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Ramsaroop heads Caribbean Investment Agency

The Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 11. The organization is home to 24 member countries in the Caribbean and 25 investment promotion agencies within these territories. The Agency focuses on increasing collaboration among its investment promotion agencies to attract investors

into the Caribbean region. The highlight of the AGM was the election of a new Board of Directors, a process that occurs every two years.

The meeting marked the end of Ronald Theodore's tenure as CAIPA President. Mr. Theodore, who is also the CEO of the Grenada Investment Development Corporation (GIDC), passed the baton to President, Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, Guyana's Chief Investment Officer and Agency Head of the Guyana Office for Investment.

Ramsaroop said his term will focus on key sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, blue economy, agriculture, ICT, and other strategic industries

THREE WISE MEN: Guyana's leaders got together for a photo during the just-concluded holiday season. Here, from left, are Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, President Irfaan Ali and Prime Minister Mark Phillips, who joined together to wish Guyanese everywhere a Happy New Year.



CARICOM Chairman urges unity and action in 2025 to tackle global challenges. Pg. 4

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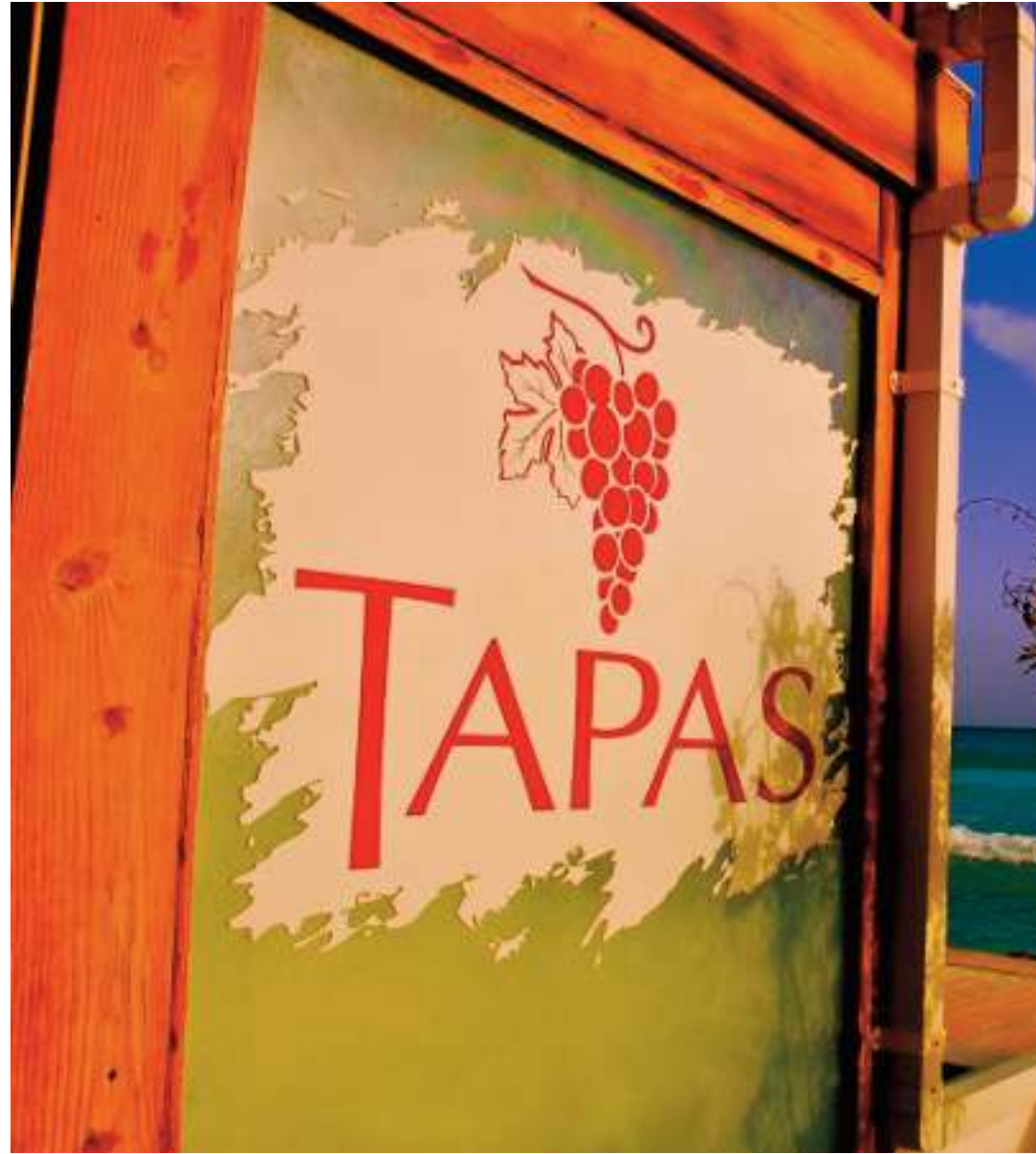
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CARICOM Chairman urges unity and action in 2025 to tackle global challenges

CARICOM Chairman and Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley said on Wednesday the 15-member regional bloc enters 2025 facing significant challenges but also remarkable opportunities, all amid a global landscape filled with uncertainty.

In her New Year address, PM Mottley said the Caribbean act together will not only shape 2025 but will leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

“How we act, united as a people, and as nations, will define not only this year 2025 but the legacy of our generation.

“The Caribbean is far more than a geographic space—we know it! It is a living testament to the power of courage, creativity, and our collective strength. Ours is a history marked by resilience. A word that we will have to embrace more and more in our future. Time and again, we have faced storms, both natural and manmade, and risen stronger, more determined, and ever united in shaping our destiny. Especially as we saw the ravages of Hurricane Beryl make history, not just for the history books, but regrettably in the lives of too many families across our region,” she said.

Below is an excerpt from the CARICOM chairman’s message:

My beloved brothers and sisters of the Caribbean,

As we step boldly into 2025, I greet you with hope, determination, and an unyielding commitment to serve as your Chair of CARICOM.

Today, we stand at the crossroads of immense challenges and extraordinary opportunities. How we act, united as a people, and as nations, will define not only this year 2025 but the legacy of our generation.

The Caribbean is far more than a geographic space—we know it! It is a living testament to the power of courage, creativity, and our collective strength. Ours is a history marked by resilience. A word that we will have to embrace more and more in our future. Time and again, we have faced storms, both natural and manmade, and risen stronger, more determined, and ever united in shaping our destiny. Especially as we saw the ravages of Hurricane Beryl make history, not just for the history books, but regrettably in the lives of too many families across our region.

I extend heartfelt thanks to the Outgoing Chairman, the Honourable Dickon Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada, for his wise and steady leadership. Together with my fellow leaders, I reaffirm our shared commitment to ensuring the prosperity, security, and well-being of every citizen in our region.

A Region at an Important Juncture is what we are.

We begin 2025 against that backdrop of global uncertainty.

The aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic linger. The worsening climate crisis endangers our homes and livelihoods. The devastating conflicts in Sudan and Ukraine and Gaza and Lebanon reverberate far beyond their borders while in our Community, the multifaceted crisis in Haiti demands urgent, thoughtful, and compassionate solutions. And we pray for the continued



Caricom chairman, Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley

stability of our relations between Guyana and Venezuela.

These challenges my friend test our resolve, but they also underscore the urgency of adaptation, resilience, and bold action. The Caribbean must not only weather these storms but we must lead in crafting solutions for a changing world.

Central to our mission must be resuming the full implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). We paused our coordinated actions on this noble but critical mission, as we applied all that we could muster to fight COVID and its trail of economic and social upheaval. But five years on we must resume our work on the CSME.

For this is not merely an economic agenda—it is a vision of unity and opportunity for small states, who know that we can achieve so much more together than we do so individually. Full realization of the CSME, including above all else, yes – the free movement of nationals, is essential for unlocking the true potential of our people and economies. So is the necessity for us to attain and go beyond the target we set ourselves for food and nutritional security best exemplified by the Vision 25 by 2025 agenda, which we set in 2021.

We must now focus my friends, to apply the few but necessary recommendations of the distinguished CARICOM Commission on Economy – who reported to us in the middle of the pandemic when we were justifiably distracted. The pooling of our sov-

eighty, must also be better addressed by the pooling of our efforts from investment to skills to procurement. We can do better together.

We must also confront the injustices of the global financial system, which continues to marginalise Small Island and Low-lying Developing States (SIDS). Unjust blacklisting practices and insufficient access to concessional financing hinder our sustainable development efforts. CARICOM will persist in advocating for reforms, championing the Bridgetown Initiative and working with others like the 73 Climate Vulnerable Countries in the Climate Vulnerability Forum as we fight for a better financial landscape regionally and globally within which we can build resilience, prosperity and equity – fairness – for all of our people. We also urge the adoption and the laser-like refining of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) to secure critical resources for our region’s future as we face these crises that are often beyond our control to avoid but for which we must strengthen our resilience to survive.

In so doing my friends, we must urgently settle a Floor of rights as a Community for our people, so that we agree on what must be the minimum protection and the opportunities that each and every Caribbean person must benefit from; while we instil as well, in all of us, the need for each to live out daily our lives to do better by our family, our communities, our country and yes our region. Our home will only be as good as WE COLLECTIVELY make it. We remain

inspired by the principles of UBUNTU – “I am, because we are”.

In tandem, we must deliver on the commitments of the recently concluded GeorgeBridge Declaration, which was built on the Regional Symposium in Port-of-Spain, that recognized Crime and Violence as a public health issue in the Caribbean. This Declaration reached in Georgetown, Guyana under the chairmanship of Barbados, prioritises Citizen Security and Safety by addressing it as a public health challenge while innovating and strengthening our efforts nationally and regionally in law enforcement and the modernisation of our criminal justice systems. This is absolutely critical for the majority of our people who simply want to ensure that the Zone of Peace that we aspire to as a region for the Caribbean is a lived reality in each our communities. We look forward to the meeting in St Kitts this year, which will add to the meetings in Trinidad and Guyana on this most critical of issues that affects each and every Caribbean person.

We are also proud as a Community to welcome the Declaration of the Second

Decade for People of African Descent, beginning today the 1st of January 2025. This achievement reflects the tireless advocacy of our region and the strides made during the first Decade, including global recognition of our Ten Point Plan for Reparatory Justice and the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum for People of African Descent.

Yet, so much remains to be done in this area. We must continue to press the international community for a mature face to face conversation, at all levels, so that we may see them repair the damage from the exploitation through the immoral institutions of slavery and colonialism which our people suffered from.

