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Caribbean Global Awards
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People's Choice- Caribbean Global Leader 2025



Prime Minister
**The Honourable Kamla
Persad-Bissessar SC**

T&T Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has been named the 2025 People's Choice winner at the Caribbean Global Awards (CGA), in a field of 58 regional leaders. The award is the only CGA category determined entirely by public vote. St Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves placed 2nd, Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley was 3rd, Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness was 4th and Guyana President Irfaan Ali was 5th. The Awards will be presented in London, UK, on Sept. 27.

Apple purchases Guyana Carbon credits



TECHNOLOGY giant, Apple, has taken a new step in its sustainability efforts by purchasing 100,000 jurisdictional carbon credits, sourced from Guyana's vast forest. "The jurisdictional programme includes all 18 million hectares of forest in Guyana — about 85 percent of the landmass — and enables the country to benefit from its historically low deforestation rate, while funding low-carbon development priorities," the company said in its 2025 Environmental Progress report, highlighting the country as 'a critical watershed and hotspot of biodiversity.' Guyana has established its own unique mechanism, through the creation of one of the first Low-Carbon Development Strategies in the world, which enabled it to enter a voluntary market for the sale of carbon credits.

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

Rest of the World Guyana



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- 25% by 2025 reduction in food import bill

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- 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



The Guyana Office for Investment is a semi-autonomous agency established in 1994 pursuant to the Public Corporations Act, with a mandate to promote and encourage investment in Guyana.

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GUYANA
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OPPORTUNITIES

OECD: Rapid Immigration Surge Exposes Deep Cracks in Canada's Economy

By Clarissa Ali
LJI REPORTER

A new report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has raised sharp concerns about Canada's economic trajectory, linking the country's historic immigration surge to growing problems in housing affordability, lagging productivity, and a misleading picture of economic growth.

The OECD, a group of 38 developed nations, publishes economic surveys for each member every two years. In its latest review of Canada, released last week, the organization points to housing and productivity as areas where Canada now ranks among the lowest performers in the developed world.

At the heart of both issues, the report says, is the country's rapid population growth — driven largely by record levels of immigration since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Rapid population growth has exacerbated previous housing affordability challenges," the OECD warns, adding that housing construction must keep pace with immigration targets to avoid further strain.

The report also notes a troubling disconnect between labour force expansion and economic output. While Canada has welcomed millions of new residents, it has failed to match this growth with "productivity-enhancing investment."

As a result, the share of economic output per person — a key measure of prosperity — is shrinking. Another factor, the OECD suggests, is a shift in the composition of newcomers. Whereas Canada once prioritized high-skilled professionals, recent immigration trends have leaned heavily on temporary workers and international students. This, the report says, may be lowering average productivity across the workforce.

Canada now has one of the most expensive housing markets in the OECD, with only Portugal posting a higher price-to-income ratio. The mismatch between housing supply and population growth has pushed home-

ownership and rental costs beyond reach for many Canadians, particularly in urban centres.

Despite positive headline GDP numbers, the report warns that Canada has been experiencing a "per capita" recession — where overall economic growth masks the fact that individual Canadians are getting poorer. From 2014 to 2022, Canada's GDP per capita grew at an annual rate of just 0.6%, trailing nearly every other OECD country, including the United States, where growth was nearly triple at 1.7%.

The OECD underscores the point with two contrasting charts: one showing Canada keeping pace with global peers in overall GDP growth, and another showing the country falling far behind when adjusted for population size.

Since 2022, Canada has added more than three million people, pushing its population from 38.5 million to over 41.6 million — a growth rate roughly six times the OECD average.

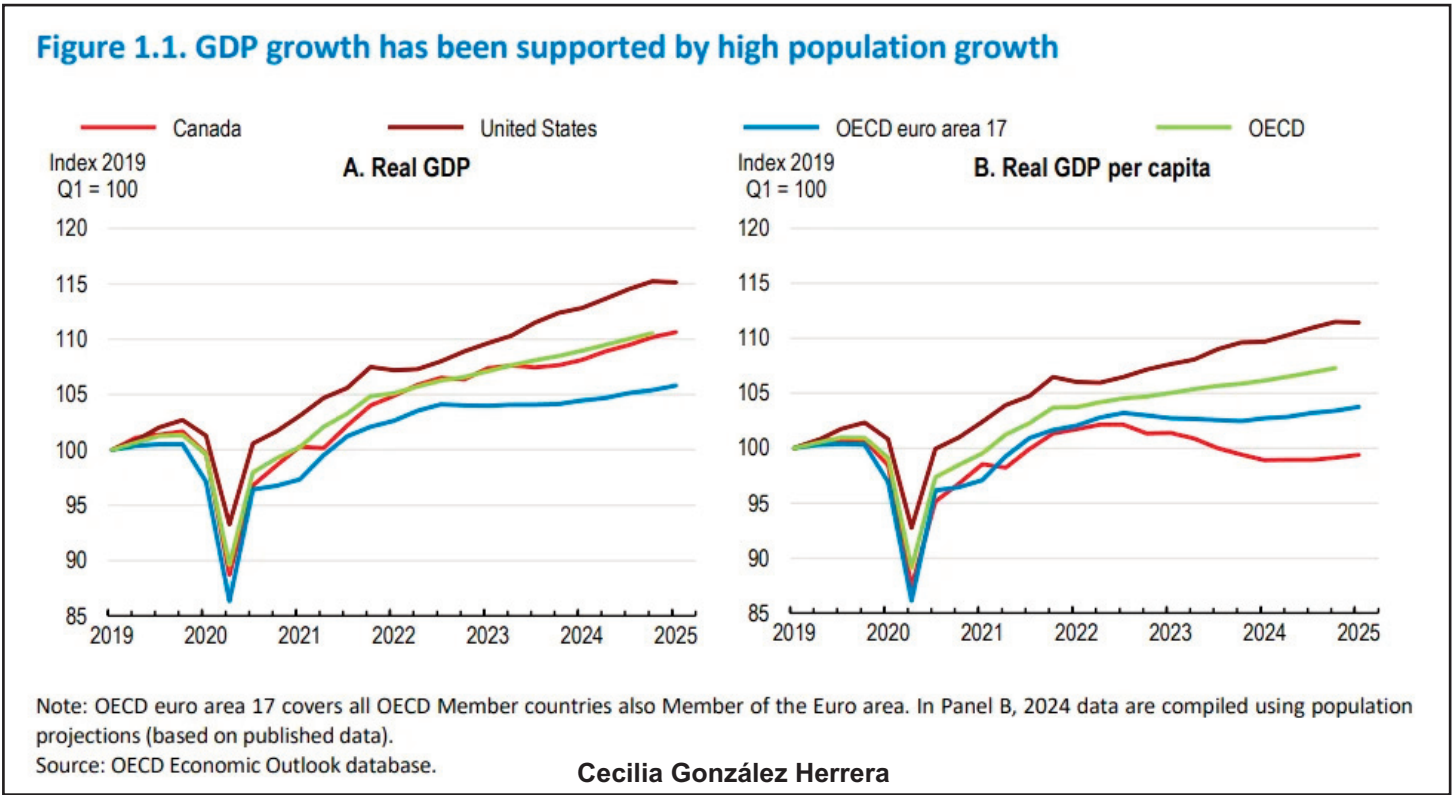
In 2023 alone, Canada's population expanded by 3%, compared to just 0.5% across other member nations. Unlike population spikes in other countries caused by war or displacement, Canada's growth has been largely voluntary — driven by federal immigration policy.

Despite the challenges, the OECD does offer a measure of optimism. The report describes Canada's economy as "resilient," supported by "robust public finances."

But it is one of the first international reviews to directly link Canada's population strategy to rising economic

and social pressures.

As the government continues to set ambitious immigration targets, the OECD's findings add to growing calls for a more coordinated approach — one that ensures infrastructure, housing, and investment keep pace with the country's rapid demographic changes.



Eglinton Crosstown to open in September

Premier Doug Ford says that he expects that the long-delayed Eglinton Crosstown LRT could be open as soon as September, with plans to hand the line over to the TTC for final testing "in the next couple of weeks."

Ford made the comment to reporters at Queen's Park on Tuesday after he was asked about the rumored September timeline.

City Coun. Josh Matlow said back in April that he believed the LRT would open by September, though Metrolinx has never confirmed the timeline.

"Yes, that is what I am hearing," Ford said of the September target date on Tuesday. "I am hearing some positive things about Eglinton track and hopefully we will be handing it over in the next couple weeks to the TTC and they will be doing their trial runs. Thank God, that is all I can say about that and that project."

Construction on the Eglinton Crosstown began in 2011 and was initially slated to be completed in 2020 but it has been plagued by numerous delays and is now at least \$1 billion overbudget.

Metrolinx has previously said that the public would be given a three-month notice before the line opens and that the company was pushing towards a 2025 opening date.

The LRT spans a 19-kilometre route from Mount Dennis in the west to Kennedy Road in the east.

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When PPP/C wins, everybody wins

Now that the election has been called in Guyana, we can expect a flurry of claims and counter-claims by the parties contesting it.

Like most election campaigns everywhere, it is par for the course for candidates and parties to make wild promises, and even wilder allegations, against each other.

