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**Thursday February 6 2025. Volume 43, Issue #06** [www.equalitynews.ca](http://www.equalitynews.ca). For advertising, call 416-281-3333

# Barbados PM wins Human Fraternity Award for climate change TOP HONOUR FOR MIA

The Zayed Award for Human Fraternity today announced its 2025 honorees: Prime Minister of Barbados and climate change champion The Honorable Mia Amor Mottley, SC, MP, humanitarian organization World Central Kitchen founded by Chef José Andrés, and 15-year-old health innovator Heman Bekele – the award’s first youth honoree.

The award, aimed at individuals and organizations, is adjudicated by its independent jury for their notable contributions to pressing societal issues and nurturing peace and solidarity across diverse communities – both globally and at the grassroots level.

The three recipients will be honored on February 4 at 7 p.m. UAE time during the sixth edition of the award ceremony, at the Founder’s Memorial in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, which will be livestreamed on the award’s social media channels: Zayed Award for Human Fraternity – YouTube

Named in honor of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founder of the United Arab Emirates, the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity stands as a testament to his revered humanitarian legacy and unwavering commitment to serving people of every background.

The Honorable Mia Amor Mottley was selected by the judging committee



**Mia Mottley**

for her leadership on climate action and policy. Prime Minister Mottley launched the Bridgetown Initiative in 2022, a call for decisive action to reform global financial systems to take into consideration climate inequality.

She has committed to achieving 100% renewable energy for Barbados by 2030, investing in solar, wind, and other clean energy sources to reduce the island’s reliance on fossil fuels. The prime minister has pioneered debt-for-climate swaps, enabling countries to re-allocate national debt toward climate resilience projects.

Following the honorees announcement, Secretary-General of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity H.E. Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam said: “It is the judging committee’s honor to spotlight three outstanding honorees who are addressing some of today’s most urgent challenges—climate resilience, humanitarian relief, and youth-driven innovation.”



## \$143.2 billion secured for health sector

Guyana’s parliamentary Committee of Supply on Wednesday approved the budget for the Ministry of Health for 2025, with a significant emphasis on the expansion and modernisation of health infrastructure across the country.

Defending the budget, Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony (top) highlighted the government’s ongoing efforts to address the challenges in the health sector, especially in light of the pressures the sector faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. A notable allocation in the budget is the \$2.98 billion for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), which will be used to provide essential facilities, vehicles, furniture, and equipment.


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# From Despair to Hope...

## Conquering Peripheral Neuropathy



...with TLC Medicine

To quote the New York Times, "Chinese medicine proves itself where Western medicine fails."

"Acupuncture has been treating complicated, chronic conditions such as neuropathy for thousands of years," shares Teresa.

"I start with a foundation based on this time-tested science and my decade of clinical experience. I then tailor treatments based on a number of factors. This includes the severity of your neuropathy, how long you've had it, whether or not there are any underlying factors, things of that nature," explains Teresa.

"It's because of these personalized treatment programs that we're seeing such incredible results!"

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.

Call (416) 461-0581 to schedule your very own comprehensive consultation or visit [TLC-Medicine.ca](http://TLC-Medicine.ca) to take advantage of their new patient offer, a \$40 consult (normally \$240).

*"It's as though I'm stepping from razor blade to razor blade."*

*"It feels like my feet are under attack by fire ants."*

*"Like I'm walking on wet paint with rolled up socks."*

And you're in this type of pain all the time.

"It's relentless, keeping you up at night and preventing you from doing even the most mundane tasks. Things I used to take for granted, like wearing shoes, going grocery shopping. Two of my three children were getting married last year, I wasn't even sure I was going to be able to attend their weddings," shares Norah W.

Norah was diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy in 2015, 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!**



# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 86

## GUYANA'S ECONOMY 'STANDING ON MANY LEGS'

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GOVT MPS FIERCELY DEFEND 2025 BUDGET

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MASSIVE US\$300M VREED-EN-HOOP SHORE BASE COMMISSIONED

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GUYANA AND U.S. TO PARTNER TO COMBAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, GUARANTEE REENTRY FOR DEPORTED GUYANESE

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# MASSIVE US\$300M VREED-EN-HOOP SHOREBASE COMMISSIONED

The US\$300 million Vreed-en-Hoop Shore base Inc., (VEHSI) on the Demerara River officially opened, with His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali describing it as a foundation for developing a leading maritime and transport industry.

Constructed on Guyana's first artificial island, the facility is a joint venture between Guyanese consortium – NRG Holdings Inc., and Jan De Nul, an international maritime infrastructure company.

The shore base is key to supporting petroleum operations, including offshore subsea equipment installation for capital projects, storage and preservation of emergency response equipment, including capping stacks, and the fabrication of important equipment such as PLETS and FLETS in Guyana.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, President Ali said the event marks the celebration of partnerships, both local and international, which is crucial in driving Guyana forward.

The president noted that this shore base facility should not be viewed merely as a piece of infrastructure, but as a stepping stone towards greater opportunities.

**of the best marine industries in the region. This is the one additional asset that positions us to build a transport and logistics hub and link, that is key and critical ... this is a means to the end and not the end by itself," the head of state underscored.**

President Ali then shifted his address on the energy sector, stating that Guyana must cement itself strategically as a major

that, he said international partners like ExxonMobil, are needed.

He emphasised the importance of leveraging Guyana's natural resources, particularly from the oil and gas industry to create long-term economic benefits, through diversification



*His Excellency President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali*

will connect Regions in Region Three and upon

ourselves. The second gas project in Berbice and the deep-water port... in the next term, is not whether it will happen; it must happen because these are key investments for the structural transformation of our country," he underscored, highlighting that it has the potential to generate sustainable jobs and wealth.

President Ali



*massive US\$300 million Vreed-en-Hoop Shorebase Inc commissioned*

player in the regional energy market.

According to the president, it would not bode well with the nation's strategy, if

of local economies.

This includes infrastructure, which is essential in driving Guyana's economic success and prosperity.

Three and Four, which President Ali said is important in optimising investments like the shore base facility.

completion, will improve the competitiveness of Guyana, by slashing the energy cost by 50 per cent.

also appealed to the business community to adopt bold, forward-thinking strategies, even if it means making sacrifices for long-term advantages.

The project commenced in 2022, which encompassed dredging of the access channel in the Demerara River, including the deepening/widening of the existing nautical channel, berth pockets, and turning basin.

It forms part of a broader project called the Port of Vreed-en-Hoop.



*Ribbon cutting for New Vreed-en-Hoop Shore base facility*

**"This is that one additional asset that allows us to build one**

Guyana does not position itself in the region's energy mix; but to do

Currently, a modern Demerara River Bridge is being constructed and

Further, a massive gas-to-energy project is being developed at Wales

**"We have to be able to create these opportunities for**

## PRESIDENT ALI TO REVIEW PSC'S PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO LOCAL CONTENT ACT



– His Excellency, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali meets with PSC

The Private Sector Commission's (PSC) proposed amendments to the landmark Local Content Act of 2021 have been delivered to His Excellency, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali for a thorough review. This development comes on the heels of the government's commitment to strengthening the current act, ensuring

that new and emerging sectors that support oil and gas production are included and opportunities for local businesses are enhanced.

P S C ' s Chairman Komal Singh and Chairman of the Local Content Committee Shyam Nokta met with President Ali at State House where they presented the proposals.

According to the president's official social media page, the proposals were put together by the commission, following an extensive two-year countrywide consultation process



The booklet with recommendations was presented to the president by the PSC

with the local private sector. The intention to review the proposal with the option to amend the legislation.

T h e recommendations and scheduled expansion for the act aim to address and strengthen areas that have evolved due to the rapid development of the oil and gas industry.

President Ali has since signalled his

Guyana's landmark Local Content legislation was passed in December 2021, the first of its kind in the Caribbean.

## GUYANA AND U.S. TO PARTNER TO COMBAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio

His Excellency President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali gave the nation an update on his recent engagement with US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio. The president announced via his Official Social media page the success of the critical engagement.

The president said that he used the opportunity to reiterate our Country's support for the extended partnership in energy, security, democracy, and Regional prosperity."

In a statement attributable to US State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce, it was confirmed that the President Ali's engagement with the Rubio centered on the crisis of illegal migration.

According to the statement the two countries agreed to jointly address this regional imperative and challenge.

The Secretary affirmed the United States' steadfast support of Guyana's territorial

integrity in the face of Nicolás Maduro and his cronies' bellicose actions.

## GUARANTEED REENTRY FOR DEPORTED GUYANESE- DR JAGDEO



Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

Vice President and General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo has stated that Guyanese who reside in the United States (US) illegally, and who may be deported,

will not be refused entry into Guyana.

The general secretary, who was at the time, speaking at his weekly press conference, stated that the government has a duty to all Guyanese, despite their situation. He reminded that the government has always welcomed people to its shores, and Guyanese who have

to return will have the same privilege afforded to them.

Jagdeo further explained that there would still be some sort of verification process for those returning, but guaranteed that verified Guyanese will be allowed entry.

**"If they are deported back home, this is home to them. Governments do not have much of a choice. There could**

**be [a] verification [process].... Once you are Guyanese, and verified to be Guyanese, then [we] have to take our people back,"** Dr Jagdeo reassured.

Newly sworn-in president of the US, Donald Trump has recently signed a host of executive orders, many of which surrounding that country's immigration policy. The executive orders would see a cracking down

on illegal immigration within the country and eventually result in mass deportation of the illegal immigrants.

The orders would in some cases jeopardise some Guyanese who have made the US their home.

Guyana and the US share a healthy diplomatic relationship that has borne much fruit over the span of decades since that relationship was established.

## -PRESIDENT ALI SAYS COUNTRY NOT SOLELY DEPENDENT ON OIL; POLICIES ENSURING DIVERSIFICATION



His Excellency President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali

GUYANA'S economy is standing not only on an oil-and-gas foundation, it is standing on many legs, President, Dr Irfaan Ali has said, noting that the investments and policies being pursued by the government are ensuring this is the case.

"When you look at the economy, when you look at all segments of the economy in the last four years, you can see the policies of the government have enabled continuous and sustainable growth. This adds to the resilience of the economy.

"This adds to the

diversified portfolio of the economy, so that we can withstand greater shocks. The economy is not only standing on an oil-and-gas foundation, it is standing on many legs, and the investments and policies that we are pursuing are ensuring that, that is the case," the Head of State said.

In reaffirming his government's commitment to long-term growth and development, President Ali stated that Budget 2025 will continue to build on what has already been initiated, expanding the country's economy and ensuring

that Guyana possesses an appealing framework for investment and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

He added that it will help to position the country as a "major destination for investment".

The President emphasised that nationwide investments are aimed at forging a stronger and more resilient economy, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for every Guyanese.

The President also pointed to his government's efforts to support farmers and improve agricultural productivity.

"We are investing in food security, investing in manufacturing, agro-processing, and investing in the diversification of our country," he said.

President Ali underscored the sector's growth and its role in boosting food security, noting that "investment in agriculture has increased by almost 160 per cent".

He added that this has contributed to the

diversification and resilience of the economy.

This is being supported by the upskilling of Guyanese through targeted initiatives, such as the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) Scholarship Programme.

President Ali outlined that out of the almost 30,000 scholarships that have been awarded under the programme, over 70 per cent of the beneficiaries are women.

He said that even before the presentation of the 2025 budget, the government had surpassed its commitment of providing 20,000 scholarships to Guyanese.

The President noted his government's broader commitment to empowering citizens through investments in education (at all levels), healthcare, and agricultural development among other key areas.

He said that critical investments have been made at all levels in education, including the construction or extension of 34 schools since 2020, as well as the maintenance of 350 nursery schools,

440 primary schools, and 115 secondary schools.

Dr Ali related: "More persons have access to secondary schools today, and this came as a result of the more than \$54 billion of investment we made in the last four years to construct and rehabilitate schools, improve infrastructure and expand infrastructure in some instances."

The President also emphasised his government's focus on training teachers and increasing access to tertiary education, which, at the University of Guyana, is free from this semester.

In healthcare, President Ali noted significant improvements, attributing them to the investment of over \$108 billion before the 2025 budget.

"Between 85 per cent and 90 per cent of drugs and medical supplies are now available in the healthcare sector—that is, our health dispensaries, our pharmacies, our

hospitals are able to deliver between 85 per cent and 90 per cent of the drugs that are required by our patients," the Head of State said.

"Our public healthcare system is now able to provide a wide array of services for the treatment of diabetes, heart disease and specialised services like hip and knee replacements," Dr. Ali related.

The Head of State also spoke about the expansion of healthcare infrastructure across Guyana, including the establishment of 57 dental clinics and assigned dental surgeons across the country.

"In our hinterland communities, we're able now to have 50 telemedicine sites across the country, all of which will add to the quality of healthcare that our citizens everywhere in Guyana now enjoy," Dr. Ali said.

Source: Guyana Chronicle

## REMAINING CASH GRANTS TO BE DISTRIBUTED AFTER APPROVAL OF BUDGET 2025

Guyanese who are yet to receive their 100k cash grants can now breathe a sigh of relief as the government has indicated that distribution of the remaining grants will commence after the 2025 National Budget has been passed.

This guarantee was given by Vice President

and General Secretary of the ruling People's Progressive Party, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo.

The Vice President stated that significant strides have been made in having cheques issued as the registration process across all regions has been completed.

