### **Proudly the largest weekly Caribbean Newspaper in Canada for 45 years**

# Equalit MAINTAINING THE PERFECT BALANCE

SERVING, CARIBBEAN, EAST ASIANS, GUYANESE, JAMAICANS, TRINIS AND MORE. 416 759 6397



- Real Estate Law (Residential & Commercial)
- Wills & Estates
- · Corporate & Commercial Law Rishani Vettyvel, BBA, LLB, LLM Barrister & Solicitor

Direct 416 261 1544 Fax. 416 291 1544



Save up to 80% On Caskets, Urns, Flowers and More Please call us and save on Funeral costs.

905-502-0334

Toronto's most reliable, trusted & affordable casket, urn & monument company; we make it simple & easy™



Thursday December 4 2025. Volume 45, Issue #46 www.equalitynews.ca. For advertising, call 647-216-2359

Youth urged to tap into opportunities

## Billions in incentives set aside to build **Guyana tourism**





President Dr Irfaan Ali delivering the feature address at the GTA Awards

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, on Tuesday evening, announced a set of initiatives aimed at breaking down obstacles and barriers that would enable Guyana's tourism sector to become a cornerstone of the country's development trajectory.

President Ali said his plan includes building the capacity of local tourism operators, unveiling plans to hire a dedicated team of young professionals who will write proper business proposals, help form consortia, and guide businesses through every requirement needed to secure investment incentives and approvals.

Addressing a large audience of industry leaders, government officials, diplomats, and awardees at the Guyana Tourism Authority's 2025 Awards and Gala at the Guyana Marriott hotel, the President said there are generous fiscal incentives for tourism and related investments, including tax and duty exemptions, and said no outstanding

applications are sitting at the investment office.

"There is absolutely not one outstanding investment application at the Guyana Office for Investment," he revealed, adding that "some investors still misunderstand what is available or are asking for additional benefits without first using the incentives that already exist.

"Less than 10 per cent of the incentives available to the tourism sector are being utilised. If the problem is people not making use of what is in the system, then we must bridge that gap," President Ali said.

The president said he would be willing to hire four young professionals who will work exclusively with the sector, developing business plans, investment proposals, and registration requirements, including acquiring TIN numbers, company incorporation and full compliance with regulations.

**SHARMA** 

Catastrophic injury? Car accident? Slip & fall? Income disability benefits denied?

sharma@vsharmalaw.ca vsharmalaw.ca

DIRECT LINE





Starting from \$1549 Tax Included

1 Check-in + 1 Cabin Baggage free

See our ad on Page 15

**Book Now** C+1 (416) 802 8000

## હવે પ્રાથના હોલ અને સ્મશાન ધર એકજ સ્થળે

### Chapel Ridge

Funeral Home & Cremation Centre

#### North Toronto

Crematorium Inc.





**Christeen**Licensed Funeral
Director
(416) 258-6759

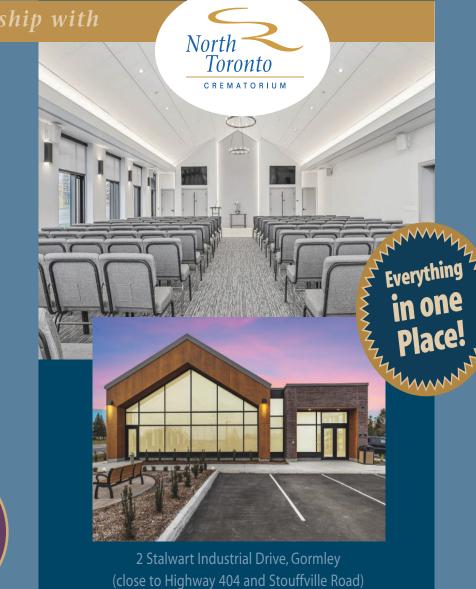
**Kirti** Licensed Funeral Preplanner (416) 417-0182





- Same Day Funeral Service with 1 hour visitation prior to service, including all professional fees and preparation
- Batesville Grey Doeskin Casket
- Cremation and Witnessing Fee at North Toronto Crematorium or St John's Dixie Crematorium in Mississauga
- Coroner, Death Registration and BAO Fee
   Not included: Flowers, Limousines, Clergy or Musician Fees, Urns

Facilities
also available in
Mississauga



#### Newly built large Chapel with Crematorium on-site - everything in one place!

8911 Woodbine Ave., Markham (4 blocks north of Hwy 7) info@chapelridgefh.com • www.chapelridgefh.com

905-305-8508

info@northtorontocrematorium.com www.northtorontocrematorium.com

289-578-1288















416 281 1222 🥨

Business Hours: Monday-Sunday 8:30am-9:00pm

SPEND \$88 BEFORE TAX **GET A FREE CALENDAR** (PER TRANSACTION)

每单消费税前满s88即送挂历1个

Lalah's Madras Curry Powder

LARGE

99<sub>18</sub>

Air1 Diesel Exhaust Fluid 9.46 L

3LB

Reg: \$16.99

金鲳鱼 Reg: \$4.99

长青瓜

Reg:\$1.99

新鲜猪腿。

Reg:\$2.79

**English Cucumber** 

Fresh pork ham bone in









A view of the gathering at the Guyana Oil and Gas Energy Chamber Annual Awards Dinner, being addressed by President Irfaan Ali

## Guyana's oil wealth in safe hands, President Ali tells Energy Chamber

PRESIDENT Dr Irfaan Ali has highlighted Guyana's disciplined and strategic management of its burgeoning oil sector, emphasising that careful planning and responsible stewardship are turning the nation's energy wealth into lasting national development.

Speaking on Friday evening at the Guyana Oil and Gas Energy Chamber's Annual Awards Presentation Dinner at the Marriott Hotel, he announced that a far-reaching national economic expansion and infrastructure integration plan will soon be made public.

The President framed the upcoming strategy as a defining roadmap for the next half-decade, one he characterised as unparalleled in ambition and national impact.

"This journey that we are on is now getting fired up," he told the audience of private-sector executives, policymakers, Cabinet members, diplomats, and industry leaders

He promised that "in the coming days, I will open with great clarity the economic expansion, infrastructure integration and development projections for our country over the next five years."

The announcement comes as Guyana moves deeper into a wave of historic investment, propelled largely by rapid developments in its energy, logistics, and industrial sectors

The President pointed to Wales and Berbice as the country's new strategic anchors—regions he said will form the nucleus of a modern, integrated national energy ecosystem.

At Wales on the West Bank of Demerara, he said more than US\$4 billion is expected to flow into projects over the next five years, including the gas-to-energy initiative, power generation facilities, a fertiliser plant, fabrication operations, manufacturing and industrial zones, marine infrastructure, and gas bottling and logistics services.

In Berbice, he highlighted plans for a second gas project, the establishment of a deep-water port, expanded industrial activities, and a gas pipeline estimated at more than US\$2 billion.

Together, these two regions are expected to push close to US\$10 billion in fresh infrastructure and energy-linked development.

"That is remarkable by any standard," President Ali said. "If that can't excite you and excite us as a people, I don't know what will."

Dr Ali also underscored the scale of Guyana's rapidly rising oil production. Output is expected to close the year at roughly 930,000 barrels of oil per day, up from 650,000 earlier this year, and projections place Guyana at a conservative 1.3 million barrels per day by 2030.

Yet he tempered this optimism with a note of caution, citing forecasts of an oversupply in global energy markets between 2025 and 2030.

"This industry is price-, cost-, technology-, politically-and regulatory-sensitive," he stressed. "Every element of risk associ-

ated with doing business is associated with this industry. It is not an easy task to manage and balance those risks."

But infrastructure and production alone will not determine the country's success. President Ali placed heavy emphasis on human capital, insisting that the pace of transformation requires a workforce capable of matching its momentum.

"The greatest complaint in the private sector today is on human capital management. Businesses complain of being unable to find workers," he said, urging Guyanese workers to pursue upskilling, increased productivity, and a mindset committed to high performance.

A workforce lacking in maturity or efficiency, he warned, can erode competitiveness and weaken national progress.

President Ali added, "We must understand that our human capital has to develop at the same pace the economy demands of it"

The President acknowledged the sense of optimism surrounding Guyana's extraor-

dinary growth, but appealed for measured expectations and a long-term outlook.

President Ali said that Guyanese are living in a time described as Guyana's golden era, a period in which the nation will be the envy of many and admired by the world.

"We cannot afford to be swept away by the tide of optimism," he cautioned. "Our future is glorious, but we must remain disciplined, prudent and clear-eyed."

Reiterating his administration's priorities, President Ali said the government remains focused on converting oil revenues into durable national assets—infrastructure, human capital, energy security and a diversified economy capable of thriving long after the volatility of the market.

Fortunately, he emphasised that the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration has an unparalleled track record of managing national resources with strategic foresight, unmatched by any other political force in the country's history.

#### BILINGUAL IMMIGRATION LAWYER

(English & French)

Refugee Claims | Francophone Immigration Support Program | Francophone Minority Communities Student Pilot.



Contact me today! pouchelonlaw@gmail.com.

416-759-8389 POUCHELON LAW PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION





### **EDITORIAL & OPINIONS**

## **Building a Legacy**

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, December 2 2025

THE announcement of a five-year plan for economic growth and infrastructure is exactly what Guyana needs, especially as the country deals with the tempting promise and real dangers of oil wealth.

President Irfaan Ali's recent comments at the Guyana Oil and Gas Energy Chamber are encouraging.

The President's focus on diversification instead of relying solely on oil is a smart move.

In fact, it is essential. With production expected to reach 1.3 million barrels per day by 2030, and a potential oversupply between 2025 and 2030, Guyana cannot afford to be complacent. The vision of integrated infrastructure, whether seen in the Wales and Berbice energy system or in proposed shipping and logistics hubs

connecting Brazil and CARICOM, shows the wise management that wealth demands.

These projects are the building blocks for a future beyond oil.

The social transfer programmes that have been implemented—the \$100,000 cash grant for adults, increased education grants to \$55,000, pension hikes to \$41,000- show a real effort to redistribute resources.

The IMF's praise for these programmes is significant, as they have clearly reduced poverty and increased disposable income.

The crucial question is not whether the government aims to share oil wealth fairly, but whether this fiveyear plan will lead to real change rather than just targeted cash transfers.

Cash grants help ease financial strain, but they do not ensure decent jobs or upward mobility.

The government's plan to digitise

the welfare system is a step forward for transparency, but we should not confuse being efficient in distributing benefits with being effective in creating wealth-building opportunities for the average Guyanese.

President Ali rightly points out that Guyana's long-term strength lies not in oil production but in using that wealth to build human capital, secure energy supplies, and diversify the economy.

This view is spot on. However, turning plans into results requires careful attention. Free tertiary education and better school facilities are investments that deserve praise. So are improved hospitals and expanded health programme. These are the essential elements of real development.

