbacks, the project's second phase is expected to progress swiftly due to the skills of the residents.

The Toshao of White-Water Village, Andrew Cox, expressed gratitude for the ongoing

developments aimed at transforming his community. He noted that the road project would bring significant relief to many residents and create economic opportunities for local businesses.

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, acknowledged the challenge of finding skilled labour, but expressed satisfaction with hiring community members for various projects. He also announced the ongoing construction of a concrete road from Mabaruma to Wauna and a similar project in Waramuri.



Some of the villagers executing works on the road in White Water

PATENTIA RESIDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW CONCRETE ROAD

The community of Skull City in Patentia, West Bank Demerara, is set for a significant transformation with the government's investment of \$91 million in upgrading the mud dam into a concrete road.

The upgrade is in response to residents' concerns over the deteriorated condition of the thoroughfare. Minister within the Ministry of Public Works

Deodat Indar assured residents during a visit to the area that work would begin promptly.

The contract, awarded to Bardon Construction, covers the upgrade of 480 kilometers of mud dam. The project was delayed due to illegal electrical connections within the area.

Minister Indar contacted Guyana Power and Light (GPL) and Guyana Water

Incorporated (GWI) to address these issues. GPL will transfer the



Current state of the road network in Skull City, Patentia, West Bank Demerara

current electrical wires to new poles to ensure the safety of over 300

children living in the community.

Additionally, drainage issues were also addressed. The National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) will take action to resolve these concerns. The ministry's engineers will also assess the deteriorating main access bridge.



Minister within the Ministry of Public Works, Deodat Indar engaging resident in Skull City, Patentia, West Bank Demerara

HICKEN'S APPOINTMENT MEETS LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The government has been advised that there are no legal impediments to appointing Clifton



Commissioner of Police (ag) Clifton Hicken

Hicken as Commissioner of Police. This confirmation came from People's Progressive Party General Secretary Dr Bharrat Jagdeo following consultations with Attorney General Mohabir Anil Nandall.

Hicken has been acting in the role since March 2022. While Dr Jagdeo is unaware of a substantive appointment, he confirmed that the Attorney General has assured the government

of the appointment's legality.

"I spoke to [the Attorney General] when I saw [concerns about the appointment] in the newspapers, and he assured us that all the legal steps were taken and that the appointment would be one that can withstand not just public scrutiny, but any legal investigation or interrogation," Dr

Jagdeo stated.

Concerns had been raised about the legality of Hicken's appointment due to his age exceeding the mandatory retirement age for public servants. However, the Attorney General noted that the Constitution (Prescribed Matters) Act allows the President to extend the service of the Commissioner beyond the age of 55, up to 60.

"By letter dated 21st July 2023, acting on the

recommendation of the Police Service Commission, His Excellency granted Mr Hicken, whose 55th birthday was on the 22nd July 2023, 'permission to act in the office of the Commissioner of Police and to perform those functions until a time to be determined,'" Minister Nandall explained in a written statement. "The conjoint

effect of the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the Constitution (Prescribed Matters) Act impels the imminent possibility of Mr Hicken being appointed to that Office. The contention, therefore, that he cannot, is an affront to both common sense and law," the Attorney General continued.

NO COVER-UPS, NO EXCEPTIONS

- DR. JAGDEO AFFIRMS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC OFFICE

No cover-ups, no exceptions

Dr. Jagdeo affirms zero tolerance for corruption in public office

The People's Progressive Party's General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has reiterated the government's steadfast commitment to eradicating corruption in public office. At a recent press briefing, he emphasised that any public official involved in illegal activities will face accountability, regardless of their position or political affiliations. "If you believe that ties to the government will protect you from facing the

consequences of corrupt actions, you are mistaken," he stated, underscoring that no one will be shielded from prosecution.

Dr. Jagdeo's remarks come in the wake of an investigation by the Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) into serious financial irregularities linked to Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police Calvin Brutus. Although expressing support for the police force, Dr. Jagdeo was clear that corruption within any sector would not be tolerated. "We back the Police Force to do their work, but they must operate within the law. If corruption is found, there will be no cover-ups," he



People's Progressive Party's General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

declared. Opposition parties, including the Alliance for Change (AFC) and the People's National Congress (PNC), have alleged

possible government interference in the Brutus investigation and are calling for an independent inquiry. Dr. Jagdeo dismissed these claims as inconsistent and unfounded, asserting that the investigation into Brutus is impartial and free from executive branch interference. "We've made it clear from the beginning—there will be no efforts to cover up any financial crimes. This administration is committed to transparency and zero tolerance for corruption," he affirmed.

