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## UNC forms coalition to fight T&T elections

POLITICAL leader of Trinidad's Opposition United National Congress (UNC) Kamla Persad-Bissessar has announced a "coalition of interest" with the Laventille Outreach for Vertical Enrichment (LOVE) movement, the Progressive Empowerment Party (PEP), the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union (OWTU) and other unions.

She said, however, the UNC was not interested in working with the National Transformation Alliance led by Gary Griffith.

Persad-Bissessar made the announcement Tuesday ahead of the screening for candidates at the UNC

headquarters in Chaguanas.

"This evening, we had some meetings with PEP (Progressive Empowerment Party), the LOVE Movement and the OWTU and other unions. We have all agreed to engage to work together with respect to a coalition of interest. We have spent some time discussing the logistics and details of how that engagement should take place...we are looking at messaging, strategies, candidates for seats, no decision has been made but we are bouncing off seats where each may have a competitive advantage," she said.

Above, Persad-Bissessar (second from right) is pictured with LOVE movement's Lennox Smith, (left), the PEP's Phillip Edward Alexander, second left, and OWTU's president-general Ancel Roget, right.



## Guyana pushes for more prosperity

Guyana President, Dr Irfaan Ali has expressed his firm belief in Guyana's vision of resilience and sustainability, emphasising that the nation's path to prosperity must go hand in hand with unity and national pride.

While he is confident in the country's ability to achieve great economic strides, the President stressed that true success cannot be measured solely by development, but also by the happiness and togetherness of its people. "We can achieve all of this, but still not be happy," Dr. Ali said.

He added: "What is it that is required to bring our country and all the people of our country to a state of national pride? And that is really where 'One Guyana' comes in, building in such a way that brings our people to-

gether and that for me is the more important challenge."

For Dr Ali, the vision for a prosperous Guyana hinges on a national effort to build a society where inclusivity and togetherness are at the core.

The Head of State said as the nation advances with ambitious plans, including the completion of large-scale projects and investments in sustainable growth, uniting the people of Guyana is just as important as any infrastructural achievement.

"An important part of the next term is to complete this project of unifying our people, of bringing our people together and ensuring that we understand what it means to be Guyanese."

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## Protecting Workers

President Trump's tariffs will devastate Ontario's economy. We'll do whatever is necessary to protect people's livelihoods, including by investing tens of billions of dollars to keep people working. We'll provide funding for impacted businesses to retool so that they can attract new customers and meet payroll. We'll invest more in building infrastructure to create jobs and retrain workers to find new opportunities.



## Keeping Us Competitive

We're fighting the job-killing Liberal carbon tax and urging the federal government to cut red tape and streamline approvals to get big things built, including speeding up construction of new and upgraded nuclear power plants and critical mineral projects in the Ring of Fire region in Northern Ontario. We'll keep lowering the cost of doing business to make Ontario the most competitive place to invest and create jobs.



## Cleaning Up Our Streets

We're protecting families and children by banning drug injection sites near schools and daycares and clearing out encampments from public parks with new investments in shelters. We're cracking down on violent and repeat criminals and building new jails to keep them behind bars.



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Four months after treatment, Norah is back at work and thriving.

"Being back at work isn't even the most exciting part," exclaims Norah. "Not only was I able to attend my son's wedding, but I could walk down the aisle! It was the most magical moment and I have Teresa to thank for it. To think I might've missed that." Norah held back tears.

If you've recently been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy, regardless of its cause, it's time to call Teresa and the staff at TLC Medicine.

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Norah was diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy in 2016, a degenerative condition affecting almost 5% of people over the age of 55.

"My doctor sat me down and said, 'Norah I'm sorry to tell you this, but you have peripheral neuropathy. I'm going to prescribe you gabapentin to manage the discomfort but overall, neuropathy is untreatable.'

My first thought was, 'we can cure cancer but you can't stop my feet from hurting?' It felt like a cruel joke."

While neuropathy can be caused by a number of things including diabetes and chemotherapy, over 23% of neuropathy cases are classified as idiopathic. In layman's terms, the cause is unknown. This was the case with Norah.

"Basically every question I had was met with an 'I don't know.' It was depressing to say the least."

Eventually, Norah was forced to quit her job because the numbness had started to set in and prevented her from driving.

Fortunately for Norah, she would attend a health fair featuring TLC Medicine and the work they were doing to treat peripheral neuropathy.

"I thought it had to be a sham," Norah shares. "After so many specialists told me there was no hope, here was this acupuncturist saying she had a 90% success rate in treating neuropathy! I just had to call and I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am that I did."

Teresa Lau, founder of TLC Medicine, says that cases like Norah's are incredibly common. "Almost all of my neuropathy patients have been told at one point or another that there is no hope. I like to think I specialize in offering hope."

**Call (416) 461 - 0581 today to schedule!**

# Guyana officially objects to Suriname's map that included New River Triangle

Foreign Secretary, Robert Persaud, on Monday confirmed that Guyana has registered objections with the Suriname authorities over the inclusion of the New River Triangle in a Surinamese map that was recently on display at an International Business Conference which was held in Paramaribo, Suriname.

Shortly after, the Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ministry issued a statement pointing out that the internationally recognised boundary between Guyana and Suriname has been settled and agreed upon since 1936, and any depiction suggesting otherwise is inaccurate and does not reflect the legally established boundary.

The Ministry reminded that the internationally recognised map of Guyana confirms that the New River Triangle is part of the sovereign territory of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

“The internationally recognised map of Guyana confirms that the New River Triangle is part of the sovereign territory of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. This status is based on a binding legal process and international agreements, between and among the Governments of Brazil, Great Britain and The Netherlands in 1936,” the Ministry said.

Reports of the map surfaced on Saturday. According to reports during the International Business Conference a map showing Guyana's New River Triangle as part of Suriname was used as the official map distributed to all attendees. This is notwithstanding that a Guyanese delegation that included the Guyana Ambassador to Suriname Virjanand Depoo being present at the event.

In its statement the Ministry noted that the presence of representatives of the Government of Guyana at the Conference in no way signifies the condoning by the Government of Guyana of the use of a map that incorrectly represents the territory of Guyana.

“The Government of Guyana was not consulted about the map prior to its distribution. Had it been consulted, it would have strongly objected,” the Ministry said.

Meanwhile, Persaud, in a social media post on Saturday, swiftly declared that “the New River Triangle remains an integral and indivisible part of the terri-



The Suriname map showing the New River Triangle as its own

tory of Guyana, because it was so determined by a process recognised as binding under international law”.

Persaud affirmed that Guyana will continue to register objection to any and all infringement on Guyana's territory.

“We have done so and will continue to register our objections at all levels and fora,” Persaud said when contacted by this publication on Monday.

Persaud called on “every Guyanese, especially those of us who hold positions of leadership and influence in this country” to ensure that they “know with certainty and conviction what are the limits of [Guyana's] territory”.

Persaud reminded that the starting point of the boundary between Guyana and Suriname was decisively determined in 1936 when a joint British-Dutch-Brazilian Boundary Commission identified the source of the Kutari River on the watershed with Brazil, as the tri-junction point where the boundaries of Brazil, British Guiana and Suriname meet.

“The map of the tri-junction point was duly signed by the Brazilian, British and Dutch Boundary Commissioners in

1936. Therefore, Guyana has always enjoyed continuous occupation of its internationally recognised and legally established territory. The New River Triangle has never been recognised nor administered as Surinamese territory and the appendage of a portion of Guyana's territory to the map of Suriname neither creates nor establishes any legal rights to it,” Robert said.

He further clarified that the Joint Border Commission of Guyana and Suriname does not have a mandate to revisit the established boundary, but instead has a mandate to examine the historical records relating to the unresolved border issues between the two countries and make recommendations to the Foreign Ministers about how these issues may be resolved.

The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) also added their voice to the mounting criticism of the situation. In a statement on Monday the business support organisation (BSO) condemned the situation as an infringe-

ment on Guyana's territorial integrity.

The GCCCI in its statement noted that the Chamber is deeply concerned by the use of these images as well as the failure of objects to the use of these Images at the event.

The Chamber said: Silence in the face of this threat to Guyana's sovereignty is viewed as an endorsement of the same, which the Chamber views as inexcusable.

The Chamber called on Business Support Organisations and other agencies that acted as supporting actors to the conference to reject these actions and refrain from supporting or justifying any activity that violates Guyana's national boundaries.

Meanwhile, the Guyana Manufacturing & Services Association (GMSA), also expressed its concern and condemnation of the recent dissemination of the inaccurate map.

This misrepresentation, occurred during the recently concluded International Business Conference (IBC) held in Paramaribo, Suriname, which the GMSA was a partner in.

The GMSA dissociates itself from the dissemination of this map and any attempt to justify it.

“The New River Triangle is an integral component of Guyana's sovereign territory, a status solidified by the 1936 tri-junction point agreement, duly signed by the Brazilian, British, and Dutch Boundary Commissioners. Further, Guyana has always maintained uninterrupted occupation and administration of this region, reinforcing its internationally recognised and legally established borders,” the statement from GMSA said.

The body urged all stakeholders—both regional and international—to respect the established treaties and international legal frameworks that uphold Guyana's territorial sovereignty. Furthermore, we call on our partners to take proactive measures and ensure that such inaccuracies do not recur in future engagements.



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## EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

# Fighting back the bully

Donald Trump, the bully, is now fully ensconced in the White House, and has started what can only be described as his reign of terror on the world.

Within just three weeks, Trump has threatened to destroy the Canadian and Mexican economies through the implementation of tariffs, and has repeated numerous times his ambitions to make Canada the 51st state, without understanding, it seems, that we are a multi-faceted country made up of many parts and cultures.

Indeed, his imperialistic ambitions reflect those of the imperial aspirations of many who have gone before, including those countries that divided up the African continent and India, causing problems that remain many decades later, and more recently, the ambitions of a German dictator who is still considered the most evil man in the world, after he used ethnic cleansing to kill millions of people in his concentration camps.

Like him, Trump the Bully wants to displace the Palestinians from their homeland of Gaza, basically supporting

the aspirations of the Zionists who seem determined to continue their genocidal actions in the region.

Trump wants to turn the Palestinian lands (whatever little they have left) into the "Riviera of the Middle East," no doubt envisioning building fancy hotels and casinos for himself and his billionaire buddies in a place three of the world's major religions consider the Holy Land.

And never mind the Palestinian people, who he suggests could be absorbed into neighbouring countries. That's ethnic cleansing on another level.

In Canada, however, we are faced with a choice of either allowing the US President to bully us, or slapping him hard upside the head.

The only way to deal with a bully is to stand up to him. Bullies only succeed by preying on the weak. And both federally and provincially, we have the opportunity to choose leaders who will either copulate to the bully, or stand up to him.

We'll leave the federal choice aside for now, and focus on the immediate:

provincial, as we get set for an election in two weeks.

From where we sit, as a voice that often speaks for business communities in Ontario, we believe there is no one else able to stand up to Trump (of the current crop of leaders) than Doug Ford.

