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ALI, 'LULA' MEET: Guyana President, Dr. Irfaan Ali and his CARICOM counterparts, on Friday, attended the Brazil–Caribbean Summit 2025 with President Luis Inacio 'Lula' Da Silva, at the Itamaraty Palace in Brasília. During the meeting, the Presidents of both Guyana and Brazil took time away for a one-on-one meeting where they discussed, among other issues, the effects of climate change on their nations. *Story on Page 5*



The governments of Canada and India are set to establish a new structure to share information about cross-border crimes, their latest step toward rebuilding ties nearly two years after Canadian officials accused India of orchestrating the murder of a Sikh activist near Vancouver.



Finance Minister calls for banking reform

Guyana's Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance and the Public Service, Dr Ashni Singh, is calling on Guyana's banking sector to modernise its approach to lending by taking full advantage of legal reforms that permit the use of movable assets as collateral. Speaking recently on the matter of diversifying collateral to better support private sector growth, Dr. Singh described the issue as “a very topical conversation in Guyana right now,” adding that while the financial sector has played a stabilising role over the years, it is time for banks to evolve. “There is room, I believe, for the banking sector to be more aggressive in providing financing to the Guyanese private sector.”

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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
2015	0	0
2016	0	0
2017	0	0
2018	0	0
2019	0	0
2020	-2	40
2021	0	20
2022	0	60
2023	0	35
2024	0	43.60
2025	0	35
2026	0	20
2027	0	25
2028	0	15
2029	0	10
2030	0	10

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	4	3	2	3	2
2020	-8	-5	-4	-3	-2
2021	8	6	5	7	6
2022	10	4	3	5	4
2023	11	3	2	4	3
2024	12	3	2	4	3

GUYANA
The Gateway to OPPORTUNITIES

Guyana Unveils Region’s Largest Hydroponics Project in Bold Step Toward Food Security

By Clarissa Ali
LJI REPORTER

Guyana has taken a major step forward in its mission to achieve food security, with President Irfaan Ali announcing the launch of the largest hydroponics agriculture investment in the entire Latin American and Caribbean region.

In a Facebook post on Saturday, President Ali emphasized the significance of the new facility — located at the Guyana School of Agriculture in Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam) — describing it as a milestone not just for Guyana, but for the wider CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) region.

“This is the largest investment in hydroponics agriculture in the entire region. We’re talking about all of CELAC,” Ali said, referring to the one-acre state-of-the-art installation.

The President credited Guyana’s strides in agriculture and food self-sufficiency to strong public investment and forward-thinking policies.

“Guyana has been identified as the only food self-sufficient country in the world,” he said. “That didn’t happen by chance — it’s the result of sound policies, targeted investments, and the tireless efforts of our farmers. Now we’re pushing even further.”

Looking ahead, President Ali outlined plans to integrate Guyana’s agriculture sector more deeply into regional and global food markets.



President Irfaan Ali at one of NAREI’s shade houses

“We’re investing in infrastructure for sustainable and resilient food production — not just to feed ourselves, but to position Guyana as a hub for regional and international markets,” he said. “We’re building a business ecosystem that supports food production for Guyana, the Caribbean, and beyond.”

During a visit to the new hydroponics site, Ali also stressed the importance of youth involvement in agriculture, noting that similar farms are being developed across all regions of the country.

“How do we make agriculture exciting for young people? How do we

turn it into a viable, future-oriented enterprise?” he asked. “That’s exactly what these modern facilities are designed to do.”

The \$200 million facility is expected to produce over 40,000 pounds of lettuce each year and will create jobs for more than 200 people in the region.

It features a modern shade house equipped with automated irrigation, climate control, and agrochemical application systems. The farm will grow high-value crops like lettuce, tomatoes, bell peppers, and celery.

Ali said these hydroponics projects will play a crucial role in reducing Guyana’s agricultural imports and bol-

stering national food sovereignty.

“These facilities will help us cut our import bill by targeting high-demand crops while ensuring our agricultural practices are sustainable and resilient,” he said.

The initiative is part of a broader national strategy to position Guyana as a global leader in sustainable food systems.

With cutting-edge facilities, youth engagement, and export-focused ambitions, Guyana is laying the groundwork for a future where its agricultural sector is both self-sustaining and globally competitive.

Presidents Ali, ‘Lula’ discuss climate action, infrastructure at summit

WITH Guyana continuing to position itself as a leader both on the regional and international stages, President, Dr. Irfaan Ali recently held bilateral talks with his Brazilian counterpart, President Luis Inacio ‘Lula’ Da Silva, as it relates to sustainable development.

On Friday last, at the Brazil-Caribbean Summit in Brasilia, both Heads of State had a bilateral meeting, marking a significant moment in deepening engagement.

The implementation of infrastructure projects and international mobilisation initiatives related to biodiversity conservation and forest protection, in preparation for COP 30, were among

some of the subject matters discussed. According to a brief statement from President Lula’s office, the leaders discussed “...the implementation of infrastructure projects that will allow the flow of Brazilian goods throughout the Caribbean, including the paving of the highway connecting Boa Vista to Georgetown.”

The two-day high-level summit was held under the theme “Bringing Together to Unite.”

In a post on his official X (formerly Twitter) page, Brazil’s President said: “We are holding the Brazil-Caribbean Summit here in Brazil. This meeting is bringing together 16 countries and will allow us to come closer together and

strengthen our partnership. Our common goals are to tackle food insecurity, climate crisis and improve connectivity.”

He said that the regional stakeholders were gathered to strengthen dialogue and promote integrated actions for the benefit of all.

A significant road construction project that connects to Lethem, a border town adjacent to northern Brazil, has been one of the major initiatives that Guyana is advancing. The project has


been pegged as a major booster of commerce between Guyana and its neighbour.

Also, in March, officials from Guyana and Brazil’s Roraima State reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening economic partnerships.

Earlier this year, President Ali noted that while ‘imports’ from Brazil exceeded \$200 million in 2023, there remained untapped potential for growth in exports.

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Proven Leadership

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, June 18 2025

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali's stirring address at the 77th Anniversary of the Enmore Martyrs was more than ceremonial remembrance; it was a necessary reminder of how political decisions devastate real families and communities.

Standing before thousands gathered to honour the five sugar workers gunned down by colonial police in 1948, the President drew a direct line between historical struggle and recent suffering under the APNU+AFC coalition government.

The parallels are indeed striking. Just as the Enmore Martyrs, Rambarran, Pooran, Lallabagee, Surujballi, and Harry died fighting for dignity and better working conditions, thousands of Guyanese families faced their own economic martyrdom between 2015 and 2020.

The APNU+AFC administration's

decision to shutter the Wales, East Demerara, Rose Hall, and Skeldon Sugar Estates represents one of the most devastating policy failures in modern Guyanese history.

The statistics President Ali cited from the International Labour Organisation's study paint a horrifying picture of institutional callousness. A 43 per cent drop in household income among affected families is not merely an economic indicator; it represents children going hungry, families losing their homes, and communities dissolving under financial strain.

When one out of six cut workers never got paid their just severance pay, this was not administrative mismanagement but a breach of the social contract between State and citizen.

The cost in human life extends far beyond policy briefs and spreadsheets. The ILO report documented high incidence rates of alcohol consumption, criminality, and suicide, all social

pathologies that occur when hope is lost and opportunity is denied.

These were the harsh realities of the APNU+AFC's reckless experiments with human lives; their neglect of working families as disposable variables in their failed economic models.

The rice industry also fell prey to the mismanagement of APNU+AFC. Rather than learning from these errors, the Coalition intensified its destructive policies, implementing over 200 new taxes and fees which strangled small businesses and ordinary citizens.

This stands in dramatic contrast to PPP/C's governance. The government has restored confidence in the rice sector, achieving record production. And infrastructure development, social programmes, and economic diversification have replaced the Coalition's legacy of stagnation and suffering.

President Ali's call for national conscience resonates because it demands accountability from those who would lead

again.

The APNU+AFC's attempts to rewrite their record of failure must be met with the stubborn persistence of truth.

Just as we honour the Enmore Martyrs' sacrifice for workers' rights, we must remember the thousands of families sacrificed on the altar of the Coalition's incompetence.

Guyana's remarkable transformation under the PPP/C from economic basket case to regional powerhouse proves that competent leadership matters.

As the nation moves forward with unprecedented opportunities in oil, infrastructure, and social development, Guyanese cannot afford to gamble their future on those who have already proven their capacity for destruction. The memory of both historical and recent martyrs demands nothing less than continued progress under proven leadership.

