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## Canada punches back at US with tariffs

Canada on Wednesday announced new trade duties on some \$30 billion worth of U.S. goods in response to US President Donald Trump implementing universal steel and aluminum tariffs.

Canada is the largest foreign supplier of steel and aluminum to the U.S., and experts have warned Trump's duties would be passed on to consumers.

In a news conference Wednesday announcing the retaliatory duties, a Canadian government spokesman called Trump's tariffs "completely unjustified, unfair and unreasonable."

"The U.S. administration is once again inserting disruption and disorder into an incredibly successful trading partnership and raising the costs of everyday goods for Canadians and American households alike," said François-Philippe Champagne (top left, with Melanie Joly), Canada's minister of innovation, science and industry.

Canada's announcement comes despite a detente having been reached Tuesday with the Trump administration to resolve threats of a 25% surcharge on American consumers of Canadian electricity. Trump had threatened Canada with steel and aluminum tariffs climbing to 50% if the province of Ontario followed through on the surcharge.

Canada's retaliatory measures follow ones announced by the European Union targeting a range of U.S. goods worth US\$28 billion, including beef, motorcycles and whiskey alongside American-made steel and aluminum. China, too, signaled it was readying a response.

The moves threaten to ignite a global trade war that could throttle economic growth prospects worldwide. The Trump administration has sought to downplay the immediate fallout from the trade volleys.

## Ali meets new US Energy Secretary

Guyana President, Dr. Irfaan Ali, on Tuesday, met with newly appointed US Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright, on the sidelines of CERAWeek in Houston, Texas.

The Guyanese Head-of-State during the engagement, highlighted the the strong partnership between Guyana and the United States in advancing energy security for regional prosperity and integration.

President Ali also underscored the strategic opportunities in regional security, and reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to being a stable and democratic partner.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to deepening collaboration, strengthening ties, and fostering greater cooperation now and in the future.

Over the last four years, Guyana has seen billions of US dollars in foreign direct investments. For the first half of 2024, Guyana recorded a substantial US\$4.163 billion increase in export receipts, with further growth expected by the end of the year.

In addition to economic investments, the US has significantly invested in Guyana's human resources and security.

The favourable investment envi-

ronment in Guyana is attributed to the government's efforts to strengthen the economy and develop key sectors such as gas-to-energy, healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

United States (US) Ambassador to Guyana, Nicole Theriot had revealed back in December 2024, that Guyana was rapidly becoming a prime destination for international investors, with over 3,000 US small and medium enterprises (SMEs) exporting to the country in 2023.

The favourable investment environment in Guyana is attributed to the government's efforts to strengthen the economy and develop key sectors such as gas-to-energy, healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

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

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

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# Congratulations!

## MPP David Smith

On your re-election as the Ontario PC MPP for Scarborough Centre!

Your dedication, leadership, and commitment to our community continue to make a difference. Wishing you continued success as you work to build a stronger and more prosperous Scarborough Centre for all.

Best wishes for the journey ahead!

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Shanghai Nio 上海苗 Reg \$ 2.35	Mini Cucumbers 迷你青瓜 Reg 2 for \$5.50	China Small Eggplant 中国茄仔 Reg \$ 2.99	Asparagus 芦笋 Reg \$ 0.99	Lemon In Bag 有机柠檬 Reg \$ 3.99	Romaine Heart 有机生菜 Reg \$ 0.99	Grape Tomato 有机番茄 Reg \$ 2 for \$5	Fuji Apple (US) 美国富士苹果 Reg \$ 1.99
<b>1.79 lb</b>	<b>2/\$3.00</b>	<b>1.99 lb</b>	<b>2.59 bunch</b>	<b>2.59 bag</b>	<b>2.99 bag</b>	<b>2/\$2.50</b>	<b>1.29 lb</b>
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<b>1.39 lb</b>	<b>2/\$3.00</b>	<b>1.99 lb</b>	<b>2.99 pk</b>	<b>2.99 ea</b>	<b>3.99 ea</b>	<b>9.99 case</b>	

RESTAURANT SPECIAL

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Broccoli 西兰花 <b>2.70 case</b>	Green Pepper 青椒 <b>2.80 case</b>	Green Leaf Lettuce 圆生菜 <b>3.00 case</b>	Celery 西芹 <b>3.00 case</b>	Lemon 黄柠檬 <b>3.50 case</b>	
Frozen Panga Baka File 冷冻巴卡鱼 Reg \$ 3.50 <b>65.00 case</b>	Headless White Shrimp 无头白虾 21/25-30/40 Reg \$ 1.90 <b>190.00 case</b>	Head On Shrimp 有头白虾 30/40-60/70 Reg \$ 1.15 <b>115.00 case</b>	Extra Large Egg 特大鸡蛋 Reg \$ 0.58 <b>58.99 case</b>	Know Chicken Bone Milk 康乐鸡肉骨汤 Reg \$ 1.15 <b>115.00 case</b>	Aroy-D Coconut Milk 椰奶 24x400ml Reg \$ 1.45 <b>45.99 case</b>
F-Pack Wip 914 包装纸 450mm x 800m <b>20.00 case</b>	Convenience Rolls 10.5x15 包装纸 1311 <b>15.99 case</b>	Clear Garbage Bags 35x47 3-Strong, 100 Pcs 垃圾袋 <b>20.99 case</b>	Solid Brand Fish Sauce 粒装鲮鱼露 <b>29.99 case</b>	ADM All Purpose Flour 面粉 20kg <b>19.99 bag</b>	Monosodium Glutamate 味精 22.7kg <b>60.00 bag</b>
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Taiwan Milk Fish 冻干 2.59 <b>2.99 lb</b>	Gray Ridge Large White Egg 冻干 10x Reg \$ 6.59 <b>6.59 ea</b>	Korean Assorted Fish Ball 韩国鱼丸 1500g Reg \$ 5.99 <b>4.99 ea</b>	Melona Ice Cream 冰淇淋 0.70L Reg \$ 6.99 <b>4.99 ea</b>	Softshell Crab 20cs 软壳蟹 Reg \$ 5.99 <b>4.99 ea</b>	SH Scallop 30x40 冷冻 7000g Reg \$ 5.99 <b>5.99 ea</b>

GROCERY

Hotte Coffee Maza Original 咖啡 410g Reg \$ 11.99 <b>9.99 ea</b>	Golden Panda Back Country Tea 金熊 410g Reg \$ 9.99 <b>5.99 ea</b>	Spain Luncheon Meat 午餐肉 2x400g Reg \$ 13.99 <b>8.99 ea</b>
Paal River 101 Superior Light Maltless Soy Sauce 生抽 1.5L Reg \$ 4.55 <b>2.99 ea</b>	Golden Swallow Tea 金燕 410g Reg \$ 1.99 <b>1.29 ea</b>	Bullock Brand Conching Corn Meal 玉米粉 1.5L Reg \$ 3.99 <b>4.59 ea</b>
Argo Swedish Condensed Sweetener 糖 300g Reg \$ 2.59 <b>1.69 ea</b>	LUX Tea Various Taste 各种口味茶包 200g Reg \$ 2.99 <b>2/\$3.00</b>	Tang Orange 橙子 1.5L Reg \$ 2.99 <b>1.59 ea</b>
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Deli Finestale Skates 鲑鱼 1.5L Reg \$ 2.59 <b>1.59 ea</b>	CHAD-ON Coconut Water 椰子水 20x200ml Reg \$ 2.99 <b>88¢ ea</b>	Free Seed Tea 茶叶 20x200ml Reg \$ 11.99 <b>11.99 ea</b>

MEAT

Pork Butt With Bone 4.5kg Reg \$ 3.79 <b>2.79 lb</b>	Beef Eye Round 牛肉 4.5kg Reg \$ 6.55 <b>7.99 lb</b>	Frozen CR Tail 冷冻牛尾 4kg Reg \$ 8.99 <b>7.99 lb</b>
Good Beef Roll 牛肉卷 4.5kg Reg \$ 8.50 <b>7.59 lb</b>	Young Chicken (No Head) 冻干鸡 4.5kg Reg \$ 2.99 <b>1.99 lb</b>	

SEAFOOD

Fresh Atlantic Salmon 新鲜三文鱼 3kg Reg \$ 12.99 <b>10.99 lb</b>	Fresh Tilapia 新鲜罗非鱼 3kg Reg \$ 3.99 <b>2.99 lb</b>	Fresh Catfish 新鲜鲶鱼 3kg Reg \$ 6.99 <b>6.99 lb</b>	Frozen Fresh Head-On White Shrimp 冷冻新鲜白虾 4kg Reg \$ 5.99 <b>4.99 lb</b>
Frozen Fresh Pompano 冷冻新鲜鲷鱼 3kg Reg \$ 5.59 <b>4.99 lb</b>	Fresh Sole King 新鲜鳕鱼 3kg Reg \$ 3.99 <b>2.99 lb</b>	Fresh Frozen Lobster 新鲜冷冻龙虾 1kg Reg \$ 3.99 <b>3.99 lb</b>	

# PPP/C government has been the most responsive in history – Mustapha

DURING a series of meetings in Black Bush Polder on Wednesday, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, emphasised that the PPP/C government has been the most responsive in the nation’s history—actively shaping a legacy of progress and commitment that citizens can take pride in.

He said, “This government has been the most responsive government than any other government in the country.”

He pointed out that he always visits Black Bush Polder as it is an important area. “I want to make it very clear according to my information that I received from GRDB just about yesterday we are 2 per cent in the crop of harvesting.”

As a responsible government, he said that they will not sit down and wait for things to happen as such they had already started speaking to rice millers as they are aware that farmers should have a fair price for their paddy.

He pointed out that the year before last, when the price of paddy was low, they met with millers and forgo the commission that GRDB was charging millers so that farmers can be paid appropriately. Further, \$498M was therefore injected then into the system with that decision “so that farmers could have gotten a better price for their paddy.”

Speaking frankly to the farmers in Mibicuri, Yakusari, Black Bush Polder and Number 63 Village, Corentyne, Mustapha said that people cannot be allowed to “come and take advantage of a situation.”

He said following several consultations involving President Irfaan Ali, himself, GRDB and the millers a decision was made that rice farmers will not sell their paddy for less than \$4,000 while those who would have sold already will get their repayment as he urged farmers to be “honest.”

He then added, that “this year we will be seeing a number of projects to benefit farmers especially people in Black Bush Polder.”

