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President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali on Monday led thousands of supporters to the Umana Yana in Kingston, Georgetown, to submit the People’s Progressive Party Civic’s (PPP/C) official list of candidates for the September 1 General and Regional Elections, declaring it the “winning list.” Flanked by his running mates, Prime Minister Brigadier (Retd) Mark Phillips and Vice

President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, the PPP/C was the second party to submit its documents to the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM).

“This is the winning list because we know what in that list, we represent Guyana, in that list, we represent every sector, and in that list, we represent what is good for Guyana,” President Ali declared in his comments to the press shortly after presenting the lists to the GECOM officials.

“We have demonstrated who we are... bringing people together, youth representation, women representation, farmers, professionals, doctors. We bring together all of Guyana, and that is why we are so efficient,” the head of state said. *More inside*

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- Downstream investment opportunities. Petrochemical industry, fertilizers & synthetic materials, Fuel Distribution, Industrial Manufacturing - Deepwater port - Aquaculture - Hotel Development - Agricultural belt
- GUYANA SURINAME CONNECTION**
- Corontyne River Bridge
- Food Production (Enhanced agricultural collaboration & trade)
- Infrastructure Projects - Eco-tourism
- LETHEM**
- Hotel Development & Casinos - Airport Expansion - Large Scale Farming - Cattle Ranching - Gold Shopping - Eco Tourism - Food Hub
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- Energy Security
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Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, MBA
Chief Investment Officer, Office of the President, Agency Head, Guyana Office for Investment


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WHY BUY GUYANA STOCK?

1 GY 43.60% -2024 REAL GDP GROWTH
Source - International Monetary Fund - Statista



Year	Rest of the World (%)	Guyana (%)
2014	0	0
2016	0	0
2018	0	0
2020	0	40
2022	0	65
2024	0	45
2026	0	35
2028	0	25
2030	0	15

FOOD SECURITY

- Tropical Climate
- Large Expanse of freshwater
- 420,000 Hectares of arable land
- 25% by 2025 reduction in food import bill

CLIMATE SECURITY

- 18.3M Hectares in standing forest
- Storing 19.5 Gigatons of Carbon worth US \$195B

ENERGY SECURITY

- 11+ Billion Oil-equivalent barrels discovered offshore
- 17 Trillion Cubic Feet Gas Reserves
- 300MW Power Plant

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

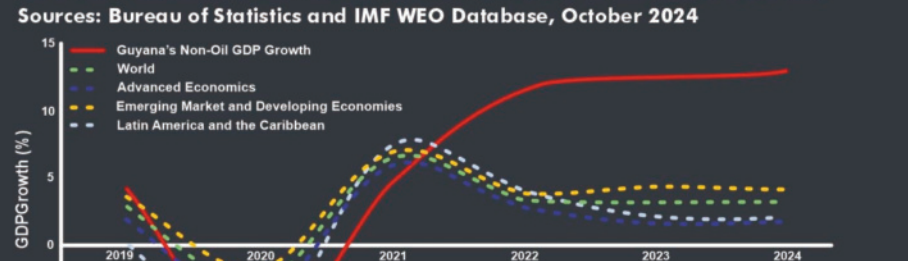
- Several New Regional Hospitals
- Access to free Education
- BIT Training
- Housing Development

WORLD CLASS TOURISM INDUSTRY

- 900 species of Birds
- 225 species of Mammals
- 800 species of Reptiles
- 6500 species of Plants & Trees
- 365 Islands along Guyana's Essequibo River
- Several US Branded hotels under construction

GUYANA: GROWTH NON-OIL ECONOMY VS. GROWTH IN OTHER REGIONS

Sources: Bureau of Statistics and IMF WEO Database, October 2024



Year	Guyana's Non-Oil GDP Growth (%)	World (%)	Advanced Economies (%)	Emerging Market and Developing Economies (%)	Latin America and the Caribbean (%)
2019	5	3	2	4	3
2020	-5	-2	-1	-3	-2
2021	10	5	4	8	6
2022	12	4	3	7	5
2023	13	3	2	6	4
2024	14	2	1	5	3

GUYANA
The Gateway to OPPORTUNITIES

Guyana Touts Emerging Logistics Sector to Tap into Caribbean Food Market

By Clarissa Ali
LJI REPORTER

Guyana’s Chief Investment Officer, Dr. Peter Ramsaroop, says a new logistics sector is rapidly taking shape across the Caribbean, offering a historic opportunity for Guyana and its neighbours to dominate a regional agricultural market worth billions of U.S. dollars.

Speaking at the launch of the upcoming International Business Conference (IBC)—slated for October and hosted by the Suriname-Guyana Chamber of Commerce—Dr. Ramsaroop underscored the untapped potential of intra-Caribbean trade.

The conference is expected to gather business leaders from across the region to discuss strategies for deeper economic collaboration.

“The numbers speak for themselves,” Dr. Ramsaroop said. “Jamaica imported US\$1.2 billion worth of food—not from Guyana, Suriname, Northern Brazil, or even the wider Caribbean. Trinidad imported another US\$1.2 billion, and Barbados brought in US\$400 million. Between our countries, we’re sitting on a gold mine.”



Chief Investment Officer of GolInvest, Dr Peter Ramsaroop

He called for a unified regional approach to agriculture, encouraging countries to combine their strengths and

“own this US\$6 to US\$10 billion agricultural market.”

According to Dr. Ramsaroop, a key to unlocking that potential lies in building efficient, modern logistics networks that can link producers with markets across the Caribbean.

“We are bridging these countries to deliver not only products but also policies that will integrate the wider Caribbean region,” he said.

His comments align with the vision recently expressed by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who used his CARICOM Day message to call for increased intra-regional trade as a pillar of economic growth and resilience.

President Ali emphasized Guyana’s expanding food production and rising energy capacity as major drivers of regional integration.

This regional momentum comes amid new infrastructure and transport initiatives aimed at strengthening logistics across the Caribbean.

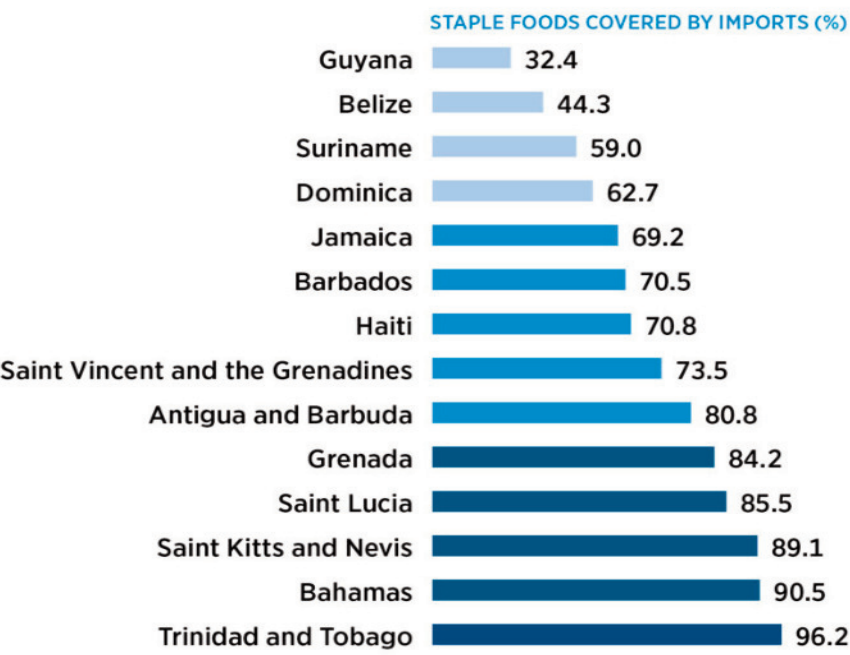
In 2024, CARI Cargo Inc.—the company behind a long-anticipated regional ferry service connecting Guyana, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago—was formally established.

The initiative supports the Caribbean Development Bank’s broader agenda of enhancing food security and regional cooperation.

The ferry service is expected to prioritize agricultural shipments, with Trinidad’s Galleons Passage designated to operate the route. The vessel is equipped to carry 400 passengers and 60 vehicles, and features on-board amenities such as a cafeteria, bar, and VIP lounge—positioning it to become a critical link in the region’s food distribution network.

With renewed focus on logistics infrastructure and a push for stronger partnerships, Guyana and its regional allies are working to transform how food and goods move across the Caribbean.

AQ CARICOM countries are dependent on food imports



NOTE: FIGURES INCLUDE 15 AGRI-FOOD PRODUCTS: WHEAT, RICE, MAIZE, SORGHUM, MILLET, CASSAVA, SWEET POTATOES, YAMS, PLANTAINS, BEANS, GROUNDNUTS, SOYBEANS, SUGAR, AND VEGETABLE OIL.