Education has the strongest association with poverty reduction

Dear Editor,

THE OGGN (Oil and Gas Governance Network) said the claim that moderate poverty rate between 2019 and 2024 has been reduced by one half does not find support from the United Nations' SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) on Guyana (SN: 6/10/25).

OGGN quoted UN poverty rates between 2017 and 2022 that averaged 44.5 per cent per annum. Two points are noted here. First, these rates suggest that there has not been any significant reduction of poverty during this six-year period.

Second, the UN figures do not seem to be based on any recent poverty survey; instead, it says that the poverty rates were estimates. What was their source?

The statement that Guyana's "last poverty assessment was undertaken nearly 20 years ago" is incorrect. The most recent poverty survey, the Household Budget, and Living Conditions Survey (HBLCS), was completed in 2019, six years ago.

The purpose of HBLCS was to combine income and expenditure data with living conditions information and to update the items in the "consumption basket," as well as assign weights to them based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Currently, the results of HBLCS are not accessible.

In the absence of HBLCS data, the World Bank's 2019 data on poverty can be used as a reference, although their results differ from those of other agencies.

For instance, the second HIES (Household Income and Expenditure Survey) of I2006, which is considered comprehensive, had reported a poverty rate of 36.1 per cent, whereas the World Bank's rate for that same year was 60.9 per cent.

Various pre-1992 poverty studies conducted by IFAD, IDB, SIMAP, UNDP, PAHO, and the World Bank also show differences in poverty rates. These variations arise because different agencies utilise different methods and assign different weights to the items

(food and non-food) in the "consumption basket."

Guyana recognises that education is a powerful tool for poverty reduction. According to The World Bank, "among the determinants of poverty, education levels appear to have the strongest association with poverty status... completing secondary education was associated with a significant decline in poverty rates." (Gampat, 2020).

The United Nations indicates that Guyana is on track to achieve the fourth Sustainable Development Goal, "Quality Education," by 2030.

Guyana has extended free public education to the tertiary level and all government training programmes by BIT (Board of Industrial Training) and TVET (Technical Vocational Educational Training).

Over the last five years, more than 35,000 scholarships were awarded. Guyanese students have outperformed CARICOM students at the CSEC and CAPE exams. Tertiary education and training are now accessible to those

previously unable to reach them.

Thousands of people living below the revised World Bank poverty line of \$6.85 per person per day are expected to rise above it soon. Over the next three years, improvements in education, health, jobs, nutrition, water, and sanitation will significantly reduce poverty beyond 24 per cent.

Regarding remittances, they contribute to Guyana's GDP and serve multiple purposes, including reducing poverty, renovating, or building houses, buying house lots, covering medical expenses, starting small businesses, paying off debts, handling emergencies, acquiring ICT products, and purchasing durable consumer goods.

It may not be accurate, therefore, to assume a direct correlation between high remittances and a perception of high poverty rates. For instance, the interior region which has the highest poverty rate (WB 2019: 65.5 per cent) also has the lowest level of remittances.

Sincerely,
Dr. Tara Singh



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Jagmeet Singh apologises to Drake for attending rival Kendrick Lamar’s concert

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

Jagmeet Singh is offering an apology after facing backlash for attending a Kendrick Lamar concert in Toronto last week — a move that drew criticism from hometown rapper Drake, who called Singh a “goof” for supporting his musical rival.

Singh, the former federal NDP leader, addressed the controversy on Sunday via Instagram after Drake publicly shared a direct message he sent calling out Singh for attending the Rogers Centre show, where Lamar performed a number of diss tracks aimed at Drake.

In his apology, Singh clarified that he had gone to see R&B singer SZA, who co-headlined the concert with Lamar.

“I was born in this city. I love this city. But real talk, I get it. I shouldn’t have gone at all,” Singh wrote.

“OVO and Drake have lifted this city and Canada. For me, it’ll always be Drake over Kendrick.”

Photos circulating on social media showed Singh seated on the stadium floor during one of the two nights Lamar performed in Toronto. Throughout the three-hour set, Lamar and SZA alternate mini-sets, with Lamar performing several songs from his recent string of Drake-targeted diss tracks, including his chart-topping hit Not Like Us.

The feud between the two rap gi-

Poilievre to face leadership vote

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will face a mandatory leadership review in January, after the party failed to form government in the last federal election.

The Conservative Party's national council agreed on Saturday that the leadership review would take place in Calgary, according to CBC News sources.

The Globe and Mail first reported the story.

If a leader does not resign following an election loss, the party's constitution requires Conservative Party members to vote on whether that leader should stay on at its next national convention.

While the Conservative Party saw a boost in vote share under Poilievre with a breakthrough among new voting blocs, they failed to form government and he lost the Ottawa-area seat of Carleton — one he had held since 2004 — by more than 4,000 votes.

In May, Battle River-Crowfoot MP Damien Kurek said he would step aside to allow Poilievre to run in the Alberta riding, which is considered one of the safest Conservative seats in the country.

Poilievre was set to lead the Conservatives to a historic majority government after the party enjoyed double-digit leads for more than 18 months in national polls over the Liberals and as former prime minister Justin Trudeau's popularity waned.

But the trade war launched by U.S. President Donald Trump and Trudeau's resignation precipitated a reversal of fortunes for the Conservative Party, which won 144 seats in the recent federal election.



Former NDP leader Jagmeet Singh (r) has apologised to Drake for attending the Kendrick Lamar concert

ants erupted last summer and has since escalated into one of hip-hop’s most high-profile rivalries in years.

Tensions intensified further when Drake filed legal action over Not Like Us, alleging the lyrics falsely imply he is a pedophile — a claim he says has endangered his safety and harmed his reputation.

Music label Universal Music Group has dismissed the lawsuit as a meritless attack on Lamar’s commer-

cial and artistic success.

Singh, who stepped down as NDP leader in April following a major electoral defeat that saw him lose his own seat, has largely stayed out of the political spotlight since.

However, his appearance at the Lamar concert reignited online discus-

sion about his public profile and loyalties within Canadian pop culture.

Though Singh said he meant no disrespect, his apology seemed aimed at reaffirming support for Toronto’s most prominent musical figure.

“For me,” he reiterated, “it’ll always be Drake.”



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Ogle to Eccles Highway to transform connectivity, ease congestion: Minister Edghill

THE Government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Public Works is forging ahead with its ambitious infrastructural drive, with the long-awaited Ogle to Eccles (Haags Bosch) road link poised to significantly boost transportation efficiency and unlock new lands for housing and agriculture.

Originally conceptualized in 2014 under a previous People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration, the transformative project officially broke ground in 2023 and has remained a top priority since the party's return to office nearly five years ago.

Though initially slated for completion in May, 2025, works on the US\$106.4 million four-lane highway are still underway. The project, which is being executed by India-based construction firm Ashoka Buildcon Limited, includes major drainage infrastructure and the construction of a roundabout near the Eugene F. Correia International Airport.

Upon completion, the 7.8-kilometre roadway will directly link the East Coast of Demerara with the East Bank of Demerara, significantly reducing travel time between the Eugene F. Correia International Airport and the Cheddi Jagan International Airport. It is expected to serve as a key connector, bypassing central Georgetown and alleviating the heavy traffic congestion that has long plagued the capital.

At a recent engagement, Minister of Public Works, Juan Edghill, emphasised the necessity of the new corridor.

"The Ogle-Eccles Road saves everybody from going all the way to central Georgetown and passing through the congestion," the minister stated. "You can move from Ogle to Eccles in nine to 10 minutes. The road is not finished, and already people are using it—contractors are finding it hard to continue because of public access sparked by social media."

The overwhelming public response, he noted, is not only a testament to the demand for the road, but also presents logistical challenges for construction crews still finalising the works.

Minister Edghill also highlighted that the PPP/C government has already completed over 5,600 community roads since returning to office—part of its



The current progress being made on the Ogle to Eccles Road linkage

broader promise to Guyanese of an "infrastructural boom" to build for the future.

This vision includes expanded investments in road and air transport, utilities such as water, electricity, and ICT, as well as improvements to sea and river

defence, drainage, waste management, hospitals, and schools—all aimed at supporting the country's rapidly growing economy.

"These developments are not just roads—they are indicators that Guyana is moving forward under the PPP/C's

stewardship," Minister Edghill declared.

The Ogle to Eccles highway stands as a cornerstone of that progress, ushering in a new era of connectivity and convenience for Guyanese citizens and businesses alike.

AG calls for more observer missions for Sept. 1 polls

ATTORNEY-GENERAL and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, has said that in the lead-up to the September 1 elections, more accredited observer missions will be invited to monitor the electoral process.

Nandlall made this known during a recent airing of his programme, 'Issues in the News,' during which he noted that the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration welcomes election observers following an announcement that the Carter Center observer mission will return for this year's elections.