We must also urge the international community to provide the resources necessary to improve the dignity, security, and material conditions of African-descended people worldwide. The spectacle of 600 million Africans without electricity, in an age of AI, is in no way morally acceptable to us as a Community which is part of the African Diaspora that is the 6th Region of Africa. In this regard, we will further continue our work to further strengthen our relationship with the Africa Union as a community of Caribbean people.

So my friends, this year, let us seize the boundless opportunities before us. The world is racing into a digital future, and the Caribbean must not be left behind. From green energy to artificial intelligence, we must lead with alacrity as innovators – not blindly but responsibly – equipping our young people with the tools to drive change and to position our region as a hub of sustainable industries. This is even more so when we consider that we equally face the challenge of many developed countries – that is an ageing and declining population. It is for that reason that our young people therefore must given every opportunity to ensure that when they too age, that there are those who are young enough to help them mature in their grey and silver years.

US companies invest US\$15B in Guyana over four years

UNITED States companies have ploughed over US\$15 billion into Guyana over the last four years, solidifying the South American nation’s status as a top destination for international investments.

US Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Brian Nichols highlighted this achievement during a recent press briefing, reaffirming the tangible outcomes of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

“The strategic elevation of our relationship with Guyana, the fastest-growing economy in the world, provides further proof that these partnerships produce results,” Nichols said while commending the bilateral efforts that have strengthened Guyana’s economy and defence capabilities.

The multi-billion-dollar investment is part of a broader collaboration between the US and Guyana, which includes partnerships with US companies, robust defence cooperation through US Southern Command, and support for key sectors like oil and gas, tourism, and infrastructure.

Since 2021, US companies have been involved in major projects, from ExxonMobil’s offshore oil developments to luxury hotel investments such as Four Points by Sheraton, and Hyatt Place.

These initiatives align with Guyana’s rapid economic transformation, and are supported by the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)-led government’s push to develop a diverse range of industries, including healthcare, education, and renewable energy.

While large-scale oil projects dominate headlines, the US is also fostering partnerships with Guyanese small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot earlier this year highlighted the role of SMEs in promoting long-term economic stability.



US Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Brian Nichols

“It’s not just our large Fortune 500 companies that are making an impact. Small and medium enterprises trading with each other is arguably even more important for long-term diverse economic growth,” she said.

In 2023, over 3,000 US SMEs were exported to Guyana, underscoring the strong trade ties between the two nations.

Leading the wave of US investments in Guyana is ExxonMobil, whose historic developments have transformed the country into a global oil powerhouse.

Since First Oil in December 2019, ExxonMobil and its co-venturers, Hess and CNOOC, have launched three major offshore projects—Liza Phase 1, Liza Phase 2, and Payara. These projects

collectively produce over 600,000 barrels of oil per day, with production expected to surpass 1.7 million barrels per day by 2030.

ExxonMobil’s operations in Guyana are among the most successful deep-water developments globally, and the company’s local investments reflect its commitment to Guyana’s economic growth.

Over the past five years, ExxonMobil has spent more than US\$2 billion on goods and services from over 1,700 local suppliers, and currently employs over 6,000 Guyanese in high-paying in-

dustry jobs.

While oil remains a cornerstone of US investments in Guyana, the relationship is expanding into other critical sectors.

US companies have made significant contributions to tourism, hospitality, and infrastructure development.

Luxury hotel projects led by US firms include the Four Points by Sheraton, Hilton Garden Inn, Hyatt Place, and H-Tower Luxury Hotel.

These ventures are set to capitalise on Guyana’s growing international profile and burgeoning tourism sector.



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Road ahead for Guyana is bright

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, December 29 2024

THE recent US\$526 million financing from the Export-Import Bank of the United States of America (EXIM) for Guyana's Gas-to-Energy project is a landmark achievement in the country's energy sector.

This large-scale project, supported by the Ministry of Finance, is to build a modern natural gas separation plant, and 300 megawatt combined cycle gas turbine power plant at Wales, West Bank Demerara.

As Guyana stands on the brink of a transformative energy transition, this project not only promises to enhance energy security, but also to catalyse economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Heavy fuel oil has long been the fuel of choice for Guyana's electricity generation, a practice that is expensive and unsustainable in its ecological impact. The Gas-to-Energy project is an important step towards healthier, more stable sources of energy by using natural gas.

This transition is expected to dou-

ble the country's installed electric capacity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 460,000 tonnes annually, equivalent to the carbon footprint of consuming more than one million barrels of oil. Such cuts are essential, given the need to respond to climate change, and they are also consistent with international aims to establish sustainable energy options.

In addition, the potentially significant cost reduction, in terms of up to 50% of electricity consumption, will not only ease financial pressure on households, but also promote competitiveness in numerous fields.

Historically, high electricity rates haven't encouraged investment in Guyana; therefore, high electricity rates need to be reduced to attract local and foreign investment. With approximately 85% of the current workforce on this project being Guyanese, it also signifies a commitment to local employment, and capacity building.

The economic implications of this project are profound. Through partnerships with American firms, such as Lindsayca and CH4 Systems, the Gas-to-Energy effort creates more than

1,500 jobs in several states in the U.S., and does so in a collaborative environment that is mutually beneficial to the U.S. and the other country.

The U.S. Ambassador to Guyana appropriately pointed out that this collaboration is, and will be, on the road to a first-class power, with quality and safety at the fore.

The promise of cheaper energy will open new doors for industrial growth, allowing local businesses to thrive and compete on a regional scale. This project is not just an investment in hardware; it is an investment in the future of the Guyanese economy.

The Government of Guyana has been outstandingly transparent in relation to the Gas-to-Energy project, by releasing the information in planning documents, and feasibility studies, which are all publicly available.

This transparency promotes citizen and stakeholder trust, which, in turn, keeps the project accountable as it develops.

While some critics have raised concerns about potential environmental impacts, it is essential to recognise that no large infrastructure project is with-

out consequences.

Nevertheless, when the facilities are equipped with strong environmental controls, the advantages of switching to natural gas are significant compared to the risk. The government's commitment to sustainability is further evidenced by its broader strategy to diversify energy sources through solar, wind, and hydropower initiatives.

While the construction continues towards the planned completion in 2025, stakeholders need to be continuously on guard to make sure that this landmark project lives up to its potential.

This project is a reflection of gaining confidence in the economic future, and the strength of partnership of Guyana and the United States.

It is crucial for all involved—government officials, private sector leaders, and citizens—to rally behind this transformative endeavour, as it positions Guyana as a regional energy hub while improving the quality of life for all its citizens. The road ahead is bright for Guyana, and let us take the opportunity with zest, and with responsibility.

Understanding the strategic nature of modern philanthropy

Dear Editor,

I WRITE in support of the First Lady's recent Diamond Ball, an event that has drawn mixed reactions from the public. While I understand the concerns expressed about its perceived extravagance, it is important to recognise the value of such events in achieving philanthropic goals and elevating causes in ways that traditional fundraisers, such as BBQ sales, may not.

High-profile events like the Diamond Ball serve a dual purpose: they raise substantial funds and generate widespread attention for important

causes.

While ticket prices may seem exclusive, the funds from such an event often far exceed what smaller-scale fundraisers can achieve in scope and impact. Moreover, the event attracts donors who can contribute financially, through their networks, influence, and continued support for charitable initiatives.

Additionally, the ball's elegance and grandeur symbolise a commitment to excellence and serve as a reminder of the transformative power of generosity. This approach can inspire others to give, multiplying the overall impact beyond

what a direct donation might achieve.

Rather than viewing this as a misstep, let us see it as an opportunity to understand the strategic nature of modern philanthropy. The resources raised and awareness created through this event

will undoubtedly contribute meaningfully to all the causes the First Lady champions.

Sincerely,
Nutana Singh

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Top 10 stolen vehicles in Ontario: is your car on the list?

How big of a target is your vehicle for theft? If it's a Range Rover, the chances are high — for every 14 in the province, one is stolen, according to a new report.

Équité Association, an organization that works to stop crime on behalf of the Canadian property and casualty insurance industry, has released a list of the top 10 most frequently stolen vehicles in the province last year.

Topping the list are the 2022 Land Rover Range Rover, the 2022 Land Rover Defender and the 2021 Cadillac Escalade Series.

Brian Gast, vice president of Équité's investigative services division, says criminals made just over \$1 billion just off of cars stolen in Ontario,

"That's the money that is up for grabs for organized crime. That's what it's about," he told CBC Radio's Metro Morning in an interview. "It's being used to purchase guns, drugs, whatever the case may be. It's being used to further their criminal operations domestically and internationally. So it's a very big concern and it goes beyond financial."

Équité released a report in February that said auto theft increased 48 per cent in Ontario from 2021 to 2023. It also said a car is stolen in Canada every five minutes.

Earlier this year, the federal and provincial governments as well as police services across the GTA put forward initiatives to reduce car thefts. But Gast and others say more needs to be done.

One thing his organization hopes to achieve is tighter security vehicles on cars sold in Canada.

"Globally, vehicles are manufactured to the requirements of whatever



The Toyota Highlander is the most stolen vehicle in Ontario, says a new report

particular country when it comes to the security package, and we're looking to elevate and make the Canadian security package much more robust."

Home invasions, carjackings up: Peel police

According to Peel Regional Police, York Regional Police and Toronto Police Services traditional car thefts have decreased, but now more criminals are resorting to violence to steal vehicles.

In Toronto alone, home invasions related to car theft have gone up nearly 140 per cent and carjackings have increased by 18 per cent, based on year-to-date police data.

Det. Greg O'Connor with Peel Re-

gional Police's auto theft unit says his team is seeing similar trends.

"Unfortunately, carjackings and the home invasion numbers are rising. But, we've doubled the size of our unit in Peel

region. We currently have 16 members in our auto theft unit, so we're seeing a large increase of the recoveries that are going through."

Top 10 Most Stolen Vehicles of 2023 Ranking by Number of Thefts

Canada						
No.	Make/Model	Most Often Stolen Model Year	# of Vehicles Insured	# of Thefts	Theft Rate/Frequency (%)	Type
1	Toyota Highlander	2021	125,532	3,414	2.75%	SUV
2	Dodge Ram 1500 Series	2022	524,837	3,078	0.58%	Truck
3	Lexus RX Series	2022	96,400	3,037	3.15%	SUV
4	Honda CR-V	2021	487,962	2,988	0.61%	SUV
5	Toyota RAV4	2021	507,451	2,680	0.53%	SUV
6	Honda Civic	2019	697,143	1,654	0.24%	Car
7	Jeep Wrangler	2021	141,379	1,641	1.16%	SUV
8	Land Rover Range Rover Series	2020	34,615	1,533	4.43%	SUV
9	Chevrolet/GMC Suburban/Yukon/Tahoe Series	2021	62,377	1,488	2.37%	SUV
10	Chevrolet/GMC Silverado/Sierra 1500 Series	2021	595,765	1,383	0.23%	Truck




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Guyana ahead of 25 by 2025 plan in spite of adverse weather

President Dr Irfaan Ali has announced that Guyana is ahead of the regional food security goal of reducing the food import bill by 25 per cent by 2025, despite the Caribbean region's goal being affected by the recent hurricane.