In addressing Brutus's recent constitutional motion alleging executive

interference, Dr. Jagdeo categorically denied any wrongdoing, reinforcing that the government supports a fair judicial process. He also highlighted the opposition's fluctuating support for Brutus, stating, "Initially, they linked Brutus with the PPP/C Administration, but now they've allied with him, revealing their contradictory position."

Currently, Deputy Commissioner Brutus faces nearly 240 charges, including financial misconduct, money laundering, and larceny, related to the alleged misappropriation of over \$800 million from the Guyana Police Force.

Alongside him, his pregnant wife, driver, and a businessman have been granted a combined bail of \$9.1 million after being charged with various financial crimes.

Dr. Jagdeo emphasised, "There will be no exceptions or cover-ups. If you engaged in illegal activities, you will face the consequences." The government intends to vigorously defend itself against the constitutional motion and will release comprehensive details of the investigation's findings as they unfold. With over 200 additional charges still pending, the case is set to resume on November 18 and 21.

WELFARE OFFICERS AND SCHOOL COUNSELLORS GET RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TRAINING

Thirty welfare officers and school counsellors benefitted from a two-day training in restorative justice, an alternative approach to justice that focuses on repairing harm and addressing the root causes of deviant behaviour.

The training session at the Guyana Police Force Training Centre in Georgetown, was opened by the Director of the Restorative Justice Centre, William Boston, who emphasised that this is just the beginning of a journey to implement restorative justice within the school system.



The restorative justice training session

There are currently 11 certified restorative justice trainers in Guyana. The government is committed to training more individuals to become trainers-of-trainers, ensuring that restorative justice principles can be effectively implemented in schools and other settings. The Permanent Secretary at the Ministry

of Legal Affairs, Adele Cole-Clarke, highlighted the significant positive impact that restorative justice can have on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. She emphasised the need for sensitisation and awareness among citizens, and the training of key stakeholders to implement this approach effectively.

Senior Schools' Welfare Officer Cornella Leitch noted that restorative justice can foster a shift away from corporal punishment in schools. She recognised that while corporal punishment is a common

approach to discipline, restorative justice techniques can be more effective in addressing behavioural issues.

Restorative justice prioritises healing, accountability, and

addressing the root causes of deviant behaviour. It is applicable to minor, non-violent offenses and allows offenders to give back to the community while avoiding the stigma of a prison record.



The restorative justice training session

17 ACRES OF LAND BEING DEVELOPED FOR HOUSING IN MABARUMA



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand and other officials at the housing site in Mabaruma

of the government's broader agenda to provide sustainable and affordable housing for Guyanese.

President Ali visited the development site and announced that the Ministry of Housing and Water has already completed the design layout. Work in the area is expected to progress rapidly, with significant advancements projected within the next six months.

The government is exploring options for the development, including

a turnkey system where the government builds the houses or a system where allottees build their own homes. Given

the high demand for land in Mabaruma, the government is actively seeking additional land in the sub-region to meet

the needs of residents.

Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal acknowledged the limited availability of land and noted that the government occasionally engages with private landowners to facilitate government projects. He emphasised the government's commitment to starting work on the housing development this year and addressing the housing needs of the community.



A section of the 17-acre housing development in Mabaruma, Region One

Seventeen acres of land are being developed in Mabaruma Township to create approximately 90 residential lots. This initiative is part

1,000 HOUSE LOTS ALLOCATED IN MOLESON CREEK HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The government has launched the first phase of the Moleson Creek Housing Development, a new residential community in Region Six.

Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal and CEO of the Central Housing and Planning Authority Sherwyn Greaves presided over the allocation of the first 1,000 house lots to Berbicians. The Moleson



First 1,000 house lots allocated at New Moleson Creek Housing Development

demand for affordable housing in the region. He noted that the Moleson Creek development aligns with the government's strategy to create "hubs for future development" and support economic growth.

The government has allocated \$3.2 billion to enhance water access in Region Six, including the construction of a new well at Mara, installation of inline filters, a 300 KW solar farm at Port Mourant, and a new well to be built at Adventure. These initiatives are part of the government's broader plan to achieve 100% access of treated water for the coastland.



First 1,000 house lots allocated at New Moleson Creek Housing Development



First 1,000 house lots allocated at New Moleson Creek Housing Development

Creek project spans approximately 1,000 acres and includes plans for schools, government offices, commercial spaces, and recreational facilities.

Minister Croal emphasised the government's commitment to delivering sustainable housing schemes and meeting the rising



First 1,000 house lots allocated at New Moleson Creek Housing Development

HOUSING SCHEMES IN PROGRESS TO COMBAT SQUATTING ON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

The government has intensified its efforts to address the widespread issue of squatting along the Soesdyke/Linden Highway.

Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister responsible for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy, emphasised the importance of addressing this issue as the country continues to develop.

"We cannot allow squatting to persist in our country," Minister McCoy stated during



Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy, speaking to the residents

a community meeting at the Yarrowkabra Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC). "We must pursue better living conditions that add value to residents' lives and their communities."

The government has outlined a number of measures to address squatting, including regularising some areas, and developing new housing schemes. Housing schemes are planned for Hauraruni

and Yarrowkabra, covering approximately 150 acres and 100 acres respectively.

Minister McCoy urged residents to avoid encouraging others to squat in unauthorised areas, as this complicates the government's efforts to transform the Soesdyke/Linden Highway.

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, recently visited Hauraruni and Yarrowkabra to inspect the progress made on

the housing schemes. In Hauraruni, land clearing has been completed, and the first phase of infrastructural work is expected to begin soon. In Yarrowkabra, 30 acres of land have already been cleared.

These measures aim to make homeownership more accessible for every citizen and contribute to the overall development of the Soesdyke/Linden Highway corridor.

MEDEVAC RATES REDUCED IN REGION NINE AS SURGICAL CAPACITY IMPROVES



Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony delivering remarks

A significant reduction in the number of patients requiring medical evacuations (medevac) from Region Nine has been attributed to the government's strategic investments in healthcare infrastructure and capacity. According to Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, the medevac rate in the region has plummeted from a concerning 20

percent to a mere three percent. This marked improvement indicates that more patients are now receiving the necessary medical care locally, rather than being transferred to the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC).

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new \$6.5 billion Lethem Regional Hospital, Minister Anthony highlighted the government's commitment to expanding local surgical services, which has enabled more patients to receive the necessary care within the region. This has not only reduced the need for medevacs,

but has also improved overall healthcare outcomes.

"It shows what we've been doing here [and] how we have



Medevac rate down at 3 per cent in Region Nine as surgical capacity improves

been working. These things are helping to change how people see the quality of care that we offer in this region. Simple investments can

save the lives of our people, and that is what this government is about, we make simple strategic investments," he

underscored. Dr. Anthony noted that over 1,000 surgeries were successfully performed in Region Nine by the end of 2023, a substantial

increase compared to the 130 surgeries conducted in 2020. The minister emphasised that the investments in healthcare have not only benefited local residents, but have also attracted patients from neighbouring countries, demonstrating the growing confidence in the region's healthcare system.

"We have our neighbours who are coming to access service at our hospital... and that shows people have confidence in what we're doing," the minister emphasised.

In recent years, the government has implemented various initiatives to

enhance healthcare in Region Nine, including telemedicine, infrastructure upgrades, and training programmes for healthcare professionals. These efforts have resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of care provided.

The new Lethem Regional Hospital will feature modern operating rooms, an emergency department, diagnostic imaging services, and specialised clinics.

Minister Anthony concluded by reiterating the government's unwavering commitment to creating a world-class healthcare system that meets the needs of all Guyanese.

30 NEW OFFICERS JOIN GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, presented 30 officers of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) with their Instruments of Commission.

The Instruments of Commission, a unique certificate issued only by the President, signify the cadets' attainment of the rank and authority of commissioned officers. The officers took the oath of office before the President, Chief of Staff Brigadier Omar Khan, and other senior officers.

President Ali charged the officers to embody the values of integrity

and duty. He emphasised that the instruments of commission were a recognition of their readiness and competence to lead. The President urged the officers to perform their duties with pride and distinction, upholding the trust



President Ali presenting the officers with their Instruments of Commission

placed in them. **"I urge you not to betray or disappoint those who have reposed their confidence and trust in you,"** he underscored.

He also encouraged them to remain committed to the Constitution, the GDF,

and the country, ensuring the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The officers were urged to demonstrate courage and bravery in the face of threats, and to inspire their subordinates with their strength of example.

President Ali highlighted the importance of ongoing training and development for the officers, and emphasised the need to be prepared for any challenge. He also acknowledged the unique challenges posed by a rapidly changing world, requiring a deep understanding of strategy, technology,



The new officers

cybersecurity, and problem-solving.

The President concluded by encouraging the officers to embrace these changes and contribute to the security and sovereignty of Guyana. **"Our country is changing, and you must change**

with it...Your ability to embrace these changes will be essential to ensuring the security and sovereignty of our nation," President Ali added.

