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Thursday January 9 2025. Volume 43, Issue #02 www.equalitynews.ca. For advertising, call 416-281-3333



Irfaan Ali signs Carter Condolence Book

In addition to the photograph above, Guyana President Irfaan Ali took to Instagram to share his feelings about late USA President Jimmy Carter, who died in late December at age 100.

The longest living US President in history, Carter (inset) played a pivotal role in restoring democracy in Guyana,

when he personally led a team to ensure free and fair elections in the country in 1990-1992.

Ali signed the Book of Condolences at the US Embassy in Georgetown, and later posted: "Today, I signed a book of condolences at the United States Embassy in Georgetown in honour of the late former President Jimmy Carter. President Carter, who died on December 29 at the age of 100, was a respected statesman, humanitarian and a global champion of democracy."



Stuart Young to replace Rowley in T&T

Stuart Young is the chosen one by a slim "majority" of 11 to nine for Pernelle Beckles.

The Energy Minister and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago emerged as the pick of People's National Movement (PNM) MPs to replace Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley when he demits office before the end of March 2025.

The move is an historic one, as Young has never been the PNM leader and has never led the party into any general election.

On January 3, Rowley announced that he intends to resign as

Prime Minister before the end of the legal limits of this term. A day later, he promised that a Prime Minister would be named.

Young's name was revealed by the Prime Minister himself on Monday, following a two-day PNM parliamentary retreat at a private villa in Tobago Plantations, Lowlands.

Rowley, in response to a question about the vote numbers and whether there was a close race between Young and Beckles, said, "You want to get inside the PNM. At the end of the day, we had a straw poll among the caucus and Minister Young came out with the majority. It doesn't involve a three-quarters majority or a half majority."

Asked if it was a "slim" majority, he replied, "My idea of slim and yours is not the same. How many football matches have been won by one-nil?"

Read more on Stuart Young's historic ascension inside

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“ I CAN WALK BAREFOOT ON THE BEACH AGAIN!

Local acupuncture clinic is treating the untreatable, peripheral neuropathy with incredible results!

Pain comes in many shapes and sizes. One of the most debilitating being the burning and tingling that comes with peripheral neuropathy. A disease that comes with years of shooting, stabbing pain that gradually ends in numbness, balance problems, and on occasion, amputations. A disease that was once classified as irreparable.

Michael R. of East York was facing such a fate.

“I stopped golfing. I wasn’t taking walks on the beach with my wife. I was living on gabapentin and antidepressants and everywhere I went, my doctor, the specialists, the pain institute, told me there was no cure. How are you supposed to live your life knowing that everyday brings pain and suffering?”

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves, commonly caused by a lack of blood flow to the hands and feet. This causes nerves to begin to degenerate due to a lack of nutrient flow. Most peripheral neuropathy sufferers experience heightened sensitivity to touch making it almost impossible for those diagnosed to even wear shoes, much less enjoy life.

“It was like walking on sharp river rocks. I barely left my recliner,” shares Michael, whose experience is not uncommon for those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy.

That is until he found Teresa Lau of TLC Medicine in Riverdale, Toronto. Teresa and her staff have pioneered a cutting edge, medical solution to treat neuropathy, eliminate or greatly reduce its symptoms and give people their lives back. And they’re doing it without the use of prescription medications and invasive surgeries.

“Acupuncture is incredible at restoring blood flow and stimulating damaged nerves, preventing them from dying off,” tells Teresa Lau. “We take our treatments a step further by integrating ATP Resonance Bio Therapy” which targets specific nerves in the body using microcurrent. ATP therapy is like watering a plant. This treatment will stimulate the blood vessels to grow back around the peripheral nerves and provide them with the proper nutrients to heal and repair.”

Three months later Michael is thrilled with his progress, “I can walk barefoot on the beach again!”

Success stories like Michael’s are not atypical for the staff at TLC Medicine. “We have a 90% success rate at treating neuropathy,” shares Teresa.

The number of treatments needed to allow the nerves to fully recover will vary from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. So long as you have not sustained more than 85% nerve damage TLC Medicine offers hope where there once was none.

While Michael’s peripheral neuropathy was idiopathic, meaning the cause is unknown, Teresa’s treatment can also help people whose neuropathy is caused by diabetes or chemotherapy.

“We have seen tremendous success in treating neuropathy of all types through very personalized treatments, specifically tailored to treat each individual case.”

To schedule a consultation and complete evaluation, call (416) 461 - 0581 but do so quickly because TLC Medicine is taking a limited number of new neuropathy patients.

Visit www.TLC-Medicine.ca to learn more and to take advantage of their NEW PATIENT OFFER!



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KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 84

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ONE GUYANA, ONE CELEBRATION

- OLD YEAR'S NIGHT BRINGS COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

The vibrant spirit of unity and national pride lit up the night as Guyanese across the country came together for the One Guyana Old Year's Night Community Celebration. Held in every one of the nation's 10 administrative regions, the event brought families, friends, and communities together to bid farewell to 2024 and welcome 2025 with a sense of shared purpose and optimism. The festivities, organised under the banner of the One Guyana initiative, showcased the diversity, culture, and collective achievements of the nation while promoting inclusivity and community spirit.



PRESIDENT ALI DECLARES 2025 AS GUYANA'S DEFINING YEAR OF PROGRESS



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali making the New Year address

In his New Year's address, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali heralded 2025 as a landmark year for Guyana, unveiling ambitious plans to transform lives and strengthen the nation's global standing. With bold initiatives in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic empowerment, the President vowed to deliver tangible benefits to every citizen while safeguarding democracy and sovereignty. **"This is no ordinary year,"** he declared, promising unprecedented progress and opportunity as Guyana enters one of the most transformative periods in its history.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT IRFAAN ALI'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE:

A Happy New Year to you all! Whether you are here at home or within our expanded diaspora, I extend warm and heartfelt wishes to you and your families for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

The New Year is always favourable to reflect on our shared journey, celebrate our

accomplishments and set our sights on the incredible possibilities that lie ahead. This year, my friends, is no ordinary year. As we step into 2025, we enter what is undoubtedly one of the most exhilarating and transformative periods in our nation's history.

The promise of a better life for every Guyanese is no longer a distant dream; it is becoming an irreversible reality. By the end of this decade, we should be able to enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the hemisphere, banish poverty and reduce inequality.

In just a few weeks, the Minister with responsibility for Finance will lay before our nation a bold and comprehensive agenda packed with measures to fuel economic growth, strengthen social development, uplift our communities and improve personal well-being. These initiatives will reflect our commitment to creating opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for everyone.

TRANSFORMING LIVES, REALISING DREAMS

But before I mention what is ahead, let us take a moment to celebrate the incredible progress we made together since 2020. From then, we have been singularly focused on the rapid transformation to a modern, prosperous Guyana for all – one where national prosperity translates into community, household and individual well-being.

We have been pursuing this objective by creating opportunities for economic and personal upliftment, including education and training, employment and opportunities for excellence in sporting and cultural endeavours.

This is the future we're working toward—a Guyana where every citizen has a fair shot at success and every family has the chance to live their best life. I am proud to say that we are delivering on that promise.

ECONOMIC GROWTH BEYOND OIL

Let's start with our economy. Guyana continues to be the shining star of global economic growth. The

numbers speak for themselves: for the fifth consecutive year, our economy grew at an extraordinary pace, leading the world in economic performance.

But here's the best part: this growth is not confined to oil. Our non-oil sectors have expanded by more than 40% since 2019 and our non-oil exports are steadily climbing. This is the result of deliberate planning and diversification of our economy, ensuring that our growth is broad-based.

Even as we celebrated this growth, we made it our mission to cushion the effects of rising costs of living globally.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: SOCIAL WELFARE INITIATIVES

We subsidised fuel and electricity, increased wages for public servants, teachers, and members of the Disciplined Services and raised pensions for our elderly. Every school-aged child was eligible for the reintroduced 'Because We Care' cash grant to aid their education, and, in an unprecedented move, we began last month rolling out a \$100,000 cash grant to every adult citizen.

This process will continue in the months ahead. And let me signal that this cash grant is not intended to be a one-time payment.

wealth, and as such, we are committed to making future direct cash transfers to our citizens. In 2024, we also allocated sums earned from the sale of carbon credits to our hinterland communities. That's real empowerment.

BUILDING A MODERN GUYANA: INFRASTRUCTURE REVOLUTION

The physical transformation of our country is very much underway and visible for all to see. New bridges, roads, hospitals, schools, factories, warehouses, hotels and restaurants, offices, and homes are there for all to see. The speed with which our physical landscape is being transformed serves as abundant evidence of the pace at which this new Guyana is unfurling before our eyes. These investments are not just about infrastructure—they're about improving the lives of ordinary Guyanese, making sure they have access to the services they need.

2025: EDUCATION FOR ALL

And now, we look ahead to 2025, a year of boundless possibilities. This year, we will deliver universal secondary education—ensuring that every child in Guyana has access to quality secondary schooling. Every teacher will either be trained or will be in training, and the University of Guyana

Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL).

On top of that, we will soon launch a digital school, expand interventions in core subjects like mathematics and find an enhanced pathway to relieving the burden of student loan repayments. Our children are our future, and we are putting in place the building blocks of a world-class education system.

HEALTHCARE FOR EVERY GUYANESE

In healthcare, 2025 will be revolutionary. Six new regional hospitals and two state-of-the-art nursing schools will be completed, paving the way for thousands of nurses and other medical professionals to join our workforce. Telemedicine sites will be rolled out to ensure high-quality medical services, no matter where you live. Our goal is simple: to ensure that every Guyanese, from our hinterland to our coastland, has access to high-quality healthcare.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

By the end of 2025 we will surpass our goal of distributing some 50,000 house lots. The fulfilment of this promise will allow us to move closer to the goal of every Guyanese family owning their own home.

Connectivity and Safety

By the end of 2025,



A vision of unity, prosperity, and global integration.

We are committed to ensuring that our people benefit from the proceeds derived from the exploitation of their natural resource

will become tuition-free from this month. By the end of the year, more than 35,000 persons would have secured scholarships under the

the new Demerara River Bridge will be operational, and the East Bank to East

PRESIDENT ALI DECLARES 2025 AS GUYANA'S DEFINING YEAR OF PROGRESS

CON'T FROM PAGE 4

Coast Bypass Road will be completed within months. This year, we will commence the construction of a new bridge across the Berbice River, and advance works on the Wismar Bridge.

These river bridges will attract no tolls, will improve connectivity and open new economic opportunities for all. Added to this is our ongoing investment in technology for public safety and we are creating a Guyana where you can move about your daily lives with ease and security.

But in addition to this physical transformation, there is a parallel transformation occurring. In 2025, we will continue to work for a safer country and safer communities – where people and their property are safe. This year we will accelerate the rollout of the Smart Country Programme and the deployment of smarter technology and intelligence-driven policing.

In this new year, we will launch a safer roadways initiative that will involve better designed highways and roadways, strengthened enforcement of road-safety laws and the use of technology-based solutions to stem the unacceptable level of road accidents and fatalities.

CLEANER AND GREENER COMMUNITIES

In 2025, we will also work towards cleaner and more appealing physical surroundings,



Major projects like roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals.

nationally. We will do this by improving solid-waste management, including garbage-collection services, increasing the number of waste-disposal dump sites and promoting an improved sense of civic responsibility as well as the construction of attractive play parks and public spaces such as the transformed Kingston Seawall Esplanade, the Lamaha Street Walkway, and the Corriverton Play Park.

For those in receipt or eligible for pensions, social assistance and disability grants, you can expect further increases to these essential supports. Public servants, teachers and members of the Disciplined Services are assured of further salary increases this year.