Indeed, if this was a playground, we'd want Doug having our backs when the bully comes calling.

We believe he has what it takes to face down Trump, and will not hesitate when coming to standing up for the people of this province. The other candidates in this race, frankly, do not.

We understand why Ford called this election when he did. In the face of coming American tariffs, he recognized the need to have a strong mandate to fight back, as well as the importance of having one that will last the entire term of the Trump presidency.

It would do us no good to change political gears mid-stream. You can't stand up to a bully and then run away when he flexes his muscles - or in this case, fat.

That's why we believe Ontarians must choose carefully in two weeks when we decide on the person to stand up to Trump.

We want the man whose first reaction to the promised tariffs was that he's simply turn off the switch that supplies Ontario power to the US north east. That's the way to stand up to a bully -- to show him you're not afraid, and that you're prepared to use any tool in your shed to fight back.

We simply don't see the same grit from other leadership hopefuls.

Federally, we have a choice between Trump 2.0 and whoever the Liberals choose as their leader (hopefully Carney). But we'll discuss that another day.

For now, let's remain focused on Ontario. This is where we live. This is where we must be prepared to stand up for ourselves. And this is where we must have a leader who will best represent us in the coming fight.

We say, Doug all the way.

We hope you see it the same way.

## Beware: They are at it again!

Dear Editor,

I HAVE noted that the opposition parties are at it again. They are questioning the accuracy of the voters list and threatening to be their usual destructive selves. In the process, they are relying on downright lies, distortion and half-truths.

It is true that the voters list is somewhat large. However, from the time the decision was taken to move towards continuous registration, a decision that the opposition was fully on board with, it was known that this situation would have arisen.

The reason was to avoid having to do a completely new list at every election. Moreover, it was realised that if a no-confidence motion was passed unless we have continuous registration, we would not be in a position to hold elections in three months, as the Constitution requires.

The PNC and others who were in the opposition at that time were very

keen on this. They supported it wholeheartedly. Moreover, if for any reason we needed an urgent referendum, the old system of registration could not suffice.

The main question here must be that all the names on the list are real persons and not fictitious. Many measures have been put in place, at great cost, we should note, to ensure that that was so.

For instance, whenever a person is registered, GECOM officials along with representatives of the ruling and opposition parties visit the home of the registrants to ensure that all the information is correct. It is then signed off by a GECOM official and the representatives of the political parties.

The other issue is the question of biometrics. When talk of this arises, the opposition deliberately choose to ignore the fact that every registrant is fingerprinted. Before elections are held, the whole database is sent abroad, to reputable companies in either the US or Canada, accompanied by officials of

GECOM and representative of the political parties, to be checked for any duplicate registrants.

This guarantees that a voter is only registered once.

This system has been working very well and was tested on more than one occasion.

In 1997, the elections were forensically audited by a team of competent CARICOM elections specialists headed by Mr. Ulric Cross of Trinidad and Tobago. In the final report, it was stated that not a single fraudulent vote was found.

In 2001, the Chairman of GECOM, Mr. Joseph Singh, Major General (Ret'd.) invited international elections specialists to audit the elections before he demitted office. Again, not a single fraudulent vote was found.

It's because it is so difficult to rig the elections that the PNC/APNU/AFC tried to do so from inside. From all appearance, they succeeded in 2015 but

were caught in 2020.

In relation to dead people being on the list, it seems very unlikely or at best very minimal since the list of dead persons is sent over monthly from the Births and Deaths Department so that those names are removed from the list.

The fundamental points should not be lost in the PNC/APNU/AFC offensive and attempts at sowing confusion, that is, firstly all the names on the list are real people, some may be abroad temporarily (maybe President Trump's deportation policy would help to ensure that they return). The second fact is that a person can only vote once.

The opposition would be better served if they play a positive role in nation building in whatever capacity they are operating instead of attempting to disrupt.

That would be the patriotic thing to do.

**Donald Ramotar,**  
Former President

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# Guyana successfully extradites fugitive to Canada in landmark case

IN a historic move underscoring the growing international co-operation between Guyana and Canada, the Government of Guyana has successfully extradited fugitive Harry Narine Rajkumar to Canada, marking a milestone in bilateral law enforcement efforts against transnational crime.

On Thursday, February 6, 2025, Rajkumar was extradited to Canada, where he faces multiple criminal charges. This marks the first successful extradition between the two nations, reinforcing their shared commitment to upholding justice beyond borders.

Rajkumar had been wanted by Canadian authorities since May 2019 after fleeing from law enforcement. His arrest in Guyana followed an INTERPOL Red Notice, which enabled the Guyana Police Force (GPF) to track his movements.

After evading capture for several years, Rajkumar was finally apprehended, committed to prison, and subsequently waived his right to an extradition hearing.

He consented to return to Canada to face charges, which include: Attempted Murder in violation of the Canadian Criminal Code; and Aggravated Assault in violation of the Canadian Criminal Code (Ottawa jurisdiction).

Upon his arrest, Canadian authorities swiftly submitted an extradition request, which was processed through Guyana's legal framework. The case was presented before Acting Chief Magistrate, Faith McGusty, where Rajkumar formally agreed to his extradition.

The successful extradition was

## Whitby woman wants refund from psychic

A Whitby woman is sharing her experience as a warning to others after she said that she handed over \$50,000 to a psychic who promised that she could help her start a romantic relationship with a man from her gym.

Joanne Whalen said that she began visiting the psychic in the fall of 2013 after separating from her husband.

Whalen said that she had made a habit of visiting psychics over the years and always found it "fun and entertaining."

This time, she said that she told the psychic she was interested in starting a new romance with a man she had noticed at her fitness club.

"When she did the reading, she found there was a man, and I said, 'Yes there is a man I like at the gym.' She told me, 'I can bring this man closer to you for \$550,'" said Whalen.

Intrigued, Whalen paid the money, but what followed in the months after were repeated requests for more payments to make the love connection happen.

"I transferred \$12,000 to \$15,000 but she wanted cash, so I was dropping off lots and lots of cash at her house," said Whalen.

Whalen said she was also asked to buy gold bars at Costco which were to be used in ceremonies with candles to help make the romance blossom.

In total, Whalen said she gave the psychic \$50,232 over the course of about one year, but the romance never happened.

"I said to her, 'If everything is going so great why isn't anything happening? I'm paying you thousands and thousands of dollars and I'm getting nothing,'" said Whalen.

Whalen said she now believes she was misled and wants her money back.

"I was so trapped in it mentally because I was so scared," said Whalen.



Harry Narine Rajkumar — wanted for attempted murder in Ottawa

made possible through a collaborative effort involving multiple agencies. The prosecution team was led by Ms. Lisa Cave, Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions at the Director of Public Prosecutions Chambers, along with Ms. Ormella Gladstone, Treaty Officer at the Ministry of Home Affairs, and Sergeant Stephan Hinds from the Major Crimes Unit, supported by other law enforcement officers.

This milestone underscores Guyana's unwavering commitment to international law enforcement co-operation and its dedication to ensuring that justice prevails, irrespective of geo-

graphic boundaries. It also sets a precedent for future collaborations between Guyana and Canada in addressing cross-border criminal matters.

With this successful extradition,

Guyana reaffirms its stance as a key player in the global fight against transnational crime, strengthening its diplomatic and judicial ties with international partners in the pursuit of justice.

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# NRF withdrawal formula ensures effective rate of withdrawal kept under 80 per cent



Joel Bhagwandin

MY attention was drawn to comments made by opposition aligned folks about the amended withdrawal rules of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) pursuant to the Fiscal Enactments (Amendment) Act No.2 of 2024. The opposition finance spokesperson (s) intimated that this new withdrawal formula will deplete the NRF, signaling reckless spending and / or depletion of the Fund at a reckless rate. However, an application of the withdrawal rules, the old versus the new, based on the forecasted deposits into the NRF, disproves this notion.

Before I proceed to demonstrate the calculations hereunder, I wish to stop short to say that it is the very opposition that have always argued that the government should not be borrowing to finance the budget given the proceeds from the NRF. Yet, the very critics have contradicted themselves when the government is now prudently moving in that direction, to, in a measured way, increase the withdrawal ceiling of the NRF, which in turn would allow for minimised borrowing. Notwithstanding, this is not the first occasion wherein the opposition has contradicted themselves owing to the lack of a studied position on these matters. It now appears that the degree of numerical and fiscal contradictions have become an invariably collective norm, morphing itself into an infectious, intellectual paralysis by which they are helplessly plagued.

I now turn to my calculable demonstration:

Exhibit (a)

NRF Withdrawal Rule - Old			NRF Withdrawal Rule - New		
	US\$ Millions	Withdrawal (US\$ Millions)		US\$ Millions	Withdrawal (US\$ Millions)
100%	500	500	100%	1,000	1,000
75%	500	375	95%	1,000	950
50%	500	250	90%	1,000	900
25%	500	125	85%	1,000	850
5%	500	25	50%	1,000	500
3%	3,500	105	10%	1,000	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>4,300</b>
<b>Effective Withdrawal Rate</b>	<b>23.0%</b>		<b>Effective Withdrawal Rate</b>	<b>71.7%</b>	

As shown in exhibit (a) above, under the old NRF withdrawal formula, on a balance of US\$6 billion, the maximum withdrawal ceiling is capped at US\$1.4 billion, or an effective withdrawal rate of 23 per cent. Whereas, under the amended withdrawal formula, on a balance of US\$6 billion, the maximum withdrawal ceiling is capped at US\$4.3 billion or an effective rate of 71.7 per cent.

In exhibit (b) below, under the old NRF withdrawal formula, on a balance of US\$12 billion, the maximum withdrawal ceiling is capped at US\$1.6 billion, or an effective withdrawal rate of 13 per cent. Whereas, under the amended withdrawal formula, on a balance of US\$12 billion, the maximum withdrawal ceiling is capped at US\$4.9 billion or 40.8 per cent.

Editor, effectively, these illustrations have disproved the notion that the amended withdrawal rule is designed to deplete the NRF. Rather, the amended

withdrawal formula is designed, more so, to sustainably increase the withdrawal ceiling relative to the projected growth of the Fund's size.

In so doing, the amended withdrawal formula can be premised upon two (2) primary factors: (1) It is aimed at minimising the level of debt financing of the budget, thus maintaining the current low-level of debt-to-GDP ratio of under 30 per cent; and (2) the current production level of oil has already increased nearly six-fold since first oil five-years ago, which is poised to increase more than ten-fold by 2030. This means that the annual deposits into the NRF is projected to increase by at least

four-fold, all things being equal.

In summary, the analysis herein has demonstrated that the amended withdrawal rule of the NRF is designed to ensure that the effective rate of withdrawal is kept under 80 per cent, based on the projected growth in the Fund's size, which was obtained under the old withdrawal rule, all things being equal. In other words, the maximum effective rate of withdrawal under the new formula pursuant to the Fiscal Enactments (Amendment) Act No.2 of 2024, has practically remained the same as it was under the old withdrawal formula, based on the projected growth in the Fund's size.