The real test of this five-year plan will be reflected in the notebooks of children in better-equipped schools, in the business ideas of young entrepreneurs who can access low-collateral loans, in the stability of farmers armed with modern tools, and in the health of communities free from preventable diseases.

It will also show in the dignity restored to workers in agriculture and fishing, sectors often overlooked in stories focused on success in the energy industry.

Guyana is at a crucial crossroads. The oil boom is real, the momentum is genuine, and the government seems genuinely committed to social welfare programmes.

Guyana must ensure that its fiveyear plan is not only ambitious but transformative, not just for overall GDP numbers, but for the everyday experiences of the people who built this nation.

The children who will inherit this future deserve nothing less.

## **Need for a Sustained Fight Against Addiction**

By Donald Ramotar

Former Guyana President

I wish to congratulate the Guyana Times for its editorial of November 25, 2025, titled "Alcoholism and Society". While the focus was strictly on alcohol, the theme could be broadened to include all substance abuse and gambling. These anti-social activities are having very serious negative consequences in our society. Many young lives are being destroyed in a variety of ways, destroyed health, depression, suicides, road accidents, etc.

While it is a general problem in the society it is probably worse in the countryside. Most of our news are highly urban oriented and therefore the social issues in the villages are often not known and unreported. It is good that this is now being exposed by letters, articles as the editorials in the press.

However, the task is how to change these things.

It is possible that one of the reasons for the prevalence of alcoholism etc, in the countryside is the lack of entertainment and more wholesome activities in the various areas.

While it would be unfair to place the whole responsibility on the government to deal with the problems, because in fact, this situation affects everyone, therefore our institutions, including non-governmental organisations has to make a contribution. Having said that though, it is clear that the administration can give a push and encourage it to eventually be self-sustainable.

In a previous piece the point was made about the creation of facilities in the villages. Things like gyms and facilities for other types of sports both in and outdoors other than cricket and football.

The young in particular, but the whole community can be organised by the promotion of Cultural and Sports groups with assistance to them of how to manage their affairs. Teach them how to conduct meetings, how to organise competition and other basic needs.

Recall that at one time Guyana had seven members playing for the West Indies at the same time. This, it is believed, was due to the many competitions that we had in cricket. A quick recount would show, we had White Cup, North Count Cup, Case Cup, Inter-

County cricket. That brought out many talented cricketers. This can be reproduced in other sports and cultural activities.

To get the ball rolling maybe a task force comprising personnel from the Ministries of Health, Education, Youth, Sports and Culture and Social Security could be formed to start the promotion (help to organise clubs).

While this is not an exhaustive list to what can be done, it may make a good start and a valuable contribution to the quality of life and to the integrity of our people. After all, "man shall not live on bread alone."

Congratulation once more to Guyana Times and hopefully the other media outlets will weigh in on this task.



Publisher: Bhaskar Sharma Equalitygroup@rogers.com Editor: Nishad Sharma

Annual subscription: \$104.00 (including postage)

Funded by the Government of Canada



Equality News is the largest weekly newspaper serving Guyanese and Caribbean readers in Canada.

Contributors: Niraj Sharma, Freddie Kissoon,

Donald Ramotar, Cliff Rajkumar, Dr Kumar Mahabir, Dr Vishnu Bisram For advertising in Ontario or nationally, call Marie Sharma 416-281-3333 or 647 -216 2359

View Equality News every week online (ads included)

#### www.equalitynews.ca

Equality News International is published by Equality News Incorporated. 104-1920 Ellesmere Road - MB# 234, Toronto, Ontario M1H 3G1

Tel: 416-281-3333 , Fax: 416-759-5359, Email: EqualityGroup@rogers.com

# Ontario extending One Fare transit program for 2 more years

By Denise Singh

LJI REPORTER

Ontario's One Fare Program — which allows transit users to pay once when transferring between a host of GTA transit agencies as well as GO Transit — is being extended for two more years, the province says.

In a news release issued Monday, provincial officials said that since the program's launch in 2024, One Fare has enabled nearly 62 million free transfers across participating agencies, like the TTC, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, MiWay and several others.

"We're extending the elimination of double fares through One Fare to make transit more affordable and convenient, saving commuters up to \$1,600 each year," said Transportation Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria in a statement.

Riders are able to access the program using a physical or digital Presto card, as well as debit and credit cards, as long as they tap on and off with the same card for the full trip.



The One Fare system allows for free transfers between different transit systems

Transfers are valid for two hours when a trip starts on a local transit agency, and for three hours when it starts on GO Transit.

"I applaud the Ontario government for its commitment to supporting residents and making public transit more accessible," Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow said in a statement.

"With our decision at the City of Toronto not to raise TTC fares for three years running, and the extension of the One Fare program allowing commuters to pay once when transferring from GO Transit to the TTC, we are delivering a more affordable city for Torontonians."

### Message from Dr Anthony on International Disabilities Day

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Guyana joins the global community in reflecting on this year's theme: "Amplifying the Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an Inclusive, Accessible, and Sustainable Future." This theme reminds us that persons with disabilities are not merely recipients of services, they are leaders, innovators, and partners who contribute meaningfully to our nation's development every day.

Over the past five years, Guyana has made steady progress in ensuring that persons with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of national life. We have strengthened our legal framework, expanded services, and created new opportunities. Most importantly, we have listened to those who live these experiences and understand their needs best. Today, we are proud that rehabilitation and audiology services are decentralised and accessible throughout health facilities across the country.

The Ministry of Health has made significant strides in advancing the rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities. Key achievements include:

• Completion of the National Commission on Disability Household Survey:

This comprehensive survey, recently concluded, will provide essential data to support evidence-based decision-making and effective policy development.

• Provision of Free Wheelchairs, Prostheses, and Hearing Aids:

More than 6,000 individuals have received these critical devices, enabling greater independence and improving overall quality of life.

• Launch of the Barrier-Free Design Manual:

This week, we will introduce this important resource outlining best practices for developing accessible public buildings, spaces, and facilities, a major step toward a barrier-free Guyana.

• Improved Access to Health Services:

Specialised rehabilitation programmes and assistive technologies are now more widely available, ensuring personalised and inclusive healthcare for persons with disabilities.

• Skills Training for Young Adults with Disabilities:



**Dr Frank Anthony** 

Enhanced training opportunities in beauty care, sustainable agriculture, information technology, and other fields are helping equip young persons with disabilities with valuable skills for employment and independence.

These accomplishments reflect our commitment to the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2010, and our vision for a more inclusive nation.

A major priority remains the achievement of Sustainable Develop-

ment Goal 3—Good Health and Wellbeing by 2030. We recognise that if persons with disabilities are left behind, we cannot truly achieve health for all. Persons with disabilities form an essential pillar of a resilient society. As such, we must intensify awareness efforts, invest in their empowerment, and ensure their inclusion in community-level planning and programmes aimed at improving health and wellbeing.

I urge all Guyanese to remember that inclusion is not an act of charity; it is a national responsibility. Let us continue to dismantle physical, social, and attitudinal barriers that hinder full participation. Let us listen more, engage more, and ensure that every individual has the opportunity to contribute to Guyana's future.

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us renew our commitment to building an inclusive, accessible, and sustainable Guyana, one where the leadership of persons with disabilities is not only acknowledged but celebrated.

Disability is not a limitation; it is a unique strength that enriches our society.

# Unpacking the PPP/C Government's Social Relief Programs

**By Joel Bhagwandin** FINANCIAL ANALYST

Embattled U.S sanctioned businessman, and the leader of the We Invest in Nationhood (WiN) political party unleashed one of the lowest of political attack directed at the President about cash grants. In a pre-recorded, scripted statement on his page, the WiN leader drew references to other countries that pay to their citizens direct cash transfers. Those countries referenced were Middle Eastern Countries. Interestingly, it would appear he knows quite a lot about those Middle Eastern countries and less or nothing at all about his own country's fiscal management and policies implemented by the PPP/C government. This is not surprising because it should be noted that this individual apparently does business with a particular Middle Eastern Country, which is the subject of the gold smuggling case he has found himself in deep trouble. It is the very Middle Eastern Country he's allegedly smuggled off over \$300 billion worth of Gold, evaded taxes in the value of some \$191 billion and is now lecturing the President and by extension the PPP government about cash grant.

Guyana under the PPP/C government has been transferring various forms of direct cash transfers and relief to Guyanese households long before crude oil and gas was discovered. He may not be aware of this because he was busy engaged in alleged illicit trading of Gold, which he is now the subject of OFAC sanctions and having been indicted in a US Court of law. Consequently, since he appears uneducated about his country's policies whereby he has insinuated that those large, monarch-governed Middle Eastern countries pay their citizens cash grant from their oil resources, here are some interesting facts for his edification about Guyana:

The Mortgage Interest Relief (MIR) introduced in 2013 by the PPP/C government for home loans covering up



The cash grant was attacked by the WIN Party

to \$30M, is another form of direct cash transfer to the citizens. The annual interest expense for a loan of up to \$30M is approximately, \$904K or a total of \$22.6M over 25 years (the life of the loan)...for a low income loan of up to \$10M, that is \$300k in annual interest expense or \$7.5M over the life of the loan for 25 years. This is a form of direct cash transfer to the citizens.

The "because we care cash grant" was introduced in 2014 by the PPP/C government, which was discontinued by the APNU government in 2015 – 2020, and reinstated by PPP/C government in 2021. This cash grant increased from \$10k per child to \$50k per child + \$5k uniform allowance, bringing the total to \$55k per child, annually. This is a form of direct cash transfer to the citizens.

Prior to 2015, under PPP/C government, CXC/CSEX fees were partially subsidized. In 2025, the PPP/C government raised this subsidy to full coverage ernment for eight (8) subjects per child. This is another form of direct transfer to the citare essertizens.

The annual public assistance is another form of direct cash transfer to

citizens.

The first phase of introducing free tertiary education was when the government implemented a debt write off policy for past students of the university of Guyana. All their old debts were written off. This is a form of direct cash transfer.

•When the GOAL scholarship was introduced and now free university education, these are other forms of direct cash transfers to citizens.

In 2025, the government introduced a newborn cash grant of \$100k per newborn. This is another form of direct cash transfer to the citizens.

•When oil prices doubled in the post-covid period, the PPP/C government subsidized the increased cost to GPL, which is over \$20 billion to keep electricity prices to the consumer constant; this is another form of direct cash transfer.

In 2020, when the PPP/C government reversed the APNU-AFC draconian taxes, over 200 new taxes; these are essentially direct cash transfers to the citizens amounting to over \$90 billion annually.

In 2020 through 2025 when the

PPP/C government waived the excise tax on fuel imports from 50% to 0%—this is another form of direct cash transfer to the citizens valued at over \$60 billion annually.