A programme to digitise our public services will aim at ensuring greater efficiency in the provision of public services. This is why when we say we are building a better Guyana, we mean a Guyana where no one is left behind.

In 2025, Guyana will launch the Global Biodiversity Alliance,

which will continue to place us in the forefront of efforts to protect our environment. We have already made history through the sale of jurisdictional carbon credits, 15% of the proceeds of which are reserved for our Indigenous communities.

EMPOWERING YOUTH AND WOMEN

Our economy is exploding with opportunities for our young people.

This is their moment to shine. From technology and agriculture to tourism, energy, and the creative industries, the doors are wide open for our youth to step forward and make their mark. Whether it's starting your own business, pursuing a trade, or joining one of the many sectors driving our growth, the possibilities are endless to build a secure and prosperous future for themselves and their families.

Our women are making remarkable strides. We couldn't be prouder of the impact

they are having. But we're not stopping here—our aim is to ensure that every woman has the support she needs to leave an even greater imprint on our economy and to have a stronger voice at every decision-

is not only resilient but robust. Your voice matters, and your vote is your strength.

Democracy is our ally, not our foe—it must always be a source of strength, never a weakness. It's the foundation upon which we build a just and inclusive society. We must protect it fiercely. This is why we must stand firm in rejecting any return to the sordid past of electoral rascality. Our future depends on fairness, transparency, and the trust of the people, and together, we will ensure democracy remains our guiding light.

Allow me in this regard to once again express our nation's appreciation for the

controversies, we stand resolute in our trust in the rule of international law and the solidarity of well-meaning friends. Together, we will ensure that our nation's borders are upheld without compromise.

Fellow Guyanese, the journey we are on is nothing short of remarkable. Together, we are building a Guyana where every family can live with dignity, where opportunities for wealth creation are within reach and where we are fully integrated into the global economy.

ONE GUYANA: INCLUSIVE GROWTH FOR ALL

We are building a One Guyana that is both democratic and



Regional hospitals, telemedicine, and nursing schools to improve access and quality.

making table. Whether it's through access to financing, training, or leadership opportunities, we are committed to empowering our women because when our women succeed, our nation succeeds.

ELECTIONS 2025: A TIME FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

But beyond the plans and policies, what excites me most about 2025 is the prospect of democratic renewal – an imperative in any democracy. This is an Election Year—a time when each of you will have the power to shape the future of our democracy.

Elections are not just about choosing leaders; they are about affirming our commitment to a free, fair, and vibrant democratic process. Let us show the world that Guyana's democracy

role played by former United States President Jimmy Carter in helping to broker the reforms that led to free and fair elections in October 1992 after almost a quarter of a century of political dictatorship.

Sadly, President Carter passed away a few days ago. As I said in my message of condolence, President Carter's standing in Guyana's history is etched in gratitude and respect.

DEFENDING SOVEREIGNTY AND INTEGRITY

As we protect our democracy, we must remain ever-vigilant in safeguarding our sovereignty and territorial integrity. Guyana is no one's pawn and certainly no pushover when it comes to defending what is rightfully ours.

While we always seek peaceful resolutions to

inclusive. The One Guyana enterprise is not just about statistics or projects; it's about people. It's about you, your family, and the generations to come.

Therefore, as we march boldly into this new year, let us do so with confidence and optimism. The road ahead will not be without challenges, but I have no doubt that together, we will overcome them. Let us hold fast to our shared vision, our shared hope, and our shared determination to build a brighter, stronger, and more united Guyana.

Happy New Year to you all! May 2025 be a year of health, happiness, and extraordinary progress for you and your loved ones. Together, let us continue to lift Guyana to greater heights.



Progress on house lot distribution and homeownership initiatives.

PUBLIC SERVANTS AND PENSIONERS RECEIVE \$100,000 CASH GRANT NATIONWIDE

Pensioners and public servants across Guyana, including teachers, health workers, and members of the Disciplined Services, have received their \$100,000 cash grant. This grant, part of a government programme involving key institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Guyana, the Auditor General's Office, and the 10 Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs). General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), Dr. Bharrat



Public Servants begin receiving the \$100,000 cash grant

already received their cheques. Out of 366,473 registered beneficiaries, 245,436 cheques have been printed, with about 100,000 distributed thus far.

REGIONAL PROGRESS

Dr. Jagdeo highlighted strong progress in five regions where registration began earlier, including:

Region One: 78% of the 16,035 allocated cheques have been distributed.

achieved.

Region Eight: 70% of the 6,538 cheques distributed.

Region Seven: Distribution has recently commenced.

Hinterland regions were prioritised during the initial phase of the rollout, with the Bank of Guyana providing on-the-spot encashment services to streamline the process.

DISPUTING MISINFORMATION

The initiative has faced opposition claims that deceased individuals were mistakenly included on the distribution list. Dr. Jagdeo vehemently rejected these claims, referring to them as part of a misguided opposition effort to distort public opinion.

He co-signed a Ministry of Finance's statement, which strongly refuted these allegations. Dr. Jagdeo asserted that such claims were part of a deliberate campaign by opposition members to mislead

the public, noting their continued efforts to create confusion and misrepresent facts surrounding the grant distribution.

In response to misinformation, Dr. Jagdeo and the Ministry of Finance reaffirmed the robust safeguards in place to ensure that only eligible beneficiaries receive their grants. The distribution process includes:

Physical Presence: Beneficiaries must appear in person to register and collect their grants.

ID Verification:

institutions.

Real-Time Monitoring: Both on-site and virtual monitoring by internal auditors and the Audit Office of Guyana ensures the integrity of the process.

Additionally, a second registration phase will be held to accommodate those who missed the initial distribution, ensuring that all eligible citizens will receive their grants.

This initiative underscores the government's commitment to improving the lives of



Pensioners countrywide celebrate new year with their government cash grant 2

announced in October 2024, is being distributed nationwide.

This major initiative will see approximately \$30 billion allocated to citizens in the first phase of distribution, marking a significant step towards financial empowerment.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali had assured that pensioners and public servants would receive their grants by the end of the year. He emphasised that the entire distribution process was designed with transparency and accountability in mind,

Jagdeo, reported



Public Servants begin receiving the \$100,000 cash grant

that nearly 90% of public servants have

Region Nine: Over 90% distribution



Public Servants begin receiving the \$100,000 cash grant

Applicants must present valid identification and photographs to confirm eligibility.

On-Site Scrutiny: Distribution officers verify the identities of beneficiaries by comparing their ID with photographs before issuing cheques.

Bank Verification: Cheques are encashed only after thorough checks at financial

Guyanese citizens by providing equitable and transparent financial support. The cash grants are part of a larger effort to foster financial stability and empowerment for the country's public servants and pensioners, with the ultimate goal of contributing to long-term wealth creation for all Guyanese citizens.

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DEMERARA RIVER BRIDGE ON TRACK - SITE CLEARANCE COMPLETED



Construction of the new bridge is moving apace

Construction of the New Demerara River Bridge (NDRB) has advanced significantly, with the East Bank site at Peter's Hall now fully cleared for the continuation of works.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, during a site visit, confirmed that all legal and financial matters related to the removal of properties from the area have been

resolved.

"As of the 19th of December, based upon the orders and instructions from the court, the Ministry of Public Works has paid everyone who needs to be paid. We now have an all-clear for full construction without hindrances," Minister Edghill stated.

The contractor, Wang Zhiliang of China Railway Construction Corporation Limited, expressed optimism about meeting the revised March 31, 2025, deadline, stating, **"It is**

very good news now that we can begin full clearance for the site, which will not bring further disruption to the construction plans."

The US\$260 million project, once completed, will feature a 2.6-kilometer-long, four-lane concrete bridge with a width of 23.6 meters. It is designed to accommodate vehicles of all tonnage, eliminating the need for closures that currently disrupt traffic.

President Ali has also announced that the new bridge will be toll-free,

marking a transformative development for commuters and the nation's infrastructure.

The NDRB is expected to significantly enhance connectivity, reduce travel time,

and improve the movement of goods and services, reflecting the government's commitment to modernising Guyana's infrastructure.



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill visiting the construction site on East Bank end of the New Demerara River Bridge (NDRB) at Peter's Hall

US EXIM BANK APPROVES \$526 MILLION LOAN FOR GAS-TO-ENERGY PROJECT



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

Export-Import (EXIM) Bank has granted final approval for a \$526 million loan to support Guyana's transformative Gas-to-Energy (GtE) Project. President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali received confirmation of the decision on December 26 during a phone call with EXIM Bank President and Chair, Ms. Reta Jo Lewis.

This approval, which followed a 35-day congressional notice period, highlights international confidence in the project's feasibility and its potential to redefine Guyana's

energy landscape. Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), noted that EXIM Bank conducted comprehensive technical and environmental assessments, ensuring the project met stringent global standards.

"This loan went to the United States Congress and would have been blocked if we didn't provide adequate answers," Dr. Jagdeo explained. He emphasised that the project represents a critical step in Guyana's transition to cleaner energy while addressing environmental concerns raised by critics.

Upon completion, the GtE Project will provide 300 megawatts (MW) of power to the national grid, cutting electricity costs for consumers by 50% and reducing annual carbon emissions by 460,000 tons—the equivalent of emissions from

one million barrels of oil. The government anticipates annual savings of approximately \$100 million in fuel costs and \$250 million in electricity expenditures, delivering substantial relief for businesses and households.

A centerpiece of the project is the construction of an integrated gas processing facility at Wales, West Bank Demerara, in Region Three. Natural gas will be transported from the Stabroek Block's Liza oilfield offshore, marking a significant milestone



The Gas-to-Energy project at the Wales site

in the modernisation of Guyana's energy infrastructure.

President Ali expressed deep gratitude

to EXIM Bank, the U.S. Government, and local teams from the Office of the President, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources, and Guyana's Embassy in Washington, D.C., for their collaborative efforts in securing the loan.

Dr. Jagdeo highlighted additional benefits, including an improved balance of payments and enhanced competitiveness for Guyanese businesses. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to funding 75% of the \$2

billion project through national resources and partnerships, including ExxonMobil.

This approval, Dr. Jagdeo asserted, dispels misinformation from critics and reinforces the credibility of the government's development agenda. As Guyana moves forward, the GtE Project is set to revolutionise the energy sector, delivering affordable and sustainable power to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life for all citizens.



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

\$18 BILLION INJECTED INTO ECONOMY AS 9,000 PUBLIC SERVANTS RECEIVE 10% RAISE

A significant economic boost has been delivered to Guyana as 69,000 public servants, including members of the Disciplined Services, received a 10% across-the-board salary increase, injecting an estimated \$18 billion in additional disposable income into the economy.

This follows the successful conclusion of a multi-year agreement between the Government and the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) on employment benefits for public servants from 2024 to 2025.

Furthermore, over 12,000 members of the Disciplined Services received a year-end One-Month Bonus, amounting to an additional \$1.8 billion. This bonus has been a consistent initiative of the People's Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) government since its return to office in 2020.

Earlier this year, teachers also received a 10% salary increase



Approximately 69,000 public servants benefited

following a multi-year agreement between the Government and the Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU), injecting over \$2.5 billion into the economy.

This salary increase for public servants brings the cumulative total of across-the-board increases to a substantial 35% over the past four years.

The agreements with the GPSU and GTU also include provisions for an 8% salary increase in 2025, resulting in a cumulative 46% salary increase over the five-year period from 2021 to 2025.

The GPSU agreement

further addresses critical issues such as "Debunching" of salaries to recognise seniority, the introduction of qualification allowances for employees with further education, increased uniform allowances for eligible health sector workers, and enhanced travel and subsistence allowances. These include:

- Qualification allowances for higher academic achievements: \$15,000 for ACCA, \$22,000 for a Master's Degree, and \$32,000 for a Doctorate.
- A \$5,000 annual increase in uniform

allowances for eligible health sector workers.