He said, Hope-like canals are being built with cross channels to get to the Hope like canals being developed. “We have to be careful. People are coming to take advantage of situation to take photo ops to put it up on social media”,



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, addresses a meeting in Black Bush Polder

Mustapha warned.

As he pointed out that Nigel Hughes and Khemraj Ramjattan visited Black Bush Polder recently – a duo that played a role in destroying the industry and supported a government that said rice is private business.

“We will never agree that farmers should receive short change, you should know us by now”, Mustapha told the farmers.

He said, the government he supports does not promise dreams but rather fulfills its promises “we will continue as much as possible to ensure that farmers got their fair share.”

He then reminded that the APNU+AFC destroyed the country and warned that farmers not allow Hughes and Ramjattan to “come and divide us.”

“Comrades, we got to be careful. People want to set us up”, he said, as he reminded that farmers were told by the last government that rice is a private business.

He pointed out that after returning to government, the PPP/C removed taxes and fertiliser was given twice.

In terms of the rice seed facility located in Black Bush Polder he pointed out that the promise was kept to have it rehabilitated and it is now producing seed paddy, “so these are the benefits and these are the things we are working to develop the industry to make it resilient, more competitive” and for the farmers as well.

Land rental, he said, is one of the main issues in the industry pointing out that presently it is like an auction sale for lands to be rented.

While the PPP/C was in opposition, the land rental and drainage and irrigation charges went from \$3500 to \$15,500, and although they had taken a

motion to parliament to rescind [the charges] the then APNU+AFC government did not. “...When we returned to office the charges were taken back to \$3500.”

Meanwhile, speaking of President Dr. Irfaan Ali’s leadership, Mustapha highlighted his tireless dedication, describing him as a president who is always working. He revealed that President Ali often calls him in the early hours of the morning, urging him to visit communities and engage directly with farmers—demonstrating an unwavering commitment to their needs and well-being.

“This government, the PPP/C government, will never ever exclude anybody from development”, he stressed.



An advertisement for Raul's Jewellery. It features a gold background with a black crown logo at the top. Below the logo, the text "Where Jewellery Speaks For Itself" is written in a cursive font. At the bottom, contact information is provided: "Raul Anthony De Souza", "592.644.0543", and "rauldesouza884@gmail.com".

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Where Jewellery Speaks For Itself

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592.644.0543  
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# Canada is not for sale

The image Americans have of Canadians is not always flattering. They portray us as “hosers”, a group of people who live in igloos, play hockey, eat poutine and speak funny.

Perhaps this is why the MAGA base in the USA think it’ll be an easy walk-over for them to annex us as their leader Donald Trump keeps suggesting.

They’ve created memes showing Canadian geese as our army fighting back their soldiers, all in an effort to portray us as weak and stupid.

Ironically, immediately after releasing that meme, a real-life Canadian goose was captured on video beating up a bald eagle, the American symbol of strength.

Of course, all of this has to do with Trump wanting to destroy us economically and claim Canada as the 51st state.

But this has met national resistance. Canadians everywhere have said a resounding “no” to Trump’s ambitions.

You see, what the Americans don’t realise is that Canada is not the cartoon they see. They’ll be shocked to discover the reality is quite different.

If they cared to really look at us, they will discover we’re not a bunch of

freezing people living in igloos, but a country where the people enjoy winters and live one of the highest quality of lives on the planet.

They’ll discover we don’t speak funny at all, but we speak many, many languages fitting for a country that is considered the most diverse in the world.

Our national dish is not poutine as much as it is likely Shawarma. And we’re quite happy with what we have. We don’t want to be American. We are Canadian.

We pay higher taxes, yes, but we don’t have to worry about going bankrupt when we get sick. We have free healthcare across the board. It is not dependent on whether you’re rich or poor, and we don’t have to pay for health insurance that is subject to the whims of insurance companies whether we get the care we need, or whether the doctor we prefer is assigned to their network.

We do not have to worry about whether our children will be risking their lives when we send them to school. In Canada, gun violence in schools is not a normal thing.

Indeed, while there is gun violence on our streets, it is no where near the level of any American city or even

small town. That’s because we have strict gun control.

We also have free speech. People in Canada can protest and not worry about being arrested, like what happened to Mahmoud Khalil, the young university student who helped lead a pro-Palestinian protest at Columbia University and is now in jail.

Khalil, a legal resident of the USA, was this week arrested on the grounds that he led “activities aligned to Hamas, a designated terrorist organization.”

The White House claimed Khalil organized protests where pro-Hamas propaganda was distributed.

“This administration is not going to tolerate individuals having the privilege of studying in our country and then siding with pro-terrorist organizations that have killed Americans,” said Karoline Leavitt, Trump’s press secretary.

See, us hosers in Canada do not have to worry about this type of prosecution or persecution. Our constitutional right of free speech -- even if we “talk funny” -- is protected.

Now, the Trump administration as of March 12 has imposed unfair tariffs on Canada on the basis of an often-repeated lie by Trump that the USA sub-

sidizes Canada to the tune of \$200 billion a year.

What Trump either doesn’t realize, or doesn’t want to admit, is that this is not a subsidy. It is rather a trade deficit. The Americans buy \$200 billion more from us than we do from them, which is expected when one compares the population sizes of both nations.

With no choice but to respond, Canada has come up with its own retaliatory tariffs. What this means is that life for all of us on both sides of the border has become more expensive, and may even lead to job loss.

This is all part of Trump’s stated plan to destroy our economy so he can realize his dream of being Emperor of North America and walk in and take us over.

But Trump should know one thing: Canada is not for sale.

We will not become American.

And this bunch of poutine-eating hosers living in igloos will do what we must to defend our country, the true North Strong and Free. Even if we have to sic the Canada geese on them.

Elbows up, Canada. The fight has only just begun.

## IMF validates gov’t economic policies

Dear Editor,

Guyana’s economic outlook remains strong through 2025, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as reported by Stabroek News (03/08/2025) and the IMF website.

Based on consultations with key economic stakeholders, including government officials, the private sector, and labour unions, the IMF’s assessment highlights significant achievements and promising trends.

The IMF’s report emphasises two key points: the diversification of economic growth beyond the oil sector and the overall strength of Guyana’s economic performance.

The IMF noted that Guyana experienced “the highest real GDP growth rate in the world, at a recorded average of 47 percent in 2022–24,” driven by

expanding oil production, robust non-oil output, and substantial public infrastructure investment.

Notably, the non-oil economy demonstrates broad-based growth, particularly in construction and services, validating the government’s focus on diversification.

These positive outcomes reflect the impact of strategic government investments. Extensive infrastructure development initiatives, funded by oil revenues, improve citizens’ quality of life.

Aligned with President Ali’s vision, the government prioritises sustainable job creation, poverty reduction, and inclusive growth through education, healthcare, and infrastructure investments. The increased budget allocation for 2025 underscores

this commitment to national development and improved living standards.

Infrastructure development encompasses vital systems, including transportation, energy, water, telecommunications, education, healthcare, and government services, all supported by modern financial systems that facilitate efficient trade.

Regarding inflation, a key concern for Guyanese citizens, the IMF projects a moderate increase to around four percent by the end of 2025, from approximately three percent at the end of 2024. However, the IMF emphasises that “fundamentals remain strong and there are no signs of inflationary pressures or overheating as of yet... since there remains slack in the economy.”

This assessment validates the effectiveness of the government’s anti-

inflationary policies, including cash grants and social transfer programs.

The IMF further notes that these policies have “increased disposable income and reduced the poverty rate,” suggesting that targeted transfers, integrated into a medium-term fiscal framework, could further promote inclusive growth and advance Guyana’s progress toward its sustainable development goals.

The IMF’s assessment strongly endorses the Guyanese government’s economic policies and their positive impact on households. With the “highest real GDP growth in the world in 2022,” Guyana’s economic future appears bright.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Tilokie Arnold Depoo,  
Economist



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# Canadians visiting the US for more than 30 days now have to register

Canadians planning to travel to the United States may be affected by a new policy that would have them register if they are south of the border for more than 30 days.

The policy came into effect under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) on March 9.

According to an executive order, called Protecting the American People Against Invasion, put in place on Jan. 20, U.S. President Donald Trump is cracking down on those heading to the U.S., including Canadians. The travel policy comes amid rising tensions between the U.S. and Canada, with on-again off-again tariffs on Canadian goods as well as Trump repeated comments about Canada becoming the 51st state.

Although some details have yet to be shared by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) — such as the registration form and process — the agency has provided information about the requirements for Canadians and other foreign nationals with long-term travel plans.

Global Affairs Canada told the National Post in an emailed statement that they are aware of the “guidance” from USCIS, which was published on Feb. 25 online. “Each country decides who enters its borders. The decision to travel is the sole responsibility of the traveller,” the department said.

Here’s what we know.

Why is there a new U.S. travel policy?

Section one of Trump’s executive order states that “millions of illegal aliens” have crossed the American border “or were permitted to fly directly into the United States on commercial flights and allowed to settle in American communities, in violation of longstanding federal laws.”

The purpose of the order is to enforce immigration laws to ensure “the national security and public safety” of Americans.

What does the U.S. travel policy say?

USCIS has a webpage with information about the new policy, which is called the Alien Registration Requirement.

It pertains to a section of the INA that says it is the duty of “every alien now or hereafter in the United States” who is 14 years or older and who is going to remain in the U.S. for 30 days or longer to “apply for registration and to be fingerprinted before the expiration of such thirty days.”



The Ambassador bridge in Windsor is one of the busiest crossings

It says that the text “contains those laws in effect on March 9, 2025.”

“Registration is not an immigration status, and registration documentation does not establish employment authorization or any other right or benefit under the INA or any other U.S. law,” says the agency.

Do all Canadians planning a 30-day trip or longer have to register?

No, some Canadians do not have to register because they are qualified to be in the U.S.

The USCIS webpage explains that those who are considered to be already registered are foreign nationals, including Canadians, who were admitted to the United States as nonimmigrants and were issued a paper or electronic form I-94 or I-94W, even if the period of admission has expired.

The forms are arrival/departure records for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for travellers “who are admitted to the U.S., who are adjusting status while in the U.S., or extending their status, among other uses,” per the American federal government.

The paper form is no longer provided to travellers, except in limited circumstances, U.S. Customs and Border Protection says. Travellers who need to check the status of their form can do so online. The form has no impact on a traveller’s ability to enter the country.

According to the Canadian Snowbird Association, a form is automatically generated for most Canadians upon arrival into the United States. Those who were issued a form do not have to take

any further steps, per the association.