The Head of State made these remarks during the second edition of his "In the Seat" show, during which he answered questions from five women journalists on pressing issues.

When asked about the food security goal for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which Guyana is spearheading, President Ali noted that there have been some disruptions in this regard due to natural disasters however, Guyana remains on track.

President Ali said, "Fortunately for us, although we went through two major floods, we are way ahead of the plan."

With this, he added that by next year, Guyana will be fully self-sufficient in corn and soya and further in black eye and red beans to the extent that there will be an exportation of the same.

"And by the end of 2026, we will be exporting corn and soya out of the region," he said.

Against this backdrop, he noted that with the integration of Northern Brazil into the regional food hub, there is an opportunity to bring down the cost of food in the region, as imported inflation is having a tremendous effect on many countries in the region.

However, turning to CARICOM's thrust towards the 25 by 2025 goal, he said that every Prime Minister from every country in the region has embraced the strategy with full determination and has gone above and beyond.

These countries, he said, have made financial resources available and have been investing heavily towards achieving the target.

To this end, he noted that the re-



Guyana is becoming fully self-sufficient in corn and soya as well as beans

cent damage done to several islands by Hurricane Beryl and other tropical storms has impacted the 25 by 2025 plans.

Giving an example, President Ali said that this has impacted spice cultivation, and banana cultivation and even caused the loss of assets for fisherfolks.

Meanwhile, as progress has been made in the region, the Head of State noted that he is somewhat disappointed at the pace at which some of the countries are moving in the removal of barriers and further some other Heads of

State have also expressed disappointment.

While this is so, he noted that there have been some moves forward, "But we have had successes too... our milk is now in Barbados... I know we are working now to have our ice cream in different countries."

Dr Ali said that there have still been some major challenges with Trinidad and added that most of it is linked to the bureaucratic layers and archaic laws that must be addressed.

These issues, he said, were raised

with Trinidad's Prime Minister Keith Rowley and with other regional leaders and he added that Rowley too expressed a desire to find a way forward.

Vision 25 by 2025 was officially implemented in 2021 and laid the groundwork for long-term social and economic partnerships among member states, private sector, regional organisations, development partners and civil society to invest in initiatives to address the region's rising food import bill and further improve intra-regional trade.



Brian Tiwarie, OMC, AA - CEO



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US EXIM Bank grants final approval for \$526M Gas to Energy loan to Guyana

“Today at noon, His Excellency the President Dr. Mohammed Irfaan Ali received a telephone call from the President and Chair of the United States Export-Import (EXIM) Bank, Ms. Reta Jo Lewis.

The EXIM Chair informed President Ali that the Board of EXIM has approved the loan for the Gas-to-Energy (GtE) Project valued at over \$526 million at their Board Meeting held earlier today having completed the thirty-five day congressional notice period.

The GtE Project is slated to deliver 300MW of Power to the grid when completed, expanding the supply of electricity, cutting the carbon footprint per kilowatt hour, and reducing energy costs to consumers by 50 percent.

His Excellency expressed to Chairman Lewis and the EXIM Bank as well as all other US Government agencies and authorities involved, including Ambassador Theriot and her team at the US Embassy in Guyana, the Government’s strong appreciation and thanks for the approval granted and for the confidence shown in this GtE project and in Guyana.

President Ali also commended the Guyana team at the Office of the President, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Guyana Embassy in Washington DC, whose work helped secure this important outcome for our country.”

Meanwhile, the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) Guyana has applauded the historic approval of a \$527 million loan from the US Export-Import Bank (EXIM) to support the critical Gas-to-Energy project in Guyana.

This landmark agreement, according to a press release from the chamber, marks the largest-ever infrastructural loan in the Caribbean, signifying a growing confidence in Guyana’s prosperity and deepening the US-Guyana partnership.

The Gas-to-Energy project is poised to transform Guyana’s energy landscape, enhancing energy security by diversifying energy sources and reducing reliance on imported fuels.

“Furthermore, it will accelerate the nation’s transition to cleaner and more reliable energy sources, driving sustainable economic growth and development,” the chamber said.

AmCham Guyana commended the Government of Guyana, the US Embassy, and all stakeholders involved in this ground breaking achievement.

“We look forward to supporting US EXIM’s continued engagement in Guyana and fostering further economic cooperation between our two nations,” the chamber said.

The Head of the Region Three Private Sector Inc. (R3PSInc), Halim Khan, has lauded the recent approval of a \$526 million EXIM loan as a monumental step toward economic and industrial growth.

This development has been wel-



Artist’s drawing of the Gas-to-Energy project

comed across all sectors as a transformative initiative for the nation’s future.

“President Ali’s foresight and unwavering commitment to Guyana’s development have once again proven transformative,” Khan said. “This project reflects his dedication to not only addressing the energy needs of our nation but also ensuring that Guyana’s economic and industrial growth is both inclusive and sustainable.”

According to Khan, the GtE Project epitomises the kind of bold, innovative solutions that Guyana needs to thrive in the global arena. “Under President Ali’s leadership, we are seeing the dawn of a new era where energy reliability, eco-

nomic growth, and environmental sustainability go hand in hand,” he underscored.

The Region Three Private Sector Head emphasised the direct benefits that the GtE Project will bring to Region Three, which is poised to become a hub of industrial and economic activity. With the project slated to deliver 300 megawatts of power to the national grid—doubling the current capacity—the reduction in energy costs by 50 percent is expected to significantly lower operational expenses for businesses and stimulate investment in the region.

“This project is a game-changer for the private sector, particularly in Region

Three,” Khan stated. “Affordable and reliable energy will not only enhance the competitiveness of existing businesses but also attract new industries, creating jobs and opportunities for residents.”

The GtE Project’s focus on utilising associated natural gas from offshore oil production aligns with Guyana’s vision of sustainable development. By cutting the carbon footprint per kilowatt-hour, the initiative supports environmental stewardship while fostering economic growth. Mr. Khan highlighted that the project’s implementation will solidify Guyana’s position as a regional leader in sustainable energy and industrialisation.

US wants more partnerships

AMBASSADOR of the United States of America (US) to Guyana, Nicole Theriot, has said that her nation anticipates more partnerships on transformational projects.

“By working with US companies, Guyana will benefit from a first-in-class power plant where quality and safety are at the forefront. We look forward to even more transformational projects where US and Guyanese companies can partner for the benefit of the Guyanese people,” Ambassador Theriot said in a post on the US Embassy’s Facebook page, following the US Export-Import (EXIM) Bank’s announcement of its approval of the more than \$526 million loan to support Guyana’s gas-to-energy project.

The project includes a state-of-the-art natural gas separation plant, which will enable Guyana to strengthen its energy security by doubling the country’s installed electric capacity.

Ambassador Theriot said: “I am thrilled that the board has approved the financing for this ground-breaking proj-



ect.”

In a press statement, the US EXIM Bank said the project will allow Guyana to transition to more reliable and cleaner energy for consumers and businesses by using natural gas to generate electricity.

“I am extremely pleased that the Board of Directors approved today’s gas-to-energy project,” President and Chair Reta Jo Lewis said, adding: “I am especially proud to continue to

support bank priorities and charter mandates along with projects that align with the administration’s economic, energy, and national security priorities.”

The financing will support a US joint venture involving Lindsayca, a Texas-based company, and Puerto Rican small business, CH4 Systems and services provided by ExxonMobil.

This work is being conducted by US and Guyanese companies. Some 85 per cent of the 500 employees currently supporting this project on site are Guyanese.



Issues of insufficient power have been averted because GPL has surpassed peak demand and has reserve power

‘Insufficient’ power no longer an issue now for Guyana Power and Light

THERE should not be power outages because of insufficient power, People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) General Secretary Bharrat Jagdeo has said.

Jagdeo, during a press conference on Friday, explained that this should be averted because the Guyana Power and Light Incorporated (GPL) has surpassed peak demand and even has reserve power.

Despite the country facing electricity woes because of a “short-sighted” approach by the previous APNU+AFC administration, according to the PPP General Secretary, the PPP/C government has worked to fix this issue.

The government, he said, has properly handled the power sector, even in the face of inheriting many challenges.

Giving greater insight into how the previous coalition government had blocked attempts to secure stable, cheaper power, Jagdeo said: “They never made an investment in a base-load capacity that would have replaced Amaila (Amaila Falls hydropower station) ... So when we resumed office, [we were left] with practically the same old equipment that we left office with.”

He said that even with an expand-

ing economy, little investment was being made in that area by the previous administration.

However, the PPP/C government has made significant investments since it assumed office in 2020.

Since being elected to office in 2020, the PPP/C government has implemented several initiatives, including the installation of 10 megawatts of emergency power, the operationalisation of 46.5 megawatts at the Garden of Eden plant in 2022, and the procurement of an additional 28.9 megawatts of power from Honduras.

Now, according to the PPP/C General Secretary, the Demerara-Berbice Interconnected System (DBIS) run by GPL now boasts 267 megawatts (MW) of power with the injection of the two power ships, solar-power projects and other installed capacity.