These are just few to mention and if we are to quantify these measures as they currently stand, these would amount to upwards of \$500 billion annually, in direct cash transfers to Guyanese households.

The one-off cash grant which the PPP/C government introduced in 2024, that they promised will become an annual transfer in their campaign and 2025-2030 manifesto, be assured that it will become an annual transfer in addition to all of the above introduced under the PPP, all of which were implemented before oil revenues started flowing to the treasury. One has to also be mindful that those funds would have to be appropriated in the budget, and the government is currently pre-occupied with 2026 budget preparation. This is alien to the WiN leader and one can understand why he would not appreciate this because he has a longstanding, well established track record, allegedly, of breaking the law. Not accustomed to compliance with the law and therefore is completely unaware and ignorant of the fiscal laws, fismanagement and accountability procedures and practices. Or perhaps, he is more anxious for another sitting of the National Assembly, not because he cares about the people, but his own self-serving motive designed to escape the consequences of the OFAC sanction.

Guyana's approach to direct cash transfers is robust, institutionalized, and predates oil revenues. The PPP/C government has implemented numerous measures benefiting households, amounting to over \$500 billion annually. Criticisms from the WiN leader are baseless and reflect a lack of understanding of established fiscal policies and accountability procedures.





GROUP OF COMPANIES
Put Guyana First

1 & 2 MUDLOT WATER STREET, KINGSTON, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA. TEL: 592- 226-5513-4 | 226-5314-5 | 226-4113 FAX: 592- 226-5517 | 223-7421

Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO

# Calgary man guilty of terrorism offences for fighting with ISIS in Syria

From the CBC:

A Calgary man who travelled to Syria with his cousin more than 12 years ago has been found guilty of terrorism offences after a judge ruled that the evidence shows he was fighting for ISIS.

Jamal Taan Borhot, 35, was convicted of three terrorism-related offences after spending 11 months in Syria between May 2013 and April 2014.

Eight of his family members were in court on Monday to hear Court of King's Bench Justice Corina Dario's decision.

After the verdict, Dario revoked Borhot's bail, and sheriffs took him into custody.

A sentencing hearing will take place at a later date.

Calgarian accused of fighting for ISIS to stand trial after judge rejects defence application

Both Jamal Borhot and his cousin Hussein Borhot were charged by RCMP in 2020.

In 2022, Hussein pleaded guilty to similar offences and was handed a 12year sentence.

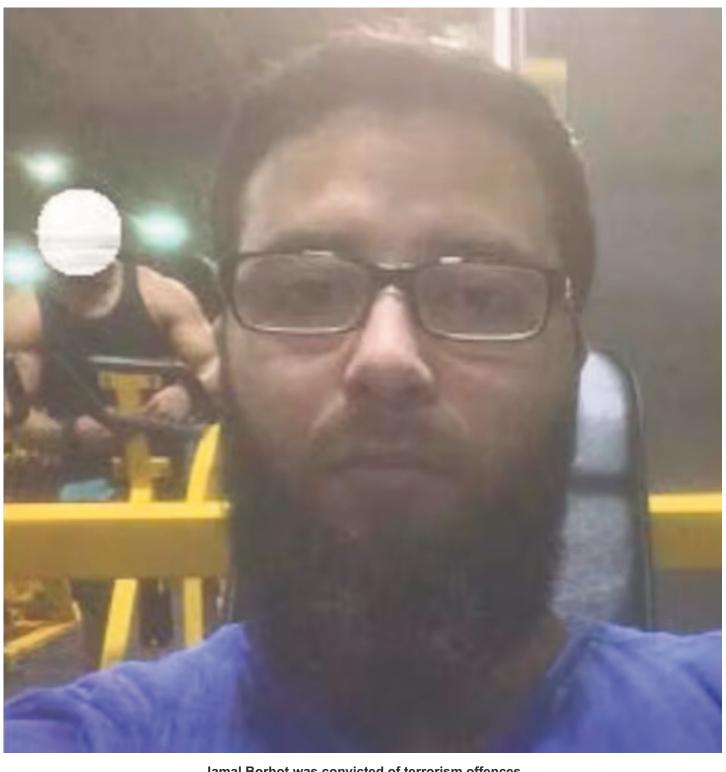
Jamal's case encountered several delays, including changes in defence counsel and federal court proceedings. Those proceedings, which dealt with issues of whether potentially sensitive disclosure could be provided to Borhot and his lawyer, had to be concluded before the trial could begin.

Last year, Dario rejected a defence application to have the charges stayed due to delays in the case.

In reaching her verdict, Dario relied on travel documents, Facebook messages sent by Jamal, and intercepted phone calls he had with family members and a friend.

During the trial, prosecutors Kent Brown and Domenic Puglia presented evidence that showed Borhot trained with and fought for ISIS, took on a role as a commander for the group, created videos for the benefit of ISIS, and attempted to recruit others to join.

After his return to Canada, Borhot gave statements to police, denying having ever travelled to Syria.



Jamal Borhot was convicted of terrorism offences

In 2020, police intercepted communications between Borhot and his mother, his cousin and another man. In some of those conversations, Borhot discussed his time in Syria and ISIS.

The Crown also relied on Facebook messages Borhot sent to three men, which prosecutors say promoted ISIS in an attempt to get the men to join him in fighting in Syria.

Dario noted Borhot made comments "filled with hatred toward non-Muslims" and "about killing those who did not convert to Islam."

Not only did Borhot hold terrorist beliefs, said Dario, "he was prepared to both kill and die for those beliefs."

Defence lawyer Pawel Milczarek argued the Crown failed to prove its case.

Milczarek submitted the Crown had not proven which group, if any, Borhot had joined and argued it is "reasonably possible" that the Facebook messages and intercepted phone calls made by

Borhot were "a fabrication created to gain status within his community of peers and family."





President Ali giving his message to the nation

## President Ali assures citizens PPP/C gov't will deliver 'faster, better, and greater'

CENTREING his message on a bold assurance that his government will deliver "faster, better, and greater," President, Dr Irfaan Ali recently reaffirmed the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration's commitment to fulfilling its promises.

The President pushed back against claims that his government has fallen short on its pledges. He stressed that the administration remains fully focused on executing its development agenda and meeting the needs of citizens.

The government, he reaffirmed, is committed to building prosperity and ensuring that citizens benefit from real policies to improve their livelihoods.

He pointed to the country's expanding economy, fuelled by unprecedented growth, expanding private-sector confidence and a wave of new investments across multiple industries.

President Ali cautioned that such momentum requires more than slogans and simplistic assumptions.

"Our economy is not a toy," he said, adding, "This is real business that demands technical competence and brain power."

In his New Year address, President,

Dr Irfaan Ali had outlined an expansive vision for Guyana's development in 2025, framing the period ahead as one of the most transformative moments in the nation's history.

He emphasised that the government's long-term objective of delivering a better quality of life for every citizen is no longer aspirational, but increasingly tangible, with projections that Guyana could achieve one of the highest living standards in the hemisphere before the decade closes.

"Since 2020, from then, we have been singularly focused on the rapid transformation to a modern, prosperous Guyana for all – one where national prosperity translates into community, household and individual well-being," the President had said, adding: "The physical transformation of our country is very much underway and visible for all to see."

The vision was for Guyana to achieve one of the highest living standards in the hemisphere by decade's

The commitments outlined in the President's New Year message have since been translated into tangible results, with the government delivering on several major pledges.

These included substantial increases in wages, pensions and social assistance; continued subsidies to cushion global cost-of-living pressures; the reintroduction of the "Because We Care" grant for schoolchildren and the rollout of the \$100,000 cash grant for every adult citizen.

Significant progress was also recorded in infrastructural development, with new roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, and housing projects advancing across the country. Most notable was the recent commissioning of the New Demerara River Bridge, which is formally named after Guyana's Vice-President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo.

Diversification of the economy continued with the Ministry of Finance reporting an overall real GDP growth of 7.5 percent and a non-oil growth rate of 13.8 percent in its 2025 mid-year report.

President Ali had reiterated that such momentum requires discipline and prudent management of the country's economy.

The report underscores the country's continued transformation, underpinned by strong performances in both the oil-and-gas and non-oil sectors particularly agriculture, manufacturing, and construction.

This marked the fifth consecutive year of non-oil expansion at the halfyear point, following the global downturn in 2020.

Building on the PPP/C's track record of fulfilling its commitments, President Ali had only last week stated that the government's support will go beyond cash bonuses and transfers.

"This government has a very elaborate agenda for the upliftment of your life, for the improvement of your life, for building prosperity for you, for building prosperity for your community, for empowering you, for giving you the opportunity to live a life in which you have access to the best health care, best education, home ownership, reduced interest rates, access to low-interest business development loans and grants with no collateral, access to textbooks, expanded school-feeding programmes, expanded infrastructure, community infrastructure, building out facilities to support women's health," he told reporters last week.

# BuyCanadianNow.Ca



# Guyana pushing high-tech agriculture training: Minister Mustapha

LEVERAGING new technologies and models already established by renowned institutions, the Guyana School of Agriculture, could adopt an advanced curriculum with emphasised focus on business to engage more young people.

This is according to Muhammad Ibrahim, the incoming director general of the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA), who during an interview on the sidelines of a special dialogue at IICA's Costa Rica headquarters, outlined a proactive vision to modernise the country's premier agriculture training school.

"Based on my knowledge of some of the schools similar to the Guyana School of Agriculture, how they have advanced in transforming the education system for more engagement of the youths and using better tools for agriculture, that is where I can contribute in terms of modifying the curriculum so that people who are studying at the Guyana School of Agriculture are coming out with a more business mindset approach," he said.

The agriculture engineer will officially begin performing his duties as director general in January and has signalled his intentions to build on the foundation that has already been laid out by his predecessor, Dr. Manuel Ontero.

He intends to continue advancing the institution's push for sustainable, climate resilient agriculture, while deepening regional collaboration, innovation and support for member states as they work to strengthen their food systems and agricultural development.

Meanwhile Guyana's Agriculture



The Guyana School of Agriculture will be the home of the new project

Minister Zulfikar Mustapha said that the GSA is a critical component to developing a resilient agricultural sector for the region.

The curriculum of the institution will be enhanced offering courses in ICT and biotechnology.

"What we want to with GSA is create a centre of excellence, now we will modernise it in a way, it will not only be Guyana, all over the Caribbean we will have people attending that institution."

Mustapha noted that the curriculum will take a very targeted approach as

courses, training and other learning material will be aligned with the needs of the region's food systems.

"The centre of excellence will be a modern centre, complemented by a fab lab, a practical lab," he said.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

#### **World Guyanese Congress**

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



















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

Email: mail@wgc-org.com
Telephone: 1-800-317-0804



## **Chief Magistrate sets new February 2026** dates for electoral fraud trial

CHIEF Magistrate (ag) Faith Mc Michelle Miller. Gusty has announced new hearing dates for the ongoing electoral fraud case, scheduled for February 2026 at the Georgetown Magistrates' Courts.