“In some situations, an I-94 may not have been generated,” the association says. This could be due to how the traveller entered the country — by land, sea or air. Snowbird Advisor says that “Canadians who enter the United States

through a land border are generally not issued an I-94 when they arrive in the U.S.”

Canadian visitors at land ports of entry who were not issued evidence of registration must register, the USCIS webpage says.

What about Canadians already in the United States?

Canadians who are already in the United States must register if they are not qualified to be in the U.S. as outlined by the Alien Registration Requirement (e.g. they did not receive an I-94 form upon arrival prior to March 9.)

The USCIS says a “significant” number of foreign nationals present in the U.S. have had no direct way to register. Therefore, the agency is “establishing a new form and process by which they may register.”

How can Canadians register?

Canadians and other foreign nationals can register with a form, according to the USCIS webpage.

The agency recommends that, beginning on Feb. 25, those who anticipate having to register should create an online account “in preparation for the registration process.”

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# Swift action by staff, parents ensures safety of students after fire at school

AN early morning fire, on Wednesday, ravaged Mae's School, a privately-owned educational institution in Subryanville, Georgetown, reducing the structure to rubble within minutes. Preliminary reports indicate that the fire started just before 08:00 hours, originating in a Grade Four classroom on the top floor. The swift and intense blaze prompted an immediate evacuation, ensuring the safety of all students and staff.

Mae's School, which housed over 1,000 students from daycare to secondary levels, was swiftly evacuated. Given the early morning hour, many students had not yet arrived, and those who were present were quickly escorted to safety. Cleaners, teachers, and parents played a critical role in ensuring no lives were lost, with no reported injuries.

The Guyana Fire Service responded promptly, deploying manpower, fire tenders, and the Bronto Skylift appliance to battle the blaze. Despite their valiant efforts, the fire consumed the main classroom block and administrative building. Firefighters, however, managed to prevent the flames from spreading to nearby residential properties.

On the scene, secondary school teacher Isa Abdullah was visibly emotional as he reflected on the tragedy.

"I told the students they don't have to worry, even though we don't have a building. I am willing to hold classes on the open field just to ensure they have an education," he said tearfully.

Abdullah, who teaches Level Five, recounted the rapid spread of the fire and how there was barely time to react. "When I got dressed this morning, I did not expect this to happen. My students are in tears because this building held so many cherished memories for us. Everything is gone—classrooms, textbooks, computers, offices."

Cleaner Renatta Somerset also recounted the harrowing moments lead-



Fire fighters battle the flames during the blaze at Mae's School

ing up to the evacuation. According to her, a young student was the first to notice smoke rising from the roof and raised the alarm. Somerset immediately took action, guiding students to safety while attempting to turn off electrical breakers. In a moment of selfless bravery, she ran back inside to ensure no child was left behind.

Parent Imran Alli, who was dropping off his children at the school, described the terrifying scene. "I was sitting in my car when I saw people running out of the building shouting 'fire!' When I looked up, I saw flames coming through the vent. I ran upstairs to my son's classroom, but it was empty. I grabbed a fire extinguisher to try and put out the flames, but it wasn't enough. The smoke became overwhelming, and I had to run out."

Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, accompanied by a team of senior education officials, visited the scene to assess the situation and reassure affected students and parents. Ex-

pressing deep concern for the displaced learners, she pledged full governmental support, particularly for Grade Six and Eleven students preparing for national examinations.

"We treat our private schools just as we do public schools. Mae's School has contributed significantly to this country, both academically and otherwise. Our priority now is to ensure that

students preparing for NGSA and CSEC examinations are accommodated so their education is not disrupted," she stated.

Minister of Home Affairs, Robeson Benn and Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, were also present, offering their ministries' assistance to affected students, teachers, and parents.



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# 'Destination Guyana' cops PATWA International Award for 2025

DESTINATION Guyana announced that it has secured the coveted Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) International Award for 2025 as Destination of the Year – Natural Attractions at ITB (Internationale Tourismus-Borse), Berlin.

A press release from the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) said it is proud to announce that Destination Guyana was awarded the coveted PATWA International Award for 2025 as Destination of the Year – Natural Attractions.

Alongside this, the GTA announced that Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond was awarded the PATWA International Award for 2025 as Tourism Minister of the Year – Ecological Tourism.

According to the GTA, this is the destination's second year securing PATWA awards.

Speaking on the wins, the tourism minister reiterated, "Receiving these awards is certainly a proud moment. With breathtaking attractions like Kaieteur, our interior savannahs, untouched rainforests, and rare wildlife, we're fortunate to have so much natural beauty to share."

Continuing, the minister said: "What sets us apart is our commitment to protecting our natural attractions. Through conservation and community-driven efforts, we ensure that every visit helps preserve our environment and supports local communities. We are proud to share our country with the world and look forward to continuing to lead the way in responsible tourism."

The awards were won at the 25th and 2025 editions of the PATWA World Tourism and Aviation Leaders' Summit and the PATWA International Travel Awards at ITB, Berlin, on March 5, 2025.

The Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce is the primary government body responsible for tourism and private sector development. For many years, tourism was the second-largest export sector for Guyana before the discovery of oil and gas reserves.

Guyana's nascent Oil and Gas industry has propelled the country's eco-

economic growth and development, being recorded among the fastest-growing economies for the last few years.

The ministry is mandated to ensure that the economy is aptly diversified with investments in all sectors, especially tourism, to ensure sustainable growth by preventing dependence on oil and gas. The ministry's core responsibility is to nurture a business-friendly environment through the creation of policies, development and amendment of legislation, and implementation of other programs and initiatives.

Under the Ministry of Tourism, the GTA is a semi-autonomous governmental organisation responsible for developing and promoting sustainable

tourism in Guyana through collaboration with sister agencies and the tourism private sector in order to maximise local socio-economic and conservation outcomes and improve the travellers' experience.

The GTA is focused on Guyana becoming recognised locally and internationally as a premier destination for protecting its natural and cultural heritage, providing authentic experiences, and maximising local socio-economic

benefits.

The PATWA is a non-profit, non-government, professional, international media organisation founded in 1999, that supports the sustainable development and growth of destinations, travel, tourism, hospitality, aviation (airlines and airports), transportation (cruise liners and rail), online travel platforms, travel technology, and allied service providers worldwide. PATWA is an affiliate member of UN Tourism.



The PATWA award given to Destination Guyana and Minister of Tourism, Oneidge Walrond



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips during his address at the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) being held in India

# Guyana stresses global collaboration for targeted climate solutions

PRIME Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips called for strengthened global partnerships to combat climate change and accelerate sustainable development during his address at the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025.

Speaking on the summit's theme, "Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions", Prime Minister Phillips highlighted the urgency of collective action, stating: "The global challenges we face—including climate change, biodiversity loss, energy security, and economic inequities—demand collective and transformative partnerships in order to be effectively addressed."

The summit is being hosted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in New Delhi, India.

During his speech, the prime minister emphasised that sustainability is not a solitary pursuit, but requires broad-based collaboration across governments, businesses, and communities.

Phillips said: "Leaders must be catalysts for change; driving policies that foster innovation, investments, and inclusive growth. Equally, societies must embrace a sustainability culture, ensuring that individuals, businesses, and communities actively participate in the transformation of our economies towards greener, low-carbon futures."

He called for greater equity in climate solutions, stressing that developing nations, which contribute the least to climate change but suffer the most, must have access to the necessary resources

to ensure a just and sustainable transition.

The Prime Minister cited Guyana's Low-Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 as a pioneering framework for balancing economic growth with environmental protection.

He added that the updated LCDS 2030 has advanced climate finance, fossil fuel policy, and forest conservation incentives, reinforcing Guyana's global leadership in forest climate services.

Phillips highlighted Guyana's leadership in climate finance innovation, noting its issuance of jurisdictional carbon credits under ART-TREES, and participation in the UN's CORSIA aviation emissions reduction programme.

Through the Guyana-Norway Agreement, the country secured US\$227 million for forest conservation and climate mitigation, while its pioneering role in issuing jurisdictional carbon credits set a global precedent for valuing standing forests as critical carbon sinks.

Prime Minister Phillips discussed energy transformation and renewable energy, reaffirming Guyana's commitment to clean-energy expansion.

He cited advancements in solar, wind, and the Gas-to-Energy project: "By 2030, even as energy demand is expected to increase five-fold, greenhouse gas emissions will remain stable or decline, ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of environmental sustainability," he said.

He announced that solar energy capacity has grown by 173% since 2020, with the Guyana Utility-Scale Solar

Photovoltaic programme (GUYSOL) set to launch the largest utility-scale solar plants in 2025, marking a significant step towards a clean-energy future.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the role of digital transformation in advancing sustainability, stating, "In addition to renewable energy expansion, digital transformation plays a key role in Guyana's sustainable development strategy. Investments in e-government services, smart infrastructure, and climate monitoring technologies are enhancing efficiency and reducing emissions across sectors."

Prime Minister Phillips also addressed the need for strengthened partnerships, emphasising the importance of cooperation and private sector engagement in driving climate resilience and sustainability efforts forward.

"No country can tackle the climate crisis alone. South-South cooperation, where developing nations collaborate on shared challenges, is critical to advancing sustainability solutions. Developing nations must leverage regional strengths, share localised solutions, and build resilience together."

He commended the India-Guyana partnership, which has been instrumen-

tal in renewable energy cooperation, trade, and technology transfer, noting: "Guyana is proud to have successfully collaborated with India in renewable energy, technology transfer, and capacity building, with plans to expand efforts in solar, biofuels, and climate adaptation."

He also praised TERI's contribution to rural electrification and low-carbon development in Guyana, highlighting projects such as the Solar Home Energy Systems, which have brought clean energy to over 250 remote communities, benefiting over 135,000 people.

The Prime Minister urged countries to embrace bold action and innovation in tackling climate challenges.

"There is a clear pathway ahead, and though it is not without its challenges, this pathway leads us to an end result that can sustain our planet while allowing future generations prosperity," he said, adding: "But we cannot achieve this reality without unity, leadership, and innovation."

Reaffirming Guyana's commitment to playing its part, he called for new collaborations, strengthened commitments, and a legacy of sustainability for future generations.

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# ‘Pay attention to the needs of our rapidly growing economy’

UNDER the theme, “Explore, Connect, Evolve”, the University of Guyana (UG) on Friday held a short opening ceremony for its two-day annual Open Day and Job Fair at the Turkeyen Campus.