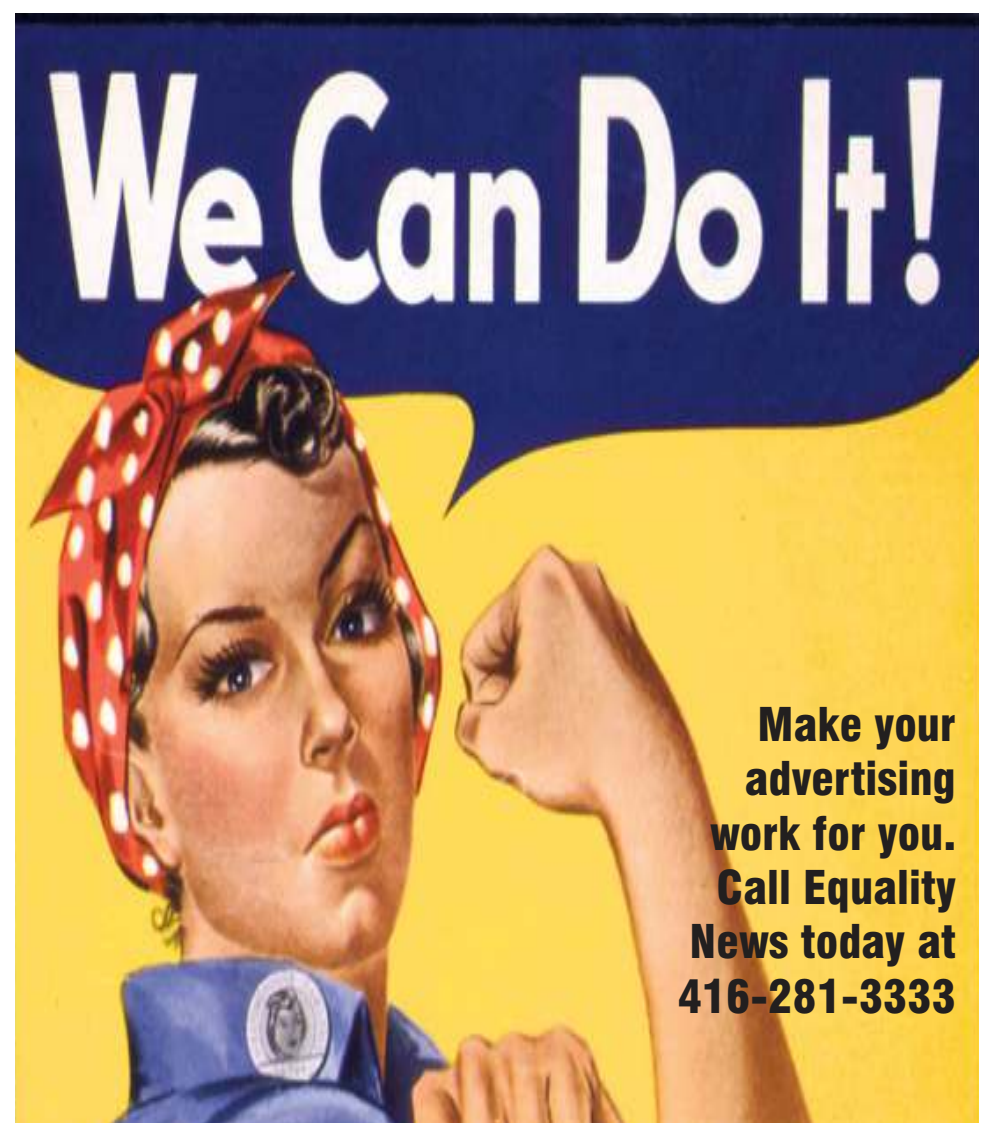
Further, he said that peak demand is just about 200MW and so, GPL now has about 67MW of reserve power. This is the first in a long time, he explained.

“So now GPL has reserves, they’re using part of it as spinning reserves and this would allow them to take out some of the other sets that have had delayed maintenance and do that maintenance now without affecting

the availability of power in the system,” Jagdeo said.

The PPP/C General Secretary, who also serves as Guyana’s Vice Pres-

ident, said that improved performance is expected from GPL since there is no longer any reason to pin failures on inadequate power.



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US\$200M invested to modernise power-lines, strengthen energy infrastructure

As Guyana prepares to usher in the new year, Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has reassured Guyanese that 2025 is slated to be a year free from energy woes.

Speaking at a Friday press conference of the governing People’s Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) of which he is the General Secretary, Dr. Jagdeo highlighted some key infrastructure developments in the sector, with the latest being a tender for a new 230KVA power line. With several projects already completed and more underway, Dr. Jagdeo emphasised that Guyana is well on its way to developing its smart grid.

Addressing a team of journalists at Freedom House, Dr. Jagdeo shared that the government is working on numerous projects to enhance Guyana’s energy sector. Recently, the country saw significant additions with the introduction of two powerships.

“We are adding about 200MW of capacity to the system. The transmission mains are still old; but now, given what happened last week when the powership sailed into the Demerara River and was connected to the grid a few nights ago...that has allowed us now to have 267MW of power installed. The demand in October was about 205MW, with peak demand now at about 200MW.”

According to Dr. Jagdeo, this means that the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) now has a reserve power of 67MW of energy. Moreover, this extra power aims to help prevent blackouts



Major investments are being made in Guyana’s energy sector

and support the US\$200M tender for power line maintenance.

“We have another tender that should have been awarded by now. This is for about US\$200 million to upgrade the current system, add more transformers, because many areas are seeing demand that exceeds the number of transformers available. This could result in load shedding, so we need to add more transformers, etc.

“We are spending about US\$200

million to do that. So, a lot of measures are being put in place to upgrade the system and build a smart grid. Ultimately, we need to develop a smart grid for the country,” the Vice President explained.

While power line maintenance remains a priority, Dr. Jagdeo emphasised the government’s focus on completely developing the nation’s energy infrastructure. He explained that work is underway to implement new, stronger, and

more capable power lines across the country, starting in regions 10 and 6.

“We have tendered for a 230KVA line to run from Georgetown all the way to Crabwood Creek. With us generating 500-600MW here, we need to move that, and the 69KVA line can’t carry that amount of power all the way to Berbice. We are doing the same now to take power to Linden, with a 230KVA line running from Georgetown to Linden, or from the East Bank to Linden,” he said.

Looking ahead, Dr. Jagdeo assured the public that the government anticipates better performance in the nation’s electricity.

“We don’t expect to have blackouts like we had before because of power shortages or availability. There may be blackouts associated with faults in the transmission system from time to time, such as a pole falling, but they should not be due to a lack of power,” he said.



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

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

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- 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.

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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

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Guyana to present evidence in July 2025 in defence of US\$100M lawsuit

The Government of Guyana will present evidence in July 2025 to counter a US\$100 million lawsuit brought by a Mexican company, Smart City Solutions (SCS). The lawsuit stems from the controversial and ultimately defunct parking meter project initiated in 2016 under the previous Alliance for Chance + A Partnership for National Unity (APNU+AFC) government.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, SC, disclosed this on Saturday during his ministry's end-of-year press conference. He said the case is currently ongoing at the International Centre for Settlement of Investments Disputes (ICSID) in Washington DC, United States. ICSID is an international arbitration institution established in 1966 for legal dispute resolution and conciliation between international investors and countries. ICSID is part of and funded by the World Bank Group, which is headquartered in Washington DC.

Providing an update on the lawsuit, Nandlall said: "We have a team of lawyers representing our interests both in the United States and here in Guyana. The hearings in the matter have been ongoing, and in July 2025, we are expected to lead evidence in defence of the claim.

"That's the liability we [People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government] inherited, and in many, many cases, we have been shouldered with this type of liability," he emphasised.

It was previously reported that lawyers from the United States law firm, Foley Hoag are representing Guyana's interest. According to Nand-



Flashback: Hundreds of people protested against the parking meters

lall, the government has already spent approximately US\$1 million in legal fees as part of its efforts to prepare a robust defence.

Nandlall stated that testimonies are being sought from key stakeholders, including former Georgetown Mayor Patricia Chase-Green, under whose tenure the parking meter project was implemented. However, he noted that lawyers have encountered difficulties in obtaining a statement from her. He emphasised that the legal team believes her testimony would be valuable.

In 2016, the Georgetown Mayor

and City Council (M&CC), under then-Mayor Patricia Chase-Green and then-Town Clerk Royston King, signed a contract with SCS to implement a parking meter system in Georgetown while the APNU+AFC David Granger-led coalition government was in office. Installations were happening throughout the capital city, as well as staff training for the new parking meter regime. However, the initiative faced immediate backlash and saw massive protests against its implementation. Citizens contended then that the fees were too high and placed undue financial burden on the populace. Others argued that the awarding of the contract lacked transparency. Public pressure forced a suspension of the project.

Throughout the process, however, the PPP/C, while in opposition, argued against the awarding of the contract and rolling out of the parking meter system. SCS subsequently sued the government of Guyana for millions of dollars in damages for the non-implementation of the project.

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Vice-President Jagdeo: ‘Every cent’ of oil revenue reaching Guyanese

In light of the bright future that Guyanese are facing, Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo has given an in-depth analysis of how every single cent of the oil revenue is meeting the people.

During a recent press conference at Freedom House, Jagdeo, who is also the General Secretary of the governing People’s Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C), clarified some public statements and spoke about Guyana’s five years of oil.

While addressing the ongoing campaigns aimed at distorting the government’s achievements, the Vice President challenged the claims made in a recent Stabroek News editorial. The editorial attempted to blame the current government for the transgressions of the previous coalition administration. Jagdeo rejected these claims, defending the government’s record and emphasizing that it should not be held accountable for actions taken under the former administration.

While some oil-producing nations are grappling with corruption and a lack of investments in their traditional sectors, the Vice President explained that this state of infamy is not Guyana’s case. Responding to the criticisms of how the oil revenues are being spent, Jagdeo said there is not a “single bit of evidence” that any cent of oil money is missing.

The Vice President firmly stated that all funds under the current administration are fully accounted for, with robust safeguards in place to ensure accountability and transparency. He contrasted this with the situation under the previous A Partnership for National Unity + Alliance For Change (APNU+AFC) administration. Jagdeo highlighted the US\$18 million signing bonus received by the APNU+AFC from ExxonMobil as an example. This bonus was not made public until the government faced intense criticism for its lack of transparency.

Jagdeo emphasised that such situations could not occur under the current government, pointing out that the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) Act prohibits illegal activities and ensures



PPP General Secretary and Guyana’s Vice President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

that all transactions are above board.

Underscoring that the NRF Act ensures that receipts of “every cent” are made public, Jagdeo said, “We have a clear provision, where all the money transferred to the budget can be traced and every cent in the budget has to be before it’s spent, has to be appropriated, and under the Auditor General control.”

He then boasted that Guyana has been getting high marks for this since there are oil-producing countries around the world that do not have the draconian provisions.

Staying on the topic of how oil revenues are being utilised, the Vice President said that the funds are not being squandered but instead, the money is going towards the citizens.

“You don’t see the money being spent on building a new building for the Office of the President like we’ve had or buying fleets of vehicles for the government even without oil money.”

The Vice President once again emphasised the contrast between the PPP/C and the APNU+AFC adminis-

trations in how they handle public funds. He pointed out that former President David Granger left office with a \$35.2 million Lexus motor vehicle, highlighting the disparity in the treatment of former leaders. This was in stark contrast to the approach taken by the APNU+AFC administration when it attempted to provide former President Donald Ramotar with a Toyota Raum, a far less luxurious vehicle.