The job of the electorate is to sift through this debris to get to the core of the issues. And what is usually at this depth is performance of past governments, and the track record of service of those new to the game.

To that end, there's no question that the incumbent Irfaan Ali government has performed over the last five years it has been in power.

One only has to look at the global economic outlook for the country to see evidence of this -- no surprise because of the oil wealth.

But what matters even more than this is the management of this oil resource, often seen historically as a curse in other nations that used the windfall to destroy their own economic potential in other areas.

Many nations enjoyed oil wealth at the expense of other areas of development. Enjoying the money that was flowing freely, they ignored agriculture, manufacturing and other income-earning areas of development, only to fall flat

when the oil money dried up and they realised that they failed to invest in other key areas.

The Ali government has done exactly the opposite. From day one, the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/Civic) government refused to fall victim of the oil curse, and immediately started investing in key areas of development, most notably agriculture.

Unlike the previous PNC government, which saw it fit to shutter the sugar industry, the backbone of the economy for many years, the PPP reinvested its oil wealth into the sector, allowing it to resurge into a major economic factor. The Ali government, from then to now -- up to this week, for that matter -- has continued its investment in agriculture, building new roads to allow farmers ease of transport to market, putting in prevention infrastructure to avoid flood losses, and investing in new products including wheat. It has invested steadily in the coconut industry, given rice farmers the tools needed to grow their farms, and even invested heavily in the fishing industry.

The reason behind this is that Ali, an astute manager, knows that oil is a finite resource, and that eventually, somewhere down the road, the money will dry up like the oil wells, and in that event, Guyana will be well positioned to continue on its path toward economic self-

sufficiency because of investments made in key sectors today.

That takes foresight.

To quote PPP General Secretary Bharrat Jagdeo, himself a former President, "From agriculture and infrastructure to energy, ICT, and tourism, we have driven broad-based, inclusive growth. We invested heavily in healthcare, education, affordable housing, social welfare, and built stronger, safer communities....thousands of house lots have been distributed, putting land and homeownership within reach for ordinary Guyanese families.

"We tempered the impact of the global increase in the cost of living by increasing disposable income across both the private and public sectors. To ease the financial burden on families and businesses, we introduced several initiatives -- including subsidies on electricity and water, the removal of all taxes on gasoline and diesel, and the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, which led to cheaper access to data and other services.

"We also reduced mortgage interest rates and implemented a range of additional measures aimed at putting more money into people's pockets. "At the same time, we tackled rising living costs through targeted interventions for the elderly, unemployed, women, youth, and vulnerable communities, while safe-

guarding jobs and incomes nationwide."

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how you measure performance. And that is how you choose a government to lead Guyana through the next five years.

The other contenders will talk a lot of talk, and some may even try to engage in the age-old tactic of race-baiting to win votes. We've already seen attempts to link the drowning death of a child at a local resort to politics, though we still have no idea how the two are linked. We've also seen attempts to cause race riots across the country as the PNC tries desperately to win support from its traditional base (which, incidentally, has been widely endorsing the Ali government) -- efforts almost as desperate as that party's attempt to steal the election through rigging at the last polls.

But we must not forget.

We've also seen new questionable contenders enter the race. But we won't go there now. That's a story for another day.

Today, as we look forward to the September 1 general election, just remember performance talks, and ole talk walks.

To borrow a phrase from the Kamla Persad-Bissessar regime next door in Trinidad and Tobago, Ali has already proven that when the PPP wins, everybody wins.

The relief to Region Three rice farmers is greatly appreciated

Dear Editor,

ON behalf of rice farmers across Region Three, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the People's Progressive Party/Civic government for the relief measures provided to the rice-farming sector since 2020.

The support extended to farmers during challenging times, whether due to adverse weather conditions, rising input costs or market disruptions, has

brought stability and hope to thousands of households that rely on rice cultivation for their livelihoods.

The PPP/C government's responsiveness and tangible actions continue to demonstrate a deep commitment to safeguarding the interests of rural communities and agriculture as a whole.

The relief interventions, including flood-relief grants, fertiliser support, seed distribution and price subsidies,

have significantly eased the burdens faced by rice farmers and enabled many of us to remain productive and resilient. My farming community is appreciative of the love and support shown to us and will be a pillar that helps in a massive electoral victory. A win for President Irfaan is a win for all of Guyana.

We especially commend the PPP/C government's inclusive approach to decision-making and for con-

tinuously engaging with stakeholders. It is clear that the administration recognises the value of rice farming to our national economy.

We look forward to further collaboration in the rice industry and are committed to doing our part to advance the rice industry.

Regards,
Pt. Rajish Kadarnauth



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Canada Urges Israel to Allow More Aid into Gaza as Humanitarian Tensions Mount

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

Canada’s Secretary of State for International Development, Randeep Sarai, is calling on Israel to restore the flow of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, warning that the region is facing an unprecedented hunger crisis.

“Gaza is officially the hungriest place on earth. This is profoundly disturbing,” Sarai wrote Monday on the platform X, urging Israel to allow independent aid organizations, including the United Nations, to resume their operations.

His remarks come amid growing international criticism of Israel’s new aid distribution system, which has replaced hundreds of distribution sites once run by international agencies with just four locations operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), a group supported by Israel and the U.S.

Israel says the change was necessary to prevent aid from reaching Hamas, though the World Food Programme has reported no substantial evidence of large-scale aid diversion.

Critics, including the United Nations and humanitarian groups such as Oxfam, argue that allowing a party to the conflict to control aid sets a dangerous precedent. They also say the new system is failing to address soaring levels of hunger — particularly in northern Gaza, where aid access remains severely restricted.

Aid workers have reported chaotic and dangerous conditions, with desperate civilians overwhelming distribution sites and Israeli forces firing warning shots nearby. The UN has accused Israel of using humanitarian aid as a weapon, a charge Israel strongly denies.

On Tuesday, Palestinian health officials reported that Israeli forces opened fire on a group of people approaching an aid centre, killing at least 27. The Israeli military said it had fired



The UN warns famine is likely in Gaza

“near a few individual suspects” who deviated from a designated route and ignored warnings.

Responding to Sarai’s comments, Israel’s Ambassador to Canada Iddo Moed pushed back forcefully, accusing UN agencies of distorting the facts.

“UN agencies cherry-pick the facts to paint an alternative version of reality and demonize Israel,” Moed wrote on social media. He reiterated accusations that “the UN feeds Hamas” and claimed the new aid model is more effective than previous systems — a stance widely disputed by other Western governments, aside from the U.S. Meanwhile, questions remain about the transparency of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

In an email on Monday, the organization declined to disclose whether it receives Canadian funding, stating only that it is “a registered non-profit” and “like most non-profits, we don’t disclose our donors.”

Back in Ottawa, the federal Lib-

eral government is facing mounting pressure from human rights advocates for failing to follow through on earlier threats to impose targeted sanctions on Israel if conditions in Gaza worsened. Since then, international agencies have repeatedly warned of a looming famine in Gaza, even as the

Israeli government moves forward with plans to expand settlements in the occupied West Bank. Sarai reaffirmed Canada’s position, calling for an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages. “Civilians must be protected and treated with dignity — humanitarian law must be upheld,” he wrote.



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Alberta man wins Lotto 4 times

The “astronomical” odds appear to be in favour of one Alberta man who has been playing the lottery for over 40 years. Here’s what we know about his lucky streak.

David Serkin is retired, a cancer survivor and resides in Lethbridge.

He says he has been buying Lotto 6-49 tickets since its launch in 1982. He won \$1 million on the May 3 Lotto 6-49 Gold Ball draw. This win comes after he won \$500,000 on Aug. 20. On Nov. 16, he won \$1 million. In a draw 12 years ago that marked his first win, he went home with \$250,000.

“I know the odds are astronomical,” he said in a news release. “I don’t think it’ll happen again, but I still like buying tickets.”

According to Western Canada Lottery Corporation, the odds of winning the jackpot are estimated to be 1 in 33 million.

Not surprisingly, his family is pleasantly shocked. “I went for coffee with the boys after I checked my ticket,” he said. “They asked to see it and said, ‘Not again?!’”

Equality News

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A woman with dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is smiling and holding a large white sign that says "Advertising That Works!".

No long wait for election results as Representation of People's Act amended

The National Assembly on Monday amended the Representation of the People's Act (ROPA) ahead of the 2025 General and Regional Elections.

The Representation of the People's Act was amended in 2022 to split the major administrative Regions Three and Six into three sub-districts and Region Four into four sub-districts manned by Supernumerary Returning Officers. This process will facilitate the tabulation of votes at the various sub-districts as opposed to one central location in each region, in the presence of all political party agents and others.

On Monday, the Act was further amended to include Deputy Supernumerary Returning Officer to ensure another person is available to conduct duties in the absence of the Supernumerary Returning Officer.

Attorney General Anil Nandlall, in whose name the bill was tabled, explained that "that famous exercise that we all saw on March 3-4th at Ashmin's Building at the corner of Hadfield Street and Avenue of the Republic, Georgetown...will now take place in Region Four at four different centres. That obviously is now being done to avoid that fraudulent fiasco which erupted at the Ashmin's building and to avoid the electoral miscreants from unfolding their plans which every elections has seen them trying to unfold."

