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President Ali hosts Seniors Luncheon

IN keeping with the festive season and to show his love and appreciation for the elderly, President, Dr Irfaan Ali recently hosted a special Christmas luncheon for senior citizens in Region Three. During the event, seniors had an opportunity to engage President Ali and several of his Cabinet ministers. Each senior citizen received a bag filled with goodies (below).



Royal Caribbean hosts 'Iconic Summit on Caribbean tourism after Melissa

Amid the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa in October this year, Caribbean tourism ministers, directors and executives gathered aboard Royal Caribbean's Icon of the Seas this month for an "Iconic Summit" hosted during the Caribbean Tourism Organization's (CTO) second annual Caribbean Weekend in Miami, to discuss the cruise industry's pivotal role in recovery and long-term resilience and growth.

Royal Caribbean International President and CEO Michael Bayley detailed his company's rapid response to the crisis, including delivering more than 100 pallets of essential supplies, generators, food and water to Jamaica's port of Falmouth, working with partners to support distribution in hard-hit areas, and helping to provide meals in affected communities. In a candid discussion with CTO Secretary-General & CEO Dona Regis-Prosper, Bayley said the company sees itself as part of the Caribbean community: "I think over the years we've always tried to support the Caribbean communities. Especially in times of crisis, we answer the phone, and we try our best."

CTO Chairman Ian Gooding-Edghill, Barbados' Minister of Tourism and International Transport, thanked Royal Caribbean and his regional partners for their compassion and generosity in supporting Jamaica and Haiti in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa.



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Air Transat route seen as key economic boost for Guyana–Canada

GUYANA'S acting High Commissioner to Canada, Cindy Sauers, is of the view that Guyana's quest to become an aviation hub to promote connectivity is not only a desired objective to facilitate the movement of people, notably the significant Guyanese diaspora community residing in Canada, but also the movement of goods and services to promote economic and commercial relations between Guyana and Canada and even beyond.

Speaking at the milestone occasion of Air Transat's inaugural direct flight from Toronto to Georgetown recently, the High Commissioner (ag) said the occasion marks a new chapter, a new relationship, a new era of international travel between Guyana and Air Transat, but more so strengthened bilateral relations between Guyana and Canada.

According to Sauers, Air Transat's commitment has not gone unnoticed and the Government of Guyana welcomes this initiative/action.

"Please be assured that the Government of Guyana is doing its part, and has established reliable navigation

services and is spearheading efforts to develop infrastructure, security framework and related services and facilities to accommodate the needs of a growing and progressive aviation sector in Guyana.

"I wish to underscore the facilitatory role and the importance of Guyana's strategic geographic location in South America in influencing/promoting greater connectivity on that continent, but also across the Caribbean, the Americas, Europe and even beyond. Having noted Air Transat's current inroads in South America, this is an area worth further dialogue amongst stakeholders to capitalise on the untapped opportunities."

The High Commissioner (ag) pointed out that she is pleased to convey that the Government of Guyana welcomes air services/airlines such as Air Transat in coming on board and joining in the journey towards contributing to Guyana's progressive aviation sector.

"In recent years Guyana's economy has been, and continues to be on a development trajectory, as it is known as the fastest-growing economy in the world."

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Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

 KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 108

\$100,000 CASH GRANT FOR ALL ADULTS, MAJOR ECONOMIC REFORMS HEADLINE PRESIDENT ALI'S FIVE-YEAR AGENDA

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President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali sharing his government's five-year agenda with a large audience gathered in front of the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC).



DISCIPLINED SERVICES MEMBERS TO GET ONE MONTH TAX-FREE BONUS

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GHANAIAN WOMAN-LED COMPANY JOINS GUYANA'S OIL FRONTIER

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U.S. WAR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS VISIT GUYANA TO EXPAND MILITARY COLLABORATION

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GOVT SERVICES MADE EASY AS LEONORA CENTRE OPENS ITS DOORS

Residents of Region Three will no longer be spending days, or even weeks, waiting on basic government services. Instead, many are now walking out of the new Government Service Centre at the West Central Mall, Leonora, with their documents in hand and smiles on their faces.

The shift was evident during the official opening of the facility by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who toured the centre, engaged staff, and spoke directly with residents about their experiences. What stood out most was the speed at which services are now being delivered.

Services that once required repeated visits and lengthy delays are



President Ali, Senior Minister in the office of the President with responsibility for finance, Dr Ashni Singh, Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation Zulfikar Ally and the staff of the Guyana Revenue Authority

now being completed in minutes.

“Can you imagine that 35 applications in the last 24 hours, taking about 10 minutes each, and people are already receiving their certificates the same day? This would have taken weeks before,” President Ali said, underscoring the

dramatic improvement.

At the Passport Office section, the transformation was just as striking. Processing times have been reduced to as little as five minutes, a change the President described as **“brilliant.”**

For residents, however, the impact goes beyond efficiency. One visitor described

the experience as **“very efficient and very friendly,”** a sentiment the President welcomed, noting that the goal is not just faster service, but better service.

“It’s an experience,” he remarked. **“They’re making the process enjoyable, and that is exactly what we want.”**

The centre brings together several essential services under one roof, including passports, electronic identification (e-ID) cards, driver’s licences, and birth, death and marriage certificates. Within the first few hours of operation, approximately 20 e-ID cards were processed, signalling strong public demand.

Driver’s licence processing has also been streamlined, with the full process expected to take no more than three days. Plans are already in place to introduce same-day licences once on-site printing equipment is installed.

President Ali highlighted the use of online government portals that allow citizens to complete forms in advance, significantly reducing wait times. QR codes will soon be displayed prominently at the centre and in public



A resident registering for E-ID card

Technology is spaces to make access playing a key role in even easier. the improvements.

NEW PAYDAYS ON THE HORIZON AS MAJOR PROJECTS DRIVE JOBS IN REGION THREE



Scene from the job fair in Region Three

Hundreds of job seekers turned out at the Leonora Track and Field Facility with résumés in hand and renewed optimism, as President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that at least 300 new jobs for Region Three residents will be advertised within days.

The announcement came during the gas-

to-energy project job fair, hosted by the government in collaboration with Lindsayca Oil & Gas Integrated Solutions Group. The event drew applicants from across the country, many eager to secure work linked to the expanding industrial activity taking shape on the West Bank of

Demerara.

Addressing the gathering, President Ali said vacancies from several companies, including Vreed-en-Hoop Shore Base Inc. and the gas-to-energy project, will be uploaded to the national employment portal, with some employers ready to hire immediately.

“This is not five years from now. This is immediate,” the President told participants, stressing that the benefits of the gas-to-energy project are already being felt.

He revealed that the Vreed-en-Hoop Shore Base Facility has so far generated more than

425 direct and indirect jobs, while other major developments are actively recruiting. One company, he said, needs

the difference between vision and recklessness, between transformation and

during the construction phase, with at least 1,500 permanent jobs across the wider industrial ecosystem, including the gas plant, fertiliser production, land development and shore base operations.

Additional opportunities are also on the horizon. Investors at the Vreed-en-Hoop Shore Base have indicated they will need 150 workers within six weeks, while GAICO Construction has an immediate demand for 120 employees. The Parika port development is also expected to provide employment for hundreds.



Scene from the job fair in Region Three

120 workers right away, and the Wales sugar refinery is expected to employ about 100 people, repurposing old infrastructure into productive assets.

“This is

decay,” President Ali said.

Looking ahead, he explained that the Wales development, anchored by the gas-to-energy project, is expected to create up to 1,000 jobs



President Ali and Minister of Health inspecting the new digital x-ray machine at the Leonora Hospital

Residents of Hospital, an upgrade Region Three are expressing relief and gratitude following the commissioning of a modern digital X-ray system at the Leonora \$130 million system

NEW X-RAY MACHINE BRINGS FASTER CARE TO LEONORA RESIDENTS

was officially unveiled by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali. He was accompanied by Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony, as they toured the facility and met with staff and patients.

For pensioner Merl Parkinson, the new service is life-changing. Being totally blind, travelling to Georgetown for X-rays was exhausting and stressful.

“To move from

here to Georgetown, it’s fatiguing,” Parkinson explained. He described the new machine as a major asset, not only for himself but for his family and the wider community. **“This is a great move that President Ali and the government have made to enhance the operations of this institution,”** he said, noting that he has long advocated for improved services at the hospital.

Another patient, Lynette, welcomed the relief from added expenses. She shared that she previously had to pay about \$2,500 in taxi fare to access X-ray services at the West Demerara Hospital. With the service now available at Leonora, that cost is eliminated.

Doctor-in-Charge Dr Zelda Luke Blyden explained that the digital system replaces an analogue machine that

was decommissioned in August 2024, restoring X-ray services for thousands of residents.

“With this service, patients will now have comprehensive care,” she said, adding that faster diagnoses and improved treatment outcomes are expected.

The new system marks a significant step forward in strengthening healthcare delivery in Region Three.

\$100,000 CASH GRANT FOR ALL ADULTS, MAJOR ECONOMIC REFORMS HEADLINE PRESIDENT ALI'S FIVE-YEAR AGENDA



Scene from the national address at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

DIRECT CASH SUPPORT AND COST-OF-LIVING RELIEF

In keeping with commitments to the people, the government will allocate funds in the 2026 National Budget to deliver a \$100,000 cash grant to every Guyanese aged 18 and older. The measure was outlined during a national address at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC), where President Irfaan Ali presented his government's economic and social agenda for the next five years.

The cash grant forms part of a broader programme of support, with additional grants to be rolled out over the period. Households will also receive assistance to support home construction and upgrades, while parents of school-aged children will benefit from the Because We Care cash grant, which will be gradually increased to \$100,000 per year. The non-contributory old-age pension will be progressively raised to

\$60,000 per month, and the public assistance grant to \$40,000 per month.

STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Investments in healthcare will include an electronic inventory management system to track the movement and availability of drugs and medical supplies, ensuring adequate stock levels nationwide. A national records platform, electronic appointment system, and AI integration will strengthen service delivery.

The recently launched Digital Health Training Institute, offering a three-year programme, will develop personnel to operate Guyana's digital health systems.



Scene from the national address at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

Investments over the next five years aim to position the country as a biotechnology research hub, supported by a life sciences park and a tropical medicine institute.

Free education at all levels will continue, alongside scholarship

programmes and ongoing modernisation of facilities and curricula.

HOUSING, WATER AND SANITATION

Net property tax on individuals will be abolished, and over 40,000 houses; approximately 4,000 per year, are expected to be built, with focus on clearing the backlog of house-lot applications and expanding home ownership nationwide. Access to potable water has reached 98.4 per cent, with plans to achieve 100 per cent treated water access along the coast.

Solid waste management and sanitation improvements will include wastewater treatment upgrades, deployment of critical equipment, and a nationwide recycling programme. A solid

Tax and investment initiatives will support agriculture and agro-processing, with corporate tax removed from these sectors and special economic zones will offer tax-free incentives. Flat taxes for double-cab pickups will be introduced: \$2 million for vehicles under 2000cc, and \$3 million for those between 2000cc and 2500cc. These measures aim to boost investment, production, and sustain economic growth.

EXPLORING A NATIONAL RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM

Options are being examined for a large-scale rail system to ease congestion in Georgetown and improve cargo movement from Lethem to the Atlantic coast. A feasibility study is underway to ensure a modern, well-connected transport network.

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICES

Citizens Connect, a digital portal for transparency and citizen engagement, will launch before year-end, allowing issues to be submitted to government agencies and tracked in real time. By 2026, it will be integrated into a single e-Government platform for online services, including IDs, passports, business registration, tax filings, and payments.

Other reforms



Scene from the national address at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

include Gov Connect for appointments, digital performance dashboards, e-procurement systems, and real-time project monitoring.

PREPARING GUYANESE FOR THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

A national digital literacy programme, coding in secondary schools, free digital certification, and innovation boot camps will equip citizens with skills for a modern economy.

FINANCING SMES AND EXPANDING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Small and Medium Enterprises will access up to \$10 million in zero-collateral loans through the Guyana Development Bank, prioritising youth,

women, and persons with disabilities. Micro-businesses will be eligible for up to \$3 million in zero-interest loans, supported by mentorship and technical assistance.

A junior stock exchange will provide small and emerging companies with capital-raising opportunities under simplified regulations, offering investment options for local savers.

A FIVE-YEAR VISION FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Together, these initiatives reflect a strategy of inclusive development, modernisation, and long-term prosperity, ensuring that all Guyanese can participate fully in the nation's growth and share in its benefits.



Scene from the national address at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

\$50,000 DISABILITY CASH GRANT BEING DISTRIBUTED

For thousands of Guyanese living with permanent disabilities, December 18 marked more than just another day on the calendar. It was the beginning of much-needed financial relief, as distribution of the government's \$50,000 Disability Cash Grant officially got underway across the country.

The initiative, announced by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, is expected to bring direct support to more than 27,000 vulnerable citizens, injecting

approximately \$1.4 billion into households that often face daily financial strain. For many beneficiaries, the grant offers help with basic necessities,

medical expenses and improved quality of life.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud explained that the process

is straightforward for persons already registered with the Ministry as living with permanent disabilities.

"These are persons on our official permanent register of disabilities, and the process begins immediately," Dr Persaud said, noting that beneficiaries can access the funds using the voucher found at the back of their 2025 Permanent Disability booklet.

For recipients living in rural and



Scene from the national address at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre



Scene from the national address at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

hinterland communities, the ability to cash the voucher at post offices or recognised outlets such as MoneyGram, SurePay and Western Union brings the assistance closer to home. Dr Persaud encouraged beneficiaries

to act promptly, while reminding them to ensure the final page of their disability booklet is properly stamped at their nearest Probation and Social Services Office before collecting the grant.

DISCIPLINED SERVICES MEMBERS TO GET ONE MONTH TAX-FREE BONUS

Members of Guyana's Disciplined Services will receive a one-month, tax-free Christmas bonus, providing added financial relief for thousands of families during the holiday season.