GOVT TAKES ACTION TO ADDRESS ROAD FATALITIES

The government has announced plans to implement stricter legislation and increase fines to address the concerning rise in road accidents, despite a decline in overall incidents.

Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn stated, **"The situation is one which needs immediate response. We will be implementing and emphasising more measures with the help of the police.**

We have been talking about increasing fines and we intend to increase the number of ticketable offences."

The government will also be working with the Ministry of Public Works to improve road signage and repair traffic lights, as well as conducting sensitisation sessions for motorcyclists and lorry drivers, who are often involved in accidents.

"We have to implement a robust response which will

not allow for this to continue," Minister Benn emphasised. **"We have to do much more to curb the situation."**

The minister expressed intolerance for disrespect towards police officers and highlighted the importance of responsible driving behaviour, including avoiding speeding, drinking and driving, and being mindful of other road users.

"Many of the accidents have been



Minister of Home Affairs, Robeson Benn, members from the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and the National Road Safety Council during the press conference

caused by other minor issues which could have been avoided by commuters," said Traffic Chief Senior Superintendent

Mahendra Singh. **"The accidents deriving from the figures that we would have presented to you tell a story of**

vulnerability." He encouraged motorists and pedestrians to look out for each other when using the roads.

BERBICE EXPO AND TRADE FAIR PROMOTES COOPERATION AND GROWTH

The 18th Berbice Expo and Trade Fair, held at the Rose Hall Community Centre Ground, is a vital platform for fostering cooperation among local businesses, and driving economic growth.

Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha emphasised the importance of the event, stating, "This event is a cherished annual tradition and a vital platform for celebrating the

dynamism of local businesses and industries."

He added that the expo, themed "Innovation in oil, gas, and agriculture for a sustainable future," showcased the strength and diversity of Region Six. The region's resources play a crucial role in advancing the country's agriculture sector and achieving food security.

Minister Mustapha highlighted Berbice's

rich agricultural heritage and its contributions to Guyana's economy. He noted that the government has invested significantly to modernise and transform agriculture, ensuring that Berbice remains a leader in agricultural activities.

The region has seen a significant increase in brackish water shrimp production, reaching approximately 100,000 kilograms per month, contributing \$1.8 billion



The 18th Berbice Expo and Trade Fair

to the local economy last year.



Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Sonia Parag

Other agricultural interventions include rebuilding the rice processing facility at Black Bush Polder and reviving the Rose Hall Sugar Estate. The government's commitment to building a resilient agriculture sector in all regions ensures Guyana's position as the food basket of the Caribbean.



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha inspects the amount of work completed thus far on the Meadow Bank Wharf

The rehabilitation of the Meadow Bank Wharf, a key fishing port in Georgetown, is progressing rapidly and is expected to be completed within the

next two months. The government has allocated \$190 million to the project, which includes resurfacing the market's front tarmac, constructing new sheds

and stalls for fish vendors, building a sanitary block, improving water quality, and installing concrete drains.

Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha recently visited the wharf to inspect the ongoing work. He expressed satisfaction with the progress and reiterated



A heavy-duty machine conducting work on a section of the wharf

the government's commitment to enhancing agricultural facilities and supporting the fishing industry.

The rehabilitation of the Meadow Bank Wharf is part of the government's broader efforts to modernise and revitalise the country's agricultural sector.

BELLE VUE RESIDENTS RECEIVE FREE SPECTACLES

Over 70 residents of Belle Vue, West Bank Demerara, have benefited from the government's eye testing and spectacles programme, receiving essential eyewear at no cost. Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr Vindhya Persaud attended the distribution ceremony.

Since the programme's inception, the government has

invested over \$7 million to provide these services in Region Three. Recipients expressed immense gratitude for this initiative, sharing their newfound ability to see clearly and perform tasks with which they had previously struggled.

Minister Persaud noted that this programme is just one of many efforts to provide necessary support to citizens throughout

Guyana. "We continue to go out, we continue to reach out to communities and we continue to meet out to some of the most vulnerable populations in and around Guyana," she said.

The Neighbourhood Democratic Council Chairman, Mark Anthony Khan, praised the government's efforts to improve the

community, stating, "It is a good initiative. It resonates with the community and that is what they are asking for."

The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security has invested a total of \$21 billion in providing services to citizens in Region Three.



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha inspects the amount of work completed thus far on the Meadow Bank Wharf

LEGUAN GETS NEW CREMATORIUM



President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali delivering remarks at the commissioning ceremony of Leguan Island Crematorium

President Ali described the newly constructed Kaashi Dhaam Crematorium on Leguan Island as a

sanctuary where families can grieve the loss of their loved ones and begin the healing process.