It was then that he noted that it was the PPP/C that had fought for 28 years to have observer missions in Guyana, while others did not want observers present and blocked them.

Providing a brief history, Nandlall noted that it was only in 1992, after 28 years, that international observers were first introduced and they have been present for every subsequent electoral cycle.

"Every one of those international observers has certified all the elections held from 1992 to 2020 as free, fair and democratic," he said.

To this end, he said that this government will invite

as many of the reputable international observer missions as possible.

"We have nothing to hide. We want transparency and we know who the electoral miscreants are, and we know what their capabilities, tendencies and proclivities are," Nandlall added.

He went on to note that the more observer teams, the safer the electoral process will be.

Just last week, the European Union formalised its support through the signing of an administrative arrangement for the deployment of a European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM).

Ambassador Rene van Nes signed the agreement on behalf of the EU, alongside Chairperson of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM), Justice (ret'd) Claudette Singh, and Ambassador Elisabeth Harper, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The agreement outlines the framework under which the EUEOM will operate, laying the legal and logistical groundwork for its presence in the lead-up to the elections scheduled for September 1, 2025.



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One of Canada’s oldest, most notorious prisons to be replaced

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

After years of political wrangling and stalled plans, Newfoundland and Labrador has taken its first tangible step toward replacing Her Majesty’s Penitentiary in St. John’s — one of Canada’s oldest and most notoriously run-down prisons.

The province held a ceremonial groundbreaking Monday to mark the start of preliminary work on a new correctional facility, a move that comes after decades of complaints from correctional officers, inmates, and advocates about inhumane conditions inside the 166-year-old structure.

Access to Information documents have revealed a litany of issues at the aging prison, including extreme heat, mold, toxic odors, and widespread rodent infestations.

The conditions have become so dire that some inmates have been granted additional sentencing credit — referred to as “Duncan credit” — due to the harshness of their confinement.

“Walk in during the summer and you’re hit with a wall of heat and stench,” said Erin Breen, a defence lawyer in St. John’s, who also highlighted the frequent lockdowns caused by staffing shortages.

“Inmates often have no access to fresh air or recreation. It’s hard to believe this is happening in Canada in 2025.”

Plans to replace the facility have faltered in the past, notably in 2019, when concerns over ballooning costs



His Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's, N.L.

derailed efforts. The latest estimate for the new prison now stands at nearly \$700 million — a significant increase from the original \$400 million projection.

Government officials blame inflation and pandemic-related delays for the price surge.

Despite the ceremonial milestone, no firm timeline has been provided for the completion of the new prison or the transfer of inmates.

The "early works agreement" signed with New Avalon Corrections

Partners will allow site fencing and groundwork to begin, but major construction remains pending.

“This has always been a tough political sell,” said Justice Minister John Haggie. “But that doesn’t make it any less critical.”

He added that when the Liberals first took office, the province’s finances were in such poor shape that keeping the public service afloat took precedence over major infrastructure projects.

Transportation and Works Minister

Elvis Loveless echoed the government's commitment to see the project through, despite the rising costs.

“We remain steadfast in our commitment,” he said.

Still, some remain skeptical. “I’m sure the intentions are good,” said Breen. “But after so many years and false starts, it’s hard to trust that this time will be different — especially given the province’s financial situation.”

with files from CTV News

Drop in Canadian tourists hurting U.S., say northeast governors

By Clarissa Ali
LJI REPORTER

Governors from New England are raising alarm over a sharp decline in Canadian visitors, blaming aggressive U.S. trade policies and anti-Canadian rhetoric for damaging a key regional industry.

At a gathering in Boston on Monday, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey said tourism from Canada is down significantly across several states — by as much as 60 per cent in some areas — compared to last year.

She pointed to “real concerns” among Canadians about travelling to the United States, including fears over safety and border treatment.

“We’ve seen impacts you can’t fully quantify,” Healey said, following a meeting between New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers.

“But the message we’re getting is clear — many Canadians don’t feel welcome right now.”

Premiers from Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador travelled to Boston for the summit, joined by governors and officials from Maine, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Connecticut, and New Hampshire.

Maine Governor Janet Mills warned that strained cross-border relations, particularly fueled by hostile rhetoric from Washington, are hurting tourism-dependent economies like her own.

“We’re here to push back against dangerous talk coming from D.C.,” Mills said. “Maine depends heavily on Canadian visitors — more than a million each year — and we deeply value that relationship.”

Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston voiced frustration over recent comments from former U.S. president Donald Trump, who suggested making Canada the “51st state” and floated the idea of using economic pressure to accomplish it.

“When Canadians hear that kind of talk, it’s offensive,” Houston said. “Nobody here created this di-

vide, but we’re all being forced to respond to it.”

Trump previously imposed sweeping tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum, and has repeatedly used nationalist messaging in his political campaigns.

Mills emphasized that while tariffs may hurt trade, the greater damage is emotional.

“It’s not just the economics,” she said. “It’s the pride — the sense that Canadians aren’t wanted here. And I get that. It hurts us too.”

Tourism numbers reflect the fallout: In Massachusetts, a 20% drop in Canadian visitors is expected this year.

Vermont has seen a 45% decline in hotel bookings and a 36% dip in Canadian credit card spending.

New York City reports a 45% drop in Canadian travel bookings.

In Maine, tourism from Canada was down 26% between February and April.

“We want Canadians to know they are welcome,” said Mills. “We want to visit Canada too..”



Agriculture Minister Zulkifar Mustapha

Mustapha reaffirms government’s commitment to food security, sustainable development

Agriculture Minister, Hon. Zulkifar Mustapha, on Friday, met with residents and farmers of Cane Grove on the East Coast of Demerara and reaffirmed the government’s steadfast commitment to agricultural development, food security, and sustainable economic development.

While addressing the gathering, Minister Mustapha highlighted a number of transformative initiatives that have been implemented under the current administration, which have significantly strengthened Guyana’s agricultural sector and elevated the country’s global standing as a food-secure nation.

“Guyana is now the only country in the world capable of producing enough food to feed its entire population. If you read the recent article that was published by BBC Science Focus, you will see that Guyana is the only country in the world capable of fully feeding its population without relying on food imports. The study was a global study, and only Guyana emerged

as a country that produces enough food to feed its people. That’s a reflection of our government’s unwavering dedication to the agriculture sector and food security. Under the previous government, agriculture was deemphasized, but if you examine our national budgets, they tell a story, one that clearly shows the Government’s priority is to develop the agriculture sector and ensure that Guyana remains food secure,” he explained.

Minister Mustapha noted that under the leadership of His Excellency President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, the government has made targeted investments in rice production, high-value crop cultivation, infrastructure, and technology, all of which are aimed at increasing yields, diversifying production, and building climate resilience.

In further support of farmers, the Minister highlighted President Ali’s recent announcement that a significant sum was allocated to construct farm-to-market roads, an initiative designed to improve access and reduce transporta-

tion costs for agricultural communities like Cane Grove.

The Minister also touched on immediate matters affecting Cane Grove residents, such as drainage and irrigation, the effective functioning of the Water Users Association, and cattle rustling. Minister Mustapha told the gathering that a team from the Ministry of Agriculture will work along with the Water Users Association to resolve all of the issues raised. Additionally, Minister Mustapha, disclosed that a committee comprising representatives from the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA), the Guyana Police Force, and cattle farmers from the area will be established to address the issue of cattle rustling in the region. He noted that a similar committee was set up in the Mahaica-Berbice region.

In addition to highlighting the advances in the agriculture sector, Minister Mustapha also spoke about developments in other sectors like health, infrastructure, education, and housing.

Residents and farmers present at the meeting praised the government’s proactive approach to community development and expressed their strong support for President Dr. Irfaan Ali and his administration. Many pledged their continued backing for the government’s re-election bid, citing tangible improvements in their daily lives and livelihoods.



Guyana calls on Israel, Iran to comply with obligations under international law

GUYANA has issued a strong appeal for de-escalation in the Middle East, urging both Israel and Iran to respect international law and refrain from further military action following Israel’s recent airstrike on Iranian facilities.

During a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting on the situation, Guyana’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett delivered a firm statement on behalf of the country, expressing “deep concern about the attack carried out by Israel against facilities in Iran”.

“My delegation has noted the reports that the attack has resulted in the loss of lives, including civilians,” she told the council meeting.

The ambassador added that this action has reportedly resulted in retaliatory drone strikes by Iran against Israel.

Describing Israel’s strike as a violation of international norms, Rodrigues-Birkett said: “Israel’s latest attack on Iran contravenes the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.”

She further warned that the timing of the strike could inflame an already unstable regional landscape.