The announcement was made by Commander-in-Chief, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, at the Guyana Defence Force's annual Christmas Luncheon at Base Camp Stephenson. The bonus is expected to inject approximately \$2.1 billion in disposable income



Guyana Police Force ranks reacting to the announcement

into the economy, benefiting more than 13,000 members of the Disciplined Services.

The measure forms part of a broader programme aimed at improving the welfare

and professional development of servicemen and women. Over the past five years, the one-month tax-free bonus has been restored and sustained, alongside salary increases, upward adjustments to pay scales, faster promotions, improved working conditions and expanded training opportunities. Since its reintroduction in 2020, more than \$6 billion has been distributed through the initiative, which was expanded in 2023 to include civilian employees of the GDF.

In addition to

financial support, emphasis continues to be placed on preparing soldiers for life beyond active service. Thousands across the joint services are currently benefitting from the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) Scholarship Programme, with steps being taken to ensure all soldiers are registered on the Guyana Digital School, particularly for Mathematics and English.

The annual Christmas Luncheon remains a longstanding tradition within the Defence Force,



Guyana Police Force ranks reacting to the announcement

symbolising unity and mutual respect. The practice of senior officers serving meals to junior

ranks reinforces values of humility, service and teamwork.

The Disciplined Services were also commended for their role in protecting Guyana's borders and safeguarding national sovereignty amid increasing regional and global uncertainty, as efforts continue to strengthen defence capability and ensure long-term security and dignity for those who serve.



President Ali at the Guyana Defence Force's annual Christmas Luncheon at Base Camp Stephenson



President Ali at the Guyana Defence Force's annual Christmas Luncheon at Base Camp Stephenson

INVESTMENTS, NOT HANDOUTS, WILL DRIVE SHARED PROSPERITY - VP JAGDEO

Govt targets long-term jobs, income growth and equal opportunity

Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo says sustained investments, not handouts, will remain the government's primary tool for ensuring shared prosperity and equal opportunities across Guyana.

Speaking at his weekly media engagement, Dr Jagdeo said the administration is focused on long-term job creation and income generation, guided by policies designed to ensure prosperity reaches every household, regardless of geographical location.

BUILDING ON FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS

Referencing President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's announcement outlining the government's five-year plan, the vice president said progress over the past five years has been rooted in keeping promises to the people, particularly

in expanding access to education, healthcare and economic opportunity.

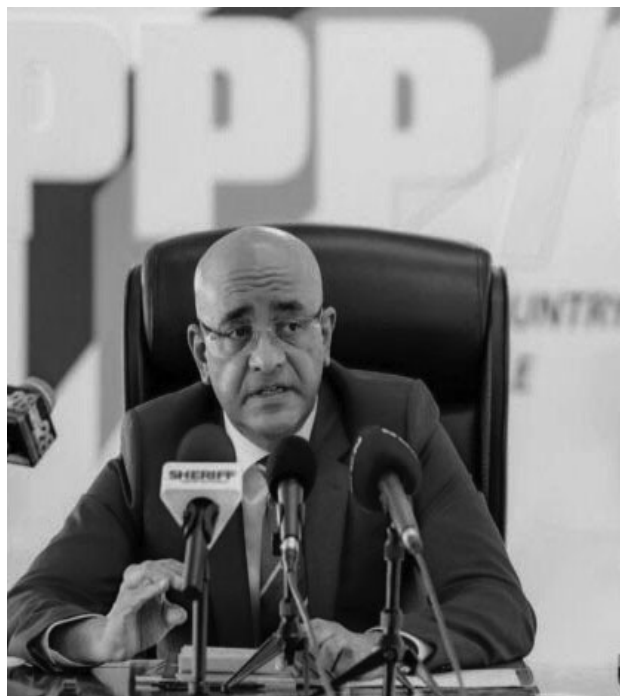
"We made a lot of progress in the past five years because we kept our promise to people. We expanded education, we expanded healthcare," Dr Jagdeo said.

However, he acknowledged that while significant strides have been made, the administration recognises that more must be done to fully transform lives and communities.

CASH GRANTS PART OF A BROADER STRATEGY

Dr Jagdeo emphasised that cash grants, while helpful, are not a standalone solution. Instead, they form part of a wider package of policies aimed at empowering citizens and strengthening household incomes.

He reiterated President Ali's position that additional cash



Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

grants will be rolled out over the next five years, alongside measures designed to reduce the cost of living and improve economic security.

One such measure is tax reform. The vice president highlighted the increase in the income tax threshold to \$130,000 per month, meaning only earnings above that amount are taxed. He added that the threshold is expected to rise annually and,

within five years, mirror levels seen in developed countries.

IMPROVING JOBS, HOUSING AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Dr Jagdeo also announced improved support for approximately 30,000 part-time workers and Community Service Officers (CSOs), who will benefit from increased monthly stipends.

For part-time workers, he said the government is actively working to transition some into permanent positions, providing greater job security and opportunities for career advancement.

In the housing sector, the vice president said the government's goal is to ensure citizens live in decent homes within clean, well-developed communities.

He also outlined plans to support young entrepreneurs and small business owners through accessible financing, mentorship and business development support. This includes the establishment of the Guyana Development Bank, which will offer zero-interest, zero-collateral loans to small and medium enterprises to help them access capital and grow.

PARTNERSHIPS TO TACKLE DRUG TRAFFICKING

Dr Jagdeo reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to regional and international

cooperation in combating drug trafficking, particularly through collaboration with the United States.

"We support any fight against drug traffickers, and we will work with the United States of America collaboratively," he said.

DISMISSES HEALTH RUMOURS

The vice president also dismissed rumours regarding his health, stating that he is not ill and has not been diagnosed with cancer. He described the claims as politically motivated misinformation and assured the public that he remains fully engaged in his duties.

Dr Jagdeo said many of the government's initiatives, including training, entrepreneurship, and the digitalisation of the health and education sectors, will be detailed in the 2026 National Budget.

GHANAIAN WOMAN-LED COMPANY JOINS GUYANA'S OIL FRONTIER

Guyana's growing oil sector has welcomed a new and historic partner with the signing of a Production Sharing

signed at the Pegasus Corporate Suite, includes a US\$17 million signing bonus, surpassing the government's

importance.

Cybele Energy's Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Beatrice Mensah Tayui, is now the first African and the first woman to lead an exploration and production company operating in Guyana. For Tayui, the moment marked a connection that goes beyond business, a link between Ghana and Guyana, bonded by shared heritage and a commitment to responsible development.

"Today, I stand as a symbol, uniting the nation of Ghana and the nation of Guyana...with ancestral ties bound, signed, sealed, and delivered," she said, describing the milestone as both professional and personal.

Minister of Natural Resources Vickram

Bharrat welcomed the new partnership, noting that the agreement reflects Guyana's rising international profile and its appeal to reputable global investors. He said the deal will open new doors for the local private sector and create fresh employment opportunities for Guyanese.

"It shows that our work has been truly recognised around the world," he noted. "The future looks bright for Guyana and Guyana's partners."

Cybele Energy also signed a new Petroleum Exploration Licence (PEL), becoming only the second company to operate under Guyana's updated fiscal regime, which includes a 10 per cent royalty, 10 per cent corporate tax, and a reduced cost-recovery ceiling. Profit oil will be



Guyana inks rich Block S7 oil deal with Ghana's Cybele Energy

shared equally between the government and the contractor, terms far stronger than the widely criticised Stabroek Block PSA.

The company estimates that the S7 Block holds a "conservative" 400 million barrels of recoverable oil. Located roughly 50 kilometres from ExxonMobil's Liza developments, the block lies within a proven oil-rich fairway that trends toward Suriname.

Tayui has pledged that Cybele's operations will be responsible,

transparent, and inclusive, with a focus on training and employing Guyanese, especially women and young people interested in science and engineering careers.

With the first exploration well expected within 12 months, Cybele Energy's arrival marks a new chapter in Guyana's oil frontier, one defined not only by investment, but by heritage, opportunity, and shared ambition between two nations.



Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat and Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Cybele Energy, Beatrice Mensah Tayui, signing the PSA for shallow-water Block S7

Agreement (PSA) for the shallow-water Block S7, bringing Ghanaian, woman-led Cybele Energy Ltd into the country's expanding offshore frontier.

minimum threshold and underscoring global confidence in Guyana's management of its natural resources. But beyond its financial value, the deal carries deep symbolic

The agreement,



Hands-on learning arrives in Berbice with new technical campus

Starting January 2026, students in Berbice will step into a world of opportunity at the Guyana Technical Training College Incorporated (GTTCI) campus in Port Mourant, where hands-on learning meets career-ready certification.

Constructed by local company Raffik and Sons Construction, the newly completed facility is

designed to give students practical experience that prepares them for careers in Guyana's growing industries, including oil and gas, tourism, and hospitality. Equipped with a state-of-the-art Facility Simulator (FacTor), modern workshops, lecture rooms, and administrative offices, the campus combines cutting-edge technology

BERBICE STUDENTS SET TO GAIN REAL-WORLD SKILLS AT GTTCI

with experiential learning.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali highlighted the milestone on his official social media page, noting the government's commitment to cultivating a skilled, capable workforce that

can drive economic growth and innovation.

Graduates will receive globally accredited advanced technician certificates, giving them access to high-paying jobs both locally and internationally. The programmes are



Hands-on learning arrives in Berbice with new technical campus



Hands-on learning arrives in Berbice with new technical campus

designed to create a generation of skilled professionals ready to contribute actively to Guyana's expanding economy.

The GTTCI campus is part of a broader vision to make Region Six the Caribbean's technical training hub.

Alongside the new facility, the Hospitality and Tourism Institute will offer specialised programmes tailored to industry needs, providing students with clear pathways from training to employment.

GUYANA AND EU HOLD 10TH PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE

The Government held the 10th Guyana of Guyana and the European Partnership European Union (EU) Dialogue on December 9,



Guyana and EU officials meeting to advance development and governance goals

at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The delegations were led by Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Todd and EU Ambassador to Guyana, Luca Pierantoni.

Both sides highlighted the importance of the annual dialogue as a platform for consultation, strengthening bilateral cooperation, and supporting

multilateralism under the United Nations Charter. They reaffirmed their shared commitment to global peace, sustainable development, and democratic governance.

The meeting also included senior officials from Guyana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU representatives including Ambassador Marianne van Steen, as well as the Ambassadors



Guyana and EU officials meeting to advance development and governance goals

of France, Sweden, and accredited to Guyana. an Italian Embassy official concurrently

NEW CONSULATE HIGHLIGHTS GROWING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN GUYANA AND GRENADA



Smiles and handshakes marked the launch of Grenada's new consulate in Georgetown

Guyana and Grenada recently strengthened their Caribbean partnership with the launch of the Honorary Consulate of Grenada in Georgetown, highlighting a commitment to regional cooperation, diplomacy, and shared development.

The ceremony, attended by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Grenadian Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Export Development Joseph Andall, marked a new chapter in the growing friendship between the two nations.

The consulate, located on New Market Street, was inaugurated in a gathering of government officials, diplomats, business

leaders, and community members. President Ali described the office as more than a diplomatic outpost; it will serve as a hub for communication, business facilitation, tourism promotion, and people-to-people engagement. **"It is opening a door to expanded cooperation built**

on strong bonds between Guyana and Grenada," he said.

Tourism emerged as a central focus of the partnership. President Ali highlighted the complementary nature of the two countries' offerings. **"Grenada is globally recognised for its beaches, marine attractions, yachting, and spice-infused cultural charm that has earned it the nickname the Spice Isle. Guyana, by contrast, offers world-class eco-tourism, rainforests, waterfalls, wildlife, and river-based adventures. Together, these**

differences become a powerful asset. We can create multi-destination packages that offer greater value to travelers and strengthen Caribbean competitiveness."

To make such initiatives successful, President Ali stressed the importance of expanding air connectivity between the nations. He also emphasised that the consulate will play a pivotal role in facilitating business ventures and promoting tourism, while fostering enduring people-to-people relationships.

Beyond tourism, President Ali outlined plans for economic collaboration, particularly in trade and agriculture. He proposed a bilateral agreement in the first quarter of 2026 that would position Guyana as a reliable supplier of quality, consistent food to Grenada. He also suggested joint investment in modernising Grenada's spice industry, including enhanced processing and packaging capacities to meet regional and international market

demand. Such initiatives, he noted, could encourage the Caribbean to remove outdated trade barriers and outdated regulations.

Prime Minister Mitchell praised Guyana as a strong and dependable regional partner, highlighting

areas of integration and collaboration.

The consulate will be headed by Dr Komal Singh, a respected Guyanese businessman appointed as Honorary Consul of Grenada in Georgetown. In this role, Dr Singh will represent Grenada's interests



President Ali and Prime Minister Mitchell unveiling the plaque for the new Grenada Consulate



The new Grenada consulate in Guyana represents a step toward a more connected, resilient, and cooperative Caribbean region

NEW AVIATION ACADEMY TO SUPPORT GUYANA'S EXPANDING SKIES

When President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that **"aspiring pilots will earn their wings right here in Guyana"**, it signalled the beginning of a new era in local aviation training.

That moment marked the official launch of the ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Plus (NGAP+) Programme, Guyana's new aviation academy designed to prepare citizens for the country's rapidly expanding aviation sector.

Held at the Pegasus Corporate Suites in Georgetown, the launch brought together eager cadets, students, aviation pioneers, and international partners. For many young people in attendance, the announcement represented not just



President Ali addressing the launch of the ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Plus (NGAP+) Programme

an opportunity, but a pathway to dreams that once felt far beyond their reach.

The new academy will train and certify Guyanese in every major aviation profession, including pilots, aircraft engineers, safety inspectors, air traffic controllers, ground crew, and logistics specialists. President Ali emphasised that the rapid growth of air travel, both domestic and international, has

created an urgent need for a new generation of trained and disciplined aviation professionals.

"We will need an entire new generation of professionals, and we must prepare them at a rapid pace," he said.

The academy brings together several key partners: the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), the International Air Cadets Training Limited of the

United Kingdom, the Air Cadets of Guyana, and the University of Guyana. Each partner contributes specialised expertise to establish a world-class training system tailored for Guyana's needs.