"They have told

me that they have completed the process in the remaining five regions," Dr Jagdeo stated.

Dr Jagdeo also clarified that even though the registration process in the regions would have mostly ended, the government is fully aware that not all citizens have



cash grant distribution continues after budget is passed

been able to register and as such, reassured that permanent measures will be put in place for persons to register in the various regions.

The government has been doing all in its power to distribute the 100k cash grant in a timely manner. To date, over 400,000 Guyanese have

registered for the grant with some 300,000+ cheques printed already.

The general secretary further expressed hope that the budget would be approved by next Thursday for grant distribution to advance smoothly.

Recently, there has

been some confusion on social media which sought to suggest that the government is either withholding the grant or moving at a snail's pace with its disbursement.



General Secretary of the PPPC and Vice President of Guyana Dr Bharrat Jagdeo.

# PRESIDENT ALI PLEDGES ADDITIONAL DRAINAGE WORKS, STREET LIGHTS FOR KITTY



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Residents of Seaforth Street and Campbell Avenue in Kitty, Georgetown will soon enjoy improved drainage infrastructure and a more secure neighbourhood.

Residents complained that frequent flooding still persists.

President Ali said the government will soon compile a comprehensive drainage programme for the community using local labour and equipment from the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority

community's significant improvements, largely attributed to the government's consistent investments in road infrastructure and recreational facilities.

The president further assured those gathered that the government will work

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali held a community meeting



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with the residents (NDIA) where he pledged these enhancements.

Residents highlighted the ongoing drainage issue in the area, as well as the need for more street lights and improved garbage collection.

While the government has already completed 3.2 kilometres of roadworks and accompanying drainage infrastructure in the area, residents

**“NDIA will bring their equipment and we will fix the drainage. In a week’s time we will start works there. We will work with GPL [Guyana Power and Light] and public works for the street lights,”** the president told the residents.

The announcement was met with satisfaction, as residents acknowledged the

with the Georgetown City Council to address the community’s garbage collection concerns.

This meeting joins a series of others held this month as the government ramps up community engagement to foster greater development at that level.



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President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali engage Kitty Residents

## -PRESIDENT ALI SAYS COUNTRY NOT SOLELY DEPENDENT ON OIL; POLICIES ENSURING DIVERSIFICATION



Guyana to chair a global coalition of the world's newest oil-producing nations

Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat recently announced that Guyana has earned an invitation to chair a global coalition of the world's newest oil-producing nations,

crediting the invitation to the country's exemplary management of its oil and gas sector.

The minister said Guyana was asked to chair a new producers'

worldwide group, that includes fellow oil producers such as Ghana and Suriname, starting in February this year.

He believes that the achievement is due to the government's work and commitment to the petroleum sector.

**"Today, we have seen the confidence of investors rising as well. As investors, your investment must be secured,"** the natural resources minister stated.

The government has

established a framework for effectively managing the oil and gas sector through visionary leadership and strategic policies.

This approach has driven unparalleled growth, positioning Guyana as a global leader among emerging oil producers.

Minister Bharrat noted that no other country has transitioned from oil discovery to producing over 600,000 barrels per day in such a short time as

Guyana has since the May 2015 discovery.

**"We are well poised with the arrival of the new FPSO [floating production storage and offloading unit] later this year to be very close or maybe over 900,000 barrels per day.** We have already signed two other production licences with ExxonMobil Guyana which will take us way above the million barrels mark per day," Minister Bharrat explained.

He remains adamant that Guyana's success rate at discovery wells offshore has never been experienced anywhere in the world.

Guyana's Local Content Legislation has also driven growth in the industry, enabling over 1,500 local enterprises to register, with the majority benefitting from opportunities.

Nearly 7,000 Guyanese are now directly employed in the oil and gas sector.

## MORE THAN US\$12 BILLION IN OIL REVENUES EXPECTED IN NEXT FOUR YEARS

The Government of Guyana expects to receive more than US\$12 billion in oil revenues in the period 2025-2028, derived from the sale of crude oil and royalties.

This substantial income, when combined with other sources of national revenue, forms the backbone of the government's development plan. Over the past three years, oil money has been used strategically to fund initiatives aimed at improving the lives of all Guyanese through investments in energy, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and social programs.

More than US\$3 billion has already been withdrawn, and the results of this spending are already being felt across the country.

A key focus of the government's agenda is the expansion of Guyana's energy generation

capacity. One of the most transformative projects currently underway is the Gas-to-Energy project, being executed in partnership with ExxonMobil. This is projected to reduce the cost of power across the board by 50% while also cutting emissions from electricity generation. Such a reduction in energy costs will not only ease the financial burden on households but will also stimulate economic growth by fostering a more competitive business environment.

Infrastructure development is another cornerstone of the government's use of oil revenue. Projects such as the replacement of the aging Demerara Harbour Bridge with the new Demerara River Crossing are massive undertakings. This modernised bridge will enhance the efficiency



Guyana to receive more than US\$12 billion in oil revenues in the period 2025-2028

of land transportation and facilitate the movement of maritime vessels across the Demerara Channel. Additionally, substantial investments in roads and bridges, valued over \$200 billion this year across the country, aim to improve traffic efficiency, reduce congestion, and open new areas for residential and commercial development. By expanding access to land and housing, the government expects to give more Guyanese families the opportunity to build homes and establish secure futures.

Education and healthcare are receiving heightened attention,

with investments directed toward democratising access to quality services in these critical areas. New schools and hospitals are being built and existing facilities are

being upgraded to ensure that both urban and rural populations benefit from improved resources. In education, these projects aim to level the playing field for students, providing equitable access to opportunities regardless of geographic location. Similarly, the development of healthcare infrastructure is intended to ensure that all citizens, including those in remote hinterland areas, can access high-quality medical care. While education at the University of Guyana is free in 2025, learners who are not able to physically travel to the campuses

can benefit from digital scholarships through the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL). The government's infrastructure vision extends beyond Guyana's borders, emphasising regional connectivity to boost economic growth. For instance, the planned bridge linking Guyana and Suriname, to be undertaken in partnership with the Surinamese government, is expected to enhance trade between the two nations. Likewise, the proposed road to Brazil will improve export potential and facilitate stronger economic ties with northern Brazil.

While pursuing these projects, the government is keen on its commitment to responsible fiscal management. Unlike the previous administration, the PPP government prioritises capital investments over unsustainable steep increases in salaries

and cash grants. By focusing on projects that will have long-term economic impacts, the administration aims to ensure that the benefits of oil revenue are felt for generations to come.

Central to this philosophy is the recognition that the true value of oil wealth lies in how it is utilised. Vice President Jagdeo has said that Guyana must not be like Venezuela which, after decades of spending, has nothing to show for it. By directing oil revenues toward initiatives that improve infrastructure, reduce costs of living, and enhance access to education and healthcare, the government is working to ensure that the prosperity of the oil and gas sector is shared equitably with the people of Guyana.

## COMPANIES FROM 60 COUNTRIES TO BE ON DISPLAY AT GUYANA ENERGY CONFERENCE 2025



The Chief Executive Officer of the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo (GECSCCE), Kiana Wilburg

The Chief Executive Officer of the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo (GECSCCE), Kiana Wilburg, has encouraged Guyanese and local businesses

to take full advantage of the opportunities available at the fourth edition of the conference from February 18-21, 2025.

Wilburg said that this year's event will feature companies representing 26 sectors and 60 countries and several activities outside of the conference and expo that will be held at the Guyana Marriott Hotel.

Wilburg described this level of involvement as a major achievement, noting that it reflects the global interest in Guyana's rapidly growing economy.

The high-level event will provide Guyanese businesses with many opportunities

to increase their brand awareness, find the right partners to increase their competitiveness, and to understand how to navigate the complexities of Guyana's evolving economy fueled by its oil and gas resources.

The Guyana Energy Conference serves as a key platform for knowledge sharing among policymakers and industry experts. Wilburg also assured that the event will maintain its tradition of attracting key heads of state from the region.

"I dare say, we're the only ones in the game who are able to bring together this kind of caliber, the crème de la crème within our industry and our region, to have

the conversations that are necessary," she added.

Wilburg dispelled the notion that the event caters only to high-level executives, stating that several activities are designed to engage the general public.

She pointed out that GECSCCE has launched several events targeted at individuals who are interested in understanding more about Guyana's economic outlook and the various industries driving that growth. The event also serves as an avenue for those in search of job opportunities as companies operating in Guyana's oil industry will be participating.

The CEO stressed the importance of accessibility to

a plethora of opportunities, noting that the exhibition will run for four days.

This year's event will include several new activities beyond the conference and expo, including "Taste of Guyana" a culinary showcase that will occur from February 18 to 21. This event, which will highlight traditional Guyanese dishes, is organised in collaboration with the Ministries of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and Culture, Youth and Sport.

Ahead of the main event, the GECSCCE will host a "Conference Village" in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture on February 17. This initiative will spotlight Guyana's agricultural

sector, with displays of both traditional produce and experimental crops.

"If you're an agro-processor or within that agricultural landscape, this is an ideal event for you," Wilburg said.

The GECSCCE will also kick off its activities with a 5K Energy Run/Walk on February 16, set to be held on the Marriott Beach in Georgetown.

Last year, GECSCCE launched an essay competition for students countrywide, which encouraged students to explore the energy sector's role in Guyana's development. Prizes include a US\$10,000 scholarship.



# GOVT WILL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO BENEFIT EVERYONE- MINISTER MCCOY

Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Public Affairs and Information,

Bank corridor to address pressing community concerns. He told the gathering the government

citizens to drive community development and improve lives.

Key issues raised by residents included the need for proper drainage and irrigation systems, enhanced street lighting, and additional training opportunities for youths.

Minister McCoy assured residents of the government's commitment to addressing these matters in collaboration with the community.

**“Our job first and foremost, is to work the people within**

**the to**

**communities improvement there work together to enhance the needs to be,”** the build an impactful

minister asserted. The minister also emphasised the importance of community cooperation, urging residents to

neighbourhood. He also encouraged them to seize opportunities provided by the government to further their development.



Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Public Affairs and Information,

Kwame McCoy, met with residents of Timehri Dock along the East

remains steadfast in its philosophy of engaging directly with Guyanese



Some of the residents of Timehri Dock at the community meeting

# SILVERHILL RESIDENTS BENEFITING FROM 159 NEW WATER TANKS



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

Residents of Silverhill on the East Bank of Demerara are now experiencing improved access to water following the distribution of 159 new black water tanks.

This initiative came swiftly after President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali visited the community and pledged to address residents' water concerns. Minister

within the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy, spearheaded the distribution exercise.

Each tank has a

capacity of 450 gallons, providing significant relief for residents who often had to travel long distances to collect water from creeks or rely on rainwater.

Minister McCoy noted all of these efforts as necessary investments

the government's commitment to the welfare of the people, the minister said “We bring about the changes that you most desire, and we bring about the type of enhancement from both a personal and a community level.”

He also assured

way for the community. The tank distribution along with all other promised interventions is a testament to the government's responsiveness to the needs of the Guyana's communities and its commitment to improving the lives of its



improved access to water for Residents of Silverhill

to ensure fair and equitable distribution of resources.

Emphasising

residents that these investments are just the beginning of numerous improvements on the

citizens.

## GOV'T SURPASSES MANIFESTO PROMISES, BUDGET 2025 TO DRIVE CONTINUED NATIONAL PROGRESS

Heralding in a new chapter of national development, the government has not only fulfilled its manifesto commitments, but

breaking allocations and innovative solutions designed to accelerate economic growth and elevate the quality of life for every Guyanese.

crafted policies and interventions.

To date, over \$54 billion has been invested to expand infrastructure in the education sector,

also removed VAT on electricity and water and introduced subsidies for pensioners, making the financial relief for many families add up to nearly \$100,000 monthly.

Guyana's housing sector boasts one of the most notable achievements by being on track to deliver over 50,000 house lots by this year - thousands more than the government's original target.

The government's focus on diversifying the economy and boosting investments extended to

the agriculture and manufacturing sectors, propelling the non-oil Gross Domestic Product forward at a never-before-seen rate.

This accomplishment positions Guyana as an attractive destination for

both local and foreign investors.

As a result of strategic government measures the private sector would have saved more than \$100 billion annually.

President Ali accredited the country's remarkable development to the government's unfaltering focus on empowering citizens and building a Guyana characterised by stability and prosperity.

**"We have been able to deliver our commitment around what I would say is a people-oriented strategy. Because the whole philosophy of the last four budgets was about improving the conditions of people, the life of people, the conditions of communities, empowering people, creating wealth, building prosperity, expanding growth,**

**opening up opportunities and investing in the development of our people all across the country.**

**Whether it's health care, education, community services, roads, infrastructure, drainage, agriculture, it was all about investing around people, empowering people, uplifting people,"** the head of state said.

He further highlighted how the country remains in a position where economic expansion and progression is undeniably achievable.

With Budget 2025, Guyana is poised to continue this transformative journey, securing its place as a beacon of sustainable growth and resilience on the global stage.



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali addresses the nation

has far surpassed expectations, achieving progress in key sectors like education, health, and housing.

Budget 2025 is expected to build on this remarkable growth with record-

In a special address to the nation, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali spotlighted the country's unprecedented enhancement while pledging to propel its expansion through funding and meticulously

a sector that is key to the furthered prosperity of Guyana.