The proceedings are set to take place from February 16 to 20, with a second set of hearings planned for February 24 to 27.

After these sessions, new dates will be scheduled in consultation with both the prosecution and defence.

The trial concerns allegations of electoral fraud arising from the controversial General and Regional Elections held on March 2, 2020.

Those facing charges include former Chief Election Officer (CEO), Keith Lowenfield; former Deputy CEO, Roxanne Myers; former Region Four Returning Officer, Clairmont Mingo; former Health Minister under the previous A Partnership for National Unity + Alliance For Change (APNU+AFC) government, Volda Lawrence; and People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) member, Carol Smith-Joseph.

Also on trial are former Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) staffers Sheffern February, Enrique Livan, Denise Babb-Cummings, and

The defendants are represented by a robust defence team, including attorneys Nigel Hughes, Dexter Todd, Eusi Anderson, Darren Wade and Ronald

Collectively, the defendants face 19 charges ranging from conspiracy to defraud to misconduct in public office. The matters have been consolidated, as a result of the charges arising from the same set of circumstances. Each defendant has pleaded not guilty to the charges and secured their release by posting significant cash bail.

The prosecution, led by King's Counsel Darshan Ramdhanie, argued that each defendant played a "critical role" in the deliberate effort to inflate votes for the APNU+AFC and reduce votes for the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C).

In the weeks that followed the contentious March 2, 2020, vote, Guyana's judiciary was inundated with multiple applications and appeals filed by various political actors over the electoral

The saga lasted five months before a national recount, led by GECOM and a delegation from the Caribbean Com-











munity (CARICOM), confirmed the PPP/C's victory and ultimately led to the

swearing-in of President, Dr Irfaan Ali

on August 2, 2020.

The recount confirmed that the PPP/C won the elections with 233,336 votes against the APNU+AFC coalition's 217,920.

The initial elections results, announced by former CEO Lowenfield, had claimed an APNU+AFC victory.

The APNU+AFC coalition received 171,825 votes, while the PPP/C received 166,343 votes, according to Lowenfield's election report.

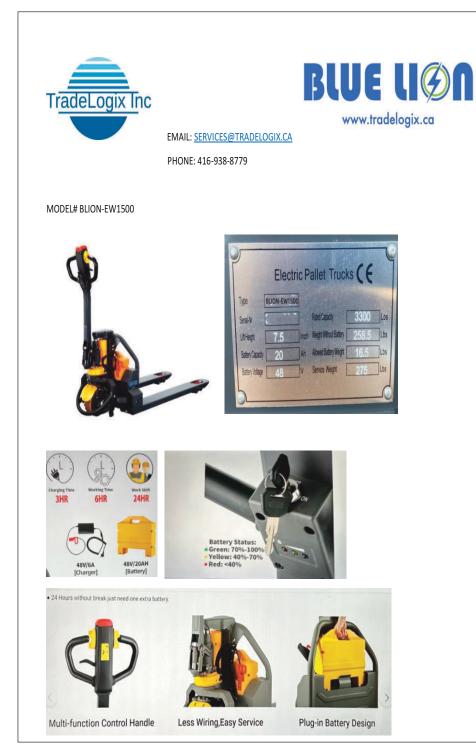
Criminal charges were filed against the defendants following the PPP/C's return to office in August, 2020.

GECOM made the decision to ter-

minate the contracts of Lowenfield, Myers, and Mingo in August 2021, after the allegations of fraud came to light.

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry (CoI) into the events of the 2020 General and Regional Elections have found that there were collusion and collaboration between senior GECOM officials to divert votes to the APNU +AFC instead of safeguarding and preserving the integrity of the electoral system.

Chairman Stanley John and commissioners — former Chancellor of the Judiciary, Carl Singh and Senior Counsel Godfrey Smith made these findings based on evidence from the many witnesses who testified along with the reports of the international observers.





## Guyana's transformation 'now getting fired up' – President Ali

ENVISIONING a nation rising with purpose, clarity and unstoppable momentum, President, Dr Irfaan Ali has announced the government's plans to unveil a comprehensive economic expansion, infrastructural integration and social development plan for the next five years.

Speaking at the Guyana Oil and Gas Energy Chamber's Annual Awards Presentation Dinner at the Georgetown Marriott Hotel last Friday, the President said the plan will define the government's vision for the next half-decade.

"In the coming days, I will open with great clarity, the economic expansion, infrastructure integration and development trajectory for our country over the next five years."

He noted that while much of Guyana's momentum is buzzing around its burgeoning oil and gas sector, the government remains disciplined in its efforts in ensuring that the country's economy is one that will be built on pillars of diversification.

"This journey that we are on is now getting fired up, but we are not only injecting fuel on this leg of the transformation."

Guyana, he noted, has built its energy ecosystems around understanding the global environment to 'shock proof' its economy from shortfalls.

"We are living in what is described as Guyana's Golden Era, a time where our nation will be the envy to many, a time when the world is looking to us, not out of curiosity, but out of admiration and critically it means that the opportunities for Guyanese firms will multiply."

He noted too that Guyana is building out an infrastructure, allowing the country to enhance its capacity to take care of consumption. This is an energy mix and integration which he believes is critical for resilience and sustainability.

"Companies supplying goods and services to the oil and gas sector, logistics, fabrication, construction, technology, catering, training are already experiencing demand surge. And that demand will only intensify as each new development comes to production," he added.

He stressed that the country's longterm strength will not be on how much oil it produces, but how wisely it converts that wealth into infrastructure, human capital, energy security and a diversified economy.

President Ali reiterated that the government is building new streams of

revenue, positioning itself to become more than just an energy powerhouse, but a stewardship for a sustainable future enhancing the lives of its people.

"This is a future that your children and their children will inherit, a future we are building at breakneck speed, not because we are in a hurry, but because history will not wait for us," the President said.

Since returning to office following the September 1 polls, President Ali has touted the government's plans to unveil a suite of comprehensive measures to support households and cushion the global trend of increased cost of living.



President Dr Irfaan Ali

# Our Family Caring for Yours

From the flowers on the front lawn to the paintings on the walls, we at Ogden's always consider the comfort and needs of the families that we serve first. We offer services and products that are meaningful and fit comfortably within your budget. Just some of the ways that we as a family care for yours.

Family owned and operated since 1948.



## SHARMA LAW

#### Your Personal Injury Lawyer

A lawyer who gets to know you, so he can represent you. When you're looking for the best possible result, you need an attorney who knows every detail about you and your case. Sharma Law takes the time to get to know each and every client, so we're in the best position to represent you and your family when it matters most. Backed by proven results and experience at Ontario's highest levels of court, Sharma Law specializes in Personal Injury Law.



#### NO FEES UNLESS WE SETTLE YOUR CLAIM



### Personal Injury

Injuries caused by the negligence of others can be physically, emotionally, and financially devastating for victims and their families. If you've been injured, you need a personal injury lawyer who knows how to fight for the compensation you deserve.



### injury Claims

- Motor Vehicle Accident Claims
- At-Fault Accident Claims
- Not At-Fault Accident Claims
- Catastrophic In-jury Claims
- · Slip and Falls / Trip and Falls
- Dog Bites
- Long Term Disability / Short Term Disability
- Pedestrian Accidents

#### **OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU**

We are committed to achieving successful results for every client and case. We accomplish this by providing exceptional legal advice and strategies based on a thorough understanding of your case and your desired outcomes.

#### FREE CONSULTATION AND CLAIM REVIEW.

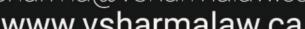
Check out our Google reviews



Available for in-person visits at your home or hospital, anywhere in Ontario. Video Conference and Office meetings available.



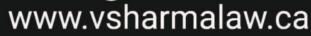
**Hurt? Call Vishal's direct line 6479724440** sharma@vsharmalaw.ca













DFM

## Food Market www.danforthfoodmarket.com Danfort

Grace

Gräce

Gruau inst.

We're simply the best West Indian store in town.

Specials in Effect Thu. Dec.4th until Wed. Dec. 10th 2025

# **DANFORTH FOOD MARKET**

SEND SUPPORT BACK HOME TOGETHER

Products Included	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
Grace Red Kidney Beans 800g	12 Pks	\$6.49	\$77.88
Grace Condensed Sweetener 297ml	48 Tins	\$1.75	\$84.00
Grace Corn Meal 2kg	18 Pks	\$4.19	\$75.42
Grace Mackerel in Tomato Sauce 155g	100 Tins	\$1.39	\$139.00
Grace Vienna Sausage (Hot) 113g	48 Tins	\$1.69	\$81.12
Grace Corned Beef 198g	48 Tins	\$2.99	\$143.52
Grace Instant Oats 1kg	24 Pks	\$3.49	\$83.76
Cedar Parboiled Rice 8kg	4 Bags	\$17.99	\$71.96
American Eagle White Flour 5kg	6 Bags	\$7.99	\$47.94
Jamaican Pride Butter Beans 398mL	24 Tins	\$1.49	\$35.76
Jumbo Barrel (Tax Incl.)	1 Pc	\$70.00	\$70.00
Shipping (Tax Incl.)		\$100.00	\$100.00

**TOTAL VALUE** \$1,010.36





\* Includes Shipping Cost

#### THIS RELIEF INITIATIVE IS PARTNERED WITH







Danforth Food Market Grace Foods Canada Cedar Phoenicia Group

Jamaican Local Transportation & Taxes Not Included









Jerk Seasoning



**Montego Sun Dried** Sorrel



•

Vita Malt Classic Sleek Can 330 ml

CEDAR



DANFORTH FOOD MARKET KITCHEN



O(O)

#### PANFORTH KITCHEN NOW AVAILABLE AT KEELE & ETOBICOKE LOCATION **BRAMPTON COMING SOON** Grown\_From\_Australia Frozen Australian Burnt Frozen Premium Grade **Jamaicas Choice** Free Range **Easy Cooked Trimmed** Goat Head **Square Cut Double Smoked** Goat Meat Oxtail Xmas Ham **Ram Mutton Meat** Frozen Frozen or Previously **Fresh** Fresh Flamingo **Smoked Frozen Headless** Frozen **Chicken Feet Bangamary Fish** Chicken Leg 31/40 Headless **Turkey Legs White Shrimps** Quarters 454 g With Purchase of 2 cases or Each More Thursday To Sunday Only Fresh Lane or Fresh Atlantic **Fresh** Fresh **Fresh Whole Yellow Tail Snappers Doctor Fish Parrot Fish** Whole Salmon **King Fish** 1/2-1 lb lb as is lb as Is lb as is Ib as is lb as is Fresh Cassava **Fresh Large** YOU'LL LOVE OUR FRESH PRODUCE Cabbage resh Jamaican<sub>d</sub> Fresh Yellow Yams anana

NTIC JAMAICAN FOOD!