He was at the time referring to attempts by Returning Officer for District Four, Clairmont Mingo to derail the results of the count for Region Four in March 2020 to falsely declare the then incumbent APNU+AFC as the winner. These attempts which included reading results from a fraudulent spreadsheet, were carried out at the Ashmin's building which used as the command centre for GECOM for the region.

Mingo who is before the Georgetown Magistrates' Court along with others in relation to attempts to derail the 2020 elections, also fell ill on March 4, leading to the process being stalled.

"Bandits will always have a problem if you grill your house, it makes their job a little more tedious and difficult so you will excuse the utterances you are hearing emanating from the other side," Nandlall heckled during his



There has normally been a long wait for elections results in Guyana

presentation on Monday.

Region Four will this year be divided into sub-districts as follows; East Coast Demerara, East Bank Demerara, North Georgetown and South Georgetown.

Nandlall noted that since the PPP/C government assumed office in August 2020, five months after the polls, it has amended the Representation of the Peoples Act to avoid another electoral impasse.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Sonia Parag who noted that "no longer should we have to be sitting in a country waiting on the results of an elections for five months for the results of our elections."

"We cannot rewrite the past or erase the deep scars etched into our national consciousness by repeated efforts to undermine the democratic process...but what we can do and must do is legislate for a future where the rules are clear, the systems are strong and the avenues for interference are firmly closed," the Minister said.

She added that with the split of the electoral districts into smaller sub-dis-

tricts, "these (supernumerary) officers play a critical role throughout the electoral process and their functions are tightly regulated. Moreover, their functions ensures that no single officer or location becomes a bottleneck in the declaration of results which we would all agree can be a source of uneasiness for our country."

Other contributors to the debate from include Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha, and Opposition Members of Parliament Roysdale Forde,

Sherod Duncan, Tabitha Sarabo-Halley and Amanza Walton Desir.

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) recently posted revised manuals for General and Regional Elections titled (i) Official Manual for Returning Officers, Supernumerary Returning Officers and Other Election Officials, and (ii) Official Manual for Presiding Officers and Other Polling Day Officials. The manuals will be used for the training of Management Staff for the upcoming elections.

Criminals in masks face tougher penalties

The Criminal Law Miscellaneous Bill 2025 was unanimously passed in the National Assembly on Monday, amending the Criminal Law Offences Act.

The amended law adds a fine of upto \$750,000 for the use of face masks in committing certain crimes. Those criminals also face the possibility of a three-year jail sentence, according to the amended law

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall contended that, "concealing one's identity emboldens offenders while reducing the risks of being identified or apprehended."

In this regard, he noted that the Bill seeks to enhance public safety and aid law enforcement in apprehending criminals.

The amendment applies to larceny, house break-in, riots, unlawful assembly, acts of terrorism, burglary, robbery and assault.

Nandlall clarified that the legislation does not prohibit persons from wearing face-coverings for other purposes.



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Carney Moves to Fast-Track National Projects Amid U.S. Tariffs

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced Monday that his government will introduce legislation to accelerate major national infrastructure projects, aiming to boost the country’s economy in response to new U.S. tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump.

Carney revealed the plan following what he described as a “very productive” meeting with Canada’s provincial and territorial leaders — his first since winning April’s federal election.

“This has been the best meeting we’ve had in a decade,” Ontario Premier Doug Ford told reporters, highlighting the rare unity among the premiers.

The federal government’s proposed legislation will streamline approval processes for large-scale “nation-building” projects — including pipelines, nuclear power, clean energy corridors, and trade infrastructure — with the goal of securing approval within two years.

Carney said the goal is to make Canada “the strongest economy in the G7,” while enhancing national resilience and reducing dependence on foreign markets.

“This meeting demonstrated how we can give ourselves far more than any foreign government can take away,” Carney said.

His economic plan follows escalating trade tensions with the U.S.,



Prime Minister Mark Carney

where President Trump announced new tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum, and automobiles. The White House said it would double tariffs on steel and aluminum to 50% starting Wednesday, citing a need to protect U.S. industry.

Carney condemned the measures as “unjustified and unlawful,” and confirmed that Minister of US-Canada Trade Dominic LeBlanc would travel to Washington later Monday to resume negotiations.

In the meantime, Carney said Canada must act independently by fast-tracking “projects of national interest” that can help the country diversify trade, strengthen security, and support long-term growth.

Eligible projects may be proposed by provinces or the private sector but

must meet strict criteria, including:

- Clear economic benefit to Canada
- Strong likelihood of completion
- Environmental sustainability
- Alignment with Indigenous priorities

These initiatives may include highways, railways, ports, airports, pipelines, nuclear and clean energy projects, and electric transmission lines.

A particular focus, Carney added, will be on building infrastructure in the Arctic to reinforce Canadian sovereignty as global powers like Russia, China, and the U.S. vie for influence in the region.

While some provinces have already submitted proposals, Carney did not indicate which projects may move

forward first.

Despite past tensions — particularly Alberta Premier Danielle Smith’s sharp criticism of former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — provincial leaders expressed rare consensus after the meeting.

Ford praised the “great collaboration,” and Smith said she was “encouraged” by Carney’s approach.

Still, challenges lie ahead. Contentious issues like oil and gas development could strain provincial cooperation, and Indigenous leaders have raised early concerns.

Some worry the fast-track approach may sideline their land and water rights and have called for greater clarity on their role in the process.

Lanterns Launched in Hope as Search for Missing Nova Scotia Siblings continues

By Clarissa Ali
LJI REPORTER

Two glowing paper lanterns rose into the fading evening sky over rural Nova Scotia on Monday, carrying with them a community’s hope for the safe return of Lilly and Jack Sullivan — two young siblings who disappeared without a trace one month ago.

Lilly, 6, and Jack, 4, were last seen on May 2, when their mother and stepfather called 911 to report that the children had wandered away from their home in Lansdowne Station, a remote and heavily forested area about 140 kilometres northeast of Halifax.

On Monday night, around 50 people gathered outside the RCMP detachment in Stellarton to hold a candlelight vigil. Mourners added stuffed animals, candles, and angel figurines to a growing memorial for the children, whose disappearance has gripped the region.

“This is not a space for judgment or speculation,” said vigil organizer Brenda MacPhee, who has



Lilly and Jack were last seen on May 2

no personal connection to the family. “It’s a space for support. This is every parent’s worst nightmare — something you hope never happens.”

The children’s disappearance triggered a massive six-day search effort that covered 5.5 square

kilometres of dense forest. Over 160 search and rescue personnel took part, using dogs, helicopters, drones, and ATVs.

Although the initial search was scaled back on May 7, efforts have continued. Search teams have since expanded their focus to 8.5 square kilometres, including renewed searches around the family’s home on Gairloch Road and underwater investigations in nearby lakes and ponds.

Over the weekend, crews returned to a pipeline trail where a boot print had been found during a previous search. Despite these efforts — and more than 10,000 volunteer hours, hundreds of public tips, and over 50 police interviews — authorities have yet to uncover any clear sign of what happened to Lilly and Jack.

The RCMP says the investigation remains active and ongoing. As lanterns drifted into the twilight, the small crowd in Stellarton stood in solemn silence — united in grief, uncertainty, and a shared hope that the children will one day be found.



Scores of rice farmers, cash crop growers, and fisherfolk have endorsed President Irfaan Ali for a second term

Essequibo farmers endorse President Ali for second term: 'this gov't delivers'

A NUMBER of rice farmers, cash crop growers, and fisherfolk from Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam) have publicly endorsed President Dr. Irfaan Ali for another term in office, citing his transformative work and unwavering commitment to the agricultural sector.

At a public meeting held at the Anna Regina Secondary School auditorium, scores of farmers expressed deep gratitude to the Head of State for the significant strides made under his administration, especially during times of economic hardship and market uncertainty.

"We've never seen a President work this hard for farmers," said veteran rice farmer Kaydar Persaud from Affiance. "When prices dropped, President Ali didn't make excuses—he acted. The \$300 per bag support came at the right time and saved many of us. I fully support another term for him."

President Ali's efforts in improving land access, stabilising rice prices, upgrading infrastructure, and introducing modern drying and storage facilities have not gone unnoticed.

Cash crop farmer Talesha Narine from Aurora commended the administration's responsiveness: "This government listens. When we asked for better

drainage and access to extension services, they delivered. Today, my yields have increased, and I feel proud to be a farmer. I stand behind President Ali 100 per cent.

Narine praised the President's vision of sustainability and value-added farming, noting that farmers were no longer being left behind in national development conversations. Fisherfolk along the Pomeroon River also shared their endorsement, citing improvements to landing sites and easier access to glue.

"We've seen a real change under President Ali. We now have proper mooring sites, and the support from the Ministry of Agriculture has been constant," said fisherman Ramesh Persaud. "The government isn't just talking—they're doing the work. We're backing the President all the way."

Since taking office, President Ali and his government have placed agriculture at the centre of national development—investing in infrastructure, machinery, markets, and modern technology Persaud said.

During his visit to Region Two, the President announced the opening of 20,000 acres of land, fully supported by government investment in equipment, land development, and seed paddy.