Pensioners have also seen tremendous support, with the old age pension now increased to \$41,000 per month. The government

## BUDGET 2025 HAS TO DO WITH DEVELOPMENT, NOT ELECTIONS - PM PHILLIPS



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips engages the people

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips clearly stated that the whopping \$1.38 trillion budget proposed in the National Assembly

was crafted with a central focus on meeting the needs of the people and fast-tracking the country's socioeconomic development.

It was not crafted with the upcoming elections in mind, but for the improvement of the daily livelihoods of the Guyanese public.

**"Budget 2025 signifies a continuation of a development process that started when we**

**took office in August 2020...it is the fifth developmental budget, it's like putting the icing on the cake. It has**

**nothing to do with elections, it has to do with development,"** the prime minister emphasised.

Reminiscing on the journey, Prime Minister Phillips said that the PPP/C Government managed to achieve major milestones over the past four years.

The country has moved from a restricted-like approach to one that is limitless with opportunities and modern infrastructure.

To further propel this achievement, the government, in its fifth year, decided to establish a rigorous scheme based on the feedback of the Guyanese population.

# GOVT MPS FIERCELY DEFEND 2025 BUDGET

## OPPOSITION'S PROPOSED MEASURES UNREALISTIC, UNAFFORDABLE - DR SINGH



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr Ashni Singh

Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr Ashni Singh concluded the week-long budget 2025 debates with a fiery two-hour address, eviscerating the arguments put forward by the opposition parliamentarians.

Dr Singh has strongly criticised the opposition's proposed relief measures, arguing that they are unaffordable and not grounded in reality.

In his comprehensive address to the National Assembly at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, the senior minister provided an estimated total of each initiative promised by the minister pointed out. According to Dr Singh, these measures would cost an estimated \$799 billion, and this fanciful host of proposed measures exclude the allocations needed for critical sectors like infrastructure and education.

**"They haven't built a single**

**hospital yet, or school, or put a single x-ray machine in the hospitals, or allocated a single house lot...and they are already spending almost a trillion dollars,"** the minister pointed out.

Minister noted that in his critique of the infrastructure budgetary allocation and the overall performance of the sector, the Opposition Leader also contended that his administration would bridge the Essequibo River at

multiple points. Dr Singh marvelled at the absurdity of this commitment.

**"The only thing left for him to announce is a road to the moon,"** the minister quipped.

The senior minister further contrasted these hypothetical postulations with the tangible and visible investments delivered under the PPP/C government. This includes increases to pensions and wages, aggressive housing programmes and the

support for sports development.

**"We are justifiably proud of what we have delivered to the Guyanese people over the last five years. We did not make the biggest promises in 2020. We sat down and consulted with everybody, and we wrote a manifesto and said 'If you elect us, this is what we will do'. And we have delivered!"** he underscored.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with

### BUDGET 2025 IS ANCHORED BY INCLUSIVITY - MP WILLIAMS



MP) Lee Williams

Member of Parliament (MP) Lee Williams has expressed his commendations for the massive \$1.382 trillion budget, stating that the initiatives are transformational and inclusive.

According to him, the budget builds upon

previous frameworks, which has led to immense and tangible changes in communities across Guyana.

**"We have seen transformational changes in every town, every village across Guyana...as we move our country to a secure, prosperous, and sustainable Guyana,"** he expressed.

Drawing a contrast to the opposition's tenure in government, he highlighted improvements in the health sector, with communities in the Upper Mazaruni now being able to conduct

surgeries locally, and the establishment of telemedicine centres in at least 50 villages.

The MP also boasted that information and communication technology (ICT) hubs are now providing students the opportunity to pursue tertiary education, with high-speed internet installed.

MP Williams reaffirmed his support for the 2025 budget, stating that it aligns with the PPP/C's vision for a better Guyana.

### BUDGET 2025 IS A PROGRESSIVE FISCAL PLAN - MP RAMSARRAN



Member of Parliament Dr Bheri Ramsarran

Member of Parliament (MP), Dr Bheri Ramsarran has lauded the 2025 budget as an innovative and supportive fiscal plan, describing it as "nearly perfect".

During budget debates in the National Assembly, Dr Ramsarran said the country's largest-ever fiscal package will boost the government's

ability to build on its standing achievements.

The MP told the house that the government would try in every way to provide citizens with more power, resources and rewards.

"In other words, this budget generates hope. I commend this budget as presented. Onwards, upwards, may we ever grow," Dr Ramsarran stated.

The MP underscored the government's continued focus on developing and implementing solutions for all food-related health concerns, although they are not current critical issues.

MP Ramsarran also said men's health, mental health, maternal care and pediatric health will also be prioritised once budget

2025 is approved. The health sector was allocated a significant \$143.2 billion to further drive efforts to create a world-class healthcare system.

The budget will fund key infrastructural projects including the construction of the Maternal and Pediatric Hospital at Ogle, Region Four, and six regional hospitals at Lima Sands, De Kinderen, Diamond, Bath, Enmore, and Number 75.

The government's focus will extend to improving citizens' health and well-being.

The budget will also see all Guyanese receiving a \$10,000 universal health care voucher to conduct general checkups and wellness tests.

### BUDGET 2025 PROMOTES WOMEN EMPOWERMENT- MP VEERSAMMY



Member of Parliament (MP) Bhagmattie Veersmammy

Member of Parliament (MP) Bhagmattie Veersmammy described Budget 2025 as 'people-centred,' and one that promotes women's

empowerment. During her contribution to the budget debates she emphasised, **"Budget 2025 offers our people goodwill,**

**increased wages, salaries, improved conditions of living, wealth creation through education, skills training, job creation, entrepreneurship and so much more."**

Despite global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, floods, and geopolitical tensions, MP Veersmammy stated that the government has achieved remarkable progress in every region. She also did not shy away from addressing criticism

from the opposition while highlighting the stark differences in governance.

The MP noted that budget 2025 outlines a robust investment aimed at reducing disparities between rural and urban areas as she revealed that six out of 12 regional hospitals will be operational this year.

The budget also continues the PPP/C government's focus on education, a sector Veersmammy described as a 'key to breaking the cycle of poverty'.

Major milestones include free University of Guyana courses, the cancellation of student loan debts since 2024, and surpassing the manifesto target of 20,000 scholarships with over 29,758 awards. Notably, 72 per cent of scholarship recipients are women, reflecting a commitment to gender inclusivity.

The Women's Innovation and Investment Network (WIIN) training programme geared towards empowering women has upskilled

over 12,000 women. Similarly, the Board of Industrial Training (BIT) has empowered thousands of women while about 72 per cent of GOAL scholarship recipients were also women.

As Guyana continues on its development trajectory, the MP reiterated the PPP/C's commitment to its vision of a secure, prosperous, and sustainable nation.

CON'T ON PAGE 10

## 'GOVT COMMITTED TO ENSURING WELL-BEING OF ALL GUYANESE - HEALTH MINISTER



**Minister Dr Frank Anthony**

Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony has reaffirmed the PPP/C government's commitment to strengthening Guyana's

health sector through strategic interventions and investments to ensure the well-being of every citizen.

Contributing to the budget debates in the National Assembly, Minister Anthony highlighted the government's achievements in the health sector noting its progress in reducing maternal deaths, citing a decline from 23 in 2017,

20 in 2018, and 23 in 2019 to 14 in 2024.

Minister Anthony reported six new hospitals are set to be opened in the coming months, each equipped with high-end medical technology and 75 beds to enhance healthcare delivery.

Over the past three years, the government has constructed 25 new health centres and posts nationwide to strengthen

primary healthcare.

Dr Anthony also reminded the house that the PPP/C administration was responsible for increasing nurses' salaries.

He pointed to the government's investments in training, with over 500 community health workers (CHWs) trained in the past four years to improve healthcare services in

their communities.

Training programmes in the health sector are also being decentralised to ensure a steady supply of personnel for health institutions.

**"Right now, we have 3,000 more persons who will be graduating soon from nursing assistant and other programmes. This year, we will take in another 3,000**

**persons. We have a track record to stand on. You don't have anything to stand on. We are proud of what we have delivered,"** Minister Anthony added.

The 143.2 billion allocated to the Health Sector will see further improvements in health care delivery throughout Guyana.

## BUDGET 2025 HAS MAJOR INITIATIVES TO PUSH SECURITY SECTOR



**Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn defends Budget 2025**

Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn

has defended the proposed \$1.38 trillion national budget for 2025, describing it as a mainspring to accelerate Guyana's transformation.

During the budget debates in the National Assembly, Minister Benn described the government's investment in the security sector as a vital component of national progress. The sum of \$108.7 billion has been set aside for the security sector this year.

Of this amount, \$4.7 billion is earmarked for infrastructure projects, including the construction of the Brickdam Police Station and the completion of police stations and outposts.

He disclosed that modern police stations are also under construction in Ann's Grove, Mabaruma and Lethem to strengthen law enforcement infrastructure nationwide.

The minister said \$262 million has been

directed toward acquiring vehicles, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), drones and other equipment to enhance security in the hinterland and coastal areas.

These strategic investments have yielded significant results, including a 12.2 per cent reduction in serious crimes over the past year.

Enhanced police operations have also led to over 1,500 domestic violence cases being

reported, with 167 convictions in 2024, alongside 1,463 narcotic seizures resulting in 77 arrests and convictions.

Minister Benn highlighted the collaborative efforts with CARICOM and international partners to combat transnational organised crime, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling.

He also underscored the government's commitment to

safeguarding Guyana's sovereignty, particularly in light of the controversy with Venezuela.

Enhanced surveillance, intelligence gathering, and community policing remain central to these efforts, he emphasised.

He appealed to the opposition to support budget 2025 to advance Guyana's development agenda since national progress requires collective effort.

## OPPOSITION WILL STRUGGLE TO MATCH GOVT'S ENERGY - MINISTER EDGHILL



**Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill makes his presentation during the budget debates**

As the 2025 budget debates continued in the National Assembly, Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill boasted of the governments energetic and robust infrastructure development programme

Minister Edghill said many roads are being repaired or have already been completed in nearly every region.

The public works minister said almost every roadway in Kwakwani and Ituni is under construction, with many already completed. Similarly, in Linden, 505 contractors are actively rehabilitating roads.

In New Amsterdam, over 100 contractors are engaged in road construction, ensuring critical infrastructure is not just planned, but executed.

In Georgetown and other parts of Region Four, 947 contractors are working on road development, with several projects already completed.

The minister said along the East Coast of Demerara alone, some 300 roads are under construction, while in Region Two, 171 contractors are actively engaged in infrastructural development. The ministry's Special Projects Unit (SPU) has already completed roadworks in Onderneeming and other areas.

From 2020 to 2024, the government successfully completed 4,322 kilometres (km) of road upgrades and 2,583 km of sea and river defences were improved.

### Bridges

All bridges from Karasabai in Region Nine to Paramakatoi in Region Eight are set for construction to enhance accessibility and mobility.

**"The cost for a sack of cement in Lethem is about \$2,900 and by the time it gets to Paramakatoi, it is \$14,000. Do you know what that means? Because of that transportation link that would become more accessible, the cost of development would be**

**significantly reduced.**

**People would have better homes, there would be better infrastructure and the livelihood of people would be improved, and the cost of food would also go down,"** he explained.

The long-awaited bridge across the Bonasika Creek will also become a reality this year while the contract for the Makouria Bridge has already been awarded.

### Maritime Transport

Minister Edghill said the government is investing in additional vessels this year to improve river transportation.

He disclosed that the MV Kimbia will be dedicated to cargo transport for Region One while another ferry will be added to the Parika-Supenaam route.

The Leguan Stelling is now fully operational, while the Bartica Stelling is set to become operational before March.

### Airstrips

The government maintains 51 airstrips and remains committed to improving access to interior locations. The 2025 budget allocates funding to upgrade these airstrips.

## GUYANA'S EXPORTS SOAR BY 285 PER CENT IN THREE YEARS - MINISTER TODD



**Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd**

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd, revealed during his presentation for the 2025 budget debates, that between 2020 and 2023, Guyana's exports increased by a massive 285 per cent, moving from US\$2.8 billion to US\$10.8 billion.

He emphasised that the government has consistently engaged in negotiations with trading partners to remove market access barriers, and expand market presence for local products in regional and international markets.

As a result, Minister Todd explained that trade with the country's major extra-regional partners increased significantly.

**"Exports to the United States and Canada expanded by US\$6.2 billion and**

**US\$385 billion respectively. The growth of our exports to the United Kingdom and the European Union have also been exponential, increasing by US\$747 million and US\$2.2 billion during that period,"** he said.

He noted that exports to non-traditional markets have also increased substantially with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore and India being ranked among Guyana's top 10 export destinations. Since 2020, exports to these countries have grown by US\$2.1 billion.

The minister credited the increase to the government's efforts to implement measures directed at the expansion of the economy and enhance both traditional and non-traditional export profiles.

Recognising President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's visionary leadership in positioning Guyana as a model in economic, social and environmental development, the foreign affairs minister also highlighted the vast achievements of the government in foreign policy.

The government continues to demonstrate its commitment to protecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It has been actively involved in the international arena, which includes its role in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Minister Todd also

emphasised Guyana's efforts to promote indigenous rights, address racial discrimination and pursue reparations for historical injustices related to the transatlantic slave trade.