Jagdeo stressed that, unlike the previous administration, the current government is directing funds towards vital sectors such as education, health-care, and infrastructure, benefiting the wider population rather than individuals.

“You see it [money] going massive in investments in infrastructure, roads for our people, not roads for the politicians, etc. Power plants. That’s where you see the money being spent.”

To ensure economic diversification and reduce reliance solely on the oil sector, the Vice President highlighted that the government has been

making substantial investments in transforming traditional sectors. These investments aim to strengthen various areas of the economy, ensuring sustainable growth and development across multiple industries, rather than depending entirely on oil revenues.

“I don’t want to list the details, you will hear about this next week when the minister speaks about [the] tissue culture labs opening up new sectors, bringing in better quality animals, giving greater incentives, co-investing in the agricultural sector and other sectors to expand the economic base of the country,” the Vice President noted as he firmly underscored that the government has demonstrated where the money is going.

“Many countries that have been producing oil and gas for 60 years, they don’t have a local content policy. We have one and 1000 Guyanese companies are already benefiting from over 700 million of business. They didn’t see that as positive. They didn’t see now that you have to go to auction.”

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Billions invested in the Pomeroon to boost agriculture, infrastructure

WITH food security remaining a top priority on CARICOM'S agenda, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, has highlighted the substantial investments being made in Region Two's infrastructure to enhance agricultural productivity.

Speaking at Saturday's commissioning of the pump station at Andrews, Minister Mustapha revealed that billions of dollars have been spent on improving drainage systems in the Pomeroon River to support cash crop farmers.

He emphasised that President Dr. Irfaan Ali's visit to the Pomeroon River spurred immediate government intervention, allocating \$500 million to dredge the river's mouth. "Many farmers are now experiencing improved drainage due to these significant investments," he stated.

Highlighting the importance of diversified agriculture, Minister Mustapha noted that the ministry was working with Pomeroon residents to expand cocoa and coffee cultivation and has distributed over 4,000 high-yield coconut plants.

He added that more than 6,000 acres of coconut cultivation have been established over the past four years, reflecting the government's commitment to revitalising the sector.

Minister Mustapha also celebrated historic achievements in rice production, announcing that, for the first time, output reached a record-breaking 725,000 tonnes.

"We are working to position Guyana as a leading agricultural hub. Our President is deeply passionate about the sector and is committed to ensuring agriculture remains resilient," Mustapha said.

Plans are underway to cultivate 25,000 acres of corn and soya, aiming for self-sufficiency and if this happens, the country will save US\$40 million annually.



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha at the commissioning of the pump station at Andrews, Region Two

Efforts to revitalise the sugar industry are also a priority, with systematic investments in GuySuCo over the past four years.

Minister Mustapha urged resi-

dents to seize the opportunities provided through these initiatives and to continue supporting the government's vision for a resilient and sustainable agricultural sector.

"We want to bring back the Pomeroon to surpass its former glory," he said, emphasising the transformative potential of these investments.

Gov't accelerates progress toward access to clean water

MINISTER within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Susan Rodrigues, has reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring equitable access to clean, potable water for all Guyanese, with a focus on achieving full coverage in the hinterland by 2025.

Speaking during a recent outreach in Block 42, Linden-Region 10, Minister Rodrigues highlighted significant advancements under the People's Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) government.

Currently, 94 percent of the hinterland regions have access to clean and safe water, a remarkable increase from just 45 percent in 2020 when the PPP/C took office. Minister Rodrigues noted that the government's efforts are

aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which aims to provide universal access to clean water and sanitation by 2030.

"In Guyana, the government has stipulated that by 2025, we should have 100 percent access to water in the hinterland regions," Rodrigues stated. "By next year, we will achieve 100 percent access, ensuring that no one is left behind."

Since August 2020, the government has invested \$700 million to provide clean and safe water for over 27,700 residents of Linden and its surrounding areas. Recent projects include the construction of a \$40 million well at Bamia, bringing potable water to 200 homes for the first time, and the

installation of a new well in Amelia's Ward to support the region's expanding housing developments.

In Rockstone, residents now enjoy consistent access to drinkable water following the installation of a new well. Additionally, water treatment plants have been rehabilitated and expanded to enhance distribution networks and improve the delivery of clean water.

Highlighting the government's innovative approaches, Minister Rodrigues announced a \$100 million project underway in West Watooka to provide access to water for over 5,000 residents. Due to unique geographical challenges, the project will filter surface water from a local creek, trans-

forming it into a reliable water source for the community.

"We had to get creative at West Watooka," Rodrigues explained. "We are using the same creek that residents rely on, filtering the water to ensure it is safe and accessible for everyone."

Minister Rodrigues emphasised that every region in Guyana will benefit from these initiatives as part of the government's broader agenda to uplift hinterland communities and ensure equal access to resources.

"The PPP/C government has always prioritised the needs of Guyana's indigenous and hinterland communities," she said. "These investments reflect our dedication to improving the quality of life for all Guyanese."

Government’s land regularisation programme being accelerated – AG

ATTORNEY-GENERAL and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall S.C., has said that the government has been able to regularise lands for possibly thousands of persons since 2020 under its aggressive land regularisation programme.

AG Nandlall disclosed this during his recent end-of-year press conference and noted that though land regularisation is not a traditional role of the Legal Affairs Ministry, it is an important one.

“We have been able to regularise hundreds if not thousands of persons already during this land regularisation programme from 2020 to now,” he said.

He noted that currently, five villages along West Coast Berbice are benefitting from the programme beginning from Cotton Tree and so far some 250 titles have already been distributed with another 80 plus ready for distribution.

Seeking to respond to the criticisms and fallacies of detractors who claim that the government is denying Afro-Guyanese titles, Nandlall noted that these villages consist of a 90 per cent Afro-Guyanese population.

Similarly, he noted that authorities are regularising over 450 families living on lands for many years at Anns Grove on the East Coast of Demerara and this is being done in tandem with the Ministry of Housing and Water and the Central Housing and Planning Authority.

Added to this, he noted that a similar programme was launched at Vigilance.

“We are regularising a village also on the Corentyne Coast called 46 Village, where the entire village is a village of squatters. We are giving them titles for the first time,” he added.

Further, on the Essequibo Coast, Nandlall indicated that an Amerindian Village is also engaged in the programme which will see some 200 families receiving titles.

Also, he highlighted that in January, the government will be working to distribute titles in Walton Hall where over 25 families will receive their transports.

The AG explained that these persons have been living on co-op lands and since the co-op society is now defunct, the occupants will receive titles.

“That is not part of our conventional function but this is just something on the side that we are working along with different agencies ensuring that we accelerate the government’s regularisation programme,” he added.



Attorney General Anil Nandlall

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New Pump Station

Over 200 rice and cash crop farmers stand to benefit from the newly commissioned pump station at Andrews on the Essequibo Coast in Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam). The rehabilitation project, undertaken by H. Nauth & Sons and supervised by Consultant CB & Associates Inc., was completed at a cost of G\$528,050,550.

At the commissioning ceremony held on Saturday at the pump station site, Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha emphasized the government's dedication to fulfilling promises made to the people of Region Two. He described the project as a significant step toward economic development in the region.

"Essequibo is an important area for us. This project symbolizes a commitment to the people of the region by the government. We want you to ply your trade so you can earn," Mustapha said.

Highlighting the region's importance, Mustapha noted that over 34,000 acres of land are under rice cultivation in Essequibo.

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Groundwork being laid to accelerate Guyana's development in 2025

AIMING to accelerate Guyana's development boom, the government has already begun laying the groundwork for an early budget in the coming year, People's Progressive Party (PPP) General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has said.

Dr. Jagdeo, at last week's press conference, emphasised the dedication and hard work that the PPP continues to invest in its development agenda.

"We are working every single day, even through this period, to ensure that we have an early budget next year so that we can continue with the development task that we have laid out for our country."

He assured that the party remains unwavering in its commitment to the promises it has made to foster a prosperous economy.

"I want to assure all Guyanese that we will continue as a party and government to work to fulfill the promises we made when we contested the last elections. We don't take our promises lightly," said Dr. Jagdeo.

Dr. Jagdeo also explained that the absence of frequent public statements from the government should not be mistaken for inactivity. "And so, when you don't hear too often from the government, it doesn't mean that people are not hard at work," he added.

With a strong focus on fulfilling the promises made to the electorate, Dr. Jagdeo further underlined the government's commitment to transparency, efficiency, and long-term development.

He pointed out that as Guyana moves forward in its economic and social transformation, the PPP/C continues to prioritise the needs and expectations of its citizens.

In reflecting on the dramatic progress Guyana has made since his government took office, President Dr. Irfaan Ali recently emphasised the country's transformation across multiple sectors, particularly how develop-



Guyana Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

ment is positively impacting citizens' lives.

Speaking about the country's growth, the President made it clear that infrastructural development is about more than just physical structures.

This publication has reported President Ali as saying, "Whatever we invest in, from an infrastructure perspective, must lead to the opening up of opportunities, the creation of new growth areas, and enhancing productivity. That's an important aspect of what development is and what investment in infrastructure means."

President Ali had also used the opportunity to highlight the significant improvements in the country's drainage and irrigation systems, noting that even in the face of recent heavy rains, citizens are praising the advances made under the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration.

Beyond physical infrastructure, the President had pointed to advancements in healthcare as another major

success. He also shared that thousands of nurses are being trained to meet the increasing demand for skilled professionals, ensuring the country's healthcare system is equipped to handle future challenges. There are also ongoing efforts to improve welfare and healthcare management, strengthening critical services to improve the overall quality of life for all Guyanese.

These developments, President Ali had stressed, reflect the government's broader commitment to building a strong, sustainable system that supports the health and well-being of the population, as Guyana continues to evolve.

Further, the Head of State had highlighted several key government initiatives aimed at fostering skill development across various sectors, pointing to the establishment of specialised programmes and institutes designed to equip both local and international trainees with the skills needed for the workforce.

One notable initiative is the Na-

tional Skills-Training Centre at Port Mourant in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne). This centre will offer training opportunities for individuals, providing essential skills that are in demand across multiple industries.

The President had also emphasised the significance of the country's first-ever world-class Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute (HTTI), which is also located at Port Mourant. This institute is expected to play a crucial role in enhancing the skillset of Guyanese citizens, opening up new employment opportunities in the growing hospitality and tourism sectors.