SOURCE: FOOD SECURITY PORTAL FOOD IMPORT DEPENDENCE RATIO, BASED ON UN FAO DATA FROM 2020 AND MOST RECENT AVAILABLE

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A logo for Raul's Jewellery, featuring a crown above a stylized diamond shape containing the letters "R" and "J".

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

The cost of a vote

The “new” style of politics around the world, especially in the USA, is causing ripples everywhere.

The act of rich people using their wealth and influence to pursue specific agendas has had a negative impact on the world, marginalizing poor and vulnerable communities in favour of effecting benefits to the rich and super rich.

Right here in Canada, the movement, casually known as MAGA Maple, has been trying to turn this country on its head through its “common sense revolution”. We saw it in action during the April 28 election, and we’re still seeing it in action in Alberta today, where the MAGA Maple leader who lost his own seat in the election two months ago is now trying to win a place back in parliament through a hastily called by-election.

That, though, is facing the same type of backlash that the party faced in the general election. Canadians see the movement as running counter to their own values and morals, and have rejected this type of politics, where cuts, cruelty and lack of empathy for people of lesser straws are the calling cards for those seeking power.

In the Alberta by-election, Pierre Pollièvre thought he was going into a

safe seat for an easy win. This backlash, however, has seen an independent challenger suddenly getting financial and other support from people around the country who have seen what is happening in the USA and want to make sure that it doesn’t get a foothold here.

And it’s not just North America.

Come September 1, the people of Guyana will go to the polls in what is perhaps the most important election in its history. They face a choice of either continuing with growth and progress that has made the country the envy of the world, or allowing the future of Guyana to be taken over by other entities that may not be as progressive as the incumbent.

In the middle of this comes an Elon Musk-styled self-claimed billionaire who is trying to use his vast resources of cash to buy his way into the National Assembly.

The businessman, who is facing US sanctions due to some questionable transactions, has been going into the country’s remote areas to convince voters he is the right choice. Of course, in his haste to convince the voters, money seems to be no problem.

But even this man’s own family members have rejected his political ambitions, going public to say he’s not the

best choice for Guyana and that his political foray is an ego trip.

At the heart of this campaign is his desire to be Kingmaker in the National Assembly. He knows he will not win government, but he wants just enough seats to be able to influence which ever government is elected.

This is not dissimilar to what the billionaire club has done in the USA, except they did it with political contributions. Musk himself has admitted that it was his \$250 million in donations to the right people at the right time is what helped elect Donald Trump. So the evidence is clear that one rich man can have a direct impact on millions of people.

Our “billionaire” friend in Guyana is hoping for a similar result, except in his case is likely not so much impacting on the Guyanese people, but instead his personal future.

No doubt he is hoping that as a member of the National Assembly and with the influence he might be able to wield on the government, he might be able to protect himself from further action from the USA Department of Treasury, which is seeking to find out about certain gold shipments to the USA as well as how much he actually paid in taxes on the luxury cars he im-

ported into Guyana from America.

It is easy to dismiss this candidate as having only nuisance value until you take a look at what has transpired in the USA and see how money can have an impact on people’s lives.

So we urge voters in Guyana to think not once, not twice, but as long as it takes before voting for him.

In fact, we believe the choice for Guyanese is easy. The incumbent PPP/C has a proven track record. The Irfaan Ali government has steered Guyana from the brink of poverty into the country with the best economic prospects in the world.

The Ali government has also improved the life of every Guyanese citizen. They have all benefited from the oil revenue flooding the country, whether it is through cash grants, house lots, improved medical care, massive infrastructure development and a boost to education.

So we urge Guyanese not to gamble with their futures.

We’ve seen the evidence of what happens when you do, as we watch what has happened in the USA in just six short months.

That’s the cost of a vote. Let the billionaire fight his own battles.

PNC Education Policy Nothing to be Proud of

The Editor:

In the Stabroek News of July 15, 2025 I read a letter from Mr or Ms. A Dey in which he/she lauded the 1976 announcement of “free tertiary education.” Whoever A. Dey is he/she should be advised that sometimes it’s better to let sleeping dogs lie. Because the PNC’s history on education is nothing to be proud of.

In the first place a section of the PNC was opposed to the creation of the University of Guyana. The then leader of that Party Mr. Forbes Burnham, had even promised to close the University

down if or when he became leader of the country. He even derogatorily called it “Jagan Night School” because Dr. Jagan began the University classes at Queen’s College after three in the afternoon. He was not willing to wait until the campus was established at Turkeyen. (Read Dr. Harold Drayton “Genesis & Early Years 1963-73).

I say a section of the PNC, because there were some who openly disagreed with Burnham on that score. Mr. John Carter (later Sir John) was one such person. He even accepted to serve on the UG Board of Governors in that

period.

The University was so popular that Mr. Burnham was unable to carry out his threat when he took power in 1964.

It is true that in 1976 Mr. Burnham announced free education in Guyana. However, what his supporters never wish to recall was the fact that by 1980 the University was flat on its back. Indeed, education as a whole was in its worst period. The PNC regime even reduced the qualification for entrance into UG and that institution was grinding downwards. At one point it had to be closed for some months to repair some

basic facilities such as toilets, etc.

Education and other essential services were sacrificed so that the PNC elite would live well. For instance, more money was spent on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs than on the Ministries of Education, Health, Housing and Agriculture combined during that same period.

So, Mr. Or Ms. Dey, the PNC’s record on education is as bad as it had been with the economy and human rights! Nothing to be Proud of!

Donald Ramotar
Former Guyana President



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Contributors: Niraj Sharma, Freddie Kissoon,

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Woodstock Duty Free Shop to Close Amid Cross-Border Slowdown

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

A long-standing duty-free shop at a New Brunswick border crossing is preparing to close its doors after more than three decades in business—an other casualty of dwindling cross-border traffic and unresolved trade tensions between Canada and the United States.

John Slipp, owner of the Woodstock Duty Free Shop in Belleville, N.B., says he plans to shut down operations within the next six weeks, citing a dramatic drop in sales, fewer Canadian travellers, and a lack of federal support.

“Canadians just aren’t crossing the border in the numbers they used to,” Slipp said,

“At the end of last year, we were down 20 per cent from 2019 levels. Now, we’re talking 50 to 60 per cent down. It’s devastating.”

Although American visitors contribute to the business, Slipp says the store relies overwhelmingly on Canadian customers—who are eligible to shop duty free at Canadian land border stores.

“Canadian travellers are the backbone of our business,” he explained. “Once the summer tourism season ends, we depend heavily on local Canadians crossing the border—and



Duty-free stores at the Canadian-US border are feeling the pinch from the slowdown in Canadian visitors to the US

they just aren’t coming anymore.”The Frontier Duty Free Association, representing 32 duty-free stores across Canada, reports similar struggles across the country. Many member businesses have seen revenue fall by 60 to 80 per cent due to ongoing border slowdowns.

In June, the association joined 15

mayors from border communities in calling on Ottawa for urgent financial support, and for Canada to align its tax and export rules with U.S. duty-free policies to level the playing field.Slipp says he’s spent the past year trying to stretch limited resources while lobbying for help through the trade associa

tion. “We’ve been operating on a shoestring—trying to buy time,” he said. “During the pandemic, we received support under emergency orders. But now, that’s all gone, and we’re still in crisis.”



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US-sanctioned Azruddin Mohamed's relatives dismiss his campaign for office as 'ego driven'

WITH general and regional elections drawing near, businesswoman Sarah Ibrahim has publicly distanced herself from the presidential ambitions of her cousin, US-sanctioned Azruddin Mohamed, warning Guyanese not to fall for what she described as "a rich man's vanity project."

Her comments, made in a strongly worded Facebook post, come at a time when Mohamed is ramping up his political campaign for 'We Invest in Nationhood' party under the guise of "independent leadership."

But Ibrahim's statement cuts to the core of what many observers have already been saying: this isn't about service, it's about ego.

"It's no secret that my cousins have decided to run for presidency and the majority of our family is against him. Our love for The Mohameds is great, the family tree bends it doesn't break. Our respect for our patriarch is still there, the truth that I think we can all agree on in and out of the family is, he has worked hard and was supported by his family thru the journey, no one wants to see his legacy be destroyed by the ego of his misguided children.

"If these were complete strangers to me, I would have voiced the same criticism, and 100 percent sure it would have been worse. I'm smart and my future and my children's future depend on whoever is running our country," Ibrahim wrote.

Ibrahim took aim at the lack of policy, direction, or clear answers coming from the campaign, noting that some Guyanese in the diaspora are pushing a narrative far removed from the lived reality at home.

She called out persons for following behind the Mohamed campaign, mocking how even party members struggle to pronounce their candidate's name "Az, Azure, Azo" a symbol, she said, of just how unserious the whole thing is.

"We want Azurdeen, Azo, Azure, Az! His party members can't even get his name right. But are the people so gullible, that when faced with real questions about our country there are no answers. Only the allure of help. No real



Azruddin Mohamed has been sanctioned by the US Treasury Department

answers of how we help each other and grow OUR country," she said.