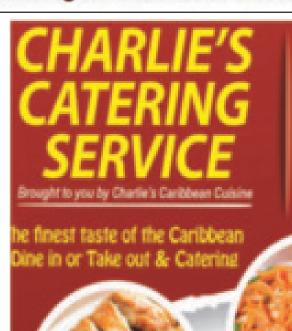
121 City View Drive
North of Belfield Road, East side of Highway 27
647-547-8188 www.lotusfuneralandcremation.com



Crematorium inside our building!



Seating for more than 500+ guests!



For CATERING Inquiries, call: 905-949-0663







## WE CATER FOR ALL OCCASIONS INCLUDING:

 Corporate Events • Weddings and other Social Events

#### Not sure how much food you'll need? WE CAN HELP YOU!

We will suggest the right amount of food to maximize the value of your dollar So you'll have enough food and pay less and have less waste

Full Catering for Hindu religious ceremonies including 7 curry

(Cooked with separate cookware and utensits

### We Guarantee

you'll love our food, that's why we are willing to give a free taste test to prove that our food is great.

WE CATER TO ALL YOUR CARIBBEAN NEEDS.

All meats halal, pork free environment



For all your catering needs please call 905-949-0663 or email us at

chartiescaribbeancuisine@hotmait.com

Delivery to the GTA available 3055 Hurontario St. Mississauga, L5A 2G9 www.charliescaribbeancuisine.com

Serving the community for over 30 years you can rest assure that your order will made fresh and with the highest quality ingredients possible.

## LAW OFFICE

### **CHET SHARMA**

B.A., B.S.W. (Hons), LL.B. Barrister, Solicitor & Notary Public

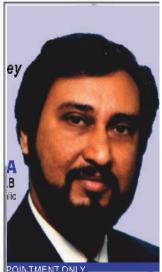
#### **GENERAL PRACTICE**

immigration Law Criminal Law

Divorce & Family Law

Office: 416-285-1550 Res: 416-284-9191

150 Lawson Road, Toronto ON M1C 2J4



Chet Sharma B.A., B.S.W. (Hons), LL.B.

## **ADS IN EQUALITY WORK!**





## CHARLEY'S CARIBBEAN CUISINE

For all your catering needs

1158 Morningside Ave, Scarborough (at Morningside)

(416) 282-8608

Fabulous authentic Guyanese food. We can't make this for these prices. (Grandma is from Berbice Guyana and knows country Guyanese food - even she will eat it!) Try the dhal puri and okra / shrimp.

### Come savor a savory meal at Charley's Caribbean Cuisine







Not sure how much food you need? We'll help you suggest the right amount of food to minimize your cost.

Pork free halal foods. Catering for Hindu releigious events, as well as all Caribbean events.





**PARTY TRAYS AVAILABLE!** 

# Minister meets IICA delegation to discuss future of Agriculture

Agriculture Minister, Hon. Zul-fikar Mustapha, on Tuesday led a team comprising several senior technical officers and a delegation from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) during a site visit to assess ongoing preparations for the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture's Situation Room. The visit marks a key step forward in advancing the project, which is being developed in collaboration with IICA to strengthen real-time monitoring, data analysis, and rapid response capabilities across Guyana's agriculture sector.

The Situation Room initiative aligns directly with President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's call for the sector to embrace modern technology, data-driven decision-making, and digital infrastructure as central pillars of Guyana's agricultural transformation. President Ali has repeatedly emphasized that technology, ranging from smart monitoring systems to predictive analytics,



Minister Zulkifar Mustapha (centre) meets with the IIAC delegation

must be integrated into every layer of agriculture to improve efficiency, enhance resilience, and drive competitiveness. Once completed, the Situation Room will serve as a central hub for collecting and analyzing national data on weather patterns, crop production, flood risks, pests and dis-

eases, and other critical factors, enabling more proactive and coordinated responses. Tuesday's visit reaffirmed the government's commitment to accelerating the project and ensuring that the infrastructure, equipment, and technical systems meet international standards. Minister Mustapha noted that

the collaboration with IICA continues to play a vital role in supporting Guyana's transition to a smarter, technology-driven agriculture sector and that the Situation Room will significantly elevate the Ministry's ability to safeguard production and support farmers nationwide.



## Guyana airspace remains open despite warning on Venezuelan airspace

Guyana's airspace remains fully operational despite a recent warning from United States President Donald Trump regarding flights over and around Venezuela.

Retired Lt. Col. Egbert Field, Director-General of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), assured that neither domestic nor international flights in and out of Guyana would be affected.

"In terms of international flights to Trinidad and Colombia, those are now using a different flight path. The traffic is being rerouted for the last couple of days. It wouldn't impact Guyana and Colombia," Field said.

Domestic flights to and from interior destinations near the Guyana-Venezuela border are also operating normally. "They have a different FIR (flight information region), so there will be no disruption. All our airstrips are within our airspace and not that close, so there is no disruption," Field added. Local aviators have corroborated that domestic flights continue to operate as

The GCAA's clarification follows a post by President Trump on his Truth Social platform, in which he stated: "To all Airlines, Pilots, Drug Dealers, and Human Traffickers, please consider THE AIRSPACE ABOVE AND SUR-ROUNDING VENEZUELA TO BE CLOSED IN ITS ENTIRETY."

Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Defence echoed the assurance, confirming that local, regional, and international



Retired Lt. Col. Egbert Field, Director-General of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority

airlines continue to operate flights in and out of the twin-island nation without in-

terruption. Defence Minister Wayne plan flights normally. Sturge emphasized that travelers can

### TSA to charge \$45 for travelers without REAL ID starting Feb. 1

U.S. airport security officials said on Monday that air travelers without federally compliant identification will face a \$45 charge starting February 1, 2026, as the government shifts from warnings to fee-based identity verification.

The fee applies to passengers whose IDs do not meet the enhanced federal standards known as "REAL ID." The notice, posted in the Federal Register, had previously referenced a possible \$18 charge, but officials later said the cost was revised upward because "expenses for the option were higher than forecast."

The Transportation Security Administration said passengers without REAL ID-compliant documents will be urged to pay the fee before arriving at the airport to reduce delays. If unpaid, the fee collection at checkpoints could take up to 30 minutes, officials said, and in extraordinary circumstances, "they could waive the fees." The charge is nonrefundable and covers a 10-day travel period.

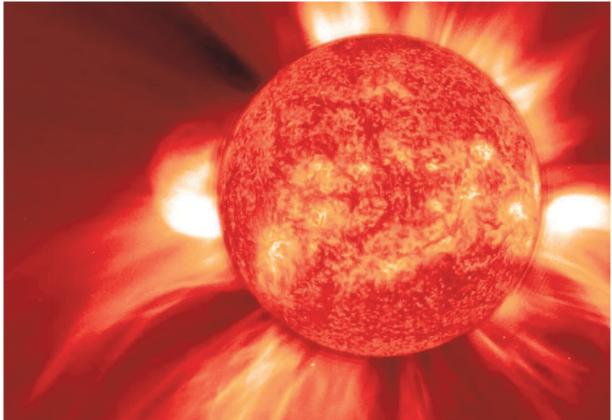
Children under 18 are not required to present IDs at airport checkpoints. Most compliant travelers present state-issued driver's licenses, but other acceptable federal-standard documents include passports from any government, Department of Defense ID, Department of Homeland Security Trusted Traveler Card, permanent resident cards and other government-issued credentials that meet minimum federal security requirements.





Get the latest entertainment news from the Diaspora and and World. Fresh, happy stories. Celebrate every month! www.limemag.ca





A coronal mass ejection can be several times larger than Earth

# Why 2026 will be a year like no other for India's Sun mission

For Aditya-L1, India's first solar observation mission in space, the year 2026 is expected to be like no other.

It's the first time the observatory – which was placed in orbit last year - will be able to watch the Sun when it reaches its maximum activity cycle.

According to Nasa, it comes roughly every 11 years when the Sun's magnetic poles flip - the Earth equivalent would be the North and South poles swapping positions.

It's a time of great turbulence. It sees the Sun transition from calm to stormy and is marked by a huge increase in the number of solar storms and coronal mass ejections (CMEs) - massive bubbles of fire that blow out of the Sun's outermost layer called corona

Made up of charged particles, a CME can weigh up to a trillion kilograms and can attain a speed of up to 3,000km (1,864 miles) per second. It can head out in any direction, including towards the Earth. At top speed, it would take a CME 15 hours to cover the 150 million km Earth-Sun distance.

"In the normal or low-activity times, the Sun launches two to three CMEs a day," says Prof R Ramesh of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA). "Next year, we expect them to be 10 or more daily."

Prof Ramesh is the principal investigator on Visible Emission Line Coronagraph, or Velc - the most important of the seven scientific instruments on Aditya-L1 - and closely monitors and decodes the data it gathers.

Studying CMEs is one of the most important scientific objectives of India's maiden solar mission, he says. One, because the ejections provide an opportunity to learn about the star at the centre of our solar system, and two, because activities that take place on the Sun threaten infrastructure on Earth and in space.

CMEs rarely pose a direct threat to human life, but they do affect life on Earth by causing geomagnetic storms that impact the weather in near space, where nearly 11,000 satellites, including 136 from India, are stationed.

"The most beautiful manifestations of a CME are auroras, which are a clear example that charged particles from Sun are travelling to Earth," Prof Ramesh explains.

"But they can also make all the electronics on a satellite malfunction, knock down power grids and affect weather and communication satellites."

The most powerful solar storm ever recorded was the Carrington Event in 1859, which knocked out telegraph lines across the globe. More recent events were recorded in 1989, when a part of Quebec's power grid was knocked out, leaving six million people without power for nine hours. In November 2015, solar activity disrupted air traffic control, leading to chaos in Sweden and some other European airports.

In February 2022, Nasa reported that a CME had led to 38 commercial satellites being lost.

Prof Ramesh says that if we are able to see what happens on the Sun's corona and spot a solar storm or a coronal mass ejection in real time, record its temperature at origin and watch its trajectory, it can work as a forewarning to switch off power grids and satellites and move them out of harm's way.

There are other solar missions watching the Sun, but Aditya-L1 has an advantage over others, including the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory sent jointly by Nasa and Esa (European Space Agency), when it comes to watching the corona.

"Aditya-L1's coronagraph is the exact size that lets it nearly mimic the Moon, fully covering the Sun's photosphere and allowing it an uninterrupted view of almost all of the corona 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, even during eclipses and occultations," says Prof Ramesh.