During the ceremonial opening, it was noted that UG is on the path to becoming a world-class tertiary institution, ensuring its students are ready to take advantage of the opportunities ahead as Guyana experiences exponential economic and infrastructural growth.

Starting three years ago, the job fair aspect of the event was begun to bring employers into direct contact with students. During this time, it was reported that the Open Day and Job Fair has positively impacted not only the students, but the university at large.

The University of Guyana, as the premier tertiary institution in Guyana, plays a critical role in shaping the mindset of tomorrow’s workforce.

Over the past 60 years, UG has played an integral role in upskilling the future of our country through its engaging courses and programmes.

UG has also been able to equip Guyanese, regional and international students with critical-thinking skills, exposure, and other traits to thrive in today’s world.

By collaborating with public and private sector companies, UG is allowing its students to explore and engage with these partners for job and learning opportunities.



Scenes from UG’s Open Day and Job Fair 2025

Some 30 public and private sector agencies are present at this year’s event supporting UG’s efforts. There are also approximately 90 exhibits from various faculties.

Minister of Labour Joseph Hamilton, in his remarks alluded to the fact that the companies present at the event would not have been involved a few years ago. This, he said, highlights Guyana’s rapidly changing labour landscape.

Minister Hamilton encouraged students to pay attention to the needs of our rapidly developing country. He re-

lated that we need to plan in such a way that all Guyanese can participate in education development.

According to the minister, national development goes far beyond Georgetown. He emphasised that it should include citizens in every administrative region to ensure that the goal of national development is accomplished.

Meanwhile, speaking on behalf of the Minister of Education, Deputy Chief Education Officer (Technical) Dr. Ritesh Tularam said the ministry is continuously engaged in networking, collaboration, and partnerships to realise

strategic goals.

He remarked that the open day is more than an opportunity to see what UG has to offer its students; it is an opportunity for networking, information sharing, internship, and job exploration.

Underscoring the growth of UG, it was mentioned that over the past years, the number of students from outlying regions has increased.

For Region One (Barima-Waini), the institution has seen a student growth of 35.8 per cent, for Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam), the increased growth rate stands at 25.1 per cent, and for Region Three (Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), it’s at 5.8 per cent. Additionally, for Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice), the number of students has increased by 17.7 per cent over the last year, while Regions Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) and Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni) have seen an increase of 5.4 and 10.9 per cent, respectively. These increases highlight UG’s widespread reach over the years.

While the institution was started as a national tertiary institution to meet the needs of Guyana’s developmental thrust, the quality of education delivered has impacted some 34 countries around the world.

At present, there are students from Nigeria (representing the largest increase in the student population), Belize, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Antigua, Grenada, Romania, the Russian Federation, China, Canada and several other countries.

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](http://www.wgc-org.com)

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# IMF hails Guyana as a pioneer in global climate policies

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) has lauded Guyana for remaining, what it termed as, a global pioneer in climate policies and commended the government for its efforts to enhance the country's energy matrix.

"Guyana remains a global pioneer in climate policies monetising forest conservation, and the authorities are enhancing the country's energy matrix, strengthening macroeconomic resilience," the IMF's 2025 Article IV Mission noted in its concluding statement released on Friday.

Since assuming office in 2020, the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) has remained firm in its manifesto promise of utilising Guyana's sustainable resources to bring forth prosperity for all.

The Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) was one of the initiatives aimed at achieving this goal. According to the IMF, building resilience, promoting sustainable forestry and enhancing biodiversity conservation in the face of climate change, are being addressed as the government is working to prioritise the actions outlined in the LCDS 2030.

The government allocated \$4.7 billion to Amerindian villages in 2024 under the LCDS. The funding benefitted approximately 254 communities across the country, marking a significant investment in the development and empowerment of Amerindian villages.

Guyana has outlined a second-generation LCDS as a successor to its first LCDS, which aims to reduce the country's reliance on heavy fuel oil and transition to cleaner, more affordable energy sources, as well as mobilise resources from domestic assets.

Under the first LCDS, the global climate services provided by Guyana's standing forests were mobilised to gen-



erate revenue for the country, in this instance, under a US\$250 million bilateral partnership with the Kingdom of Norway.

On December 1, 2022, the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions announced the issuance of US\$33.47 million TREES credit to Guyana for the five-year period from 2016 to 2020. The Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) is a global initiative that seeks to incentivise the reducing of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), as well as restore forests and protect intact forests. Subsequently, the government entered into an agreement whereby Hess Corporation purchased approximately a third of Guyana's credits. The agreement sets out that Hess will buy 2.5 million credits per year for 2016 to 2030 to a total of 37.5 million credits for a minimum payment of US\$750 million to be paid to Guyana between 2022 and 2032.

On February 28 last year, Guyana

announced the issuance of the world's first carbon credits eligible for use by airlines in Phase 1 of CORSIA – the United Nations' International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)'s global emissions reduction programme. The credits issued were for Guyana's 2021 performance in sustaining one of the


world's highest levels of tropical forest coverage, and one of the world's lowest deforestation rates. A total of 7.14 million credits were issued by the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) for conformance with ART's "TREES" standard.

Energy is key for the economic growth and for an improved quality of life for all Guyanese, the PPP/C had outlined in its manifesto.


Since assuming office, the administration has pursued a number of initiatives to ensure Guyanese can access affordable, stable and reliable energy.

According to the IMF, the Gas-to-Energy (GtE) project is expected to secure reliable electricity provision countrywide as a transition toward a cleaner and more renewable energy mix over the longer term.

Earlier this year, Guyana and the United States Export-Import (EXIM) Bank signed a US\$527 million loan to further support the development of the GtE project. This highly-anticipated project will see a 200-kilometre pipeline bringing gas from the Liza Destiny and the Liza Unity Floating Production fields onshore.








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# Some 9 million bags of paddy to be harvested this crop – Min. Mustapha



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha

DURING a meeting with rice farmers from the West Coast of Demerara (Region 3) on Friday, Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, said that approximately 9,000,000 bags of paddy are expected to be harvested in the first crop of 2025.

He said that over the last four years, the government has invested in infrastructure to support the expansion of the agriculture sector and has also made inputs available to assist with lowering the costs associated with rice cultivation.

“As a government, we recognise the value of the rice industry, and that is why we’ve been making inputs available. For this crop, the 233,000 acres, when we examine the estimated amount of paddy to be harvested, is around 9,000,000 bags. We removed the VAT from the inputs in agriculture. In two instances, fertiliser was procured and given to farmers.

“We are looking to rehabilitate and extend all of the seed facilities so that seeds can be available to farmers on a timelier basis with excellent varieties

producing better yields. In the last four years, we have launched three new varieties. So, the support has been tremendous over the years,” Minister Mustapha explained.

Minister Mustapha also told farmers that contrary to what is being said on social media by known anti-government propagandists, negotiations between the millers and the government commenced weeks ago.

“The President engaged the millers on several occasions to determine how we can work together to keep the price of paddy at a stable rate. These negotiations didn’t happen overnight. They began weeks ago. At one point, they were at a deadlock, and the President intervened and said we will ensure the farmers receive a minimum of \$4,000 for a bag of paddy. Every bag of paddy that the farmer sells to the mill, we have to contribute. When you do the calculation, we have to inject approximately \$2.7 billion to ensure farmers receive a better price,” Minister Mustapha explained.

The minister also said that the

PPP/C government has always engaged farmers and, when necessary, stepped in to ensure farmers receive a fair deal.

“The millers said they could not pay the \$4,000 per bag because of the current world market price and other factors. In order to come to an agreement, we had to contribute. We did it before, and we’ll do it again. Like any other responsible government, we are always ensuring that we bring relief to people. The farmers know that this government, under the leadership of His Excellency, President Irfaan Ali, has and

will always ensure farmers get a fair deal,” he explained.

Minister Mustapha also told the farmers that the ministry will explore procuring a Jaclo sprayer to assist farmers from the region with the application of chemicals. This, he added, would represent an investment of approximately \$6.5 million.

In 2024, rice production surpassed its target and reached an all-time high of 725,282 metric tonnes, representing a record-breaking milestone in the country’s agriculture sector.

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# Ali to Hague Back farmers: ‘Your best days are ahead of you’

WITH Guyana focusing on expanding its rice production, the government is actively exploring new markets and is aiming to produce a wider range of value-added rice-based products.

This is according to President, Dr Irfaan Ali, who on Sunday engaged several farmers and residents at an impromptu meeting at Hague Back, West Coast Demerara, Region Three.

There, he revealed that the government is actively engaging with partners from the Middle East to unlock potential markets for Guyana’s rice.

Additionally, it was disclosed that the government has already made a commitment to invest in a fertiliser plant with the goal of supporting farmers country wide.

“We want to invest in a fertiliser plant so that we’ll bring down the cost of fertiliser for the farmers. So, there are better days far ahead of you when you will get cheaper fertiliser made right here in Guyana,” President Ali told the large gathering as he outlined massive plans to not only boost agricultural production, but also create a sustainable landscape for rice farmers and every other agricultural stakeholder.

“We also have to invest more here, so that we had to have more value-added production from the rice. With the cost of electricity coming down, you have to have more rice-based products, cereals and all of these things that is [sic] important.”

He noted that with more breweries coming into the country, further exploring the valued-added market could add to an increase in local consumption.

“We want production to expand. We want production to get to a million tonnes, and we are also working on ensuring that your input cost comes down, so that your profitability will be greater,” the President noted.

Just last week, Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, said that approximately 9,000,000 bags of paddy are expected to be harvested in the first crop of 2025.

In addition to this, the Guyana Rice Development (GRDB) and local rice millers, inked an official agreement that will see rice farmers receiving no less than \$4,000 for a bag of paddy for the first crop of 2025.

He said that over the last four years, the government has invested in infrastructure to support the expansion of the agricultural sector and has also made inputs available to assist with

lowering the costs associated with rice cultivation.

“As a government, we recognise the value of the rice industry, and that is why we’ve been making inputs available. For this crop, the 233,000 acres, when we examine the estimated amount of paddy to be harvested, [it] is around 9,000,000 bags. We removed the VAT from the inputs in agriculture. In two instances, fertiliser was procured and given to farmers.”

In 2024, rice production surpassed its target and reached an all-time high of 725,282 metric tonnes, representing a record-breaking milestone in the country’s agricultural sector.