As such, Ibrahim warned voters not to be swayed by social media campaigns and charity handouts.

"It's like the beautiful, magical Lambo that fascinated the nation will immediately fix all the roads, provide jobs and [give] fat bank accounts to every citizen? A rev of the engine will heal all illnesses and rainbows and gold coins will rain down on Guyanese with every turn it makes. Getting into all the good, the bad and the ugly won't answer the questions, because people aren't ready for the answers," she added.

She urged against throwing all the progress made over the past few years for a "feel-good campaign."

"In just about 50 days don't listen to the noise. Don't follow the pomp and scene. Look at the progress. Look at the speed at which our country is moving. It can't happen overnight but it's happening," she said.

Ibrahim made it clear that her post wasn't about family drama, it's about Guyana's future.

The businesswoman is not the first family member to come out against him. Recently, two of Azruddin's uncles, Mohamed Yusuf and Mohamed Haseeb Yusuf, publicly declared that he is not capable of leading Guyana.

"My nephew, Azruddin Mohamed, he does not understand politics, he does not understand geo-politics, he is a political [novice]...I don't think he has that ability, and he is not that educated...that is my main reason. If he had those qualities, I would have been the first to endorse him, but he doesn't have leadership qualities. So that is why I just dismiss him," Mohamed Yusuf had said.

Yusuf did not mince his words as he called out his nephew for turning his father's 30 years of quiet but meaningful charity into a "political circus" to fuel his own "narcissistic" ambitions.

"He hijacked his father's charity and he is going about now and turn it into a political circus. He is going to the people and show them that he is such a charitable man and he deserves to lead them. But this guy is not fit, and he and his sister, Hannah Mohamed, they just

wake up one morning and decide to form a political party because Azruddin has some social media standing and has a lot of followers. These people are just social media freaks," Yusuf said.

The two highly respected Muslim men endorsed President, Dr. Irfaan Ali for a second term in office, describing him as the man capable of taking charge of Guyana's further development.

Haseeb Yusuf had said too: "I have examined most of the candidates who are vying for leadership, for the highest office of this country and I have recognised that there is only one person, one candidate that has all of the prerequisites, to lead this country into the new era of development, the one who has the credentials, the vision, the competence, the empathy and the integrity, that goes with the office.

"I have examined all of the candidates, including my nephew, Azruddin Mohamed, and I have only seen one person that outshines all the others...I hereby endorse Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali as President for the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for a second term," the religious leader, educator, and social activist had said.

Nazar Mohamed, his son Azruddin and their businesses, namely Mohamed's Enterprise, Hadi's World and Team Mohamed's Racing, on June 11 2024, were sanctioned by U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which oversees sanctions against individuals and entities tied to illicit activities and hostile foreign governments.

In a June 2024 statement, the OFAC stated, "Azruddin and Mohamed's Enterprise evaded Guyana's tax on gold exports, and defrauded the Guyanese government of tax revenues by under-declaring their gold exports to Guyanese authorities. Between 2019 and 2023, Mohamed's Enterprise omitted more than 10 thousand kilogrammes of gold from import-and-export declarations, and avoided paying more than US\$50 million in duty taxes to the Government of Guyana."



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Canadian-Born Man Barred From Re-Entering U.S. Over Past Offences

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

For more than 40 years, Canadian-born Christopher Landry has called the United States home.

The 46-year-old, who moved to the U.S. as a toddler, lives in New Hampshire with his wife and five children.

A green card holder, Landry has built a life in America—but now finds himself unexpectedly stranded in Canada.

“I’m a Can-American,” he says. “I have deep Canadian roots, but I also love the U.S. That’s my home.”

Landry travels annually to visit family in New Brunswick, and this summer was no different—until his attempt to return across the border in Houlton, Maine, was blocked. U.S. border agents detained him for three hours before turning him away.

“They said I had to seek a pathway to an immigration judge,” Landry recalled, referencing two prior convictions—one for cannabis possession in 2004, and another for driving with a suspended licence in 2007. “I was told if I try to re-enter again, I’ll be detained—possibly for months or years—until my case is heard.”

That uncertainty weighs heavily on him.

“There’s no simple route to an immigration hearing from outside the country,” he said.

“Right now, the fastest way is being detained. That’s a terrifying thought.”

His two daughters, who were with him at the time, have since returned to the U.S. But Landry remains in Grand-Barachois, New Brunswick, staying with his grandmother while trying to resolve the situation. He’s worried about the family he had to leave behind—and how



The US border in Maine was closed to a Canadian Green Card holder

long it might be before he sees them again.

“It feels like death,” he said quietly. “I miss them a lot. I can’t even think about it. I just have to stay focused.”

Landry said he has crossed the border multiple times since 2007 without incident and was unaware his past offences could cause problems.

Now, he’s scrambling to find legal options—speaking with lawyers and even reaching out to his senator for support.

“I’m a third-generation green card holder,” he said. “We’ve always lived peacefully alongside our American neighbours. We never imagined this would happen.”

His grandmother Clara, who also holds a green card, said she was shocked.

“For 40 years, we crossed the border with just our green cards. No issues,” she said. “We didn’t need passports. They told us that was enough.”

Blair Hodgman, an immigration lawyer based in Nova Scotia (who is not representing Landry), says U.S. immigration law has long considered controlled substance convictions grounds for inadmissibility—but enforcement may now be stricter.

“Legally, he’s inadmissible and could be subject to detention,” Hodgman explained. “The law hasn’t changed, but the scrutiny has increased. They’re

catching more people now.”

Landry’s story has also drawn political attention. A former supporter of Donald Trump, he says public reaction has been harsh—from both ends of the political spectrum.

“I don’t agree with Trump’s policies anymore,” he said. “He’s hurting people who haven’t done anything wrong. People make mistakes—but what matters is what you do after.”

“I don’t support illegal immigration or breaking the law,” he added. “I just wanted a better future for my kids. But now, we’re paying the price—and it’s been really hard.”

—with files from Global News

A Legal Luminary with a Heart for Humanity

Toronto is home to many professionals, but few shine as brightly as Dave Deonorine, a prominent attorney-at-law whose reputation spans not only the legal corridors of Canada but the hearts of the Guyanese diaspora. Born in Canada to Guyanese parents, Dave has spent years mastering the legal field from real estate transactions and corporate law to family settlements and wills all while never forgetting his roots.

A humble and compassionate figure, Dave’s passion for service extends beyond the courtroom. He’s a consistent supporter of philanthropic efforts, giving back generously to Guyanese communities both in Canada and abroad. His frequent visits to Guyana reflect a deep commitment to uplifting the underprivileged, with plans to offer free legal services in the future.

In a moment of honor and gratitude, Maulana Manzoor Baksh, visiting from Guyana, visited the Dave Deonorine Law Firm in Toronto to present Dave with a Recognition Pin a small token symbolizing immense appreciation for his selfless work and dedication to our people.

Photo courtesy Andrieko Basir





Agriculture Minister Zulkifar Mustapha with officials at the signing of the MoU

Guyana to partner with top US agricultural company to brand food hub

In a landmark move to accelerate Guyana’s regional leadership in food security and agri-business development, the Government of Guyana today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Blumberg Grain and Logistics, a renowned U.S.-based agricultural company, to collaborate on the marketing and branding of the regional food hub currently under construction at Yarrowkabra, along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway.

The MoU signing was hosted at the Ministry of Agriculture’s main boardroom and is seen as a pivotal milestone in Guyana’s food security agenda, championed by His Excellency, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. The agreement lays the foundation for integrating modern marketing strategies and branding mechanisms to expand Guyana’s agricultural exports, reduce post-harvest losses, and secure a stronger presence in

the CARICOM and South American markets.

While delivering remarks at the event, Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Zulkifar Mustapha, emphasized the transformational progress Guyana has made since 2020. He said that Guyana is the only country in the world that can feed its citizens. That is a tremendous achievement for us because when we started in 2020, we saw a sector that was run down; Guyana had lost its place in CARICOM. Today, under the visionary leadership of His Excellency Dr. Irfaan Ali, Guyana is leading the food security agenda in the region.

Chairman of Blumberg Grain and Logistics, Philip Blumberg, noted that the partnership will focus on maximizing export potential through reducing losses in the value chain. He said while Guyana is self-sufficient, the first step toward expanding exports is reducing

post-harvest loss — the loss from field to market. If we can minimize that, farmers will have more income, more marketable volume, and greater access to regional markets in CARICOM and northern South America.

Also present at the ceremony, U.S. Ambassador to Guyana, H.E. Nicole Theriot, hailed the agreement as a transformative moment in regional development.

“I’m absolutely thrilled to be here today to witness this partnership — the first step in an incredibly important collaboration between Blumberg Grain and the visionary Government of Guyana. President Ali told me from the beginning that food security is a top priority. This deal goes beyond CARICOM. It has the potential to change lives across the entire region, and I’m proud this partnership involves a U.S. company.” Ambassador Theriot said.