- Increases in travel and subsistence allowances.
- A \$35,000 monthly housing allowance for public servants seconded to hinterland locations, effective January 1, 2025.

The Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the well-being of its workforce, evident in the successful agreements reached with various unions.

The Guyana Sugar Corporation (GUYSUCO) and the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU) signed a three-year agreement with significant wage increases for sugar workers.

The University of Guyana also reached a three-year deal with the University of Guyana Senior Staff Association (UGSSA) and the University of Guyana Workers Union (UGWU), providing a 10% increase for 2024, with additional

raises scheduled for the following two years.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, emphasised the government's commitment to improving the livelihoods of all Guyanese, not just through salary increases, but also through initiatives like affordable housing, world-class healthcare, and extensive infrastructural development. He described the agreement with the GPSU as "historic," marking a significant milestone in industrial relations.

The Government's initiatives to enhance the quality of life for public servants have been consistent and impactful since President Ali took office in 2020. These include:

- A 7% increase in 2021, 8% in 2022, and 6.5% in 2023, totalling a 23% salary increase over the past three years.
- Restoration of the

one-month tax-free year-end bonus for disciplined services, placing over \$6 billion in the hands of personnel.

- A significant increase in the income tax threshold, allowing workers to keep more of their earnings, with over \$9 billion added to disposable income.
- A 75.6% increase in the monthly old-age pension and a more than doubling of public assistance payments.
- The restoration and expansion of cash grants for parents of school-aged children, amounting to \$45,000 per child.

In addition, the government has made salary adjustments for health workers and disciplined services personnel to resolve pay disparities, adding \$3 billion to their earnings.

The PPP/C government has made clear that salary increases are just one part of a broader commitment to public welfare.

BUDGET 2025 TO PRIORITISE ELECTIONS FUNDING

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has affirmed that Budget 2025 will allocate the necessary resources for the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) to conduct General and Regional Elections, ensuring the nation's democratic processes remain robust and transparent.

Speaking during a press conference at State House, the President reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to supporting GECOM and safeguarding free and fair elections.

"In an election year, I expect GECOM will require additional resources, and the budget will fully address those needs. I am confident GECOM is already



The next elections slated for 2025

working diligently to ensure all systems are in place for the elections," President Ali stated.

The Head of State underscored that his administration's priorities transcend electoral timelines,

emphasising a governance approach rooted in addressing citizens' aspirations.

"Our focus has always been on serving the people. As long as we remain committed to this, the elections will take

care of themselves," he said.

Confident in Electoral Success

Expressing optimism, President Ali declared that his government is poised to secure a decisive victory in the 2025 elections, highlighting the administration's fulfilment of its manifesto promises.

"Our development strategy remains people-centred. It has never been about elections or power but about delivering on the mandate we were entrusted with. We have fully delivered on every promise made in our manifesto," the President asserted.

Guyana's last General and Regional Elections, held on

March 2, 2020, tested the nation's democratic fortitude during a protracted process. With the next elections slated for 2025, though no specific date has been announced, Budget 2025

country holds dear.

Through these efforts, President Ali reaffirms his administration's steadfast dedication to democracy and development, signalling



Guyana's last General and Regional Elections, held on March 2, 2020

aims to ensure GECOM is equipped to uphold the democratic ideals the government focused on progress for all Guyanese.

JIMMY CARTER AND MANMOHAN SINGH REMEMBERED AS CHAMPIONS OF DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has expressed heartfelt



James Earl Carter Jr. was an American politician and humanitarian who served as the 39th president of the United States from 1977 to 1981

condolences following the passing of two of the world's most respected leaders: former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. Both of these extraordinary statesmen dedicated their lives to advancing democracy, human rights, and economic development on the global stage.

In a heartfelt message, President Ali acknowledged the significant impact that President Carter had on Guyana's democratic journey. **"His legacy is intertwined with the**

story of Guyana's path toward democracy and development," President Ali stated. **"Jimmy Carter's name will forever be linked to the electoral reforms that paved the way for free and fair elections in Guyana, breaking the shackles of nearly a quarter-century of political dictatorship."**

President Carter's contributions extended beyond political reform; he was also a steadfast advocate for development. After the restoration of democracy

in Guyana in 1992, Carter played a vital role in supporting the creation of the National Development Strategy and mobilising resources for reconstruction, helping lay the foundation for Guyana's progress today.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, who served as India's Prime Minister from 2004 to 2014, was equally lauded for his transformative leadership. **"India has lost a great son, and the global community has lost a statesman of exceptional wisdom and dignity,"**

President Ali remarked in his tribute to Singh. He added that Dr. Singh's policies propelled India into a new era of economic growth, and his leadership exemplified a steadfast commitment to democracy, inclusivity, and development.

The government and people of Guyana stand in solidarity with the families of both leaders and the people of the United States and India, who have lost two of their most distinguished figures. As the world reflects on their legacies, Guyana remains deeply grateful

for their contributions to the global pursuit of democracy, development, and peace.



India's former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, inspected progress on the Ogle to Eccles Road Project, reporting that 92% of the overall work has been completed. The two-year initiative, which began in June 2022, is set to be finished by January 24, 2025.

Thus far, 3.7 kilometers of asphalt paving—accounting for 20% of the total paving work—has been completed. The remaining 80% of the paving is on track for completion within the project timeline.

Ramachandra Rao, the contractor representing Ashoka

OGLLE TO ECCLES ROAD PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION- 92% OF WORK FINISHED



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill conducting an inspection of the works being done on the Ogle to Eccles Road Project

Buildcon Limited, assured that the company is fully prepared to finish the project promptly.

"We have mobilised all the necessary materials to complete the remaining work

in the shortest time possible," Rao stated.

Final works include the removal of utility lines obstructing the project's path, a critical step toward ensuring timely completion.

During his visit, Minister Edghill also assessed progress on the East Coast Road Widening Project at Cummings Lodge. These projects form part of the government's broader agenda to improve infrastructure and ease traffic congestion in key

areas.

The Ogle to Eccles Road Project is expected to significantly enhance connectivity and reduce

travel time, supporting economic growth and improving the quality of life for citizens.



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill conducting an inspection of the works being done on the Ogle to Eccles Road Project

PRESIDENT ALI WARNS GPL OVER POOR POWER SUPPLY - NEW POWER SHIP GOES ONLINE

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has delivered a stern warning to the management of Guyana Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, who visited the newly activated



At approximately 1545 hrs on Monday, December 23, 2024, 60 Megawatts (MWs) of Generation was been added to the grid.

Power and Light (GPL), demanding significant improvements in the reliability of the nation's power supply by January 2025.

With heightened frustration over persistent power issues, President Ali warned that "heads will roll" if substantial progress is not made, underscoring the government's commitment to ensuring uninterrupted electricity for households and businesses across Guyana.

The ultimatum coincides with the activation of a new power ship at the Guyana Sugar Corporation's (GuySuCo) terminal in Ruimveldt. Managed by Karpowership and UCC, the vessel features four generators with a combined capacity of 60 megawatts (MW), adding a crucial boost to GPL's generation capabilities.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, who visited the newly activated

power ship, reassured the public that the increased capacity would address ongoing power outages. He emphasised that any disruptions moving forward would be rare and typically



Prime Minister of Guyana, Brigadier R'td, Mark Phillips on a site visit to GPLs New Georgetown Substation and the Power Ship

related to unforeseen circumstances, such as accidents affecting power lines.

The power ship's installation has been a significant logistical achievement, involving the construction of new

mooring facilities, a temporary access road, and 3.9 kilometers of high-voltage transmission lines. This work, carried out by India's Kalpataru Projects International, has successfully integrated the power ship into the national grid, bolstering the Demerara-Berbice Interconnected System.

The new power ship joins another vessel activated in May 2024, stationed in Everton, Region Six, which brought an additional 36 MW capacity online. Together, these two ships now provide the grid with a combined reserve power, increasing total installed capacity to 267

MW, while peak demand hovers at approximately 200 MW.

While these short-term solutions have strengthened the power grid, the government is focused on a long-term strategy for Guyana's

energy future. Central to this vision is the ambitious gas-to-energy project in Wales, Region Three, scheduled for completion in 2025. This multi-billion-dollar initiative will not only provide consistent power but also lower electricity costs by 50% and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo highlighted that although occasional blackouts may still occur due to transmission faults, the substantial increase in capacity ensures that power shortages will no longer be a source of outages. The government's strategic investments are designed to meet current demand and address the energy needs of a rapidly growing economy.

Despite the positive strides in power generation, President Ali made it clear that the government will not tolerate any more excuses from GPL. "We're investing heavily in modernising the transmission and distribution network," President Ali emphasised, adding that any lack of improvement by January 2025 would result in significant changes to GPL's management.

Dr. Jagdeo also voiced the government's expectations, stressing



Prime Minister of Guyana, Brigadier R'td, Mark Phillips on a site visit to GPLs New Georgetown Substation and the Power Ship

that the newly secured power supply should translate into more reliable service. He referred to the current infrastructure upgrades as a bridge to the transformative gas-to-energy project, which is poised to revolutionise the nation's energy sector.

transformative projects on the horizon, the government is laying the foundation for a modern, reliable, and affordable energy grid. This effort is critical for supporting Guyana's growing economy, ensuring that the nation's future energy needs are met sustainably while



Prime Minister, Brigadier R'td, Mark Phillips on a site visit to GPLs New Georgetown Substation and the Power Ship

With new power ships, substantial reserve capacity, and

improving the lives of all its people.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, SC, announced that the final draft of Guyana's landmark oil spill legislation is nearing completion.

During a year-end press conference, Minister Nandlall stated, "The work is significantly completed. There is one part of the bill that I would like to relook at. And I plan to do it before the end of the year."

This crucial legislation will establish clear guidelines for responding to oil spills, outlining the responsibilities of both oil companies operating in Guyana and shipping companies.

It aims to strengthen the government's capacity to ensure full liability coverage for any potential incidents and guide its preparation, planning, and response efforts.

Minister Nandlall emphasised the multi-stakeholder nature of the bill, highlighting the involvement of key agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Civil Defence Commission.

The government has recognised the need

for comprehensive and robust legislation to address the potential risks associated with oil exploration and production. While existing measures are in place, this new legislation aims to provide a more robust framework for preventing and responding to oil spills.

In addition to the oil spill legislation, the government is also finalising amendments to the Integrity Commission Act. These amendments will enhance the declaration of assets process by establishing

formal guidelines for electronic declarations, implementing advanced cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data, strengthening the reporting mechanism, exploring stricter penalties for non-compliance, and enhancing Transparency and Accountability.

The Integrity Commission Act, enacted in 1997, aims to deter corruption and promote transparency and accountability in public life. The amendments will further strengthen the Commission's ability to fulfill its mandate.



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

These legislative initiatives demonstrate the government's commitment to responsible resource

management and upholding high standards of transparency and accountability in all sectors.

\$205 MILLION MAGISTRATE'S COURT COMMISSIONED IN MAHAICONY

poor condition. **"This new facility signifies a remarkable transformation in our legal**



The Mahaicony Magistrate's Court

A state-of-the-art magistrate's court was officially commissioned in Mahaicony, marking a significant milestone in enhancing access to justice for residents of Region Five.

The modern facility, built at a cost of \$205M replaces the previous courthouse, which operated within the Guyana Police Force's building, providing the

community with its first dedicated judicial center. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, joined members of the judiciary to celebrate the commissioning.

The AG emphasised the government's commitment to making justice accessible to all Guyanese, highlighting this as a fundamental right. **"New courts**

in every corner of the country will play a crucial role in ensuring that the rights of every citizen are enforced and upheld," he stated.