“At a particularly volatile period in the region, the attack risks exacerbating existing tensions in the Middle East and escalating the ongoing crisis,” she said.

Against this backdrop, the Permanent Representative called for restraint from all parties involved, noting: “Guyana reiterates its appeal to both Israel and Iran to exercise maximum restraint and to avoid any further manoeuvres that could plunge the entire Middle East into further turmoil, or



Guyana’s Permanent Representative to the UN Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett

worse, result in a nuclear catastrophe.”

Further, Rodrigues-Birkett urged both nations to comply with their obligations under international law and relevant resolutions adopted by the council, and also to uphold the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The ambassador also stressed the importance of accountability, noting: “Guyana also stresses the importance of accountability for all violations of international law and to avoid creating a culture of impunity for such actions.”

She affirmed that Guyana will act constructively to support any Security Council measure that is in keeping with its mandate aimed at preserving international peace and security.

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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GuySuCo could become a hub of rural development, President Ali says

LEVERAGING the existing human capital and technology of the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo), the Government of Guyana is examining plans to strategically reimagine the mandate of the Corporation to become a hub of rural development, President Dr. Irfaan Ali has said.

Addressing a mammoth gathering at the 77th commemoration of the Enmore Martyrs on Monday, President Ali said the arable lands, infrastructure and knowledge base of GuySuCo could support the production of other crops like rice, corn and cassava, diversifying production to boost income.

“Let no one dare tell you that sugar is a relic; that it is dead, that it is a burden, because they would not only be wrong, but they would also be dangerously mistaken.

“Sugar is still vital, especially to the rural community. It directly and indirectly supports about one fifth of our population. Each estate serves as a hub of economic and social life in its regions,” President Ali said.

The sugar industry provides jobs



Sugar is still vital to Guyana, says President Ali

not just for harvesters, also but for welders, mechanics, clerks, drivers, technicians and engineers.

“For every job created directly by GuySuCo, several others are supported indirectly from market vendors, the transportation operators, to small shops in cane-growing communities.

“Sugar ensures the circulation of money in rural communities, money that pays for transportation for children to get to and from school, buys groceries, supports households and keeps businesses alive. It sustains families, many of whom have been part of this industry for generations,” President Ali added.

He noted that GuySuCo’s mandate should now be reimaged to become a hub of rural economic development.

“Its land, infrastructure and knowledge base can support all crops, like rice, corn, cassava, livestock operations, agro-processing hubs, farmer training and extension services, fabrication and engineering services,” the Head of State said.

Dr. Ali believes there are exciting opportunities for crop diversification, skills diversification, and income diversification.

“Make no mistake, GuySuCo possesses the best machinists globally. The global machining industry historically recruited machinists and fabricators from GuySuCo. We have to leverage this human capital and human potential

“We don’t only want the sugar workers to rely on their income from

sugar. We want to convert acreage of land into high-yielding production, high-value production... production that is owned by the workers; lands that are cultivated, and revenues that are generated but generated to support the income diversification of the workers,” he added.


At several local sugar factories, the government is currently making significant investments in mechanisation.

Additionally, efforts are underway to develop value-added production, with the intention of moving beyond the mere export of bulk sugar.


President Ali emphasised that the government remains committed to making the necessary investments to ensure Guyana secures the best possible revenue for its produce.

He further noted that although Guyana experienced a setback in sugar production this year, it was not due to mismanagement but rather the adverse impacts of climate change. The government, he assured, is actively addressing this challenge through strategic investments aimed at adaptation and resilience.

GuySuCo’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Paul Cheong had previously reported that rainfall this year broke records. Berbice Estates saw 212 per cent above the long-term average, and Demerara was not far behind. Fifty-three per cent of the available days were classified as ‘wet days’.

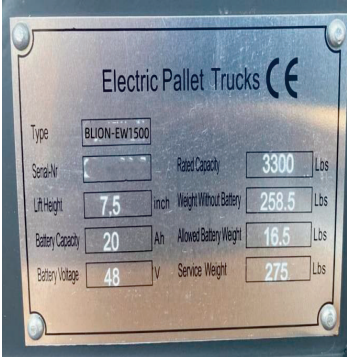



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
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Lift Height	7.5 inch
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Battery Voltage	48 V
Pallet Capacity	3300 Lbs
Weight Without Battery	258.5 Lbs
Allowed Battery Weight	16.5 Lbs
Service Weight	275 Lbs




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Working Time
6HR



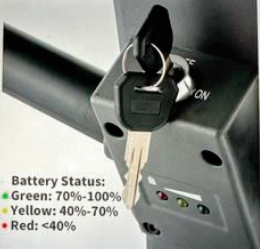
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President Ali urges Guyanese not to gamble with their future

STANDING before a mammoth gathering to mark the 77th anniversary of the Enmore Martyrs,' President, Dr Irfaan Ali delivered a call for national conscience on Monday, urging Guyanese not to forget the cost of poor leadership under the APNU+AFC and the hard-fought gains made under the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) in recent years.

With emotion and intensity, President Ali reminded the nation that the struggles of the past were not confined to history books or the martyrdom of sugar workers in 1948, but also lived experiences endured by thousands of Guyanese just a few years ago.

"We don't need to go back to 77 years to remember. We just need to go back to 2015, to 2020, and that is why tens of thousands of persons are embracing the philosophy of the People's Progressive Party/Civic, who were once rivals against us, who were once the greatest critics, they have seen the light and they have seen the truth, they have felt the progress," President Ali told the gathering.

He further underscored the gravity of the economic and social devastation unleashed by the closure of several sugar estates by the APNU+AFC administration.

"Over 7,000 workers were sent home, and with them, tens of thousands more affected. These weren't just jobs lost. They were livelihoods, dreams and future[s] destroyed."

Citing a study by the International Labour Organization, President Ali revealed that the 2016–2017 closure of the Wales, East Coast, Rose Hall, and Skeldon estates led to a staggering 43 per cent drop in household income among affected families.

He said: "One in every six workers severed had their severance pay delayed or not paid at all. Many laid-off workers remain jobless, even three years after others found only seasonal or part-time work, often unrelated to their skillsets; their children's education was disrupted as families struggled to afford school-related costs."

The crowd fell quiet, absorbing the weight of his words.

"This wasn't 77 years ago," he repeated, adding: "This was less than six years ago. This is what the ILO is telling us was the impact of the APNU+AFC government."

"There were increases in alcohol consumption, crime and suicide in affected communities; the community fabric weakened through the migration and economic strain," he added.

In order to ensure that citizens never have to experience such hardships again, President Ali recommitted the PPP/C's dedication to the service of the people, invoking the values of unity, dignity, and shared prosperity.

"I stand before you, the people we serve and once again commit the People's Progressive Party/Civic to your struggles, to your service, to your honour, and once again, commit ourselves to taking the responsibility of leadership, to lead, to uphold, to uplift every single Guyanese family," President Ali said.

The Head of State compared his administration's philosophy to the pre-

vious APNU+AFC government that led Guyana to an almost complete regression.

He said: "We cannot gamble with our future. This is a period of consolidation for a better Guyana. It is not the time for experiments. It is the time to build upon our gains and lead every family to full prosperity.

"And all of Guyana, every citizen is a witness to the truth, and that truth is that your government has delivered to you, your government has worked hard for you, your government has stood by you... that your government has delivered on every single commitment."

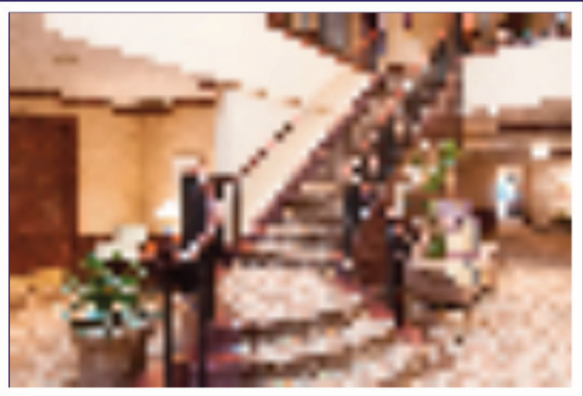


Dr Irfaan Ali

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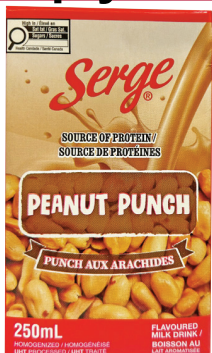
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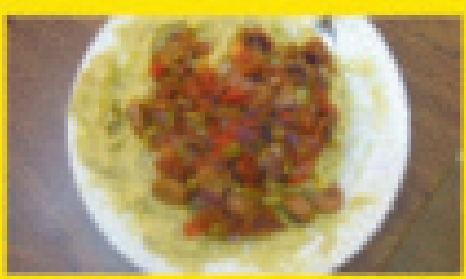
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ABCEU diplomats meet with political contenders ahead of polls

CHIEFS of Mission of the ABCEU recently met with political contenders for the upcoming September 1, 2025 General and Regional Elections.