Exhibit (b)

NRF Withdrawal Rule - Old			NRF Withdrawal Rule - New		
	US\$ Millions	Withdrawal (US\$ Millions)		US\$ Millions	Withdrawal (US\$ Millions)
100%	500	500	100%	1,000	1,000
75%	500	375	95%	1,000	950
50%	500	250	90%	1,000	900
25%	500	125	85%	1,000	850
5%	500	25	50%	1,000	500
3%	9,500	285	10%	7,000	700
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>4,900</b>
<b>Effective Withdrawal Rate</b>	<b>13.0%</b>		<b>Effective Withdrawal Rate</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	



Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO



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# First 12,000 doses of flu vaccines to arrive soon: Minister of Health

As the government prepares to roll out a programme to safeguard the most vulnerable, Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony has announced that the first batch of influenza vaccines is scheduled to arrive in the country soon.

These vaccines will be administered to healthcare workers and the elderly, who are at greater risk during the flu season.

“We have already started the process, and very soon we will have about 12,000 doses of these vaccines arriving in the country. We will then commence rolling out this programme,” Dr Anthony said on Monday.

He was speaking at a two-day workshop organised by the Ministry of Health, the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), and the International Health Regulations National Focal Point Committee to develop Guyana’s 2024 State Party Self-Assessment Annual Report (SPAR).

Dr Anthony first mentioned this initiative to vaccinate against the flu last Wednesday during the consideration of the ministry’s budget.

For many years, these vaccines were unavailable in the public healthcare system, forcing individuals to seek them overseas.

According to Dr Anthony, investments made over the years have strengthened the country’s surveillance capacity.

In January this year, the Ministry of Health announced that the National Public Health Reference Laboratory had officially received accreditation from PAHO/WHO as a National Influenza Centre.

Now, Dr Anthony said the focus is on implementing an integrated surveillance system that utilises the existing telemedicine infrastructure at healthcare facilities.

“We want to use the existing telemedicine infrastructure, where we have internet connectivity, at these 84 sites to enhance our surveillance efforts,” he said.

In preparation for future pandemics, Dr Anthony stated that the ministry is working to develop a robust surveillance system that will monitor both human and animal health.

“We know, of course, that if we are to be ready for the next pandemic, there is a strong likelihood that a virus could jump from animals to the human population.

“That is why it is important to have this integrated surveillance system,” Dr Anthony said.



Guyana will soon start to administer the flu vaccine

## New mammogram machines in Linden

The Minister of Health, Honourable Dr Frank Anthony, has commissioned a state-of-the-art mammogram machine at the Linden Hospital Complex, marking a significant step in expanding breast cancer screening services across the country.

Previously, the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) was the only public health facility offering mammography services.

With this new addition, residents of Region 10 and surrounding areas now have improved access to early breast cancer detection, reducing the need to travel long distances for screenings.

During his remarks, Dr Frank Anthony emphasised the importance of early detection in reducing cancer-related deaths.

“For many years, we have spoken about the need for a structured cancer programme, and now we are taking the necessary steps to implement it. By placing mammography machines in every region, we are making it easier for individuals to access screening services,” he said.

The Health Minister further noted the government’s commitment to improving cancer care through timely diagnosis and treatment.

“If we are going to improve survivability, we must ensure early detection and swift intervention. In the past, patients had to wait more than a month for biopsy results. Today, that time frame has been reduced to just three to seven days,” Dr Anthony added.

The Linden Hospital Complex is the first of four locations to receive a mammogram machine, with additional units to be commissioned in the coming months. The Min-



Dr Anthony at the commissioning

istry of Health continues to prioritise improved healthcare accessibility, ensuring that advanced medical technology reaches communities beyond Georgetown.

Among those present were Regional Health Officer, Dr Gregory Harris; Regional Executive Officer, Dwight John; Director of Non-communicable Diseases Dr Lachmine Lall and other officials.



An aerial view of Guyana in the night

# Guyana economy not 'wedded' to oil and gas, says President Ali

DESPITE Guyana's aspirations to become a significant energy producer, President Irfaan Ali has stated that the nation's economy is not exclusively reliant on its oil and gas sector.

The Head of State, during a media engagement earlier this week, stated that though Guyana is looking to bring key energy industry players together, there are vaster opportunities.

"Our country is not wedded to oil and gas. We have many other opportunities outside oil and gas. The energy equation, of course, is important, because we are looking to be a major player in energy within the region itself. New opportunities are coming with gas," the head of state said.

He pointed out that the country is focused on creating new opportunities and partnerships.

In the next few days, the country will host its 4th edition of its energy conference and supply chain expo.

"You'll have an opportunity to meet with local businesses, creating new partnerships and expanding your own horizons here in Guyana. So we're looking forward to bringing the region together, bringing the world together here in Guyana, as we seek to continue expansion of the energy sector and the billing out of the diversified economy here in Guyana."

Guyana's economy is expected to continue its unprecedented growth this

year, with a projected economic expansion of 10.6 percent.

That was revealed during the presentation of the country's national budget last month.

An economic outlook of the country's growth, credited the massive expansion to the country's peak oil production from the Liza Destiny floating production storage and offloading (FPSO) in 2024, and the commencement of the 'One Guyana FPSO' in late 2025 and continued expansive growth in the non-oil economy.

This expansion will solidify the nation's position as the third fastest growing economy in the world.

The non-oil economy is expected to grow by 13.8 percent, as significant investments are made to diversify the economy.

The agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors are anticipated to expand by 11.4 percent in 2025, with production increases across all subsectors.

In the sugar industry, growth of 115.4 percent is expected, with production targeting 101,000 metric tonnes.

This growth will be supported by efforts in mechanisation and conversion, as well as value-added production. Additionally, rice production is forecasted to expand by 12.4 percent, reaching 804,000 tonnes through expanded acreage and improved crop varieties developed through research and

development.

The other crop sub-sectors are projected to grow by 11.7 percent, driven by expanded acreage and the country's focus on strengthening local food security. Livestock production is also expected to grow by 7.5 percent across all categories.

The fishing industry will continue its upward trajectory, with a 5.8 percent growth driven by increased investments in aquaculture. The forestry sector is projected to grow by 1.3 percent, with a production target of 419,000 cubic metres.

In the extractive industries, mining and quarrying are expected to grow by 10 percent. Oil and gas production from the three existing FPSOs, along with the 'One Guyana FPSO', is expected to reach 786,000 barrels per day by the fourth quarter of 2025, contributing to a 9.5 percent projected growth for the sector.

Gold mining is expected to grow by 17.2 percent, with production anticipated to reach 501,000 ounces due to increased output from both large-scale and small- to medium-scale miners. Bauxite mining is projected to grow significantly by 70.1 percent, driven by increased production, particularly at the Linden mine, where output is expected to rise by 167.3 percent to 4.4 million metric tonnes.

Other mining and quarrying sec-

tors are forecasted to grow by 39.7 percent, reflecting significant investments in public and private infrastructure projects.

The manufacturing sector is expected to grow by 30 percent, fuelled by expansions in sugar, rice, and other manufacturing subsectors. The construction sector is projected to grow by 24.8 percent, while the services sector anticipates growth of 8 percent, with notable expansions in wholesale and retail trade, administrative and support services, information and communication, and transport and storage. These sectors are expected to increase by 8.7 percent, 9.8 percent, 5.8 percent, and 9.3 percent, respectively.

During a previous broadcast, Dr. Ali emphasised that continuous efforts are being made to ensure the non-oil economy continues to thrive, avoiding stagnation through targeted investments aimed at fostering growth and significant improvements.

The government, he pointed out, has skillfully navigated potential economic pitfalls, such as the Dutch Disease—a phenomenon where a rapid increase in revenue from natural resources, like oil or gas, negatively impacts other sectors of the economy, particularly manufacturing and agriculture.

# On the 80th anniversary of the defeat of fascism, never again

**By Donald Ramotar**  
*Former President of Guyana*

We are on the eve of the 80th Anniversary since the end of the second world war, which resulted in the defeat of Hitlerite Fascism. At that time many pledges were made. The main cry was “Never Again”.

In order to prevent the atrocities of that war many international institutions were created. The most important being the United Nations. Subsequently an International Court of Justice (ICJ) and an International Criminal Court (ICC). These were to discourage acts of mass violence and when they occur to punish the perpetrators.

Unfortunately, almost all of the people that experienced such genocide and the untold sufferings have passed on. The leaders of the world today seem to have forgotten the misery and grief caused by that war.

It appears that Fascism and the supporters of fascism are on the rise, holding some of the most important positions in our world. Our world has become a very dangerous place where no one is safe.

The most shameful occurrence took place in plain sight of the whole world. Tens of thousands of innocent civilians were killed by bombs and bullets in Palestine. Among these were children who were deliberately targeted by Israeli snipers in the Gaza. All of them killed by snipers were shot in the head or through the heart.

Deliberately targeted were hospi-

tals so that those who were injured would die from their wounds. Pure water, electricity and sewerage systems were deliberately destroyed so that those who were “fortunate” not to have been shot could die from simple diseases such as gastro, flu and/or starvation.

For the first time ever doctors, nurses and other medical workers including ambulance workers were marked for death. Hundreds were brutally murdered.

Another group that was targeted was journalists and other media workers. Never before were so many killed. This was to prevent them from reporting on the genocide. However, the scale was so massive that it could not have been hidden.

The Israeli regime that was mainly responsible for the massacre was fully supported with billions of dollars worth of bombs, bullets, tanks, planes, drones, helicopters and other killing machines mainly from the United States but also from the United Kingdom, Germany and other European States. Those governments are as guilty as the fascist, apartheid Israeli regime in the genocide that took place. Indeed, it could not have happened without their military, political, economic and diplomatic support.

The international institutions created at the end of World War II are now seriously damaged and made almost totally ineffective by the US and its allies.

There was some hope that the Palestinian may have gotten some jus-



Donald Trump

tice after Donald Trump was elected. However, since taking over from the collaborationist Biden Government, the Trump administration promises to be the same or worse.

In the first place they continue to blame the victims – the Palestinians people with the most outrageous lies and distortions. They keep supporting the occupation and the thousands of Palestinians imprisoned for decades, many without even being charged.

Trump has proposed to seize the Palestinian lands in Gaza and is supporting the present attacks by the Israeli Defence Force on unarmed Palestinians on the West Bank.

This new American regime is not just threatening the Palestinians. The

President himself has threatened to seize the Panama Canal, Greenland and Canada.

One of the reasons we were told that gave rise to Adolph Hitler in Germany was the policy of appeasement. The UK sacrificed Czechoslovakia in the hope of getting peace.

We see many countries scuttling to appease Donald Trump. Mexico and Canada which took a strong stance against the threat of ‘sanctions’ by Trump caved in. They both placed ten thousand soldiers on their borders while begging not to be penalised. So far Trump has given them a month’s reprieve.

Colombia’s President took a strong position against the way Colombians were being deported back to Bogota. Within hours he went on a 180-degree change. The same could be said of Panama’s administration which had decided to end its relations with China which was more in Panama’s national interests.