The minister noted that under the stewardship of the PPP/C government, Guyana has also established itself as a leader in climate and energy security, piloting bold initiatives to foster sustainable development and advance global climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

The government also resuscitated the Diaspora Unit and re-established stakeholder engagement to improve the services provided to the diaspora. In this regard, since 2020 about 2,035 re-migrant applications have been processed.

**"This highlights the trust and confidence the diaspora places in the PPP/C government,"** the foreign affairs minister asserted.

## BUDGET 2025 PROMISES SUSTAINABLE HOUSING, CLEAN WATER- MINISTER CROAL



**Minister of Housing & Water Collin Croal**

The government's proposed \$135.7 billion allocation in the 2025 Budget for housing and water is crucial to expanding affordable housing and ensuring reliable access to potable water for Guyanese.

Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal made the assertion while defending the allocation during the budget debates in the National Assembly.

He said his ministry's allocation is justified and essential. It represents the government's commitment to correcting past mismanagement by the previous government and building a future where every citizen can thrive.

The government has invested more than \$244 billion over the years to accelerate major

developments in the housing and water sectors.

Upon assuming office in 1992, the PPP/C government prioritised the housing sector recognising the severity of the crisis.

The government allocated millions of dollars to launch a comprehensive housing programme despite facing dire economic circumstances.

Minister Croal said when the APNU+AFC coalition took office in 2015, little to no progress was made in continuing the robust

housing programme inherited from the PPP/C government.

**"[There was] a lazy approach to the housing sector, it was musical chairs at housing and everyone was off key! Not a single effective strategy came from them."**

He highlighted the PPP/C government's achievements in the housing and water sectors, which reflect the promises made in their manifesto.

The government has allocated over 40,808

residential house lots since 2020.

Infrastructure works have been completed in more than 50 new and existing housing schemes while major highways on the West and East Bank of Demerara have been constructed.

Water

The government has drilled 157 wells countrywide, with 130 located in hinterland and riverine communities. More than 40,000 residents have gained first-time access to potable water.

Several water treatment plants are at various stages of completion, positioning the country to achieve 90 per cent treated water coverage along the coast by year-end.

Construction will soon begin on five more water treatment plants this year.

Minister Croal described budget 2025 as an excellent blueprint that will allow the government to build on its achievements and drive further economic growth.

## BUDGET 2025 HAS NO NEW TAXES



**Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr**

In his contribution to the budget debates 2025, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr underscored the absence of new taxes in the \$1.138 trillion budget, which he described as progressive and designed to deliver lasting benefits to the Guyanese people.

The Minister outlined the

achievements of the PPP/C administration since 2020, including the restoration and transformation of the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport.

Key accomplishments under the ministry include the establishment of the Institute of Creative Arts, now registered with the National Accreditation Council.

Over 60 cultural events have been hosted, featuring international festivals and workshops with Hollywood actors. The revival of the Guyana Prize for Literature through initiatives like the Write-to-Stage programme was also highlighted.

Minister Ramson noted that 2024 was a landmark year for Guyanese athletes, who won a record 534 medals in regional and international competitions.

He pointed to the government's role in hosting world-class events such

as the Cricket World Cup, CONCACAF qualifiers, and the Caribbean Cycling Championships, which not only enhanced athlete development, but also boosted the local economy.

The minister also detailed infrastructure improvements, including the rehabilitation of over 550 community grounds to provide safe spaces for youth engagement and talent development.

This year, the sum of \$8 billion has been allocated for the sport sector, a significant increase of \$3.4 billion compared to last year's \$4.6 billion provision.

This allocation will see the completion of several sports facilities and the construction of new sports halls in Leonora, Lethem, Mabaruma, Mahdia, and Mongrippa Hill.

## GOVT'S COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT CEASE - MINISTER PARAG



**Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag makes her contributions in the budget debates**

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag has reaffirmed that the government's commitment to economic and regional development will not waver despite political obstacles.

Contributing to the budget debates in the National Assembly, Minister Parag said nationwide

development will continue under the new budget, ensuring people remain the priority and not politics.

Through the government's part-time worker initiatives, 15,283 individuals, of which 11,000 were women, have been empowered to lift themselves out of financial hardship.

These programmes have enabled women to leave abusive situations and care for sick family members. To further expand these opportunities, the government has allocated \$12.7 billion.

**"This government has invested billions annually to ensure that these workers are not only earning a living, but are part of an inclusive economic structure that values their contributions,"** she said.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has been allocated 2.8 billion dollars to enhance livelihoods and advance development strategies this year.

A sum of \$13.2 billion has been earmarked to improve solid waste management nationwide. The government plans to build additional market areas and landfill sites, expanding on the 13 already in operation.

Significant investments are also being made in upgrading health centres and schools.

Efforts will also be made to strengthen the regional system to ensure citizens have easy access to government services through their Neighbourhood Democratic Councils.

## ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF EMPOWERMENT, INCLUSIVITY- MINISTER MCCOY ON BUDGET 2025



**Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy**

Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Public Affairs, Kwame McCoy lauded the 2025 budget as another gleaming example of the PPP/C government's staunch commitment to empowerment and inclusive governance.

According to the minister, this budget is a "modern example of people's empowerment" as it ensures

every citizen, regardless of affiliation can benefit from the abundant opportunities created through the growth of the oil and non-oil sectors.

This dedication is further manifested in the improvements in river transportation, expansion of medical services and educational facilities, as well as the rolling out of the government's massive housing programme nationwide.

The minister noted that the budget funnels direct financial benefits to 253 hinterland and riverine communities, further empowering them to administer their community affairs.

Minister McCoy criticised the theatrics and hypocrisy of the opposition,

accusing them of seeking to undermine the government's progress to gain political mileage.

These efforts, the minister stressed, are wholly in vain, noting that evidence of the government's achievements in fostering economic development is in plain sight.

Minister McCoy praised budget 2025 for its focus on sustainable development, infrastructure improvement and equitable access to services.

**"Today, Guyanese see the progress that is not marred by empty rhetoric but is grounded in real impactful action and progress that includes every single Guyanese,"** he said.

## BUDGET 2025 DESIGNED TO SECURE A PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR ALL GUYANESE- MINISTER WALROND



**Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond**

Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond reaffirmed the government's commitment to fulfilling its promises, describing its record as one of 'delivery, competence, execution.'

During the ongoing budget debates in the National Assembly, Minister Walrond lauded Budget 2025 as a transformative tool designed to secure a prosperous future for all

Guyanese.

The minister highlighted the PPP/C government's efforts to uplift citizens, even without the fiscal space now afforded by oil revenues. She pointed to the reinstatement of school cash grants, pensioner subsidies for electricity and water, and bonuses for disciplined services, initiatives removed under the APNU/AFC administration.

The Walrond outlined the government's broader efforts to empower small businesses and create jobs, including a 20 per cent government contract allocation for small businesses.

This initiative has awarded approximately \$25 billion in contracts to 2,500 small contractors, with 30 per cent of those businesses being women-owned. She also noted that the hospitality

sector employs nearly 22,000 people, with 2024 occupancy rates reaching 88 per cent in the business segment.

Between 2020 and 2024, the industry added four new hotels and 561 rooms, creating jobs during both construction and operations. The construction sector has also grown significantly, with over 2,000 community infrastructure projects awarded to small contractors in 2024 alone.

Urging the opposition to move beyond divisive rhetoric and work for the nation's collective good, Minister Walrond reiterated that budget 2025 is a bold vision for Guyana's future, rooted in sustainability, equity, and progress.

# Fair allocations in housing thanks to transparency in process: Ali

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali has said that the strict regulations, transparency and openness in the housing sector ensure that there is fairness in allocations, and no room for misconduct.

The President, during a live broadcast on Monday evening, spoke extensively on the operations of the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA), and emphasised his administration's commitment to ensuring that there is transparency in all spheres.

Although under the A Partnership for National Unity+ Alliance For Change (APNU+AFC), the housing sector was embroiled in allegations of infractions, corruption has been stamped out under the current Ali-led administration.

First, the Head of State spoke on the land policy and how it has resulted in the lives of ordinary citizens being transformed.

While the Opposition has ramped up its rhetoric that the ordinary Guyanese are not seeing changes in their lives, the President pointed out that less than 10 per cent of the total acreage of lands were allocated to private developers and commercial purposes, within the last four years.

What is important to understand is that the resources generated from the sale of lands to private developers were for



A new housing estate in Guyana

development purposes.

For further clarity, he said that the resources from it are used to cross-subsidise investments for low-income, middle-income and low middle-income properties.

The Head of State related that the concept of cross-subsidisation in the housing sector is a key one, and that is why, with government investment and cross-subsidisation, they are able to heavily reduce the cost of a house lot allocated to an ordinary person.

There is no longer inadequate over-

sight of the housing ministry, unlike from 2015-2020, but instead the agreements between the government and private developers are just and transparent.

The President gave a detailed explanation to the Guyanese populace of what the agreement entails, dismantling the narrative of detractors.

Within the process, there is an expression of interest, and private developers would have to respond to it and, notably, all of the developers would have to sign the same agreement.

Dr. Ali firmly stated: "In this agree-

ment, under the People's Progressive Party/Civic government, no land can be transferred or vested without the full payment."

The private developers must also install the necessary infrastructure such as: Drainage, roads and street lighting within 18 months of the date of the agreement.

The developers must also substantially complete 70 per cent of the residential construction within three years of the date of the agreement.

The depth of the agreement goes beyond that, as the purchase price for all private developers is \$30 million per acre.

Also, a 30 per cent deposit must be made upon the signing of the agreement, and the balance of the purchase price shall be paid to the vendor, which is the CH&PA, within 18 months of the date of this agreement.

"So, none of these developers would have title until all of these conditions are satisfied," he said, while noting that if the requirements are not satisfied, then CH&PA "shall be under no obligation" to accept the balance of the purchase price, and convey title to the purchaser, and may, at that point, terminate the agreement.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

**World Guyanese Congress**  
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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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# BUDGET DEBATES 2025



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2/2<sup>50</sup>



Benjamin's Rose Water 480 ml

3<sup>39</sup> each



Anchor Brand Syrup assorted 750 ml

3<sup>99</sup> each



Geisha Jack Mackerels in Tomato Sauce 200 g

2/2<sup>20</sup>



Titus Sardines assorted 125 g

2/\$<sup>3</sup>



Nupak White Corn Meal 10 kg

24<sup>99</sup> each



Grace Instant Oats 1 kg

2/\$<sup>5</sup>



Comet Powder Cleanser 400 g

99¢ each



Old Dutch Laundry Detergent assorted 6 L

7<sup>99</sup> each



Windsor Safe-T-Salt Ice Melt Salt 10 kg

3<sup>99</sup> each



Laurentide Windshield Washer -45 3,78 lt

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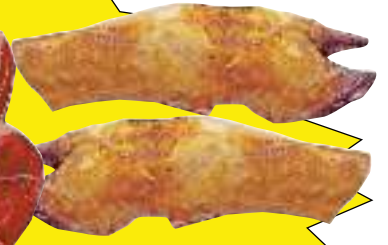
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**Frozen Centre Cut Beef Shank Steak**



**\$3.99**  
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416-398-8123

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Danforth Food Market  
144 Kennedy Road  
South  
289-298-0399

**Store Hours**  
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Saturday 8 am to 9 pm  
Sunday 9 am to 7 pm

## 'BUDGET 2025 A CHRONICLE OF PERSEVERANCE, DEVELOPMENT, UNDYING COMMITMENT' - MP CHARLIE



**'Budget 2025 a chronicle of perseverance, development, undying commitment' - MP Charlie**

The government's proposed \$1.38 trillion budget has been hailed as a testament to perseverance, development, and the government's unwavering commitment to ensuring

that every citizen benefits from the nation's resources and initiatives.

This was emphasised by Member of Parliament (MP), Alister Charlie during the budget debates in the National Assembly.

MP Charlie highlighted that Budget 2025 prioritises inclusive development while opening up numerous opportunities. It presents a comprehensive plan designed to foster economic growth,

enhance public services, and improve the quality of life for Guyanese.

Over the years, the government has improved access to water, healthcare, telecommunications, and energy in Hinterland and rural communities. The PPP/C government's housing programme has also provided thousands of Guyanese with house lots and affordable homes.

Turning his attention to Region Nine, MP Charlie highlighted the substantial transformation underway, with the region set to receive a budgetary

allocation of \$7.08 billion this year – the largest allocation to date.

Thirty-one new schools are under construction, with 17 already completed in areas including Crashwater and Moco Moco. Several schools are also undergoing upgrades, ensuring a better learning environment for children.

In the health sector, over 30 communities now have access to telemedicine at their health centres and posts, bringing healthcare closer to the people.

In the area of road infrastructure, over 1,200 kilometres of roads have been constructed and rehabilitated, connecting the communities and increasing socio-economic opportunities.

The Lethem Housing Programme is providing a sustainable living environment for many families. A total of 41 wells have been drilled in the region, providing enhanced access to thousands of residents.

In the area of agriculture, farmers have

benefited from planting materials and 31 shade houses to increase crop production. Agro-processing facilities were also opened at Krowdar, Maruranau, and St Ignatius allowing farmers to increase value for their produce.

Further, almost 2,000 individuals have benefited from public assistance.

MP Charlie further stated, "This is what the PPP/C government is doing...The promises [made] in 2020 are fulfilled..."