United States of America (US) Ambassador, Nicole Theriot; United Kingdom (UK) High Commissioner, Jane Miller; Canadian High Commissioner, Sébastien Sigouin; and European Union (EU) Ambassador, Rene van Nes conducted a series of meetings engaging the leaders of the parties separately on matters related to the election.

Representing the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) during this engagement was General Secretary of the PPP, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo; Executive Secretary Zulfikar Mustapha, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Todd, at Freedom House.

General Secretary Jagdeo, according to a post on the US Embassy’s Facebook page, outlined the PPP/C’s vision for a second term in office, and shared his views on the elections on September 1.

The ABCEU Chiefs of Mission, in their meeting with People’s National Congress Reform (PNCR) Leader Aubrey Norton and his team at PNCR headquarters, were told of the party’s vision heading into elections.

The diplomats also engaged Leader of the Alliance For Change (AFC) Nigel Hughes, and AFC executive members on the party’s platform and priorities for Guyana’s September 1 elections.

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Guyana to set new terms for Cuban health workers

The Guyana government says it will introduce new conditions for employing Cuban health professionals as it prepares for the “aggressive” recruitment of foreign nurses to staff several hospitals currently under construction across the country.

“We’re recruiting people from around the world, not confined to Cuba but we’re working to ensure that people who come here from Cuba that they meet the definition because of what the US Secretary of State mentioned that the conditions of work here don’t run afoul of the requirements set by the United States of America,” Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo said during his weekly news conference.

The move comes after the United States expanded visa restrictions targeting what it describes as “forced labour” linked to Cuba’s overseas medical missions. The policy, announced by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, applies to current or former Cuban officials and foreign government figures involved in the Cuban labour export programme. It also targets the immediate family members of those supporting the initiative.

“The department has already taken steps to impose visa restrictions on several individuals, including Venezuelans, under this expanded policy,” Rubio stated. Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants, has been a vocal critic of the Cuban medical brigades, alleging that they exploit healthcare workers.

In response, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries, including Guyana, have defended the Cuban health programme. Georgetown has since requested that Washington provide proof that Cuban medical workers’ rights are being violated within Guyana.

Jagdeo emphasized that while Guyana is prioritizing the training and employment of local nurses—with plans to offer better salaries and working conditions—there remains an urgent need to bring in foreign personnel.

“Right now, we don’t have enough healthcare personnel to offer the expanded level of services that would come through the opening of these new hospitals,” he said.



Guyana Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo

Guyana has partnered with several hospitals along the coast and in the interior. The Vice President reiterated the administration’s commitment to ensuring that any foreign recruitment, including that of Cuban professionals, aligns with international labor standards.



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The plane crashed shortly after takeoff in a residential neighbourhood in the city of Ahmedabad

Wait for bodies deepens pain of families after Air India crash

For Mistry Jignesh, 72 hours feel like an eternity.

Since last Thursday evening, Mr Jignesh and his family have been doing the rounds of the Civil Hospital in Ahmedabad, trying to find details of his 22-year-old niece - one of the 241 passengers that died in an Air India plane crash earlier that day.

Authorities had been telling him they would return his niece's body in the 72 hours normally required to complete DNA matching - which end on Sunday.

But on Saturday, he was told that it might take longer as officials are still searching for bodies from the site of the crash, he claimed.

"When people are still missing, how can they possibly complete the DNA process by tomorrow? What if my niece's remains have not even been found? The wait is killing us," he said.

Officials have refused to comment on Mr Jignesh's claim, but a fire department officer and a police official said that a search for remains of the passengers is still under way.

Rajnish Patel, additional superintendent of the Civil Hospital, said on Saturday that 11 victims had been identified so far based on their DNA samples, adding that their families had been informed.

The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, which was on its way to London's Gatwick Airport, crashed and erupted in a fireball shortly after taking off from Ahmedabad's main airport, in what has been India's worst aviation disaster.

Only one of the 242 passengers and crew on board survived. At least eight others were killed as the plane struck the hostel of a medical college when it came down on a densely populated residential area near the airport.

Things have moved swiftly since.

The Indian government has ordered a high-level investigation into the incident and has ordered all Boeing 787s operated by local carriers to be inspected.

While the reason of the crash remains unknown, the country's aviation authority has said it is looking into all possible causes for the accident, also bringing in foreign aviation experts to assist with the inquiry.

Back at the hospital, doctors are racing to complete the DNA sampling of the victims so that they can start returning bodies to their families.

But for families like Mr Jignesh's, time passes in dragging lulls.

Officials have talked about how the process of identifying bodies has been extremely challenging - and is being carried out in small batches - as most of the remains have been charred beyond recognition.

"There is no scope for mistakes here - we have to ensure that every family receives the right body," said HP Sanghvi, the director of Directorate of Forensic Sciences in Gandhinagar city. "But DNA identification is a time-consuming process. Besides, given the scale of the disaster, there is also a possibility that the DNA of several passengers was damaged due to the extremely high temperature of the blast."

Jaishankar Pillai, a forensic dentist at the hospital, told reporters that his team has been trying to collect dental records from charred bodies, as that might be the only source of DNA left.

The wait has been beyond agonising for the families, many of whom refused to speak to the media, saying they just want to go back home with "whatever is left of their loved ones".

"We are in no condition to say anything. Words fail us right now," a woman, who was waiting with three members of her family outside the autopsy room, told the BBC impatiently, as she quickly slipped into her car.

Meanwhile, officials at the BJ Medical College have started to vacate several wards of the hostel, near which the plane struck. So far, four wards - including the hostel canteen, the site of the crash - have been completely emptied out.

But students living in other nearby wings of the hostel have also begun to leave.

"In one of the wards, there are just three people left - everyone else has gone back to their homes for now. They will leave soon too, but until then, they are sitting there, all alone, haunted by the memory of what has happened," their friend, who is also a student at the college and wanted to stay anonymous, said.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Envy may not be the best of emotions but it can be the catalyst that gets you to strive harder. With Mars, your ruler, moving into the work area of your chart today it's okay to look at a senior colleague and aim to do better than them.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Try not to attach too much importance to what you are told by other people today, especially if they are the sort of people who enjoy putting other people down. Ambitious Mars' move into the most dynamic area of your chart makes you almost unbeatable.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): If you allow minor irritations to get to you today they will divert your attention and your energy away from the issues that really matter. On the home front especially, refuse to get involved in problems you know are not really problems at all.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): You need to toughen up and let rivals and competitors know they won't get the better of you no matter how hard they try. You don't have to be overly aggressive but you will need to bare your teeth so they know you mean business.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): You have been so active of late that it was inevitable that you took a few wrong turnings and made a few mistakes along the way. The good news is you are still well on course to reach your number one goal, so don't waste time on regrets.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): The world may be coming apart at the seams but with Mars moving into your sign you won't care in the slightest. Why? Because you recognize that the more things fall apart the more opportunities there will be for you personally. Yes that's selfish, but so what?

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You cannot hope to be in control of events every minute of every day, so stop being so hard on yourself and ease back a little over the next 24 hours. A more hands-off approach will work better for you both at home and at work.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You may not be the most outgoing member of the zodiac but as Mars is now moving into the friendship area of your chart you should find it easier to open up to people you meet along the way. You may even discover they are just like you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): People in positions of authority may have their doubts about your abilities but Mars in the career area of your chart will endow you with so much self-belief and so much get-up-and-go that those doubts will soon disappear. Aim for the big time!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): Everything seems right with your world at the moment and long may it continue, but some of the people you are closest to are not exactly bubbling with joy. What can you do to cheer them up? Maybe you should start by listening to their woes.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): The fact that you feel uncomfortable about what's going on in your social circle will spur you on to do something about it. The course you choose to take won't make you popular but it will do the most amount of good for the people who really need it.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Don't waste your time arguing the toss with someone whose outlook on life is at odds with your own. Their way of looking at the world is so different from your own that a meeting of minds is all but impossible. Just stay out of each other's way.

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Dominica launches crackdown on gun-smuggling network after firearm seizures

Dominica authorities on Monday pledged to dismantle a gun-smuggling network after police announced the seizure of nearly 50 firearms — including assault rifles — at the island’s ports since the start of 2025.