"We are clearing a new flight path for our nation's future," President Ali told the gathering. **"This is not an initiative by accident or chance. Each partner here has brought their expertise, their vision, and their commitment to this critical mission."**

He noted that Guyana's skies are becoming busier each month. More international airlines are charting routes to the country, and domestic aviation continues to extend deeper into the interior, connecting remote communities

and supporting national development.

"No region, no community will be left on the tarmac of progress," the President affirmed.

To support this growing sector, the government is investing heavily in aviation infrastructure, including a new terminal at Cheddi Jagan International Airport, upgrades to the Lethem and Rose Hall airports, extensive hinterland airstrip

improvements, and runway extensions nationwide.

Turning to the cadets, the first cohort of the academy, President Ali issued a motivating charge.

"In aviation, there is no room for 'almost'. There is only 'correct'," he said. **"The future of aviation in Guyana is not just bright, it is dazzling."**

With the academy now launched, Guyana is preparing its young people to take flight, literally and figuratively, into an aviation future full of opportunity.



President Ali addressing the launch of the ICAO Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Plus (NGAP+) Programme

U.S. WAR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS VISIT GUYANA TO EXPAND MILITARY COLLABORATION

Senior officials from the United States War Department visited Guyana to strengthen the strategic military partnership between the two nations. The delegation, including Senior Advisor to the Secretary of War Patrick Weaver and Acting Assistant Secretary of War for Western Hemisphere Affairs Joseph Humire, met with President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and top Guyanese officials at State House.

The visit underscores the long-standing security cooperation between Guyana and the United States, aimed at promoting peace, stability, and territorial integrity. Discussions focused on countering



The meeting with War Department and President Ali and top Guyanese officials at State House

transnational criminal networks and advancing shared security goals across the Caribbean and South America. During the meeting, both countries signed a Statement of Intent to expand joint military collaboration, ensuring full respect for the sovereignty and legal frameworks of each nation. The delegation

was accompanied by U.S. Ambassador to Guyana, HE Nicole Theriot. Guyana's delegation included Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Todd, National Security Advisor Captain Gerry Gouveia, Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud, and Chief of Defence Staff Brigadier Omar Khan, who all participated in the discussions aimed at deepening defence collaboration.



The vessel in question

VESSEL FALSELY FLYING GUYANA FLAG SPARKS MARAD'S WARNING

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) has raised concerns over the growing misuse of the Guyana flag by vessels not registered in the country. Recently, the Government of the United States informed MARAD that the Motor Tanker SKIPPER (ex-

ADISA), IMO Number 9304667, was spotted in international waters falsely flying the Guyana Flag. MARAD confirmed that the vessel is not registered in Guyana, marking this as an unacceptable violation. The agency emphasised its commitment to safeguarding the integrity

of Guyana's maritime registry. "MARAD will continue to collaborate with international partners and maritime agencies to identify, pursue, and take firm action against any unauthorised use of the Guyana Flag," a statement said.

MARAD urged vessel operators and the maritime community to ensure compliance with all registration and flagging regulations to maintain safety, security, and the country's reputation in international waters.

GUYANA POLICE FORCE DELIVERS SAFER STREETS - PRESIDENT ALI SALUTES RECORD YEAR

It was a record year for the Guyana Police Force. With crime rates dropping and clearance rates rising, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali praised officers for their discipline, commitment, and the tangible difference they've made in communities across the country. Speaking at the GPF's traditional Christmas breakfast at the Police Officers' Mess Annexe in Eve Leary, he highlighted a 61.7 per cent crime clearance rate and a 25.2 per cent reduction in serious crimes in 2025. "These numbers matter because they

represent people, families who feel safer, communities that are more secure, and a country that is stronger," President Ali said, commending both the leadership and the officers on the frontlines for their dedication. He also lauded the force's modernisation efforts, including five new real-time command centres and the deployment of 120 patrol vehicles nationwide, upgrades that are helping officers respond more efficiently and keep communities safer. While Christmas is a time of celebration

for most Guyanese, President Ali reminded the police that it is also a period demanding extraordinary sacrifice. "You give of yourselves every day, sacrificing time with loved ones, enduring harsh conditions, and facing risks most cannot imagine. In doing so, you live the true spirit of Christmas: selflessness, compassion, and commitment to others," he said. The president used the occasion to reaffirm his government's commitment to the welfare and professional

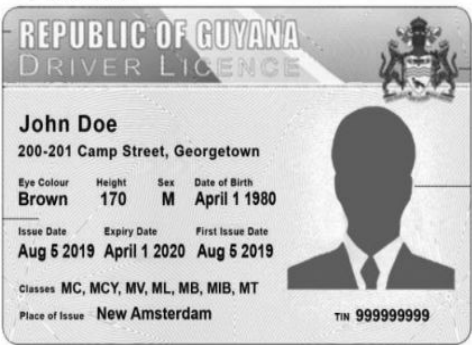


GPF's Christmas breakfast

growth of officers. He encouraged personnel approaching 20 years of service to protect their careers and retirement benefits and instructed senior ranks to ensure all officers are enrolled in the Guyana Digital School, emphasising the

importance of CSEC-level English and Math. He also tied ongoing infrastructure improvements, including modernised police stations with better facilities, to morale and professional pride, noting that

safe, well-maintained workplaces directly support efficiency and discipline. Concluding his address, President Ali emphasised that a secure country is central to national development. "Security is the most critical component of building prosperity and achieving human development. Your dedication is woven into our digitisation, education, and justice reforms... without your work, the country's transformation would not be possible."



GRA specimen

Technology has exposed discrepancies in Guyana's driver licencing system, and the government is now giving offenders six weeks to surrender invalid or illegally obtained licences. President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali made the announcement

during the Guyana Police Force's traditional Christmas breakfast at the Police Officers' Mess Annexe in Eve Leary, Georgetown. Individuals holding licences obtained under irregular circumstances have until January 20, 2026, to come forward. After this grace period, names will be published, licences suspended, and legal action initiated. The move follows a comprehensive post-audit conducted by the government

TECHNOLOGY UNCOVERS LICENCING IRREGULARITIES

in partnership with the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), and the Ministries of Home Affairs, and Public Service. Using integrated digital systems, officials uncovered cases where individuals received practical licences without ever passing the mandatory theory examination.

"If 150 people pass the theory, but 400 receive practical certificates, something is wrong," President Ali said. "Technology has allowed us to trace every step, and we have all the names." The president emphasised that this initiative is part of

a broader push for institutional integrity, digital transformation, and accountability. Citizens are encouraged to comply and re-enter the licencing process legitimately, ensuring fairness, road safety, and public trust across the nation.



First White Sugar Refinery launched

With a new refinery at the former Wales Sugar Estate, Guyana aims to reduce regional sugar imports and establish itself as a key supplier to the Caribbean.

Guyana is poised to make history with its first white sugar refinery, a US\$20 million project described by Senior Minister in the

Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, as a defining moment for the country's agro-industrial future.

The refinery is a joint venture between GAICO Construction and General Services Inc. and Sucro Limited, and is scheduled for completion in 2026.

GUYANA TO REFINE ITS WAY TO THE CARIBBEAN MARKET

Once operational, it will produce 100,000 tonnes of refined sugar annually, with room to expand. This output is expected to significantly reduce the Caribbean's dependence on imported sugar, which reached 200,000 tonnes valued at US\$180 million in 2024.

Speaking at the signing ceremony at the Pegasus Suites in Georgetown, Dr Singh highlighted the refinery's regional importance. The project aligns directly with Guyana's CARICOM commitments and the 25 by 2030



First White Sugar Refinery launched

initiative championed by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

The refinery is not just about numbers; it is also about honouring a rich sugar heritage. Sugar cultivation

shaped Guyana's earliest economic activity, built communities, and brought generations of ancestors to these shores. Dr Singh noted the government's steadfast support for the

industry, even through challenges like the loss of the European preferential market and the closure of estates between 2015 and 2020.

The project is expected to generate jobs, opportunities, and trade benefits, creating prospects for local farmers, workers, and communities. With modern technology and scalability built in, the refinery positions Guyana as a key player in Caribbean sugar markets, blending history, innovation, and regional leadership.

As Guyana continues its rapid development, local businesses are being urged to collaborate and pool resources to take advantage of the country's growing economic opportunities. Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation, Zulfikar Ally, made the call at the 136th Annual Awards Presentation & Gala Dinner of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI), highlighting the importance of strategic partnerships in competing with international firms.

"When you pool your resources, your knowledge, and your talents, you can be the best, and you can be very competitive," Minister Ally said. He stressed that local firms

GUYANESE BUSINESSES ENCOURAGED TO FORM PARTNERSHIPS FOR NATIONAL PROJECTS

cannot tackle major projects alone and that forming consortia is key to securing contracts on large-scale initiatives.

Minister Ally also praised Kathy Smith, President of the GCCI, and her team for successfully forming a consortia, noting that the government fully supports such collaborative efforts. **"The president has said it many times: our expectations are that you in the private sector should think about not doing these things on your own but joining forces to compete with international players,"** he added.



Minister Ally presenting an award to one of the honourees at the Gala event

Over the past five years, Minister Ally highlighted the positive impact of government-private sector collaboration, citing reduced taxes, increased disposable income, human capital investment, and nationwide infrastructure upgrades

that have created an enabling environment for local businesses to grow.

Looking forward, he pointed to emerging opportunities, including interest-free loans from the Guyana Development Bank, new economic zones in Berbice, growth in the tourism and

ICT sectors, AI-driven telemedicine, cross-border connectivity links, and a second gas-to-energy plant.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues, encouraged the private sector to capitalise on the groundwork already laid by the government. **"Your government has done the heavy lifting. What is required now is the determination to take advantage of the possibilities,"** she said.

Minister of Home Affairs Oneidge Walrond also addressed attendees, highlighting government's investments in

security, including the expanding 'Safe Country' programme, which provides faster investigations, stronger asset protection, and improved safety for businesses nationwide.

The event celebrated local success stories, with honours presented to Matthew Gaul, Hand-in-Hand Insurance, Green Agro Services and Supplies, Dragon Fly Drone Solutions, ExxonMobil Guyana, and Total Property Management Services Inc., underscoring the potential for homegrown companies to thrive through collaboration and innovation.

83 WOMEN RECEIVE BUSINESS GRANTS TO LAUNCH AND GROW ENTERPRISES

Eighty-three women across Guyana have been empowered to turn their entrepreneurial dreams into reality, thanks to business grants provided through collaboration among the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, the Government of Canada, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The grants, valued at \$300,000 each, were distributed at the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI), East Coast Demerara, totalling approximately \$25 million. Recipients included participants from the Women's

Innovation and Investment Network (WIIN) programme, survivors of gender-based violence, and individuals assisted by the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Unit, ensuring support for women from diverse backgrounds in nine of the country's 10 regions.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr. Vindhya Persaud described the initiative as a transformational milestone. **"We have not just trained you through WIIN in a particular skill. We have engaged with you so that you can see**

how your skills can lead you to financial independence and stability. You will understand what it means to not only put money into the business, but to constantly reinvest it," she said.

Dr. Persaud encouraged accountability and sustainability as these women take the next steps in their entrepreneurial journey. She also applauded the growing number of women venturing into non-traditional sectors such as construction, oil and gas services, logistics, and technology. **"This**

initiative introduces 83 additional women into Guyana's expanding network of female-owned businesses, strengthening gender equality and economic diversification," she added.

Lorena Salazar, Country Representative of the IDB in Guyana, reminded the women of the wider impact of their ventures. **"With business, you will help to improve the condition of your families, or more so, the entire ecosystem of your family, including**



Women-led enterprises get boost through \$25 million grant initiative

better health and education," she noted.

Tariq Williams, Representative of the High Commissioner of Canada in Guyana, highlighted the importance of coupling training with capital. **"Training alone is not enough; it was necessary to provide these grants so women can build sustainable businesses,"** he said.

For many recipients, the grant represents a pathway to independence, security, and the opportunity to transform their lives and those of their families. With these resources, they join a growing network of women leaders shaping Guyana's economic landscape and inspiring future generations.

LAW IS CLEAR, EXTRADITION MOVES FORWARD - AG NANDLALL

No legal manoeuvring will stop the extradition process, Attorney General Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, said, following Principal Magistrate Judy Latchman’s decision in the ongoing extradition proceedings involving the Mohameds. The magistrate’s ruling reaffirmed that the case would continue without further delays, rejecting the defence’s attempt to reintroduce previously settled arguments.

Minister Nandlall, speaking to the media after the ruling, explained that the

magistrate’s refusal to revisit arguments already determined by higher courts was entirely expected. **“All of the issues raised before the magistrate have been canvassed and conclusively determined, many times, by the High Court, the Court of Appeal, and other superior tribunals,”** he said.

Highlighting the doctrine of precedent, a cornerstone of common law, AG Nandlall stressed that lower courts must adhere to established legal principles. **“The**

law in this area is now settled and straightforward,” he stated, adding that Magistrate Latchman’s decision fully aligned with existing jurisprudence.

Magistrate Latchman, in her ruling, dismissed the defence’s request to refer constitutional issues (such as alleged breaches in the Fugitive Offenders (Amendment) Act) to the High Court, determining that the arguments were **“frivolous and vexatious”**. She confirmed that the extradition process

must continue without disruption, rejecting the bid to halt or delay proceedings based on constitutional challenges.

While the defence has indicated plans to appeal to the High Court, AG Nandlall warned that such actions are an **“expressed plan”** to prolong the proceedings unnecessarily. **“What will be taken to the High Court are the same issues already settled against them. One cannot stop persons from approaching the court, but that does**

not translate into a stay of proceedings,” he explained.

AG Nandlall also dismissed a new claim that the authority to proceed issued by the Minister of Home Affairs was defective, calling it **“a fabrication”** designed to delay the process. **“That form is a standard template directly from the Fugitive Offenders Act. Anyone can verify that it meets all legal requirements,”** he said.