## BUDGET 2025 WILL CONTINUE THE AGENDA FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION - MINISTER PERSAUD

The well-crafted developmental strategies within budget 2025 have earned yet another resounding commendation in the National Assembly. The budget solidifies its position as a catalyst for national progress.

Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development Anand Persaud mirrored the passions of his cabinet colleagues and delivered a spirited defence of the financial plan during the budget

debates. Minister Persaud painted a picture of the budget as a "pathway to prosperity" for Guyanese citizens, highlighting the critical role each allocation will play in bettering the lives of Guyanese and leaving indelible positive marks on various sectors of the economy.

**"Budget 2025 is the embodiment of carefully crafted policies and projects to continue our brisk and bold agenda for the transformation**

**of our economy,"** the minister stated.

He highlighted its focus on improving lives through initiatives like cash grants for newborns, increases to old age pensions and the billions of dollars allocated to ease the cost of living and increase citizen's disposable income.

In addition to cash grants and financial aid, the budget has allocations that will reduce electricity prices by 50 per cent, remove bridge tolls for over



**Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development Anand Persaud during the budget debates**

50,000 commuters daily and provide thousands more house lots.

## BUDGET 2025 WILL IMPROVE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF ALL GUYANESE- MINISTER TEIXEIRA



**Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira during her contributions to the budget debates**

The 2025 Budget will improve the socioeconomic status of

all Guyanese through policies that will make life easier, and lift their standards of living and wealth accumulation, paving the way for future generations.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira made these remarks during her contributions to the 2025 budget debates in the National Assembly.

Minister Teixeira said like previous budgets presented by the PPP/C, budget 2025 is laced with recommendations from many sections of society.

This comes as a result of the government's regular posture of engaging citizens in their communities.

"The changes in income tax are important. All these measures are to make life easier and less stressful for our people... The private sector, a critical component of any country moving forward, has all come forward in public statements supporting this budget and further saying they contributed to it...there is not one day in this country that the ministers are not out in

the field. Thousands and thousands of community meetings are held," she explained.

Minister Teixeira said it is clear that Guyanese are experiencing progress in their individual lives and do not want to return to a place of regression.

Budget 2025 amounted to a whopping \$1.382 Trillion, 20.6 per cent larger than last year's fiscal package. This budget injects some \$90 billion of disposable income into the pockets of Guyanese.

# Over \$2B to be injected into transformation of Guyana’s zoological park

A \$2.8 billion budget for the National Parks Commission, under the Office of the President, has been approved by the House, setting the stage for significant upgrades to the Guyana Zoological Park and Botanical Gardens.

During day two of consideration of the estimates and expenditures of the 2025 national budget, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira noted that the bulk of the funding will be used to reimagine the facility.

“[With] \$2 billion we will have a proper place to house and showcase our animals,” she said.

This funding will also be creating training and nature schools to educate both children and adults.

Minister Teixeira expressed her excitement about the government’s ambitious plans for the zoo, highlighting the significant changes that will transform the space into a modern, educational, and climate-resilient facility.

“I think the most fascinating thing in the budget, which I’ve always longed for, and personally, I’m delighted about [is] the upgrading of the Zoological Park,” she said.

The funding will support the construction of new areas, security outposts, guard rails, new water systems, zoning areas, an admin building, washrooms, parking shed, a modernised concession area, and much more.

Back in October, 2024, Vice-president Dr Bharrat Jagdeo engaged children, university students, and adults to seek their input on the re-development of the Guyana Zoological Park and Botanical Gardens.

By involving children in this transformative project, Dr Jagdeo said that the government hopes to create a more engaging and educational space that reflects the rich, natural heritage of Guyana, while also serving as a safe haven for families and visitors alike.

The project aims to develop a modern, educational and recreational facility, while expanding ‘green’ spaces, an initiative that aligns with the government’s vision of sustainability.

During the well-attended public consultation, the Vice-president outlined that the re-development of the Zoological Park and Botanical Gardens forms part of the government’s larger strategy aimed at promoting sustainable tourism, while safeguarding Guyana’s rich biodi-

versity.

The design is intended to minimise disturbance, with a focus on indigenous aesthetics and interactive exhibits, including a hop-on-hop-off electrical transport system to navigate the ecosystem replicas.

Further, the park is expected to undergo a significant redesign to highlight Guyana’s diverse plant species. Rare and endangered plants will be preserved and the gardens will feature specialised areas for medicinal plants, native fruit trees, and ornamental flora. Pathways will be refurbished to accommodate guided tours.



Donald Trump takes the oath of office on Monday

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## EDUCATION IS A KEY PRIORITY FOR GOVT - MINISTER MANICKCHAND REITERATES



**Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand**

Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, highlighted the PPP/C government's efforts include investing \$39 billion in educational infrastructure over the last four years and construction of 28 new secondary schools.

She was at the time defending the

government's \$1.38 trillion 2025 budget in the National Assembly.

Further, access to education is significantly enhanced, with programmes like the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) empowering thousands of Guyanese with free education at reputable universities.

**"We have declared that the University of Guyana is going to be tuition free for all. We have declared that there are going to be no facilities fees at the University of Guyana**

**for any student. We have declared that those who have already paid for this academic year will get a refund for their second and third semesters. That is what the PPP/C has done to advance tertiary education,"** the minister added.

Improving Math performance Turning her attention to the need to improve math performance, the minister recognised that this is a challenge faced by the Caribbean and the wider international community.

The minister boasted of the PPP/C government's

Mathematics Intervention Initiative, which targets 50 schools nationwide. The programme aims to enhance the performance of teachers and students in Mathematics, through the introduction of Math Monitors.

**"We have given every child a scientific calculator, geometry sets, graph books and a past paper booklet organised by topics. We are sending in math monitors. We are going school to school, meeting with the parents. We are doing something to take us to the place of 100 per cent,"** she

said.

The Education ministry's expansive and robust work programme will receive a significant boost with its \$175 billion allocation in the 2025 budget.

This allocation includes:

- \$36.2 billion for the construction and rehabilitation of educational facilities across Guyana.

- \$2 billion to expand the Ministry of Education's textbook programme

- \$13.4 billion to finance UG's operations as a result of the abolition of tuition fees

- \$5.5 billion for the National School Feeding Programme.

- \$2.6 billion to expand access to Technical Vocational Education Training

The minister declared that in their refusal to support the 2025 budget, the opposition is essentially telling the Guyanese people that they do not support the abolition of fees at UG, the increase in the 'Because we Care' cash grant, the construction and rehabilitation of educational facilities or any of the other transformational measures it holds.

## 'TAKING CARE OF ALL GUYANESE FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE' - MIN RODRIGUES



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

In a passionate address to the National Assembly, Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, reinforced the government's relentless dedication to prioritising the betterment

of all Guyanese, especially vulnerable demographics.

Minister Rodrigues underscored the administration's ongoing efforts to drive tangible development and praised Budget 2025's provisions, designed to benefit citizens at every stage of life.

Budget 2025 provides a series of supportive initiatives including a \$100,000 cash grant for mothers of newborn babies, increases to the old age

pension and "Because We Care" cash grant, and allocations to support small business development and housing expansion.

Defending the budget, the minister described the government's developmental strides and record-breaking budget as no less than "transformational" and "empowering".

She also contrasted these advancements with what she described as the opposition's

legacy of unfulfilled promises and economic mismanagement, highlighting the significant progress under the current administration.

The administration has committed to lifting the Guyanese public out of poverty by providing numerous opportunities for self-development. Thus far over 40,000 house lots have been given to Guyanese while 129 core homes were built for low-income families. Hundreds more housing and material

subsidies were also distributed all across Guyana.

By realising citizens' dreams of homeownership, the government has granted thousands of Guyanese the ability to increase their worth and build tangible assets.

The Minister also touted the government's success in doubling the income tax threshold, introducing health vouchers, and improving nationwide access to water and electricity, noting that these

measures have given Guyanese a better quality of life.

According to Minister Rodrigues, the result of the government's promises are not empty words, but lasting impacts on the livelihoods of many.

**"This is how we are creating wealth among ordinary Guyanese people, and this will allow people to lift themselves out of poverty because of the conditions that we are creating through our policies."**

## BUDGET 2025 LIVES UP TO EXPECTATIONS- MP BROWNE



**member of parliament Sarah Browne**

Member of Parliament (MP) Sarah Browne asserted that Budget 2025 fulfills the government's manifesto and demonstrates the People's Progressive Party's trustworthy nature.

**"Budget 2025, like every other PPP/C budget, lives up to expectations ... And it proves to all Guyanese**

**that we are a government and a party to be trusted,"** the MP underlined.

Her argument centred on the failures and neglect of the previous A P N U + A F C coalition, which saw Amerindian villages being left in great despair. Critical infrastructure, including health centres and educational facilities, was dilapidated, depriving residents of essential services.

According to Browne, this situation has drastically changed and significant improvements have been made over the past four years, thanks to the government's

unwavering commitment through investments.

Thousands of youths are enjoying employment through the Youth Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Programme (YEAP).

Despite claims that it is not people-centred, MP Browne emphasised that Budget 2025 is rooted in community consultations, ensuring the voices of Guyanese are prioritised.

MP Browne reiterated the government's proven track record of progress and its dedication to continuing development to achieve prosperity for all.

## BUDGET 2025 ALIGNS WITH VISION OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH FOR GUYANESE - MP MAHADEO



**Member of Parliament (MP) Dr Vishwa Mahadeo**

Member of Parliament (MP) Dr Vishwa Mahadeo has described the \$1.382 trillion fiscal framework as a transformative step to creating an equitable Guyana, where opportunities and essential services, particularly health care, is accessible to all Guyanese.

The allocations contained in the framework, according to him, transcends mere financial figures as

they represent a symbol of hope and opportunities for families, communities and future generations.

"This budget builds on the foundation of inclusivity, equity, sustainability and ensures that every Guyanese has access to tools and resources that they need to be healthy, to grow and to thrive," the parliamentarian emphasised.

With six regional hospitals being constructed across Guyana, Dr Mahadeo noted the human resource pool will increase significantly.

The MP went on to add, "Currently, we have over 3,000 nurses in training.

And this year, we are going to take in another over 2,000 persons. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan and we are working towards a plan."

Dr Mahadeo, who has parliamentary oversight of Region Six also highlighted a number of infrastructural projects being undertaken in the region, including a state-of-the-art New Amsterdam Hospital, expanded mental health services, and digital x-ray facilities.

Another hospital is also being constructed in No 75 Village and is set to become operational later this year. He noted that residents of East-Berbice Corentyne will benefit from this massive facility, underscoring the government's strategic approach to investing in healthcare.

## PPP/C'S TRACK RECORD WILL BRING VICTORY AT 2025 POLLS - AG NANDLALL



Attorney General & Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall

The PPP/C government has secured the trust of Guyanese, and established a track record of delivering on its promises due to its prudent people-centred policies and programmes.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, made the assertion during the budget debates in the National Assembly.

Minister Nandlall explained that there is a direct correlation between the budget estimates and the upcoming general elections, as the government will be seeking the votes of Guyanese to return them to office and will demonstrate that its track record is one of meeting the needs of the people.

“Once we show the

people that the promises we made in 2020 have been delivered, we will ask them to return us to office. And that is what they certainly will do,” the AG said.

He noted that the opposition’s political legacy is one that inflicted scars on the country and laid the foundation for the destruction of Guyana’s international standing.

## GOV'T HAS HISTORICALLY WORKED TO EMPOWER FAMILIES, YOUTHS - MP SINGH FIERCELY DEFENDS 2025 BUDGET



recently sworn in Member of Parliament, Suresh Singh

Member of Parliament (MP), Suresh Singh fiercely defended the historic \$1.382 trillion budget, emphasising that improving Guyanese lives through education, empowerment and policymaking is a cornerstone of the People’s Progressive Party / Civic’s Administration.

In his maiden contribution to the ongoing parliamentary debates, MP Singh contrasted the government’s approach to development with the opposition, describing the latter as uncaring and devoid of empathy.

According to the MP, thousands of youths have accessed training opportunities through the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) and the Get Ready for Opportunities to Work (GROW), among other initiatives.

Also, thousands of young adults, particularly the housing programme, with more individuals to benefit this year.

Additionally, the government has poured investments to advance infrastructure development in areas that were historically neglected, including construction of roads and bridges.

To illustrate his argument, the young parliamentarian said extensive works have

been undertaken to repair 95 bridges in Buxton on the East Coast of Demerara with local residents employed as contractors.

Additional infrastructure works have been rolled out in communities like Melanie, Victoria, Paradise, Vigilance and other communities along the East Coast corridor.

The MP called upon Guyanese, particularly young people, to analyse the track records of both parties and make their independent evaluation.

## MP WESTFORD REITERATES GOV'T'S FIRM SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS



Member of Parliament Dr Jennifer Westford

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hugh Todd, revealed during his presentation for the 2025 budget debates, that between 2020 and 2023, Guyana’s exports increased by a massive 285 per cent, moving from US\$2.8 billion to US\$10.8 billion. He emphasised that the government has consistently engaged in negotiations with trading partners to remove market access barriers, and expand market presence for local products in regional and international markets.

As a result, Minister Todd explained that trade with the country’s major extra-regional partners increased significantly.

“Exports to the United States and Canada expanded by US\$6.2 billion and US\$385 billion respectively. The growth of our exports to the United Kingdom and the European Union have also been exponential, increasing by US\$747 million and US\$2.2 billion during that period,” he said.