Acting Police Commissioner Lincoln Corbette revealed during a press briefing that the Firearms Investigative Unit is actively probing the importation of a significant cache of guns and ammunition into the country. The specialized unit, made up of officers from the police force, Customs, and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), is working alongside other government agencies to disrupt the flow of illegal arms.

“From January 23 to June 14, a total of 42 firearms and 220 rounds of ammunition were intercepted at the ports of entry into Dominica,” Corbette stated, noting that the haul included two AR-15 assault rifles — weapons he described as “equivalent to the M-16 as carried by soldiers.” An additional seven firearms and 69 rounds of ammunition were taken from suspected criminals on the streets, bringing the year-to-date total to 49 guns and 289 rounds.

“These seizures have led to the arrest of 21 individuals for possession and trafficking of firearms,” Corbette said. “Seven have already been convicted, and the rest await trial.”

National Security Minister Rayburn Blackmoore also addressed the media, declaring that authorities are collaborating with regional and international law enforcement partners to break up what he called a transnational



In the first 6 months of the year, a total of 42 firearms were seized in Dominica

gun-running syndicate.

“Certainly, there is a syndicate and the origin of which we are committed to dismantle,” Blackmoore said. “The coordination we have been able to do with our regional and international partners is working. The intelligence we have been able to cultivate is also very effective.”

Blackmoore highlighted recent investments aimed at curbing the illegal arms trade, including approximately EC\$2.7 million spent on scanners now installed at all ports of entry. He said law enforcement officers are undergoing specialized training to trace weapons back to their sources.

Calling on the public to assist,

Blackmoore urged residents to report suspicious activity and encouraged those in possession of illegal firearms to surrender them to authorities. He also chastised community members who obstruct police operations or turn a blind eye to unexplained wealth among young people.

St. Lucia mourns former magistrate and MP Dr. Velon John

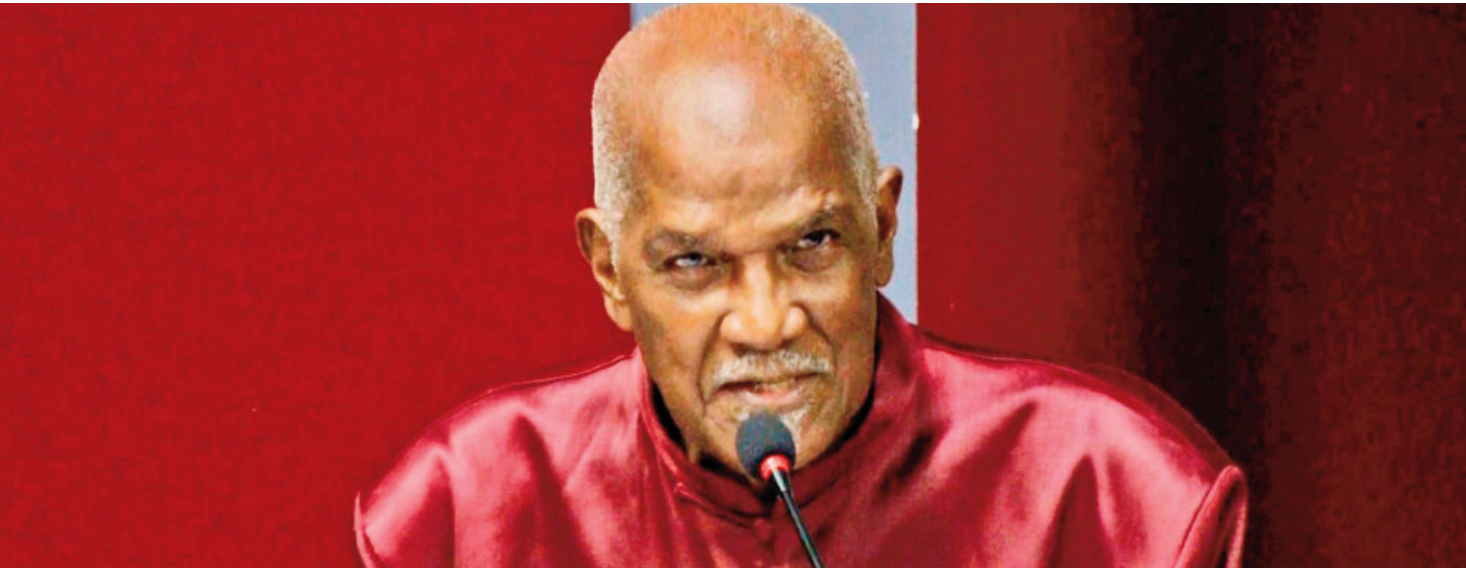
Dr. Velon Leo John, OBE, a former magistrate, senator, and parliamentary representative for Laborie, has died at the age of 83.

John, who served as a Member of Parliament for Laborie from 1997 to 2006 under the Saint Lucia Labour Party, passed away on Friday. He was widely regarded as a sharp legal mind and eloquent speaker, known for his deep commitment to public service and national development.

Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre paid tribute to John, offering condolences on behalf of the Government and people of Saint Lucia.

“Dr John rendered exemplary service to the nation in several capacities, including magistrate, senator and Leader of the Opposition. He was widely respected for his sharp intellect, masterful command of language and his commitment to country and community,” said Pierre.

“The Government of Saint Lucia extends sincere condolences to his



Dr Velon John: former Magistrate and Senator

family, friends, and all who mourn his passing. May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his legacy endure.”

In April, in what was billed as his final public appearance, John launched his book *Ramblings of a Mind and Pulsations of a Heart*. At the event, attended by Prime Minister Pierre, John advocated for the redesign of the na-

tional flag and the removal of colonial symbols. He described the book as “a compilation of his thoughts on the multiplicity of subjects that constitute in some measure the fabric of my existence.”

When asked about his views on death, John shared his philosophical perspective: “I embrace death since as

I see it is the transitioning from the metaphysical state of becoming to being. It is the gateway to the unknown and that I find fascinating... A veritable exciting encounter. So what is there to fear, what is there to be perturbed about the phenomenon of death. It is inevitable.”

WPA calls to rename University of Guyana in honour of Dr. Walter Rodney

The Working People’s Alliance (WPA) on Friday called for the University of Guyana (UG) to be renamed after its founding member and noted academic Dr. Walter Rodney, who was assassinated 45 years ago.

“The WPA puts on the national agenda, the renaming of our national university, the Walter Rodney University of Guyana. While small steps, mostly opportunistic, have been made to recognise his contributions, his name is not affixed to a visible national institution,” the party said in a statement.

Rodney was killed in a bomb blast on June 13, 1980, during a period of civil unrest aimed at removing the then Forbes Burnham-led People’s National Congress (PNC) government. The WPA highlighted that evidence later surfaced linking the assassination to members of the Guyana Defence Force.

“Although four and a half decades have passed since that fateful night, the wounds are still fresh in the psyche of those who lived through those times, especially Rodney’s family and close comrades,” the WPA said, describing Rodney as a victim of the political turmoil accompanying post-colonial nation-building.

The WPA, now in coalition with the PNC for the upcoming September 1 elections, said the alliance “injects the Rodneyite vision of National Unity and Reconstruction or what is today



Walter Rodney was assassinated in 1980

popularly called coalition politics.”

“Our unwavering advocacy and struggle for a grand coalition to contest the upcoming election is more than electoral strategy — it is deeply rooted in our historical drive for national jointness. WPA will firmly plant the Walter Rodney banner of People’s

Power/No Dictator in the imminent campaign,” the party stated.

The WPA reaffirmed its commitment to Rodney’s vision of a free, independent Guyana founded on racial and class equality. “Walter Rodney confronted our class-race dilemma, not by denial but by active engagement at

both the intellectual and activist levels. He reached for a multiracial praxis without denying his own racial identity,” the party said, adding, “WPA holds fast to that praxis as we navigate the complex terrain of the post-plantation petrostate.”

T&T Parliament approves Allister Guevarro as new top cop

With bipartisan support, the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament on Friday confirmed Allister Guevarro as the country’s new Commissioner of Police, officially replacing Erla Harewood-Christopher, whose term ended under a cloud of controversy.

Guevarro’s nomination came through the constitutional process, with the Police Service Commission (PSC) submitting the name to the Head of State, who in turn forwarded it to Parliament. Homeland Security Minister Roger Alexander, a former senior police officer who resigned ahead of the April 28 general election, piloted the nomination in the House.

Guevarro, a 1996 graduate of the police academy, has trained at the International Law Enforcement Academy in El Salvador and holds an MBA. He was one of three officers who led the investigation into the national security implications of the February 2022 islandwide blackout, which was later deemed an “act of God.”