Farmers will also benefit from two new drying and storage facilities, with tenders going out in just two weeks. He also unveiled a co-investment strategy for fertiliser production and a price stabilisation system to shield rice farmers from market volatility.

"You have a government that's with you through good times and bad," President Ali told the packed audience. "We are not just building farms—we are building a future of food security, prosperity, and self-reliance."

From rice fields to riverbanks, farmers in Region Two say the choice is clear: they want continuity and leadership that delivers.

"We've had governments in the past, but this one stands out for one reason—results," said cash crop grower Mohini Deonaraine. "President Ali has kept his promises. That's why he deserves a second term."

The rice farmers were very appreciative of President Irfaan Ali and his government's efforts in improving the farming community. Rice farmers said that they are now getting more markets for their produce, and they are also using the Agro processing facility to dry their mangoes and pineapples as value-added crops.

Melrose Henry from Capoey said that there have been tremendous agricultural opportunities in the Capoey community. Henry said that Capoey is supporting President Ali and he called on more indigenous youths to take up agriculture as a career path. She urged the government to construct a dormitory for students to attend the Guyana School of Agriculture branch at Cotton Field.

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PPP/C's support continues to grow with endorsements from opposition, civil society

THE People's Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) is experiencing a surge in support from former opposition figures and civil society members who are backing President Dr. Irfaan Ali for a second term, citing national progress, inclusive governance and a clear development vision.

General Secretary of the PPP, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, while speaking at a recent press conference, credited the party's track record over the past five years for attracting new endorsements, even from former critics and longtime political opponents.

"They see the changes under the PPP. They see that we are a party welcoming to people, regardless of their former political views; that we are a diverse party, ethnically diverse, religiously diverse, with a gender-diverse party, and they like what they see," he stated.

Dr. Jagdeo revealed that the PPP has been receiving widespread support from individuals formerly aligned with the main opposition parties like the Alliance for Change (AFC) and the People's National Congress (PNC), many of whom have expressed deep disillusionment with their parties' internal management and leadership direction.

"I've met with a ton of people from their camp, who are totally dissatisfied with the leadership in both parties, AFC and the PNC. They don't see any future in those parties for themselves. In fact, they don't believe those parties are capable of managing their own affairs; internal affairs, much less that of the country," Jagdeo said.

The General Secretary credited the



PPP/C General Secretary Bharrat Jagdeo addressing a gathering of supporters

PPP's inclusive and forward-thinking governance as a key reason for the recent wave of endorsements. He said the party's embrace of diversity, ethnicity, religious and gender has resonated with citizens across Guyana.

Among other drivers, he pointed to the PPP/C's track record over the past five years, highlighting policy areas that have drawn praise even from former critics.

In recent days, PNC Member of

Parliament Geeta Chandan- Edmond has endorsed President, Dr Irfaan Ali, throwing her full support behind his bid for a second term and aligning herself with the governing PPP/C.

Almost driven to tears, the long-standing opposition member during her presentation to the National Assembly on Monday, said her decision to break ranks with the PNC came after several attempts to silence her.

Standing at the podium, Chandan-

Edmond watched as members of the PNC camp exited the parliament chamber.

"Let the record reflect tonight that I stand proudly with President Irfaan Ali, I stand with his leadership, I stand with his vision and I stand with his steadfast commitment to this country...Because when the choices between progress and happiness, between development and dysfunction ... I will always choose Guyana," Chandan-Edmond said.

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

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

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.

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

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Guyanese suppliers benefit from over \$170B in work from ExxonMobil –during 2024

EXXONMOBIL Guyana and its contractors have set a new benchmark for local economic impact, injecting over GY\$170 billion into the economy through Guyanese suppliers in 2024 alone, according to its latest annual report.

This massive injection according to the company’s 2024 Annual Report, is among the highest annual local content expenditure since oil production began in the country, and signals the increasing participation of Guyanese businesses in the booming offshore oil and gas sector.

This figure forms part of a broader economic footprint, with the largest US oil producer and its partners Hess Corp and CNOOC having now spent more than GY\$525 billion with local businesses since 2015.

But the GY\$170 billion in 2024 underlines a major acceleration in local engagement, as production scaled up and major projects like the Yellowtail development and the Gas-to-Energy project took shape.

“Over the past decade, ExxonMobil Guyana, its co-venturers and contrac-



A Guyanese oil -and-gas worker is seen in action

tors have spent more than GY\$525 billion with over 2,000 Guyanese suppliers for goods and services.

“Their participation shows the ripple effect of our presence, and how oil-and-gas investments expand far beyond the effect of oil production’s direct impacts, helping to grow Guyana’s economy and develop its workforce,” President of ExxonMobil Guyana, Alistair Routledge said in the report.

Currently, more than 2,000 unique Guyanese businesses have provided services to ExxonMobil and its contractors.

In 2024 alone, over 6,100 Guyanese were reported working to support offshore operations, nearly 70 per cent of the oil-and-gas workforce.

The sectors benefiting from these opportunities range from Cargo Management Services, Engineering and Machining, and Pipe Welding to Blasting and Coating. Additionally, emergent sectors like Warehousing, Civil Works and support services, Industrial Cleaning, and Janitorial services are also experi-

encing growth and investment.


In 2024, a state-of-the-art FPSO facility simulator was commissioned at the Technical Training College in Port Mourant, Berbice, further bolstering Local Content and capacity building.

This training facility provides practical, real-world education, enabling trainees to practice safety, operations, troubleshooting and maintenance activities, equipping them to succeed in new careers offshore.


The Centre for Local Business Development established in 2017 through the Greater Guyana Initiative has been instrumental in expanding local capacity.

Last year, the centre posted over 250 procurement opportunities and hosted more than 30 vendor days, allowing Guyanese businesses to directly engage with industry buyers.

The centre also assisted over 500 companies in adopting international safety and business standards, ensuring their competitiveness in the energy sector.

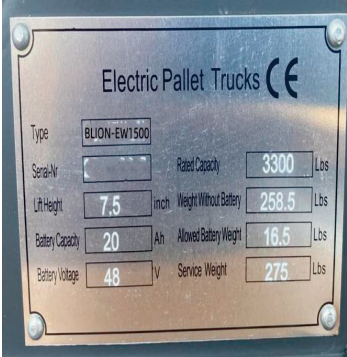



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
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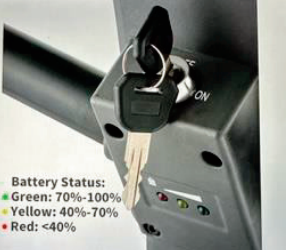
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Gov’t maps out strategic food production plans for farming districts

RESPONDING to the immediate needs of farmers in Region Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), the government of Guyana has set aside some \$50 billion to begin the rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads.

This was announced on Sunday by President, Dr Irfaan Ali, during a community engagement with fisherfolk, rice farmers, and cash-crop producers.

The President stated that the government is actively crafting strategic food-production plans tailored to the specific needs of farming districts across the country.

Specifically for Region Three, an audit is underway to examine the conditions of farm-to-market roads.

“Right now, we’re completing an audit of all the farm-to-market access dams across the region. We are going to set aside \$50 billion to start upgrading all of those farms-to-market access dams into all-weather, hard-surface roads.”

This investment is expected to reduce transportation costs and minimise produce spoilage, thereby improving overall efficiency in getting goods from farms to markets.

“Let me say to you that agriculture, food production is not a one size fits all.

“Agriculture and food production is about specific policies and measures depending on the competitive advantage of each and every region,” the President said, highlighting the importance of continued engagements with government officials, farmers and other stakeholders to address concerns and develop effective solutions.

“That is why we’ve been going through all across the country to address this issue of agriculture and food production, but with a specific development strategy for every single one of our regions, because the aim is to position Guyana as a leading producer of food for the entire Region,” he added.

In addition to the government’s plans to fix all-weather roads, President Ali pointed out how the investment in new highways will open new transportation links, allowing farmers to not just access new lands, but also new markets.

He explained that the new highway to Parika and the Del Conte Road link, complemented by the Sandhill Road link will unlock an estimated 75,000 acres of land for which people have transports or leases.

“These investments will open up those lands, giving farmers access. But access alone is not enough—capital in-

vestment for development is significant. That’s why the government will form agricultural districts and assign machinery to assist with land development,” President Ali explained.

Ultimately, the aim is to enhance connectivity between the mainland and island communities in the Essequibo River, further integrating the national food production network.

“We are talking to you about a clearly defined vision—understanding what investments are needed and committing to making those investments a reality.”

While the government continues to

invest heavily in drainage and irrigation (D&I) systems countrywide, the President proposed a more targeted approach that empowers farmers to manage their own D&I systems by district.

“For example, in Canal Number One, we’ve assigned two bobcats and two tractors to the farmers’ group. We provide the capital equipment, and they will have to maintain that capital equipment and keep it in operation.”