He noted that exports to non-traditional markets have also increased substantially with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore and India being ranked

among Guyana’s top 10 export destinations. Since 2020, exports to these countries have grown by US\$2.1 billion.

The minister credited the increase to the government’s efforts to implement measures directed at the expansion of the economy and enhance both traditional and non-traditional export profiles.

Recognising President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali’s visionary leadership in positioning Guyana as a model in economic, social and environmental development, the foreign affairs minister also highlighted the vast achievements of the government in foreign policy.

The government continues to demonstrate its commitment to protecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It has been actively involved in the international arena, which includes its role in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Minister Todd also emphasised Guyana’s efforts to promote indigenous rights, address racial discrimination and pursue reparations for historical injustices related to the transatlantic slave trade.

The minister noted that under the stewardship of the PPP/C government, Guyana has also established itself as a leader in climate and

energy security, piloting bold initiatives to foster sustainable development and advance global climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

The government also resuscitated the Diaspora Unit and re-established stakeholder engagement to improve the services provided to the diaspora. In this regard, since 2020 about 2,035 re-migrant applications have been processed.

“This highlights the trust and confidence the diaspora places in the PPP/C government,” the foreign affairs minister asserted.

## BUDGET 2025 - A VISION FOR THE FUTURE- MINISTER MUSTAPHA



**Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha Defends Budget 2025**

Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha has emphasised that Budget 2025 is forward-thinking, setting a strategic direction for the

country's economic growth – one that aims to reshape Guyana's future.

He added that the budget would also lay the foundation for the PPP/C Government's next term in office, spanning from 2025 to 2030 and beyond.

Speaking during the budget debates in the National Assembly, Minister Mustapha said, **"It is one for all Guyanese regardless of class, ethnicity, or political affiliation... Guyana is charting a path to**

**economic prosperity that will benefit every single citizen of our country. This budget is more than just a plan for the upcoming year, it is a vision for the future."**

The Minister highlighted significant strides in the agriculture sector while addressing misinformation spread by the parliamentary opposition, noting that the \$104.6 billion allocated to the sector this year will ensure that the sector continues on its current trajectory

Minister Mustapha

underscored that the government's continued commitment to reviving the sugar sector, despite the devastating impact of climate change over the last two years. To date, 40 per cent of cultivation lands have been mechanised.

the minister further expressed confidence that the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) will achieve its target of 101,000 metric tonnes of sugar this year.

On the rice industry, Minister Mustapha noted that Guyana is producing over 700,000 metric

tonnes of rice – the highest in the country's history.

With ongoing investments, Guyana's rice production is expected to exceed 804,000 metric tonnes this year. For this crop alone, 235,000 acres have already been cultivated, and for the first time, the Mahaica Mahaicony Abary / Agricultural Development Authority (MMA-ADA) is cultivating 101,000 acres of rice.

The minister also highlighted new interventions in the sector, such as the construction of a feed mill, vannahai

prawn production, and marine cage culture. He also cited the Black Belly Sheep Project, which has benefited over 175 farmers and resulted in a 100 per cent increase in black belly sheep production.

The agriculture sector is rapidly growing to ensure food security in the region, contributing to the 25 by 25 food security agenda. Minister Mustapha stated that Guyana has reclaimed its position in Caribbean agriculture through increased production in traditional areas.

## PM PHILLIPS SAYS APNU+AFC NEGLECTED ITS OWN



**Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips during the budget debates in the National Assembly**

The PPP/C's massive track record of delivering tangible results and developing underserved communities extends beyond coastal development and touches every citizen across Guyana.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips echoed this

sentiment and boasted of the unmatched accomplishments of the government particularly in areas that the APNU+AFC claims to be their strongholds.

While contributing to the budget debates in the National Assembly PM Phillips said, **"Our mission remains to secure continued economic growth, empower our people and lay a foundation of sustainability that will endure for generations to come,"**

He said the PPP/C restored hope and improved many lives in Region Ten and reiterated the government's commitment to inclusive development.

He highlighted key achievements of the

government including 60,000 new jobs, 40,000 house lots distributed, and thousands of young people graduating through the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) scholarships.

PM Phillips expressed confidence in the gas-to-energy project's success, promising reduced electricity costs.

Tremendous headway has already been made in providing electricity to scores of communities across the length and breadth of Guyana.

The prime minister declared budget 2025 as a roadmap to a brighter future that ensures economic security and prosperity for all.

## 'ORDINARY PEOPLE ARE SEEING BENEFITS' - MP PEARSON-FREDERICKS AS SHE COMMENDS BUDGET 2025



**Member of Parliament (MP) Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks supports Budget 2025**

Successive People's Progressive Party/Civic government budgets have seen Guyanese benefit tremendously from the many development projects geared at improving lives.

Member of Parliament (MP) Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks made the assertion as she defended and commended the government's \$1.38 trillion

budget.

The MP spoke of the multiple job opportunities being created nationwide, the investments in infrastructure, health, education and various social programmes that address the immediate and long-term needs of the people.

MP Pearson-Fredericks also clarified that the Indigenous people are thriving under the PPP/C government, as they have seen significant development and have much coming their way shortly.

The MP noted that under the PPP/C government, the land titling programme continues at a steady pace.

The ministry was able to grant more than 20 villages the legal documents for their land over the last four years, representing the government's commitment to Amerindian land tenure.

The budget also contains

\$7.2 billion earmarked for Amerindian development, excluding revenues from the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 Carbon Credit programme.

This allocation will bolster several key initiatives. It includes \$650 million to accelerate Amerindian land titling activities, \$1.5 billion to support more than 2,700 Community Service Officers (CSOs) and \$5 billion to fund economic, ecotourism, agricultural and infrastructural initiatives.

"We the PPP/C reach out to the total population of Guyana. The PPP/C reaches the utmost ends of this country. I see no reason why we should not support budget 2025. On behalf of the Amerindian people of this country and the ordinary people, we support budget 2025," MP Pearson-Fredericks declared.

## BUDGET 2025 WILL CONTINUE THE AGENDA FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION - MINISTER PERSAUD



**Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development Anand Persaud during the budget debates**

The well-crafted 2025 have earned yet developmental another resounding strategies within budget commendation in the

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**"Budget 2025 is the embodiment of carefully crafted policies and projects to continue our brisk and bold agenda for the transformation of our economy,"** the minister stated.

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In addition to cash grants and financial aid, the budget has allocations that will reduce electricity prices by 50 per cent, remove bridge tolls for over 50,000 commuters daily and provide thousands more house lots.



# BUDGET 2025 IS A BLUEPRINT FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH - MP DATADIN



**(MP) Sanjeev Datadin**

Member of Parliament (MP) Sanjeev Datadin delivered a passionate address in the National Assembly

countering opposition claims and lauding what he described as transformative developments under the PPP/C government.

He praised Budget 2025 as a "blueprint for sustainable growth" while critiquing the opposition's record on healthcare, education, and economic policies.

The MP pointed to improvements in the health sector, including establishing the diagnostic labs and dialysis centres in Regions Two, Three, Six, and Ten, as well as in Georgetown,

and along the East Bank of Demerara.

He noted that future hospitals will be equipped with dialysis facilities, reaffirming the government's commitment to accessible healthcare.

Additionally, MP Datadin commended the government's initiatives to make university education free, write off existing student loans, and reverse the opposition's policy of targeting loan defaulters through public notices.

He further credited the PPP/C government with introducing robust legislation, including the

Local Content Act and the Petroleum Activities Act.

He noted that over 1,100 companies, of which 51 per cent are owned by Guyanese, have received local content certificates since the Act's implementation, generating \$620 million in revenue in 2024 alone.

**"That is what keeping your promise looks like. That is what caring about the people of Guyana looks like. Don't say you're going to have a policy to benefit them and for which they would be able to develop their companies and earn revenue, and you**

**don't actually do it,"** the MP emphasised.

The MP also praised the revamped Natural Resource Fund (NRF), which he said now operates transparently with clear rules on withdrawals, investments, and reporting.

Addressing criticisms of the gas-to-energy project, the MP said it would provide affordable energy, boosting industrial competitiveness.

Datadin asserted since taking office, the government has already delivered on its pledge to create 50,000 jobs and is on track to allocate 50,000 house lots.

He also highlighted the reinstatement of cash grants for students and additional financial aid programmes further enhancing the lives of Guyanese in accordance with the PPP/C administration's 2020 to 2025 mandate.

With Guyana poised as a regional and global economic leader, Datadin called on all members of the National Assembly to support the 2025 budget, which he described as 'significant and visionary', and a reflection of the people's aspirations.

## VULNERABLE GROUPS PRIORITISED IN BUDGET 2025 - MINISTER PERSAUD



**Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr Vindhya Persaud**

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud firmly defended the 2025 budget in the National Assembly during the debates. Dr Persaud refuted claims made by the opposition that the budget does not support senior citizens

The ministry is expected to receive a sum of \$58.5 billion when budget 2025 is passed. Of that amount, \$37 billion will go directly to

support pensioners.

Dr Persaud stated that the government is known for consistently increasing the financial support for senior citizens and even improving the services for them to access benefits.

Old age pension moved from \$20,500 in 2020 to \$41,000 in 2025 and this reflects a 100 per cent increase.

She said measures like direct pension deposits, alternate venues for cashing vouchers and the shut-in delivery system were introduced to ease the delivery of service to the elderly population.

Minister Persaud highlighted that the public assistance initiative has expanded by 133 per cent. The programme is now benefitting some 50,000 people with disabilities and 76,000 pensioners.

**"When I came into this ministry there was confusion and chaos.**

**All this talk of care for people, they raised the public assistance by only \$600 in 2017 and \$800 in 2018, that's your legacy, embrace it!"** she said.

The minister also highlighted the importance of addressing gender-based violence as she mentioned the introduction of the Family Violence Act which was passed in 2024.

The government is also looking to refine policies to expand the foster care programme.

The Woman and Innovative Investment Network (WIIN) has benefitted over 13,000 women allowing them to start and expand their businesses, with 11,000 more to be trained in 2025.

## QUALITY OF LIFE HAS IMPROVED UNDER PPP/C LEADERSHIP - MP NARINE



**Member of Parliament Seepaul Narine**

Member of Parliament (MP) Seepaul Narine has commended the PPP/C administration for delivering a historic and comprehensive budget for 2025 to uplift the lives of all Guyanese.

He highlighted President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's vision of

a Guyana where every citizen has a part in the nation's future.

**"It [budget 2025] consolidates progress and builds a prosperous nation and a sustainable future for all Guyanese. The budget exemplifies the party and government's unwavering determination to ensure a brighter future for all, irrespective of their political shade or stripe,"** he emphasised.

Responding to recent claims by Opposition Leader Aubrey Norton, who criticised budget 2025, the MP outlined key provisions in the budget that deliver tangible benefits to the working

class.

These include:

- threshold adjustments, and reducing income tax rates
- \$1 allocated to support families with children,
- \$1.1 billion is set aside for workers who earn overtime or hold second jobs.

MP Narine reiterated that this budget builds on past and present PPP/C Administrations, and provides a visionary plan for the nation's continued development.

## 'NO LIP SERVICE, WE ARE A WORKING GOVT'- MINISTER SUKHAI DEFENDS GOV'T TRACK RECORD ON AMERINDIAN DEVELOPMENT



**Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai**

Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Pauline Sukhai has reinforced the People's Progressive Party/Civic role as the party that works in the people's best interest, particularly the First People in her defence of the \$1.382 trillion fiscal framework.

Minister Sukhai spoke

of investments in indigenous peoples, contrasting these achievements to the Coalition's sordid performance while in government.

Between 2020 to 2024, the government funded 1,140 projects under the Presidential Grant programme, surpassing the APNU+AFC's 857 projects during their five-year stint in office.

Further, the ministry's capital budget from 2020 to 2024 covered 523 projects amounting to \$9.37 billion, surpassing the 218 projects funded by the coalition administration.

Meanwhile, the

discontinued Community Service Officers (CSOs) programme is now empowering youths, with \$411 million invested to train 1,565 young people over the last four years.

**"We are not speaking here about lip service; we are not making promises in the manifesto that we fail to address. Mr Speaker, the People's Progressive Party/Civic government has completed its manifesto promises to the indigenous people,"** the minister stated.

**Amerindian land titling**

Minister Sukhai reiterated the government's commitment to Amerindian

land tenure, with over 20 land titles distributed to various communities over the last four years.

Two certificates of title were granted to Karasabai in Region Nine and Arrau in Region Seven. Six absolute grants were issued to Hotoquai, Hobodai, and Red Hill in Region One, Akiwini in Region Two and Moco Moco and Sawariwau in Region Nine.

**Carbon credit programme**

Some 248 Amerindian villages across Guyana have received an additional injection of \$9.6 billion, under the landmark Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 Carbon Credit programme,

since 2022.

**Amerindian budgetary allocations**

Addressing the budget itself, Minister Sukhai noted that the trillion-dollar framework has earmarked significant resources for transformative initiatives in villages, totalling \$7.2 billion. To ensure Amerindian land rights are legally secured, \$650 million is set aside to advance Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) activities, she informed the House.

Also, more than 2,700 CSOs will continue to earn income and gain valuable skill sets with \$1.5 billion allocated to the Youth Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Programme (YEAP) in 2025.

Notably, \$5 billion has been budgeted to fund economic, ecotourism, agricultural and infrastructural initiatives in the more than 248 Amerindian villages.