He pointed to several other ongoing court construction projects, including those in Soesdyke, Parfaite Harmonie, and Tuschen, as further evidence of the government's dedication

to improving access to legal services.

In 2024 alone, the government has commissioned the Wales Children's Court, a new magistrate's court in Port Kaituma, and an additional courtroom at the Diamond/Golden Grove Magistrates' Courts.

"These modern court edifices, equipped with the latest amenities, can stand proudly among the best in the Caribbean," the AG asserted.

The AG recalled his own experiences at the



The commissioning of the Mahaicony Magistrate's Court

previous Mahaicony Magistrate's Court, where rain often disrupted proceedings due to the building's

infrastructure," he emphasised, highlighting the government's investments in improving the lives of Guyanese citizens.

Chancellor of the Judiciary (ag), Justice Yonette Cummings-Edwards, and Chief Justice (ag) Justice Roxanne George also addressed the gathering, emphasising that the new court marks the dawn of a new era for the legal system in Region Five.



The commissioning of the Mahaicony Magistrate's Court

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT SHINES BRIGHT AT PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE



Scene from the annual children Christmas social at State House

President Irfaan Ali and First Lady Arya Ali hosted a joyous Christmas social for scores of children from orphanages across Region Four at their official residence on Main Street, Georgetown.

The event, filled with festive cheer, featuring lively carols, captivating

dance performances, heartwarming poems, and a much-anticipated toy distribution.

President Ali extended warm Christmas greetings from his family, including the First Lady, their sons, and members of the cabinet. He expressed his heartfelt wishes for a joyful and prosperous

year ahead for all in attendance, including the dedicated caregivers.

Highlighting the significance of this annual tradition, President Ali emphasised the government's unwavering commitment to spreading holiday cheer. **"This is an event we hold dear,**

one." Encouraging acts of love and kindness beyond material gifts, President Ali urged the children to embrace the true spirit of the season. **"Let us recognise the importance of love, the simple act of sharing a smile, extending kindness,**



Scene from the annual children Christmas social at State House



Scene from the annual children Christmas social at State House

a priority on our calendar," he shared. **"We find the greatest joy in sharing this occasion with you, and I want you to know that this is your home too. We are all together, united as**

and caring for one another," he emphasised.

The event concluded with the children receiving a delightful array of toys, adding to the festive cheer.



Scene from the annual children Christmas social at State House



Scene from the annual children Christmas social at State House

CHRISTMAS EVE VISITS: PRESIDENT ALI BRINGS CHEER TO GEORGETOWN'S STREETS AND VILLAGES

On Christmas Eve, President Dr. Irfaan Ali made visits to Regions Three and Four, spreading holiday cheer and bringing festive joy to communities.

The President began his tour at the **Mon Repos Market**, where he engaged with vendors and shoppers. Children's faces lit up as President Ali distributed toys, spreading happiness and adding a special touch to their holiday celebrations.

The festivities

continued on **Regent Street**, one of Georgetown's busiest commercial areas. There, the President interacted with business owners and passers-by, sharing good wishes and offering encouragement. Families gathered to take photos with him, and his presence created a sense of unity and goodwill in the heart of the city.

The final stop of the day was in **Vreed-en-Hoop**, where President Ali continued to connect with residents. He

ensured that children received gifts to make their Christmas extra special, further enhancing the festive spirit in the community.



TWO FAMILIES GIFTED NEW HOMES ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas joy took on a profound meaning for two Region Four families as they received the ultimate gift: the keys to new homes through President Ali's transformative Men

East Coast Demerara, now look forward to brighter futures in homes that symbolise hope, resilience, and opportunity.

For Blades, a single mother who has endured

"This is such a blessing. I would like to thank the president for making my dream come true this Christmas morning. Paying the rent is not easy. I can now say that I've acquired my own home through you. Thank you," she said, her voice filled with emotion.

At 74, Ramraj has spent years living in a deteriorating house with a leaking roof, relying on the support of her local church to weather life's hardships. The new home marks a fresh start for her and her two children.

"I thank the president for his good work," she expressed, overwhelmed with gratitude for what she called a "blessing."

Speaking at the handover ceremonies,

President Ali underscored the life-changing impact of homeownership, not only as shelter but as an asset that empowers families.

"Today, you can go to the bank with this structure, and the bank would at least give you \$7 million. That is the value that we have created in your life," he stated, highlighting the financial security and opportunities these homes represent.

The president commended MoM for its wide-reaching impact in transforming lives and fostering inclusivity.

"We have built more than 60 houses, completed hundreds of home improvement projects, and implemented

In addition to handing over the homes, President Ali and his team delivered gifts to children in the community,



Delise Blades of Cummings Lodge New Scheme receiving the key to her new home

on Mission (MoM) initiative.

The recipients, 43-year-old Delise Blades of Cummings Lodge New Scheme and 74-year-old Kirtimatie Ramraj of Good Hope,

countless challenges, the new home is a turning point. Battling health issues while juggling odd jobs to support her family, Blades described the moment as a dream come true.



Kirtimatie Ramraj receiving the key to her new home

counselling and health programmes. The Men on Mission initiative has touched the lives of thousands of Guyanese across this country," he said.

Beyond building homes, MoM addresses critical social needs, bridging gaps for vulnerable populations and fostering a sense of community.

spreading Christmas cheer and reinforcing the government's commitment to improving lives across all sectors.

For Blades and Ramraj, the holiday season will forever be etched in their memories as the moment their lives were transformed.

SEASON OF LOVE: STATE HOUSE WELCOMES CHRISTMAS WITH UNITY AND CHEER

On Christmas Eve, President Dr. Irfaan Ali and First Lady Arya Ali hosted a spectacular Christmas concert at State House, bringing joy and unity to the heart of Georgetown. Against a dazzling lightscape on Main Street, the event celebrated the season's spirit with music, dance, and heartfelt messages.

Blackman, Diana Chapman, and Soca Monarch Young Bill Rogers. The vibrant show also showcased cultural harmony through acts by the National Dance Company, Berbice Delights Dancers, and more, leaving the audience, including ministers of the Cabinet, in awe.

President Ali, in a warm holiday greeting, emphasized the power of love to foster unity and build a compassionate society.

The festivities extended beyond the concert, with the One Guyana Supermarket and Annual Christmas Village lining Main Street, creating a magical experience for all who attended.

The evening featured stellar performances from top local talent, including Charmaine



Over 7,000 G/town residents have improved access to primary healthcare

Approximately 7,651 residents from the East Ruimveldt to Lamaha Park stretch and beyond now have better access to primary healthcare with the re-opening of the \$18 million North East La Penitence Health Centre.

On Monday, the Ministry of Health marked the occasion with a simple ceremony.

The re-opening marks a crucial step in expanding access to primary healthcare within the capital city.

Residents will benefit from several critical services, including the expanded vaccination campaign for 19 preventable diseases such as the Human papillomavirus (HPV).

Other services include school health screenings with corrective care, HbA1c testing and infectious disease monitoring.

The health centre will be expanded to include a dental suite in the coming months.

The health centre will advance the government's collaboration with the Pan American Health Organisation's package that offers 115 different types of interventions at healthcare services facilities nationwide.

The Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, said that he is pleased at the expansive services that will benefit the



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony

Georgetown area.

With regards to the HEARTS Initiative which supports the prevention and early detection of cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, the minister said:

"We want to make sure that people can access the new types of medication we are using for this. We will make this health centre one where the HEARTS initiative is done, so all the effective medication will be offered to their pa-

tients here."

Primary healthcare emphasises community-based care, providing continuous, individualised and first-contact health services. This model aims to reduce health disparities by ensuring equitable, affordable, and inclusive universal health coverage.

To further enhance the standard of medical services in Georgetown, several other facilities will undergo upgrades and renovations this year.

Construction on a new health centre for residents of Campbellville and surrounding areas is set to begin in February. The estimated cost is \$831 million.

That new structure will be equipped with an asthma bay to reduce the patient load at the Georgetown Public Hospital (GPHC). It will also provide several medical services such as digital X-rays, ultrasounds, and electrocardiograms (ECG).

Director-General of the Ministry of Health, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Narine Singh, Hinterland Health Coordinator, Micheal Gouveia, District Medical Officer, Dr Judy Bentley-Browne, and PPP/C Georgetown Councillor, Alfonso De Armas, were also in attendance for the opening ceremony.



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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

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



To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit www.wgc-org.com

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
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WELCOMING 2025: PR WITH POLIC



President Dr. Irfaan Ali and First Lady Mrs. Arya Ali played an active role in Guyana's Old Year's Night celebrations, ushering in 2025 with optimism and unity.

The evening began with a visit to the Guyana Police Force's Police Officers Mess, where the President and First Lady joined law enforcement officers in their celebration. President Ali expressed his gratitude for the officers' dedication and extended his best wishes for the year ahead.

The couple then enjoyed a spectacular fireworks display hosted by the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), with vibrant collars lighting up the sky—a symbol of the nation's bright future.



The night culminated at the Officer's Annual Old Year's Night Ball at Base Camp Ayanganna, where the First Couple joined GDF officers, distinguished guests, and officials to reflect on the past year's achievements and embrace the opportunities of 2025.



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1 99 each



Redpath Golden Yellow or Dark Brown Sugar 1 kg

2/ \$5



Governor's Choice Hot pepper Sauce 88 ml

99¢ each



Benjamin's Vanilla Flavoring 480 ml

3 49 each



Titus Sardine In Soya Oil Assorted 125 g

2/ \$3



Jamaican Pride Butter Bean 398 ml

99¢ each



Trinidadian Pride Macaroni 400 g

2/ \$3



Creation Food Veggie Chunks assorted 200 g

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Strongmor Garbage Bag 30's

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69¢ each



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Laurentide Windshield Washer -45 3,78 lt

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<p>Grown From Australia Free Range Goat Meat</p>  <p>\$4.99 lb Frozen</p>	<p>Burned Cow Feet</p>  <p>\$2.99 lb</p>	<p>Frozen Centre Cut Beef Shank</p>  <p>\$3.99 lb</p>	<p>Fresh or Frozen Sub Oxtail</p>  <p>\$2.99 lb</p>	<p>Salted Beef Short Ribs</p>  <p>\$5.99 lb</p>
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<p>Large Salted Fish</p>  <p>\$4.99 lb</p>	<p>Frozen Fu Yang 31/40 Headless White Shrimps 500 g</p>  <p>9.99 Each</p>	<p>Jamaica's Choice Double Smoked Turkey</p>  <p>\$5.99 lb</p>	<p>Fresh Large Chicken Feet</p>  <p>\$1.99 lb</p>	<p>Frozen Chicken Wings</p>  <p>22.99 5 kg box</p>
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Fresh Seafood Catches

<p>Fresh Lane Snapper</p>  <p>\$4.99 lb as is</p>	<p>Fresh Florida Red Snappers</p>  <p>\$6.99 lb as is</p>	<p>Fresh Doctor Fish</p>  <p>\$7.99 lb as is</p>	<p>Fresh Golden Groupers</p>  <p>\$6.99 lb as is</p>	<p>Frozen King Fish Steaks</p>  <p>\$6.99 lb</p>
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<p>Fresh Organic Ginger</p>  <p>2.99 lb</p>	<p>Green or Ripe Plantain</p>  <p>1.79 lb</p>	<p>Fresh Cassava</p>  <p>.99 lb</p>	<p>Frozen Good Taste Mixed Vegetable 750 g</p>  <p>1.99 each</p>
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Sunday 9 am to 7 pm

PRESIDENT ALI STRESSES UNITY AND EQUALITY FOR GUYANA'S FUTURE AT CHRISTMAS SERVICE



Christmas Day Service at the Lifespring Ministry in Chateau Margot on the East Coast of Demerara

At the Christmas Service at Life Spring Ministries Church on the East Coast of Demerara, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali reaffirmed the government's commitment to building a united and equitable Guyana, where prosperity and equality are accessible to all.