This will embolden Trump and the ultra right in his government. In search of raw materials the present US administration is leaving nothing to the imagination. They are making it clear that they would take what they want. International laws would not be an impediment to this cabal.

If the US is allowed to get away with these outlandish positions, then the world would be the limit.

In this year of the 80th anniversary of the defeat of Fascism let us reiterate the call “Never Again”.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

**World Guyanese Congress**  
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To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit [www.wgc-org.com](http://www.wgc-org.com)

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# Agriculture Minister continues drive to empower local governments

As part of the government's efforts to empower local government authorities across the country, Agriculture Minister Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha handed over four mini-excavators to four Neighborhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) in Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice).

The machines, each valued at approximately \$14 million, will be used to carry out drainage works in the residential communities within their respective catchment areas.

Minister Mustapha while addressing residents at the Mahaica Mahaicony Abary Agriculture Development Authority's (MMA – ADA) office on Saturday, disclosed that all ten NDCs in Region Five now have access to their own excavator, thanks to the Government of Guyana which represents an investment of approximately \$56 million.

He told residents that as part of the government's vision to develop a comprehensive drainage system across the country, the Ministry of Agriculture through the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) has a critical role to play when it comes to providing drainage and irrigation in both cultivation and residential communities.

"At the Ministry of Agriculture, we are not only focusing on the agricultural aspect of development in the country. When we have dry weather or a heavy rainy period, the Ministry of Agriculture through the NDIA plays an important role. When farmers don't have water, we have to put systems in place to provide irrigation. Similarly, when communities are experiencing flooding, we have to provide drainage. This is why, the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, is working to develop a comprehensive drainage system across the country," he explained.



Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha

plained.

Minister Mustapha said President Dr. Irfaan Ali and Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo have directed that resources be allocated to empower local government authorities to be able to maintain the drainage systems within their communities.

"Upon the instruction of the President and Vice President, we are working to empower all the NDCs so that they can become more responsive to the communities' needs. This region, Region Five, is the first to have all of its NDCs equipped with machines to carry out community drainage works. The NDC will be responsible for developing a work programme. We know that they might not be in a position to maintain these machines so the NDIA will be responsible for maintaining the machines, providing fuel, and also pay-

ing the operator. These machines are to be used to execute community work, not private work," the Minister explained.

Minister Mustapha also con-

demned the actions taken by the Chairman and overseer of the Union/Naarstigheid, who, he explained were invited to receive the machine on behalf of their NDC but chose not to attend.

"I asked the Regional Chairman to invite the officials from the four NDCs to come and receive the machines that will be beneficial to their communities and utilize them to improve their drainage. But, because of petty politics, the Chairman and the overseer from the NDC at Union/Naarstigheid refused to attend this ceremony. This machine will benefit the residents of the community. We have to move away from petty politics so that the country can move forward," he said.

The NDCs that benefited from today's handing over were Blairmont/Gelderland, Rosignol/Zeelust, Union/Naarstigheid and Bath/Woodleypark.

Minister Mustapha said before the end of the year, all local government authorities in Guyana will have a mini-excavator to execute works to upgrade internal drainage systems in the communities.



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BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL

# Meet the Guyanese surgeon who saved Dr Martin Luther King's life

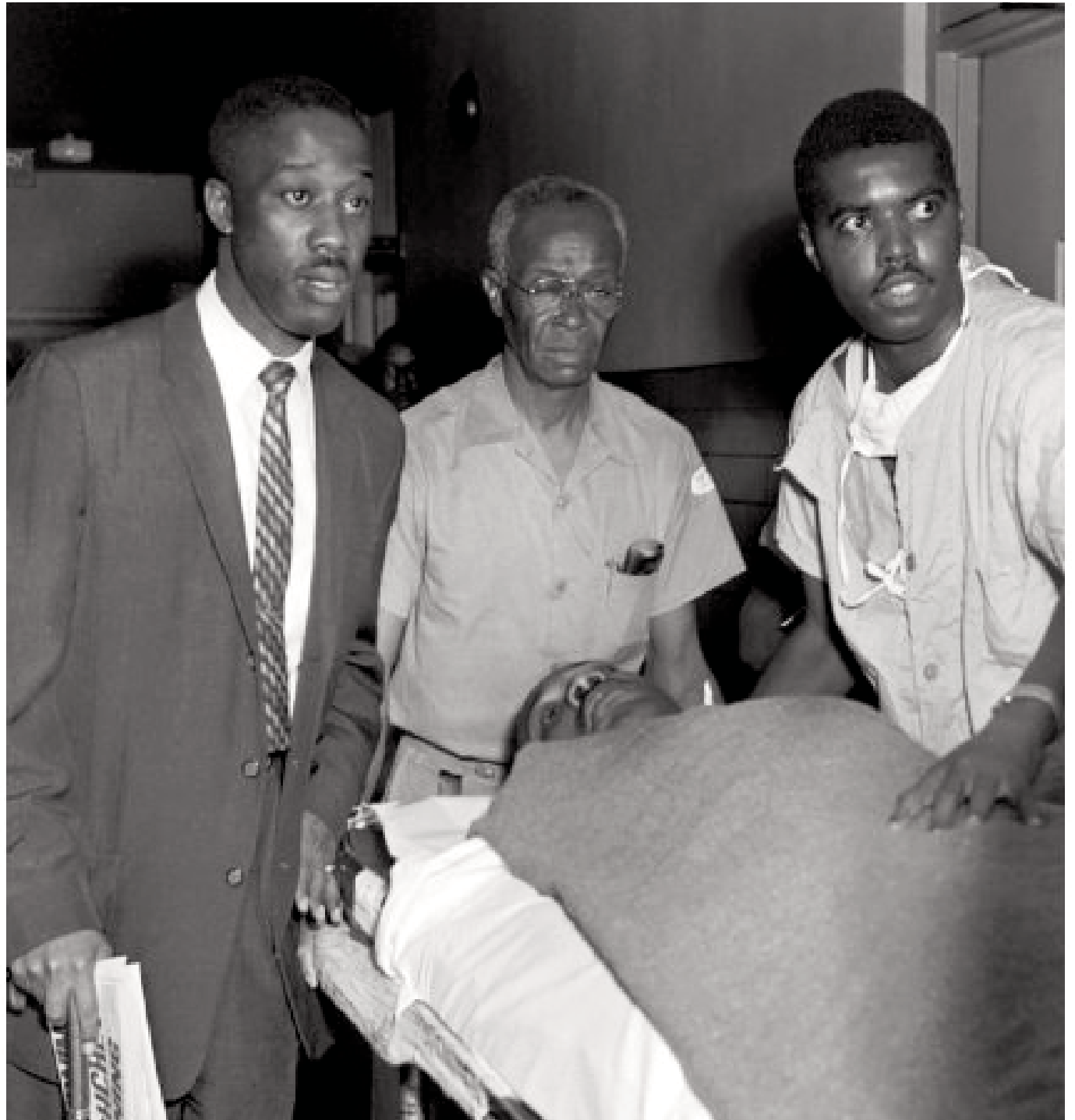
Dr. Leo Cecil Maitland was a physician who did not discriminate against any of his patients, from rich clientele to the average person who couldn't pay for his services, Dr. Maitland was committed to providing quality medical treatment to whoever needed it. What mattered to him the most is ensuring his patients were healthy.

He designated weekends specifically to treat poor working-class patients whose strenuous schedules made it difficult to seek medical care during the weekday. As a result of this benevolence, his patients gave him the moniker, "Doctor to the Stars".

He played a significant role in a pivotal moment in history when his surgical team saved the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1958. During a book signing event in Harlem, Dr. King was stabbed, and Dr. Maitland, along with his medical team at Harlem Hospital, operated on him for a chest stab wound.

Dr. Maitland was born in Guyana, but like many Caribbean folks, he relocated to New York at the age of 14 in search of better opportunities. He schooled at City College, and was the only African American who gained admission into Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1926.

He however withdrew his application when he learned that Columbia's teaching hospital, Columbia-Presbyterian, had a racist policy that never allowed black students in its



Dr Maitland (left) with Dr King on the stretcher

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wards, and turned his attention to New York University, which was more welcoming of persons of African American descent, according to Alpha Omega Alpha.

He emerged as one of the first four black trainees at Harlem Hospital, the surgical residency integrated by Louis T. Wright, and was the first African American surgeon in the facility, as well as the first to be appointed to the position of director of surgery.

Dr. Maitland was employed after

he finished his residency training to serve as the hospital's inaugural thoracic specialist. After years of practice, he established himself as a respected surgeon, working at various hospitals in New York. At Sydenham Hospital, he held the positions of chairman and associate director for the surgery department. His expertise and compassion earned him the love of his community.

Throughout his career, Dr. Maitland was committed to improving healthcare access for underserved

communities. He was a strong advocate for increasing diversity in the medical profession and mentored many aspiring young doctors.

He also served as a clinical professor of surgery at New York University and was actively involved in medical research. Dr. Maitland passed away in 1992 at the age of 64. His legacy as a pioneering surgeon and advocate for healthcare equity continues to inspire future generations of medical professionals.

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# Ali mulls construction of municipal airports in Berbice, Lethem

WHILE Guyana is well on its way to enhancing its infrastructure, meeting its ambitious economic targets will require significant additional work which when completed, will help to create intricate interconnected networks both domestically and with our immediate neighbours.

This is the belief of President, Dr Irfaan Ali, who during an Energy Perspective Podcast which was released on Sunday, stated that there is still an ‘enormous gap’ to where he envisions the country should be.

“We have started to address critical infrastructure that is linked to economic expansion, creation of new wealth, the support to the agriculture sector, and, of course, the efficiency in the transport system.”

In this context, the President noted that the construction of municipal airports, akin to the Eugene F Correia International Airport at Ogle, on the East Coast of Demerara, might be imminent.

He pointed to the massive buzz ongoing in Region Six as an example. Already, the region is seeing a complete overhaul to its infrastructure with plans to link Guyana to its eastern neighbour, Suriname.

Already, officials have laid the terms for the construction of a bridge across the Corentyne River connecting the two countries.

“Let’s start from our link to Suriname. Now that bridge is very critical. It opens up a whole new host of opportunity for us. When you look at the development that we’re going to do at Palmyra, it is my estimation that somewhere in Berbice we will need to have a municipal airport like Ogle, you will have to have the development of a municipal airport.”

With these advancements, the President also reiterated the idea of developing a second gas plant and a deep-water port.

“Then the plans of bringing the second gas development to Berbice, Region Six, that is going to be massive, that will have a number of off takers, maybe a huge industrial zone. You have to build that deep-water port ... that is part of the plan,” the Head of State explained.

There is also growing potential for an aluminium plant in the area, taking advantage of reserves shared with Suriname, along with the arrival of cheaper energy. This, coupled with Suriname’s own development, opens up possibilities for a strong and fruitful partnership.

“These are what I would say are just the tip of the iceberg.”