Meanwhile, the National Toshiha Council (NTC) Conference has received an allocation of \$150 million, ensuring Amerindian leaders are consulted on their development needs, while \$127 million is allocated to support 800 hinterland youths.

Minister Sukhai underscored the trillion-dollar fiscal framework as a vehicle for stimulating investment, improving livelihoods and addressing the needs of every Guyanese.

# UNIONS BACK 2025 BUDGET AS WORKERS SET TO BENEFIT SIGNIFICANTLY



**Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union General Secretary Aslim Singh**

The Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union (GAWU), and the Clerical & Commercial Workers' Union (CCWU) have described the \$1.382 trillion 2025 budget as inclusive.

The unions believe the fiscal package will create a positive impact on Guyanese, particularly the working class.

These sentiments were shared by the GAWU's General Secretary Aslim Singh and CCWU's General Secretary Sherwood Clarke.

Singh believes that the budget has substantial benefits for citizens across various sectors. This includes the \$10,000 child tax exemption for working families and the tax relief for overtime workers.

"And then there's a massive investment in services and infrastructure for people, health centres, schools, hospitals, roads, all of these will tangibly impact the working class positively," he added.

He also focused on investments in the agriculture sector, which recorded success over the past four years. Singh also pointed out that agriculture remains Guyana's largest



**Clerical & Commercial Workers' Union (CCWU) General Secretary Sherwood Clark**

employer.

While reiterating the growth recorded in the agriculture sector, Singh underlined the importance of utilising resources from the oil and gas industry to invest in the agriculture sector for economic sustainability.

Clarke discussed the long-term benefits of investments in infrastructure, which he

emphasised is critical to driving economic growth, fostering job creation and enhancing productivity in the private sector.

He explained that trade unions, employers, and the government form part of a tripartite system to ensure investments translate to employment opportunities and development within these industries.

"We strongly believe that the framework will strengthen our country's fiscal capabilities and enable it to invest more in poverty, education, essential public service, infrastructure and sustainable development. This initiative will support a fast transition," he stressed.

GAWU's executive member, Gordon Thomas, additionally, highlighted the significant increase in the income tax threshold to \$130,000 noting that the tax reduction is seen as a positive development by many.

The government has proposed several key measures to ease the cost of living and support Guyanese from all walks of life. These include:

- Reduction in electricity costs, upon completion of the massive gas-to-energy project in Wales, Region Three
- Abolition of bridge tolls at major crossings.
- \$11 billion to support part-time workers across Guyana
- An additional \$9 billion is earmarked for targeted interventions for



**GAWU's executive member Gordon Thomas**

the cost of living, following stakeholder consultations

- Old-age pension has been increased from \$36,000 to \$41,000
- Public assistance payments have increased from \$19,000 to \$22,000

Aside from financial relief, substantial investments are being made to improve education, healthcare, welfare, governance, infrastructure and initiatives that will push Guyana into prosperity.

# PRIVATE SECTOR HAILS BUDGET 2025

This year's massive \$1.3 trillion budget caters to various sectors, some of which will impact the Public and Private Sectors, as the government has a duty to both.

cross-section of the population, and have a significant impact on ordinary working-class people.

Singh also lauded the government's inclusive move of lowering the required National

the fact that government now puts in a lot of resources in almost each one of those sectors will allow the private sector to continue to grow in the sector."

## Collaborative and Comprehensive

Head of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce (GCCCI), Kester Hutson expressed that this budget is detailed, yet comprehensive. He

suggested that it is now up to the private sector to perform an in-depth analysis to ascertain the next steps that business leaders should take.

## AIMED AT IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF LIVING

Positive sentiments were expressed by Executive Director of the PSC, Nayteram Ramnarine, who hailed this year's budget as progressive, citing that it is directly aimed at further improving the standard of living for every Guyanese.

The Executive Director further praised the government's further investment into small businesses, saying, "What that is going to do

for young entrepreneurs, is to facilitate them in getting to start up, to reach that level in which they aspire to be."

## 'BUDGET 2025 IS AMBITIOUS'

Teanika Huntley, who is employed in the private sector believes in this year's budget ability to foster more growth. She also praised the budget for continuing to promote the infrastructural drive

private sector is growing and thus, she pointed out, opportunities for employment are ripe. She highlighted that Guyanese are now, more than ever, poised for growth and development in various sectors.

Peters mentioned that the budget caters for the ordinary Guyanese, stating, "that the ordinary worker has more disposable income. With more disposable income, it means that you're better able to purchase more goods and services. The budget not only provides opportunities for the private sector in terms of projects. But as I said before, job opportunities for people coming off of those projects, but also opportunities in terms of higher wages, for the workforce."

## A BUDGET FOR PARENTS

Aretha Forde, a mother who works in the private sector has commended the government for presenting a budget that caters for her family.

Forde also praised the government's drive to provide affordable housing for all Guyanese; while expressing



**Chief Executive Officer of the Kayman Sankar Group of Companies**

satisfaction with the fact the Guyanese will now have more money in their pockets at the end of each month thanks to initiatives announced in country's 2025 economic frame work

The 2025 budget



**Chairman of the Private Sector Commission (PSC), Komal Singh**

Citizens who either work or are engaged in entrepreneurial ventures within the private sector gave their opinions regarding the proposed economic frame work for the year 2025.

## AN INCLUSIVE BUDGET

Chairman of the Private Sector Commission (PSC), Komal Singh, suggested that this year's budget builds on the progress made with last year's budget. Singh described the budget as one that caters to all Guyanese.

He did not shy away from the economic advantages also, noting that the budget will most impact the broader

Insurance Scheme contributions, which he stated would now guarantee that more Guyanese would be eligible to receive pensions after they have reached 60 years.

As head of the commission, Chairman Singh registered that, "This budget shows continued investor confidence in our economy."

He further pointed out that, "The private sector by themselves over the last four years has invested over USD 2.5 billion into this economy in various infrastructure projects, developments and projects that will support the oil and gas sector..."



**Head of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce (GCCCI), Kester Hutson**



**Executive Director of the PSC, Nayteram Ramnarine,**

was presented under the theme: A secure, prosperous and sustainable Guyana.

# GUYANA FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY GETS NEW LABORATORY, OFFICE AT LBI

A state-of-the-art laboratory and office were commissioned for the Guyana Food Safety Authority (GFSA) at La Bonne Intention, East Coast Demerara, increasing diagnostic

is a critical step in establishing an effective food safety system in Guyana which will also help to enhance local competitiveness.

Equipped with cutting-edge technology and specialised equipment, the laboratory has the capability to test various commodities, and can also do multifaceted traceability studies to keep ahead in the



Minister of Agriculture Zulfiqar Mustapha delivers remarks at the commissioning ceremony

capabilities and guaranteeing the safety of the food that is consumed.

The facility will allow the GFSA to safeguard consumers' health and welfare by encouraging and guaranteeing food safety across the food chain in a coordinated manner.

The modern edifice

changing global food safety landscape.

Over \$520 million was spent to equip the facility, with funding from the Inter-American Development (IDB) through the Sustainable Agricultural Development Programme (SADP).

Speaking at the commissioning



state-of-the-art laboratory and office were commissioned for the Guyana Food Safety Authority (GFSA) at La Bonne Intention

ceremony, Minister of Agriculture Zulfiqar Mustapha underlined that the opening of the laboratory reflects the government's dedication to safeguarding public health and encouraging food safety nationwide.

Due to the government's investments and strong policies, the minister stated that there has been remarkable growth in the sector including rice, other crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture. The

agriculture sector alone grew by 11 per cent in 2024.

The agriculture minister said that laboratory will enable Guyana to ensure that the products are produced at a better and higher quality.

He continued, **"So, as the agri-food production increases, we must be cognisant that what is produced should be safe for consumption... Food borne diseases impede social economic**

development. Food safety is a shared responsibility requiring a coordinated approach by agencies responsible for ensuring the production, distribution and sale of safe food products from farm to the table."



IDB's Country Representative, Lorena Solorzano-Salazar

Meanwhile, IDB's Country Representative, Lorena Solorzano-Salazar highlighted that the facility signifies the government's and IDB's common goal of ensuring food safety in Guyana.

"It is not just about food. It tackles several areas in the economy... Today is not just about growing the products, but also the international and local markets are requiring traceability and quality of what we are eating and drinking," Solorzano-Salazar emphasised.

The facility will empower the GFSA to execute its mandate with proficiency, serving as a hub for testing, and training allowing food producers to maintain the highest standards of food safety and quality.

He noted that Guyana's agriculture sector is undergoing massive transformation fueled by several key initiatives aimed at boosting food security and exports while modernising the industry.

## 'ALL HANDS ON DECK' TO PUSH HEALTH, EDUCATION AGENDA THIS YEAR



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali met with Regional Executive Officers (REOs), Regional Health and Education Officers and cabinet members

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali met with Regional Executive Officers (REOs), Regional Health and Education Officers and cabinet members for an open discussion on strengthening access to quality health and

education services for the population.

The government is accelerating its efforts to ensure Guyanese benefit from important investments in the country.

The meeting at his office sought to address

even the most minuscule issues and other changes that can be made to make the system more efficient and people-oriented.

**"We want to reduce the costs of people receiving government business, reduce the time it takes them to receive government service and improve the quality and delivery of that service. I have made it very clear that [all the programme heads in the regions] are going to be held**

**accountable for the delivery of service to people,"** he said.

The president instructed that every health centre be given three months of medical supplies to avoid any future hassle.

The delivery of medical supplies will be further decentralised soon, especially in the hinterland regions for various health posts to have a year's supply.

The daily use of these supplies will be monitored through an electronic platform

to ensure they can be replenished efficiently.

The president has directed the Minister of Health to ensure that by the end of January, a comprehensive demand chart for the entire year is available for every region.

Each region will then be responsible for further decentralising the demand chart to the district level to eliminate any gaps or delays.

The 2025 budget allocated \$143.2 billion to advance the country's health sector and this

allocation provides for the completion of several regional and specialty facilities, along with the procurement of medical equipment and supplies, among other tasks.

An impressive \$175 billion was budgeted for education to complete several initiatives such as the National School Feeding Programme, the construction of new schools and rehabilitation of existing facilities and the 'Because we Care' cash grant.

## REGION FIVE GETS 15 LAB TECHNICIANS



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony Delivers charge

Fifteen residents of Region Five have completed the 12-month Medical Laboratory Technician training programme, equipping them with the skills necessary to enhance healthcare delivery and improve patient outcomes.

The comprehensive

haematology, microbiology, blood banking, clinical chemistry, immunology, and urology.

Participants also received instruction in laboratory safety protocols, specimen handling, quality assurance, and data interpretation, ensuring

high standards of precision in laboratory services.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony emphasised the importance of decentralised training programmes to meet the healthcare demands of Guyana's rapidly evolving health sector.

Dr Anthony said, **"These programmes are quite robust, so, if you don't put in the effort, you are not going to make it. Medicine, after all, is a very serious**

**thing, and therefore, we want to train you in a way that you can dispense your professional responsibility in the best possible manner...We also want you to deliver good, quality work."**

Minister Anthony also highlighted the



Some of the graduates at the ceremony

significant investments made within the last few years to improve the region's health infrastructure and services among other support.

While commending the graduates for completing their course, Dr Anthony stated that they are ready

to make meaningful contributions to the region's healthcare sector.

In January 2024, the government launched the first Medical Laboratory Programme in Region Six.

This year, Guyana's health sector will be further enhanced with a budgetary allocation of \$143.2 billion.

To this end, he told the participants, **"We have a lot of work to do. That is because we want to do a lot of transformational things."**

# 40 HOUSES TO BE COMPLETED NEXT MONTH AT BARTICA

The 40 houses that are under construction at Five Miles Housing Scheme Phase II in Bartica, Region Seven, are slated for completion by February month-end. During an inspection of the project Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal expressed satisfaction with the works completed thus

is investing about \$490 million on the construction of these houses. Two types of three-bedroom houses are being built in the housing area, which is the bungalow-roof and V-roof, which cost \$13 million and \$11 million, respectively. "Overall, [works

per cent completed... We have a list of persons who have already indicated their interest. During the next two weeks, we will be engaging those persons to be able to pre-qualify, as well as to allocate," Minister Croal said. The 99-acre housing area yielded over 300 serviced lots, with 150 house lots already allocated. Meanwhile, approximately \$1.87 billion is being spent on infrastructural works such as drainage and road networks in the housing scheme, providing enhanced access.

This project is also stimulating the local economy with the creation of employment opportunities since all four of the contractors involved in the project are from Bartica.

during the visit, that

site Five Miles Housing Scheme and its new extension. The extension has 119 lots and the Ministry's first 40 turn-key three-bedroom houses are currently under construction.



Minister of Housing and Water, Hon. Collin Croal



Works ongoing at Five Mile Water Treatment Plant

far in the scheme. The government

on] majority of the houses are over 50

scheme, providing enhanced access.

with the creation of employment opportunities since all four of the contractors involved in the project are from Bartica.

Mile residents will soon benefit from improved water supply as construction of a new water treatment plant is in progress. The facility is designed to serve both the existing

Construction of the treatment plant is expected to be completed by August. However, the contractor is working to deliver ahead of schedule.