In other words, the coronagraph acts like an artificial Moon, blocking the Sun's bright surface to let scientists continuously observe its faint outer corona - something the real Moon does only during eclipses. Moreover, this is the only mission that can study eruptions in visible light, letting it measure a CME's temperature and heat energy - key clues that show how strong a CME would be if it headed toward Earth, says Prof Ramesh.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): You may have been acting a little bit crazy lately but there is a method to your madness. You figure if you can keep your rivals off balance they will be less likely to oppose you. A little fear can be made to go a long way.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Resist the urge to take chances with your money. The approaching full moon could make you a bit reckless over the next few days, so resolve right now to keep your cash in your pocket. You don't need another shiny toy to add to your collection.

**GEMINI (May 22 - June 21):** You won't always be thinking logically between now and Thursday's full moon, so whenever there is an important decision to be made get some input from people you trust. They may be able to see dangers that you have overlooked.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): There have been times lately when you were unable to decide if it was more appropriate to laugh or to cry, but what occurs today will cheer you up immensely. A loved one's antics will be so off the wall that you can't help but laugh.

**LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23):** Your dreams may have taken a battering in recent months but now the Sun is well placed in the most dynamic area of your chart it won't be hard to push ahead with them again. Be brave in your choices and, above all, be creative.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): The fact that you feel a bit restricted, both in your private life and in your career, is actually a good thing in that it forces you to narrow down your goals and focus on what is important. Forget about instant gratification and aim for long-term success.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You need to remind yourself that there is no point worrying about matters you cannot control. The approaching full moon will make you more nervous than you need to be, so stay calm and strive to look for the bright things in life.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): The more bad things there are going on in the outside world the more inclined you will be to retreat from it all and enjoy your own company. That's not a bad strategy at all for the next few days but don't make it a lifestyle choice.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21):** It may seem as if loved ones are not giving you the support you deserve but you need to understand they have their own issues to deal with. Thursday's full moon will clear away both their worries and your own, so be patient.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): If others start adding to your workload today you must have the courage to tell them to stop. The planets warn if you don't put your foot down now they will continue to take advantage of you throughout the week. Work only for yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): You may think that you can snap your fingers and have others come running to assist you but it won't be that easy today. If you want something from family and friends you will have to give them what they want in return. Give first if you can.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Close relationships could get a bit tense between now and the full moon on Thursday, so promise yourself that you won't say or do anything that might upset friends and loved ones who don't share your warped sense of humor.

Our
advertising works!
Try a low cost ad in
Equality News and reap
the benefits of the only
print weekly newspaper.



# Jeffrey Bostic sworn in as second president of Barbados

Jeffrey Bostic was sworn in as Barbados' second president early Sunday, coinciding with the nation's 59th Independence Day and its fourth year as a parliamentary republic.

A former Minister of Health and decorated officer in the Barbados Defence Force (BDF), Bostic earned acclaim for his leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, famously rallying the nation with the call: "No Retreat, No Surrender." He succeeds Dame Sandra Mason, who made history as both the last Governor-General (2018–2021) under the monarchical system and the country's first president.

For the ceremony, the Government of Barbados requested support from the Regional Security System (RSS) to bolster local law enforcement. Officers and military personnel from Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Guyana, and St. Kitts and Nevis were deployed, under the terms of the RSS treaty. The event also hosted several heads of state, government officials, and international dignitaries.

In addition to Bostic's swearingin, three Barbadians were awarded the nation's highest honour, The Most Honourable. Central Bank Governor Dr. Kevin Greenidge, cricket legend Joel "Big Bird" Garner, and economist and philanthropist Dr. Kurt Lambert received the Order of Freedom of Barbados for "distinguished and extraordinary service to Barbados, the Caribbean diaspora or to humanity at large."

Dr. Greenidge was recognized for his "exceptional, people-centred leadership in economic policy and central banking, and his outstanding transformative achievements in guiding reforms under the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation programmes."

Garner, celebrated for his record as one of the world's greatest fast bowlers, was honoured for his "outstanding leadership as a distinguished sports administrator, sterling service to national cricket development, and extraordinary contribution to West Indies and Barbados cricket," including his roles as Barbados Cricket Association president, selector, director, and West Indies team manager.

The honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados was also awarded to Professor Benedict Okechukwu Oramah, former president and chairman of the African Export-Import Bank, recognizing "his dedication, pivotal role and strategic leadership in expanding trade and investment relations between the members of the African Export-Import Bank and Barbados."

Sunday's events highlighted both the continuity of Barbados' democratic institutions and the nation's recognition of exceptional service to society, sports, and international development.

### **Worthy Park Estates is top rum**

Worthy Park Estate has once again captured global attention after being named IWSC Rum Producer of the Year 2025. This marks the distillery's second time receiving the prestigious title, following its breakthrough win in 2023, placing Worthy Park among the world's top rum producers.

Awarded by the International Wine & Spirit Competition (IWSC), the most respected and influential spirits judging body in the world, the title of Rum Producer of the Year is regarded as one of the industry's highest honours. Each year, the IWSC evaluates thousands of entries from across the globe, recognizing only those that demonstrate exceptional craftsmanship, consistency, and excellence. Worthy Park's repeat victory speaks highly of authentic Jamaican rum production and traditional pot-still distillation.

"Winning IWSC Rum Producer of the Year for a second time is a profound honour," said Alex Perkins, Export Sales Manager at Worthy Park Estate. "The IWSC is the pinnacle of global spirits judging, and this award reflects the dedication of our entire team to preserving and elevating Jamaican rum. It signals to the world that Worthy Park continues to lead with authenticity, heritage, and world-class quality."

This year, Worthy Park's success at the IWSC extended well beyond the top trophy. The distillery earned a sweeping collection of medals, including: Gold Outstanding for Worthy Park 109, Gold for Worthy Park Overproof and Gold for Worthy Park 12 Year Old as well as Multiple additional accolades across its portfolio

These achievements cap off a year of international recognition. Across major global competitions, including the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, The Spirits Business Rum & Cachaça Masters, and the International Spirits Challenge, Worthy Park collected an impressive array of Double Gold, Master, Gold, and Silver awards.

For industry observers, the distillery's consistent dominance on the international stage is no surprise. Worthy Park's rum-making heritage dates back to 1670, and today, the estate remains one of the few distilleries in the world that produces rum entirely on a single estate from cane to bottle.

Yet even amid celebration, Worthy Park's leadership acknowledges the recent hardship faced by Jamaican communities affected by Hurricane Melissa. The storm's aftermath sparked an unprecedented wave of international support from the rum, bar, and hospitality communities, many of whom work closely with Worthy Park. "These relief efforts mean more than words can express," Perkins said. "As we celebrate success, we are also deeply moved by the generosity of our friends and partners around the world."

# PM Persad-Bissessar defends secrecy over US radar in Tobago

Prime Minister Kamla
Persad-Bissessar has defended her decision to withhold details about the installation of United States radar systems in Tobago, even as she criticised the previous administration for leaving Trinidad and Tobago's borders "exposed."

Last week, Persad-Bissessar dismissed suggestions that the US presence in Tobago was military in nature. "They are helping us with something to do at the (Arthur NR Robinson International) airport," she said, pointing to work connected to a roadway near the airport. "It is not a military force as such. We are not about to launch any campaign against Venezuela."

She has now acknowledged that she deliberately kept the purpose of the US deployment quiet, arguing that public disclosure would have jeopardised national security. "Since it is a sensitive national security issue which provides for the protection of our territory and citizens, I did not think it was wise on Wednesday outside the Parliament, to publicly broadcast to narco and human traffickers as well as other criminals that we were installing a radar," she said. "It would be counterproductive to our citizens' safety." She added that the "security advantage has been lost" now that the upgrade has been made public.

According to the prime minister, the new system provides real-time monitoring of Trinidad and Tobago's air and sea space—capabilities she said were lacking when her government took office. "When we entered government, we found an existing radar system that was functioning sporadically and inefficiently and did not provide cover for our entire territory. Our Coast Guard could not even access data in real time, in addition to the system being compromised," she said. She noted that she had requested temporary assistance from the US Embassy "until we could get a permanent replacement for the existing system."

On Friday, the Office of the Chief Secretary (OCS) of the Tobago House of Assembly said it was seeking full clarification on the radar installation at the ANR Robinson International Airport. In a statement, the OCS confirmed that US personnel had been conducting work at the facility, including installing equipment intended to enhance surveillance. Chief Secretary Farley Augustine said he only learned of the prime minister's confirmation after wrapping up a live interview on Wednesday. He stressed that while foreign policy is handled by the central government, the THA remains focused on maintaining the island's stability and security. Augustine said he has



The new US 360 radar in Tobago

since spoken with the prime minister and requested a detailed briefing.

The US had originally planned to install a similar radar system at the Maurice Bishop International Airport in Grenada. However, Grenadian authorities missed Washington's deadline as they awaited a technical report, and the project faced public pushback from

protesters in St George's.

Persad-Bissessar has long supported US-led efforts against drug trafficking in the Caribbean, despite international criticism of Washington over the deaths of suspected narco-traffickers in international waters. She has openly stated that those involved in the illegal drug trade should be killed "violently."

Some political analysts argue that the wider US campaign is a front for moves to weaken or remove the Nicolas Maduro administration in Venezuela. Maduro's government has in turn accused Persad-Bissessar of allowing Trinidad and Tobago to be used for attempts at regime change.

### **Nevis Premier: No new taxes in 2026**

As the 2026 fiscal budget approaches, Nevis Premier Mark Brantley has reassured residents that no new taxes will be introduced in the coming year.

Speaking at his monthly press conference on November 25, Brantley was clear in response to a question about potential tax increases: "No! There won't be any new taxes."

The Premier emphasized that the Nevis Island Administration has consistently sought to avoid placing additional financial burdens on local residents. "The posture that my government has taken over the years is that where possible, we have sought to impose tax increases on goods or tax services on individuals who are outside the local population," he said.

Brantley highlighted several measures the government has implemented to boost revenue without affecting Nevisians directly. "I mention, for example, when we increased the Tourism Development Levy — that bites principally on visitors to the island. We have increased some charges at the Financial Services Registry. Those are not taxes but fees, and to incorporate companies and to do various types of business here, we have increased those. By doing that, we have increased revenue without putting any burden on the people of Nevis. That has been going quite good."

The Premier also noted that adjustments had already been made earlier this year to hospital costs and water tariffs.

With the 2026 budget on the horizon, Brantley's message underscores the administration's commitment to protecting residents from additional fiscal pressures while maintaining revenue streams from non-resident sources.



**Premier Mark Brantley** 

# Jamaica secures US\$6.7 billion in international support after Melissa

A coalition of international financial institutions has assembled a coordinated support package of up to US\$6.7 billion over three years to aid Jamaica's recovery and reconstruction following Hurricane Melissa.

The package was assembled by CAF – Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Inter-American Development Bank Group (IDB Group), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank Group (WBG).