Addressing the congregation, President Ali emphasised that the government's focus is on the nation's most vulnerable populations, ensuring that no one is left behind as the country progresses toward a brighter, more inclusive future.



Christmas Day Service at the Lifespring Ministry in Chateau Margot on the East Coast of Demerara

Reflecting on the true spirit of Christmas, President Ali reminded attendees that love, often associated with the holiday season, should be a constant guiding force in the daily lives

of every Guyanese. "Love should not be seasonal," he said. "It must be ingrained in our hearts and reflected in our actions as a people."

The president elaborated on his vision for the country's future, stating that the government's efforts aim to unite the people and address the needs

He also stressed the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving these goals. "Building a prosperous Guyana requires all of us to come together, to show patience, kindness, and a collective sense of responsibility," the president stated.

Citing key government initiatives, including the \$100,000 one-off cash grant and an aggressive housing programme, President Ali reinforced that tangible support is being provided to improve the lives of citizens, particularly those in vulnerable communities. "When you patiently await the love, you will receive it," he remarked.

The president's message underscored his administration's ongoing work to promote unity, equality, and a brighter future for every Guyanese family.



Christmas Day Service at the Lifespring Ministry in Chateau Margot on the East Coast of Demerara



Christmas Day Service at the Lifespring Ministry in Chateau Margot on the East Coast of Demerara



Christmas Day Service at the Lifespring Ministry in Chateau Margot on the East Coast of Demerara

PRESIDENT ALI VOWS CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR DHARM SHALA - GRANTS \$1 MILLION CONTRIBUTION



President Ali with residents of the Dharm Shala (Home of Benevolence for all races) in Albouystown.

On Christmas Day, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali reaffirmed the government's commitment to the Dharm Shala, announcing a \$1 million contribution to support the institution's operations.

President Ali visited the Dharm Shala, a home for the elderly that provides care to people of all backgrounds, to partake in the Christmas festivities. He commended the dedication of Managing Head Kella Ramsaroop and Vice President

Pamela Ramsaroop, along with the staff, for their tireless work in supporting the elderly.

"We're going to continue to support this institution," President Ali stated. "I will try to see how I can make two other interventions during the course of the year that will support the institution."

Recognising the unique challenges faced by the elderly, particularly in terms of family and community support, President Ali emphasised

the importance of providing adequate care. He stressed that the residents of the Dharm Shala are valued members of society and deserve respect and support.

In addition to the financial contribution, President Ali distributed toys to children in the community, spreading holiday cheer.

Vice President of the Dharm Shala, Pamela Ramsaroop, expressed gratitude for the continued support. Despite the challenges of maintaining an over 100-year-old institution, the Dharm Shala

remains dedicated to its mission of providing free services to those in need. With 11 locations across the country, the institution offers essential services such as meals, accommodation, and social and religious support to its residents.

Founded in 1921 by Pandit Ramsaroop Maharaj, the Dharm Shala embodies a commitment to humanitarian service. Today, it continues to serve the community under the leadership of his granddaughters, Pamela and Kella Ramsaroop.



President Ali with residents of the Dharm Shala (Home of Benevolence for all races) in Albouystown.



President Ali with residents of the Dharm Shala (Home of Benevolence for all races) in Albouystown.



President Ali with residents of the Dharm Shala (Home of Benevolence for all races) in Albouystown.



President Ali with residents of the Dharm Shala (Home of Benevolence for all races) in Albouystown.

Rowley to resign as T&T PM, Stuart Young named as successor

THREE days after revealing his intention to step down as T&T Prime Minister, Dr Keith Rowley announced on January 6 that Minister of Energy and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Stuart Young will replace him as head of the government.

Speaking to reporters during a news conference at the close of the government's two-day parliamentary retreat at the Tobago Plantations, Magdalena Grand Beach & Golf Resort, Lowlands, Tobago, Rowley said deciding on his replacement as prime minister, and the way forward for the People's National Movement (PNM), were some of the main items on the agenda over the past two days.

He said Young, who has served in various capacities as a government minister over the past ten years, received the majority of support from the party's parliamentary caucus.

"Once a vacancy arises with respect to the appointment of a prime minister, it falls to the President to respond to that by making an appointment on the person, who, in the President's view, commands the majority in the House," Rowley said, adding the provisions are contained in Section 76 of the Constitution.

"So we, as a caucus, as a PNM in the house (of Representatives), we discussed at length and in the end, we came up with a situation where the entire PNM caucus is in support of Member of Parliament Stuart Young, MP for Port of Spain North/St Ann's West. And we are very pleased to announce that the promise of a smooth transition is going according to plan."

Rowley said the PNM was a very stable and democratic organisation.

"In this case, the President would be guided by the expectation of the caucus and there would be no discrepancy between what the President thinks as against what others may think as to who has the majority of support in the House."

Responding to his appointment in a post of his Facebook page, Young, who turns 50 on February 9, thanked his parliamentary colleagues for the confidence expressed in him.

He also thanked Rowley for his "continued and exemplary leadership in guiding through this historic process."

Young said he was proud to be a member of the PNM and looks forward to working tirelessly "not only with all of our members but also with all citizens...as we continue working towards the building of our country and ensuring its future success."

During the news conference, Rowley said apart from Young, Minister of Planning and Development and Arima MP Pennelope Beckles-Robinson had also thrown her hat into the ring, but did

not get the majority support.

There was speculation that PNM general secretary and Minister of Youth Development and National Service Foster Cummings might also have been in the running.

Rowley declined to say how many parliamentarians voted for Young but expressed confidence in his ability to lead the government. "Minister Young has been in the government for about ten years, operating first out of the Office of the Prime Minister, where he would have seen the government close up and would have participated in the government. I have seen him at work on many very detailed and technical assignments and he has not only done the job, but has distinguished himself."



Stuart Young will be the first PNM leader who isn't of African descent

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OVER 600 JOBS TO BE CREATED THROUGH ROAD, D&I CONTRACTS IN REGIONS FIVE AND TWO

The government has awarded contracts worth over \$1.6 billion to empower small contractors and boost infrastructure across Regions Five and Two. These initiatives are expected to create over 600 jobs, improve local infrastructure, and provide transformative opportunities for small businesses, including women-led enterprises.

In Region Five, 108 small contractors signed contracts valued more than \$1.5 billion to execute road construction and upgrades. Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, who oversaw the signing, highlighted the initiative's impact



Staff from Ministry of Public Works facilitating the signing of contracts in Region Five

on accelerating development and creating jobs for hundreds of construction workers.

"This initiative goes beyond road construction; it uplifts communities and improves lives. These contracts will touch the ordinary man in the street, creating meaningful

change," Minister Edghill remarked.

He urged contractors to approach the opportunity with diligence, underscoring the long-term value of their contributions: **"Thirty years from now, your grandchildren will walk on those roads and know you made a difference."**

To support infrastructure in project completion, the government is providing a 10% mobilisation advance without requiring a bond, with expedited payments. Additionally, contractors with a bond qualify for a 30% advance, ensuring swift project initiation.

Simultaneously, 63 small contractors in **Region Two** signed contracts worth \$104 million to improve drainage and irrigation systems. Among these contractors, 21 are women, reflecting the government's commitment to gender inclusivity in the construction sector.

Minister Edghill emphasised the importance of drainage

in protecting roads and communities from water damage. **"The enemy of a road is water. We are focusing on drainage as a key aspect of urban development,"** he noted.

These initiatives are more than infrastructural projects; they represent a platform

for small contractors to showcase their skills and contribute meaningfully to their communities.



Contract signing for drainage and irrigation work in Region Two

Contractors in Region Two will receive 50% of their payment upon signing, with

for small contractors to showcase their skills and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

ESSEQUIBO COAST MAIN ROAD SET FOR MAJOR OVERHAUL



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill at the contract signing ceremony in Region Two

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, has announced a complete rehabilitation

of the main access road along the Essequibo Coast, Region Two. The project aims to address the road's deteriorating condition and accommodate increasing traffic volumes.

During a contract signing ceremony in Region Two, Minister Edghill outlined the project's urgency and revealed plans for a construction approach that minimises disruptions.

"We are planning

to reconstruct the entire Essequibo Coast road," Minister Edghill stated. **"The plan involves milling the existing asphalt, blending it with fresh asphalt, and immediately relaying the surface."**

The project also includes the repair of three bridges along the coast. A senior engineer has already conducted assessments, and the tendering process is currently underway.

"We are in the final stages of tender selection and expect to award contracts by

the end of the year," he said.

Minister Edghill acknowledged that



Road in Region Two

while most roads in populated areas have been addressed, several significant projects remain.

"We prioritised roads in areas where residents live, attend school, visit clinics, and access community centres," the Minister explained. **"We will address the remaining roads early next year."**

Region Two is the only region awaiting the final round of road project awards. The Minister assured small contractors that they will have opportunities to participate in these projects.

\$3.1 BILLION INVESTED IN ROAD UPGRADES ACROSS DEMERARA COUNTY

The Ministry of Public Works' Special Projects Unit (SPU) has successfully completed the upgrade of 373 roads across Georgetown, East Bank Demerara (EBD), East Coast Demerara (ECD), and West Bank Demerara (WBD), at a cost of \$3.1 billion.

This extensive infrastructure project, covering over 120 kilometers of roads, marks the largest undertaking by the SPU to date.

KEY INVESTMENTS:

- East Bank Demerara: \$1.39 billion was invested to upgrade 47.4 kilometres of roads in communities such as Eccles, Farm, Mc Doom, Timehri, Golden Grove, and Diamond.



Completed road work

- East Coast Demerara: \$200.8 million was invested to improve 6.47 kilometres of roads in Annandale, Logwood, Enmore, Plaisance, Atlantic Ville, and Liliendaal.

- Georgetown: \$1.15 billion was invested to upgrade 50.1 kilometres of roads across 20 communities, including Alexander Village, East Ruimveldt,

Alboustown, Kitty Lodge, and Campbellville.

- West Bank Demerara: \$353.9 million is being invested to rehabilitate 15 roads spanning 16.3 kilometres in La Parfaite Harmonie and Schoonord.

These road upgrades are expected to significantly improve accessibility and enhance the quality of life for residents across the Demerara County. They are also anticipated to stimulate economic growth and development in these areas.

The Ministry of

Public Works has hailed this project as a significant milestone in road development, demonstrating

the government's commitment to enhancing infrastructure nationwide.



The Ministry of Public Works' Special Projects Unit

SUGAR SECTOR OVERHAUL LOOMS AS GUYSUCO FACES ACCOUNTABILITY DEADLINE

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has delivered a strong message to the management of the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo): meet 2025 production targets or face a leadership shakeup.

Speaking during the live broadcast of In the Seat, the President underscored his government's commitment to accountability and reviving the ailing sugar industry, which remains a cornerstone of Guyana's economy.

Acknowledging the significant challenges stemming from years of mismanagement under the previous administration, President Ali emphasised that underperformance will no longer be tolerated.

"We sat down with them [GuySuCo management] and supported their investment plan to restore factory efficiency. I made



The sugar industry is a important pillar of Guyana's economy

it very clear—if the targets for the 2025 first and second crops are not met, heads will roll," the President warned.

The government has allocated billions to modernise the sector, including mechanising production and upgrading facilities. For 2024 alone, \$6 billion was earmarked in the national budget to enhance operational efficiency and improve production. Packaging

plants are being built at Albion and Blairmont Estates to shift toward value-added products.