Under the PPP/C administration, Guyana has experienced rapid economic growth, driven largely by the booming oil and gas industry. This growth has been channelled into infrastructural projects, social services, and creating new opportunities for citizens. The government has focused on diversification, aiming to reduce reliance on the oil sector by investing in agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism.

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Non-oil sector contributing to ‘dynamic economy’ - Ali

ALTHOUGH Guyana’s booming oil-and-gas sector has driven the country to new heights, robust policies and investments in the non-oil sector, too, must be credited for the country’s rapid economic growth.

This is the belief of Guyana’s President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, who, during a live broadcast on Sunday evening, highlighted the government’s strategic agenda in building a dynamic economy, which is not overwhelmingly based on oil revenues.

The Head of State, in a detailed presentation, pointed to statistics highlighting the non-oil sectors’ growth from 2019 to 2024.

“I believe it’s very important for us to examine the numbers; to examine the key features of the economy between the period 2019 and 2024, so you can have an appreciation of what has taken place over the last four years in our economy, and how our economy has been performing; the impact of government policies and the performance of the economy,” Dr. Ali said, citing statistics which show that the non-oil real gross domestic product grew by 41 per cent over the past four years.

This, he noted, demonstrates how the government’s push for economic diversification has yielded results.

“That is how the non-oil economy performed... This is to show that we are now on our way to building a dynamic economy; one that will be globally competitive, and one that is not stuck or overwhelmingly based on oil revenue,” President Ali said.

Continuous efforts, he noted, are being made to ensure that the non-oil economy does not ‘stagnate’, but rather is invested in to support growth and massive enhancements.

“It also shows that our proactive approach is working in relation to preempting the risk of the Dutch disease,” he added.

The government, he noted, has successfully navigated its way in avoiding ‘pitfalls’ like the economic phenomenon that is the Dutch disease that occurs when a country experiences a rapid increase in revenue from natural resources (like oil or gas), leading to negative side effects in other sectors of the economy, particularly manufacturing and agriculture.

“It shows that our policy of protecting the traditional; building new and expanding the economic base from non-oil is bearing tremendous fruit.”

Providing a further breakdown of how the non-oil GDP has flourished,



President Irfaan Ali

Dr. Ali revealed that Guyana’s agriculture sector saw a growth of 17 per cent, while the services sector saw a growth of 28 per cent, and the construction sector saw a growth of 138 per cent. And, at a whopping 153 per cent, mining and other sectors have thrived over the past four years.

“This tells a story of an economy that’s performing in every sector; one that has seen growth in almost all of the main areas of economic expansion, diversification and modernisation.”

This economic boost, he further pointed out, is directly linked to job creation, homeownership, and many other spinoff benefits.

With regards to agriculture, the country would have seen increased

production and a better yield of crops which translated into investments, and the confidence of the private sector in agriculture.

This is linked to the jobs being created, and more persons being involved in the production, agro-processing and expansion in modern farming techniques and services.

President Ali also alluded to the growth that is being reflected in the country’s tourism, Information and Communication Technology, services and construction sectors.

He noted that growth is even being reflected in the communities and their respective households.

“We see this everywhere in our country. If you drive throughout the

country, you will see new factories, new processing plants, and new housing schemes are all being invested in,” President Ali said.

Private sector expansion, too, is notable. “What we have seen is a rapid expansion in investment from the private sector for construction, industrial construction, manufacturing for commercial purposes,” he added.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ali pointed out that non-oil GDP can also be linked to the country’s export earnings, which has reflected a 163 per cent increase.

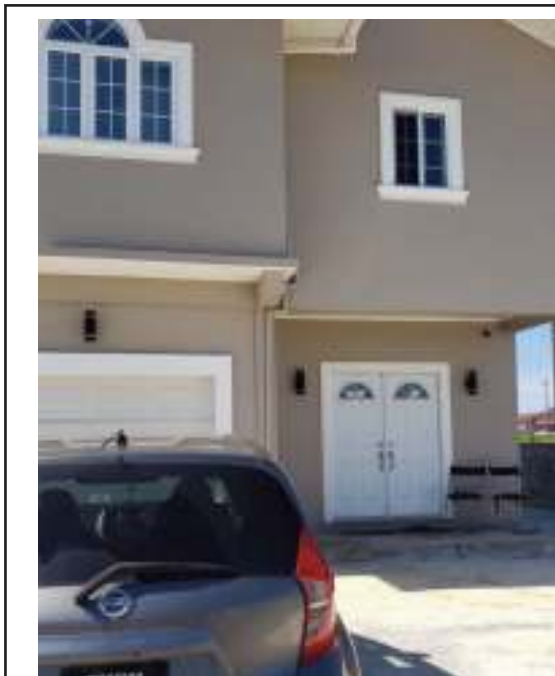
“This tells you that the performance of the economy is necessary, and the growth of the economy has necessitated an expansion that has resulted in an import value; an increase in import between 2019 and 2024.”

He explained that this massive growth is intricately linked to the diversification and growth of the productive sectors, with the non-oil capital goods imported showing a 252 per cent increase.

He pointed out that the implementation of programmes for agriculture, food security, the expansion and incentivising of the agricultural sector saw more people investing more in agricultural machines. This constituted a 500 per cent increase for agriculture machines.

And further, with the government focusing on expanding industrial parks, and providing incentive for more industrial activities, a 142 per cent increase was recorded.

Meanwhile, with regards to transportation, which includes machines such as barges and trucks, a 534 per cent increase was recorded.



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Singh's funeral procession through the streets of Delhi

India mourns ex-PM Manmohan Singh with full state funeral

India has mourned one of its longest-serving prime ministers, Manmohan Singh, with a state funeral in Delhi.

Singh led the country from 2004 to 2014 and was considered the architect of India's economic liberalisation. He died on Thursday aged 92.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present at the ceremony on Saturday. He has called Singh one of the country's "most distinguished leaders".

Mourners turned out across the capital to pay their respects as Singh's coffin, flanked by an honour guard, was taken through the city to the cremation grounds.

His eldest daughter lit his funeral pyre at the crematorium in front of Modi, President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and senior members of Singh's Congress Party.

Foreign dignitaries such as the King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Mauritius Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ramful were also in attendance.

Singh received full state honours in a ceremony that included a 21-gun salute.

Following his death on Thursday night, the government declared seven days of national mourning.

Paying tribute shortly after his death, Modi said Singh's "wisdom and humility were always visible" during their interactions and that he had "made extensive efforts to improve people's lives" as prime minister.

Opposition congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who was also present at the funeral, said he had lost "a mentor and a guide".

Among foreign tributes, US President Joe Biden said his country's "unprecedented level of cooperation" with India would not have been possible without Singh's "strategic vision and political courage."

"He was a true statesman. A dedicated public servant. And above all, he was a kind and humble person", Biden said in a statement.

Singh's coffin, draped in garlands of flowers and an Indian flag, was accompanied by a military guard through the capital

Singh changed India's economic growth trajectory during his time as prime minister and as the country's finance minister in 1991.

He is remembered for saying in his first budget speech: "No power on Earth can stop an idea whose time has come".

He continued to build on his economic reform measures as prime minister, lifting millions out of poverty and contributing to India's rise as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies.

The first Sikh to hold India's top post, Singh formally apologised in 2005 for the 1984 riots in which around 3,000 Sikhs were killed.

He was also the first Indian leader after Jawaharlal Nehru, who led the country from 1947 until his death in 1964, to be re-elected after serving a full first term.

Singh's second term in office, however, was marred by a string of corruption allegations.

The scandals, many say, were partially responsible for his Congress party's crushing defeat in the 2014 general election.



Late Indian PM Manmohan Singh



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): If you make yourself useful to someone in a position of authority now they will find ways to repay you early in the new year. That may sound a bit mercenary but in this dog eat dog world who you know is as important as what you know.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): If you want to do something out of the ordinary today, something you know is likely to shock friends and family members, then go for it 100 per cent. It's a good way to end the old year and an even better way to start the new one.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): It's time to look ahead and start thinking about your long-term aims and ambitions. That applies as much to personal matters as it does to your career. You need to invest in the people you are closest to emotionally if you want to succeed professionally.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Partnerships are under excellent stars at the moment and today's new moon will bring you into contact with an individual who can help make your dreams come true. The main reason for that is because their dreams are pretty much the same as your own.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): For some reason you have got it into your head that you need to prove yourself to the people you work with and for. Usually, of course, it's the other way round in that you expect them to prove themselves to you. Get things back to normal quickly.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): This is one of the best days you could hope for when it comes to creative activities, so don't sit at home watching the old year come to a close, get out into the world and cause some serious waves. Make your talents work for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Anyone who thinks you will meekly do what they demand of you today is in for a reality check and it could be painful. But try not to take too hard a line when it comes to family matters – harmony on the home front is essential.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Your focus has been too narrow of late and you need to widen your horizons if you are to make the most of the opportunities now coming your way. Keep your eyes and ears open and be ready to act swiftly when you get the chance to shine.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): No matter how enthusiastic you may be about a new job or project you must insist that you get paid a fair rate for your brilliant work. The fact that you enjoy it so much is not an excuse for your bosses to rip you off financially!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): A new moon in your sign means that something you begin over the next day or two is going to be of major importance to you over the following six months. You can and you will outshine your rivals and make a name for yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): As the old year comes to a close you should be spending at least some of your time now looking back and assessing your journey so far. Only then will you be in a position to decide what your next major moves are going to be.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Get out and about and have fun with your friends. A new moon in the area of your chart that encourages group activities makes this the perfect time to get together with like-minded people and let your hair down a bit – or even a lot!

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CARICOM to continue working with stakeholders in the year ahead

In her end-of-year message, Dr. Carla Barnett, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), highlighted that throughout 2024, the regional body remained dedicated to advancing regional integration and enhancing the well-being of its citizens. Barnett emphasized that under the strong leadership of the Conference of Heads of Government, significant progress was made on many of the region's key priorities. The focus on collaboration and collective action played a vital role in pushing forward initiatives aimed at strengthening the region's social, economic, and political ties.

"Food and nutrition security was boosted through the 25 by 2025 initiative; there were efforts to improve air and maritime transportation in the region and advance implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and initiatives to stem the worrying issue of crime and violence."

"We continued to take advantage of opportunities in regional and international fora to advocate for decisive climate action by the international community to keep temperatures to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. We also called for urgent attention to honor commitments made to provide climate financing. The Bridgetown Initiative and implementation of the multilaterally agreed multidimensional vulnerability index remain critical to ensuring that CARICOM small island and low-lying coastal developing states (SIDS) receive the resources needed to increase and sustain resilience," she said.