At the crematorium's

commissioning ceremony, President Ali noted that the facility provides a dignified and comfortable space for families to offer their final respects to the deceased. "Where life ends symbolically, is also where healing begins," he stated.

The Kaashi Dhaam Crematorium, which means "heavenly abode," is the second of its kind in Guyana. It was funded and constructed by the Ramroop Foundation, and President Ali

recognised the family's valuable contribution to the island's development.

Prior to the construction of the

crematorium, families on Leguan Island faced challenges in transporting their loved ones for cremation.

President Ali expressed concern over the previous circumstances, noting that the new facility provides a much-needed and respected space for honouring the deceased.

President Ali also announced plans to construct landing pads at Leguan and Wakenaam, making it easier for grieving families on both islands to access the crematorium.



The newly constructed Leguan Island Crematorium

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DIWALI MELA CELEBRATES UNITY AND HOPE IN GUYANA



The Indian Commemoration Trust's Pre-Diwali Cultural Extravaganza

The Indian Commemoration Trust hosted a vibrant Diwali Mela at the Monument Gardens in Georgetown, bringing together families and the Hindu community to celebrate the Festival of Lights.

The event featured cultural performances, art, cuisine, and other items on display. Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips joined patrons and the Indian community for the auspicious celebrations, participating in the lighting of the Diya. Diwali will be observed on October 31.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Phillips emphasised the symbolic meaning behind Diwali, highlighting its universal message of hope, light, and renewal. He underscored the festival's significance for Guyana, a nation built on the values of diversity and unity.

"Let the light of the diya inspire us to overcome the challenges we face both as individuals, and as a country," Prime Minister Phillips said. **"May we live out the principles of Diwali - principles**



The Indian Commemoration Trust's Pre-Diwali Cultural Extravaganza

such as kindness, generosity, and righteousness so we can continue to nurture peace, understanding, and prosperity in our beautiful country."

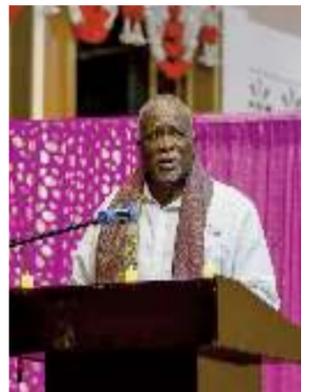
The Indian Commemoration Trust, dedicated to promoting Indian culture, has organised numerous melas for various celebrations, including Diwali, Phagwah, and others.



The Indian Commemoration Trust's Pre-Diwali Cultural Extravaganza



The Indian Commemoration Trust's Pre-Diwali Cultural Extravaganza



The Indian Commemoration Trust's Pre-Diwali Cultural Extravaganza

QUEEN'S COLLEGE COMMEMORATES ITS LEGACY ON 180TH ANNIVERSARY



Commissioning the new Industrial Technology and Home Economics department

Queen's College (QC), one of the most prestigious secondary schools in Guyana, proudly celebrated its 180th anniversary, with a week of commemorative activities organised by the Queen's College Old Students Association (QCOSA).

The celebration began with a wreath-laying ceremony at St. James the Less Church in Kitty, attended by Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh. During the ceremony, Minister



Inside the new department

Singh acknowledged the remarkable achievements of QC alumni across various fields, including politics, academia, literature, and the arts. He emphasised that QC has been an



Commissioning the new Industrial Technology and Home Economics department

incubator of excellence for generations and expressed confidence in its continued contributions to Guyana's future. In honouring the school's founder, Lord

leadership in establishing the Anglican Grammar School for Boys in 1844.

At a special general assembly, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali urged students and alumni to shape a new nation characterised by collective success. He stressed the importance of an inclusive culture that supports those who may be falling behind,

Priya Manickchand highlighted the government's

commitment to enhancing educational resources across all 10 administrative regions. She announced plans for a new section at QC to further improve accessibility for students.

Adding to the celebration, a new Industrial Technology and Home Economics Department was commissioned. This state-of-the-art facility includes six laboratories dedicated to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), offering courses in food and nutrition, textiles, mechanical engineering, and more.

As part of the anniversary festivities, various events included a welcome brunch, a career connections event, art exhibitions, tours, an inter-house cooking competition, and sports featuring alumni versus students.