Further, to match the ongoing development in Region Six and Region Four, the government will also have to

focus on enhancing the farming infrastructure in Region Five.

“And then when you come over to Region Five, you definitely have to also expand the roadways [and] focus heavily on agriculture production, modernisation of the agricultural system.”

The President further touched on plans to strengthen the Brazil and Guyana connection, highlighting too that a municipal airport in Lethem, Region Nine, may also be needed.

“And then you have, of course, a road going to Brazil, connected to the new quarter port, the development; we have to develop another municipal airport of Lethem,…”



President Ali said the new airports will help regional trade

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### Law revision exercise on track

THE revision exercise for the Laws of Guyana is on track for the June 2025 competition, as its commission has intensified efforts to update the country’s legal framework, with support from the Anguilla-based Regional Law Revision Centre Inc.

On Monday, Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, SC, led a high-level meeting with Yolande Dash, Manager/Legislative Publisher of the Regional Law Revision Centre to discuss the ongoing revision of the Laws of Guyana.

The engagement, held at the Attorney-General’s Chambers in Georgetown, comes as the country seeks to update its legal code for the first time in over a decade.

Monday’s meeting was also attended by Adele Clarke, Permanent Secretary; Joann Bond, Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel; Melissa Adolphus, Parliamentary Counsel; Renee Sandiford-King, Law Revision Officer; and Deneille Griffith, Legal Assistant.

The last comprehensive revision, known as the “Purple Volumes”, was published in 2012. The current exercise, spanning laws enacted between 2012 and 2022, is scheduled for completion by June 2025.

Accompanying the Attorney General in the meeting were Ms. Adele Clarke, Permanent Secretary, Ms. Joann Bond, Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Ms. Melissa Adolphus, Parliamentary Counsel, Ms. Renee Sandiford-King, Law Revision Officer and Ms. Deneille Griffith, Legal Assistant.

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# Guyana and United States to deepen national security partnership

Guyana and the United States have committed to further strengthening their strategic partnership, with a focus on enhancing Guyana's national defense capabilities. The two nations reiterated their shared dedication to mutual prosperity across key sectors, including defense and economic development.

Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud praised the collaboration during a reception dinner celebrating the graduation of the first cohort from Guyana's National Defense Institute on Friday. In partnership with the William J Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the National Defense Institute graduated 40 ranks and officers from Guyana's Joint Services.

This comprehensive course provided graduates with critical knowledge and specialized training, enhancing their ability to safeguard Guyana's national sovereignty against threats such as drug trafficking, transnational crime and illegal migration, as well as the concerning rhetoric emanating from Venezuela.

According to Secretary Persaud, "This collaborative effort exemplifies the strong partnership between the governments of the United States and Guyana. Our relationship is characterized by mutual respect and a shared vision for a secure and prosperous Western Hemisphere."

He expressed Guyana's eagerness to collaborate with the US on future training and knowledge-sharing initiatives to strengthen the nation's security capabilities.

He also stressed the critical need to bridge the gap between policy development and implementation to effectively address evolving threats.

"Security and defense are fundamental pillars of national prosperity," Secretary Persaud asserted. "As policymakers, we must create synergies in policy formulation, adopting a holistic and inclusive approach to address security threats and challenges, always prioritizing our national interests."

Meanwhile, in an effort to safeguard Guyana's sovereignty, the government is proactively taking decisive steps to bolster its security sector against emerging threats.

As the nation confronts threats to



its territorial integrity, including renewed claims to the Essequibo Region by Venezuela, and an increase in transnational organized crime, the government is allocating resources and making significant investments to protect the country's safety.

Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn, who also attended the reception, said Guyana must remain focused on heightening its security forces and ensuring they are equipped to address the multifaceted challenges facing the country's defense system.

He explained that while the country is experiencing unprecedented economic growth due to oil and gas reserves, an increased number of threats and issues arise.

Currently, Guyana is experiencing a population deficit while facing the ever-present territorial threat posed by the country's western neighbor.

During these times, the government is engaging in ongoing efforts to form strategic international partnerships with powerful countries, focusing heavily on initiatives like joint military exercises, intelligence sharing and resource development.

Benn expressed confidence in Guyana's strong partnerships with countries like the United States, noting the collaboration's vitality in addressing geopolitical vulnerabilities.

The minister also launched a call to action to Guyanese, highlighting the role all citizens play in strengthening

Guyana's presence across its national territory.

He urged community policing groups, particularly those in vulnerable hinterland regions, to assist the joint services with information gathering and work towards a Guyana free of territorial disputes.

"We have to have a clear awareness of the challenge we have, we have to have a clear awareness of our responses to this challenge, and we have to read and think and work with the professors and others who have expertise and interests, of course, in the matter to make sure that we could all work together in the first instance to have our sovereignty protected," he said.



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India ships a diverse range of products to the USA, including iron and steel

## India looks on nervously as Trump wields tariff threat

Last week India further slashed import duties on motorcycles, cutting tariffs on heavyweight bikes with engines above 1,600cc from 50% to 30% and smaller ones from 50% to 40%.

A pre-emptive move designed to further smoothen the entry of Harley Davidsons into India – and, Delhi hopes, ward off any threat of tariffs. US motorcycle exports to India were worth \$3m last year.

Donald Trump has marked his return to the White House by brandishing trade measures against America's neighbours and allies as well as its big rival China.

India hopes it is ahead of the game – but will its tariff cuts satisfy Trump, or is trade action still on the table?

"Canada and Mexico are literally two arms of the US. If he has acted against them, he could easily act against India too," says Ajay Srivastava, founder of the Delhi-based think tank Global Trade Research Institute (GTRI).

In their phone conversation late last month, the US president pressed Prime Minister Narendra Modi to buy more US arms and for there to be a fairer trade balance, keeping the pressure on.

And during his first term, Trump fixated on India's steep tariffs. He repeatedly slammed the then 100% duty on Harleys as "unacceptable", making it a rallying point in his crusade against what he saw as unfair trade practices.

In the past he repeatedly branded India a "tariff king" and a "big abuser" of trade ties.

India enjoys a trade surplus with the US, its top trading partner. Bilateral trade crossed \$190bn (£150bn) in 2023. Merchandise exports to US have surged 40% to \$123bn since 2018, while services trade grew 22% to reach \$66bn. Meanwhile, US exports to India stood at \$70bn.

But beyond bikes, India has zeroed out import taxes on satellite ground installations, benefiting US exporters who supplied \$92m worth in 2023.

Tariffs on synthetic flavouring essences dropped from 100% to 20% (\$21m in US exports last year), while duties on fish hydrolysate for aquatic feed fell from 15% to 5% (\$35m in US exports in 2024). India also scrapped tariffs on select waste and scrap items, a category where US exports amounted to \$2.5bn last year.

Top US exports to India in 2023 included crude oil and petroleum products (\$14bn), LNG, coal, medical devices, scientific instruments, scrap metals, turbojets, computers and almonds.

"While Trump has criticised India's tariff policies, the latest reductions signal a policy shift that could enhance US exports across various sectors," says Mr Srivastava.

"With key tariff cuts on technology, automobiles, industrial and waste imports, India appears to be taking steps towards facilitating trade even as the global trade environment remains tense."

India exported \$7.5bn worth of medicines, including anti-cancer drugs, to the US in 2023

Meanwhile India's exports span a diverse range – from textiles, pharmaceuticals and engineering goods to petroleum oils, machinery and cut diamonds. It also ships smartphones, auto parts, shrimp, gold jewellery, footwear and iron and steel, making it a key player in global trade.

"This diverse range of products reflects India's broad export base and its strong trade relationship with the US," says Mr Srivastava.

India was once among the world's most protectionist economies. In the 1970s, American political scientist Joseph Grieco described it as having one of the "most restrictive, cumbersome... regimes regulating foreign direct investments".

This inward-looking approach led to a steady decline in India's export share of global trade, from 2.42% in 1948 to just 0.51% by 1991. As Aseema Sinha, author of *Globalizing India: How Global Rules and Markets are Shaping India's Rise to Power*, observed, this period was marked by "a self-driven industrialisation drive, export pessimism, and suspicion of global alliances".

India finally opened up in the 1990s and 2000s, cutting average tariffs from 80% in 1990 to 13% in 2008.

But after Modi launched his "Make in India" policy to boost manufacturing in India tariffs have climbed again to about 18% - higher than those set by other Asian nations such as China, South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand.

Experts also point to Modi's warm personal rapport with Trump as an advantage. Some clarity will come when the Indian prime minister visits the White House later this month.



**ARIES (March 21 - April 20):** You can sense that something big is coming but you cannot work out what it might be. Even an Aries can get anxious in such a situation but there is really no need. Yes, there will be major changes, but every one of them will benefit you.

**TAURUS (April 21 - May 21):** There is no point trying too hard to prove to someone that their beliefs are wrong, because even if your arguments are rock solid they are comfortable with their own illusions and have no intention of changing them. In other words, don't waste your breath.

**GEMINI (May 22 - June 21):** What appears to be a setback early in the day will turn out to be a blessing in disguise come the evening, so don't spend too much time and energy cursing your luck or you could end up looking foolish. Relax into life and let it happen.

**CANCER (June 22 - July 23):** You will face some pretty tough challenges over the next seven days or so, but you are tough too and those challenges are unlikely to daunt you. You may find you even enjoy being put to the test as it allows you to show off your talents.

**LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23):** No doubt there are many things about yourself you would like to improve but if you take a look at the people around you today you will see that you are already doing better than most. A minor adjustment here and there is really all that is needed.

**VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23):** As the Sun squares up to Uranus today you will have to expend an awful lot of physical, mental and maybe even emotional energy to change something quite small. Is it worth the effort? Probably not, so don't push yourself too hard.

**LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23):** Do you go it alone or do you join forces with people who share your aims and values and present a united front to the world? It has to be the latter, of course, so ignore any minor differences you may have and make good things happen.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22):** If you keep your mind focused on a single objective over the next 24 hours you will make more progress than was possible over the previous 24 days. Don't worry about upsetting the status quo – in fact that should be part of your goal.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21):** Pay attention to what friends and loved ones and colleagues tell you today, because if you allow your focus to waver for even a moment you could misinterpret what they are saying and spark a serious falling-out. Pin back your ears and listen!

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20):** You may have no intention of taking life at a more leisurely pace but you do need to watch your step over the next 24 hours. Today's Sun-Uranus link warns that a small mistake on your part could lead to big consequences further down the line.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19):** Opportunities to get ahead in the world may be coming thick and fast but you also need to pay attention to your domestic situation. Are loved ones feeling a bit left out at the moment? What can you do to bring them into your plans?

**PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20):** You can be rather touchy at times and the cosmic picture warns if you allow your emotions to take control they could soon be out of control in a dangerous way. What is irritating you so much really isn't worth the effort, so let it go.

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# St Lucia forms task forces to monitor impact of US policy changes

The government of St. Lucia has set up task forces to monitor recent policy changes by the United States, aiming to mitigate any potential negative impacts on the population. Prime Minister Phillip J. Pierre shared this update during a news conference, highlighting the government’s focus on closely tracking shifts in US policies, particularly regarding the imposition of tariffs and changes to immigration regulations.