Speaking on the broader economic implications of the agreement, Senior Minister within the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr. Ashni Singh, reaffirmed agriculture’s central role in Guyana’s development strategy. He said that upon assuming Office in 2020, President Ali said that the government had, as a principal economic objective, the realization of a globally competitive non-oil economy. One of the main pillars of that economy is agriculture. It is no accident that agriculture features so prominently in our national policy and economic priorities.

This strategic partnership between the Government of Guyana and Blumberg Grain marks a bold step toward achieving sustainable agriculture-led growth, not only for Guyana but for the wider region.



CARICOM condemns Venezuela’s defiance of ICJ order

HEADS of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have reaffirmed their unwavering support for Guyana’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, strongly condemning Venezuela’s recent attempts to assert authority over the Essequibo region in defiance of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

During the recently concluded 49th Regular Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government of CARICOM in Montego Bay, Jamaica, leaders received an update on the ongoing border controversy and expressed deep concern over Venezuela’s claim to have conducted regional elections in the so-called “Guayana Esequiba State” on May 25, 2025.

Despite Venezuela’s public assertions, CARICOM noted that no such elections were actually held within the Essequibo region, which remains under the control and administration of Guyana.

The move, they noted, was a blatant challenge to the ICJ’s binding order issued on May 1, 2025, which explicitly prohibited Venezuela from holding or preparing to hold any elections in the disputed area.

The ICJ’s directive—adopted by a vote of 12 to 3—expanded on earlier provisional measures from December 1, 2023. It states clearly that, pending a final decision, Venezuela must “refrain from conducting elections, or preparing to conduct elections, in the territory in dispute,” a region which the Co-operative Republic of Guyana currently administers.



Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community

The court in its December 1, 2023 order stated: “Pending a final decision in the case, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela shall refrain from taking any action which would modify the situation that currently prevails in the territory in dispute for which the Co-operative Republic of Guyana administers and exercises control over that area; and both parties shall refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the court or make it more difficult to resolve.”

The recent decision followed Venezuela’s January 2025 announcement that it intended to include the Essequibo region in its May regional polls by electing a governor and legislative council for what it refers to as “Guayana Esequiba State.” The planned elections were timed

to coincide with the eve of Guyana’s 59th Independence anniversary.

Heads of Government reiterated their full support for the ICJ-led judicial process as the only legitimate and peaceful mechanism for resolving the century-old controversy—one that dates back to the 1899 Arbitral Award, which established the boundary between the two countries.

In line with the ICJ’s scheduling order, CARICOM leaders also urged Venezuela to submit its final written pleading, or rejoinder, by August 11, 2025.

Guyana, which initiated the proceedings before the World Court in 2018, is seeking a final and binding ruling that upholds the 1899 Arbitral Award.

The Essequibo region in question

comprises nearly two-thirds of Guyana’s landmass and has remained under Guyana’s effective control for decades.

Following the May 1 ruling, Guyana’s President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, declared, via social media, that the decision was a victory for international law. “Once again, Guyana’s position has prevailed. Once again, it has been demonstrated that Guyana’s position accords with international law,” the Head of State affirmed. The World Court’s judgement serves as a decisive response to Venezuela’s escalating efforts to alter the status quo of the disputed territory. In both its December 2023 and May 2025 orders, the Court emphasised that Venezuela must not take any steps that could aggravate or extend the dispute or undermine a peaceful resolution.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

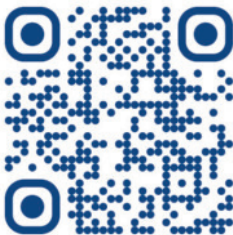
- Build a globally cohesive community with a focus on youth and women in business and civic leadership worldwide.
- Support social entrepreneurship and civic engagement in communities around the world.
- Engage diaspora communities in the social and economic development of Guyana.

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

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
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Sea travel between Guyana and other CARICOM countries to cost under US\$100

A SINGLE ticket for sea travel between Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, with stops to other Caribbean islands, could soon cost less than US\$100.

This comes as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) intensifies efforts to revolutionise regional transportation and deepen economic integration across member states.

Barbados’ Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Kerrie Symmonds, announced the initiative during

a recent press conference following the recent CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in Jamaica.

The plan, he said, is not only to move goods more efficiently but also to allow affordable and practical movement of people throughout the region.

“The ambition is to have those costs per person well beneath US\$100—making access between the islands far more competitive,” Symmonds declared, as he outlined a vision for seamless regional travel similar to that found



Trinidad’s Galleons Passage has been assigned as the new ferry

in Europe.

While a vessel has already been identified for cargo transport between Guyana and Barbados, the initiative has grown to include the development of a passenger ferry system with possible stops in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, and other CARICOM states.

Symmonds emphasised that the aim is not simply logistical—it is transformational.

“The intention is to have connectivity across the island chain,” the foreign minister explained. “For example, those products which may be brought from Guyana to Barbados may now then be carried to St Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica.”

Symmonds also painted a picture of an integrated future where regional entrepreneurs can easily move goods and services. “The businessman in Dominica who wishes to obtain some supplies from a hardware store in Barbados may wish to drive his van onto a ferry, be able to bring that van to Barbados, collect the things he wants, drive back onto that ferry and go back home,” he said.

According to Symmonds, this is a model that has already proven effective in Europe and could similarly serve as a powerful tool to advance the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). “They [Europe] have succeeded in deep-

ening their integration movement. We in CARICOM have now come to the point of deepening ours in a similar capacity,” he added.


The minister confirmed that “RoPax” vessels—designed for both roll-on/roll-off cargo and passenger service—have been identified. Similar vessels are currently used in ferry operations between Trinidad and Tobago.

“This is a process that is going to require substantial work over the next few weeks,” he noted. As part of the effort, Symmonds and Jamaica’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kamina Johnson Smith, have been appointed as lead ministers to oversee implementation.


Symmonds will focus on the southern Caribbean, while Johnson Smith will lead efforts in the northern region.

Key to the plan’s success will be the support of the private sector—and early signs are promising. “Discussion with the CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO) indicates that they are onboard,” Symmonds confirmed. “The discussion now is how we can drive the cost down.”

However, the initiative is not without challenges. Several legal and infrastructural obstacles must be addressed before passengers and vehicles can freely move between states.



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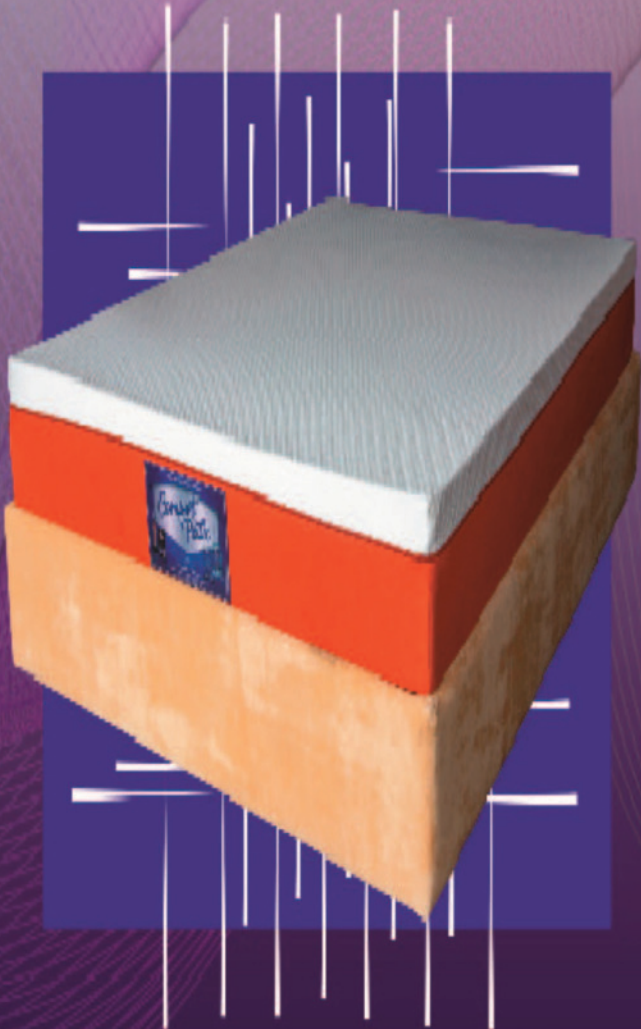
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Elections result could be declared day after close of polls: Persaud

CHIEF Elections Officer (CEO), Vishnu Persaud, on Monday, said that the declaration of results for the September 1, 2025, General and Regional Elections could be made as early as the end of following day after the close of polls.

Persaud made this known while speaking to members of the press at the end of Nomination Day held at the Umana Yana.

According to the CEO, the law requires that as soon as a Statements of Poll (SoP) are processed, they should simultaneously be posted to the website.

“So, the results of the election could be known even before we declare it because you could be sitting in your sitting room and be doing your own tabulation,” he said.