Part of the special General assembly at the National Cultural Centre

Bishop William Piercy Austin, the inaugural Anglican Bishop of British Guiana, Minister Singh laid a wreath at his final resting place, commending Bishop Austin's visionary

stating, **"If your culture of winning is leaving others behind, we have to re-examine that culture, not only for QC but for our country."**

Education Minister



Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST



KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 79

JOE VIEIRA PARK - A CARIBBEAN GEM IN THE MAKING

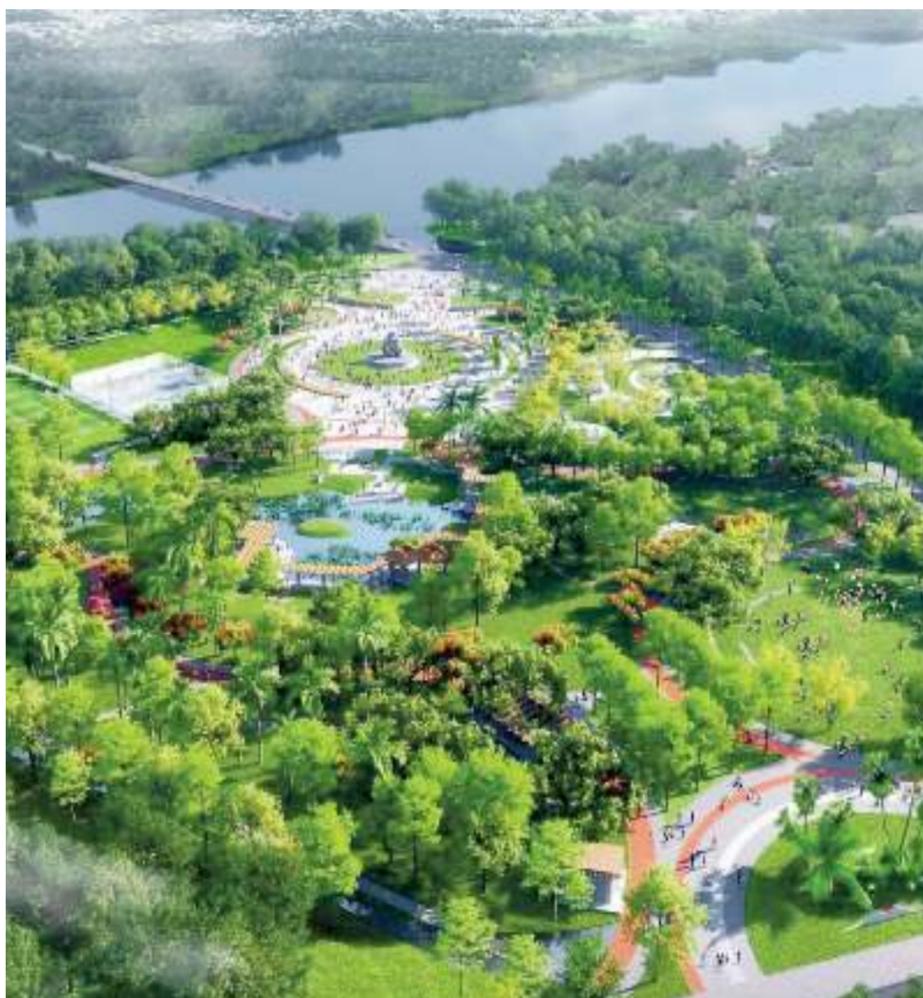


Artist's impression of Joe Vieira Park upon completion

The US\$10 million transformation of Joe Vieira Park, funded by China, promises to elevate the park into one of the Caribbean's premier recreational spaces. Key attractions include a basketball court, tennis court, football field, elevated walkway, and the Guyana/China friendship monument. Designed with families in mind, the park will feature a pond, children's activity centre, and picnic lawns—offering a perfect spot for relaxation and community gatherings.



Artist's impression of the monument which will be the centerpiece of the revamped park



Artist's impression of Joe Vieira Park upon completion



An overhead shot capturing the transformation of Joe Vieira Park as construction continues.

Is the United States of America a Captured State?

by Donald Ramotar

The United States, unlike the Western powers of the last two centuries, has an anti-colonial history. Its founding fathers led the people of that country into many heroic battles for National Liberation.

Since then it has made great strides in almost all aspects of life. When people think about the US, for most, the image that comes to mind is that of a rich country, technologically advanced with opportunities.

The US has also done many commendable things. We must not forget that its opposition to Spanish colonialism contributed significantly to the independence struggle of many Latin American countries. It has also done a lot in assisting counties and peoples in all parts of the world who were afflicted by natural disasters and in containing the outbreaks of many dangerous diseases, such as Ebola and HIV and AIDS. It has also led the struggle against trafficking in persons and modern day slavery.