The formal extradition hearing is scheduled to begin on **January 6, 2026**, continuing on **January 8, 2026**, to allow for the submission of documents from the United States,



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

including the requested diplomatic note. While not legally required, the government provided the note in good faith to maintain transparency and ensure adherence to international norms.



Bell 429

Guyana’s capacity to protect its people and respond swiftly in times of crisis received a major boost with the commissioning of two new helicopters into the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), reinforcing national security while expanding life-saving capabilities.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips officially commissioned the Bell 407 and Bell 429

helicopters at the GDF Hangar at Ogle, delivering remarks on behalf of President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali. The moment marked more than the addition of new aircraft, it signalled the government’s continued investment in safeguarding lives, sovereignty, and communities across the country.

“With sovereignty comes responsibility,” Prime

TWO NEW HELICOPTERS EXPAND GDF’S REACH ACROSS GUYANA

Minister Phillips said. **“That responsibility must be supported by sustained investment in our Defence Force.”**

The helicopters will play a critical role beyond defence. They are designed to reach remote hinterland and riverain communities, support medical evacuations, assist in disaster response, and conduct search and rescue operations when lives are on the line.

The Bell 429, acquired for US\$10.1 million, is a versatile, multi-role aircraft capable of carrying two crew members and six passengers. It will support surveillance, emergency response, and rapid deployment

missions. The Bell 407, purchased for US\$5.9 million, enhances patrol and logistical operations, particularly in difficult terrain where access is limited.

Prime Minister Phillips noted that these aircraft significantly

flexibility, allowing faster response times during emergencies and strengthening border security.

Over the past five years, government investment in the GDF has increased more than threefold, rising from

This funding has enabled the acquisition of modern aircraft, vessels, vehicles, and advanced technology.

“Capital investment is where modernisation lives,” the Prime Minister said, adding that upgrades also include improved training, drone technology, and advanced surveillance systems.

He also thanked the Government of the United States and its technical teams for supporting the acquisition, describing the helicopters as symbols of a nation committed to protecting its people today and securing its future.



Interior of the helicopter

expand the GDF’s \$13.9 billion in 2019 to operational reach and \$50.4 billion in 2025.

PM PHILLIPS SPOTLIGHTS OPPORTUNITIES IN QATAR-GUYANA COLLABORATION



PM Phillips celebrating Qatar National Day

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips highlighted how strengthened ties between Guyana and Qatar could bring real benefits to everyday citizens, from

better jobs to cleaner, more sustainable infrastructure. He underscored this during a reception celebrating Qatar’s National Day at the Guyana Marriott Hotel.

Hosted by the Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of Qatar, Mr. Mohd Ibrahim K B Alrumaih, the event marked 147 years of Qatar’s unification and brought together the diplomatic corps, government officials, and representatives from Qatar.

Extending warm congratulations on behalf of the government and people of Guyana, PM Phillips praised Qatar’s remarkable achievements and its growing role as a global leader rooted in peace, diplomacy,

and sustainable development. He highlighted Qatar’s rapid transformation and its National Vision 2030 as a model that Guyana admires in shaping its own development path.

“Guyana seeks to benefit from the best practices that underpin Qatar’s rapid economic growth, particularly its forward-looking diversification strategy,” the Prime Minister said, emphasising the potential for sectors such as healthcare, infrastructure,

technology, and education to benefit local communities.

Relations between the two nations, established in 1996, have strengthened significantly in recent years, with collaboration expanding in energy, investment, and diplomacy. PM Phillips referenced QatarEnergy’s active involvement in Guyana’s offshore sector, including the recent strategic alignment with TotalEnergies and PETRONAS in developing offshore

block S4, noting how these partnerships could create local employment and skills development opportunities.

The Prime Minister also highlighted shared environmental priorities, citing Qatar’s commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 alongside Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030). He noted potential cooperation in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, manufacturing, education, culture, and tourism, emphasising how these initiatives could directly improve the lives of ordinary Guyanese.

BERBICE'S NEW SOLAR PROJECTS STRENGTHEN GUYANA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY DRIVE

Berbice's transition toward cleaner and more reliable electricity gained further momentum with the commissioning of the Prospect Solar Farm, while a similar project at Trafalgar, Region Five,

in reshaping Guyana's energy future.

"Every renewable project we bring online strengthens our energy system," Prime Minister Phillips said. **"This solar farm**

on fossil fuels. I think it is an excellent idea to have solar panels to help generate electricity," he said.

For East Canje youth Sean Smith, the shift to renewable energy is both exciting and necessary. **"This is a massive project,"** he said. **"The entire East Canje will benefit. Energy will become easier and more accessible. And what's impressive is how it helps reduce our reliance on fossil fuel. This is great planning from the government."**

durability.

Once fully operational, the installation is expected to generate approximately 4,800 megawatt-hours of electricity annually. This is projected to save about \$210 million in fuel costs each year and significantly reduce carbon emissions, contributing to a cleaner energy mix for the region.

Region Six is no stranger to renewable energy development. Just weeks earlier, Prime Minister Phillips commissioned the 3MWp Hampshire Solar



Berbice sees another solar farm go live in expansion of renewable network



Berbice sees another solar farm go live in expansion of renewable network

continues to reinforce the government's broader push to modernise Guyana's energy sector through renewable sources.

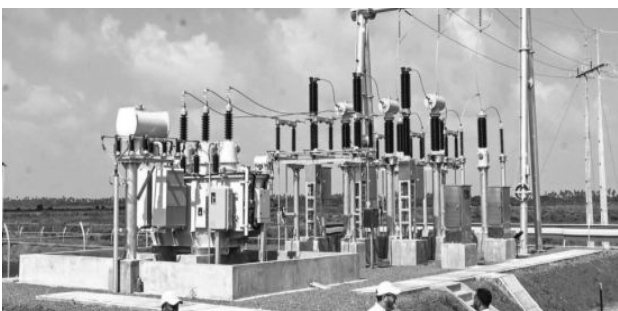
The newly commissioned Prospect Solar Farm, a 3-megawatt peak (MWp) facility located in East Berbice-Corentyne, is now feeding electricity directly into the national grid. The project is expected to reduce power outages, lower fuel costs and strengthen energy resilience for communities across Region Six.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, who led the commissioning exercise, described the solar installation as both practical and transformative, underscoring its role

brings us closer to a future that is modern, affordable and reliable for every Guyanese."

Canje resident Youdhithir Persaud, who has lived in the area for decades, said the project gives him confidence that the next generation will enjoy a better quality of life. **"The government is doing a wonderful job... I love the project; it will support the people in this area,"** he shared. **"As a senior citizen, I'm jealous... in a good way—that the young people will enjoy such a wonderful thing."**

Another resident, Frank John, said the project was long overdue. **"For too long, the country relied totally**



Region Five power up with new solar farm

Constructed at a cost of US\$5.5 million, the Prospect Solar Farm features nearly 5,000 solar modules, advanced inverters and a 13.8-kilovolt connection to the Demerara-Berbice Interconnected System (DBIS). The facility can supply up to 2.4 megawatts of electricity to the grid and is engineered to withstand winds of up to 244 kilometres per hour, ensuring long-term

Farm, also located in East Berbice-Corentyne. Together, the Prospect and Hampshire facilities form a growing renewable base supporting the regional power supply.

These projects complement the recently commissioned 4MWp Trafalgar Solar Farm in Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice), financed through the Guyana-Norway climate partnership under the

REDD+ Investment and Charity, with a Fund. The Trafalgar facility is expected to generate approximately 6,000 megawatt-hours of electricity annually, avoid the combustion of more than 1.3 million litres of diesel, and reduce between 4,000 and 5,000 tonnes of carbon emissions each year. It is also projected to save the country over \$300 million annually in fuel costs.

Collectively, the Prospect and Trafalgar solar farms form part of a rapidly expanding network of renewable energy installations across Guyana, including facilities at Wakenaam, O n d e r n e e m i n g

Overall, the government intends to deliver more than 500 megawatts of new generation capacity, with renewable energy serving as a central pillar of Guyana's sustainable development strategy.



Region Five power up with new solar farm

GPL'S 30+ RAPID-RESPONSE TEAMS ON CONSTANT STANDBY FOR GRID EMERGENCIES

More than 30 specialised emergency response teams are on constant standby across the country, ensuring that Guyana Power and Light Inc. (GPL) can react immediately to any threat to the national grid. Their readiness was put to the test recently as two major outages in Demerara and Berbice highlighted the dangers posed by activities near high-voltage transmission lines.

The Ministry of Public Utilities and Aviation said the swift interventions by these rapid-response teams prevented prolonged disruptions and reduced the risks associated with electrical faults on

critical infrastructure.

The first deployment came on December 9, at approximately 10:06 p.m., when smoke and heavy arching were detected at the Kingston Substation's 69kV transformer. GPL's standby technicians quickly mobilised, discovered a damaged cable, isolated the fault, and safely restored full power by 12:30 a.m. on December 10.

Less than 12 hours later, another emergency team was activated after the 69kV line between Edinburgh and Vreed-en-Hoop tripped while carrying roughly 15 megawatts of power. The outage, triggered by heavy machinery

operating too close to the transmission line, caused a cascading effect across the grid. Thanks to GPL's coordinated standby units, electricity was restored to some communities within 30 minutes and fully stabilised in about 90 minutes.

Officials emphasised that, while Guyana's baseload generation comfortably meets national demand, the most common threats to reliable electricity come from external interference—especially construction and heavy-duty equipment near transmission corridors. These incidents not only disrupt service but pose life-threatening dangers



GPL and Ministry respond to outages, urge caution near power lines

to operators and the public.

The Ministry is urging contractors, equipment operators, and residents to exercise heightened

caution around GPL's infrastructure. With the more than 30 rapid-response teams positioned nationwide, GPL says it remains fully prepared to respond

to any grid emergency, but preventing avoidable contact with transmission lines remains essential to public safety and system stability.

CONNECTING WITH THE DIASPORA

Residents of Lethem and neighbouring hinterland communities are celebrating new beginnings as the Government's housing programmes continue to transform lives.

For 32-year-old Jennifer Douglas of Sand Creek, a mother of five caring for a child with a disability, receiving the keys to her new home was life-changing. **"I was struggling in my house before,"** she said. **"Mostly it's for my disabled little daughter... I'm happy the government established this programme to support families like ours."**

During a recent outreach, Minister of Housing, Collin Croal, and Minister within the Ministry, Vanessa Benn, handed over keys to Jennifer and 29 other families. The 500-square-foot flat houses, built on communal land with locally sourced materials and labour, represent a \$105 million investment, providing safe and modern living spaces. Among the beneficiaries was 89-year-old Manoel Jacobs, a wheelchair user, whose daughter said, **"Now he gets this big house... he's glad to get this."**

In Rupunau, father of ten Flavian Thomas shared similar relief. **"My children are more**

comfortable than before. The house is a big improvement for our family," he said.

The programme supports hundreds of vulnerable families across Regions One, Seven, Eight, and Nine. Minister Croal noted that in Region Nine alone, 120 homes have already been constructed as part of a broader initiative to improve housing, health, education, and infrastructure under President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's administration.

In Lethem, 12 families became homeowners through the Lethem Housing Support Programme. Single mother Sharon Malcolm described the moment as **"one of the happiest of my life... my kids can finally call this their home."** Another beneficiary, Anureiya Leonce, praised her land allocation, noting it provides a permanent home and safe space for her adopted daughter.

The outreach also featured the distribution of building-material vouchers under the Steel and Cement Housing Subsidy Programme, helping more residents access secure homes. Minister Croal confirmed that over 1,000 house lots have been allocated in Region Nine, with pending applications set to be cleared by the end of 2025.



LATE COACH DANIELS REMEMBERED FOR DEDICATION TO BASKETBALL AND YOUNG ATHLETES



President Ali at the Ex-Guyana Defence Force Association of New York

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali visited the Ex-Guyana Defence Force Association of New York, where he paid tribute to former national basketball coach, the late Bernard Daniels, recognising his lasting contribution to the development of basketball in Guyana.

Describing Coach Daniels as **"a true pioneer who led with his heart, strength and wisdom,"** President Ali said it was an honour to

acknowledge a man whose life was dedicated to sport, mentorship and national pride. He noted that Coach Daniels played a pivotal role in shaping generations of young athletes, instilling discipline, confidence and a love for the game.

The highlighted President Coach Daniels's achievements on the regional stage, recalling Guyana's bronze medal finish at the 2000 CARICOM Basketball Championships in



President Ali at the Ex-Guyana Defence Force Association of New York

Barbados under his guidance. He also pointed to Daniels's success with women's basketball, having coached the Guyana Select Senior female team to victory at the 12th Gillian Brazier Basketball Championship in Antigua in 2012.

President Ali said Coach Daniels's legacy extends beyond trophies and titles, living on through the many players he mentored and the impact he made on Guyanese sport both at home and in the diaspora.



President Ali at the Ex-Guyana Defence Force Association of New York



May the season bring comfort, warmth,
and meaningful moments with the people
who matter most.



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AIR TRANSAT LAUNCHES CANADA-GUYANA SERVICE



Air Transat begins direct flights from Canada

The arrival of Air Transat's first flight from Canada has strengthened Guyana's international connections, offering new opportunities for tourism, commerce, and economic development. The inaugural flight touched down at Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) on December 16, 2025, marking a key milestone in the country's growing aviation and tourism sectors.

The twice-weekly service, operating until May 29, 2026, is flown on Air Transat's Airbus A321LR, a next-generation aircraft designed for long-haul efficiency and passenger comfort. The new route will make travel between Canada and Guyana smoother for families, business travellers, and tourists eager to explore the country's rich culture

and natural beauty. Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar, said the launch aligns with the Government's vision to expand international air connectivity and support economic growth. **"Reliable and modern air links are essential for trade, tourism, and investment,"** Minister Indar noted. **"The arrival of a reputable carrier like Air Transat demonstrates confidence in Guyana's aviation standards and regulatory framework."**

CJIA Chairman, Sanjeev Datadin, added that the new route reflects the airport's

long-term strategy to increase capacity, strengthen airline partnerships, and ensure the facility is prepared to meet future demand while maintaining international standards. Air Transat's Chief Revenue Officer, Sebastian Ponce, highlighted the importance of the route for connecting Canada's vibrant Guyanese community with their homeland. **"This inaugural flight marks the beginning of stronger ties, new opportunities, and memorable journeys...all with the comfort and care that define Air Transat,"** Ponce said.