President Ali spoke of the key drivers of sustainable development

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## Guyana Digital School in Region Two

MINISTER of Education, Priya Manickchand, on Monday unveiled the Guyana Digital School at Abram Zuil Secondary School, introducing the transformative online learning platform to Region Two students who are preparing for the upcoming Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination.

During her address, Minister Manickchand emphasised that the Guyana Digital School adopts a holistic four-quadrant approach, integrating technology, content, engagement, and hands-on experiences to enhance students' learning.

She noted that this method goes beyond traditional education, ensuring a well-rounded academic experience.

The platform is specifically designed for Grades 10 and 11 students, providing them with access to CSEC learning materials to support their studies.

Minister Manickchand highlighted that this initiative aligns with President Dr. Irfaan Ali's vision of equalising education access, ensuring that all students—regardless of their financial background—receive high-quality lessons without the need for costly private tutoring.

She also stressed the importance of bridging educational gaps, particularly for students in remote areas who may have limited access to extra lessons.

Students can register for the programme through the link: <https://www.digitalschool.moe.edu.gy/>.

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# Guyana asks ICJ to block Venezuela's elections in Esequibo region

Guyana on Thursday requested that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) order Venezuela to halt its plans to hold elections in the disputed Esequibo region, asserting that such a vote would violate a prior court ruling.

The Guyanese foreign ministry made the request in response to Venezuela's plans to conduct provincial elections, including for state governors, on May 25.

In 2023, the ICJ issued a ruling instructing Venezuela to refrain from any actions that would alter the status quo in the Esequibo region while the court considers which country has sovereignty over the territory. However, Venezuela's government, led by President Nicolás Maduro, passed a law last year creating a new state within the disputed area, ignoring the ongoing legal proceedings. Guyana argues that holding elections in this region would "flagrantly violate" the 2023 ICJ order.

In its statement, Guyana urged the ICJ to prohibit Venezuela from moving forward with the elections, also requesting expedited hearings to prevent potential harm to its rights. The country warned that conducting elections in Esequibo could cause "serious and irreparable prejudice" to its claims over the territory.

Venezuela's communications ministry has yet to respond to a request for comment on Guyana's appeal.



Venezuelan map shows the disputed Guayana Essequiba region that it claims belongs to them

Tensions between the two countries over Esequibo have escalated in recent days. Last weekend, Guyana reported that a Venezuelan coast guard patrol entered its waters and approached an offshore oil vessel operated by ExxonMobil in a block managed by the

company. CARICOM, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France have all come to the defense of Guyana. Venezuela, however, defended the move, stating that the waters in question are part of a maritime zone pending international legal delimitation.

The ICJ's final decision on the decades-long territorial dispute could take years to resolve, leaving both nations in a state of legal uncertainty over the fate of Esequibo, a region that comprises more than two-thirds of Guyana's territory.

# Bharrat Jagdeo receives top award in India

Guyana's Vice President, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has been honored with the Sustainable Development Leadership Award at the World Sustainable Development Summit 2025 in New Delhi, India.

The summit, organized annually by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), gathers world leaders, global institutions, and sustainability experts to address key issues in sustainable development.

The prestigious award recognizes leaders with a transformative impact on sustainability and climate action. According to a release by TERI, Dr. Jagdeo was selected for the honor due to his leadership in spearheading Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy and positioning the country as a global leader in forest conservation and climate finance.



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Gurpreet Singh hoped to enter the US before President Trump's crackdown began

## Migrant deported in chains: 'No-one will go to US illegally now'

Gurpreet Singh was handcuffed, his legs shackled and a chain tied around his waist. He was led on to the tarmac in Texas by US Border Patrol, towards a waiting C-17 military transport aircraft.

It was 3 February and, after a months-long journey, he realised his dream of living in America was over. He was being deported back to India. "It felt like the ground was slipping away from underneath my feet," he said.

Gurpreet, 39, was one of thousands of Indians in recent years to have spent their life savings and crossed continents to enter the US illegally through its southern border, as they sought to escape an unemployment crisis back home.

There are about 725,000 undocumented Indian immigrants in the US, the third largest group behind Mexicans and El Salvadoreans, according to the most recent figures from Pew Research in 2022.

Now Gurpreet has become one of the first undocumented Indians to be sent home since President Donald Trump took office, with a promise to make mass deportations a priority.

Gurpreet intended to make an asylum claim based on threats he said he had received in India, but - in line with an executive order from Trump to turn people away without granting them asylum hearings - he said he was removed without his case ever being considered.

About 3,700 Indians were sent back on charter and commercial flights during President Biden's tenure, but recent images of detainees in chains under the Trump administration have sparked outrage in India.

US Border Patrol released the images in an online video with a bombastic choral soundtrack and the warning: "If you cross illegally, you will be removed."

"We sat in handcuffs and shackles for more than 40 hours. Even women were bound the same way. Only the children were free," Gurpreet told the BBC back in India. "We weren't allowed to stand up. If we wanted to use the toilet, we were escorted by US forces, and just one of our handcuffs was taken off."

Opposition parties protested in parliament,

saying Indian deportees were given "inhuman and degrading treatment". "There's a lot of talk about how Prime Minister Modi and Mr Trump are good friends. Then why did Mr Modi allow this?" said Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, a key opposition leader.

Gurpreet said: "The Indian government should have said something on our behalf. They should have told the US to carry out the deportation the way it's been done before, without the handcuffs and chains."

An Indian foreign ministry spokesman said the government had raised these concerns with the US, and that as a result, on subsequent flights, women deportees were not handcuffed and shackled.

But on the ground, the intimidating images and President Trump's rhetoric seem to be having the desired effect, at least in the immediate aftermath.

"No-one will try going to the US now through this illegal 'donkey' route while Trump is in power," said Gurpreet.

In the longer term, this could depend on whether there are continued deportations, but for now many of the Indian people-smugglers, locally called "agents", have gone into hiding, fearing raids against them by Indian police.

Gurpreet said Indian authorities demanded the number of the agent he had used when he landed back home, but the smuggler could no longer be reached.

"I don't blame them, though. We were thirsty and went to the well. They didn't come to us," said Gurpreet.

While the official headline figure puts the unemployment rate at only 3.2%, it conceals a more precarious picture for many Indians. Only 22% of workers have regular salaries, the majority are self-employed and nearly a fifth are "unpaid helpers", including women working in family businesses.

"We leave India only because we are compelled to. If I got a job which paid me even 30,000 rupees (£270/\$340) a month, my family would get by. I would never have thought of leaving," said Gurpreet, who has a wife, a mother and an 18-month-old baby to look after.



**ARIES (March 21 - April 20):** Today's Venus-Mercury union in your sign should be beneficial, but as Venus is going through its retrograde phase you would be wise not to take anything for granted. What the universe gives with one hand it can easily take back with the other.

**TAURUS (April 21 - May 21):** If someone you work or do business with appeals to the generous side of your nature today you must keep up your guard. Most likely there is something they want from you they cannot be bothered to get for themselves. Don't give it to them.

**GEMINI (May 22 - June 21):** It will pay you to be vague about what you are up to today. If others get to know of your plans they may try to muscle their way in so they can share in the spoils - which is exactly why you must keep them in the dark.

**CANCER (June 22 - July 23):** If a partner or loved one does something that takes you by surprise today the most likely reason is because you have not been paying attention. Sometimes you can be a bit too laidback for your own good, which could leave you playing catch-up.

**LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23):** You want to get ahead in the world but the planets warn if you cut corners or break rules to impress people today your reputation could go downhill fast. If you can't play by the book it might be best not to play at all.

**VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23):** You may believe that you have insights into a situation that other people have overlooked but there is a real danger you are kidding yourself. If that is the case then what occurs around the time of the lunar eclipse on Friday is sure to burst your bubble.

**LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23):** There are very few certainties in life but one of them is that when you are doing well you attract the kind of people who want a free ride. That appears to be happening now. There is no good reason why your sacrifices should benefit others.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22):** If you expect to get straight answers to simple questions over the next 24 hours you will most likely be disappointed. On the work front, especially, employers and colleagues will be rather evasive and, yes, it's because they have something to hide.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21):** If the definition of stupidity is making the same mistake again and again while expecting a different outcome then one of your friends must be very stupid indeed. Make it your priority today to clue them in to reality and tell them they need to change.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20):** The more others pour cold water on your plans the more inclined you will be to believe it's because they are jealous and want to see you fail. You could be right, but more likely they are trying to save you from yourself. Maybe you should listen.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19):** If you spend too long weighing up the pros and cons of your next move you may end up staying right where you are and wasting the entire day. Make a decision and stick with it even if it turns out later on to be less than perfect.

**PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20):** If you are not in the mood for work then don't force yourself. This is one of those occasions when if you have no interest in a task then almost certainly you will make a bad job of it, so be smart and postpone it for a while.

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# Measles resurgence in North America sparks concern for the Caribbean

Public health officials in the U.S. are raising alarms as measles resurges in North America, with rising cases reported in the United States, Canada, and other regions.

This increase has sparked concerns for Caribbean nations, particularly those heavily dependent on tourism, due to the heightened risk of importing the highly contagious virus.

As of February 27, 2025, the United States has reported 164 measles cases across nine states, including Texas, California, and Georgia. Disturbingly, 95% of those affected were either unvaccinated or had unknown vaccination status. The outbreak has resulted in 32 hospitalizations and one death—the first measles-related fatality in the U.S. in a decade. This marks a significant rise compared to the same period last year, which saw only 60 cases.

Measles is an extremely contagious disease, transmitted through respiratory droplets. An infected person can unknowingly spread the virus up to four days before symptoms appear. The virus can linger in the air for up to two hours in an enclosed space, making it easy to contract.

Common symptoms of measles include:

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- Tiny white spots inside the mouth
- A rash that starts on the face and spreads across the body

The disease is preventable through the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine, which has been available since 1963. A single dose is 93% effective, and two doses offer 97% protection. While the disease was declared eradicated in the region in 2000, declining vaccination rates in recent years have led to its return.

In May 2024, the Caribbean reported its first measles case since 2019, highlighting the region's vulnerability. With millions of tourists visiting Caribbean islands annually, the risk of exposure to infected travelers is high.

Jamaica, the Caribbean's third-largest island with a population of just under three million, has made significant strides in eliminating vaccine-preventable diseases such as smallpox, polio, and measles. The country introduced the measles vaccine in 1982 and mandates routine childhood vaccinations by law. Jamaica has maintained a national disease surveillance system since 1974, with no confirmed local measles cases since 1991.