The democratic forces in Guyana would always remember that the US stood with the masses in the defense of democracy during the 2020 elections. This is important to us since it helped to compensate for its negative role in the 1960s. It helped to prevent our country from retrogressing into an undemocratic state as the 1964 to 1992 period.

The US also joined with progressive mankind during the fight against Hitlerite fascism which threatened Europe and the world. These things cannot ever be forgotten.

That image as a shining star on the hill was tarnished since then in Vietnam, Grenada, Iraq, Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, Syria and other places.

However nothing it did in the past has damaged the image and reputation of America as what is taking place in the Middle East at this time.

Recall that immediately after the Palestinian people in the GAZA struck an important blow for its own freedom on October 7 2023, the US sided with the Fascist, Apartheid Israeli regime to the point of being a partner in the genocide that followed and is continuing.

The President of the US and his Secretary of State flew to Israel immediately to show their solidarity with the leader of that murderous regime, Benjamin Netanyahu. Mr. Blinkin said words to the effect that he was there not just as Secretary of State of the US but as a Jew thereby misrepresenting the act of the Palestinians as being anti-Jew when in fact it was not. It was an anti-colonial act, an act for National Liberation.

A lot of what took place on October 7, 2023 are still obscured by the excessive lies and distortions of the mainstream cooperate media which is fully behind the Israeli regime.

The US, no doubt at the request of Israel, immediately dispatched a sizable contingent of its armed forces into the region to protect Israel.

It was extremely distressing to witness the US total support for Israel as it unleashed its barbaric and murderous attacks on an almost unarmed people. No one was spared, babies, children, women nor the elderly. This was manifested in the Veto it used on five occasions when other countries took resolutions for a ceasefire to the UN's Security Council. The US frustrated all of those.

When the South African government took the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which was the first country to jump in defense of Israel? It was the United States! It used all its powers to defend Israel and the slaughter it was committing.

It even used its enormous influence to prevent the issuance of an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and two of his ministers by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Its congress even made open threats to the Chief Prosecutor and judges of that body.

Indeed the Criminal Netanyahu was invited to address the joint sitting of Congress and was given a reception suited for heroes. He had more than fifty standing ovations during his address, more than any US President ever had. Moreover he traveled to the US and addressed the Security Council of the United Nations.

While he was addressing the coun-

cil he had already given the order to kill the head of Hezbollah, Nasrallah in a terrorist attack that killed hundreds of innocent civilians. To kill that freedom fighter Israel destroyed six high rise apartment buildings in Beirut, Lebanon.

As a demonstration of its opposition to a ceasefire, the Israeli regime murdered the Chief negotiator of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh while he was in Iran. This was another terrorist attack aimed at sabotaging negotiations and at escalating the conflict by committing the crime on Iranian territory.

The US has openly stated that it assisted Israel with intelligence in the killings of the leaders of the resistance movement. It has even carried bombing raids on poor Yemen on behalf of Israel.

Since October 7, 2023 the US has ramped up its supply of deadly military hardware to Israel. More bombs, tanks, planes etc. tens of thousands of tons of military hardware have been delivered into the hands of the Zionist regime since October 7.

The calls by the US for Israel to allow humanitarian aid into GAZA sounds very hollow. Israel continues to disregard them. It is painful to look at press conferences by White House and State Department Spokespersons calling for Israel to allow relief trucks into GAZA. It looks so insincere. Hunger and disease are weapons that are employed by the racist regime against the poor Palestinians. All are crimes against humanity as well as breaking all International Laws. Israel continues to ignore world public opinion because of the backing it receives from the world's most powerful country, the USA.

How was the US transformed from a progressive, revolutionary, anti-colonial country into one that supports racism, genocide and ethnic cleansing?

The reasons are too many to be dealt with in a small piece such as this article.

One that must be identified though is the policy of lobbying that is widely used in the USA.

Over the years a pro-Zionist group, which supports the regime in Israel and helps it to get its way internationally, has acquired tremendous influence in all the

corridors of power in the United States. This group is known as The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) it is part of the whole Zionist scheme.

The group finances the campaigns of pro-Israel candidates to the US Congress and it's Senate. If any one of those law makers ever dare to criticize Israel for any of its racist behavior, AIPAC works hard to get that person removed by scandals and even by finding pro-Israel candidates to support at subsequent elections.

Thus Israel has tremendous support not only in the Legislative bodies of the US but also in the Executive. Top jobs in the State Department, the White House and the Pentagon are influenced by AIPAC. These agencies are chuck full of pro-Zionists.

That is why today the US administration is acting against the wishes of its own people, the vast majority of whom are against this genocide. Many Public Servants were dismissed from their jobs and removed from positions if they are perceived to oppose any of Israel ambitions. Many conscientious officers have resigned rather than to be associated with the bloody crimes that are being committed daily against Palestine.