“Considering that these changes may have both social and economic effects on St Lucia, the cabinet of ministers has formed a task force to deal with the ramifications and possible implications of a change in both of these policies: namely the imposition of tariffs by the US, and the threat of deportation of non-nationals in the US,” he added.

Pierre said that the new policies by the Donald Trump administration could have economic effects on the island.

“This shows that what happens outside of St Lucia has an impact on St Lucia. We are a very small economy. Regarding the tariffs, we are concerned about the cost of inflation on the cost of

goods and services, particularly food. As you know we import many of our foodstuffs and other goods from the US.

“Now, more than ever, this shows the importance of having local produce and local goods,” Pierre added.

He said that the task force on tar-



St Lucia Prime Minister Phillip J Pierre

iffs is being led by the Minister for Commerce Emma Hippolyte while the task force on immigration is led by Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Crime Prevention, Jeremiah Norbert.

Pierre urged importers to work alongside the task force to help mitigate

against the possible effects of tariff increases.

Since his inauguration, President Trump has signed a significant number of executive orders ranging from the deportation of illegal migrants to imposing tariffs on countries like China, Canada and Mexico.

# Jamaica facing highest suicide rates in 25 years

Jamaica is grappling with a concerning rise in suicides, with the country recording its highest number of suicide deaths in nearly 25 years.

According to data from the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Statistics and Information Management Unit, 67 suicide deaths were reported in 2024, surpassing 66 in 2023, 63 in 2022, 50 in 2021, and 43 in 2020.

The figures paint a troubling picture of the country’s mental health crisis, which has deepened since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest numbers mark the highest suicide toll since the year 2000, when 77 cases were recorded, followed by 75 in 2001.

The statistics also highlight a stark gender disparity in suicide deaths. Of the 67 suicides recorded last year, 61 were men—a pattern that has remained consistent over the years. The overwhelming presence of men in these figures has sparked discussions about mental health stigma, emotional suppression, and inadequate support systems for men in Jamaica.

Earlier this month, a former firefighter climbed the Half-Way-Tree Transport Centre, threatening to take his own life. His attempt was halted after former colleagues from the Jamaica Fire Brigade intervened. Reports suggest that domestic issues were the main trigger. This incident has since fueled a nationwide debate on social media about men’s mental well-being, particularly in a culture where expressing vulnerability is often discouraged.

With the alarming rise in suicide rates, mental health advocates and government officials are urging Jamaicans to seek help through available counselling and support services.

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. Christo-

pher Tufton, has repeatedly called for a mindset shift regarding mental health in Jamaica. He emphasized that many citizens struggle with mental health challenges without realizing it, and those who do recognize their struggles often avoid seeking help due to fear of stigma.

“I would like to see the day when people brag about going to see their shrink like in America,” Tufton said. “You know, you have some people in America and they say, ‘Oh, I cannot bother with today, so I’m going to see my shrink, my psychiatrist, or my counsellor. I’m going in that long chair to lie down and just pour out my heart.’ That’s profound because what it is saying is it is okay to need that kind of support.”

In Jamaica, however, seeking professional mental health care is still frowned upon, with many casually labeling individuals in distress as “mad” or “crazy”. Tufton stressed the importance of normaliz-

ing mental health care and making it more accessible to all Jamaicans.

As Jamaica faces this growing crisis, mental health professionals and government agencies are being urged to expand their efforts in:

- Increasing awareness and education to combat stigma surrounding mental health.
- Enhancing access to affordable mental health services across the country.
- Creating more safe spaces for men to discuss their struggles without fear of judgment.
- Strengthening community-based interventions to provide early support for those at risk.

With suicide rates climbing, there is an urgent need for Jamaica to prioritize mental health as a national issue. Breaking the silence and encouraging open conversations could help save lives and provide much-needed relief to those silently suffering.

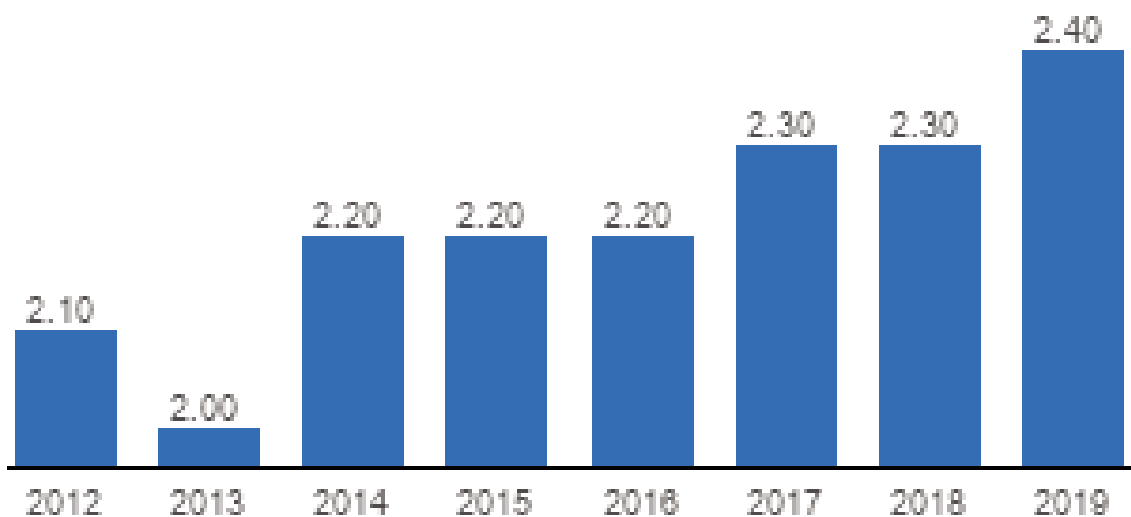


Chart shows the exponential rise in suicides in Jamaica in the past 12 years

# Mia Mottley praises Bob Marley for his revolutionary music

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley shared her deep admiration for reggae legend Bob Marley during her address at the Jamaica Music Museum (JaMM) Grounation gathering at the Institute of Jamaica's Lecture Hall last Sunday.

Speaking at JaMM's 13th annual cultural symposium, themed 'Bob Marley at Eighty: His Music, Legend and Legacy', Mottley explained that Marley's music had inspired her advocacy from a young age. In a pre-recorded message, she reflected on growing up listening to Marley, saying she had become a "disciple of his vision." Mottley fondly recalled how, as a teenager, she felt something "special" when she first heard Marley's iconic lyrics, "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our mind"—not realizing at the time that they were originally the words of Marcus Garvey.

During her 15-minute presentation, Prime Minister Mia Mottley invoked several of Bob Marley's iconic songs, expressing her concern over the state of the world. She lamented the "so much trouble" around, particularly the "deep inequalities" highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, where the most vulnerable suffer the most. Mottley emphasized that, "the most vulnerable among us suffer first and suffer worse."

She also warned against the forces seeking to divide and undermine democracies, urging people not to be misled by propaganda, fake news, social media algorithms, or conspiracy theories. In her message, Mottley highlighted the lack of common



Barbados PM Mia Mottley is a fan of Jamaican musician Bob Marley

spaces for shared values and facts, pointing out that such divisions were also evident in the Caribbean, where violence and the degradation of music are concerning issues. She cited Marley's lyrics, "Don't let them fool you, or even try to school you," as a reminder of the need to resist these negative influences.

Mottley reminded her audience of Bob Marley's revolutionary call to action with his famous words, "get up, stand up, stand up for your right." She emphasized that truly embracing his philosophy meant advocating for the pressing issues facing the Caribbean and vulnerable nations like Barbados.

Mottley also echoed Marley's warning, quoting him: "Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, everywhere is war!"

She cautioned that if action is not taken, the region risks losing an entire generation to "a war of the mind, a war of the soul, a war of hopelessness." As a two-term prime minister, Mottley stressed the importance of addressing these issues before they spiral into irreversible consequences.

After Prime Minister Mia Mottley's presentation, the session continued with a two-man panel featuring

Professor Clinton Hutton, a retired University of the West Indies lecturer, and Dr. Michael Barnett, a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology at UWI. The discussion was moderated by attorney-at-law and journalist Dionne Jackson-Miller.

Grounation, held every Sunday in February at 2 p.m., brings together a vibrant community of culture and music enthusiasts to engage in thoughtful discussions, or "reasoning." The event explores different aspects of Jamaica's rich musical history while drawing connections to the issues facing contemporary society.

## US seizes Venezuelan plane in Dominican Republic

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio oversaw the seizure of a Venezuelan government plane in the Dominican Republic today. U.S. authorities confirmed that they had grounds to file a civil forfeiture action to recover the aircraft, citing violations of U.S. sanctions, export controls, and money laundering, according to a statement from the State Department.

This marks the second time in recent months that the U.S. has seized a Venezuelan plane in the Dominican Republic. On Thursday, Rubio, in the final leg of his Latin American tour, observed a U.S. Department of Homeland Security official attach a warrant to the plane, formally seizing it. The plane had been undergoing maintenance at an airport in Santo Domingo.

The U.S. State Department revealed that high-ranking members of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's government had used the seized Dassault Falcon 200 aircraft for travel to countries such as Greece, Turkey, Russia, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

Marco Rubio, who has long been an outspoken critic of Maduro's regime, advocated for stringent sanctions against the Venezuelan government during his time as a U.S. Senator. As the son of Cuban immigrants, Rubio has consistently criticized Maduro, an ally of Cuba's communist government, and has reiterated



The Venezuelan aircraft seized by the US government on Dominican soil

ated this week that the U.S. does not recognize Maduro as Venezuela's legitimate leader.

This action comes shortly after Richard Grenell, former U.S. President Donald Trump's envoy, visited Venezuela for talks with Maduro last month. Grenell left Caracas with six Americans who had been detained in the country and also pushed for Venezuela to accept nationals that the U.S. seeks to deport.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his government have consistently rejected sanctions imposed by the U.S. and other countries, labeling them

as illegitimate and describing them as an "economic war" aimed at crippling Venezuela's economy.

Maduro's government-backed victory in the July 2024 election has been heavily contested by opposition groups, international observers, and several nations, including the United States, which does not recognize the legitimacy of the election results.

The Venezuelan government has not yet responded to a request for comment from Reuters regarding the recent seizure of the plane.



# Tsunami warning issued in Caribbean after massive 7.6 earthquake

A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 struck the Caribbean Sea on Saturday, with its epicenter located approximately 209 kilometers (130 miles) south-southwest of the Cayman Islands. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) initially recorded the quake at 8.0 but later revised it to 7.6. The tremor occurred at 6:23 a.m. local time.

USGS issued a Green alert following the earthquake. A Green alert for both shaking-related fatalities and economic losses indicates there is a low likelihood of casualties and damage.

Following the earthquake, the NOAA / National Weather Service U.S. Tsunami Warning System issued tsunami advisories for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands around 6:40 p.m. ET. Additionally, a potential tsunami threat alert was extended to multiple Caribbean nations, including Haiti, Belize, the Bahamas, Costa Rica, the Cayman Islands, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Jamaica.