Despite the recent resurgence, the measles vaccine remains widely available. Health experts emphasize that individuals who may have been exposed to the virus can still receive the vaccine within 72 hours to reduce the risk of severe illness.

Authorities across the Caribbean are urging residents and travelers to verify their vaccination status and get immunized if necessary. For members of the Caribbean diaspora in North America, staying up to date on vaccinations is essential not only for personal

protection but also for safeguarding public health both at home and abroad.

As the measles situation continues to unfold, local public health officials will closely monitor the outbreak and advocate for increased vaccination rates to curb further spread.

## Jamaicans accused of stealing 900 Taylor Swift tickets

Two Jamaican employees of a business process outsourcing (BPO) firm in Kingston have been arrested and charged in connection with a sophisticated cybercrime operation that allegedly stole more than 900 concert tickets, including hundreds for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour. The scheme reportedly netted approximately \$635,000 in illegal profits.

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Tyrone Rose, 20, of Kingston, and Shamara P. Simmons, 31, of Jamaica, Queens, have been arraigned on charges of grand larceny, computer tampering, and conspiracy, among other offenses.

Authorities allege that Rose, along with an unapprehended accomplice working at Sutherland, a BPO firm in Kingston, used their access to StubHub's computer systems to intercept ticket URLs intended for legitimate buyers.

The stolen tickets were then redirected to Simmons and another co-conspirator in Queens, who allegedly downloaded and resold them on StubHub. The operation, which ran from June 2022 to July 2023, targeted high-demand events such as concerts by Taylor Swift, Adele, and Ed Sheeran, as well as NBA games and the US Open Tennis Championships.

The Jamaican BPO industry has grown rapidly over

the past decade, becoming a critical part of the island's economy with more than 60,000 employees and contributing significantly to its GDP. The sector handles a range of services for international clients, including customer support, technical services, and data management for major U.S. companies.

Sutherland, the BPO firm at the center of this investigation, is one of the many global outsourcing companies that have established a significant presence in Jamaica, attracted by the country's English-speaking workforce and favorable business environment.

However, this case has cast a spotlight on the potential risks associated with outsourcing sensitive tasks overseas. Security experts have long warned about the vulnerabilities that come with providing offshore contractors with access to private data and secure systems. The alleged misuse of StubHub's systems by employees highlights the challenges faced by companies in safeguarding customer information while managing global operations.

"These individuals are accused of exploiting their positions to steal tickets to some of the most sought-after events and resell them for personal gain," DA Katz said. "This case demonstrates the reach of cybercrime and the importance of partnerships between law enforcement and private companies to protect consumers."

# St. Vincent government officially acquires Balliceaux Island

The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines announced on Thursday that Balliceaux Island has officially become part of the nation's patrimony. Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves revealed the move to lawmakers, emphasizing the cultural and historical significance of the island.

The acquisition, finalized as of Wednesday, was made under the Land Acquisition Act, allowing the Governor-General to declare land for public use. In this case, the land on Balliceaux will be preserved as a cultural and historic memorial site.

According to Gonsalves, the Governor-General, acting on the advice of the Cabinet, has declared that the approximately 323-acre island, located in the Grenadines, will be vested in the Crown. This includes all rights to the land, water, and associated privileges.

"The lands shall be vested absolutely in the Crown, and this declaration secures Balliceaux as part of our national patrimony," Gonsalves stated. "This acquisition will ensure that Balliceaux is preserved for future generations as a symbol of our history."

Balliceaux Island holds deep historical importance to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, particularly due to its role in the tragic history of the Garifuna and Kalinago peoples. In 1795, over 2,000 Garifuna and Kalinago



Balliceaux Island has been acquired through the land acquisition act

were exiled to the island by the British, where many perished due to harsh conditions. This event, known as the Balliceaux massacre, is a key part of the region's colonial history and has long been a site of cultural memory for the Garifuna people.

The acquisition of the island is part

of the government's broader efforts to preserve and honor its cultural heritage. Gonsalves had previously pledged in March 2024 that his government would acquire the island in recognition of its historical significance.

The island is situated about five miles off the southern coast of St. Vin-

cent, in the Caribbean Sea, and is largely uninhabited today. Its rugged terrain, combined with its historical backdrop, makes it a site of both historical and symbolic importance, further emphasizing the government's dedication to preserving such significant locations within the nation's patrimony.

## B'dos awards India's PM with highest honor

Barbados has bestowed its highest national honor, the Honorary Freedom of Barbados Award, on India's Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, signaling a move to strengthen commercial and diplomatic ties with the Asian nation.

The award was presented during a ceremony on Wednesday as Bridgetown continues to expand its global diplomatic footprint.

The award, which recognizes India's support for Barbados during the COVID-19 pandemic, was accepted on Prime Minister Modi's behalf by Pabitra Margherita, India's Minister of State for External Affairs. The presentation was made by President Dame Sandra Mason and was attended by Prime Minister Mia Mottley and officials from both countries.

In his acceptance speech, Margherita expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Mottley, praising her leadership and decisive actions that have played a vital role in enhancing international relations. He emphasized the hope for continued cooperation between Barbados and India to build a resilient and prosperous future for both nations.

Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Minister, Kerry Symmonds, highlighted the shared commitment of both countries to addressing global challenges, particularly in the areas of climate change and healthcare. Symmonds noted that the award not only celebrates past support but also paves the way for deeper economic and diplomatic partnerships.

Barbados and India have maintained diplomatic relations since November 30, 1966, and this latest gesture is seen as a significant step in fortifying ties between the two nations.



Barbados President Dame Sandra Mason presenting the award to India's Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita



# US sanctions on Cuban medical missions pose threat to Jamaica's health system

Jamaica's Health and Wellness Minister, Dr. Christopher Tufton, has raised concerns about the potential impact of new U.S. visa restrictions that could prevent Cuban healthcare workers from continuing their work in Jamaica.

Dr. Tufton addressed the concerns surrounding the U.S. government's decision to impose visa restrictions on officials from countries benefiting from Cuban medical missions. This move could affect nearly 400 Cuban healthcare workers who are currently providing essential support to Jamaica's public health system.

The Cuban workers, predominantly nurses and specialist nurses, have been crucial in filling gaps in the healthcare workforce, particularly in light of a significant shortage of qualified professionals.

Dr. Tufton stressed that if the worst should happen — meaning the suspension of the medical missions — it would have a substantial impact on the island's healthcare system. "This is something that we would prefer not to have happen because lives depend on it," he said. He pointed to the Cuban eyecare program at St. Joseph's, which performs almost 20 surgeries a day, benefiting thousands of Jamaicans.

The announcement of the visa restrictions was made by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on February 25, targeting Cuban and foreign officials involved in managing Cuba's overseas



**Christopher Tufton, Jamaica's Minister of Health**

medical missions. The U.S. government justifies the restrictions by claiming the program exploits Cuban medical professionals, subjecting them to forced labor, while the Cuban government allegedly profits from their work abroad.

Although the visa restrictions do not directly affect the healthcare workers themselves, the diplomatic tension

surrounding the issue has raised concerns across the Caribbean, especially in countries like Jamaica, Guyana, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which rely heavily on Cuban healthcare professionals. Dr. Tufton confirmed that Jamaica currently hosts almost 400 Cuban healthcare workers in its public health system.

In light of the uncertainty, Dr.

Tufton revealed that the Jamaican government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is engaging in negotiations with both Cuba and the United States in an effort to reach a compromise. He also noted that the government is exploring contingency plans with other countries, including the Philippines, India, and Nigeria, to supplement Jamaica's healthcare workforce should Cuban professionals be forced to leave.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has expressed similar concerns, with leaders from across the region voicing alarm over the potential loss of these workers. St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, echoed these fears, warning that the region's healthcare services could face catastrophic consequences. In a radio address, Dr. Gonsalves emphasized the dire implications for small island nations, stating, "If you cut that off, a lot of health services in the Caribbean would suffer greatly, and a lot of people would die."

The ongoing debate over Cuban medical missions has sparked international controversy. U.S. lawmakers, including Marco Rubio, have condemned the program as exploitative, while CARICOM leaders argue that the medical assistance provided by Cuba has been essential in improving healthcare outcomes across the Caribbean, particularly in resource-constrained countries.

## US Coast Guard seize US\$141M in cocaine in Caribbean

The United States Coast Guard has seized approximately 12,470 pounds of cocaine valued at around US\$141.4 million during a series of operations in the Caribbean Sea.

The confiscated drugs were the result of six successful interdictions in the Caribbean Sea, leading to the arrest of 17 suspected smugglers who will face federal prosecution in U.S. courts.

"These seizures are a testament to the Coast Guard's continued dedication to safeguard America by securing our maritime borders," said Lt. j.g. Jesus Martinez Borges, an enforcement officer for the Seventh Coast Guard District.

Among the significant operations was an incident on February 2, when a Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard aircrew detected a suspicious vessel about 30 miles north of Venezuela. The vessel was intercepted by the Netherlands Royal Navy ship HNLMS Groningen, with support from an embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment 105. The operation led to the capture of five suspected smugglers and the seizure of approximately 6,220 pounds of cocaine.

That same day, an aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Miami identified another suspicious vessel around 35 miles southwest of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle responded, intercepting the vessel and apprehending three suspected smugglers along with about 2,200 pounds of



**US Coast Guard pose with seized cocaine**

cocaine.

In another operation on February 14, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew spotted a suspicious vessel about 18 miles north of Venezuela. During the pursuit, the vessel's crew attempted to flee into Venezuelan territorial waters after discarding 571 pounds of cocaine, which was later recovered by the Groningen crew.

On February 17, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) aircrew detected a suspicious vessel approximately 50 miles northeast of the Dominican Republic. This led to the Valiant's crew intercepting the vessel, capturing five suspected

smugglers and seizing about 1,280 pounds of cocaine.

"AMO continues to predict, detect, identify, classify, track, deter, and interdict threats through the coordinated application of aviation and maritime law enforcement resources," said Christopher Hunter, director of CBP Air and Marine Operations in the Caribbean.

In a recent incident on Tuesday, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew alerted the Groningen crew to a suspicious vessel about 120 miles northwest of Aruba. The Groningen crew deployed a helicopter to intercept the non-compliant go-fast vessel, using warning shots to halt the suspected smugglers. The operation resulted in the arrest of two suspects and the seizure of approximately 545 pounds of cocaine without injuries.