The secretary general said great effort was also expended throughout



CARICOM Secretary General, Dr Carla Barnett

the year by CARICOM leaders and the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) towards the resumption of functional governance and security in Haiti, by ensuring Haitian-led and Haitian-owned solutions to the ongoing crises. Regrettably, the growing insecurity caused by gang violence remains a serious threat to the aspirations and hopes of the people of Haiti, as many thousands of persons continue to be displaced, and are victims of violence and food insecurity.

"In July, the record-breaking Hurricane Beryl severely impacted agriculture, fisheries, communications and transportation in several countries of the region. However, in the true spirit of the community, our member states and regional institutions rallied to support each other."

The regional body also signed the CARICOM-African Union memoran-

dum of understanding in the latter half of the year to promote the strengthening of economic, cultural, political and fraternal relationships between CARICOM and Africa.

This will also be bolstered by the increased opportunities for trade, investment and tourism between CARICOM and Africa.

"We acknowledge the strong participation of our member states, international development partners, the private sector, labor organizations, the diaspora, and civil society in initiatives to strengthen the pillars of our integration movement. In this regard, for their sterling contribution to the region, two community stalwarts, Sir Clive Lloyd and the Honorable Roderick Rainford, were awarded the Order of the Caribbean Community, the region's highest honor, at the 47th Regular

Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government."

Barnett said as the region seeks to consolidate integration in the year ahead, CARICOM looks forward to continued collaboration with stakeholders and partners, including the CARICOM Committee of Ambassadors and CARICOM Youth Ambassadors, as well as the guidance of the Bureau of the Conference, which will comprise Barbados, Grenada and Jamaica, effective 1 January 2025.

"My sincere thanks to all the staff of the secretariat at our Georgetown headquarters and our offices in Barbados and Jamaica, for their unwavering dedication to the work of the Community. I wish for all peace, success and prosperity in 2025, and safety during the season's festivities," said Barnett.

Man charged with murder of veteran journalist Barbara Gayle

Authorities have charged 24-year-old Travis Ellis of Gulf, Gregory Park, St. Catherine, in connection with the murder of retired Jamaican journalist Barbara Gayle at her Caymanas Country Club Estate home.

Ellis faces charges of murder and robbery with aggravation.

Gayle, 77, was discovered inside her home on December 17 with multiple stab wounds. The following day, her car, a GLA 180 Mercedes Benz, was recovered near Dyke Road in St. Catherine. Ellis was apprehended on December 18 in Grange Lane, where he was reportedly found hiding in bushes.

According to a report by Radio Jamaica, Ellis confessed to the killing while providing a caution statement to detectives from the Criminal Investigations Branch.

He told investigators he killed the veteran journalist for her GLA 180 Mercedes Benz motor vehicle that had been parked in her yard at the Caymanas Country Club Estate housing scheme in St. Catherine. He said he had planned to sell the vehicle.

Ellis was then charged with murder and robbery with aggravation.

The murder of the veteran journalist, known for her dedication to the field, has shocked the nation and sparked widespread outrage.

Former Prime Minister P.J. Patterson described the brutal murder of veteran journalist Barbara Gayle as a "wake-up call" for Jamaica, urging the nation to re-examine its values and prioritize those that are "life-sustaining."

In a statement, Patterson remembered Gayle as "gentle, modest, and conscientious," and urged Jamaicans to reflect on the values that sustain life. "This heinous act should prompt a national effort to end such despicable crimes," he said, warning that failure to act would leave the nation increasingly vulnerable.



Barbara Gayle — murdered at home

The case has highlighted the ongoing issue of crime in Jamaica, with calls for a renewed focus on social and cultural reforms to prevent further tragedies.

St. Kitts and Nevis sees record-breaking air arrivals during Christmas

St. Kitts and Nevis has experienced a surge in air arrivals this holiday season, marking a significant milestone in the Federation’s tourism recovery.

From December 14 to 25, 2024, the twin-island nation welcomed 8,335 passengers across 265 flights, making it the highest number of air arrivals recorded during this period in recent years.

This 2024 total exceeds previous holiday season arrivals, surpassing the 7,492 passengers recorded in 2023, 6,334 in 2022, and 2,937 in 2021. Notably, the 2024 figures also show a strong recovery compared to pre-pandemic levels, surpassing the 7,813 passengers recorded in 2017 and outpacing 2018 and 2019 arrivals, which stood at 7,773 and 8,069, respectively.

The boost in arrivals is attributed to the combined appeal of St. Kitts and Nevis’ holiday offerings, including vibrant Christmas celebrations and the highly anticipated Sugar Mas Carnival. Visitors have been drawn to the Federation’s cultural festivities, including lively street parades, calypso competitions, and traditional folklore performances, making it a premier holiday destination.

Minister of Tourism, the Hon-



The Brandshaw International Airport in St Kitts

ourable Marsha Henderson, expressed pride in the Federation’s tourism performance, stating, “This growth reflects the resilience and allure of St. Kitts and Nevis as a leading Caribbean destination. Our unique blend of cultural celebrations, natural beauty, and warm hospitality continues to attract visitors

and returning nationals alike.”

In collaboration with key stakeholders, the Ministry of Tourism has worked to ensure a smooth and welcoming experience for travelers. Enhanced operations at Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport have contributed to the Federation’s ability

to accommodate the increased volume of passengers efficiently.

With Carnival season still in full swing, Minister Henderson added, “We are excited to continue offering unforgettable experiences to all our visitors as we celebrate this festive time.”

Suriname says no to Desi Bouterse state funeral

Suriname’s government announced Saturday that it would not hold a state funeral or declare a national mourning period for former President Desi Bouterse, who passed away last week at 79 while on the run from justice.

President Chan Santokhi “has decided, based on his powers and advice received, that there will be no state funeral... No period of national mourning,” Foreign Minister Albert Ramdin said during a press conference.

Bouterse, a former military leader, orchestrated two coups in 1980 and 1990, establishing himself as a dictator. After years away from power, he was elected president in 2010, serving for a decade.

Bouterse died on Tuesday in an undisclosed location, where he had been hiding to avoid serving a 20-year prison sentence handed down in December 2023 for his involvement in the 1982 executions of political opponents, including lawyers, journalists, and military personnel. He was also convicted in absentia for cocaine trafficking.

His body was delivered to his residence in the capital, Paramaribo. Authorities have ordered an autopsy, but police reported no signs of foul play.

Despite his controversial past, Bouterse remained a polarizing figure, holding significant support among Suri-



Desi Bouterse — dead at 79

name’s poor and working-class communities in the former Dutch colony.

While the government will not

honor Bouterse with a state funeral, flags will be flown at half-staff on government buildings on the day of his funeral, out

of respect for his status as a former elected president. The funeral date has not yet been announced.

Jimmy Carter, longest-living US president and Guyanese 'hero', dies at 100

Jimmy Carter, the 39th president of the United States and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, passed away peacefully on Sunday, December 29, at his home in Plains, Georgia.

Surrounded by his family, Carter's death marks the end of an extraordinary century-long life dedicated to public service, humanitarian work, and the pursuit of peace. At 100, he was the longest-living U.S. president in history.

President Carter is survived by his children, Jack, Chip, Jeff, and Amy, as well as 11 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Rosalynn, his partner of 77 years, and one grandchild.

"My father was a hero, not only to me but to everyone who believes in peace, human rights, and unselfish love," said his son, Chip Carter. "The world is our family because of the way he brought people together, and we thank you for honoring his memory by continuing to live these shared beliefs."

Public observances are planned in Atlanta and Washington, D.C., followed by a private interment in Plains, Georgia. Details of the state funeral, including motorcade routes and public events, are expected to be released soon.

Born in Plains, Georgia, in 1924, Jimmy Carter rose from humble beginnings as a peanut farmer to become a global advocate for peace and human rights. His presidency, from 1977 to 1981, was marked by significant accomplishments, including brokering the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel and establishing the Department of Energy and the Department of



US President Jimmy Carter: extraordinary life

Education. Despite facing economic challenges and the Iran hostage crisis, Carter's administration emphasized honesty and integrity in government.

After leaving the White House,

Carter embarked on a remarkable post-presidential career that arguably overshadowed his time in office. In 1982, he founded the Carter Center, an organization dedicated to advancing human

rights, eradicating diseases like guinea worm, and monitoring elections in over 100 countries.

One of the Carter Centre's actions was to broker a free and democratic election in Guyana in 1992.

His efforts earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for "his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development."

Throughout his life, Carter was guided by his Christian faith, often referring to himself as a "born-again Baptist." His belief in equality and social justice informed much of his work, from advocating for fair housing as governor of Georgia to his dedication to Habitat for Humanity, an organization he supported through hands-on volunteer work well into his 90s.

Even in his final years, Carter remained deeply engaged in politics and democracy. The former president often joked that he wanted to live long enough to vote for Kamala Harris to become president. He fulfilled that wish in the November election.

Beyond his political and humanitarian work, Carter was an accomplished author, penning numerous books on topics ranging from his presidency to his faith and love for his wife, Rosalynn.

Jimmy Carter's legacy transcends partisan politics. He will be remembered as a leader who dedicated his life to serving others, whether in the Oval Office, on the international stage, or with a hammer in hand, building homes for those in need.

As the world mourns his loss, tributes have poured in from leaders and citizens alike, celebrating a man whose impact reached far beyond the borders of his small Georgia hometown.

"With his compassion and moral clarity, he worked to eradicate disease, forge peace, advance civil rights and human rights, promote free and fair elections, house the homeless, and always advocate for the least among us. He saved, lifted, and changed the lives of people all across the globe," President Joe Biden said in a statement.



President Desmond Hoyte welcomed President and Mrs. Carter during a visit to Guyana in October 1990.

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Barbados confirms first human case of West Nile Virus

Barbados has confirmed its first human case of West Nile Virus (WNV).

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that a child under 15, tested positive for the virus last month and is currently recovering under medical care.

In a post on its Disease Outbreak News on Thursday, the WHO assured that the overall public health risk remains “low.” Based on the available information, the WHO has not issued any travel or trade restrictions for Barbados.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause illness in humans, horses, and birds. It is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito and can lead to sickness or, in severe cases, death.

The WHO stated, “This is the first human case of WNV infection detected in Barbados. Additionally, no infections have been previously documented in birds or horses in this country, making this case both unusual and unexpected.”