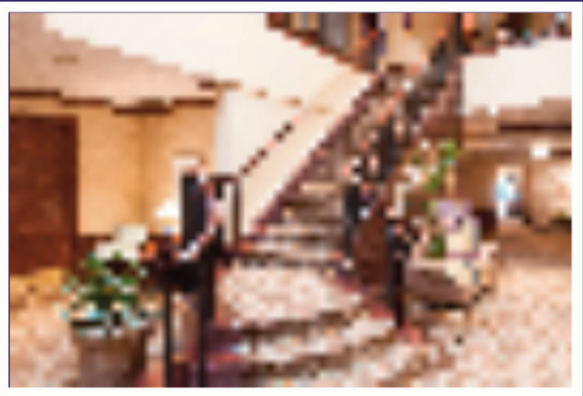
This initiative is expected to empower farmers and reduce their input costs, while the government continues to invest in larger, more complex national drainage systems.



Dr Irfaan Ali

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 <div>Lantic Rogers Granulated White Sugar 2 kg</div>	 <div>Lou & Nicky's Lemon Juice 946 ml</div>	 <div>Club Supreme Ground Black Pepper 280 g</div>	 <div>Grace Browning 142 ml</div>
299 each	129 each	2/\$5	199 each
 <div>Dunya Harvest Lima Beans 540 ml</div>	 <div>Titus Sardine in Soy Bean Oil 125 g</div>	 <div>Cedar Yellow Corn Meal #250 907 g</div>	 <div>Grace Parboiled Rice 2 kg</div>
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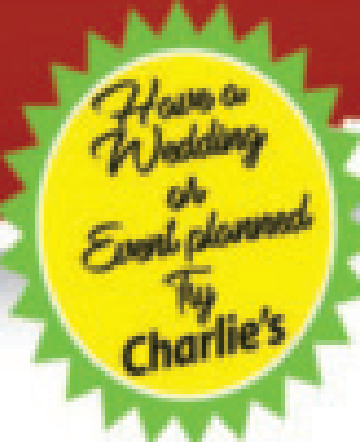


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Guyana-NASA forum coming

COME January 2026, the first Berkeley-Guyana NASA innovation Forum will be held locally, creating a platform for the country to leverage expertise from major technology giants.

This was according to President, Dr Irfaan Ali, following his visit to the Spring 2025, Berkeley Innovation Forum, California, United States.

“In January next year, we will have the Berkeley-Guyana NASA Innovation Forum in Guyana. These were things we fantasised about in the past looking at television,” President Ali told a community gathering in Region Three.

Last week, the Guyanese Head of State was awarded the prestigious Global Leadership Award for Open Innovation for 2024 from the University of California, Berkeley, at the NASA Ames Research Centre.

President Ali said: “A rush of emotions went through me as I walked into the NASA centre, walked into the Google X innovation room, knowing that these are things that you wished that is [sic] upon us now.”

A highlight of the tour was the Vertical Motion Simulator (VMS), a key tool used by innovators and contractors to advance drone and aviation technology.

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Guyana assumes presidency of UN Security Council with focus on poverty

Guyana has assumed the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the month of June, taking the helm of the Council’s agenda during a period of escalating global conflict and slow progress toward sustainable development goals.

The Caribbean nation, which began its current two-year term on the Council in January 2024, will lead a packed calendar of meetings addressing crises in Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Central Africa, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen. The Council will also hold a mandated session on Resolution 2334, which concerns Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories.

A key feature of Guyana’s presidency will be a High-Level Open Debate on June 19, chaired by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali. The debate, titled “Poverty, Underdevelopment and Conflict: Implications for the Maintenance of International Peace and Security,” will explore how poverty and underdevelopment serve both as causes and consequences of conflict. Speakers will include representatives from the UN system, the African Union, and various UN Member States. The event comes as armed conflicts continue to rise and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals remain off track.

Guyana will also convene the annual Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict on June 25. Briefings will be delivered by Virginia Gamba, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, and UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. Member States will respond to the Secretary-General’s latest annual report on the issue.

Throughout the month, Guyana plans to spotlight several of its priority issues: conflict prevention, the link between security and development, the effects of climate change on peace and security, the protection of children in conflict zones, and the women, peace and security agenda.

The Council’s Programme of Work is expected to be adopted on Monday,



Guyana has taken over the rotating role of Presidency of the UN Security Council

June 2, after which Guyana’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, will brief the media on the month’s agenda and objectives. This marks Guyana’s third time serving on the Security Council, following previous terms in 1975–1976 and 1982–1983.



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Cases of rape and sexual assault often make headlines in India

India anger over 10-year-old rape victim's death after treatment delay

The death of a 10-year-old rape victim in the eastern Indian state of Bihar after an alleged delay in medical treatment has sparked outrage in the country.

The girl died on Sunday morning at the state government-run Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) in the capital Patna.

Her uncle has alleged that the child's condition worsened as she was kept waiting in an ambulance for around four hours on Saturday before being admitted to the hospital.

PMCH authorities have denied this, saying that claims of a delay in admission are "baseless".

The girl's death has made national headlines, with opposition leaders accusing the Bihar government - a coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janata Dal United (JD-U) - of gross mismanagement. The government has denied any negligence.

The girl is from the Dalit community, which is at the bottom of the Hindu caste hierarchy. Dalits face widespread mistreatment in India despite laws in place to protect them.

Following the outrage, the National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Women have criticised the incident and asked for the hospital's role to be investigated.

Rape victims cannot be named under Indian law.

The girl was raped on 26 May, allegedly by a man who lived near her aunt's house in Muzaffarpur. Police have arrested the man and are investigating the crime.

The girl went missing while she was playing outside her house. Her family members later found her lying injured near a road. Police officials have told reporters that she had several knife wounds.

She was first taken to a local hospital and then to the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH), around 85km (53 miles) from Patna.

Kumari Vibha, the superintendent of SKMCH, said that the child had several injuries, including wounds on her chest and neck, but that her condition had stabilised. She was referred to PMCH as she needed reconstruction surgery on her windpipe, Ms Vibha said.

But at PMCH, the child's uncle said, they

faced a delay in admission while the child waited in the ambulance.

"They [the hospital staff] made us run around for four hours from one hospital department to another one," he alleged. She was later admitted to the gynaecology department, he said.

The hospital has denied the allegations. IS Thakur, a top hospital official, said that the child's family had initially admitted her to the paediatrics department but that she was sent to the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department because of her injuries.

"Since we do not have an ICU in ENT, the child was shifted to the ICU of the gynaecology department," he said, adding that the child was brought in an Advance Life Support ambulance, which is equipped to offer critical care.

"The allegations of a delay in getting a hospital bed are baseless," Mr Thakur said.

The child's plight began making news after a viral video showed members of the opposition Congress party arguing with hospital staff, demanding that she be admitted.

Opposition parties in the state have held several protests since the death.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said that the girl's death was "extremely shameful" and demanded that strict action be taken against negligent officers.

"The rape victim waited for hours outside PMCH to be admitted... what is the use of the big buildings being built in the name of hospitals when there is chaos, corruption, misbehaviour, lack of resources and insensitivity all around?" the state's main opposition party Rashtriya Janata Dal said on X.

Leaders of the BJP and JD(U) have denied any negligence. Anamika Singh Patel, a BJP spokesperson, called the girl's death "unfortunate".

"But I myself run a hospital and I know that getting a bed in a hospital is a process which takes time. People in our government are working responsibly," she said.

The incident has also brought attention to the condition of Bihar's medical infrastructure, months before the state assembly election is due to be held.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Don't let the fact that you recently said something you regret spoil the whole week for you. If you have feelings of remorse the only way you are going to get past them is to seek out those you wronged and say sorry. Make sure you mean it.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): You should know by now that there is no such thing as something for nothing in this world. If you gained handsomely from someone's generosity the universe will expect you to be generous in return. How can you make them happy today?

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Do what you can to help a friend in need but don't put yourself out to such an extent that your own plans suffer. This may be one of those occasions when the best advice you can give them is to toughen up and sort it out themselves.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): You can sometimes be too nice for your own good and the planets warn it would be a mistake to let someone off the hook for an offense they should be penalized for. If you don't feel able to punish them then just ask someone who will.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): You may be an outgoing Leo but you need to spend some time alone today to get your thoughts in order. Only then will you be able to push ahead with your plans while ignoring your critics, of which there may be more than a few.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): This is a great time to approach employers and other powerful people and let them know about your latest big idea. Don't wait for them to invite you to speak, take the initiative and let them know who you are and what you can do.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): The time is fast approaching when you will be in a much better position to push ahead with your plans, so get both your personal and professional houses in order and be ready to seize the initiative when the moment arrives. Leave your rivals trailing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You have been endowed by the universe with an incredibly strong willpower and if you go after a goal of some sort over the next few days there is no doubt you will reach it. Try not to tread on too many toes along the way though!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): If a partner or loved one makes a mistake of some kind today you are advised to pretend you did not notice and to carry on as usual. They will know that you know, of course, but your sensitivity to their plight will earn their considerable gratitude.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): You can at times be a bit too serious and your main aim today should be to lighten your mood so you can enjoy life more. Time spent with a friend who makes you laugh could be the best investment you have made in a long time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Be open about what you intend to do over the next few days and invite loved ones to join you in the journey. Because you are such a self-contained individual others tend to see you as overly aloof and that's an image which needs improving.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): The more upheavals there have been on the home front of late the more receptive partners and loved ones will be if you offer them an olive branch. You don't have to admit it was all your fault but you do have to shoulder some of the blame.