Additionally, on Saturday, a Caribbean maritime patrol aircrew notified the Royal Canadian Navy ship HMCS Harry DeWolf of a suspicious vessel about 176 miles north of Cabo De La Vela, Colombia. The crew, along with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 team, intercepted the vessel, capturing three suspected smugglers and seizing about 1,650 pounds of cocaine.

The U.S. Coast Guard and its international partners continue to enhance regional security and stability by targeting transnational criminal networks responsible for drug trafficking across the Caribbean.

# Suriname Foreign Minister Albert Ramdin elected as OAS Chief

The Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) has congratulated Suriname's Foreign Minister Albert Ramdin on his historic election as the next Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) for the 2025-2030 term.

Ramdin, 67, was elected by acclamation on Monday during the 56th Special Session of the OAS General Assembly, following the withdrawal of Rubén Ramírez, the Foreign Minister of Paraguay. He will succeed Luis Almagro, who first took office in 2015 and was re-elected in 2020.

"COFCOR is of the view that Mr. Ramdin's election reflects the confidence of Member States in his abilities," the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) stated. "The Council expressed confidence that with a career distinguished by extensive experience in foreign policy and diplomacy, including a previous tenure as OAS Assistant Secretary-General, he is well-equipped to guide the organization in addressing critical issues such as peace, security, socio-economic development, democracy, and good governance across the hemisphere.

"The Caribbean Community is confident that Minister Ramdin will serve in his new role with distinction, upholding the OAS Charter and demonstrating the necessary expertise to navigate regional challenges, thereby contributing to the shared vision for a



Suriname Foreign Secretary Albert Ramdin is the new OAS Secretary General

peaceful and prosperous hemisphere," COFCOR added.

The United States also extended its congratulations to Ramdin, with a statement emphasizing its commitment to working with the newly elected Secretary-General to uphold the OAS's core mission of defending democracy, promoting human rights, and advancing security and economic prosperity across the region.

"I look forward to working with

Secretary General-elect Ramdin to uphold the OAS's core mission of defending democracy, promoting and protecting human rights, as well as advancing security and economic prosperity throughout our hemisphere," the U.S. statement read.

The U.S. also reaffirmed its stance on regional stability, calling a secure and prosperous hemisphere vital to advancing its national interests. It highlighted the importance of strengthening

alliances with democratic partners to address shared regional challenges, particularly illegal migration, transnational crime, and the authoritarian regimes in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. The statement further emphasized institutional reforms to enhance the OAS's efficiency and financial sustainability.

Outgoing Secretary-General Luis Almagro was also commended for his leadership in defending democracy.

## PJ Patterson fires first salvo in SSL lawsuit

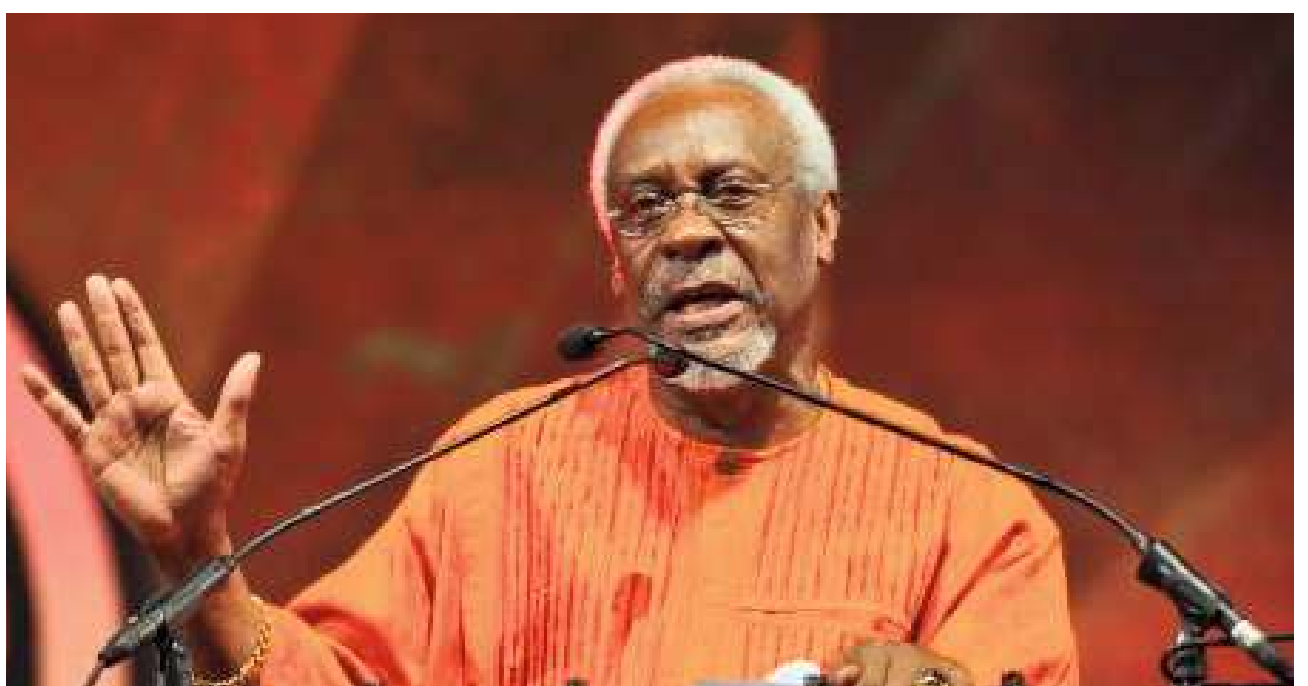
Jamaica's former Prime Minister PJ Patterson has delivered a blistering critique of the Financial Services Commission (FSC) for its handling of the massive fraud scandal at Stocks and Securities Limited (SSL).

The scandal, which surfaced in January 2023, has rocked Jamaica's financial sector, involving fraudulent activities dating back over a decade and affecting more than 200 investors with losses exceeding \$30 million USD. Among the victims is Jamaican sprint legend Usain Bolt, who reportedly lost approximately \$12 million USD.

Speaking at a People's National Party (PNP) event in St. Andrew, Patterson called on the FSC to prepare a "top-class legal team" to defend against potential lawsuits from investors. He questioned whether the FSC breached its statutory duties by failing to prevent the fraud, arguing that the agency is "clearly exposed to civil action."

In an interview with The Fix podcast earlier this year, Bolt broke his silence on the scandal, expressing disappointment in the government's handling of the situation. "If this happen to me and it a gwaan fi two years and me can't see back a dime ... you really start evaluate," Bolt said, suggesting that the ordeal has made him rethink his status as a public figure in Jamaica. He also accused the government of inaction, describing the situation as "almost at a stalemate."

PJ Patterson echoed Bolt's concerns, criticizing the government for attempting to stifle public discourse on the issue. "Expecting silence from the Opposition is sheer stupidity," Patterson remarked, underscoring the need for transparency given the scale of the fraud and Bolt's high-profile status. He also dis-



Former Jamaica Prime Minister PJ Patterson

missed the notion that Jean-Ann Panton, the only individual charged so far, acted alone in orchestrating the scheme. "It is sheer naivety to believe that a scheme of this magnitude was carried out by one individual," he declared.

Meanwhile, Bolt hinted at the possibility of taking legal action, stating, "At some point, we have to figure out something and make a move. We can't just lose all of that [money]." He also suggested that public pressure might be his only recourse. "Clearly it look like if me nuh start apply some pressure me nah go get

back nothing," Bolt said, even hinting at taking his fight to the international media if necessary.

Director of Public Prosecutions Paula Llewellyn has cautioned that excessive media coverage could jeopardize the fairness of the trial, noting the complexity of the case and the extensive volume of evidence still under review. As the scandal continues to unfold, the call for greater oversight and accountability in Jamaica's financial sector is growing louder.



Outgoing T&T Prime Minister Keith Rowley meets with schoolchildren during a recent visit to a school

# Rowley slams new US policy on government visas

Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Keith Rowley has strongly declared he will ensure the sovereignty of Trinidad and Tobago in the wake of remarks made by US Secretary of State Marc Rubio's statement about restricting US visas of government officials whose countries employ Cuban health-care workers.

Speaking at the ceremony marking the opening ceremony of the central block of the Port of Spain General Hospital, Dr Rowley said TT relied on specialists for its health-care delivery which over the years have come from India, the Philippines, Africa and mainly from Cuba.

"Out of the blue now, we have been called human traffickers because we hire technical people who we pay top dollar, equal to local rates. We are now being accused of taking part in a programme where people are being exploited. That's somebody's interpretation. Of course, there are local people here encouraging them to take away our US visas.

"I just came back from California, and if I never go back there again in my life, I will ensure that the sovereignty of TT is known to its people and respected by all."

On February 25, Rubio said, "Today, we announce the expansion of an existing Cuba-related visa restriction policy that targets forced labour linked to the Cuban labour export programme.

"This expanded policy applies to current or former Cuban government officials, and other individuals, including foreign government officials, who are believed to be responsible for, or in-

involved in, the Cuban labour export programme, particularly Cuba's overseas medical missions."

Rubio has claimed that Cuba continued to profit from the forced labour of its workers and the regime's abusive and coercive labour practices had been well documented.

Rowley said health, education and national security remained top priorities, and that meant revenue was essential. He said the country relied on oil and gas for this.

He took aim at detractors who he said were rejoicing at the difficulties TT was experiencing with the Dragon gas deal owing to tensions between the US and Venezuela, as the US is seeking to terminate all oil and natural gas licences with Venezuela that were approved by the former Joe Biden administration.

"Only today I'm looking at the newspapers and I'm seeing a Parliamentary colleague literally jumping up and down trying to convince the word that the Dragon gas project is finally being admitted by the government to have failed.

"I really want to think, when you go to a game and you want the team to win, what do you do? You cheer for the team, right? You give some mental support that today will be the day the runs will come. I am asking the rest of you to send some telepathic power to overcome this negative nonsense about the failure of the Dragon deal."

He said the deal was a "marvellous surprise" to many people and reminded the gas within TT's border was running

out.

"What will happen to Pt Lisas where we now rely on the activities of Pt Lisas for our major revenue stream? What happens when the gas runs out. It won't run out in eight years, it will be running out along the way until the eighth year and in the ninth year, it's gone. But between now and then, as it gets less and less, the problem of insufficient gas equalling not sufficient revenue equalling not being able to pay for what you already owe, so you can't do what you want to do, that is the calamity we'll be facing."

Rowley said the public should be celebrating the fact that the government was able to negotiate a deal with the Venezuelan government for TT to extract gas in a proven Venezuelan gas field.