However, insofar as a declaration is concerned, Persaud stated that at the level of GECOM, at the district level, they are earmarked to have a declaration made on the night following polling day, meaning election results could be declared by the night of September 2.

“As a declaration is concerned, at the level of GECOM [Guyana Elections Commission], at the district level we are earmarked to have declarations done by the night of the day after election,” he told reporters.

However, he noted that the public declaration would depend on whether there would be a request for a recount, among other things.

Persaud went on to note that if there is a request for a recount, it would naturally hold back a national declaration.

In 2020, the country waited for five months to get the correct results of the elections. Citizens and persons abroad watched as the APNU+AFC and its affiliates attempted to derail the process and influence an outcome that favoured them.

GECOM Chairperson, retired Judge, Justice Claudette Singh, however, affirmed: “We would not have that kind of saga.”

Justice Singh assured Guyanese that stakeholders would be more vigilant, and the SoPs would be published online for the world to see.

“We have been looking at a lot of, many matters, and we are putting things in place,” she said.

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The GECOM Chairperson said both statutory and legislative safeguards have improved since 2020. International technical assistance is also being provided to bolster voter education and operations.

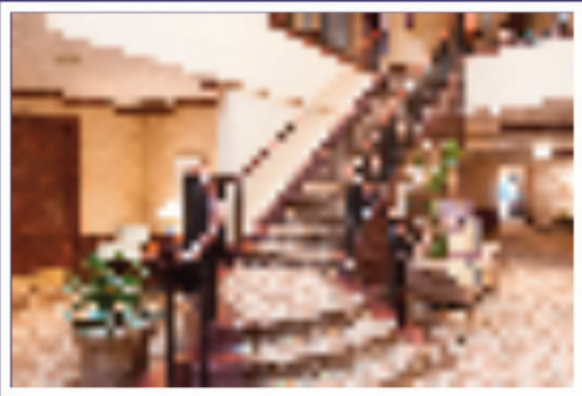
She said: “Well, we have separate persons working with operations. We have somebody who is working with, well, generally, you know, like to assist us in, well, putting out more information. You will find a lot of information going on. Yes, civic and voter regulation, and you will find information going on as well.”



Chief Elections Officer, Vishnu Persaud

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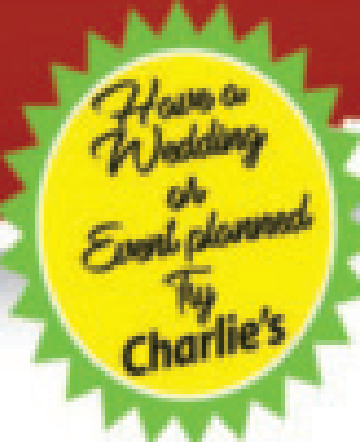


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We have the winning team, says President Ali after Nominations

WITH a candidate line-up that blends youth, national representation and experience, President, Dr. Irfaan Ali and the People’s Progressive Party’s (PPP) General Secretary, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo are confident that they have submitted the “winning lists” of candidates to contest the September 1 General and Regional Elections.

Monday July 14 was Nomination Day and the PPP/C with a massive crowd of over 8,000 people, came in their full red attire to present their lists to the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM).

Dr. Jagdeo, who is the leader of the PPP/C’s list was accompanied by President Ali, Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips and other party members to the venue of the Umana Yana in Kingston, Georgetown on Monday- Nomination Day.

GECOM’s Chief Elections Officer, Vishnu Persaud accepted the PPP/C’s list of candidates in a process that was transparent and smooth.

President Ali, after the party submitted its lists, described the PPP/C as an unshakeable force that is not just focused on attaining power but working for the people.

The candidates on the lists, the President said: “Is a representation of all of us...The list is the power of this family- the People’s Progressive Party.”

He also stated that the PPP/C will continue to be a party that focuses on growth, unity and development.

President Ali also described Dr. Jagdeo as a heavyweight champion in politics, expressing immense confidence in the PPP/C Leader of the Lists.

He also called out those media outlets who will try to paint the PPP/C’s “winning lists” in a negative light and rejected the brewing notions.

President Ali said the party hasn’t lost anyone and told the supporters to go in their communities, go on social media and tell their stories, outline the government’s impeccable track record.

Leader of the PPP/C’s lists Dr. Jagdeo, on the other hand, told supporters to hit the ground and mobilise in their communities to ensure all persons come out to vote on September 1.

“I need every one of you to work,” Dr. Jagdeo stated while emphasising that



A massive crowd turned up to support the candidates being nominated by the PPP/C

elections are won when people come out and vote.

Trustworthy, fulfils promises and possesses a vision for a Guyana that continues to move upwards are the elements that Dr. Jagdeo said the PPP/C

has that makes their lists the “winning lists.”

“I want each and every one of you to know that you are making history,” he said, pointing to the inevitable victory for PPP/C at the 2025 polls.

The PPP/C said the team of candidates presented on Monday provides the vision, the energy, the experience, the integrity and everything else required to steer Guyana in the right path over the next five years



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Nimisha Priya is currently lodged in the central jail of Yemen's capital Sanaa

Yemen postpones execution of Indian nurse on death row

Authorities in Yemen have postponed the execution of an Indian nurse who is on death row after being found guilty of murder, Indian foreign ministry sources say.

Nimisha Priya, who was sentenced to death for killing a local man, was set to be executed on 16 July, according to campaigners working to save her.

The nurse, who is from the southern Indian state of Kerala, denied murdering her former business partner Talal Abdo Mahdi, whose chopped-up body was discovered in a water tank in 2017.

The postponement of her execution is only a temporary reprieve - the only way she can be saved is if Mahdi's family pardons her.

Yemen's Islamic judicial system, known as Sharia, offers her one last hope - securing a pardon from the victim's family by paying diyah, or blood money, to them. Her relatives and supporters say they have raised \$1m (£735,000) and offered it to Mahdi's family.

"We are still trying to save her. But ultimately the family has to agree for pardon," Babu John, a member of the Save Nimisha Priya International Action Council, told the BBC last week after the date for her execution was set.

Mahdi's family, however, have made clear that they will settle for nothing less than her being put to death.

"Our stance on the attempts at reconciliation is clear; we insist on implementing God's Law in Qisas [retaliation in kind], nothing else," his brother, Abdelfattah Mahdi, told BBC Arabic on Monday, before the execution was postponed.

He added that his family had suffered "not only from the brutal crime but also the long, exhausting litigation process in a horrible and heinous but obvious crime case".

"We feel sorry to see the attempts to distort the truth, especially from the Indian media that portrays the convicted as a victim, to justify the crime. And we say it clearly that they are aiming to influence public opinion," he said.

"Any dispute, whatever its reasons and however big, can never justify a murder - let alone dismembering, mutilating and hiding the body."

The Indian foreign ministry sources said on Tuesday that its officials had been in touch regularly with jail authorities and the prosecutor's office in Yemen, where there has been a civil war since 2011.

The government "made concerted efforts in recent days to seek more time for the family of Ms Nimisha Priya to reach a mutually agreeable solution with the other party", they said.

Nimisha Priya left Kerala for Yemen in 2008 to work as a nurse. She was arrested in 2017 after Mahdi's body was discovered. The 34-year-old is presently lodged in the central jail in Sanaa, the Yemeni capital.

In 2020, a local court sentenced her to death. Her family challenged the decision in Yemen's Supreme Court, but their appeal was rejected in 2023.

In early January, Mahdi al-Mashat, president of the rebel Houthis' Supreme Political Council, approved her execution.

Nimisha's mother, a poor domestic helper from Kerala, has been in Yemen since April 2024 in a last-ditch effort to save her.

She has nominated Samuel Jerome, a Yemen-based social worker, to negotiate with Mahdi's family.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): You have been working extra hard of late and need a break but if you are expecting your superiors to suggest you take some time off you may be disappointed. Seize the initiative and tell them you will be winding down today whether they like it or not.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Someone you work or do business with will have a lot to say for themselves today and if you are smart you will listen and learn. The fact is they have the kind of experience that will take you years to acquire, so do what they suggest.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): If you need to make friends and influence people then you must be quick, because once your ruling planet Mercury turns retrograde on Friday it won't be so easy to make a good impression. Express yourself forcefully with both words and body language.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): There is a major luck factor working in your favor at the moment but that is not an excuse to sit back and let the good things in life come to you. Take your number one creative idea and find a way to turn it into serious cash.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): You rarely lack for confidence but something seems to have spooked you recently and now you may be wondering if you are on the right track. Don't let your doubts consume you but do look into what changes you can make to improve your chances.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): Sometimes you fear the worst for no good reason but as your ruler Mercury is about to begin its retrograde phase you would be wise to watch your back. Someone who secretly resents your success may be planning something that causes you problems.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): The higher your hopes and the bigger your plans the quicker you need to get your act together and start making things happen. Come the end of the week a door of opportunity that is currently wide open is likely to slam shut in your face.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): If you genuinely believe that your efforts will bring success then your belief will make it a fact. However, if you allow even a trace of doubt to creep into your mind, failure is more likely than not. Have faith in who you are and what you can do.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): You need to get your point across and you need to do so immediately. The longer you stay silent the harder it will be to find the words to express yourself, so speak up today and let others know why you've got it right and they've got it wrong.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): A number of good things have fallen into your lap of late, thanks to the Sun and Jupiter in your opposite sign, but you cannot expect your luck to last. Get smart and make sure you have the resources to tide you over any upcoming lean spells.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): The more other people say you should be doing this and doing that the more you must ignore them and let your inner compass guide you. Deep down a part of you already knows the answers you seek, so quiet your mind and let them come through.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): You need to get organized and you need to do so now. If you carry on rushing about with no clear goal in mind you will end up going around in circles and getting nowhere fast. Self-discipline is a must if you intend to make your mark.