**I M P R O V E D WATER SERVICES** Minister Croal also announced

both the existing

## TWO WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS COMMISSIONED IN REGION TEN



A pupil samples water from the new system

Over 400 residents from Falmouth and New

Found Out in Region Ten are now accessing potable water, following

the commissioning of a water supply system in each community.

Both systems cost \$46.8 million and were commissioned by the Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal.

Falmouth's \$22.5 million water system serves 95 per cent of the community's population while the one at New

Found Out is valued at \$24.3 million and supplies service to 95 per cent of the community.

During brief remarks, Minister Croal spoke of the government's manifesto's promise of ensuring every household is provided with better access to clean and safe water.

He announced

that water tanks would be provided to the remaining five per cent of residents who are living far from the water system for water storage.

"All of our people are important to us. We are ensuring that the quality of life is enhanced for everyone. This year, we will be drilling a minimum of 60 wells

in the hinterland," the minister disclosed.

After four years, access to potable water currently stands at about 93 per cent in the hinterland with the drilling of 130 wells.

The minister stated that the community of Bethany in Region Two will also benefit from a new well soon.

## NEW HEALTH CENTRE OPENS AT ESAU AND JACOB, REGION FIVE

Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony

at Esau and Jacob in Region Five that will now

will offer various services including maternal

services, chronic disease management, home visits, pharmacy services and school health programmes.

Minister Anthony underlined that the construction of this health centre represents the government's efforts to decentralising health services, especially to underserved communities.

Before the construction of the centre, residents from Mahaicony Creek had to travel to Mora Point to access basic health services.

Dr Anthony reminded that the hospitals at Mahaicony and Fort Wellington are now better equipped to provide advanced health services to patients due to the crucial



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony commissioned a new health centre at Esau & Jacobs



\$37M health centre opens at Esau and Jacob, Region Five

commissioned a new health centre valued at about \$37 million

provide enhanced health services to the residents. The health centre

and child healthcare, family planning, general outpatient

investments made by the government.

As such, Mahaicony Hospital performed more than 200 planned surgeries last year, eliminating the need for persons to travel to Georgetown or elsewhere for services.

Additionally, two modern digital X-ray

machines were installed at both hospitals last year.

Minister Anthony also encouraged the residents to take advantage of the wide range of health services including the health screening programme.

# GNBS CRAFTING NEW STANDARDISATION STRATEGY



GNBS' Executive Director, Trevor Bassoo

The Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) engaged several stakeholders at a workshop to gather essential information for developing a national standardisation strategy (NSS).

The new strategy is being crafted mainly to improve quality products and service delivery, and is being supported by the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and

the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

During the workshop's opening ceremony at the National Exhibition Centre in Sophia, GNBS' Executive Director Trevor Bassoo described the initiative as exciting and transformative for Guyana's future.

He said this is crucial to building a stronger and resilient national quality infrastructure.

"I do acknowledge that standards are voluntary, but I'm certain the growth path of our country's economy will prompt the use of more of these crucial guidance

documents that we call standards," Bassoo added.

The executive director disclosed that the plan would align with the country's economic, social, technological, and environmental objectives while maintaining global competitiveness.

CROSQ's Chief Executive Officer Sharonmae Smith-Walker noted that the project is also being implemented in six other CARICOM nations.

Smith-Walker said the standardisation strategy will allow Guyana to align its national standards with international best practices.

"This will enable seamless integration of Guyanese products into international value chains, creating greater trade opportunities for the country. The standardisation strategy is a critical tool to protect the wellbeing of Guyanese citizens through better quality products and services, and more importantly to safeguard your constituents from poor quality imports," she stated.

GNBS has approved



CROSQ's Chief Executive Officer, Sharonmae Smith-Walker

33 National Standards for sectors, like agriculture, tourism and petroleum over the last year.

# 300 ACRES OF LAND CLEARED IN DARTMOUTH FOR CROP CULTIVATION



Land cleared in Dartmouth for red bean cultivation

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that 300 acres of dormant

farmland have been cleared in Dartmouth, Region Two, with 180 acres dedicated to red bean cultivation and the remainder for additional crops.

The initiative follows the president's

visit to the Region, where he promised to open up more lands for agriculture.

While there, the head of state said: **"We want to increase productivity, open up and invest in the lands here so you can be productive. Expanded productivity is an important part of what we're investing in."**

The cultivation of

red beans on this land is expected to boost large-scale production to meet local and regional demands.

By the first quarter of 2025, Guyana aims to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of red beans and black-eyed peas. The country is projected to supply these commodities to CARICOM markets by 2026.

This plan aligns with the government's

broader vision of transforming Guyana into the Caribbean's food hub.

The government allocated \$104.6 billion in the 2025 national budget to expand and develop the food sector.

# GPF GETS \$50M WORTH OF ENFORCEMENT EQUIPMENT



Commissioner of Police, Clifton Hicken

The Guyana Police Force (GPF) received enforcement equipment valued at approximately \$50 million to boost its traffic management and road safety efforts.

The items were procured with financing from the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB), and will be dispatched to the

various policing divisions nationwide.

The equipment includes speed guns with cameras, wheel clamps, single and dual-zone direction-sensing radars, portable speed bumps and 20 electronic tablets to record data.

Additional items were procured for the Ministry of Public Works' road safety interventions. These include digital speed measuring devices, LED-powered YIELD and STOP signs.

These upgrades aim to improve visibility and

promote compliance with traffic regulations and are valued at approximately \$25 million.

Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill said the 2025 budget will allocate some

in Georgetown.

Minister Edghill said the equipment is only half the solution to address the key issue of speeding in Guyana.

The minister also stressed the need for a culture shift

citizens hold each other accountable.

**"It must start with peer pressure. We have put laws in place t**



Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill



GPF gets \$50 million worth of enforcement equipment

prevent drunk driving. We have moved the responsibility from just the reckless, careless person who wants to imbibe and then go on the road to drive," the minister said.

IDB Country Representative for Guyana Lorena Salazar

also noted that citizens should be more conscious of their conduct on the roadways to curb the issue of speeding.

Commissioner of Police, Clifton Hicken and Deputy Commissioner of Police, Ravindrat Budhram both assured that the equipment will be used to bolster road safety.

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**PRESIDENT ALI EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE IN JUNIOR JAGUARS**



President Dr Mohamed Irffan Ali and Junior Jaguars



Junior Jaguars Training session

His Excellency President Dr Irfaan Ali lauded the Junior Jaguars, Guyana's Under-17 football team, for their drive and expressed confidence in their future

undertakings, during a training session at the National Training Centre in Providence.

The team is currently training to participate in the CONCACAF U17 World Cup Qualifiers.

The Junior Jaguars are placed in Group B and will tackle Trinidad and Tobago, the British Virgin Islands, Sint Maarten and host Costa Rica. If Guyana gains qualification, they will

participate in the FIFA U17 World Cup being hosted in Qatar.

**"I want you to know that when I speak to you today, I'm speaking to you on behalf of all of Guyana, all the people of Guyana. We have great confidence in**

**this team making us proud,"** President Ali stated.

The Head of State, who made a sizeable donation to the venture, also pledged his government's further support.

**"I also wanted to let you know that even the facilities**

**that you see here, we're going to invest, from a Government perspective, in further improving the facility, and also we are going to invest in you."**

**NEW PROGRAMMES LAUNCHED AT CPCE TO BRIDGE GAPS IN EDUCATION DELIVERY**



4 new training programmes launched at the Cyril Potter College of Education's (CPCE)

The Ministry of Education has officially introduced four new training courses to the Cyril Potter College of Education's (CPCE) curriculum.

The new courses will train teachers on how to navigate educating children with

unique academic needs and create an inclusive learning environment where they can thrive academically.

The four courses are Health and Family Life Education (HFLE); Literacy Education; Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Graduate Teacher Education (GTE).

Scores of student teachers have begun their journeys with these new lessons to become

certified educators well-equipped to cater to diverse education needs.

Minister of Education Priya Manickchand noted these moves as vital in propelling the standard of education delivered while catering to the needs of all.

**"As we commission these new programmes at CPCE, I say this is the beginning. We have our eyes set on**

**CPCE becoming an international teacher training college,"** the minister stated in her keynote address.

As the education sector continues to expand, the government remains steadfast in its commitment to training teachers and implementing lasting interventions to meet the ever-changing education needs of children.

**SINGLE MOTHER FROM ENTERPRISE RECEIVES NEW HOME FROM MOM**



Ameena Elliot receives new home from MOM

Amena Elliott, a 27-year-old single mother of two from Enterprise, East Coast Demerara, received the keys to her new house, providing her family with a spacious and safe environment.

The new home was

built under President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's Men on Mission (MoM) initiative.

Reflecting on her hardships over the years, Elliott recalled the difficulties of being a single mother, and the constant search to

provide a decent home for her sons.

She said, "At one point in time, I moved seven times in one year just to find somewhere that is comfortable and affordable. So, it was very hard. Nobody wants to be a single

mother and have to fight for two children [and] everything on your own. But you know, I'm here, and I'm very thankful."

She was thrilled and taken aback when she was informed that she had been selected for a new home.

"When I applied and requested for some assistance from the Men on Mission, I didn't expect them to reach out so quickly," an excited Elliott highlighted.

Overcome with emotion and gratitude, Elliott said that the new home has not only significantly improved their lives, but has provided financial relief since she doesn't have to pay rent.

Elliott thanked the government and the Men on Mission for constructing the house for her family, marking a new beginning for them.

Additionally, the young mother spoke about her dreams for her kids, ensuring they have a good education and a positive environment so they can have a prosperous future.

Elliott, who is a student at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE), is currently teaching at the Early Childhood Centre of Excellence at the University of Guyana, Turkeyen.

Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony highlighted that this

undertaking forms part of the government's ongoing efforts to provide the necessary interventions to the vulnerable population.

Minister Anthony also encouraged Elliott to become a role model in her community by assisting and inspiring those who are experiencing similar hardships as she did.

Over the years, the Men on Mission has made significant progress in its work programme by providing various support to youths, men and the vulnerable which has improved their lives.





# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 86

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BLAZES TRAIL WITH STAGING OF ANANSI



The Ministry of Education has once again raised the bar for literary and cultural engagement in schools with the highly anticipated staging of Anansi at the National Cultural Centre. This thrilling production by GEM's Theatre Production, brings to life the legendary trickster of Caribbean folklore, blending humor, wit, and valuable life lessons in a way that captivates both students and educators alike.





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# Caribbean Tourism Organization Unveils 2025 Theme: “Caribbean Resilience: Crafting Tomorrow’s Tourism”

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has unveiled its theme for 2025: “Caribbean Resilience: Crafting Tomorrow’s Tourism.” This timely and forward-thinking theme underscores the region’s commitment to embracing its strengths, addressing challenges, and creating a future-ready tourism sector that continues to thrive in an ever-changing global landscape.

CTO Chairman Ian Gooding-Edghill, Barbados’ Minister of Tourism and International Transport, emphasized the transformative potential of the theme: “Caribbean Resilience: Crafting Tomorrow’s Tourism” challenges us to think innovatively and act collaboratively. It is a rallying call to strengthen partnerships, invest in our people, and prioritize sustainability while harnessing technology and innovation to redefine how the Caribbean engages with global travelers. We must commit to building a tourism sector that not only meets today’s demands but also anticipates tomorrow’s opportunities.”

This year’s theme invites regional governments, tourism departments, private sector partners, and local communities to work together to address

priorities such as climate adaptation, digital transformation, workforce development, and diversification of tourism products. Alongside the ongoing CTO Reimagine exercise, the theme reflects a renewed focus on sustainable tourism practices that preserve the region’s natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

Highlighting the significance of the theme, the chairman continued, “Resilience is at the core of the Caribbean’s identity, and this year’s theme acknowledges our ability to navigate challenges while emphasizing our proactive approach to building a sustainable and innovative tourism industry. It inspires us to think beyond recovery, focusing on transformation and long-term success for the region.”

The Caribbean, celebrated worldwide for its diverse cultures, breathtaking landscapes and warm hospitality, has consistently demonstrated its resilience in the face of natural disasters, economic shifts, and global disruptions. The 2025 theme calls on all stakeholders to embrace this spirit of resilience to ensure the region’s continued growth and competitiveness.

As part of its 2025 vision, CTO will host events, workshops and initiatives designed to empower stakeholders and foster innovation across the Caribbean. The organization is committed



CTO Chairman G.P. Ian Gooding-Edghill

to ensuring that the region remains a leader in global tourism, offering unique, enriching experiences to visitors while providing economic benefits to its people.

“This theme is an invitation to celebrate our collective resilience and to take bold steps toward a future where the Caribbean continues to shine as a center of innovation, sustainability and unmatched hospitality. Together, we will craft a tourism industry that em-

bodies the true spirit of the Caribbean,” said Gooding-Edghill.

CTO encourages all stakeholders and partners to join in celebrating this theme throughout 2025, working collectively to shape a resilient, sustainable and prosperous future for Caribbean tourism.

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), headquartered in Barbados is the Caribbean’s tourism development agency, comprising membership of the region’s finest countries and territories, including Dutch-, English- and French-speaking, as well as a range of private sector allied members. The CTO’s vision is to position the Caribbean as the most desirable, year-round, warm-weather destination, and its purpose is Leading Sustainable Tourism - One Sea, One Voice, One Caribbean.

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For further inquiries, please contact the Authority via email at info@guyanaturism.com or WhatsApp at +592 638 5128.

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