Despite these efforts, the industry faces hurdles tied to the closure of four sugar estates in 2017 by the previous coalition government, a move that devastated communities and displaced 7,000 workers. The Rose Hall Estate alone lost 2,500 jobs, while closures also affected Blairmont and Albion.

President Ali

reiterated that the government's investment in the sector is not merely about economics, but about safeguarding families and communities. **"Revitalising sugar is not just a financial project; it's an economic lifeline for thousands of Guyanese,"** he asserted.

To ensure success, the government plans

to bring in technical expertise to address inefficiencies. President Ali emphasised that the administration will support efforts to increase productivity, but there is zero tolerance for continued underperformance.

The ultimatum marks a turning point in the government's strategy to restore GuySuCo's viability. While the administration remains

committed to reviving sugar as a vital economic pillar, the President made it clear: failure to deliver results will have serious consequences for management.

This decisive approach signals that the government is unwilling to allow past mismanagement to undermine its efforts to rebuild a stronger, more resilient sugar industry for Guyana.



The sugar industry is a important pillar of Guyana's economy

REGION TWO GETS \$528 MILLION DRAINAGE UPGRADE



The commissioning of the pump

Agricultural production in Region Two will be significantly boosted with the commissioning of a new \$528 million pump station in Andrews. The facility, equipped with two powerful solar-powered pumps, will greatly improve drainage and irrigation for farmers.

This brings the total number of pump stations in Region Two to 26, enhancing water management capabilities for the area where agriculture is the primary livelihood for over 90%

of the population. The new station regulates water flow from the river into the village, allowing farmers to better manage water levels for their crops.

The pumps, each capable of discharging 100 kilofeet of water per second, can effectively drain the land and prevent waterlogging, leading to increased crop yields.

The improved drainage infrastructure will help farmers better withstand the impacts of climate change, such as increased rainfall and

flooding.

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha underscored the government's commitment to transforming Guyana into an agricultural hub for the Caribbean. He highlighted the importance of infrastructure development, such as the new pump station, in achieving this goal. He stated, **"Region**

Two is an important area for us where 90 per cent of the population depends on agriculture. This new pump will bring tremendous benefit to them."

Regional Chairperson Vilma DaSilva echoed the sentiment, stating that the pump station will provide much-needed relief to residents, especially during the

rainy season. **"We often have a built-**



The commissioning of the pump

up of water in this region when rain falls, however, with a caring government and a sector like the Ministry of Agriculture, we can proudly say that we are catered for and farmers are now in a better position," she noted.

Lionel Wordsworth, Chairman of the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA), noted that the project was undertaken following a survey that revealed

the need for enhanced drainage infrastructure to support the growing agricultural sector in the region. He explained, **"With the expansion of agriculture in this catchment area it was discovered that**

close to 10,000 acres are being cultivated for agricultural purposes. We would have evaluated that and the analysis results would have shown that we need additional capacity to drain this area more effectively."

The project was undertaken by H. Nauth and Sons Construction Company. Work started in September 2021 and concluded in August 2024.



The commissioning of the pump

GOV'T CLEARS \$437M IN OUTSTANDING PETROCARIBE RICE PAYMENTS

The government disbursed approximately \$437 million to 22 farmers and three millers from Region Two. These payments represent outstanding sums from

a 2015 PetroCaribe rice deal with Venezuela, which remained unresolved under the previous administration. During the payout ceremony, Agriculture

Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, expressed the government's unwavering commitment to ensuring fairness and equity in the agriculture sector. Minister Mustapha criticised the former APNU/AFC government for neglecting the plight of farmers and millers, noting their failure to secure the owed payments after rice shipments were delivered to Venezuela under the PetroCaribe agreement.

The PetroCaribe deal, a bilateral agreement between Guyana and Venezuela, allowed for



\$437M paid to Region Two farmers and millers for PetroCaribe Rice Deal Debts

the export of Guyanese rice in exchange for oil. However, in 2015, after rice shipments were sent to Venezuela, the farmers and millers involved were left without their payments. This lapse left many in

financial hardship, as they had incurred debts to produce the rice.

Upon assuming office, the PPP/C government made it a priority to rectify the situation, honouring its promise to farmers

and millers. Minister Mustapha emphasised that the payments are not just financial restitution but a demonstration of the government's commitment to agriculture and the welfare of its people.

This payout follows a similar resolution earlier this year when the government, through the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) and the Ministry of Legal Affairs, settled an issue involving rice exported to Panama in 2018. Payments for that deal, which were also delayed under the previous administration, were finally transferred to the GRDB accounts and distributed to the respective millers and farmers.



\$437M paid to Region Two farmers and millers for PetroCaribe Rice Deal Debts

MINISTER EDGHILL ORDERS CONTRACTORS TO ACCELERATE CJIA CONSTRUCTION

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, has delivered a firm ultimatum to contractors involved in the construction of the new administrative building at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA): make significant progress by early 2025 or face termination.

During a meeting with contractors overseeing several airport projects, Minister Edghill demanded a detailed work plan with strict timelines for every aspect of the administrative building's completion.

"This building must be operational by June 30, 2025," the minister declared. **"If we see signs by**



Ongoing works at the CJIA

late January or early February that this deadline will not be met, the contractor will be removed, and a replacement will be brought in to finish the job."

The \$890 million project, being executed by Avinash Contracting & Scrap Metal Inc., is currently only 40%

complete, despite the 16-month contract period nearing its end. Minister Edghill has insisted that the contractor double working hours and staff to expedite progress, rejecting any unrealistic plans.

"I need to see a revised work plan immediately — details on personnel,

schedules for windows, doors, and every task down to the smallest detail," he instructed.

The state-of-the-art administrative building will house over 300 airport staff when completed, representing a critical upgrade to CJIA's infrastructure.

Minister Edghill also inspected progress on other key projects at CJIA, including the modern commercial centre designed to elevate the travel experience. This facility will feature:

15 concessions, including duty-free shops, food outlets, and currency exchange services.

A restaurant and bar, kids' play area, and

ATMs.

Business lounges, a VIP suite, and a state-of-the-art conference room.

In addition, the minister reviewed ongoing works on the in-line baggage handling system and



Ongoing works at the CJIA

the international apron's rigid pavement renovation.

Minister Edghill has made it clear that there will be no room for complacency. Contractors must rise to the challenge or face consequences. His commitment to ensuring the timely completion of these projects underscores the government's dedication to delivering

modern, world-class infrastructure at Guyana's premier airport.



84 new healthcare professionals added to Region One's healthcare workforce

The Suddie Public Hospital in Region Two achieved a significant milestone in 2024; its staff conducted 644 surgeries a substantial increase compared to the 502 surgeries performed in 2023.

This positive development was revealed by Omkar

Persaud, a member of the hospital's board of directors, during the graduation ceremony for the region's newly trained healthcare professionals at the Abram Zuil Secondary School.

Despite facing numerous challenges, Persaud emphasised

that Suddie Hospital continues to serve as a cornerstone of effective and efficient healthcare delivery within the region. As a grade-four facility, the hospital plays a crucial role in providing high-quality care. With only one operating room, it has successfully conducted a wide range of surgeries, encompassing major and minor procedures across three key specialties: general surgery, orthopaedics

and gynaecology.

"In 2024, we performed a total of 644 surgeries, including 48 pediatric cases, marking a significant improvement over the 502 surgeries conducted in 2023," Persaud stated.

Looking ahead, Persaud highlighted the region's plans to expand its healthcare services. The introduction of new medical equipment at various health facilities

across the coast will further enhance service delivery.

Moreover, the upcoming completion of the state-of-the-art hospital at Lima, expected by June 2025, will significantly bolster healthcare capabilities within the region. **"We anticipate an increase in the number of referrals for surgical interventions such as cataract surgeries and hip fracture repairs in the near**

future," Persaud added.

Suddie Hospital currently serves as the primary healthcare facility in Region Two, offering the most advanced medical services. The Ministry of Health is actively working to equip the Oscar Joseph District Hospital at Charity with the necessary resources to enhance its operational capacity and function at a level comparable to the Suddie Public Hospital.

SUDDIE HOSPITAL SURPASSES SURGICAL TARGETS IN 2024

REGIONS ONE AND TWO HEALTH SECTOR BOOSTED- 175 GRADUATE



84 new healthcare professionals added to Region One's healthcare workforce

The healthcare workforce in Regions One and Two has received a significant boost with the graduation of 175 new healthcare professionals, a testament to the government's commitment to enhancing healthcare services across Guyana's hinterland communities.

In Region One, 84 individuals received certification as Nursing Assistants, Community Health Workers (CHWs), and Operating Room Technicians. Among this cohort were 50 CHWs, 23 nursing assistants, and 11 operating room technicians.

The graduation ceremony was held at the Northwest Secondary School, during which Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, reaffirmed the government's dedication to improving the standard of living for

all Guyanese. Minister Croal emphasised the vital role of healthcare professionals in building a healthy and thriving population.

"Healthcare

remains strong."

He encouraged the graduates to serve their communities with passion and compassion, stressing that healthcare is a team effort.



Region Two gets 91 new healthcare workers

professionals are the heart of our healthcare system," Minister Croal stated. "A healthy population is the foundation of national development. You will be on the frontlines ensuring that the foundation

The minister urged continuous learning and adaptation to new technologies.

Minister Croal also highlighted the expansion of telemedicine, with 13 sites in the region and plans for more in 2025. Additionally,

he announced the upcoming upgrade of Port Kaituma Hospital, which will include a new theatre to enhance surgical capacity.

Dr. Vishwa Mahadeo, Director General of the Ministry of Health, outlined the region's impressive healthcare transformation since August 2020, thanks to the government's strategic investments. He urged the graduates to take advantage of ongoing training opportunities to further their career

"Your government has provided the opportunities," Dr. Mahadeo said. "You need to make sure of them and help us elevate healthcare to a higher level."

Regional Chairman Brentnol Ashley also praised the decentralisation of training programmes, ensuring that hinterland residents have access to necessary healthcare education. He highlighted the significance of the graduation for remote communities, including Baramita, which will now benefit from trained local healthcare workers.

In Region Two, 91 residents graduated from various Health Sciences Education

(HSE) programmes, including Medical Laboratory Technicians, Nursing Assistants, Post-Basic Midwifery, and Operating Theatre Technicians. The ceremony was addressed by Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, who reiterated the government's commitment to decentralising healthcare training to ensure an adequate supply of

cultivating the right attitude toward patients. He encouraged the graduates to create a welcoming environment and continually improve their skills.

"I implore you to treat our patients with care and respect," Dr. Singh urged. "Healthcare is about service, and we must strive to make it the best for our communities."

The new healthcare professionals from both regions will now be deployed across various health



Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal handing over a trophy to a graduate in Region One

healthcare professionals across the country.

"We are rolling out 18 to 20 different programmes nationwide," Minister Anthony explained. "We want to train more people every year to ensure that we meet the growing healthcare needs of the population."

Dr. Ranjeev Singh, Regional Health Officer for Region Two, stressed the importance of

facilities to enhance the quality of care in their communities. With a focus on both improving healthcare infrastructure and strengthening the local workforce, these graduates represent a critical step toward the government's vision of accessible, high-quality healthcare for all Guyanese.

NEW BOATS TO ENHANCE MATERNAL HEALTHCARE IN REGIONS ONE AND EIGHT

The Ministry of Health has acquired two specialised maternal health boats to improve healthcare services for remote communities in Regions One and Eight. Funded by the Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI) through UNICEF, these boats, constructed by local contractors, cost approximately \$9

million each.