Air Transat begins direct flights from Canada



Air Transat begins direct flights from Canada

GUYANA NAMED ONE OF BLOOMBERG'S TOP DESTINATIONS TO WATCH IN 2026

Destination Guyana has earned international recognition, being featured in Bloomberg's "Where to Go in 2026" travel guide, a curated list of 25 global destinations poised for remarkable visitor appeal in the year ahead.

The full guide can be viewed at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/best-places-to-travel-2026-guide/?embedded-checkout=true#guyana>.

Bloomberg highlights Guyana's growing allure for international travellers looking for off-the-beaten-path experiences rooted in culture, biodiversity, and natural wonders. The feature underscores that while the discovery of offshore oil reserves in 2015 propelled the country's economic transformation, a new chapter in ecotourism is now emerging alongside

this growth. According to the guide, Georgetown is rapidly evolving with new hotel developments and infrastructure improvements that are opening the destination to more visitors. New flights from the US, Europe, and Canada, as well as a modern airport terminal under construction, are helping to connect Guyana with the world.

Yet it is Guyana's

untouched interior, from the sprawling Rupununi savannahs to ancient rainforest landscapes, that is capturing the imagination of global travellers. The guide points to wildlife-rich ecosystems, Indigenous-owned eco-lodges, and iconic natural sites like Kaieteur Falls as part of the country's unique tourism offerings.

Tourism stakeholders see the Bloomberg recognition

as a boost for efforts to position Guyana as a premier nature-based and cultural travel destination. With community-led experiences, sustainable

lodges, and unparalleled biodiversity, the country is poised to transform from a rising trailblazer into a must-visit destination in 2026 and beyond.



The Burro-Burro River in Guyana (Bloomberg image)

CHRISTMAS TRAVEL MADE EASIER WITH LAUNCH OF MODERN FERRY

Thousands of farmers, traders, and passengers from Regions Two and Three can now enjoy faster, safer, and more comfortable travel this festive season with the commissioning of the MV Konawaruk 1899 on the Parika-Supenaam route.

The US\$5 million vessel was officially launched on Friday evening, December 20, 2025, with over one hundred passengers boarding for its maiden voyage to Supenaam. Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, accompanied by government ministers, commissioned the



Scene from the commissioning of the vessel

ferry at the Parika Stelling, highlighting its role in boosting connectivity and trade between the two regions. Named after an Amerindian area in Region Eight, the MV Konawaruk 1899 is Guyana's first modern double-ended ferry, capable of carrying more than

300 passengers and 81 vehicles. Prime Minister Phillips noted that the ferry ensures farmers' produce reaches markets fresh, while businesses can move at **"the speed of opportunity, not outdated schedules."**

The new vessel is part of

the government's national transportation master plan, with a strong focus on river transport as a driver of regional development. Plans are underway to operationalise additional cargo boats for the Pomeroon, Berbice, and North West regions, ensuring no community is left off the map of progress. The Parika Ferry Stelling is also set for upgrades to become a hub for regional and international trade.

Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill said the ferry, built in Greece, was acquired at a competitive price and

doubles the capacity of the existing MV Kanawan and MV Sabanto ferries. He also revealed that a similar vessel will soon serve Region One (Barima-Waini). To meet high demand during the Christmas season,

the government transport website for schedule updates. Other ferries, including the MV Malali and MV Makouria, will continue serving the islands of Wakenaam and Leguan. Looking ahead,



Scene from the commissioning of the vessel

major ferry routes will now operate twice daily, reducing congestion and long waits for passengers and traders. Commuters are encouraged to check

the government plans to introduce Wi-Fi on all vessels via Starlink or WifiGY, further improving passenger comfort.

‘Guyana’s Central Bank will no longer be passive’ – President Ali

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali has signalled a decisive shift in the posture of the Bank of Guyana, outlining plans to modernise the institution and sharpen its role in safeguarding macroeconomic stability through proactive, data-led policymaking.

In a recent address, the Head of State said the government intends to transform the Central Bank into a forward-looking institution capable of supporting sustainable growth, protecting purchasing power, and strengthening confidence across the economy.

“Over the next five years, our government will also establish a modern, more efficient Bank of Guyana that is proactive, data-driven, and fit for the digital age. Its foremost mission will be to safeguard stable prices and a resilient exchange rate, ensuring a sustainable cost of living for all Guyanese.”

President Ali emphasised that the enhanced mandate would be underpinned by stronger and more precise monetary policy, reinforcing credibility with investors and the wider private sector.

“We will strengthen monetary-policy tools, deploying the policy interest rate and open-market operations with precision to manage liquidity and inflation expectations, while enhancing forward guidance and expanding statistical capacity to anchor private-sector confidence, innovation, and investment.”

He also pointed to sweeping reforms in payments infrastructure and capital markets as central to improving financial inclusion and unlocking new opportunities for businesses, particularly through a modernised regulatory and securities framework.

“To make financial transactions faster, safer, and more inclusive, we will modernise the payment system and transform money and capital markets by upgrading the securities framework, thereby creating new opportunities for the private sector. The Central Bank will not be passive and will act with urgency, intelligence, and credibility to secure Guyana’s economic future.”

The President noted too that over 600,000 Guyanese are now integrated into the country’s financial system.

“We firmly believe that everyone should have equal access to participate fully in our economy, beginning with the fundamental ability to open a bank account. That is why we drastically simplified the requirement for opening bank accounts.

“These simplified procedures are already in operation. Today,

more Guyanese than ever before are part of the formal banking system. In fact, the number of bank accounts has grown by more than 65,000 since 2020,” President Ali added.

Earlier this year, the President called on Guyanese to ensure they open bank accounts, as the government aims to deliver social cash transfers via the banking system.

Additionally, online banking is operational at four local commercial banks, making the process of creating a bank account much easier, including for those in the hinterland regions.

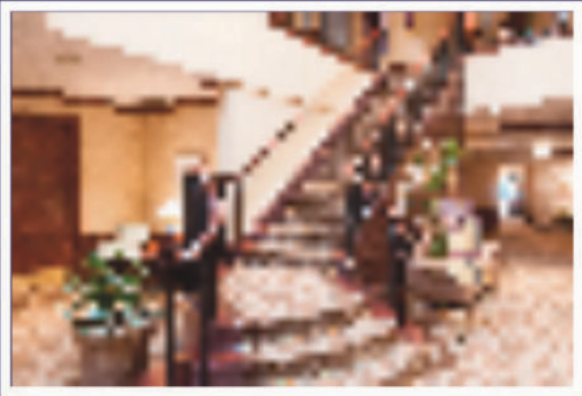
To further modernise the financial system, President Ali announced that a junior stock exchange will be created.



Guyana’s Central Bank is being modernized, says Pres. Ali

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FESTIVE FUN AND SHOPPING AT THE FIRST LADY’S CHRISTMAS MARKET

The Kingston Seawall Esplanade came alive with colour, culture and Christmas cheer as the First Lady’s Christmas Market opened its doors for four festive nights, from Thursday, December 18 to Sunday, December 21.

From 5:00 pm to midnight each evening, families, friends and visitors gathered along the waterfront to enjoy a vibrant shopping and entertainment experience. The market showcased a wide range of locally made products, including crafts, clothing, artwork, food and holiday treats, giving small businesses and vendors a prime opportunity to connect with shoppers during the festive season.

Beyond shopping, the atmosphere was filled with music, lights and the unmistakable spirit of Christmas, turning the esplanade into a lively social space where people could relax, stroll and celebrate together.



SPREADING CHRISTMAS JOY ACROSS GUYANA

Christmas came early for children and residents across Guyana as gifts, games, and festive activities brought joy and laughter to communities nationwide.

Children receive gifts during the annual Toy Distribution Exercise

During the annual Toy Distribution Exercise, Cabinet members and Government representatives visited several communities, handing out toys and hampers to delighted children.



Cookies, crafts, and laughter mark a memorable Christmas celebration

At the Sophia Home, young residents baked cookies, crafted artwork, and enjoyed fun activities with Minister Dr. Vindhya Persaud and the Young Influencers before receiving their early Christmas gifts.



Residents enjoy the Night Shelter’s annual Christmas Social

At the Night Shelter, 107 residents joined Minister Persaud for the annual Christmas Social, enjoying a day of celebration, laughter, and togetherness. The Minister also announced new initiatives to empower residents.



Across all events, the smiles, laughter, and festive spirit captured the essence of a true Guyanese Christmas, one of giving, togetherness, and joy.

CHILDREN EXPERIENCE CULTURE AND CHRISTMAS AT GUYANA-CHINA EVENT



Children celebrate Christmas through Guyana-China friendship

Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd), Mark Phillips joined children for a joyful Christmas celebration hosted by the Guyana/China Friendship Society at the residence of the China Medical Brigade, creating an atmosphere of cultural exchange, learning and holiday cheer. Children from the Save Our Kids Home and Windsor Forest Primary School were treated to an afternoon of festivities that blended the spirit of Christmas with elements of Chinese culture. The event featured cultural performances and hands-on activities,

allowing the children to learn and experience traditional Chinese art. Addressing the gathering, Prime Minister Phillips reflected on the long-standing ties between Guyana and China, noting that the relationship dates back to 1853, when the first Chinese labourers arrived in Guyana. Since then, he said, Chinese Guyanese have played a meaningful role in nation-building and in shaping the country's rich cultural identity. "I'm happy that we are able to bring

our children here today and to let them understand our Guyanese culture, which includes the Chinese culture," the Prime Minister said. "So, as we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate a Guyanese Christmas, which includes Chinese performance and the Chinese culture."

The celebration not only spread Christmas cheer but also reinforced the importance of unity, cultural appreciation and shared heritage among Guyana's next generation.



Children celebrate Christmas through Guyana-China friendship



Children celebrate Christmas through Guyana-China friendship





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Green Pepper 青椒 Reg:\$30.00 case	Broccoli 西蘭花 Reg:\$35.00 case	Head Lettuce 圓生菜 Reg:\$40.00 case	Lemon 黃檸檬 Reg:\$45.00 case	Green Onion 蔥 Reg:\$65.00 case	Australia Orange 澳大利亞橙 Reg:\$50.00 case	Avocados 36s 牛油果 Reg:\$55.00 case
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Mr. Goudas Long Grain Rice 20kg 黃米 Reg:\$29.99 bag	Long Grain White Rice 優質絲苗米 20kg AAA USA-1 Reg:\$29.99 bag	P.R.B Monosodium Glutamate 50Lb 珠江橋牌味精 Reg:\$58.00 bag	ADM All Purpose Flour 面粉 20kg Reg:\$19.99 bag	Capri Vegetable/ Canola Oil 16L 菜油/芥菜籽油 Reg:\$32.99 case	Carnation Evaporated Milk 48x354ml 三花淡奶 Reg:\$90.00 case	
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ECD ROAD EXPANSION REACHES 84% COMPLETION



Ongoing construction on the East Coast Demerara road expansion project

For thousands of East Coast commuters who battle traffic and bottlenecks daily, the long-awaited upgrade is finally taking shape. The massive East Coast Demerara Road Widening and Improvement Project is now 84 per cent

complete, bringing smoother, safer and faster travel within reach. According to the Ministry of Public Works, significant progress has been made along the Railway Embankment corridor between Sheriff Street and the Ogle

Roundabout, where the asphalt surface has now been fully paved. The newly laid roadway is expected to give drivers a smoother and more durable commuting experience after years of navigating uneven surfaces and congestion. With the foundation works completed in this section, the next phase includes road markings, installation of traffic lights and signs, and new lighting for the expanded four-lane carriageway. These finishing touches will prepare the corridor for full use even as construction continues further east. Meanwhile, major reconstruction works

are ongoing on critical bridges at aPlaisance, Success, La Bonne Intention (LBI), Mon Repos and Foulis. The bridge at Foulis is already “**substantially complete**,” with only approach and railing works outstanding. Bridge construction began in November and remains on schedule for completion by January 2026. The project, executed by China Railway First Group Company Limited, involves transforming the Railway Embankment into a four-lane highway from Sheriff Street to Enmore, along with building a brand-new

four-lane road from Enmore to Orange Nassau, Mahaica. It also includes a full reconstruction of the alignment, featuring 42 new bridges and 77 culverts. So far, crews have completed 29 bridges and 70 culverts. Once finished, the upgraded roadway will

dramatically improve connectivity, ease daily congestion, shorten travel times, and support new investments along the East Coast corridor. For many residents who rely on the road every day, the progress brings the promise of a more reliable and less stressful commute.



Ongoing construction on the East Coast Demerara road expansion project

SOESDYKE-LINDEN HIGHWAY UPGRADE CLOSE TO FINISHING LINE



Soesdyke-Linden Highway

The highway linking the coast to Linden is transforming before residents’ eyes. Milling and paving works are 98 per cent finished, and the US\$161 million Soesdyke-Linden

Highway upgrade promises not just a smoother commute, but safer travel and improved economic opportunities. Commuters who rely on the 73-kilometre corridor for work, school,

and trade have faced delays, potholes, and hazardous conditions. Now, with the major construction phases nearly complete, relief is on the horizon. Consultant Tota Kimnauth explained that the core rehabilitation involves two essential processes: milling, which removes the old, worn road surface, and paving, which creates a durable, long-lasting layer capable of handling heavy traffic. “**Full-depth reconstruction has just begun, alongside curb and**

slipper drain works,” he said. This process stabilises the road base to ensure it stands the test of time. Other upgrades include improving the road shoulders and drainage systems, with shoulder works about 70 per cent complete and drainage 60 per cent finished. Special attention is being given to areas with persistent ruts and potholes to prevent future damage. Construction at Linden’s roundabout near Millie’s Hideout is set to begin shortly, including excavation,

layering of asphalt, and installation of geotextiles for long-term durability. Once fully complete, the upgraded highway will dramatically improve travel safety, reduce commuting times, and strengthen

the vital link between the coast and hinterland. For thousands of daily users, the project represents not just a better road, but a boost to business, connectivity, and quality of life along this key artery.