A tsunami advisory means that strong currents or waves are expected, posing a danger to those near the water, but significant flooding is not anticipated. Local officials may take precautions like closing beaches or evacuating



**A tsunami warning was issued for several Caribbean countries after the earthquake**

harbors.

A tsunami threat message is issued when a tsunami could impact coastal areas, with estimated arrival times provided. Authorities assess the risk and decide on further warnings or evacuation orders.

Authorities in the affected regions are closely monitoring the situation,

urging residents in coastal areas to stay alert for updates and potential evacuation orders.

As of now, there have been no immediate reports of significant damage or casualties. However, seismic experts warn that aftershocks could follow in the coming hours or days. Emergency response teams in the affected countries

are assessing the situation and advising residents to take necessary precautions.

The USGS and regional disaster management agencies continue to monitor the earthquake's aftermath and its potential impact on surrounding countries. Residents in the Caribbean are advised to stay tuned to official channels for further updates on tsunami risks.

## Jamaica is 9th on list of most affordable vacations

Despite the rising costs of global travel, Jamaica remains one of the most affordable international vacation spots. New data from US-based insurance company InsureMyTrip reveals that the average cost of a trip in 2025 has increased to US\$7,401, up from US\$5,960 in 2024. In contrast, a vacation in Jamaica averages US\$4,145, securing its position as the ninth most budget-friendly destination worldwide.

According to the latest data, Jamaica continues to be one of the more affordable options in the Caribbean, although regional competition is growing. In 2024, the Philippines (US\$3,336), Mexico (US\$3,441), and Colombia (US\$3,497) were ranked as the top three most budget-friendly international destinations, offering lower average trip costs. Within the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic (US\$3,882), The Bahamas (US\$3,687), and Bermuda (US\$3,821) also made the top 10, reflecting a broader trend of increasingly competitive pricing across the region.

Jamaica remains less expensive than Aruba (US\$4,259) but slightly pricier than some of its direct competitors. While cost is a factor, destination appeal, accessibility, and infrastructure play critical roles in attracting visitors. Jamaica benefits from strong airline connectivity and a well-established tourism industry, but maintaining affordability will be key as travel costs rise.

Jamaica's affordability comes as the country's tourism sector experiences continued growth. In 2024, Jamaica welcomed 4.3 million visitors, generating US\$4.3 billion in revenue. Looking toward 2025, the outlook remains positive. As part of its growth strategy, Jamaica is targeting five million visitors and US\$5 billion in earnings by the end of the



**Jamaica is known internationally for its pristine beaches**

year, with its "5x5x5" goal driving the tourism sector's ongoing success.

The United States remains Jamaica's largest source market, with strong visitor traffic from New York and Florida. However, to diversify its reach, Jamaica is expanding its efforts to attract new markets, including India, where a targeted marketing campaign is set to launch in 2025.

At the same time, rising operational costs could

challenge the island's affordability. Hotel and airline prices have been affected by inflationary pressures, but Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett has expressed confidence that the addition of over 2,000 new hotel rooms from brands like Princess, Hard Rock Hotels, Secrets, and Viva Wyndham will help meet the growing demand and maintain Jamaica's competitive position.

# Usain Bolt on billion dollar fraud: I want my money back

Jamaican sprint legend Usain Bolt has finally spoken out about the multi-billion-dollar fraud at Stocks and Securities Limited (SSL), which resulted in him losing approximately \$12 million USD. In an interview with The Fix podcast, Bolt expressed disappointment in the government's handling of the situation and made it clear that he expects restitution.

"If this happen to me and it a gwaan fi two years and me can't see back a dime ... you really start evaluate," Bolt said, suggesting that the ordeal has made him rethink his status as a public figure in Jamaica.

The SSL scandal, which surfaced in January 2023, involved fraudulent activity dating back over a decade, impacting more than 200 clients and totaling losses exceeding \$30 million USD. The prolonged investigation has frustrated many victims, including Bolt, who believes the authorities have not done enough to bring about a resolution.

Bolt stated that despite conversations with government officials, "nothing has materialized." He accused the government of failing to act decisively, calling the situation "almost at a stalemate."

"The government alone really can do nothing big bout this," he said, emphasizing that only the authorities have the power to ensure justice.

When asked if legal action was on the table, Bolt did not rule out the possibility. "At some point, we have to figure out something and make a move. We can't just lose all of that [money]," he said.



Usain Bolt was a victi of fraud at SSL Financial

Bolt admitted that he had remained silent on the matter to avoid damaging "brand Jamaica." However, he now believes that public pressure may be his only recourse.

"Clearly it look like if me nuh start apply some pressure me nah go get back nothing," he said, even hinting at the possibility of taking his fight to the international media if necessary.

Meanwhile, the legal battle surrounding the collapse of SSL remains bogged down in bureaucratic hurdles. Two years after the fraud was exposed, a critical piece of evidence remains outstanding, preventing the Office of the

Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) from completing its review and issuing charges beyond those already filed.

In a recent interview with The Gleaner, DPP Paula Llewellyn confirmed that while significant progress has been made, the Financial Investigations Division (FID) has yet to provide key evidence necessary for a ruling. She emphasized that her office cannot move forward until the missing documents are submitted, stating that she understands the public's frustration but must ensure due process is followed.

The only person charged so far is Jean-Ann Panton, a former SSL client

relationship manager, who faces a 21-count indictment including fraud, forgery, and larceny as a servant. Bolt said he doesn't believe that it was only one person involved in the fraud. Authorities have hinted at additional charges, but no timeline has been provided.

The Jamaican government is also locked in a legal fight for control of SSL, which is currently under the supervision of a court-appointed trustee. The firm's assets, valued between \$107 million and \$254 million, fall far short of covering its \$1.03 billion in liabilities, making full restitution unlikely.

## US Congresswoman questions USAID to JA

U.S. Congresswoman Nancy Mace has criticized Jamaica, along with other countries, for allegedly wrongfully benefiting from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding. She claims that USAID is promoting agendas that conflict with an "America first" policy.

During a House Oversight and Government Reform hearing last Wednesday, the South Carolina Republican expressed her concerns about the US\$50 billion agency, which was established six decades ago to manage civilian foreign aid and development assistance. Mace argued that USAID has deviated from its original mission of advancing American interests and effectively administering aid, a stance also echoed during the Trump administration, which sought to disband the agency, sparking global concern.

Congresswoman Nancy Mace questioned whether the use of U.S. tax dollars in various countries, including Jamaica, truly put America's interests first. She specifically highlighted a USAID grant of US\$1.5 million (J\$225 million) aimed at strengthening community support structures to advance LGBT rights advocacy in Jamaica, asking, "Does this advance our interest?"

Her question was directed at a panel of three governors, with two responding negatively, while one offered no stance on the matter.

Mace's inquiry was part of a broader series of questions she posed during the hearing. She argued



Nancy Mace

that the U.S. foreign assistance system is "badly broken" and insisted that it was time for this to end.

USAID suspended its program globally on January 24, following an order from the US Department of State, though several implementing agencies have been granted limited waivers to continue with those considered life-saving humanitarian assistance.

Last Wednesday, USAID wrote to the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, instructing that its Faculty of Medical Sciences, through Health Connect Jamaica (HCJ), could continue with its program to expand access and utilization of high-quality HIV-spe-

cific primary health services.

USAID granted US\$4 million to the program, 10 per cent of which went to UWI to oversee its operations. The funding was to cover four years, from 2024 to 2028, and to focus on HIV and global health initiatives.

In a letter dated February 5 to Mona Campus Principal Professor Densil Williams, the University of the West Indies (UWI) was instructed by the Health and Care Jamaica (HCJ) to refrain from engaging in any activities beyond life-saving humanitarian assistance for HIV.

The letter specifically stated, "UWI/HCJ will not undertake activities related to abortion services, family planning, conferences, administrative costs outside the scope outlined in the attachment, or programs centered on gender; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); transgender surgeries; or other forms of non-lifesaving assistance."

It remains unclear whether HCJ had previously focused on or promoted programs outside its primary mission to assist HIV patients.

"For purposes of this limited waiver, life-saving humanitarian assistance applies only to: Delivery of life-saving HIV care and treatment services through support for health workers (doctors, nurses, and other clinical and community health workers, etc.) delivering or monitoring HIV care and treatment to ensure continuity of service provision.

# T&T opens bidding on 26 deep water oil well blocks

Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Energy launched the deepwater bid round on February 10, the first day of the Energy Chamber's three-day Energy Conference at the Hyatt Regency.

At the conference, permanent secretary Penelope Bradshaw-Niles said there were 26 blocks up for bid in TT's deepwater regions off the northern and eastern coast of TT.

The legal notice that opened the bidding was dated January 24. Bids are now invited for production-sharing contracts for exploration and production in the assigned region. The deadline for posting the bids is July 2 at noon.

Senior geologist and team lead for the bid round Kimberly London said the acreage sits at a depth of 1,000-2,500 metres.

"The potential exists to extract a great amount of resources from the area, once we commit to doing the work required," she said. "We have to continually invest in the exploration of these areas to get the development going."

She said TT had been exploring the deepwater regions for at least 30 years.

The competitive bidding process is separated into three parts: a pre-bid round, in which bidders would have to pay a US\$25,000 fee; a bid fee; bidders will have to pay US\$40,000 per block; and a pitching round, in which bidders will provide the ministry with a technical presentation on each of the blocks on which oil and gas companies bid.

An internal evaluation will then be done to award the blocks to the preferred bidder.

Bidders will receive a data package which would contain everything needed to do proper evaluations of the blocks. They will get data on all of the areas up for bid as well as the necessary documents needed for the bidding round.

Bids must contain a technical and commercial evaluation of the areas as well as a signed declaration that the company has viewed the model production-sharing contract and has agreed to the terms.



Oil platforms in offshore Trinidad and Tobago

Bidders will also have to comply with the government's local-content policies and oil-spill contingency plans.

In his keynote address, Minister of Energy Stuart Young expressed confidence in the energy sector as he highlighted its achievements.

In January, Young signed the award of two production-sharing contracts for two blocks of shallow-water acreage, which were put up for bid in the shallow-water competitive bid round from October 2, 2023-May 27, 2024. The blocks were awarded to EOG.

On February 10, Young also noted the restructuring of ALNG, securing licences for production of the Dragon gas field, along with other milestones.

He said, "The path forward requires not just vision, but concrete investment and a belief in our destiny."

"What we have done to propel and secure TT's future in the energy sector has been indicative of our confidence in our country and reflective of unparalleled competence.

He said work was in progress on the Dragon Gas Field, to which TT secured a 30-year licence for the development, and a final investment decision is being finalised with a view to seeing first gas by 2027.

BpTT and the National Gas Company of TT (NGCTT) also did seismic evaluation scans of the cross-border Manakin-Cocuina field, to which TT received an OFAC licence for exploitation and development along with Venezuela. Young said the evaluations were expected to be complete by the third quarter of 2025 and would determine the number of development wells to be

drilled.