The initiative combines emergency financing, sovereign loans, grants, and private sector investments to support a fiscally responsible, long-term recovery. Prime Minister Andrew Holness is scheduled to meet with representatives from the international financial institutions to discuss implementation plans.

Jamaica's existing disaster risk financing framework enabled a rapid early response, allowing the government to access US\$662 million in immediate funds. This includes US\$37 million from national contingency funds, US\$91 million from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), US\$150 million from a World Bank catastrophe bond, US\$300 million from the IDB's Contingent Credit Facility, and US\$42 million (scalable to US\$84 million) under the World Bank's Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option.

With damages estimated at US\$8.8 billion, recovery will require significant resources and long-term investments. Comprehensive recovery planning is already underway, focusing on critical priorities and reinforcing Jamaica's resilience.

To that end, a new financial support package of up to US\$3.6 billion could be made available to finance the Government's recovery and reconstruction program over the next three years, comprising:

CAF: Up to US\$1 billion for government-priority areas.

CDB: Up to US\$200 million for resilient infrastructure and small business support.

IDB: Up to US\$1 billion in sovereign financing.

IMF: Up to US\$415 million under the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) large natural disaster window.



Residents navigating down a flood-scarred street in Black River, Jamaica

World Bank: Up to US\$1 billion for budget support, partial risk guarantees, and investment projects.

The institutions are also providing technical assistance and grant support, with US\$12 million already mobilized

to strengthen recovery planning and disaster resilience.

Private investment will play a central role in rebuilding. IDB Invest and the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multi-

lateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) aim to mobilize an estimated US\$2.4 billion in private capital to complement public resources and preserve fiscal space.

## No lepto risk to tourists in JA

As Jamaica continues to manage a leptospirosis outbreak, Minister of Health & Wellness Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, CD MP, assured on Thursday (November 27) that the situation poses no significant risk to tourists visiting the island.

"We have discerned no great risk as it related to facilities that cater to tourists, including hotels and attractions. There is a certification process that is required for these facilities, and this is done collaboratively with the local health and tourism authorities. We are not giving an advisory to discourage visitors, but to alert the vulnerable communities, which have been identified," the Minister said.

Dr. Tufton added that the advisory aims to protect Jamaicans and raise awareness, not to incite panic. "We are managing the outbreak, and our discussion is intended to protect Jamaicans and heighten alertness. This can be easily misunderstood as panic; however, we are discouraging that."

The Ministry of Health, in coordination with the Regional Health Authorities and parish health departments, continues to work closely with tourism operators to ensure visitor safety and access to health services. The public is reminded that leptospirosis is preventable, treatable, and survivable if detected early. Protective measures include wearing protective gear during clean-up, avoiding floodwaters, securing food and water supplies, and maintaining environmental cleanliness.

National Epidemiologist Dr. Karen Webster Kerr reported that the country's leptospirosis death toll has risen to 14, up from 11 suspected cases the previous week. She confirmed 11 new cases based on positive PCR results, while seven previously suspected cases were ruled out after negative tests. As of November 26, Jamaica has recorded 90 cases of leptospirosis, with 51 reported before Hurricane Melissa and 39 following the hurricane.

# BuyCanadianNow.Ca



# Ralph Gonsalves vows ULP will endure after election defeat

Former Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, whose Unity Labour Party (ULP) suffered a crushing defeat in Thursday's general election after 25 years in office, said the party remains "very much alive" and that he will return to Parliament as Leader of the Opposition.

Speaking on Saturday, Gonsalves conceded the election but did not offer specific congratulations to new Prime Minister Dr. Godwin Friday or the New Democratic Party (NDP), which secured 14 of the 15 seats in Parliament.

"Believe me this: at this very height of the NDP's triumphalism, it is the moment of the start of their descent. And descend they will," Gonsalves said.

He painted a stark picture of the challenges ahead for the new administration: "The unravelling usually commences imperceptibly and then becomes a flood of disarray, as the centre cannot hold and things fall apart. History and experience so teach, and in our fast-changing world, the clock of their demise is already ticking."

Gonsalves, who led the opposition from 1998 to 2001, pledged to assume his new role "with dignity, duty and love," saying, "I have trod this road before. It is not unfamiliar to me... There remain in me no personal vanities or demons to overcome. I accept, after prayerful consideration, that I have been set apart and blessed for a time like this."



Former St Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves

He said he will convene a meeting of the ULP leadership on Sunday to decide on appointments for two Senate seats. "Clearly, given the lopsided majority of the new regime in Parliament, we in the Opposition will be routinely out-voted, but the people of St. Vincent

and the Grenadines will judge us on the basis of the quality of our work, which I assure you will be of the highest standard," he said.

Looking to the future, Gonsalves emphasized party renewal and resilience. "Labour is very much alive.

We shall rendezvous with the electorate formally again in 2030 or before, as the circumstances demand or admit... Let us turn this setback into an advance," he said, highlighting the potential for rebuilding and rejuvenation within the party.

## New SVG PM Goodwin Friday vows major reforms

Godwin Elliot Loraine Friday was sworn in as St. Vincent and the Grenadines' (SVG) fifth prime minister since independence in 1979, promising to serve "for all the people of this country."

The 66-year-old leader took office on Friday evening, less than 24 hours after leading his New Democratic Party (NDP) to a decisive 14-1 election victory over Ralph Gonsalves' Unity Labour Party (ULP), which had been seeking an unprecedented sixth consecutive term in office.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony, Friday stressed his commitment to improving living standards, moral values, and opportunities for all Vincentians. "It is my duty to do what I can to uplift living standards, moral values, hopes and expectations of our people, to enable each and everyone to dream and aspire to a better life in this country, and to not be prevented or obstructed from doing so by partisan politics, by unnecessary interference," he said

He emphasized that his policies will aim to help citizens achieve their full potential. "Our country of less than



St Vincent Prime Minister Goodwin Friday

110,000 people... we have to pool our resources, our intellect, all that we have to ensure, not just for us as individuals and our own families, but for those around us, that we can uplift one another," he added.

Friday also spoke of the importance of faith, gratitude, and unity. "I

always remember that in such times and in others, when we have joy and pleasure, that we take it to the Lord in prayer. I intend to do so as prime minister as well," he said, calling on Vincentians to work together for the common good.

Acknowledging the challenges

ahead, Friday said his administration will remain open to new ideas and adaptable in its approach. "I understand the challenges of office and the changes that take place from time to time, but we will remain adaptable, open ears to those who have solutions that might be better than the ones that we have put forward," he said.

He also expressed gratitude to his family and colleagues. "My wife, Ave Friday, small in stature, but... a tower of strength... our sons, Nicholas and Christian, have been there, offering critical advice when necessary... and my colleagues, I know, they can't wait to get started," he said.

Friday thanked voters for their confidence in the NDP, pledging major, transformational change. "It signalled to me that the people are ready for change that makes a difference in their lives, not incremental but major changes... We can't do it by ourselves... We must rely on all of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and I know that from my conversations... that people are willing and ready to do so," he said.

# Jamaica on track for lowest murder total in nearly 40 years, says PM

Prime Minister Andrew Holness says Jamaica is on pace to record fewer than 700 murders in 2025 — a benchmark the country has not approached in almost four decades.

Speaking Friday at the opening of the newly reconstructed Little London Police Station in Westmoreland, Holness credited sustained investment in national security for what he described as a historic drop in violent crime.

The prime minister said his administration has invested over \$90 billion into national security forces since 2016, including more than \$90 billion in funding to the sector over the last nine years. He said government spending on Jamaica's security forces now exceeds \$90 billion annually, totaling more than \$90 billion injected into policing and defense since 2016, amounting to over \$90 billion in broad security support.

Holness also credited policy support for the nation's uniformed services, naming the Jamaica Constabulary Force and the Jamaica Defence Force as central drivers of the shift, particularly during crisis response after Hurricane Melissa.

"As a result of that, the murder rate is now down 42 percent this year, 21 percent last year, and seven percent the year before. So now we can, for the first time in over 30... almost 40 years... look for a murder rate that is below 700," he stated.

The prime minister also applauded officers who remained on the front lines during severe weather. "Every police officer, every soldier is proud of their institution—proud of the uniform they wear when they stand in the public



**Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness** 

square, upright, shoulders squared, even in a hurricane. I saw the team from St. James foil attempted robberies during [Hurricane Melissa]. They could have decided to stay in the station and lock it. But our new JCF decided to go out, to be present, to be felt, to serve and protect," he emphasised.

Holness stressed that the homicide reduction was intentional, not random. "It happened because the Government made an investment and gave confidence and support in policy and direction to our security forces, and we are now reaping the benefits of that," he declared.

He also described police stations as emergency community anchors during Hurricane Melissa. "Many of the police stations became the centre of activity in the communities that were destroyed [by Hurricane Melissa]. That is where they were getting internet access. People gathered to get their phones charged... gathered for safety. That is where many of the distribution hubs were stationed," he said.

Holness argued that the progress is

measurable and rooted in public trust. "It is indisputable that you have a far lower murder rate today than you had in the last 30 years. It is indisputable that the JCF stood up as a strong unit," he pointed out.

He urged citizens to continue backing law enforcement. "We will continue to support them, we will continue to invest, and we will continue to make Jamaica a safer place for all citizens," he assured. "We will continue to support them, and we will continue to make Jamaica a safer place for all."





# Andre Russell retires from IPL, joins KKR staff as new 'power coach'

The Indian Premier League has bid farewell to one of its most explosive performers, as Kolkata Knight Riders legend Andre Russell announced his retirement from IPL competition.

The 37-year-old Jamaican, long regarded as one of the tournament's most devastating all-rounders, made the decision after KKR chose not to retain him for the 2026 season.

But while Russell's playing days in the IPL have reached their final over, his bond with the franchise continues. In a move that speaks volumes about his influence and charisma, KKR has immediately welcomed him into its coaching structure as the team's newly appointed "power coach."

Russell delivered the news himself in an emotional video message, reflecting both pride and clarity about the transition.

"I've decided to retire from the IPL," he said. "I'll still be active playing in various leagues all around the world and all the other KKR franchises. I had an amazing time and great memories, hitting sixes, winning games, MVP and all of those things."

He explained that the timing felt right, an intentional choice to exit with his legacy untouched.

"But sometimes you just have to know when to hang up the boots," he noted. "I don't want to fade out, I want to leave a legacy." For Kolkata fans, that legacy needs little explanation. Since joining KKR in 2014, Russell became the heartbeat of the squad, an athlete capable of flipping matches in minutes with bat, ball, or sheer presence.

He was instrumental in the franchise's two title runs during his tenure, first in his maiden season in 2014 and again during KKR's triumphant 2024 campaign. His individual peak arrived in 2019, when his blistering all-round performances earned him the IPL's Most Valuable Player award.