His appointment comes after the controversial departure of Harewood-

Christopher, who made history in February 2023 as Trinidad and Tobago’s first female police commissioner. Her tenure, however, was marred by legal scrutiny and tension with the administration. She was sent on 66 days’ leave last month, just two days after returning to duty following a decision by Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Roger Gaspard, SC, that there was “no realistic prospect” of her being convicted of misbehaviour in public office or any other offence.

Harewood-Christopher officially demitted office on May 15 after two term extensions.

A statement from the Ministry of Homeland Security noted that Junior Benjamin, who had been appointed Acting Commissioner on February 6, will remain in that position until the PSC formally advises the Ministry of a change in status.

Benjamin, who was also screened for the substantive role, will continue in the acting capacity until Guevarro’s official assumption of duties.



New top cop: Allister Guevarro

Caribbean launches groundbreaking regional platform to tackle climate crisis

In a bold regional move to confront the escalating climate crisis, the Caribbean officially launched its first-ever Regional Platform for Catalysing Resilience and Climate Action on Friday. The initiative aims to accelerate climate finance, strengthen collective resilience, and unlock transformative investment opportunities across the region.

Spearheaded by Barbados Prime Minister and CARICOM Chair Mia Mottley, the platform represents what she called a “bold collective response” to the climate emergency threatening the livelihoods and futures of Caribbean nations.

“For too long, the Caribbean has been sounding the alarm and calling for greater action to build the resilience of our people,” Mottley said at the launch. “We must not invest in band-aids for the moment, but in game-changing, future-defining solutions.”

So far, seven Caribbean governments—Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Grenada, Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—have signed Letters of Support to participate. More nations are expected to join in the coming months.

The platform will operate under a Regional Steering Committee and Secretariat housed at the Caribbean Development Bank, with input from technical working groups and development partners. It aims to attract both public and private financing to support initiatives like:

- A sustainable energy transition
- Resilient transport and infrastructure
- Water and food security solutions



Mia Mottley: spearheading climate change action

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Education system alignment to address regional demographic and skills challenges

Mafalda Duarte, Executive Director of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), praised the initiative as a model of climate leadership. “This first-of-its-kind platform is a powerful example of leadership,” Duarte said, noting its potential to transform regional assets like renewable energy into strategic investment programmes.

The platform’s initial work will be supported by the GCF’s flagship Readiness Programme, which offers grants of up to US\$7 million per developing country over four years. Participating governments have committed to using portions of their allocations to fund the platform’s activities.

“With one voice, we are saying clearly that the Caribbean will not wait. We will lead. We will innovate. And we will act together,” Mottley declared.



The Caribbean has suffered devastating effects from climate change

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Murders down by 44% in Jamaica, JCF data shows

Murders across Jamaica have dropped by more than 44% in the first half of 2025, according to new statistics from the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), marking one of the most significant declines in homicides in recent years.

Between January 1 and June 14, police recorded 303 murders, compared to 543 during the same period in 2024 — a reduction of 240 cases, or 44.2%. The data was released by the JCF on its website over the weekend.

Other serious crimes also fell during the reporting period, including shootings, which declined by 32.5% (from 492 to 332 incidents), and rapes, which dropped by nearly 33% (from 204 to 137).

Overall, the country recorded a total of 1,606 serious crimes, down from 1,977 in the same period last year — an 18.8% decrease.

While the downward trend in violent crimes may signal the effectiveness of anti-gang operations and intelligence-driven policing, other categories saw increases. Reports of break-ins rose by 21%, moving from 421 to 509 cases, while robberies went up slightly, from 317 to 325 incidents.

The parishes with the largest year-over-year drops in murder include:



Prime Minister Holness credited improved surveillance technology for the downward trend in murders

Hanover, down 75% (from 28 to 7 murders),
St. James, down 68.5% (from 73 to 23),
Westmoreland, down 59.6% (from 52 to 21),
and Manchester, down 55% (from 20 to 9).

Only a few divisions, including St. Thomas and Portland, reported small increases in homicides.

Law enforcement officials have not yet formally commented on the mid-year figures. However, the JCF

has previously credited multi-agency cooperation, increased community policing, and improved surveillance technology for progress in fighting crime.

The sharp decline in violent crime has not gone unnoticed internationally. In May, the United States downgraded its travel advisory for Jamaica from Level 3 to Level 2, citing improvements in public safety. The upgrade encourages U.S. citizens to exercise increased caution, rather than reconsider travel altogether — a notable shift

from previous warnings.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness welcomed the move, saying in a statement:

“This revision reflects the hard work of our security forces and government agencies. We have been deliberate and data-driven in our approach to reducing crime and improving the safety of our people. Jamaica remains one of the most vibrant and welcoming destinations in the world, and we are pleased that our progress is being recognised.”

Florida woman jailed for 21 years for murder of JA husband

A Florida woman has been sentenced to 21 years in prison for the murder of her Jamaican husband following a heated domestic dispute at their Coral Springs home last year.

Denise Nicole Malcolm, 46, pleaded guilty last week to one count of second-degree murder with a firearm, according to court records. She was sentenced to 21 years behind bars, with 285 days credited for time already served in pretrial detention.

Her husband, 52-year-old Rohan Noel Malcolm — a former employee of the Jamaica Observer — was fatally shot multiple times at their home on Northwest 43rd Street on August 31, 2024. The incident occurred after he returned from grocery shopping for a planned Labor Day barbecue.



Denise Malcolm, left, was convicted of the murder of her Jamaican husband, Rohan Malcolm, in Coral Springs

According to an arrest report from the Coral Springs Police Department, Malcolm told investigators she no longer trusted her husband and had grown frustrated over what she described as years of lies and infidelity. The final argument erupted after Rohan told her he was going to Port Saint Lucie with friends, which she interpreted as a cover for seeing another woman.

The couple, who reportedly slept in separate bedrooms, had a history of volatile confrontations. On the day of the shooting, a nearly hourlong argument ended in gunfire.

Their then-14-year-old son, who

had been listening to music in another room, told police he heard “two or three loud bangs” around 6:30 p.m. When he ran to his parents’ bedroom, he saw his father wounded and his mother holding a handgun. He immediately called 911.

When police arrived at the scene minutes later, they instructed the family to exit the home. Two teenage boys emerged, but not the adults. Shortly afterward, another gunshot was heard from inside the house — believed to be the final shot that took Rohan Mal-

colm’s life.

Malcolm later told officers she had contemplated suicide but claimed her husband “said something to her” in that moment that prompted her to fire the final shot instead. Afterward, she placed the semi-automatic handgun on a dresser and surrendered.

Officers entered the home and found the victim lying on his back with multiple gunshot wounds and blood pooling beneath him. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

The couple’s son later told investi-

gators that his parents were effectively estranged and often argued about his father’s alleged involvement with other women. In a now-closed GoFundMe created to help cover funeral costs, one of Rohan Malcolm’s friends described him as “a beacon of light, known for his kindness, laughter, and unwavering support for others.”

As part of her plea agreement, Denise Malcolm must also pay \$23,500 in restitution, with additional amounts to be determined for the guardian of her children.

Judge orders DPP to give update on murder of lawyer Dana Seetahal

A High Court judge in Trinidad and Tobago has ordered the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to give an update within seven days on the status of the long-delayed Dana Seetahal murder trial.

On June 13, Justice Carol Gobin directed the DPP to say whether he plans to file an indictment and, if so, when, or if he intends to drop the case altogether.

The judge also ordered the DPP to give Earl Peters, one of the ten accused men, a written explanation for the delay in filing the indictment needed to start his trial. Peters must inform the court if the DPP fails to follow the order. He has until August to respond, and the matter was postponed to September 15.

Peters and another accused, Rajae Ali, challenged the DPP's failure to move the case forward. They said no indictment has been filed, and no decision has been made about the prosecution of the case.

In an application filed on March 13, their attorneys, Criston J Williams and Aaron Lewis, argued that the nearly 10-year delay has violated their client's constitutional rights. They said the men had been held without trial, even though committal proceedings ended over four years ago in 2020.



Dana Seetahal — senior lawyer and former Senator murdered in 2014

The lawyers also said the DPP's failure to act goes against the Constitution, which allows the DPP to either continue or discontinue criminal cases. They noted that under the Indictable Offences (Committal Proceedings) Act (IOCPA), the DPP is expected to act within a rea-

sonable time, which has not happened.

They also raised concerns about the DPP's lack of response to a Freedom of Information request filed in December 2024, which asked for updates on the case. Though the DPP acknowledged the request in January, no response has been

given. The lawyers said the delay was causing emotional and mental stress on the accused men and is making it harder for them to defend themselves in court.

Ten men were charged with Seetahal's murder. In 2017, one of them – Stephan Cummings – was released from the murder charge after the DPP dropped the case against him. Instead, Cummings was charged with conspiracy to murder and agreed to testify for the state.