Quoting from independent energy research and business intelligence company Rystad Energy's 2025 energy outlook, Young said investments in deep-water projects were forecast to increase by three per cent. The global demand for liquids is also projected to increase by about a million barrels a day, with NGL and other liquids expected to contribute additional growth of over 300,000 barrels per day by 2026.

"The global movement to clean energy has resulted in the government taking steps to diversify and strengthen our energy sector. However, this has not been at the expense of oil and gas, which are the mainstay of our economy.

"Our strategy has been to accelerate the exploitation of our oil and gas resources," Young said.

## Machel Montano among T&T Chutney finalists

WHO will win the Chutney Soca Monarch (CSM) 2025?

That is the \$400,000 question being asked as the finalists were announced on February 10, for this competition which has become an integral part of the Carnival landscape over the past 30 years.

Four of the female finalists – Reehanna Gopaul, Hurricane Hemlatha Dindial, Warrior Princess - Reshma Ramlal and Vanessa Ramoutar – are also vying for the top spot, as well as the Queen of Chutney Soca title. The 2024

CSM queen, Rawytee Ramroop, failed to advance to the final round.

Southex CEO George Singh, who promotes the event, is already promising a stage and setting like no other ever seen, and a show that would surpass past expectations.

The show is free to the public and Singh is anticipating that fans of both the chutney and soca genres will crowd Skinner Park, San Fernando on March 1, to experience something unique.

A statement from Southex said, "A battle royal has been set for the grand

final as the five-time soca monarch, two-time groovy soca monarch, reigning calypso monarch and the undisputed 'King of Soca,' Machel Montano, and nine-time chutney soca monarch and undisputed 'King of Chutney Soca,' Rikki Jai, has set the stage for what will definitely be a historic battle at Skinner Park on Carnival Saturday."

Southex said only a few points separated Montano and Rikki Jai who both topped the semifinals which saw outstanding, high-energy performances from 32 contenders on February 8 at La

Tropical, La Romaine.

"They distanced themselves from the rest of the pack that included past champions Neval Chatelal and Daddy Chinee. Rick Ramoutar, the defending 2024 chutney soca monarch and the 'King of Guyana's Chutney,' Terry Gajraj are also on the card to compete at the grand final."

Singh said the semifinal venue proved to be too small to contain the audience which occupied every possible space and, on that basis, will move to an outdoor arena in 2026.

# Rohit powers India to ODI series win over England

England were comprehensively beaten again in the second one-day international in Cuttack as India clinched the series with a match to spare.

After setting their hosts 305 to win, England's struggles on tour continued as captain Rohit Sharma hit a majestic 119 from 90 balls to power India towards victory.

The opener was caught after miscuing a Liam Livingstone full toss in the 30th over but by that stage only a further 85 runs were needed. India stuttered but still won with four wickets and 33 balls remaining.

While Rohit's century was his first for India for 11 months, England are still searching for form under new coach Brendon McCullum.

They wasted a platform set through an opening partnership of 81 by Ben Duckett and Phil Salt, failing to kick on after Duckett was caught for 65. Despite all of England's top six making it beyond 25, Joe Root was the highest scorer with 69 and England were dismissed with a ball remaining in their 50 overs.



Rohit Sharma's century was his 32nd in ODIs

The final match of the series, England's last before their Champions Trophy opener against Australia on 22

February, is in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. England all-rounder Jacob Bethell was ruled out of playing in Cuttack

after sustaining a hamstring injury in the first ODI that will also cause him to miss the Champions Trophy.

## Jamaica poised for historic pink-ball Test

JAMAICA'S cricket fans could be treated to seven nights of international cricket this July when Australia arrives for a Test match and two T20 Internationals, but that excitement hinges on the completion of crucial lighting upgrades at Sabina Park.

Jamaica Cricket Association (JCA) President, Dr. Donovan Bennett, has revealed that the upcoming West Indies vs Australia Test match, scheduled for July 12-16, 2025, could mark Jamaica's first-ever pink-ball Test match. This would be only the second pink-ball Test in the Caribbean, following the 2018 encounter between the West Indies and Sri Lanka at Kensington Oval in Barbados.

Dr. Bennett spoke to Sportsmax.TV, emphasising the significance of upgrading Sabina Park's lights, a move that would allow day-night Test cricket to become a reality in Jamaica.

"The match against Australia may be a pink-ball game. That is what is happening right now," Dr. Bennett stated.

"So, if the Test match lasts as we hope it would, then we would have seven nights of cricket in Jamaica. I am a little excited about that—we have never had a pink-ball game."

The decision to introduce a pink-ball Test would not only enhance fan engagement but also ensure prime-time television coverage, potentially attracting larger audiences both at the stadium and worldwide.

Dr. Bennett also highlighted the importance of crowd attendance, stating that Cricket West Indies (CWI) is currently assessing fan turnout across the Caribbean.

"One of the things that the CWI is looking at right now is an assessment of crowd sizes across the



The Test at Sabina Park is dependent on a lighting upgrade

Caribbean, because there has been a tendency for some countries not to support the game at all. There is a Test match and two people turn up. So you may very well find that certain territories may end up with difficulty getting international games because of the response of the population."

With Australia's visit bringing a marquee Test match followed by T20Is on July 20 and 22, Dr. Bennett is hopeful that an energised Jamaican crowd will help secure the nation's place as a prime destination for future international fixtures.

The JCA has been actively working to enhance Sabina Park's infrastructure, starting with a USD\$1 million high-definition scoreboard, donated by the In-

dian government. An Indian contractor is expected to arrive this week to begin the installation, which will significantly improve the viewing experience for both local spectators and global audiences watching on television. The most pressing upgrade, however, is the lighting system, which is estimated to cost JMD\$75 million (USD \$500,000). Dr. Bennett confirmed that efforts to secure funding and complete the installation are progressing, raising optimism that Jamaica will indeed host its first-ever pink-ball Test match this July.

If all goes according to plan, Sabina Park could become the centre-piece of Caribbean cricket this summer, setting the stage for a historic and unforgettable series against Australia.



Special Offers Effective: Friday Feb.14, To Thursday Feb.20, 2025.



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Spanish Onion 大洋葱 <b>27.00 case</b>	Green Onion 蔥 <b>28.00 case</b>	Spanish Orange 清甜橙 <b>32.00 case</b>	Lemon 黃檸檬 <b>35.00 case</b>	Head Lettuce 頭生菜 <b>38.00 case</b>	
Frozen Pangas Fillet 魚柳 8x5 5Lb <b>65.00 case</b>	Headless White Shrimp 黑頭白蝦 21/25-100/1Lb <b>190.00 case</b>	Head On Shrimp 有頭白蝦 30/40 4x4Lb <b>115.00 case</b>	Beef (Tenderloin) Bails 龍蝦牛柳 2x5Lb <b>50.00 case</b>	Extra Large Egg 特大雞蛋 <b>58.99 case</b>	Haind Tomato Ketchup 番茄醬 2x2.5Lb <b>59.99 case</b>
F-Pack Wrap 914 包裝紙 450mm x 400m <b>20.00 case</b>	Convenience Rolls 10.5x15 包裝紙 13Lb <b>15.99 case</b>	Clear Garbage Bags 35x47 X-Strong 1000's 垃圾袋 <b>20.99 case</b>	Solid Brand Fish Sauce 純牌鮮味魚露 <b>29.99 case</b>	ADM All Purpose Flour 麵粉 20kg <b>19.99 bag</b>	Monosodium Glutamate 味精 27.7kg <b>60.00 bag</b>
Capri Vegetable Oil 威華利油 <b>31.99 case</b>	Mel Loi Mai Bora Fancy Long Grain Rice 美女米 10kg <b>31.99 case</b>	Lee Kum Kee Kim Chun Oyster Flavoured Sauce 中級鮮味蠔皇醬 1.6L 2kg <b>39.00 case</b>	Lee Kum Kee Hoisin Sauce 中級鮮味蠔皇醬 1.7L <b>48.99 case</b>	NE-18 New Gen Eco-Friendly Packaging 一包 20kg <b>22.00 case</b>	Redpath Sugar 白糖 25kg <b>30.99 bag</b>

FROZEN

Thai Gold Head-On Frozen White Shrimp 凍蝦 20/20 500g Reg \$3.99 <b>5.99 ea</b>	Bu Yang Frozen Pre-Fried Tempura Shrimp 天婦羅蝦 500g Reg \$10.99 <b>8.99 ea</b>	G.L. Basa Fillet 3.75Lb 蒜味龍蝦 3.75Lb Reg \$8.99 <b>7.99 ea</b>	Siren's World Frozen Whole Abalone 凍鮮中級鮮味 200g Reg \$6.99 <b>4.99 ea</b>	Assorted Fried Fish Ball 各式凍蝦 500g Reg \$5.99 <b>4.99 ea</b>	AA-1 Slago 340g 大 Reg \$4.99 <b>3.99 ea</b>
Shark Fish Brand Frozen Sohy Cooky 400g Reg \$9.99 <b>7.99 ea</b>	Shark Fish Brand Frozen Small Meat 400g 日曬肉 Reg \$4.99 <b>2/\$7.00</b>	SH T Jagla 雞中夾 2.5Lb Reg \$6.99 <b>5.99 ea</b>	Dol Spring Roll Pastry 春卷皮 2.1kg Reg \$2.99 <b>1.99 ea</b>	Mekeni Fish Balls 250g 各式凍蝦 Reg \$3.99 <b>2/\$7.00</b>	Gray Ridge XL White Egg 大白雞蛋 12x Reg \$4.99 <b>3.99 ea</b>

MEAT

Boneless Pork Butt 無骨豬柳 Reg \$3.99 <b>2.99 lb</b>	Beef Sirloin Tip Steak 牛柳 Reg \$5.99 <b>7.59 lb</b>	Beef Short Ribs AAA 凍牛柳 Reg \$6.99 <b>5.99 lb</b>
Beef Choke Sliced Beef Roll 大級牛柳 Reg \$8.99 <b>7.59 lb</b>	Chicken Breast Meat 雞胸肉 Reg \$5.99 <b>4.99 lb</b>	

SEAFOOD

Frozen Fresh Pangas 凍鮮魚柳 Reg \$5.99 <b>4.99 lb</b>	Frozen Fresh Head-On White Shrimp 凍鮮白蝦 Reg \$5.99 <b>4.99 lb</b>	Grainy Gumbo 鮮蝦炒飯 Reg \$3.99 <b>2.99 lb</b>
Fresh Skate Wing 鮮魚翅 Reg \$3.99 <b>2.99 lb</b>	Fresh Frozen Lobster 鮮凍龍蝦 Reg \$5.99 <b>3.99 lb</b>	Fresh Atlantic Salmon Filet 鮮凍大西洋三文魚 Reg \$12.99 <b>10.99 lb</b>

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The Guyana Tourism Authority is issuing an urgent reminder to book tour experiences exclusively with licensed tourism operators when visiting Guyana.

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