Across 133 appearances for the Knight Riders, Russell carved out numbers that feel almost mythical:

2,593 runs at a phenomenal strike rate of 174.96

220 sixes, many of them demolition blows etched into IPL folklore

12 half-centuries

122 wickets with his skiddy pace and sharp variations

40 catches in the deep and in pressure moments

16 Player of the Match awards, second only to his longtime teammate and compatriot Sunil Narine

His all-round mastery places him in rare company. Russell is one of only two players, alongside Chennai's Ravindra Jadeja, to reach both 2,000 runs and 100 wickets in the IPL, a testament to his unmatched versatility and enduring impact.

Now, as KKR's new power coach,



Andre Russell — new role

Russell enters a fresh phase of his cricketing life. His role will center on the very skill set that made him a global sensation: generating power, controlling momentum, and shifting

games with fearless precision.

The jersey may change from playing kit to coaching attire, but his imprint on Kolkata's cricketing culture promises to remain unmistakably bold.

## Gavaskar calls Conrad's 'grovel' remark ill-advised

SUNIL Gavaskar said Shukri Conrad should have been mindful of the history between India and South Africa, noting that South African cricket owes India gratitude for the support it has received over the years.

He pointedly remarked that, with all SA20 franchises owned by Indians, many South African players are getting employment opportunities because of Indian investment in the league.

"When you consider the current landscape of South African cricket, especially the SA20, five out of the six franchises (all six) are Indian-owned.

These owners are significantly supporting South African players – not just the international stars who are well taken care of, but the fringe players as well – giving them opportunities to build strong careers," Gavaskar said referring to South Africa coach remark that he wanted India to grovel on the field during second Test in Guwahati recently.

"You could say it was an ill-advised use of the word. We need to look back at South Africa's re-entry into international cricket. It was the Indian Cricket Board that proposed South Africa's readmission after more than 20

years of isolation, and their first international match on return was played in India," Gavaskar told broadcaster Jio Star, adding, "Indian and South African cricket have shared a positive, collaborative relationship for decades.

"Across all the years and encounters between the two teams, cricket has always been competitive and tough, but never hostile. I have witnessed nearly every India-South Africa contest, and it has always been hard, fair cricket.

Nothing beyond that. So yes, it may have been an ill-advised remark — wrong time, wrong place. I hope that in his next media interaction, he addresses it.

"I don't think an apology is necessary; I personally don't believe in apologies. But acknowledging it and making up for it would be accepted by everyone. These things happen. In the heat of the moment, you can get carried away and say something that goes a bit over the top. Given the strong connection between Indian and South African cricket over the last 30 years, I think he can simply clarify that he got a bit carried away."

Conrad used the racially-loaded



Sunil Gavaskar

word 'grovel,' a term infamously used by Tony Greig in the 1970s for the West Indies. "We didn't want to declare too early... obviously we wanted India to spend as much time on their feet out in the field. We wanted them to really grovel, to steal a phrase – bat them completely out of the game, and then say to them, 'Well, come and survive on the last day and an hour this evening," the South Africa coach said after Day 4 of the second Test in

Guwahati

Dale Steyn, a South African great, distanced himself from the coach's stand. "I'm not on that boat. I don't like that. I almost don't even want to make a comment about it. There are certain things you just don't say. There's stigma attached to it. It just wasn't necessary. South Africa were in such a dominant position-saying nothing is enough. I'm just not on that boat," Steyn said.



# St. Lucia stays red: SLP secures 14 of 17 seats, Pierre returns as PM

St. Lucia's political map turned bright red on Monday as the St. Lucia Labour Party secured a commanding re-election victory, clinching 14 of 17 seats in Parliament — extending Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre's leadership for a second consecutive term.

The election night mood carried symbolic undertones. With other Caribbean political movements riding recent "yellow is the colour" campaign waves in Trinidad and Tobago and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, SLP supporters proudly pushed back against the trend.

Many had vowed that St. Lucia would not follow a campaign branding path aligned with the United Workers Party's yellow messaging, hoping instead to reinforce long-standing democratic norms and national identity.

The message was clear — and ultimately successful.

The Prime Minister retained his parliamentary crown in Castries East, defeating SLP rival Peter Chiquot with a wide margin. Pierre, visibly emotional, praised the nation for a peaceful electoral day.

"First of all, I would like to thank

the people of St. Lucia for conducting what was a very decent election, an election free from violence, and this is testimony to the maturity of our people and the maturity of our democracy," Pierre said.

He directed his gratitude not to any one person but to the collective engine that powered the campaign — constituency groups, party executives, and volunteers working behind the scenes.

"I want to thank the members of the St. Lucia Labour Party: the executive, the Cabinet, the men and women in the constituency groups, who worked hard, who worked tirelessly, that this victory happened."

"Well done!" chants from the crowd drowned out applause as supporters waved flags emblazoned with the SLP's official red colour — a brand identity that helped carry the party through its largest parliamentary win vet.

Opposition leader Allen Chastanet successfully defended his seat in Micoud South, securing 1,248 votes and defeating SLP candidate Dr. Shanda Harracksingh. However, the party's



Philip J. Pierre

overall results left UWP operatives contemplating next steps.

Political analyst and columnist, Rick Wayne, said on local television that Chastanet would now need to consider surrendering party leadership.

"He will have to look at giving up the leadership of the party, having lost two consecutive general elections," Wayne asserted.

Pierre also extended a diplomatic olive branch to the opposition, urging a collective reset for the sake of parliamentary balance.

"There is a place in Parliament for the opposition, and we will move forward and work moving forward together," Pierre said, reaffirming his belief in democratic coexistence.

"Because we think there is a role for the opposition so the fine traditions of democracy can prevail."

Deputy Prime Minister Ernest Hilaire also retained his seat in Castries South, defeating UWP candidate Tommy Descartes and Independent David Hird in a three-way contest.

The result closes a legal chapter that briefly shadowed regional headlines earlier this year.

Hilaire had been the target of corruption allegations linked to his former diplomatic role, but the matter was dismissed by the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice, the island's highest appellate body, mid-election cycle.



We can sell your property for the best price on the market

- PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
- PROPERTY SALES & RENTALS
- REAL ESTATE VALUATION

## A Complete Real Estate Service:

- **W** Buying
- Selling
- **@ Rentals**
- *<b>⊘* Tax Compliance

Contact: 223-6218, 623-7805, 656-5544

# Trinidad PM says Opposition is financed by 'local drug mafia'

Trinidad and Tobago's prime minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, on Monday accused the opposition People's National Movement of being financed by the "local drug mafia" and fuelling an anti-United States "narrative," amid public debate over the installation of U.S. military radar systems in the Caribbean nation.

The PNM's Tobago Council leader, Ancil Dennis, has since urged the government to remove the newly installed military radar system at Arthur NR Robinson International Airport in Tobago.

In a widely shared social media video, Dennis pointed to the radar while standing on a road near the airport, accusing the government of "taking us for fools."

"You see that camouflage thing spinning in there?" he said, referencing the radar. "That's the road that the Prime Minister said a few days ago was being built by a foreign government to assist us here in Tobago."

He also highlighted conflicting explanations from senior officials, adding he had been told "this is a refuelling plane" and that the equipment was part of "standard international upgrades" to the airport.

The controversy intensified last week when THA Chief Secretary Farley Augustine said he was unaware of the radar system, sparking an emergency meeting over the weekend. That meeting included Attorney General John Jeremie, Defence Minister Wayne Sturge, Chief of Defence Staff Commodore Don Polo, and General Dan Caine, chairman of the United Chiefs of Staff, who also visited Tobago last weekend for high-level security talks.

In a statement posted on X, Persad-Bissessar alleged that "many persons, groups, politicians, and businesses who are profiting from drug trafficking are fuelling this anti-American narrative." She encouraged citizens to scrutinize those opposing drug interdiction efforts.

"When people show you who they are, believe them," she said, later writing that "it is not surprising that the PNM, a party long suspected of being financed by the local drug mafia... will be against the Government's anti-drug and anti-human-trafficking efforts."

Persad-Bissessar also accused the PNM hierarchy of prioritizing "illegal profits" over citizens' safety.

Her comments landed amid a regional backdrop of rising tensions, in-



Kamla Persad-Bissessar

cluding U.S. actions in Venezuela. Trinidad PM clarified that Washington's radar installation was requested by her as a temporary measure, not a military strategy against Venezuela.

"Contrary to public speculation," she said, "she was the one who requested the US to put up a radar system here."

Speaking outside Parliament last

Wednesday, Persad-Bissessar had assured the public: "It is not a military force as such. We are not about to launch any campaign against Venezuela."

She later acknowledged keeping the radar request confidential due to national security sensitivity, explaining that publicly disclosing the installation would "broadcast to narco and human traffickers... that we were installing a radar."

"It would be counterproductive to our citizens' safety," she told local media

Last week, U.S. President Donald Trump said land strikes against Venezuela "will start very soon," but Persad-Bissessar firmly denied any Tobagonian involvement in those plans.

The U.S. has significantly expanded its military presence in the Caribbean Sea as part of its Southern Command mission to counter regional drug cartels. That deployment includes the nuclear-powered reconnaissance aircraft P-8 Poseidon squadron, an amphibious squadron of United States Marines in the southern Caribbean, destroyers, a guided-missile cruiser, P-8 aircraft, an attack submarine, and a guided-missile cruiser.

ETHNIC VISION IMMIGRATION SERVICES

#### **OUR SERVICES**

- SPECIALIST IN REFUGEE MATTERS
- · APPEALS
- FAMILY SPONSORSHIP
- STUDENT VISAS
- STUDY PERMITS

Ritu Vashni Sharma RCIC #R510878 FOUNDER/OPERATOR Canadian Immigration Consultant

#### RVS LEGAL SERVICES PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

We offer expert legal consulting services designed to provide clarity, guidance, and strategic solutions tailored to your unique needs and objectives

#### **OUR SERVICES**

- · Specialized in Landlord and Tenant Matters
- Immigration Appeals
- · Small Claims Court,
- Human Rights Tribunal
- · Highway Traffic Offenses
- Notary Public
- · Commissioner of Oaths for taking affidavits.
- · & more



(416) 799-2106

CALL FOR CONSULTATION (416) 799-2106





# **BOOK NOW**

And Enjoy An Unforgettable Guyanese Christmas!



Accommodation (2 persons)





- Day 1 Welcome to Destination Guyana and unwind
- Day 2 Georgetown City Tour & Manatee Feeding, (Optional-Evening): Demerara Historical River Tour
- Day 3 Kaieteur Falls Excursion. (Optional-Morning) Birding in Georgetown's Botanical Gardens, (Optional-Evening): Dinner at Backyard Café
- Day 4 (Free Day) Personal or visit to Guyana Christmas Village
- Day 5 Mahaica River Eco-Tour, (Optional-Evening): Dinner with Singing Chef
- Day 6 Essequibo River Islands Expedition
- Day 7 Departing Destination Guyana and reminisce