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Barbados to host 2025 Caribbean Tourism Conference

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has announced that Barbados will host the 2025 edition of its premier State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) from September 30 to October 3 at the Hilton Barbados Resort.

Widely regarded as the region’s leading forum on tourism development, SOTIC 2025 will bring together government ministers, tourism executives, international partners, students, media, and other key stakeholders for high-level dialogue on policy, investment, research, and sustainable growth.

This year’s conference will be held under the theme: “Reimagining Caribbean Tourism: Research, Relevance and the Road Ahead.” It will focus on data-driven strategies to enhance global competitiveness and long-term sustainability across the region’s tourism sector. Highlights will include the Regional Tourism Youth Congress, which engages “Junior Ministers of Tourism” from CTO member nations.

New to the 2025 edition are sessions centered on emerging sectors such as sports tourism, medical tourism, and health and wellness — areas identified as high-potential growth markets aligned with evolving traveler preferences. These discussions aim to help Caribbean destinations diversify their offerings and build more resilient tourism economies.

“Barbados offers an ideal setting for this forward-looking dialogue on Caribbean tourism,” said Dona Regis-



Prosper, CTO Secretary-General and CEO. “As we reimagine the future of our sector, we must ground our strategies in solid research, ensure our actions are relevant to today’s traveler, and work together on a clear roadmap for what lies ahead.”

The event is being organized in collaboration with the Barbados Ministry of Tourism and International Transport and Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc., with support from both public and private sector partners.

“As the host destination and headquarters of CTO, Barbados is proud to welcome the region’s tourism leaders for this timely exchange,” said Andrea Franklin, CEO of Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. and Chairman of the CTO Board of Directors. “The theme of this year’s conference speaks to the heart of our mission — to advance tourism that is informed, inclusive and impactful.”

SOTIC 2025 will feature keynote speeches, expert panels, data presenta-

tions, workshops, and networking events, all designed to support regional transformation through collaboration. Attendees will also receive updates on CTO’s “Reimagine 2025–2027” strategic plan, which aims to reshape the Caribbean tourism landscape.

More information on registration, accommodations, and sponsorship opportunities is available at: <https://www.onecaribbean.org/sotic-2025>.

Jamaica earns US\$2.4 billion in 2025 tourism revenue

Jamaica has recorded approximately 2.3 million visitors since the start of 2025, generating US\$2.4 billion in earnings from the tourism sector.

The update was delivered by Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, during the opening ceremony of the 11th ‘Christmas in July’ trade show at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on Thursday (July 10). Bartlett noted that the tourism industry grew by two per cent in the first quarter of the year, contributing to a one per cent increase in the country’s overall economic performance.

“After Hurricane Beryl and all the disruptions – travel advisories, political and geopolitical issues – we are back on the growth path, and that’s going to continue,” Mr. Bartlett said, highlighting the sector’s resilience and renewed momentum despite the challenges faced in 2024.

The minister also projected a significant increase in tourism earnings for the current quarter, compared to the



Jamaica welcomed 2.3 million visitors in 2025 so far

same period last year, crediting the strong rebound from the disruptions caused by Hurricane Beryl.

“I’m worried about how big the growth is going to look for this quarter

because... you’re comparing a Beryl period to now, a normal period. But that’s how growth goes, because you’re measuring against another period. The good news is that you’re

back to where you were in 2023,” he stated.

Mr. Bartlett urged the 180 exhibitors participating in the two-day trade show to capitalise on the expanding tourism sector and the increasing demand for Jamaican-made products.

“A new demand has been created for goods and services that must be supplied by you; and if it is not supplied by you, it is going to have to be imported. If it is imported, then we are going to have what we call leakage. That is to say, the [earnings] that [have] come from tourism will leave by the same plane that brings the visitors or the same ship that brings the cruise passenger. We want the money to stay here,” he said.

The ‘Christmas in July’ trade show, which ended on Friday (July 11), offered local producers and creatives a platform to showcase their products while networking with key stakeholders from the tourism industry, corporate Jamaica, and international organisations.

Dominica announces gun amnesty, firearms task force amid surge in crime

The government of Dominica has unveiled a slate of urgent measures to combat rising gun violence, including a limited gun amnesty, the formation of a special firearms task force, and financial rewards for information leading to the seizure of illegal weapons.

The announcement came Monday from Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, who addressed the nation alongside National Security Minister Rayburn Blackmoore, Police Commissioner Lincoln Corbette, and senior law enforcement officials. The measures follow a series of violent incidents, including the shooting of a South Korean crew member from the Logos Hope vessel last week in Roseau.

“These incidents, brazen and reckless, have disrupted the peace and shaken the sense of safety that we hold dear as a people,” said Skerrit. “Let me be clear: this government will not tolerate lawlessness.”

The injured Logos Hope crew member, who was shot in the buttocks while walking in the capital, underwent surgery at the Dominica China Friendship Hospital and has since been discharged.

Skerrit said that after returning to the country on Sunday, he held an emergency security meeting, resulting in the following key measures:

- Establishment of a dedicated Firearms Task Force comprising personnel from the Police CID, Special Branch, K9 Unit, Customs and Excise Division, Coast Guard, and National Joint Intelligence Centre (NJIC).
- Confidential hotline for reporting illegal firearms, with a reward of EC\$1,000 for tips that lead to seizures.
- Limited gun amnesty, allowing citizens to surrender illegal firearms without fear of prosecution.
- Ban on tinted windows in rental vehicles.
- Engagement of a special prosecutor to handle all major gun-related cases.
- Immediate increase in police foot and mobile patrols, particularly in Roseau.
- Nationwide installation of surveillance cameras, starting in the capital.

Details regarding the amnesty’s duration and firearm drop-off protocols will be provided by the police, Skerrit said.

“Dominica is a peaceful nation, and we will not permit our streets to become battlegrounds,” he declared. “We will find you. We will disarm you. And we will prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law.”

Commissioner Corbette disclosed that 11 murders have occurred in Dominica so far this year, four of them involving firearms. He confirmed that suspects have been identified in three



Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit

cases: Ian Alfred, Brent Alexander, and Jamal Ismael Alexis—all considered armed and dangerous.

Since mid-June, police have made four arrests and seized seven firearms, 84 rounds of ammunition, 16 motorcycles, three vehicles, and 1.1 kilograms of cocaine, in addition to EC\$15,000 in cash.

Overall for the year, police have seized 49 firearms and 289 rounds of ammunition, including three high-powered AR-15-type rifles. Corbette emphasized the seriousness of these findings: “Those are weapons of war, and they do not belong on the streets of Dominica.”

Historical figures show a troubling trend:

- 2022: 92 firearms, 2,140 rounds seized
- 2023: 35 firearms, 1,651 rounds
- 2024 to date: 27 firearms, 764 rounds

In total, 175 people have been arrested for firearm-related offenses over the past four years.

Minister Blackmoore rejected recent calls for his resignation, asserting that public safety must take precedence. “If we want safe streets, we must allow the police, with reason, to carry out their duties,” he said, urging citizens to cooperate with law enforcement.

Skerrit concluded by thanking the police for their service and reaffirming government support: “You have the full support of this Government, once you carry out your duties within the confines of the constitution and laws of Dominica.”

SVG reports five straight months of economic growth

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves expressed satisfaction with the performance of the local economy during the first five months of 2025, highlighting a significant increase in capital expenditure.

“And last year was a record year. Last year was about EC\$250 million (One EC dollar = US\$0.37 cents),” Gonsalves said, noting that capital expenditure had stood at EC\$69 million at the end of May 2024. He revealed that the figure has since increased to EC\$131 million this year.

“But if you say that, they more or less even out what didn’t come to account last year ... this year will also be another bumper year,” he added, emphasizing that his numbers are “rough guides — trends.”

“Amazing, eh? You hear money?” Gonsalves remarked, reporting that total revenue and grants through May 2025 rose 16.9 per cent year on year, from EC\$319.5 million to EC\$373.4 million.

“The current revenue component alone went up by 11.2% from EC\$310.3 million to EC\$345 million,” he said. “Not bad eh?”