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Port Royal set to become UNESCO World Heritage Site by July

Port Royal, the once infamous pirate haven turned archaeological treasure, is poised to join the prestigious list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites by July, according to Jamaica’s Culture Minister Olivia Grange.

Grange made the announcement during a floral tribute last Wednesday, marking the 95th anniversary of former Prime Minister Edward Seaga’s birth.

“I proudly report today that I’ve received the good news from the World Heritage Centre that the evaluation team has recommended that our nomination of Port Royal should be accepted for inscription on the World Heritage List in July of this year,” said Grange.

The site, formally recognized as “The Archaeological Landscape of 17th Century Port Royal,” will become Jamaica’s second entry on the World Heritage List, following the Blue and John Crow Mountains, which received the designation in 2015.

Calling the announcement “another win for Jamaica,” Grange emphasized the significance of the moment, particularly in light of Seaga’s early efforts. During his administration in the 1980s, three Jamaican sites—including Port Royal—were proposed for World Heritage status.

Port Royal was once the most important trading hub in the New World and gained a notorious reputation as both the wealthiest and “wickedest” city in the western hemisphere. That



Port Royal — once the most important trading hub in the new world

changed dramatically on June 7, 1692, when a devastating earthquake caused two-thirds of the city to sink into the sea. Today, over 330 years later, much of it remains remarkably well-pre-

served beneath the waves, offering a rare archaeological window into life in the 17th century.

Grange noted that the upcoming UNESCO designation, along with on-

going developments like the Port Royal Cruise Ship Pier, would significantly enhance Jamaica’s cultural and heritage tourism offerings.

New migrant task for in Jamaica to deal with influx of deportees

With more than 2,500 Jamaicans set to be deported from the United States, the Jamaican Government is stepping up its response—launching a national technical working group aimed at managing the reintegration of both voluntary and involuntary returnees, while balancing social support with national security.

Chaired by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), the newly approved task force forms part of the Government’s broader reintegration and rehabilitation strategy. It brings together key ministries, agencies, and civil society partners under the oversight of the Ministries of National Security, and Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, announced the initiative during a special post-Cabinet press briefing on Thursday (May 29) at Jamaica House. The same day, over 100 deportees from the United States arrived back on the island.

“The working group’s mandate is to coordinate reintegration services and to ensure that returnees are supported in a structured and sustainable man-



US deportees being returned to their home countries

ner,” said Senator Johnson Smith. “This includes their reception, verification, health checks, security, vetting and access to social and legal support. Where necessary – and I say this to citizens who are particularly concerned about those who return with serious criminal antecedents – monitoring and detention measures are in place; they will be applied.”

The Minister also clarified that the migrant population being supported is diverse, with differing circum-

stances.

“We now have a subgrouping of those who are returning of their own motion, determining the circumstances in the US to not be where they wish to remain, and those who are being returned, those who have had the decision made for them,” she said.

Approximately 2,500 Jamaicans have been confirmed for removal from the US, though the timeline for their return will be determined by logistics, legal processes, and other factors.

“The Government remains committed, together with our partners, to treating all returnees with dignity and fairness while upholding our national security interests,” Johnson Smith added.

The initiative reflects a more structured and strategic approach by the Jamaican Government to address the complex needs of returnees, especially amid tightening US immigration enforcement.

Jamaica records lowest murder rate in over three decades, says PM Holness

Prime Minister Andrew Holness is hailing what he describes as a historic decline in murders across Jamaica, citing the lowest figures in 34 years and a dramatic drop in violence, especially in previously troubled areas like St. James.

“Murders have dropped to their lowest level in 34 years, with the first quarter of 2025 recording a 43.3% reduction compared to last year, 210 fewer lives lost,” Holness wrote on social media. He said the Jamaica Constabulary Force has reported the lowest number of murders since official tracking began in 2001, with the second quarter on pace to continue the trend.

“We are seeing the results of strategic investment in law enforcement, stronger legislation, and community partnerships,” Holness added. “Your government remains focused on building a safer, more secure Jamaica for every Jamaican.”

Highlighting success in one of the island’s most historically violent parishes, the Prime Minister praised the St. James Police Division, led by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Samuels. “So far this year, the division has recorded 22 murders, compared to 68 during the same period last year, a 67% reduction,” he noted. “Notably, for the entire month of May, the parish recorded one murder, and that incident was a domestic dispute.”

Holness commended the local police force’s “focused, intelligence-driven, and strategic work,” and called it “a clear reflection” of effective modern policing. “I commend their strong lead-



Local police force is now intelligence-driven and focused, says PM Holness

ership, dedication, and meaningful engagement with the community,” he said.

In 2016, Jamaica’s murder rate was among the highest in the world, at 49.6 per 100,000. As of May 29, 2025, the country is seeing a 43% reduction in murders year-to-date. If the trend holds, Holness said, “we are on track for an annualized murder rate of 24.3 per 100,000, meaning we will have cut the national murder rate in half.”

“This is not by chance,” he stressed. “It is the result of deliberate, strategic, and unprecedented investment in national security by this administration.”

Since 2016, the Jamaican government has poured \$87 billion into the security sector—more than triple the amount invested before that year. Today, roughly \$9 billion annually is being allocated to law enforcement, intelligence, and operations.

“We are not just talking about security, not just praying about it, but doing the work, making the hard decisions, and investing where it counts to make Jamaica safer for every citizen,” Holness said. “There is more work to do, but let us recognize what has been achieved so far. We are turning the tide, step by step, investment by investment, life by life saved.”

Kartel no-show in Trinidad; finance minister probes deal

Trinidad and Tobago Finance Minister Davendranath Tancoo has ordered an investigation into the use of foreign exchange related to artist fees for the One Caribbean Music Festival (OCMF), following the controversial withdrawal of Jamaican dancehall star Adidja “Vybz Kartel” Palmer and other international acts from the event over alleged contractual issues.

Vybz Kartel was one of several performers who pulled out of the highly publicised festival at the Queen’s Park Savannah on Saturday. Other artists Sizzla Kalonji, Malie Donn, and Rvssian, along with Ghanaian-American singer Moliy, also backed out, citing contractual issues.

In comments made to the Trinidad Guardian, Tancoo expressed concern over the sums being mentioned in connection with the festival, especially as the country grapples with ongoing foreign exchange challenges. “I am also intrigued by the amount of foreign exchange being mentioned in the media reports as having been involved in this venture, and I expect in other similar ventures. I have requested the Ministry

of Finance to investigate and report on the very questions you raised,” the minister said.

He stressed that the move was not accusatory, but rather an attempt to gather facts. “Just to be clear, this is a fact-finding effort. Our Prime Minister and Government is fully supportive of private sector development of foreign exchange generators, including the commercialisation of the music and entertainment industry towards greater contribution to our country’s gross domestic product. We will share the results of this inquiry when we get same.”

Just hours before the start of the concert on Saturday, Kartel’s team announced the artist would not perform, citing a breach of contract.

The event’s promoter, Jacho Entertainment Ltd, claims Vybz Kartel and his team were paid a total of USD\$1.1 million—USD\$950,000 directly to the artist and another USD\$150,000 to his legal representative—towards a USD\$1.35 million performance fee. The remaining balance, they said, was available but

could not be issued in cash due to legal and financial constraints.

Organisers claim they only learned of Kartel’s withdrawal via a local media report. “Despite all efforts made by the OCMF team to ensure the artiste’s comfort and full payment, it was through the media that we were informed of his decision to pull out,” they said in a statement released hours before showtime. “We extend our sincere apologies to fans who were looking forward to his performance.”

In a video shared on Instagram later on Saturday, the dancehall star addressed the promoter directly. “Remember a years me know you. Remember the money that you talking about for the legal team, a outta my money it faawud. TJ [Vybz Kartel’s manager] reluctantly give you a bligh. You missed deadline after deadline, me beg for you. I say TJ give him a bligh,” Kartel said. “Remember you [the promoter] wanted to keep the show during Carnival. I tell you, you cannot do that. Don’t mess with the culture. ... You just couldn’t manage a Kartel show.”

He added that his only regret is that Trinidadian fans were robbed of the opportunity to see him perform after over a decade of him being incarcerated.

The fallout of the event also caught the attention of law enforcement. Acting Police Commissioner Junior Benjamin said the matter could merit further scrutiny, particularly because one of the promoters has a pending criminal charge.

It might be something of great concern. And that is something I would probably want to engage them (Financial Intelligence Bureau and Financial Intelligence Unit) to see exactly what is our take on that matter as it relates to that situation,” he said.

Though Saturday’s event was officially sold out, turnout was underwhelming as disappointed fans—learning of Kartel’s absence—demanded refunds. Ticket prices ranged from TTD\$450 for general admission to TT\$2,700 for VVIP access.

Former Suriname Minister Albert Ramdin sworn in as OAS Secretary

Suriname’s former Foreign Affairs Minister, Albert Ramdin, was officially sworn in on Friday as the new Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), ushering in what he called the beginning of a “new era” for the hemispheric body.