"Of course, we got that during a time when the geopolitics is such that the US and other countries, who shall remain nameless, are setting new parameters and new terms of trade, and sanctions by one country against another country could have the effect of destroying our economy. We're not involved in it, but it could destroy everything we represent and we work for.

"It takes a lot of good leadership to navigate between these grinding gears to come away in an era of sanctions by the US against Venezuela with an OFAC license from the Office of Foreign Asset Control where TT has in fact the licence to operate without the sanctions.

If you see us losing that OFAC license, as you will see in the news if it happens, then you will know your coo coo cooked. If you see the Venezuelans

not allowing us to use the Dragon field, then you know that we are in difficulty."

Rowley also reminded that the Manatee deal was an achievement by the government.

"There are fields where they exist now, shared by Venezuela and TT, where we have not been able to extract any gas there for 20 years because we have been pursuing the normal legal way of doing that through unitisation, where both countries have to do it together, or agree on how it has to be done. We have been able to, in a short time, to get the Venezuelans to agree to allow us, Venezuela and TT, to cancel that approach and allow TT to go into the field and extract its portion. That's what happening right now with Shell moving to extract gas from Manatee, which is the largest volume of gas we would have had coming into our reserves for the longest while."

The Prime Minister said those who were cheering on the possible loss of the Dragon deal were not the ones who would be most affected by the loss of revenue.

"So if you see in the news any of these things going south and sour, do not join other people to jump up and celebrate it. Our revenue stream on the scale that is required to pay teachers, nurses, doctors, MPs, build hospitals, etc, if what we have done in the last seven years was not done, where would TT be today if those initiatives had not been successful, so we can continue today with the promise of good revenues from gas in particular from within our border as well as from across the border."

# Sabina Park to stage historic day/night Test match

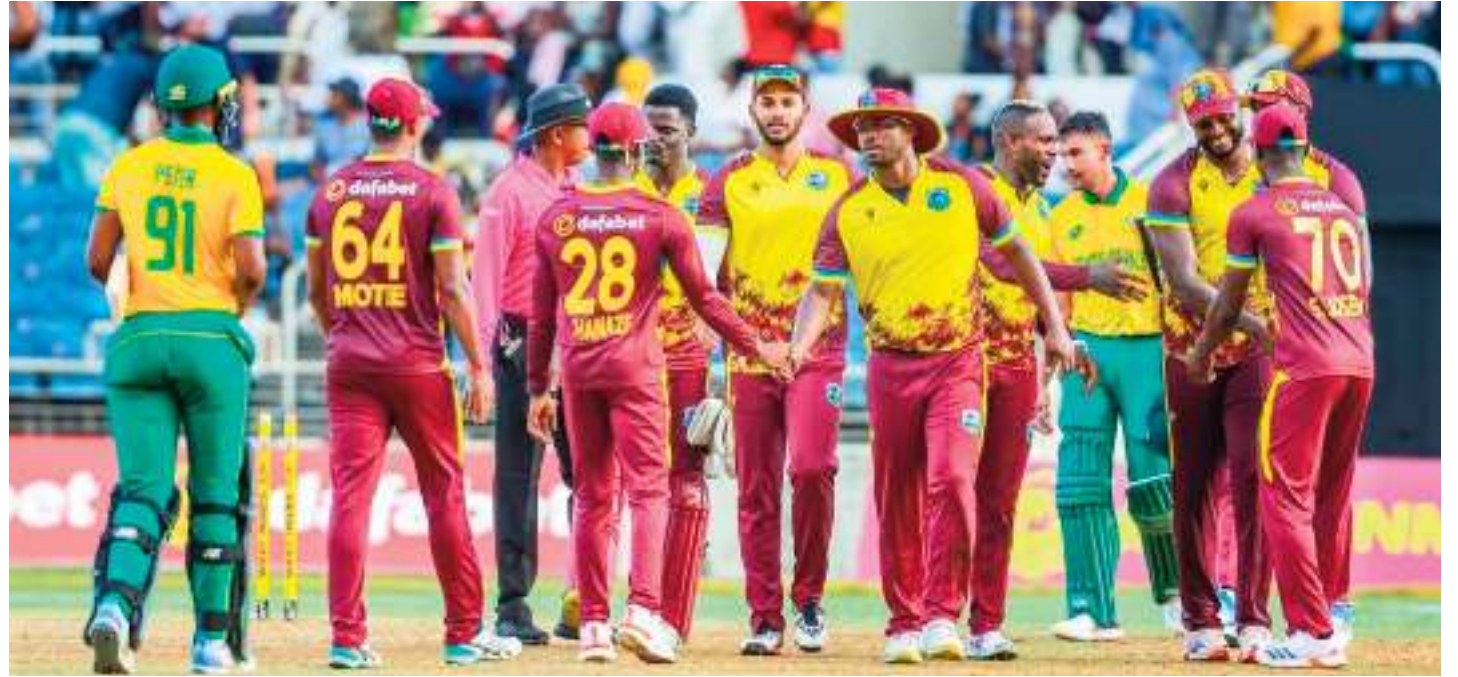
President of the Jamaica Cricket Association (JCA), Dr Donovan Bennett, has expressed cautious optimism that Sabina Park will host its first-ever day/night pink-ball Test match this July when Australia visit the Caribbean.

As previously reported in the local media, Cricket Australia requested that the third Test against the West Indies be played as a day/night encounter.

This move aligns with the preference of Australian fans, who are eager to explore the island's attractions during the day while enjoying cricket under the lights in the evening. However, the proposal hinges on the completion of necessary upgrades to the floodlights at Sabina Park.

Dr Bennett confirmed that the JCA has secured funding from the Jamaican government to upgrade the lighting system, with the new equipment set to be shipped from the UK. Additionally, a state-of-the-art scoreboard from India is expected to be installed ahead of the July deadline.

Alongside the third Test, Sabina



West Indies players exchange pleasantries following a T20 match against South Africa at Sabina Park

Park will also host two T20 matches between the West Indies and Australia, both scheduled as night games. While preparations are well under way, Dr Bennett emphasised that final approval from Cricket West Indies is still pending.

"CWI has not yet signed off on it.

However, we have assured them that the lighting upgrades will be completed, as we have already secured the funds from the government and paid for the lights. The equipment is being shipped from England, so we are confident everything will be in place. I am almost certain it will be a pink-ball

Test, but we must await the final decision from the Cricket West Indies before confirming."

The last time the Australians played a Test match at Sabina Park was June 2015, when the visitors defeated the West Indies by 277 runs.

## Red Force women crowned Super50 Cup champions

TRINIDAD and Tobago Red Force women lifted the 2025 CG United Super50 Cup, after easing past Barbados by seven wickets in a one-sided final at Warner Park in St Kitts on March 7.

Tight bowling from spinners Anisa Mohammed (3/17) and skipper Karishma Ramharack (2/12) and 15-year-old fast bowler Amrita Ramtahal (2/5) dismantled Barbados for 71 all out, from 29 overs, batting first.

For the Bajans, Asabi Callender (28) and Trishan Holder (15) were the only batters to get into double-figures. Ramharack's two scalps were those of West Indies siblings Kycia and Kyshona Knight.

In reply, TT openers Djenaba Joseph (28) and Shunelle Sawh (nine) constructed a 21-run partnership, before Sawh was caught by Callender off Shamilia Connell. Joseph and Britney Cooper (17) teamed up for a 41-run stance which took TT to 62 runs from 20 overs.

However, Connell struck again and had Cooper caught by Aaliyah Alleyne.

Needing just ten runs from 30 overs, TT cruised to victory, despite Joseph departing caught and bowled by Keila Elliott, with just three runs to go.

Lee-Ann Kirby (six not out) and former West Indies vice-captain Mohammed (one not out) did not falter and led TT to their first women's Super50 Cup title since 2017.

Skipper Ramharack was elated to end the title drought and said their preparation paid off in the end.

"We planned and prepared well. Every game we sat down as a team and identified who were our threats, and we were able to execute every single time we came out," Ramharack said in the post-match



Red Force women celebrate their win

media conference on ESPN. "Our bowlers were on target every single time and I must commend them for the great job they've done throughout the tournament.

"We know how important they are to the Barbados batting line-up. Taking responsibility and bowling the new ball against them was one of the things we spoke about, and I'm really happy to come out on the winner's end today."

Ramharack spoke to her teammates the night before and reminded them that the last time she played in a final, the team emerged victorious. She applauded

an all-round team effort for this year's success.

"The bowlers were able to execute. The way we bowled as a unit in every single game, we were able to execute our plans, and we made the job easy for our batters to go out there and have to chase small targets.

"As a team you want your bowlers and batters stepping up when you need them, and that's what we did. We have the depth in our team to be the best team in the tournament and we proved it today," Ramharack added.

West Indies and TT player Joseph said her goal was to bat until the end, despite her being dismissed on the cusp of victory.

"I just went out there and tried to back myself and play as straight as possible when I went in. Playing straight was the main thing as it was a really small total, so it was just to stay and bat until the end.

"It's about not getting complacent because even with a small total, you still have to stay and bat until it's over. That's what we tried to do. It's really an amazing feeling after so much years. I'm really grateful for this moment. A lot of thanks to fans, families and supporters back home."

Coming in third was Guyana, who defeated Jamaica by 82 runs in the third-place playoff. Guyana, batting first, scored 182/8 with Raelenna Grimmond (71) top scoring alongside Cherry-Ann Fraser (47).

In response, Jamaica capitulated for 100 inside 32 overs with Rashada Williams (27) and Neisha-Ann Waisome (21) top scoring. Guyana's Nyia Latchman (4/15), Trisha Hardat (2/30) and Plaffiana Millington (2/25) did most of the damage with the ball.



# “ I CAN WALK BAREFOOT ON THE BEACH AGAIN!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Visit [www.TLC-Medicine.ca](http://www.TLC-Medicine.ca) to learn more and to take advantage of their NEW PATIENT OFFER!**



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*Guyana offers a distinct experience for the tourism market*



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**NOTICE**

**USE ONLY OFFICIALLY LICENSED TOURISM BUSINESSES AND GUIDES**

The Guyana Tourism Authority is issuing an urgent reminder to book tour experiences exclusively with licensed tourism operators when visiting Guyana.

A complete list of officially licensed businesses is available on the Guyana Tourism Authority's Facebook page.

**For further inquiries, please contact the Authority via email at [info@guyanaturism.com](mailto:info@guyanaturism.com) or WhatsApp at +592 638 5128.**

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