On expenditure, Gonsalves noted a 25.6 per cent increase, rising from EC\$384 million in 2024 to EC\$482 million year-on-year during the same period.

“I’m rounding the numbers off. That’s a big, big jump,” he said, adding that there was a deficit of approximately EC\$6.5 million, compared to EC\$4.3 million last year.

“Well, given what we have done, that deficit on the current account is a small deficit,” the prime minister said.

“If this was an exam report and you take it home to your mammy, your mammy would say, ‘Well done. Well done. You’re definitely getting promoted. You’re going up,’” Gonsalves said.

Jamaica becomes latest CARICOM country to join Afreximbank

Jamaica has officially acceded to the Establishment Agreement of the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), becoming the 13th Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member State to join the African multilateral financial institution.

The historic signing took place last week on the sidelines of the 49th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community.

Jamaica’s accession represents a major milestone in the growth of Global Africa, an intercontinental partnership focused on economic transformation and self-determination for African nations and their diaspora. This move unlocks an additional US\$1.5 billion in financing for Jamaica and other Caribbean economies, increasing Afreximbank’s total approved facility for the region to US\$3 billion, contingent on full CARICOM membership.

At the signing ceremony, Prof. Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Afreximbank, highlighted the mutual benefits of the partnership.

“We are thrilled to welcome Jamaica into the Afreximbank family. Jamaica’s accession to the Partnership Agreement marks a pivotal step towards realising the vision of our forefathers—a united and prosperous Global Africa, built on a platform of South-South cooperation. The Partnership Agreement unlocks Afreximbank’s financing solutions, trade facilitation tools, and investment opportunities, empowering Jamaican businesses to access African markets while fostering reciprocal trade,” he said.

Jamaica’s Prime Minister, Dr. The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, expressed optimism about the benefits Jamaica’s membership will bring.

“This is a significant and strategic step that strengthens Jamaica’s ability to access increased trade financing, in-



Dr. The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, The Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, Mr Okechukwu Ihejirika, Ag. Chief Operating Officer of Afreximbank Caribbean Regional Office and Prof. Benedict Oramah GCON, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Afreximbank pose after Jamaica signed Afreximbank’s establishment agreement

vestment support, and technical assistance. The agreement creates real opportunities for Jamaica to benefit from Afreximbank’s expanding suite of financial instruments, including trade guarantees, project financing, and capital support tailored to the needs of de-

veloping economies. It positions Jamaica to tap into new sources of funding for critical sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, agriculture, and the creative industries, while laying the foundation for deeper collaboration between African and Caribbean businesses,” Holness stated.

This milestone builds on momentum from the inaugural AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum (ACTIF), held in Bridgetown, Barbados, in September 2022, where Caribbean nations reaffirmed their commitment to closer Africa-Caribbean cooperation. Since then, Afreximbank has hosted successive ACTIFs in Guyana (2023) and The Bahamas (2024), with the fourth forum

scheduled for July 28–29, 2025, in Grenada.

Since opening its regional office, Afreximbank has approved over US\$700 million in financing across the Caribbean, with a pipeline exceeding US\$2 billion. Investments have supported key sectors such as energy, tourism, education, and small business development in Barbados, St. Lucia, Suriname, Grenada, and The Bahamas. Additionally, the Bank provided over US\$4.3 million in pandemic-related assistance through the Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) to The Bahamas, Antigua & Barbuda, and Trinidad & Tobago.



JLP chairman declares party ready for upcoming general election

Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) Chairman Robert Montague says the party is fully prepared for the upcoming general election, declaring that its machinery is in place and energized for a third term in office.

Montague made the announcement Sunday night at a gospel concert hosted by the JLP’s Area Council Two in Old Harbour, St. Catherine. He responded directly to the question of why Jamaicans should return the party to power.

“We have our 18 candidates in Area Council 2. The canvas ready, the workers ready, the voters ready. We are ready. Wi ready! Wi ready!” declared the party chairman to cheers from supporters.

“As we warm up and trottle up and fix up and get ready, I want you... as you go about and you get your good ideas, to forward the good ideas to the party so we can put them in the manifesto so we can present it to the people of Jamaica and we can say to the people of Jamaica, these are the plans that we have for you — plans to prosper you and plans to make you good, wealthy and strong. Because the Jamaica Labour Party is on a mission to move Jamaica from poverty to prosperity, and we have been doing a good job,” Montague added.

The chairman’s remarks follow recent comments by JLP General Secretary Dr. Horace Chang, who also signaled that the election is approach-



Jamaicans celebrate after elections in 2020

ing.

“I don’t know the date or the time but I know it is near,” Chang said last week.

With Parliament now on its summer break, lawmakers from both major parties are expected to ramp up their campaign efforts in anticipation of a general election widely expected by September. Prime Minister Andrew Holness, as head of government, holds the constitutional authority to set the election date.

Under the Jamaican Constitution, Parliament must be dissolved no later than five years after its first sitting following the previous election. That timeline requires dissolution by September 14, 2025, with an election held within three months after that. However, elections are typically called before the full five-year term ends. The last general election took place on September 3, 2020, and the new Parliament convened on September 15.

In a court ruling last month, Supreme Court Justice Lorna Shelly-Williams confirmed that the current Parliament “must be dissolved on or before the 14 September 2025.”

In recent weeks, political momentum has been building. Both the JLP and the Opposition People’s National Party (PNP) have ramped up public events, rolled out policy proposals, and increased grassroots mobilization. The upcoming election is expected to be closely watched, as the JLP seeks a third consecutive term and the PNP attempts to regain power amid national concerns over economic growth, crime, and governance. In the 2020 election, the JLP secured 49 of the 63 seats in the House of Representatives, while the PNP won 14.

Jamaica tourism sector on track to see record growth

Jamaica’s Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, says the country’s tourism sector is firmly back on track and poised for record-breaking growth, following a turbulent period marked by global and regional challenges.

Speaking with JIS News, Minister Bartlett noted that the industry has overcome several setbacks—including a now-downgraded U.S. travel advisory, lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and natural disasters like Hurricane Beryl—and is now operating in full recovery mode.

“I have always maintained that growth is what we are about, and we are never and will never be satisfied with being flat or experiencing negative growth,” he said. “When we see negative figures, it makes us uneasy because our goal is always to grow, regardless of what’s happening anywhere else in the world.”

Prior to the recent U.S. travel advisory—which has since moved from level three to a more favourable level two—Jamaica’s tourism industry was already showing resilience, with visitor arrivals and revenue on the rise. The Minister noted that the country had been on the



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett

verge of achieving historic performance levels before these external disruptions impacted momentum.

Now, with travel conditions stabilizing and the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) and key stakeholders aligned, the outlook is strong. As of mid-year, Jamaica has welcomed approximately 2.3 million visitors, generating US\$2.4 billion in tourism earnings—a clear signal

that the sector is regaining its stride.

These figures also reflect progress toward Jamaica’s ambitious 5x5x5 tourism growth strategy, which targets US\$5 billion in revenues and five million visitors by March 31, 2026.

“We’re now about halfway through the year, and I believe we’re on track,” Bartlett stated. “We’re also focusing on boosting cruise arrivals, which currently stand at about 750,000.”

To support continued growth and create deeper linkages with the local economy, the Minister revealed that new legislation and regulatory frameworks are being drafted. These will encourage long-term supply contracts between Jamaican manufacturers and the tourism sector, particularly as the country moves toward a luxury and high-end tourism model.

“As we shift toward luxury and high-end tourism, the demand for authentic Jamaican products will grow. We will implement a ‘local first’ policy, prioritising Jamaican suppliers, unless a product is unavailable locally,” he said.

Bartlett also encouraged entrepreneurs to leverage platforms like the Christmas in July trade show as an opportunity to elevate their businesses.

Trinidad gov't to implement tough new measures to tackle crime surge

Homeland Security Minister Roger Alexander says Trinidad and Tobago is set to roll out aggressive new crime-fighting initiatives in the coming days, as the government moves to curb the spiraling violence gripping the country.

“In the coming week, you will see what we are coming with. Some persons may not agree, but then it is done for the citizens of this country to have a better quality of life, a safe and secure environment,” Alexander said Monday, during an appearance on a local television program.

The former top police officer, who now serves in the Kamla Persad Bissessar-led administration, acknowledged that the country is in the throes of a serious public safety crisis. Since the general election on April 28, more than 80 people have been murdered.

“My responsibility as the Homeland Security Minister is to ensure that all my citizens are safe and have a comfortable life,” Alexander said. “If there are persons who cannot or bring themselves to the level where they too must understand that they live here, then we must do things to confine them or remove them from among members of the population.”

While specific details remain under wraps, Alexander assured the public that a suite of initiatives aimed at reducing gun violence, murders, and shootings will be implemented shortly. He signaled that some elements of the plan may be controversial but insisted they are necessary.