The boats, equipped with maternal transport cots and solar-powered vaccine refrigerators, are designed to significantly enhance maternal and neonatal healthcare and immunization efforts. They will provide essential healthcare services to remote communities including Kamwatta, Parakeese, Karaburi, Santa Rosa, Waramuri Islands, Acquero, and Koko in Region One, as well as Waipa, Sandhill, Kaibarupai, Catchcow, Bishop Landing, Salawoo, and Orinduik in Region Eight.

At the handover ceremony held at the Guyana Defence Force's Coast Guard Wharf in



Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal handing over the boats in Region One

Georgetown, Director General of the Ministry of Health, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, highlighted the government's ongoing efforts to align hinterland healthcare services with those of the coastland. Dr. Mahadeo stated, "Our aim is that every

single community must have some sort of transportation connectivity with a major hospital." He continued, "So, whilst we are training more staff, providing more equipment and better facilities, transportation in Guyana via river

will always be important."

UNICEF's Operations Manager for Guyana and Suriname, Abdul Salem-Saleh, highlighted the long-standing partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Health in ensuring equitable access to healthcare

services for all Guyanese.

The boats' design, which complies with international best practices, can be adopted by other countries facing similar geographical and logistical challenges.

In addition, four villages in Region One (Morawhanna/Smith Creek, Barima Koriabo, Hobodiah, and Katchicamo) received boats valued at \$1.4 million each to improve healthcare access.



One of the maternal health boats



The handover of the maternal boats

BPO SECTOR GROWS IN LINDEN WITH PROCHANT'S GRADUATE CLASS



Prochant certifies first batch of patient interaction specialists in Linden

Human Resources at Prochant, emphasised the company's commitment to investing in Guyana's talent pool. "The graduation of this inaugural class marks a significant step in Prochant's global expansion strategy and our dedication to nurturing the remarkable talent that Guyana possesses," Hedrick stated.

Georgia Innis, Director of Global Eureka Business Solution Inc., praised the graduates for pioneering a new era in Linden's BPO industry. "You are trailblazers, setting a new standard for the level of training and professionalism in Linden's call centres," she remarked.

The government-supported training programme provided participants with a stipend of \$15,000 for the first three weeks and an

additional \$25,000 upon successful completion. The comprehensive curriculum covered BPO fundamentals, including communication, cultural understanding, customer service, and specialised training in medical billing.

Prochant, an industry leader in AI-

billing and revenue cycle management.

This successful graduation signifies a new chapter for Linden, positioning the town as a hub for highly skilled BPO professionals. As Prochant continues to invest in the region, this programme is expected to create sustainable



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill handing over a certificate to one of the graduates

Linden marked a significant milestone in its economic development with the graduation of the first cohort of patient interaction specialists trained by Prochant, a leading US-based medical billing company.

The ceremony celebrated the successful completion of a rigorous training programme designed to equip Lindeners with the skills necessary to excel in

the growing business process outsourcing (BPO) sector.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, congratulated the graduates on their dedication and perseverance throughout the challenging training programme.

"This is a testament to your commitment, your ability to stay the course, and your resilience," he emphasised.

The Minister highlighted that the graduates, following a rigorous recruitment process, are now assured of employment with Prochant. "You are now well-equipped and trained in medical billing through this call centre programme, a significant achievement," he added.

Sierra Hedrick, Associate Director of

driven reimbursement services for home healthcare, is committed to providing cutting-edge solutions for medical

career opportunities and contribute significantly to the local economy.

"REQUIEM FOR THE LIVING" THRILLS AUDIENCES AT NATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE

Jamal La Rose's "Requiem for the Living," the third-place winner of the prestigious Guyana Prize for Literature, captivated audiences at the National Cultural Centre on December 15. This powerful play, a blend of serious drama and dark humour, delves into the complex lives of two estranged sisters, Beverly and Elizabeth, haunted by the traumas of their childhood.

The play masterfully explores themes of abuse, anger, love, lust, fear, and the enduring pain of unresolved family conflicts. Beverly, returning to her childhood home with her new boyfriend, seeks to confront the past and find healing. However, her reunion with her sister, Elizabeth, quickly descends into a bitter confrontation fueled by resentment and the



Play Requiem for the Living was a hit

lingering shadows of their shared past.

The escalating tension culminates in tragedy, with both sisters meeting a tragic end in a murder-suicide. The play concludes with a poignant and emotionally charged dance performance by the Wright's Temple Dancers, offering a poignant reflection on the aftermath of the sisters' tragic fate.

Directed by Godfrey Naughton, the production featured a stellar cast, including Feliz Robertson as Beverly, Jude Holder as her paramour, Latiefa Agard as Elizabeth, Frederick Minty as Elizabeth's husband,

Sheron Cadogan Taylor as their neighbour, Akeila David as Elizabeth's son, and Kelly Asgill as a Police Officer.

Requiem for the Living is a product of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport's "Write to Stage" support programme, launched in 2023. This initiative, revived after the government's reinstatement of the Guyana Prize for Literature in 2022, aims to bring the winning

showcased six prize-winning plays, including "Sauda" by Mosa Telford, "Makantali" by Harold Bascom, "The Last of the Red Men" by Michael Gilkes, "Father of the Man" by Paloma Mohamed, and "Children of Baby" by Mosa Telford.

The Write to Stage programme provides a valuable platform for showcasing the talents of Guyanese playwrights and enriching the local theatre scene. Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr, at the conclusion of the performance, reaffirmed the government's commitment to the



Play Requiem for the Living was a hit



Play Requiem for the Living was a hit

works of the Prize to life on stage.

This programme has already successfully

programme, promising audiences a new slate of captivating productions in 2025.

BUILDING 'ONE GUYANA'

- PRESIDENT ALI REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO GROWTH AND INCLUSION



President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of all Guyanese, emphasising that every policy, initiative, and investment is designed with the people at its core.

Speaking at a press conference at State House, the President assured that his administration's mission is to uplift citizens will remain steadfast, even in the face of the 2025 elections.

"Our strategy and philosophy have always been about the people, not elections or the pursuit of power," he stated. **"Winning elections is merely a tool to advance the welfare of our citizens. We govern not on an election timetable but on a people's timetable."**

Highlighting the remarkable economic achievements from 2020 to 2024, President Ali underscored the government's success in fostering growth in both

oil and non-oil sectors. The non-oil economy grew by an impressive 41%, driven by strategic investments in agriculture, construction, and mining. The President revealed key sectoral expansions:

Agriculture: 17% growth due to enhanced farming techniques and improved infrastructure.

Construction: A staggering 138% growth, fuelled by a boom in housing and public infrastructure projects.

Mining: 153% growth, reflecting significant contributions to the country's revenue base.

Service Sector: 28% growth, showcasing advancements in ICT, telecom, and hospitality.

President Ali noted that this economic transformation has resulted in the creation of over 50,000 jobs, far exceeding the

government's manifesto promise.

The country's financial standing has also improved, with the Bank of Guyana's reserves more than doubling from US\$575 million in 2019 to over US\$1.17 billion by the

overwhelmingly reliant on oil revenue," the President asserted.

Central to President Ali's governance is the 'One Guyana' initiative, which seeks to foster national unity and integration. He stressed

2030, Guyana must stand as a global model of cohesion, where cultural and religious diversity are celebrated and integrated into a united identity."

The President envisions Guyana becoming an international example of cultural and religious harmony, with nations looking to replicate its success in fostering unity.

President Ali reiterated that the government's investments, from infrastructure to social development, are aimed at creating prosperity for every Guyanese.

"We are determined to build a future where every citizen benefits from the nation's growth. There is no room for failure in achieving this vision," he stated.



Media personnel at the end-of-year press conference at State House

end of 2024.

"This growth demonstrates our journey towards a dynamic, globally competitive economy that isn't

that achieving this vision is non-negotiable.

"This is not about politics; it is about our future, our country, and our people," he emphasised. **"By**

2024 MARKS LOWEST CRIME AND ROAD FATALITY RATES IN A DECADE

Guyana has recorded its lowest crime figures in a decade, with a significant reduction in major crimes, including murders, robberies, and break-and-enters, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali revealed during his end-of-year press conference at State House.

For 2024, the country witnessed a 13.6% reduction in the national crime rate compared to 2023, marking a substantial leap in the government's ongoing efforts to enhance safety and security for all Guyanese citizens. According to President Ali, 2024 saw the lowest number of murders, robberies, and property crimes in the past ten years, a milestone that signals the country's steady progress toward a safer environment.

"Over the last 10 years, the lowest number of murders and robberies were recorded this year, and break-and-enter and larceny reports were at their lowest in 2024," President Ali stated, underscoring the importance of these achievements.

Notably, the clearance rate for murders reached an impressive 71%, meaning



A police officer conducting mobile patrol in Georgetown

that law enforcement was able to arrest and charge perpetrators in more than two-thirds of homicide cases, a remarkable feat in criminal justice. The success of this initiative, the president explained, was largely due to the government's investment in advanced technologies and the strengthening of the law enforcement agencies.

"We've introduced cutting-edge systems, such as safe command centres and enhanced surveillance,

alongside bolstering our immigration systems to track entries and exits," President Ali explained. These advancements have played a key role in the improved detection and prevention of major crimes.

In addition to crime reduction, the year also saw the highest seizure of illegal firearms in Guyana's history, with record-high prosecutions for drug trafficking offenses. The Guyana Police Force's diligent efforts have been pivotal in curbing

the illegal activities, with the president praising their dedication and performance.

As the government continues to prioritise security across the nation, President Ali emphasized that the goal is to create a safe country, not just a safe city. He highlighted plans to expand "public-imaging" technology and community policing efforts, especially in "hot spot" areas, to further ensure the safety of all citizens.

Road Safety Improvements: Decreasing Fatalities and Serious Accidents

Simultaneously, 2024 marked a successful year for road safety, with a notable reduction in fatal and serious road accidents. The government's proactive measures led to a 20% decrease in fatal accidents compared to the previous year, contributing to consistent declines in both serious and minor accidents.

President Ali

attributed the success to targeted interventions, such as intensified traffic education programmes, increased enforcement, and the implementation of the electronic speed monitoring system, which recorded over 60,000 instances of speeding during its testing phase. These measures are part of a broader effort to improve road safety across the nation.

"Fatal deaths have decreased, and all levels of road accidents are showing a downward trend. Our increased efforts in traffic enforcement,

including a 37% rise in court cases brought forward and a record number of speeding tickets issued, are proving to be effective," said President Ali.

Looking forward, the government is set to expand its traffic safety initiatives, with plans to introduce a demerit point system for drivers and further amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act. These measures are aimed at enhancing enforcement and ensuring greater transparency and accountability on the roads.



Decreasing fatalities and serious accidents

YEAR IN REVIEW: TRANSFORMATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS KEY SECTORS IN 2024



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha at the launching of the new GRDB 18 rice variety

As 2024 drew to a close, government officials highlighted significant milestones achieved across various sectors during year-end press conferences. From record-breaking advancements in agriculture to groundbreaking improvements in healthcare, Guyana has made remarkable strides in its journey toward progress and prosperity.

Agriculture: Record-Breaking Production and Expansion

RICE PRODUCTION REACHES HISTORIC HIGH

Guyana achieved an unprecedented milestone in rice production, harvesting **725,282 metric tonnes** in 2024. Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha credited this achievement to:

High-Yielding Varieties: Introduction of four new rice strains, including GRDB 18, producing 7-9 tonnes per hectare.

Enhanced Seed Production: Facilities nationwide increased output to **152 bags**

Government Investment: A **\$97.6 billion** injection



GPHC recorded fewer deaths, saved 79 women in 2024

boosted efficiency and management across the sector.