The Lobby has great influence in the mainstream media in the US. Therefore the media is used to hide (ignore), distort and demonize those who oppose the genocide taking place in the GAZA, West Bank and Lebanon. Many journalists are completely muzzled.

The US administration has damaged the image of its country in the eyes of the world and in many cases, acting against its own best interest to please the Israeli regime.

All its actions lead to the conclusion that the USA is a captured State! It is acting in the interest of the Fascist Israeli regime! It is protecting a Fascist, Apartheid regime.

As friends of the United States we must let our voices be heard to assist that great country to return to the anti-colonial past that the world admired them for!

Donald Ramotar is a former Guyana President

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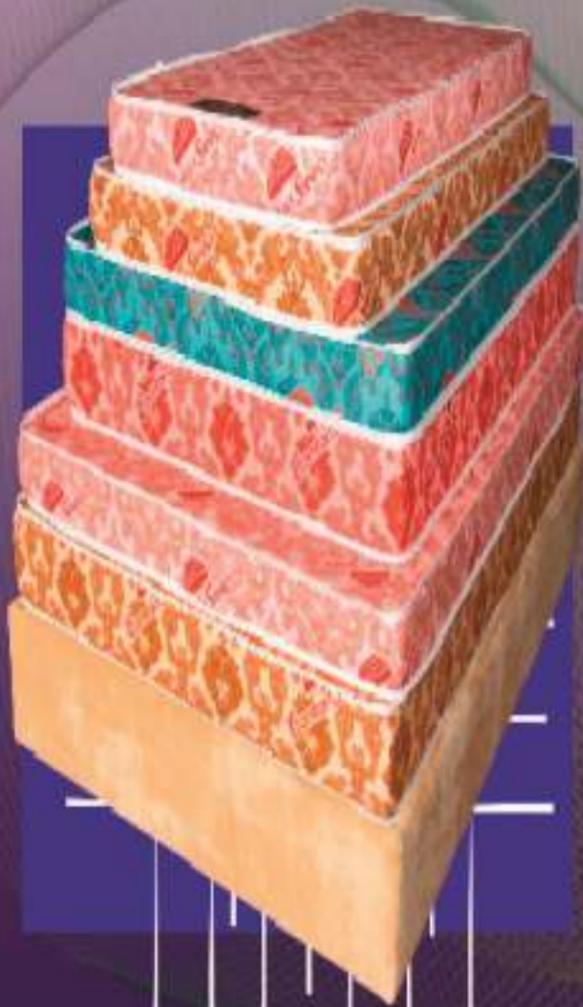
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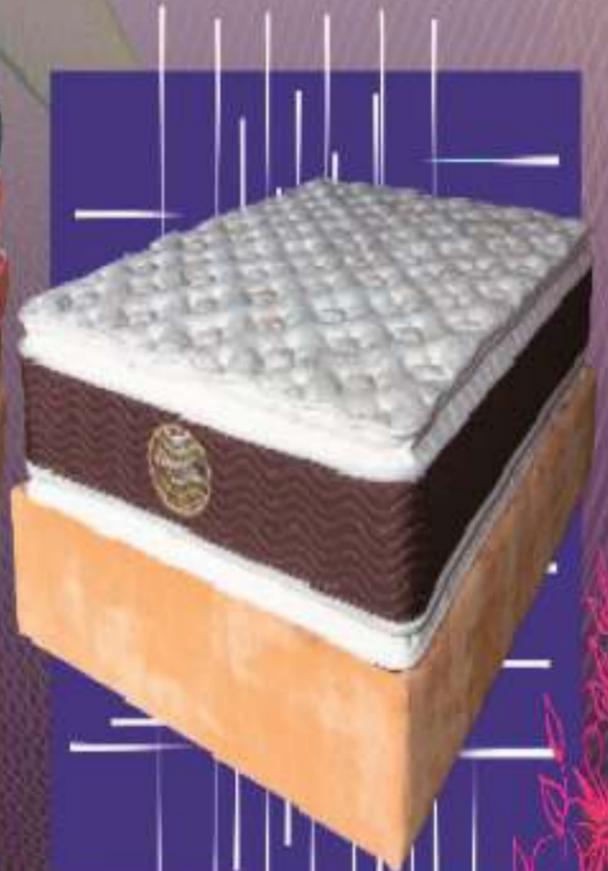
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Save the Dates



Events
Calendar

October - December 2024



October

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

November

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

December

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

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- Oral Surgery (Extractions)