Despite this, the overall impact on public health remains limited at this stage, as there is currently only one recorded human case and appropriate public health response measures have been implemented. WHO considers the current risk from WNV as low but will continue to evaluate the epidemiological situation in Barbados.”

According to the post, the Interna-



West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause illness in humans, horses, and birds.

tional Health Regulations (IHR) National Focal Point (NFP) for Barbados notified WHO on September 13 of the confirmed infection.

It is reported that the visited a horse stable in February and a beach often frequented by horses on June 8, just two days before the onset of symptoms.

“Although these exposures to horses were considered risk factors for

WNV infection, the exact source of infection remains unclear,” the WHO stated. “No other suspected cases of WNV have been identified, but public health authorities are continuing to monitor the situation closely.”

The WHO also noted, “The risk of international spread of WNV from Barbados is low. The virus is mainly transmitted through mosquito bites, with

birds as the natural hosts. There is no evidence suggesting that WNV spreads easily between humans or from horses to mosquitoes, so the potential for widespread international transmission remains low.” Symptoms of WNV include fever, headache, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea, and rash. There are no vaccines or treatments available for West Nile Virus in humans.

Major crimes down for 2024 in Jamaica

Jamaica’s Commissioner of Police, Kevin Blake, has announced significant reductions in major crimes across the country for 2024, highlighting a notable decline in murders, shootings, rapes, and robberies.

During his year-end address on December 27, Blake reported an 18% reduction in murders, a 10% decrease in shootings, and a 25% drop in rape cases. Robberies saw a 21% decline, marking substantial progress in the fight against crime.

Blake attributed these positive results to an intelligence-driven approach, increased police visibility, and strategic operations. “These outcomes are a direct result of a more focused and visible policing strategy,” he stated. The commissioner also noted that while the year saw over 180 police killings, the majority of law enforcement operations were carried out without fatalities.

“The Jamaica Constabulary Force’s (JCF) clear preference is to bring persons before the courts to face justice rather than engage in fatal confrontations,” Blake emphasized. He pointed to numerous high-value targets who had been arrested and brought to court this year, as well as over 400 weapons seized from gunmen without fatal consequences.

Blake also addressed criticisms regarding the integrity of crime statistics, dismissing doubts raised by some critics. “The statistics we present do not lie. They are rigorously compiled, analyzed, and transparently shared with the public. To cast doubt on these figures is to erode the trust and confidence that we have painstakingly built over time,” Blake as-



Jamaica Commissioner of Police Dr. Kevin Blake

sented.

According to the statistics, the police divisions experiencing the highest increases in murders were Manchester (17%) and St. Andrew North (14%). In contrast, Kingston Central recorded the largest decrease in murders at 40%, followed by St. James with a 34% reduction, and Hanover and St. Ann,

each with a 35% drop in killings.

Blake emphasized that public safety remains a top priority for the JCF, and issued a stern warning to criminals. “To those offenders who believe they can evade the reach of justice, let me be clear. We know who you are, and our resolve will not waver,” Blake concluded.

State of emergency declared in T&T after murders spiral out of control

Trinidad and Tobago President Christine Kangaloo has declared a state of emergency (SoE) in Trinidad and Tobago.

In a statement on December 30, the Communications Ministry said the SoE was declared under Section 8 of the Constitution.

“President Christine Kangaloo, as President and Commander in Chief, has, on the advice of Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley, declared a state of public emergency being satisfied that the circumstances of section 8(2)(c) of the Constitution exist.”

It said the circumstances warranting the declaration of the public emergency are based on the advice of the police service to the National Security Council of heightened criminal activity which endangers the public safety.

The current murder toll in TT is said to be 622 so far this year, though some sources report it is higher than that.

In a proclamation bearing the President’s seal, Kangaloo said under Section 8(1) of the Constitution, the President may from time to time make a proclamation that a state of public emergency exists.

She said under Section 8(2) of the Constitution, a SoE could be enacted if the President was satisfied that action had been taken, or was immediately threatened, by any person, of such a nature and on so extensive a scale, as to be likely to endanger the public safety.

“Now, therefore, I, Christine Carla Kangaloo, President as aforesaid, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon me by section 8(1) of the Constitution



The scene of the shooting to death of five men on Saturday in Port of Spain

hereby declare that: I am satisfied that a public emergency has risen as a result of the occurrence of action that has been taken, or is immediately threatened, by any person, of such a nature and on so extensive a scale, as to be likely to endanger the public safety; and a state of public emergency exists in TT.”

The declaration of the state of emergency came after five men were shot dead in Prizgar Lands, Laventille on December 29. Area residents say the killings took place in a shop.

Details of the murders remain vague, but reports state the men were

killed at around 8 pm.

Police believe the shootings are linked to a murder outside the Besson Street Police Station on December 28.

During that incident, Travis Williams, who was said to be close to a Port of Spain-based gang leader, was shot dead.

Williams, 31, was among a group of men who escorted the gang leader to the police station to sign his bail book.

As the gang leader left the police station at around 4 pm, armed men ran toward them and began shooting.

Williams was shot dead. The gang

leader escaped.

Police found a white panel van parked nearby and believe the gunmen were waiting in it before ambushing the gang leader.

The murders over the weekend continued to push the record murder toll to 622. The previous record high was 605 in 2022.

Less than 12 hours after the Prizgar Lands murders, President Christine Kangaloo declared a state of emergency based on the advice of the National Security Council.

No curfew, restrictions on public gatherings

ACTING attorney general Stuart Young says a curfew will not be part of the state of emergency (SoE) and there will be no restrictions on public meetings, marches or gathering.

The full details of the SoE, which was announced early on December 30, will be made public soon.

He said the SoE would be targeting those involved in criminal activity.

Speaking at a media conference on the morning of December 30, Young said under the SoE the police would be given additional powers, including searching premises and people without warrants, and detaining people for “periods of time.”

“We’re going to have a 48-hour holding period where people can be held under these regulations. Thereafter either a magistrate or a senior police officer can make an order of detention for another seven days whilst evidence is being gathered with respect

to people being held under the SoE regulations.”

He added that the SoE is targeting the unlawful possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives.

“People who are found in the company of anyone with these items will also be detained.”

The regulations will also suspend the ability to apply for bail.

The Defence Force will also have the powers of police officers.

He said the murder toll for 2024 is 623 and, “Over the last month or so and, in fact, building up to this, the government has been concerned about the use of high-powered illegal firearms.”

Young said under the Constitution, a sitting of Parliament will be held within the 15 days mandated for a SoE, to debate it and decide whether to extend it.



Acting Attorney General Stuart Young

Sherfane Rutherford nominated for ICC ODI Cricketer of the Year

DUBAI: West Indies batsman Sherfane Rutherford has been nominated for the International Cricket Council (ICC) ODI Cricketer of the Year award following a stellar 2024 for the men in maroon.

The Guyanese left-hander made the list following a remarkable year with the bat, during which he scored 425 runs in seven innings at an average of 106.25.

Demonstrating resilience and skill under pressure, Rutherford made a strong start to 2024 with three consecutive half-centuries in a losing series against Sri Lanka.

Rutherford's contributions were exceptional, amassing 204 runs at a strike rate of 107.36 and being dismissed just once.

The 26 year old continued his impressive form on home soil, scoring 54 off 36 balls in his sole innings against England in Antigua. However, his standout performance came in December during the home series against Bangladesh. In the opening match in St. Kitts, Rutherford played a sensational innings, scoring 113 off just 80 balls to secure a comfortable chase of 295 and give his team a 1-0 series lead.

He followed up with an unbeaten 24 not out and a solid 30 in the remain-



Sherfane Rutherford

ing matches, contributing significantly to the West Indies' commanding 3-0 series sweep. He now stands as one of the

contenders for the ICC Player of the Year award, alongside Afghanistan's Azmatullah Omarzai and Sri Lanka's

Wanindu Hasaranga and Kusal Mendis. The winner of this prestigious award will be announced in January 2025.

WI women's coach Deitz rues ODI series loss to India

WEST INDIES women's head coach Shane Deitz believes his squad will have to work much harder in 2025 after their devastating 3-0 One-Day International series loss against India puts them out of contention for an automatic Women's World Cup spot.

Deitz confirmed batting inconsistencies from his top order played an important role in the team's demise over this series, but said this particular loss now ushers in new challenges for the coming year.

On the current ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 cycle standings, West Indies women are ninth (14 pts).

With just one three-match ODI series to play against England in May before the cycle ends, and with it World Cup qualification, even if the Maroon sweep that series they would still finish outside the top six automatic qualifiers, and therefore must contest the World Cup qualifiers.

He knocked his top order batters for failing to set a proper foundation, despite skipper Hayley Matthews smashing a century in match two, but unable to get off the mark in the other two.

"You lose three wickets within the first six overs, and it's tough to recover. Over the three ODIs, we lost something like nine (wickets) for 81 in the power plays. That's an average of three wickets per power play for just 27 runs. It killed us. We haven't been able to handle the new ball, and we've struggled to recover from there. That's a top-order issue we need to address urgently," he said in the post-match press conference.

He reiterated the importance of qualifying for the World Cup, which bowls off in August/September in India.

"We have our series against Bangladesh, our regional 50-over competition and the World Cup quali-

fiers, they're just after that so we have to make sure that we qualify for the World Cup first and then we have series against England and South Africa."

"We have a lot of cricket coming up, but we have to make sure we play well in that qualifier to make sure we're here next year for that World Cup."

West Indies lost all three ODIs convincingly, the first by 211 runs, the second by 115 runs and third by five wickets. This after losing the three-match T20I series 1-2.

On the team's bowling attack throughout the ODI series, Deitz said they needed to bowl six balls in one spot, not four good balls and two pressure-releasing ones.

"That's about technique, mental attitude, and fitness as well, a huge thing," he added.

Deitz even scolded his batters saying that when they get to 30 or 40 runs they should be converting those knocks into centuries in the 50-over format.

In the final match, Chenille Henry (61) and She-maine Campbelle (46) rescued a horror start which had the Windies women reeling at 3/9 in under five overs. However, Campbelle's dismissal spurred a batting collapse, which saw Aaliyah Alleyne (21) the other batter to score double figures.

"It was a good partnership by Campbelle and Henry put together nearly 100 runs, but once Campbelle chipped one to long-on, and that's what set the ball rolling. We've got to be better there, not open the door when we're on top of the opposition to not give them opportunities to get back in the game."

Despite ending 2024 on a losing note, Deitz remains focused on the upcoming series in 2025 and goal-bound on achieving World Cup qualification, via the qualifiers.



West Indies women's team allrounder Chinelle Henry



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