Seetahal, a former independent senator, was killed on May 4, 2014. She was shot while driving home in Woodbrook.

The DPP, Roger Gaspard SC, and the Judiciary had been in disagreement over document delivery in the case. Gaspard said the Judiciary sent electronic copies of the 8,100-page case file, but the law required hard copies. He argued that the documents could have been delivered in boxes in the three years it took to send the files electronically.

Others accused in the case include Rajae Ali's brothers, Ishmael and Hamid Ali, as well as Devaughn Cummings, Ricardo Stewart, Gareth Wiseman, Kevin Parkinson, Leston Gonzales, and Roget Boucher. Some of them also face separate gang-related charges.

Company admits paying lawyers over \$8M in divers' deaths

PARIA Fuel Trading Company Ltd has revealed it paid over \$8.4 million in legal fees for representation at the commission of enquiry (CoE) into the 2022 diving tragedy in T&T, but continues to withhold the exact fees paid to each lawyer involved.

In a letter dated June 10, attorneys from the law firm Johnson, Camacho & Singh (JCS) wrote to Freedom Law, the firm representing former Petrotrin employee Anthony Dopson. Dopson filed a freedom of information (FOI) request in January asking for a breakdown of legal fees paid by Paria during the 2023 enquiry into the February 25, 2022, incident, in which five LMCS divers died after being trapped in a pipeline at Pointe-a-Pierre. One survived the ordeal.

In response, JCS provided six redacted cover letters and invoices totalling \$8,439,492.70. The documents listed the names of the attorneys who represented Paria – Gilbert Peterson SC, Jason Mootoo SC, Gretel Baird, Thane Pierre, and Sebastian Peterson – but did not indicate how much each was paid. According to the letters, Peterson, as lead counsel, received the full payments and was responsible for distributing fees among the team. On February 6, JCS attorney Kendell Alexander said the company had already responded to similar FOI requests in the past.

He argued that releasing individual fee amounts could pose a security risk as attorneys were being targeted by criminals. "In light of the present socio-economic climate in Trinidad and Tobago,

in which attorneys-at-law are being targeted by criminal elements, it is our client's position that it would be an unreasonable disclosure of personal information to provide documents disclosing the names of each attorney-at-law on Paria's commission of enquiry team and the total fees paid to them.

"Should this information be made public, as previous disclosures were, these attorneys-at-law may find themselves being targeted."

Alexander said that while Paria recognised its obligations under the FOI Act, it believed that the safety of the lawyers outweighed the public's right to know the exact breakdown of fees. He said Paria would not provide further disclosure unless Dopson agreed not to publish the information.

However, in a response, the next day, Freedom Law attorney Aasha Ramlal criticised Paria's refusal, calling it "arbitrary and irrational." She warned that legal action could follow.

Ramlal argued that the public had a right to know how taxpayers' money is being spent and described Paria's position as contrary to principles of transparency and accountability. She said legal fees paid with public funds do not fall under the category of "personal information" under the FOI Act.

Ramlal also dismissed the company's safety concerns as speculative, pointing out that the salaries of public officials, including the Prime Minister and judges, are already public knowledge. She added that previous govern-

ments have disclosed legal fees paid to attorneys without issue and said Paria could have offered redacted copies if it was concerned about privacy.

On May 23, at a post-cabinet press briefing, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar made it clear that people doing business with the government must ex-

pect public scrutiny. She was addressing the government rental issue but also criticised lawyers who received government briefs under the former People's National Movement (PNM) administration but did not want their names or fees made public.

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Holder, Russell recalled for Windies T20s vs England

West Indies racked up their second-highest score in T20 cricket – 256 for five – as they whipped Ireland by 62 runs in the third and final T20 at Bready Cricket Ground, Magheramason, Northern Ireland on June 15 to clinch the series 1-0. The two previous matches in the series were abandoned because of rain without a ball being bowled.

Ireland captain Paul Stirling won the toss and inserted the Windies, but he may have been regretting that decision as openers Evin Lewis (91 off 44 balls) and skipper Shai Hope (51 off 27) put the West Indies in a dominant position with a 122-run partnership.

The left-handed Lewis slammed seven fours and eight sixes in his devastating innings, with the stylish Hope hitting four fours and four sixes. The Windies had a blip after the loss of Hope's wicket, as Lewis and former skipper Rovman Powell (two) fell in quick succession as the team slid to 152 for three in the 13th over. After the fall of Shimron Hetmyer (15), the in-form Keacy Carty turned up the heat at the Bready venue as he slammed an unbeaten 49 off 22 balls with four fours and four sixes. Playing in his T20 debut, the 28-year-old Carty carried over his form from the One-Day Internationals (ODIs) against the Irish last month when he hit consecutive centuries to end the three-match series. With helpful cameos from allrounders Jason Holder (18) and Romario Shepherd (19 not out), West Indies scored 76 runs in the last five overs to post the imposing 256.

The Windies' highest score in the T20 format came in Centurion versus South Africa in 2023 when a century from Johnson Charles propelled them to 258 for five.

In the chase, Stirling (13) was dismissed in the second over by Holder (two for 49), but Ireland showed good attacking intent as the pair of Ross Adair (48 off 36) and Harry Tector (38 off 25) put on a 101-run partnership for the second wicket.

Wily left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein (three for 27) then drove home West Indies' advantage with the double strike of Lorcan Tucker (one) and Adair in the 12th over, while the wickets of George Dockrell (15), Tim Tector (seven) and Barry McCarthy (two) fell in quick succession as Ireland slipped to 161 for seven in the 17th over.

Some lusty blows from Mark Adair (31 not out off 14) eventually



West Indies opener Evin Lewis

saw Ireland close on 194 for seven to give West Indies the facile win.

Coming off 3-0 losses to England in back-to-back ODI and T20 series, the win could give the West Indies a much-needed confidence boost ahead of their Test and T20 series against Australia. The teams will play a three match Test series starting on June 25, with a five-match T20 series scheduled to start on July 20.

Summarised Scores:
WEST INDIES 256/5 (20 overs) (Evin Lewis 91, Shai Hope 51, Keacy Carty 49 not out; Matthew Humphreys (2/16) vs IRELAND 194/7 (20 overs) (Ross Adair 48, Harry Tector 38, Mark Adair 31 not out; Akeal Hosein 3/27, Jason Holder 2/49). West Indies won by 62 runs.

Injured Aussie star Steve Smith still on squad to WI

Star batter Steve Smith and his dislocated finger are going with Australia to the Caribbean.

Smith doesn't need surgery on the compound dislocation to his right pinkie from the World Test Championship final at Lord's, captain Pat Cummins said on June 14.

But Smith's appearance in the three-test series against the West Indies starting on June 25 in Barbados remained a major doubt.

"I'd say first Test maybe unlikely and then go from there, but it's a bit early just to tell," Cummins said.

Smith became the highest non-English run-scorer in Tests at Lord's and was hurt at a decisive moment in the final against South Africa on June 13.

Standing at first slip and closer to the wickets than usual, his finger was smashed by an edge off South Africa captain Temba Bavuma and he dropped the catch. Bavuma was on 2 and went on to 66 in a match-winning stand with opener Aiden Markram, who scored 136.

Smith's finger should heal in two weeks and he could play depending on his tolerance for wearing a splint. He has to wear the splint for eight weeks, which encompasses the entire series.

Cummins was grateful that the West Indies Tests — their opening series in the 2025-27 WTC cycle — mean they don't have long to lick their wounds after losing the final by five wickets inside four days.

"To make these finals, it's normally off the back of being really strong at home, but you've got to win some away series too," Cummins said. "We've got a good chance to do that straight away. A three-Test-match series out there, it means we're into some really important cricket.

"So, in some ways, it's good we get to dust ourselves off and turn around in a couple of weeks and start looking ahead to the next one. That's one of the good things about the World Test Championship, every Test series and every test match feels like you're playing for something significant."

Cummins said they naturally want to be in the 2027 final but the makeup of what is an aging team has to be balanced between giving new talent a chance while trying to win matches, with an Ashes home series coming up in November. It wouldn't surprise if there are test retirements after that.

"It does feel like a little bit of a fresh start," Cummins said. "Fast forward a couple of years, you start thinking about who's going to win. Hopefully if we make the final, who's going to be in that? Do we want to get some games into them? Do we feel like now is the right time to change? Or do you hold with the team that got us to the final?"

"A new WTC cycle in some ways does feel like a bit of a reset."

Cummins had a good final, taking seven wickets and reaching 300 for his career, but he believes Australia let slip a second straight WTC title after having the upper hand at times. He felt their 74-run first-innings lead could have been more.



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