“What we intend to do to have that sustainable impact in the first instance is to roll out some of the ideas that we have, some we can say to the members of the public, and some we cannot,” he said, adding that following an upcoming strategy session, he will confer with the Commissioner of Police to determine the next steps.

The Minister also announced an enhanced security presence in communities and around schools, promising that “in the not-too-distant future, you will be able to see police vehicles in every junction, highway, and byway.”

He took a swipe at the previous administration, suggesting they hesitated to



Jamaica Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang meets with Hon. Roger Alexander, Minister of Homeland Security, Trinidad and Tobago during a courtesy call.

spend adequately on security: “The former administration would have indicated that it had been spending too much money on crime. Still, this administration is sparing no resources to ensure the safety and security of our people.”

Alexander also disclosed that he recently held talks with Jamaica’s National Security Minister, Dr. Horace Chang, during the CARICOM Heads of Government Summit in Montego Bay. The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in crime prevention and information-sharing between the two countries.

A release from Trinidad and Tobago’s Ministry of Homeland Security said both ministers pledged to maintain open communication between their national security agencies and committed

to continued collaboration in tackling criminal networks across the region.

“The meeting solidified the bonds of friendship between Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica and set the tone for a strengthened partnership on security

matters,” the statement read.

As crime continues to weigh heavily on the national psyche, Alexander warned that those determined to flout the law will soon “feel the heavy hands of law enforcement.”



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Chase calls for reflection after West Indies’ 27-run debacle

The West Indies cricket team endured one of the darkest days in their storied history, crumbling to an unfathomable 27 all out in their second innings against Australia at Sabina Park on Monday.

It was a collapse so brutal that it etched itself into the annals of Test cricket ignominy: the second-lowest total in the format’s history, and the lowest ever recorded by a West Indies side, eclipsing the previous nadir of 47.

Australia’s 3-0 series whitewash was sealed in just 14.3 overs on the third day of the final Test. The Sabina Park faithful watched in stunned disbelief as Mitchell Starc ripped through the batting order in a devastating burst, claiming five wickets in only 15 deliveries—the fastest five-wicket haul in Test history.

Adding to the shame, the West Indies became the first team ever to record seven ducks in a single Test innings, a statistical scar that will linger for years.

A visibly dejected Roston Chase, leading the West Indies in his first series as captain, did not mince words in his post-match reflections.

“It’s disappointing,” Chase admitted. “We’ve been putting ourselves in positions to win games, and then we just lay down and don’t put up a fight in the last batting innings. It’s quite heartbreaking, because I think we did it in all three Tests, and we’re not really learning from our mistakes.”

The skipper acknowledged the magnitude of the collapse.

“Obviously, being bowled out for less than 30 is quite embarrassing,” he said. “I thought 204 was realistic. The wicket was still a good batting wicket. I didn’t think there were too many devils in the pitch like the last two games. We thought 204 was gettable. But then, obviously, with the start we had—11 for 6 or something like that—it’s very difficult to get those runs from there.”

The Sabina Park debacle capped a miserable series for the West Indies’ fragile batting unit. Across six innings in three Tests, their totals read: 190, 141, 253, 143, 143, and finally 27.

Only Brandon King provided fleeting resistance, registering the team’s sole half-century with 75 in Grenada. No other batter averaged above 20 for the series, underscoring the depth of the crisis.

While Chase acknowledged the challenging conditions, he refrained from using the pitches as an excuse.



West Indies captain Roston Chase

“I think the pitches were very tough. I don’t want to say they were too in favour of the bowlers, but they were very tough. This is probably the first series I’ve played where no batter got a hundred for either side. That just shows how dominant the bowlers were.”

Yet even that context could not soften the harsh reality: the West Indies had failed to adapt, failed to fight, and

failed to learn.

Looking ahead, Chase urged his team to use the break before their next assignment—a daunting tour of India in October—as a time for soul-searching and technical improvement.

“We need to really take a deep look at ourselves as batters. We’ve got time on our side now. We need to see where we can improve and how we can

put up 300-run totals,” he said.

With subcontinental conditions awaiting them, Chase emphasized the need for specific preparation.

“India is going to be different—probably more spinner-friendly. So, if we can have some batting camps around playing spin, I think that will be ideal for us.”

Hayley Matthews claims fourth ICC Award

Hayley Matthews, the inspirational captain of the West Indies Women’s team, has added another prestigious accolade to her already impressive résumé.

The 27-year-old all-rounder was named the ICC Women’s Player of the Month for June, outshining her own teammate Afy Fletcher and South African opener Tazmin Brits for the honor.

This latest triumph marks Matthews’ fourth time winning the award, placing her level with Australia’s Ash Gardner for the most ICC Women’s Player of the Month titles in history.

Matthews’ recognition comes on the back of an exceptional all-round performance in the recently concluded ODI and T20I series against South Africa in Barbados.

She played a pivotal role in guiding the West Indies Women to a 2-1 T20I series victory over South Africa, their first T20I series win against the Proteas in 12 years. Her performances were as commanding as they were



Hayley Matthews

consistent: T20I series: 147 runs at an outstanding average of 73.50 with a strike rate of 120.49, along with two wickets. ODI series: 104 runs at 34.66 and four wickets, underlining her value in all facets of the game.

It was a month that encapsulated

her class, resilience, and match-winning ability.

Upon receiving news of her award, Matthews expressed both gratitude and determination.

“It’s an honor to receive the Player of the Month award again,” she said. “I’ve been pleased with my form recently, but more importantly, it’s been great to contribute to the team’s success—especially in a hard-fought T20I series against South Africa.”

Even as she celebrated the personal milestone, Matthews kept her sights firmly on future ambitions.

“Recognition like this is appreciated, but my focus remains on what’s ahead. There’s a lot more I want to achieve, both personally and with this team. We’re heading in the right direction, and I’m excited about where we can go from here.”

Matthews’ leadership continues to drive a revitalized West Indies Women’s side. Under her captaincy, the team has shown renewed competitiveness and resilience, with her own performances setting the standard.



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“We don’t want to take away people’s freedom, we want to protect it” – NISA Head

Guyana’s strategic military framework is committed to the protection of its people and sovereignty, to ensure that peace and safety remain intact and are of paramount importance.

Appearing in the most recent episode of ‘Safeguarding Our Nation’, the Director of the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) Colonel Sheldon Howell said that the implementation of national security initiatives falls within the confines of the laws of Guyana.

“We do not want to take away people’s freedom, we want to protect it. Yes, we use CCTV, sophisticated cameras, drones, satellite imagery and other AI systems that detect patterns...,” the NISA head explained, adding that “we stick rigidly to the laws that govern us.”

Elaborating further, Col. Howell said that “every piece of equipment is logged and audited, and there is no access to footage without traceability. We also have strict access control and oversight systems. Soon we will have an oversight board with civil society voices.”

The head of NISA announced plans to improve the protection of children by enhancing response mechanisms for missing persons.

“We have also upgraded the response mechanism for missing persons, especially children, and soon enough as well. We will have a national alert sys-



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tem that sends real-time information to your phones, TVs, radios and social media platforms....These tools are not threats. Once it is used with discipline and purpose, [it] will earn the public’s trust,” he said.

When questioned about what is being done to safeguard Guyana’s valuable human resources, Col. Howell pointed out that “Guyana’s patrimony is not just oil, gold or timber. It is our identity, our future, and our sovereignty,” acknowledging that “there are many attempts by illicit actors to exploit it, especially in our hinterland and vulnerable areas.”

Col. Howell gave an example of smart technology being used in the hinterland region, stating that the joint

services collaborate with the Guyana Forestry Commission and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission to track illegal logging and mining.

“We use drones, satellite imagery and other technology, and most importantly, along with community intelligence, to provide that information for us to shut down those illegal mining operations. Within the past year, in Regions Seven, Eight and Nine, we have done that,” Howell explained.

Guyana’s waters are also being monitored. Col. Howell explained, “For example, along our rivers, we have intercepted many gold smuggling operations and unregulated dredging, especially near our borders.”

Explaining how forward operating

units act quickly to minimise damage, Col Howell said “our Coast Guard, the Police Marine Wing, the Maritime Administration and Department and the customs Anti-Narcotics unit are protecting our marine resources from illegal fishing vessels, especially from Venezuela, and from illegal drug trafficking and armed trafficking groups, we are now using sophisticated, state-of-the-art coastal radars and AIS systems to protect and monitor our sea space in real time.”

In Guyana’s commercial areas, Col Howell stated that naval presence has increased, particularly where oil exploration occurs.

“In our exclusive economic zone, especially near our oil exploration installations, we have increased maritime patrols and our domain awareness, supported deeply by our international partners like the United States and our regional allies,” Howell mentioned.

In his call to action from the public at large, the national intelligence director reminded citizens of the importance of community reporting if they suspect illegal activities are taking place in their environs.

“If you observe something, whether it is illegal dredging, illegal mining or a foreign vessel, make a call. Your call can save lives or protect national assets,” he stated.

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