Ongoing road and drainage infrastructure works



The Guyana-China Joe Vieira Park captured in November 2025

Region Three residents will soon have a new destination for sport, recreation, and family fun, as upgrades at the Guyana-China Joe Vieira Recreational Park are nearing completion, with a 2026 opening in sight. Chairman of the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) Board of Directors, Robert Persaud, told the Department of Public Information that the project is “**about 90 per cent completed**” and will offer a modern, community-focused park with amenities for all ages. The park will feature a full-sized professional football field with spectator stands, basketball and tennis courts, and a table tennis area. A dedicated children’s playground is also under construction, giving younger visitors a safe and engaging space to play. Persaud emphasised that the park aims to become a central hub for families on the West Coast and West Bank of Region

GUYANA-CHINA JOE VIEIRA PARK TO BECOME A CENTRAL HUB FOR REGION THREE

Three. “**The project is about creating a space where everyone can enjoy recreational activities safely, while also encouraging healthier lifestyles,**” Persaud said. Funded through a \$12 million grant from the Government of China and coordinated by the PAC, the park is part of a broader plan to upgrade

major recreational facilities across Georgetown, including the National Park and Botanical Gardens, in line with the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030. Deputy Commissioner Parmanand Persaud revealed that additional improvements are planned for next year, including a modern

concession area offering healthy snacks and beverages, a new tennis court, and a football field built to international standards. Fitzroy Sealey, also a deputy commissioner, highlighted efforts to ensure nearby communities benefit directly from the park, with initiatives targeting residents most in need. To increase public

engagement, the PAC plans to launch a new podcast in 2026, providing a window into the commission’s work and the opportunities the park will offer. “**Next year, the park will not only be a place for sports and recreation, but also a hub for community connection, learning, and healthy living,**” Persaud added. “**We encourage everyone to stay involved and support this transformative project.**” With the park’s completion just months away, families, athletes, and residents of Region Three can look forward to a safe, modern, and welcoming space to enjoy together.



The Guyana-China Joe Vieira Park captured in November 2025



Scene from the funeral of the veteran broadcaster

Guyana is mourning the loss of Ronald “Ron” Robinson, the celebrated broadcaster, actor, director, and mentor, who passed away at the age of 79 after health complications including heart issues, diabetes,

GUYANA BIDS FAREWELL TO RON ROBINSON, A VOICE THAT INSPIRED GENERATIONS

and hypertension. He was laid to rest with family, friends, and colleagues paying tribute to a man whose voice and vision shaped the nation’s cultural landscape.

Robinson’s career spanned nearly six decades, beginning on August 1, 1965, at the British Guiana Broadcasting Service. Over the years, he became a household name through radio, television, and theatre. His programmes, including *The Link Show*, *No Big Thing*, *Merundoi*,

and *Stretched Out Magazine*, entertained and inspired, blending wit, intelligence, and insight while reflecting Guyanese society.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, speaking at Robinson’s funeral, described him as more than a broadcaster. **“Ron Robinson’s voice helped to shape our cultural memory,”** he said. **“Perhaps the most fitting tribute we can now offer is to renew and revitalise the local performing arts, especially theatre,**

and to ensure that what he sustained does not fail.”

Beyond broadcasting, Robinson nurtured local talent and dedicated himself to community service, including roles in the Rotary Club of Georgetown Central, the Scout Association of Guyana, and the Volunteer Youth Corps. His contributions earned him the Golden Arrow of Achievement in 1990 and, earlier this year, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Office of the Prime Minister.



Scene from the funeral of the veteran broadcaster

Colleagues and listeners remember him as a true musical connoisseur, whose love for harmonica-led tunes and careful curation of music taught the nation to listen deeply. His

productions, especially during the Christmas season, became woven into Guyanese traditions, leaving an indelible mark on generations.

BHARRAT JAGDEO DEMERARA RIVER BRIDGE SAFE, REMEDIAL WORKS PLANNED FOR PAVEMENT

Motorists are assured that the Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara River Bridge is safe, with minor asphalt irregularities soon to be corrected. The Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) confirmed that continuous monitoring of the bridge’s foundations

has shown no abnormal settlement, and the structure remains fully stable for public use.

Technical investigations revealed that the pavement bumps are limited to the surface layer and do not affect the bridge’s

structural integrity or load-bearing capacity. The slight undulation near the east approach abutment is due to the transition between the road embankment fill and the concrete structure, where differences in material properties have

caused minor surface variations.

The contractor has been instructed to carry out remedial works to restore a smooth and comfortable driving surface. MoPW thanked the public for their vigilance and assured

that ongoing monitoring and maintenance will continue to uphold the highest standards of safety and comfort for all bridge users.



Minister Edghill and technical team inspecting the bridge

NEW TRUCK PARKING FACILITY IN GROVE TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY AND EASE CONGESTION

As Guyana’s construction sector grows, so too does the number of large trucks navigating the country’s roads. To address rising safety concerns and ease traffic congestion, the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA) is developing a dedicated truck stop and parking facility in the industrial area of Grove, East Bank Demerara.

Chief Executive Officer Dr. Martin Pertab, accompanied by a team of engineers, recently visited the site

to assess progress and engage with contractors. He explained that the facility is strategically located within the industrial zone to ensure nearby residential communities are not affected by heavy-duty vehicle operations. **“This is part of an industrial area, so any heavy-duty services or vehicles operating here will not impact nearby residents,”** Dr. Pertab noted.

The truck stop is designed to be more

than just a parking area; it will serve as a hub offering maintenance and support services for heavy-duty equipment, creating a safer and more organised environment for drivers and the public alike.

Addressing contractors, Dr. Pertab stressed the importance of timely and efficient project completion, highlighting that performance on current projects will influence eligibility for future contracts. He also confirmed plans are

underway for similar facilities in other parts of the country.

During a recent Cabinet Outreach in Region Six, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that two 30-acre sites at Palmyra and Number 76 Village will also be developed for trucks and heavy-duty equipment. The President said these initiatives are expected to improve safety, reduce congestion, and support smoother traffic flow across key economic areas.



Work ongoing on the truck stop at Grove

The Grove truck facility represents a practical step toward safer roads, better working conditions for

drivers, and a more efficient construction sector, benefiting both communities and the economy.

NEW GUYANESE TRANSPORT SERVICE HITS THE ROADS



Prime Minister Phillips supports homegrown transport initiative

Guyanese commuters now have a new way to get around as Scoop Ride Inc., a homegrown transportation service, has been officially launched, promising modern, convenient, and reliable travel options for residents.

The launch was attended by Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips, who highlighted how the Government’s investments in

infrastructure have created opportunities for local businesses to thrive.

“With more roads and better connections throughout the country, there is a growing demand for services that meet the needs of our people,” Prime Minister Phillips said.

Scoop Ride allows customers to book rides online, select their

preferred vehicle, and track their driver in real time, giving commuters control and transparency that many say has been long overdue.

The Prime Minister lauded the company’s dedication to excellence and noted that supporting local enterprises is central to creating more jobs and improving services for Guyanese.

Scoop Ride’s launch is part of a broader

vision to encourage local entrepreneurship while leveraging Guyana’s expanding infrastructure network. With roads reaching more communities than ever before, businesses like Scoop Ride are stepping up to meet the country’s evolving needs and setting a standard for homegrown innovation in the transportation sector.

TEACHERS SET TO GAIN LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH NEW EDUCATION ACADEMY



The launch of the National Education Leadership Academy

A new initiative aimed at strengthening the leadership skills of teachers across Guyana was officially launched with the National Education Leadership Academy. The programme, created through a partnership with UNESCO, the Inter-

American Development Bank (IDB), and supported by a US\$5 million grant from the Global Partnership for Education, is designed to equip educators with the tools to mentor students and lead confidently in their schools.

The launch at the

Pegasus Hotel brought together teachers, education officials, and partners, highlighting the Academy's role in addressing pressing concerns in schools, including bullying and unequal access to opportunities. Education Minister Sonia Parag emphasised that leadership in schools is critical to bridging gaps and fostering equitable learning for every child.

"We are at a defining moment in Guyana's development," Minister Parag said. **"Leadership is the bridge between our national aspirations**

and the reality of teaching and learning, and this Academy is designed to strengthen that bridge."

The first cohort of 100 teachers will undergo 18 months of comprehensive training, combining online and in-person sessions. Participants will learn skills that enhance their ability to lead in the classroom, support students' personal growth, and create safe, inclusive school environments.

IDB Country Representative Lorena Solorzano-Salazar noted that the programme aims



The launch of the National Education Leadership Academy

to build **"leadership ecosystems"** that ensure every child, in every region, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

Upon completion, teachers will receive a certificate recognising their new skills and

leadership abilities. Minister Parag said the initiative not only empowers educators but also strengthens the foundation for lifelong learning and equitable education opportunities across Guyana.

ENTERTAINERS ENGAGED EARLY FOR GUYANA'S 60TH INDEPENDENCE



Promoters, performers share ideas as 2026 Independence plans take shape

Entertainers, cultural creatives, and event promoters across Guyana have begun shaping the blueprint for the country's 60th Independence anniversary celebrations, following a special consultation led

by Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues.

The session marked one of the earliest and most inclusive engagements as Guyana prepares for a milestone year of national pride in 2026.

The consultation, part of President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's wider vision for a vibrant, culturally rich anniversary, brought together DJs, promoters, musicians, producers, and other cultural workers who help power Guyana's entertainment

landscape.

Minister Rodrigues told participants that the government wants the entertainment sector not at the sidelines, but at the heart of the celebrations. She assured them that their creativity and industry experience are essential to delivering high-quality events that reflect the spirit of a modern, diverse Guyana.

She also encouraged the sector to work collectively, stay aligned with national goals, and ensure that the events planned uplift and unify. Transparency,

coordination, and teamwork, she added, will be key to presenting Guyana's cultural identity to the world.

For many stakeholders, the opportunity to be included at such an early stage was both meaningful and motivating. Several attendees expressed appreciation for the government's willingness to hear their ideas, not just about entertainment, but about branding Guyana internationally during its 60th anniversary year.



Promoters, performers share ideas as 2026 Independence plans take shape



Promoters, performers share ideas as 2026 Independence plans take shape



Promoters, performers share ideas as 2026 Independence plans take shape



VP Jagdeo urging the NDC councillors to map vacant land for safer, vibrant communities

Empty lots across communities in Guyana could soon be transformed into playgrounds, local markets, and parking spaces under a government initiative aimed at making public spaces more functional and accessible.

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo made the call during a Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development meeting, which brought together chairpersons, vice

councillors, overseers, and other key NDC personnel to discuss community development strategies and improving service delivery.

Dr. Jagdeo urged officials to identify all available public reserves by January 15, stressing that the initiative is intended for community development, not private business use. **"Between now and January 15, I want you to identify all the free land that you have, reserves...not**

VACANT LAND TO BECOME PLAYGROUNDS, MARKETS, AND PARKING FACILITIES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

to give businessmen land, because often they start squatting," he said.

Once mapped, each site will be developed to include recreational areas, commercial zones, and additional parking facilities. The initiative aims to support small businesses such as taxi drivers, barbershops, and car wash operators, while creating safe, welcoming spaces for families, children, and the elderly. **"This is about improving lives in the community,"** Dr. Jagdeo said. **"Playgrounds, parks, and local markets will give families places to gather, children to play safely, and residents spaces to relax and socialise."**

The project forms part of a broader vision for modern, secure, and well-planned communities. Plans are already underway to improve drainage systems, install 4,000 security cameras, and place 90,000 streetlights nationwide to enhance safety and accessibility.

Dr. Jagdeo also reminded NDC officials to prioritise proper garbage collection, effective use of equipment, and professional conduct while serving their communities, reiterating the PPP's commitment to fulfilling all promises in the election manifesto.

Minister Manickchand highlighted the importance of collaboration with residents to address

community concerns and ensure development aligns with local needs. The discussions also focused on upgrading infrastructure, improving drainage and irrigation systems, enhancing waste management, and strengthening financial

and budget planning.

The East Coast engagement is part of a nationwide series of meetings to evaluate the performance of local democratic organs, identify challenges, and map strategic priorities for 2026 and beyond.



VP Jagdeo and Minister Manickchand meeting with the NDC officials

GEORGETOWN'S FLOOD RELIEF EFFORTS GAIN MOMENTUM



Major drainage upgrades bring relief to the capital

Residents and businesses in Georgetown can look forward to fewer waterlogged streets as extensive desilting works get underway along key drainage channels in the capital. The National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA), under the Ministry of Agriculture, launched the operation, beginning at the Commerce Street outfall channel and Avenue of the Republic. For years, silt and debris have clogged these vital waterways, contributing to flooding during heavy rains and high tides. The desilting project aims to remove these blockages,

allowing water to flow freely and reducing the risk of sudden flooding. NDIA teams are also excavating beneath the bridge along the South Road drainage channel, a known bottleneck where water often pools. Clearing this section is expected to dramatically improve drainage in one of the city's busiest corridors, helping commuters and local businesses alike. Over the coming weeks, similar work will extend to other channels, including Cowan Street, Church Street, Princes Street, Sussex Street, La Penitence, South Ruimveldt, North Ruimveldt, and Rome. Each cleared channel

brings relief not only to residents, but also to vendors, schoolchildren, and daily commuters who have long contended with overflowing drains. These efforts are part of a broader Georgetown Restoration Plan, President Ali's initiative to revive the capital as the 'Garden City of the Caribbean.' Beyond infrastructure upgrades, the plan includes citywide cleanups and campaigns to encourage citizens to take care of their surroundings, ensuring the benefits of the desilting work last for years to come.