In a special session of the OAS Permanent Council, Ramdin—who previously served as Assistant Secretary General—laid out an ambitious vision focused on revitalizing the world’s oldest multilateral organization amid growing global uncertainty, democratic erosion, and deepening social inequality.

“Let this moment not be remembered as the beginning of a new administration,” Ramdin declared, “but as the beginning of a new era.”

Ramdin takes the helm from Uruguay’s Luis Almagro, who served two terms and was known for his vocal advocacy on democracy and human rights. Ramdin praised his predecessor’s legacy and also welcomed Colombian diplomat Laura Gil, set to become the OAS’s first female Under-Secretary-General.

In his inaugural address, Ramdin pledged to pursue four key priorities during his first year: internal institutional strengthening, greater public visibility of the OAS, financial sustainability, and an expanded role in tackling regional crises—chief among them, the worsening situation in Haiti.

Ramdin’s reform plan includes overhauling the OAS’s internal operations, introducing monthly cabinet meetings, improved staff communication, and a renewed focus on employee well-being and professional development. A change management unit will be established within his office to support these efforts.

“The OAS must become more effective, agile and cost-conscious,” he said, adding that revitalizing the institution is key to maintaining its relevance and impact in a fast-changing world.

Another major pillar of Ramdin’s strategy is to bring the OAS closer to the citizens of the Americas. He vowed to modernize the organization’s communications through storytelling, public campaigns, and partnerships with civil society, media, and academic institutions.

“From the modern cities of North America to the cultural richness of the



OAS Secretary General Albert Ramdin

Caribbean, it is our diversity that forms the foundation of mutual understanding,” Ramdin said. “The OAS is not just a bureaucracy, it is the beating heart of cooperation, peace and regional unity.”

Financial sustainability was also high on Ramdin’s agenda. He plans to build stronger alliances with development banks, private sector entities, NGOs, and observer nations. “More impactful programs require broader partnerships,” he said.

Ramdin identified Haiti as the hemisphere’s most urgent challenge, saying the OAS will support efforts to restore security, reform political institutions, and prepare for 2026 elections. He announced the relaunch of the “Group of Friends of Haiti” to help coordinate international assistance and

emphasized the need for a referendum on a new constitution.

He also reiterated the OAS’s continued commitment to its core mission of promoting democracy, human rights, security, and development.

Highlighting his extensive experience in election observation, Ramdin stressed that digital resilience is essential in safeguarding democratic processes from disinformation and cyber threats. He sees the OAS playing a central role in supporting countries as they navigate artificial intelligence and digital modernization.

Ramdin also addressed regional concerns, including migration, organized crime, drug violence, and climate change—urging for evidence-based solutions and stronger regional cooperation. He backed ongoing efforts like the

Bridgetown Initiative and called for serious engagement on the Multi Vulnerability Index to ensure small and climate-vulnerable states receive adequate support.

Finally, he emphasized the need for greater intra-regional trade, logistics connectivity, and economic self-reliance in the face of global disruptions.

“The strength of the Americas lies in its people, its history, and its potential,” Ramdin said. “Only through cooperation and shared responsibility can we build resilience for the future.”

Ramdin’s five-year term officially begins with broad expectations for transformative leadership and renewed purpose within the OAS.



US deportee who left Trinidad and Tobago as a baby learns to be Trini

On the plane ride home Trinidad to a place where he had never lived, Akeem Creese felt like an outcast. His thoughts came fast and furious.

"I thought about my first taste of freedom in six years and wondered how my daughter would visit me. I had US\$120, and I didn't know the exchange rate, Creese said.

He arrived in Piarco airport at 9 pm on February 28 with his belongings in a net bag, resembling a laundry bag, given to him by US immigration officers when they deported him to Trinidad.

The Trump administration has taken an aggressive approach to deport any immigrant who breaches the law or overstays their time in the US. Thousands have been deported to various countries, including members of the notorious MS-13 gang.

Two recent groups were deported from the US to TT and some of them were assisted to reintegrate in society by non-governmental group Vission on a Mission.

"I never thought I could get deported," said Creese. "It's not that I thought I could do whatever I wanted, but I had a permanent resident card, and when you see the word 'permanent,' you think the word means just that. The authorities told me that card really doesn't mean anything. That was a shock to me. I didn't know that the word, 'permanent,' could change."

Born on May 20, 1986, Creese, was a year old when his family left Trinidad and migrated to Newark, New Jersey. His home in the US felt very Trini, but his life felt American. His parents and five siblings had Trinidadian accents; he had an American accent.

"I can't fake an accent even if I wanted to," said Creese.

He mostly knew about Trinidadian culture through his mom.

"My mom only had Trini friends, and my friends always asked me, 'How do you understand your mother when she talks? Everything felt normal to me.'"

Creese, 39, had only visited Trinidad once, when he was 13, for a wedding. He spent five days here.

"I knew my relatives in Trinidad only because they visited New Jersey," he said.

Creese had no Trini friends in the US.

"I was a fixture in my neighbourhood. I played basketball. We had a big block party when my school won the state championship, and I got a scholarship to Keystone College. I was the first boy in my neighbourhood to go to college," Creese said.

He went on to study culinary arts, specialising in Italian food, pasta dishes and Italian sauces and mastered Trini cuisine, roti, pelau, curried po-



Akeem Creese had been living in the United States of America since he was one-year-old

tato, channa, ponche a crème, callaloo and saltfish,

"I'm really diverse," he said.

In 2017, Creese held two jobs, working at a Dollar Store in the day and a Quality Foods Warehouse at night. His trouble began in 2019 on the street near Mohammed's corner store.

"I frequent the store a lot. So do a lot of guys. Some are in crime. I know them. I don't judge them."

On the day, he stopped to talk and shake a few hands on the street, nothing felt out of the ordinary. Two weeks later, police raided his home searching for illegal drugs. They said someone reported they were coming to pick up cocaine. Instead, police found a gun. This didn't worry Creese.

"I told them if you check the paper inside the bag with the gun, you'll see a church flyer advertising a buy-back programme for illegal guns."

The gun had a broken firing pin and couldn't be used, but it could fetch US\$200 in the buyback programme.

"Guys on the street don't fix broken guns. They get a new one. It was an easy way to make some money," said Creese.

Three months later, the gun possession charge turned into a federal charge when police checked the serial number and discovered the firearm was a stolen weapon from Virginia.

"I didn't know the history of the gun. The police had a show-and-tell. They disclose their evidence and you give your explanation. They showed me a video of me shaking hands with a person of interest for the Feds (federal officers) and wanted me to identify the person. If I did that, my family would have been dead. Everyone knew my face and where I lived."

Creese says he took the gun charge to protect his family. Four years later, in 2023, his lawyer got a sentence of time served. On October 25, 2023, he stepped out of the federal holding cell, thinking he was going home. Immigration officers arrived at the same time, arrested Creese and took him to

an immigration facility in Pennsylvania. He stayed there for 15 months fighting a case to remain in the US. On December 11, 2024, he lost the case.

"I had 30 days to appeal the deportation order. My mother wanted me to appeal. The lawyer said I had only a 30 per cent chance of winning my appeal. I had spent 16 months in immigration and was financially drained."

On the 30th day, he signed the deportation order. He had no passport, but Immigration had his ticket. They took him to JFK airport in New York, gave him a folder to present to Trinidad immigration and put him on a plane.

"They said Trinidad would process me, and I would be able to go to my family. In Trinidad, an official escorted me through customs, fingerprinted me and asked me for an address." He had no exact address.

"I just knew my brother was waiting outside for me. They told me that if I couldn't give an address, they would have to detain me until someone claimed me. Instantly, my heart dropped. I don't know phone numbers by heart. I had no phone.

"I told them I hadn't heard my brother's voice in 20 years."

The flight landed at 9 pm., and Creese was still detained at 12:30 a.m.

"I asked someone to please go outside and ask for my brother. They wrote my brother's name on a paper and went to look for him. Luckily, he was still waiting for me. The woman came back and gave me the thumbs up. She asked me if I wanted something to eat and walked me outside."

Then reality hit home.

"My first week here, I went through the whole ID card process and applied for a BIR number for taxes. It takes months to get these documents. I'm lucky I have family, but who wants to keep asking family for help?"

Creese experienced Carnival for the first time, playing mud mas in a J'Ouvert band. That took his mind off his culture shock and his desperate need to find work.

"I have no ideal job in mind. I'll take anything – even a job no one wants. I have to be busy. I want to do everything I can to better myself."

He thinks about everything he will miss in his children's lives now.

"I have a son 13, and a daughter, almost six. I'll never attend their graduations or my daughter's prom."

He speaks to his daughter on social media every day. His son's mother has stopped communicating because she doesn't feel the situation is good for her son.

"My girlfriend has been a backbone of support. Though she's in America, she makes sure I feel like I'm not a failure. Not everyone is rooting for me, but I have a lot of supporters," said Creese.

When people ask why Creese never became a US citizen, he tells them about all the money his mom spent on immigration lawyers. He was 21 when his mother became a citizen. Creese says waiting to settle into his new life is draining.

"I wouldn't wish this on anyone. I don't want to be a statistic. All I need is a chance. I know I will make the person who hires me proud, and I want my children to be proud of me. My main thing is fitting into Trinidadian culture. It's difficult having an accent. People know you're not from here."