This success translated to **425,490 metric tonnes** of rice exports to 30 countries, generating **USD\$254 million** in revenue and opening new markets. Minister Mustapha emphasised the government's continued commitment to driving growth in the rice industry.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN CORN AND SOYA

CULTIVATION
In 2024, Guyana cultivated **12,000 acres** of corn and soya, setting the stage for full self-sufficiency. Plans for 2025 include expanding cultivation to **25,000 acres** biannually, supported by new infrastructure:

An **18,000-tonne silo** and conveying system in the Tacama Savannah.

Further developments in black-eyed and red bean production are underway, with **2,000 acres** already allocated and harvesting set to begin in March 2025.

security in Guyana.

HEALTHCARE: SAVING LIVES AND ENHANCING SERVICES

Maternal and Neonatal Health Milestones

The **Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC)** reported substantial improvements in maternal and neonatal care:

Maternal deaths reduced to **8** in 2024, compared to **10** in 2023.

Neonatal deaths decreased by **50%**, attributed to enhanced training for **46 healthcare professionals**, new equipment, and strict infection control measures.

Expansion of gynaecological surgeries and minimally invasive procedures improved outcomes.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH EMR SYSTEM

The GPHC announced the launch of an **Electronic Medical Record (EMR)** system in early 2025, funded by a **US\$3.3 million contract**. The system will digitize patient records, streamline processes, and improve care quality.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SCREENING FOR YOUTH

The Ministry of Health's Child and Youth Health Programme expanded to include secondary schools, building on the success of **36,000 screenings** in nursery and primary schools in 2024. Key initiatives include:

Eye Testing and Spectacles Programme: Vouchers provided to pensioners and individuals under 18.

\$10,000 Healthcare Vouchers: Supporting basic medical exams for **500,000 individuals**.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Pandemic Preparedness Strengthened
Guyana secured a

US\$22 million grant programmes for to enhance pandemic recreation and preparedness, with education. initiatives such as: Digital literacy



Health screening programme expanding to secondary schools

Upgraded initiatives for seniors.

laboratories, including the National Public Health Reference Lab.

Enhanced disease surveillance for zoonotic diseases and influenza.

SUPPORT FOR SENIORS



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud with senior citizens

The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security is making bold strides toward a prosperous and self-sufficient future. With continued investments and innovative strategies, the nation is well-positioned for transformational growth.

Restored water and electricity subsidies. Weekly community



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud at the Ministry's year-end press conference



First phase of e-record system to begin at GPHC early 2025

FROM STRUGGLE TO TRIUMPH - PRESIDENT ALI AND VICE PRESIDENT DR JAGDEO CELEBRATE PPP'S 75-YEAR JOURNEY



President Ali addressing the PPP's 32nd congress

From Struggle to Triumph - President Ali and Vice President Dr Jagdeo Celebrate PPP's 75-Year Journey

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has celebrated the 75th anniversary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) as a milestone that underscores its unwavering dedication to the people of Guyana. Founded in 1950, the PPP has championed national unity, equality, and democratic governance, cementing its place as a cornerstone of Guyana's

modern history. Reflecting on the party's vision, Dr. Ali remarked, "The PPP was born out of a vision for a free, independent, united, and prosperous Guyana." He highlighted the PPP's early achievements, including its role in securing universal adult suffrage. "Since its inception, the PPP has been a steadfast advocate for the rights of the working class, justice, equality, and national development,"

he said.

Dr. Ali also credited the PPP with reigniting the nationalist struggle before independence. "The formation of the party gave voice, leadership, and direction to the aspirations of a people yearning for freedom, dignity, and self-determination," he noted.

Since the restoration of democracy in 1992, the PPP's transformative governance has left a lasting impact. "Through its policies and programmes, the PPP/C government laid the groundwork for economic recovery, improved social services, and infrastructural development, rekindling hope among the people," Dr. Ali emphasised.

Beyond its national achievements, the President highlighted

the PPP's contributions to global struggles for freedom and justice. "Throughout its history, the party has forged fraternal relations with progressive forces, including those fighting for national liberation," he stated.

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo reflected on the party's long struggle for freedom. "For 44 of our 75 years, the PPP fought against oppression - 16 years under colonial rule and another 28 years under an undemocratic regime. This party has always been the shield of the Guyanese people," he said.

Dr. Jagdeo also reflected on the PPP's achievements since 1992. "Before 1992, we were one of the poorest and most



Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo speaking at a party press conference

indebted countries in the world. Under PPP leadership, Guyana transformed into a rising Caribbean nation," he remarked, recalling how the country was once dubbed the 'Singapore of the Caribbean.'

As the PPP celebrates its 75th anniversary, President Ali praised the grassroots support that has sustained the party. "None of these achievements

would have been possible without the tireless loyalty of our members and grassroots supporters. They deserve acclaim and applause," he said.

The PPP remains a symbol of courage, sacrifice, and progress, inspiring hope and confidence under Dr. Ali's leadership as it charts a brighter future for all Guyanese.

MEADOW BANK WHARF REHABILITATION CLOSE TO COMPLETION, ADDITIONAL UPGRADES PLANNED



Over 80 per cent of rehabilitation work at Meadow Bank Wharf complete

The rehabilitation of the Meadow Bank Wharf in Georgetown is on track for completion by January 2025. The \$150 million initiative, led by the Ministry of Agriculture, will see additional upgrades to further enhance the facility.

During a site visit, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha confirmed the progress and outlined the scope of the rehabilitation. The project includes rebuilding vendor stalls, installing modern washroom facilities, and upgrading lighting systems to improve

safety and security. Following the inspection, Minister Mustapha directed engineers to incorporate additional features, including construction of more stalls

to accommodate growing vendor needs, installation of concrete drains to address drainage issues, and expansion of the tarmac area to support increased activities at the wharf.

The revitalised wharf is set to benefit fisherfolk, vendors, and customers, creating a more efficient and welcoming environment.

Minister Mustapha emphasised the government's broader commitment to Guyana's fishing communities. "Our focus extends beyond Meadow Bank. We are undertaking significant

rehabilitation projects at major wharves across the country, including D'Edward, Rosignol, and Number 79 Village Corentyne," he stated.

As one of Georgetown's busiest fishing hubs, Meadow Bank Wharf holds cultural and economic importance, drawing both locals and tourists. The government aims to ensure a clean, safe, and conducive environment for all stakeholders.

REGION FIVE LANDING FACILITY AND SHED NEARING COMPLETION

Meanwhile, construction of the landing facility and shed at the Three-door Sluice in D'Edward Village, Region Five, is nearing completion. This development is part of a commitment made by

President Ali, in a recent social media update, highlighted the project's progress and its significance. During a visit to the community in March, the President engaged local fisherfolk, pledging to address their



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha engaging with vendors occupying the new stalls

President Ali earlier to improve the working conditions of fisherfolk in the Mahaica-Berbice region. To ensure community involvement and satisfaction, the fisherfolk collaborated with government officials in designing the shed. Additionally, they were provided with seedlings to support farming initiatives, especially during early morning operations.

The new facilities will provide much-needed shelter for fisherfolk as they mend fishing gear and conduct daily activities, enhancing safety and efficiency, especially during early morning operations.



Construction of landing facility and shed nearing completion for fisherfolk at D'Edward Village, West Coast Berbice

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- OLD YEAR'S NIGHT BRINGS COMMUNITIES TOGETHER





Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 84

CLIFF ANDERSON SPORTS HALL GETS \$300 MILLION MAKEOVER, USHERING IN A NEW ERA FOR SPORTS



Before

The iconic Cliff Anderson Sports Hall in Georgetown has received a remarkable \$300 million upgrade, transforming it into a facility that meets international standards.

Key improvements include the installation of air conditioning, ensuring a more comfortable environment for athletes and spectators alike. Additionally, the hall now features modernised amenities, such as redesigned public entrances, corporate boxes, state-of-the-art dressing rooms, anti-doping rooms, and dedicated facilities for physiotherapists.

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr., highlighted that these upgrades are a pivotal step in achieving the government's vision of establishing Guyana as a top destination for world-class sporting events.



After





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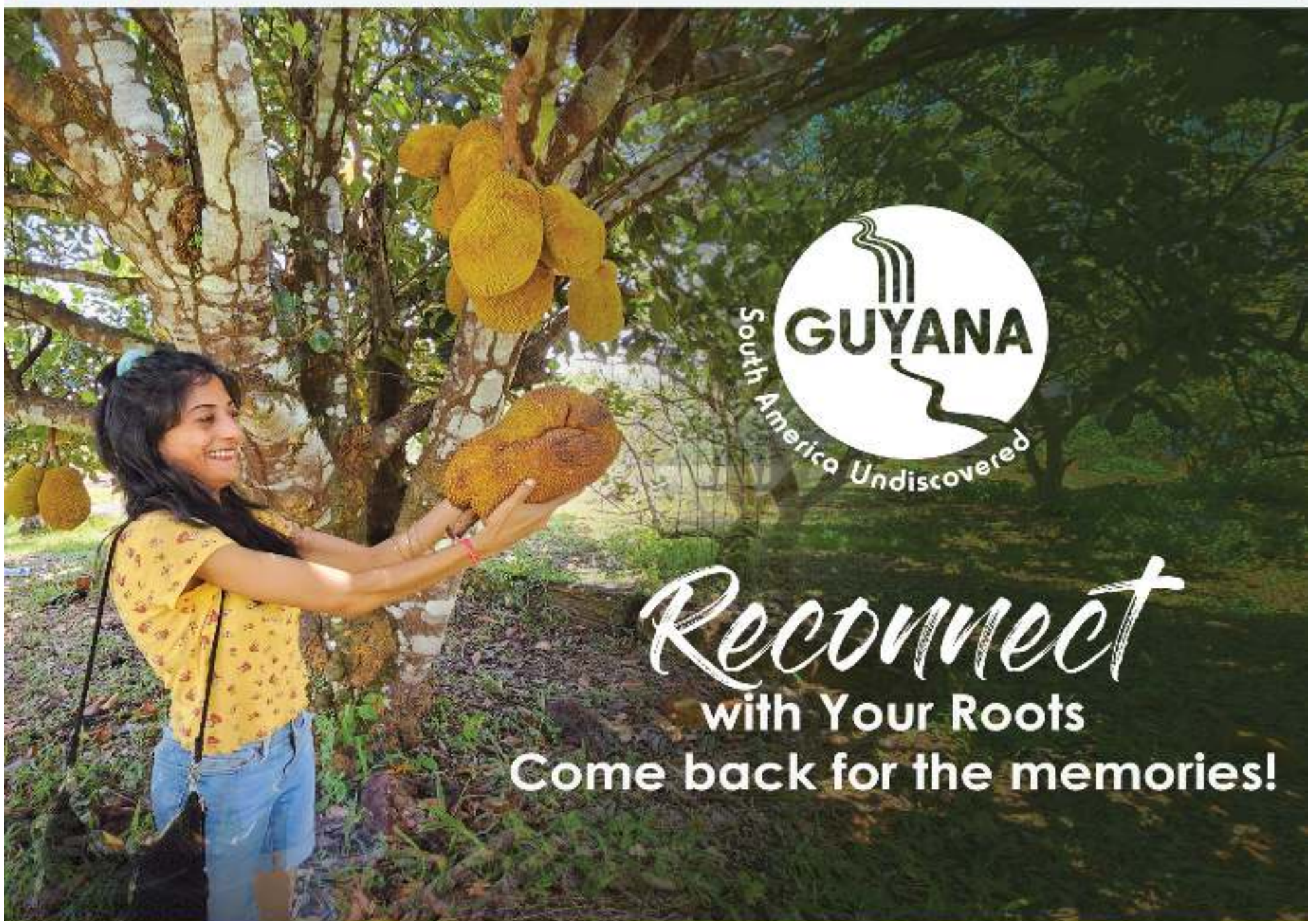
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