Major drainage upgrades bring relief to the capital



Major drainage upgrades bring relief to the capital

DEN AMSTEL FARMERS SEE HOPE FOR BETTER HARVESTS



The meeting with the farmers

Farmers in Den Amstel and surrounding communities in Region Three are set to benefit from long-awaited drainage works, support that many say could finally bring relief after years of flooding, crop losses, and stalled expansion.

The initiative is part of the government's broader plan to boost agricultural productivity and improve livelihoods across Region Three. During a weekend community outreach, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, told residents that machinery will be deployed shortly to clean and clear clogged canals throughout the area. "Wherever there is an existing canal, we will clear it," the Minister assured. "Our goal is to make Guyana the premier food-producing hub of the region." For farmers who depend on the land, this

intervention represents hope for stronger harvests and more stable incomes, especially during the rainy season, when blocked waterways have often left fields underwater and crops destroyed. The Minister also announced additional support for farmers looking to expand their operations. Once land ownership is verified, the government will clear up to five acres per farmer. "We will work with the GLSC to examine the lands here," he said. "Once ownership is established, we will clear them so you can plant and expand."

Cattle farmers were encouraged to organise into groups so they can access structured assistance for pasture development, similar to successful programmes already implemented in Region Five. He also reminded rice farmers of the government's ongoing support through subsidies and vital inputs. These include the \$300 per bag paddy support, provided last crop and again this crop, as well as fertiliser, seed paddy, and additional assistance to reduce production costs. Investments in all-weather farm roads, he added, are helping



The meeting with the farmers



The meeting with the farmers

farmers reach markets more reliably. Contrasting this progress with the challenges farmers faced before 2020, he noted widespread neglect of drainage systems and limited institutional support. Today, he said, the administration remains committed to building a stronger, more diversified agricultural base through strategic investment and partnerships with farmers.

FURTHER ENHANCEMENTS AT MEADOW BANK WHARF TO BOOST FISHERFOLK SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY



Meadow Bank Wharf to get another round of upgrades

Early mornings at Meadow Bank Wharf are set to become brighter and smoother, as new plans for sheds, lighting, and upgraded facilities promise much-needed relief for the hardworking fisherfolk and vendors who rely on the dock. During a recent walkabout, Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha outlined the next phase of improvements. These include additional sheds to expand workspace,

enhanced lighting for safer operations, and new water connections to help workers clean equipment quickly, especially during busy hours. The ministry also plans to acquire a dredge to maintain the channel, ensuring vessels can move safely. Security at the wharf's entrance has already been strengthened under instructions from President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, providing a safer environment for both workers and shoppers. Addressing concerns about vendors' comfort and pricing, Minister

Mustapha assured that older sheds will be upgraded. He also announced that fisherfolk will soon be allowed to sell their catch directly to consumers, giving them more control over sales and helping to stabilise prices. Over the past two years, the government has invested significantly in Meadow Bank Wharf, constructing a new wharf, structured sheds, and an organised layout to replace what was previously described as a "free-for-all" environment. Minister Mustapha encouraged stakeholders to continue working



Minister Mustapha engaging a fisherfolk at the wharf

closely with the ministry will directly benefit hundreds of workers while ensuring safer and more efficient daily operations. emphasising that these ongoing enhancements

NEW WAVE OF SKILLED TALENT EMERGES FROM GUYANA LEARNING INSTITUTE



Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning Keoma Griffith handing over a certificate to a graduate

The Guyana Learning Institute has once again proven to be a launchpad for success as 71 graduates were celebrated at



Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning Keoma Griffith handing over a certificate to a graduate

the Umana Yana in Kingston, Georgetown. With diplomas in fields ranging from sociology and social work to management

and occupational safety and health, these young professionals are now equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the nation. Christopher Rambarran, who completed the Organisational Management programme, described the training as eye-opening. **“It has been a very enlightening programme for me,”** he said, expressing gratitude to the Board of Industrial Training for its support. Psychology graduate Vibhuti Panchu

called the six-month course challenging, but rewarding. **“The lecturers were excellent, guiding us through each topic and making complex concepts easy to understand,”** she shared. Rebekah Brusch, who earned a diploma in occupational safety and health, said the experience exceeded her expectations. **“I learned so much that I didn’t know before. It was a wonderful opportunity,”** she said, her enthusiasm evident. Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning,

Keoma Griffith, congratulated the graduates, praising their resilience, dedication, and readiness to support Guyana’s developing economy. **“These are precisely the qualities our labour force requires,”** he said, urging them to carry their skills forward and make a tangible impact in their fields. Since its establishment in 2016, the Guyana Learning Institute has positively impacted over 2,000 students across Regions Three, Four, Five, Six, and Ten. All programmes are accredited by the

National Accreditation Council (NAC) and designed to provide not only technical knowledge but also critical life skills, leadership, and teamwork capabilities, preparing graduates to excel in both their professional and personal lives. With this latest graduating class, the institute continues to play a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation of skilled Guyanese, ready to contribute to the nation’s growth and development.

REGION SEVEN BOOSTED BY 574 NEWLY TRAINED WORKERS



Some of the graduates of the Region Seven BIT programme

Region Seven’s workforce has received a major lift, with 574 residents completing skills training through the Board of Industrial Training (BIT) between 2020 and 2025, an achievement that is already changing lives and strengthening

the region’s economic future. The initiative, supported by more than \$87 million in government investment, has opened doors for both young people and adults seeking a fresh start. Of the graduates, 312 were men and 262

were women, reflecting strong participation across communities. At the BIT Class of 2025 Graduation Ceremony held at the Bartica Community Centre, Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith, said the numbers tell a powerful story of personal and regional transformation. **“Behind each number is a family, a future, and a Guyanese dream,”** he told the graduates, many of whom were the first in their households to receive formal vocational certification. This year alone,

105 residents earned qualifications in six key occupational areas delivered in partnership with G-Mining Ventures Guyana. Training included heavy-duty equipment operations, commercial food preparation, hospitality, welding and fabrication, electrical installation and heavy-duty mechanics. Minister Griffith announced that G-Mining Ventures has committed to hiring as many graduates as possible—an opportunity that brought visible excitement to the room. **“This partnership reflects confidence in our government’s**

leadership and, more importantly, confidence in the young people of Region Seven,” he said. BIT’s reach has extended deep into the Upper Mazaruni, with training brought directly to communities such as Kamarang, Paruima, Waramadong, Jawalla, Kako and Kwebanna. Residents there benefitted from programmes in small engine repairs, tractor operations, garment construction and building construction. As the newest cohort steps into the workforce, Minister Griffith



Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith encouraged them to see the moment as a beginning, not an end. **“Stay connected, stay empowered, and go forward confidently to build the Guyana you want to live in,”** he urged.

“THIS COURSE WILL HELP ME SERVE BETTER” - POLICE SERGEANT AFTER HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING



Jamaal Thornhill graduated from the International Human Rights Law Certificate Course

Jamaal Thornhill, a sergeant with the Guyana Police Force (GPF), said he is now better equipped to serve the public with respect, dignity, and fairness following his completion of the International Human Rights Law Certificate Course. Thornhill was

among 280 participants who graduated from the programme at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre in Liliendaal. Reflecting on the experience, he told the Department of Public Information (DPI), **“The programme is impactful. I have learnt a lot; there are**

many new treaties and topics on human rights that will help me in my work as a law enforcement officer. This course will help me serve better.” He also expressed gratitude to the Government of Guyana for making the training accessible, noting that it strengthens accountability within the force and promotes modern, people-centred policing practices. **“The Government is doing a really good job in helping the Guyanese people access this course and understand their rights,”** he added. The course, now

in its second year, drew unprecedented interest, receiving 1,000 applications and training participants from law enforcement, public service, civil society, the private sector, and several hinterland regions. Jamaican officers also participated. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira described the programme as a highly sought-after initiative, entirely designed and delivered by Guyanese experts. Sessions covered constitutional rights, international conventions, and emerging global issues including climate change



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira handing over a certificate to one of the graduates

and artificial intelligence. **“The demand shows that people want to understand their rights and responsibilities. A more informed society is a more respectful, dignified, and fair society,”** Minister Teixeira said.

For Sergeant Thornhill, the training is already shaping the way he approaches his duties, ensuring that every citizen he interacts with is treated fairly and their rights respected.



Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Sarah Browne-Shadeek

Plans for a new, modern hostel in Georgetown promise to provide comfort and support to over 1,200 Amerindians who travel to the capital each year for medical treatment and other essential services. The architectural design is being finalised, and resources are expected to be allocated in the 2026 National Budget to advance construction.

Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Sarah Browne-Shadeek, reaffirmed the government's commitment to the project, dismissing recent criticisms from US-indicated businessman Azruddin Mohamed as politically motivated. **"President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali committed to establishing a modern facility five months ago, and we are moving forward,"** she said.

The ministry has worked closely with the Central Housing and Planning Authority to finalise and refine the design. Land for the new

OVER 1,200 RESIDENTS YEARLY TO BENEFIT FROM NEW AMERINDIAN HOSTEL

hostel has already been identified, and budget proposals, including construction funding, have been submitted to the Ministry of Finance.

Until the new facility is built, the existing hostel on Princes Street continues to serve residents, many of whom arrive sick or in need of urgent care. **"On any given day, it's filled to capacity. Oftentimes, we don't want to turn anyone back because when you turn them back, they have nowhere to go,"** Minister Browne-Shadeek said. The

ageing facility, built in 1972, requires ongoing maintenance, including repairs to broken fixtures, worn furniture, and soiled mattresses.

The hostel does more than provide accommodation. When residents are ready to return home, staff help arrange flights or provide travel funds depending on the location, ensuring safe journeys for those coming from the 10 administrative regions of Guyana.

Minister Browne-Shadeek stressed that constructive criticism is welcome,



The Amerindian Hostel located on Princess Street

but confrontational or disruptive behaviour diverts attention from the residents' needs. **"While that behaviour is happening out there, we have persons in this facility who are sick,"** she noted.

The new hostel promises a modern, safe, and dignified

environment for Amerindians visiting Georgetown, reflecting the government's commitment to supporting Indigenous communities and ensuring that thousands of residents continue to receive care, comfort, and assistance each year.

KUMAKA DISTRICT HOSPITAL GETS STATE-OF-THE-ART DIGITAL X-RAY SYSTEM



Kumaka Hospital introduces cutting-edge digital x-ray technology

Residents of Region One now have access to advanced diagnostic services following the commissioning of a \$60 million GE digital X-ray system at the Kumaka District Hospital. The upgrade, which replaces decades-old film-based equipment, is part of the

government's ongoing efforts to modernise healthcare infrastructure and bring world-class medical services to hinterland communities.

During the commissioning, Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony highlighted the significance of the investment, noting that the outdated X-ray systems, some over 25 years old, often limited diagnostic accuracy and required patients to travel long distances for imaging. **"For many years, we struggled with old X-ray equipment,"** Dr Anthony said. **"With this new system, patients no longer need to leave the**

sub-region for high-quality imaging."

The new GE digital X-ray unit is among the most advanced in the country, installed alongside specialised electrical wiring, voltage stabilisers, and backup power systems to ensure continuous operation even during outages. Staff are receiving comprehensive training to operate and manage the system efficiently, ensuring residents benefit from accurate and timely diagnoses.

Dr Anthony also revealed plans to introduce a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS), allowing images to be digitally shared with

specialist radiologists in Georgetown within minutes, further improving patient care. Additionally, the Ministry is piloting artificial intelligence (AI) for automated X-ray interpretation, with the potential to expand this technology across the hinterland.

Regional Vice Chairman Paul Pierre praised the Ministry for its commitment to enhancing healthcare delivery in remote areas. **"The number of health facilities being upgraded and built in our most remote communities tells a powerful story,"** he said. **"We continue to see meaningful**

development, and the government is serious about making healthcare accessible to all in Region One."

Toshao Rawle Hendricks of Santa Rosa Village echoed these sentiments, expressing gratitude on behalf of the Moruca Sub-District and looking forward to the 2027 opening of the Moruca Regional Hospital.

With these

enhancements, Kumaka District Hospital now offers residents advanced diagnostic services, ensuring timely, high-quality healthcare without leaving the region, a milestone that reflects the government's commitment to equitable healthcare for all Guyanese.



Kumaka Hospital introduces cutting-edge digital x-ray technology

50 TECHNICIANS GRADUATE - TO SUPPORT REGIONAL HOSPITALS



New cohort of health technicians graduate

50 technicians graduate - to support regional hospitals

Twenty medical laboratory technicians and 30 X-ray specialists have graduated, bringing much-needed expertise to Guyana's regional hospitals. These graduates will play a crucial role in improving diagnostics

and patient care across the country.

The Ministry of Health's Health Sciences Education Clinical and Technician Training Programme, which began in February, provided participants with both theoretical and hands-on practical training. Graduates hail from nine regions,

ensuring that hospitals nationwide will benefit from their skills.

At a ceremony held at the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre in Georgetown, Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony congratulated the new technicians and encouraged them to see this milestone as the first step in a lifelong journey of learning and service.

"This is not the end of your journey; this is just the beginning," Dr Anthony told the graduates. **"Continue striving for excellence, work hard, and aim to be the best. Your efforts will have a real impact on people's lives."**

The graduates will

be deployed across the public health sector, including facilities such as the National Blood Transfusion Service, Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, West Demerara Regional Hospital, De Kinderen Hospital, Leonora Cottage Hospital, Diamond Regional Hospital, Eureka Medical Laboratory, and Woodlands Hospital.

Dr Anthony highlighted how the Ministry of Health has invested heavily in modernising services, including a full transition from analogue to digital X-ray systems. He noted that these new technicians have trained on state-of-the-art equipment, giving

them the skills needed to deliver accurate, timely diagnoses and improve patient outcomes.

The minister also stressed that this programme is part of a broader effort to build a strong healthcare workforce across Guyana. He

encouraged graduates to consider advancing into specialised roles in laboratory science and medical imaging, reinforcing the idea that their careers can grow alongside the country's health sector.