When he went to town last week, Creese noticed someone's strange behaviour after he spoke to a store clerk.

"I finally did something I never would have done in America. I walked up to a cop and said, 'There's a man following me everywhere and making me feel uncomfortable.' The police officer walked me to a taxi."

Some day, Creese hopes to return to the US. His deportation papers state that he is banned from reapplying for entry into the US for 10 to 20 years.

Akeem Creese feels like an American. Now, he's learning to be a Trinidadian.

courtesy Newsday



An oil tanker in Trinidad’s waters

Experts: T&T in perfect position for clean maritime fuel industry

AS THE maritime sector faces increasing pressure to mitigate its greenhouse gas emissions, advancements in alternative fuels such as hydrogen, ammonia and biofuels are gaining more attention as these fuels can provide energy for the industry without the fallout of high-carbon emissions.

At the Caribbean sustainable energy conference held by the TT Energy Chamber on June 2, a panel of experts in the area including Roger Strevens, director of Methanex’s low carbon, regulation and advocacy department; Dr Tristan Smith of the UCL Energy Institute; commercial manager for Paria Fuel Trading Lydia Dindial; and chairman of the decarbonisation taskforce at the Energy Chamber, Dr Dale Ramlakhan all agreed that TT continued to be in the perfect position to capitalise on the changing tides in the global maritime sector.

Smith, who has been working on decarbonising the shipping industry for 15 years, said there was a shift in the industry toward alternative fuel, driven by regulations for the shipping industry.

He said the Caribbean, which was frequented by different ships across different routes, could use multiple pathways to decarbonising the sector in the region but ultimately, a significant amount of investment would be needed for proper transition.

He said the International Maritime Organisation committed to an absolute emission reduction by fully transitioning to zero-emission fuels by 2050.

“Those absolute emissions reductions are happening at the same time that global trade is growing,” Smith said. “When you put those two facts together

you get that the average CO2 emissions has to be reduced by around 60 per cent by 2030.”

He said a transition that large would need a fundamental shift away from fossil fuels.

He noted that in the Caribbean, cruise vessels dominated the seas and used the most energy with most islands utilising cruise ships more than ships for cargo, energy transporting and freight.

Strevens described the commitment as ambitious.

“Shipping is a huge, diverse industry,” he said. “It is the original global industry. The increase in operational specifics, both commercially and technically and the economic set up is really wide-ranging.”

He said for the industry to transition at the scale it had committed to, a significant amount of investment would be needed. He said investors needed to develop a long-term perspective on the maritime industry.

“There is a nice parallel between the shipping industry and its view on investment. A ship will typically operate between 25-30 years and they need to plan that far into the future. The same thing goes for fuel production. We need to think in decades.”

He said methanol, of which Methanex is the world’s largest producer, is one of the best choices for decarbonising the maritime fuel industry, noting that methanol has multiple production pathways, is easy to handle because it could be stored at room temperature and it is also cheaper to store.

“You probably already have heard

about blue fuels (fuel produced by gases reused from another industrial purpose) and green fuels (alternative fuels produced through the use of renewable energy), but at this stage, those kinds don’t cover the variety of different pathways that are possible to produce fuel.”

He said different fuels could be produced with a variety of greenhouse gas intensity.

One type of fuel described by Dindial was hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) which is a fuel produced with

100 per cent renewable oil, such as used vegetable cooking oil, palm oil and animal fats.

“It is very similar to petroleum based oil so it can be used for bunkers and can also be used in tugs and launchers at airports,” she said.

She said Paria’s first shipment of HVO was expected in late July or early August. “We have customers that are already interested in that and we will be taking up this product at our port in Pointe-a-Pierre.”

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FREE ESTIMATE

Holder, Russell recalled for Windies T20s vs England

ALLROUNDERS Jason Holder and Andre Russell have been recalled to the West Indies setup for the three-match Twenty/20 series against England from June 6-10.

Holder, a former West Indies skipper, has also been included in the Windies squad for a three-match T20 series against Ireland from June 12-15, with Trinidad and Tobago middle-order batsman Jyd Goolie receiving a maiden West Indies call-up for the Ireland leg of the tour.

On June 2, Cricket West Indies (CWI) revealed a 15-man squad for the England T20s, with a 14-man squad being named for the matches against Ireland.

With the Windies also set to host a training camp in Barbados from June 13-21 in preparation for their three-match Test series versus Australia which starts on June 25, there will be some tinkering in the coaching department for the Irish leg of the tour.

"Head Coach Daren Sammy, as well as his assistants Floyd Reifer and Ravi Rampaul, will depart to join the Test series Camp after the England leg of the tour, a strategic move as he prepares for his first outing as head coach of the Test team," a CWI release said.

New Test captain Roston Chase, who has been included in the T20 team for the English leg of the series, will also miss the Irish leg of the tour to attend the Test camp.

Rayon Griffith will take over the mantle as head coach for the T20s against Ireland, with Donovan Miller stepping in to lend support to the coaching staff.

The release said Jamaican opening batsman Brandon King, who will serve as vice-captain for the England T20s, has been granted leave for the Irish leg of the tour. The in-form Keacy Carty, who has scored three centuries in his last four One-day International (ODI) matches, will replace King for the Irish series as he looks to make his T20 debut for West Indies.

Meanwhile, TT superstar Nicholas Pooran will not be involved in either T20 series after asking for a rest because of his exertions in the 2025 Indian Premier League (IPL) campaign. The 29-year-old Pooran, who was named as Wisden's Leading T20 Cricketer in the World for 2024, scored 524 runs at IPL 2025 at an average of 43.66 and a staggering strike rate of 196.25.

Goolie, 28, could be in line for his international debut after playing a star-



West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder

ring role for the TT Legions in the inaugural West Indies T20 Breakout tournament.

The T20 team will be led by Shai Hope, with regulars such as Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Sherfane Rutherford and former T20 captain Rovman Powell also in the mix.

The West Indies' ODI team is currently in the midst of a three-match ODI series versus England. With the Caribbean team trailing 2-0, the third and final ODI will be contested on June 3.

Squad for T20s against England: Shai Hope (captain), Brandon

King (vice-captain), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Rovman Powell, Andre Russell, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd.

England’s Joe Root (166) crushes WI, seals series

Joe Root hit a masterful, unbeaten century to anchor England to an exciting three-wicket victory over the West Indies, which helped them to claim their One-Day International series with a game to spare here on Sunday.

Root rescued the home side with a magnificent knock of 166 not out, his 18th ODI century, to propel them to 312 for seven off 48.5 overs, past the West Indies’ competitive total of 308.

His performance overshadowed that of Keacy Carty, who scored 103 – his third century in four matches – to put the West Indies in a good position to post a total in excess of 350.

Carty along with opener Brandon King put on 141 runs for the second wicket following the early dismissal of Jewel Andrew for a duck after the West Indies were sent in to bat.

Both batsmen were given lifelines early in their innings, with Ben Dockett dropping Carty at slip when he was one and King after he had scored just 11.

They took advantage of their luck, with Carty racing to his half century off 59 balls by pulling Adil Rashid to backward square for four.

King then ended a poor run of form by reaching his half century off 56 balls with a single off Rashid after driving him through cover.

The pair had motored along to 147 for one at almost six runs an over, until King drove Rashid straight into the hands of Brydon Carse stationed at long off to be out for 59.

Captain Shai Hope joined Carty at the crease and the two maintained the momentum by taking the score pass the 200-mark.

Carty, fresh off two hundreds in the preceding tour of Ireland, brought up his fourth ODI century off 102 balls when he guided Jacob Bethell past backward point for a boundary.

But almost immediately after, Carty walked straight past a Will Jacks

delivery and was stumped for 103 off 105 balls, inclusive of 13 fours.

At that point, West Indies were still well positioned at 205 for three in the 36th over.

However, Carty’s dismissal saw the visitors lose five wickets for 63 runs to see them slump to 268 for seven.

It took a fighting 78 off 66 balls by Hope to help get the West Indies over 300, before he was the last wicket to fall with 14 balls still remaining in the innings.

Rashid led the way for England with 4-63 while pacer Saqib Mahmood took 3-37.

England got off to terrible start, losing openers Jamie Smith and Duckett for ducks to slip to 2-2.

Root and captain Harry Brook joined forces, but the former was lucky not to be run out with the score on seven, but Roston Chase’s effort from gully went just wide.



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Fri 11	19:00 AST	CENTRAL STAGS vs GUYANA AMAZON WARRIORS
Sun 13	10:00 AST	RANGPUR RIDERS vs HOBART HURRICANES
Sun 13	19:00 AST	DUBAI CAPITALS vs GUYANA AMAZON WARRIORS
Tue 15	19:00 AST	HOBART HURRICANES vs CENTRAL STAGS
Wed 16	10:00 AST	DUBAI CAPITALS vs RANGPUR RIDERS
Wed 16	19:00 AST	GUYANA AMAZON WARRIORS vs HOBART HURRICANES
Thu 17	10:00 AST	RANGPUR RIDERS vs CENTRAL STAGS
Fri 18	19:00 AST	FINAL - FIRST PLACE vs SECOND PLACE