New cohort of health technicians graduate

NEW EQUIPMENT EMPOWERS HINTERLAND CLINICS TO SAVE LIVES



Canadian High Commissioner, Sébastien Sigouin handing the equipment over to Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony

In Regions One, Seven, Eight, and Nine, the sound of a newborn’s first cry will soon carry extra reassurance. Modern, lifesaving medical equipment worth \$27.5 million (CAD\$183,000) is now supporting maternal and childcare, giving families hope and security like never before.

The Ministry of Health officially received the equipment under the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Project, funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented in partnership with McMaster University and the Canadian charity Giving Help to Kids. The handing-over ceremony at the Ministry’s Kingston

Bond, Georgetown, was attended by Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony and key health officials.

The donation includes critical items such as HbA1c analysers, hepatitis B test kits, haemoglobin analysers, portable steam sterilisers, and urine test strips, all designed to strengthen services for mothers and newborns in remote communities.

“This upgrade is about giving mothers and babies in our hinterlands the best possible care,” Minister Anthony said. **“Early testing, timely interventions, and improved diagnostics will directly save lives and**

reduce preventable maternal and newborn deaths.”

Dr. Anthony also highlighted training opportunities through McMaster University, which will prepare at least 35 Guyanese doctors over the coming years. **“We are building a healthcare workforce that is skilled, empowered, and ready to meet the needs of every region,”** he said.

Regional Health Director Dr. Ertenisa Hamilton noted the impact on hinterland families. **“In remote areas, access to quality care can mean the difference between life and death. This**



Hinterland mothers and babies get lifesaving health boost

equipment ensures that no mother or newborn is left behind.”

Representatives from Giving Help to Kids and the Canadian High Commissioner, Sébastien Sigouin, praised the long-standing partnership with Guyana. **“By investing in maternal and newborn health, we are investing in the future of**

Guyana,” Sigouin said.

The MNCH Project (2023–2028) focuses on strengthening clinical readiness, expanding outreach services, improving neonatal emergency care, and building capacity among healthcare workers, with the ultimate goal of ensuring every mother and child in Guyana, regardless of location, has access to high-quality care.

WORK BEGINS ON MORUCA REGIONAL HOSPITAL



Construction begins on Moruca Regional Hospital

For the residents of Region One, the wait for modern healthcare is nearly over as construction has started on the Moruca Regional Hospital, a 50-bed facility that will bring advanced medical services closer to families who previously had to travel long distances for treatment.

The project carries a total investment of \$4.6 billion and represents a major step forward for hinterland healthcare.

Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, toured the site and highlighted the hospital’s comprehensive facilities. The new

hospital will feature an Accident & Emergency Department, a fully equipped pharmacy, and a modern laboratory. An advanced imaging suite with X-ray and CT scan capabilities will enable faster, more accurate diagnoses, reducing the need for patients to leave the region.

Surgical care will be strengthened through fully operational theatres capable of routine and complex procedures, complemented by intensive care units for both adults and children. Maternal health services will include a specialised delivery suite, while inpatient rooms are

designed for comfort, accommodating no more than five beds per room, each with a private toilet and bath.

The hospital will also house specialised departments, including ophthalmology, audiology, and dental care, addressing key health needs in the community. An on-site oxygen plant will ensure timely access to oxygen, a critical feature underscored during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This hospital will change lives, giving families the care they deserve right here in their communities,” Dr Anthony said.



Construction begins on Moruca Regional Hospital

“From advanced diagnostics to comfortable rooms, this facility will set a new standard for healthcare in the hinterland.”

For the people of Moruca and surrounding areas, the hospital is more than a building, it is a promise of

better health, safer families, and brighter futures. The Ministry of Health reaffirmed its commitment to expanding access to high-quality healthcare, ensuring hinterland communities receive the same standard of care as urban centres.

NEW MATERNAL HOME OPENS IN REGION ONE

For expectant mothers in Moruca and surrounding communities, giving birth just got a little safer and a lot more comfortable with the commissioning of the \$47 million, 12-bed Maternal Waiting Home at the Kumaka District Hospital in Region One.

The facility is designed with maternal comfort in mind, featuring consultation and examination rooms, a fully equipped kitchen, and laundry area, ensuring women can focus on their health and that of their babies without worrying about daily needs.

Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony emphasised that the home is part of a broader government effort

to reduce maternal mortality, particularly in remote regions such as Moruca. He recalled the dangers faced by mothers in the past, who often travelled long distances during labour, sometimes experiencing complications or delivering en route.

“Most maternal deaths are preventable, and we must take deliberate actions to avoid them,” Dr Anthony said. **“Providing a safe space for mothers before and after delivery is a crucial step in saving lives.”**

The Minister noted that hospitals with similar waiting homes have already seen



New maternal waiting home brings safety and comfort to Moruca mothers

significant reductions in maternal deaths. Following childbirth at Kumaka Hospital, mothers can return to the home until they are ready to resume their lives in their communities, ensuring both safety and peace of mind.

Regional Health Officer Dr Steven Cheefoon praised the

dedication of local healthcare workers, recalling the challenges during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when Moruca lacked basic services such as X-rays and functional laboratories. **“Today, mothers have access to modern facilities, digital X-rays, and supportive care**

pregnancy and childbirth. A healthy baby is the first step to a successful future,” he said.

The Kumaka Maternal Waiting Home marks a major milestone in the ongoing transformation of healthcare services. It joins eight other

Maternal Waiting Homes across Guyana, providing a combined capacity of 169 beds, and represents the government’s commitment to eliminating maternal deaths, stillbirths, and preventable complications in hinterland communities.



New maternal waiting home brings safety and comfort to Moruca mothers

GUYANESE TO BENEFIT FROM EXPANDED RIGHTS AND FAIRER PUBLIC SERVICES



The Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Expo

Guyanese citizens are set to experience stronger protections and fairer treatment as the government rolls out a series of measures aimed at expanding human rights and improving public services. From tougher penalties for inciting racial hostility to policies promoting equal pay and increased support for victims of domestic and gender-based violence, these initiatives are designed to ensure that every citizen can access justice, safety, and essential services.

Speaking at the opening of the Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Expo at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre in Liliendaal, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips said the reforms are intended to reduce harm, support vulnerable groups, and create a more predictable and just system of public administration.

“People deserve clear information, reasonable timelines, and respectful treatment,” the Prime Minister emphasised. **“We are building systems that support fairness, transparency, and accountability, so citizens can trust public institutions and participate fully in governance.”**

The government is introducing and enforcing anti-discrimination legislation, including

protections related to sexual orientation, while strengthening training for security forces with mandatory modules on human rights and integrity. Service standards across ministries and agencies will be rolled out, giving citizens clear guidance on procedures, required documents, processing

rights of citizens are upheld, and that public officers serve with accountability and respect,” she said.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, outlined the government’s wider approach to human and economic rights.



The Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Expo

times, and fees.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, highlighted that legislation alone is not enough; meaningful progress requires a culture of ethics and integrity. **“We are committed to ensuring that the**

He pointed to record investments in social sectors, including a 231 percent increase in education spending and a 300 percent rise in the health budget between 2019 and 2025. Programmes such as solar electrification, internet access in hinterland communities, and tele-

education initiatives, though not traditionally classified as human rights interventions, are expanding opportunities and access across the nation.

Dr Singh also highlighted progress in anti-corruption measures, including transparent management of public finances and the Natural Resource Fund, which now ranks among global examples of best practice.

“Every investment we make, every reform we implement, is about empowering Guyanese citizens, ensuring that public resources are managed responsibly, and creating a country where fairness and opportunity are guaranteed,” he said.

The Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Expo featured booths from over 40 government and civil society bodies, providing citizens with information on available services, reinforcing the government’s commitment to a more equitable, accountable, and inclusive Guyana.



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh



Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Priya Manickchand, engaging residents of Bare Root, ECD

Organised development efforts for the Skull City community at Patentia, West Bank Demerara, are progressing. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Priya Manickchand, recently conducted a walk-about to assess residents’ needs and examine opportunities for further community enhancement.

Minister Manickchand met with residents, reviewed ongoing works and listened to concerns relating to infrastructure, land regularisation and access to community facilities. Several families acknowledged the improvements already made in the area, while also outlining challenges that continue to affect daily living.

A major update

provided during the engagement was the advancement of the settlement’s regularisation process. The Minister disclosed that 33 households have already been allocated house lots by the Ministry of Housing, with additional allocations currently being processed. She explained that the cadastral plan has been lodged and that preparation of the block title is underway, with completion targeted for the first quarter of 2026. This process, she noted, will provide residents with greater security and pave the way for structured development.

Minister Manickchand also held discussions with the contractor overseeing road upgrades within the community. She

ORGANISED DEVELOPMENT MOVING AHEAD FOR SKULL CITY, BARE ROOT

was informed that drainage infrastructure, a critical component of the project, is scheduled for completion by the end of January 2026. The upgraded drainage system is expected to improve access throughout the area and reduce flooding during periods of heavy rainfall.

In response to residents’ requests



Minister Manickchand engaging residents during walkabout in Patentia’s Skull City

for recreational and commercial spaces, the Minister said engineers will be engaged to assess whether available lands can support the development of a small park for families and a designated vendor

strip to encourage small business activity and local livelihoods.

She reaffirmed the government’s commitment to inclusive and sustainable development, emphasising that informal and vulnerable communities will continue to receive organised support aimed at improving living

and bridges. Minister Manickchand made the announcement during a separate community engagement, where she addressed concerns raised by residents and outlined upcoming interventions.

She said efforts are underway to regularise land to facilitate the construction of the community centre and committed to replacing a community sign recognising a young female achiever. The Minister also indicated that discussions will be held with Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha regarding the construction of a bridge that had previously been promised to the community.

While acknowledging that some projects take time due to procedural requirements, Minister Manickchand assured residents that cleaning initiatives and other works will commence shortly. She noted that similar initiatives are being implemented

nationwide as part of the government’s ongoing efforts to improve livelihoods and ensure equitable development for all Guyanese.

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Minister Manickchand engaging residents during walkabout in Patentia’s Skull City



Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Priya Manickchand, engaging residents of Bare Root, ECD

PPP/C GOVT TAKES SOLUTIONS TO THE DOORSTEPS OF REGION THREE RESIDENTS



President Mohamed Irfaan Ali led a two-day government outreach in Region Three (Essequibo Islands–West Demerara) from December 19–20, taking services, projects, and development initiatives directly to residents. Across 80 locations, ministers, MPs, and government officials met with community members to listen, address concerns, and showcase ongoing and upcoming programmes. Leguan and Wakenaam islands were key stops on the tour. President Ali assured Leguan residents that the newly installed 0.60-megawatt solar farm would significantly reduce electricity costs for households and businesses. Additional ferry services were also announced to improve connectivity, while engineers are finalising plans for a long-awaited bridge linking Leguan and Wakenaam. Farmers in the region will benefit from a major drainage and water storage project covering approximately 13,000 acres, including new canals, intakes, and heavy machinery. A mini-excavator will also be deployed to assist with interlocking drains. President Ali noted that these investments will boost agricultural productivity and strengthen the local economy. Tourism, healthcare, and youth development were also highlighted.



The Leonora Cottage Hospital will receive new X-ray, maternal, dental, and laboratory facilities, while youth will be guided on signing up for digital learning initiatives such as the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) and Coursera programmes. Transportation improvements include the deployment of a new ferry, the return of the Hercules to serve the islands, and fixed schedules to support farmers, commuters, and local businesses. Public safety will be enhanced through street lighting, a safe-city camera system, and a new landfill to improve sanitation and environmental management. President Ali



emphasised that the outreach reflects the government's commitment to people-centred governance. “We confront issues directly and ensure communities are supported,” he said, citing the successful resolution of more than 8,000 issues raised by residents in Region Three over the past five years.



















PRESIDENT ALI HONOURS SENIORS WITH HOLIDAY GATHERING IN REGION THREE



In Regions One, Seven, Eight, and Nine, the sound of a newborn's first cry will soon carry extra reassurance. Modern, lifesaving medical equipment worth \$27.5 million (CAD\$183,000) is now supporting maternal and childcare, giving families hope and security like never before.



The Ministry of Health officially received the equipment under the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Project, funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented in partnership with McMaster University and the Canadian charity Giving Help to Kids. The handing-over ceremony at the Ministry's Kingston Bond, Georgetown, was attended by Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony and key health officials.



The donation includes critical items such as HbA1c analysers, hepatitis B test kits, haemoglobin analysers, portable steam sterilisers, and urine test strips, all designed to strengthen services for mothers and newborns in remote communities. “This upgrade is about giving mothers and babies in our hinterlands the best possible care,” Minister Anthony said. “Early testing, timely interventions, and improved diagnostics will directly save lives and reduce preventable maternal and newborn deaths.”



Dr. Anthony also highlighted training opportunities through McMaster University, which will prepare at least 35 Guyanese doctors over the coming years. “We are building a healthcare workforce that is skilled, empowered, and ready to meet the needs of every region,” he said.



Regional Health Director Dr. Ertenisa Hamilton noted the impact on hinterland families. “In remote areas, access to quality care can mean the difference between life and death. This equipment ensures that no mother or newborn is left behind.”



Representatives from Giving Help to Kids and the Canadian High Commissioner, Sébastien Sigouin, praised the long-standing partnership with Guyana. “By investing in maternal and newborn health, we are investing in the future of Guyana,” Sigouin said.



The MNCH Project (2023–2028) focuses on strengthening clinical readiness, expanding outreach services, improving neonatal emergency care, and building capacity among healthcare workers, with the ultimate goal of ensuring every mother and child in Guyana, regardless of location, has access to high-quality care.



Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST



KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 108

WARM SMILES AND CHRISTMAS VIBES AT FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Laughter, warm conversation, and the familiar mischief of Home Alone 2 filled the air as families and friends gathered for a cozy movie night at the One Guyana Kitchen, opposite State House on Main Street Avenue. With refreshments in hand and children snuggled close, the evening captured the true spirit of a Guyanese Christmas, togetherness, simple joy, and shared moments that turn an ordinary night into a cherished memory.





*Subject to availability. Some conditions apply.

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