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Universal health care for all Guyanese

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali (above) announced on Thursday that a \$10,000 universal health care voucher will be introduced in 2025 for every Guyanese citizen.

This measure will benefit over 500,000 persons countrywide and will involve an investment of over \$5 billion in the health and wellbeing of the population.

He made the announcement during

his address at a special sitting of the National Assembly at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC), Liliendaal.

The voucher will cover the cost of basic medical tests to establish baseline health data, which is necessary to determine the preventative actions required to minimise the spread of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

“The universal health voucher will help us as we work to build a healthy, strong and resilient population,” President Ali emphasised.

Children and the elderly are already benefiting from the free eye testing and spectacle vouchers distributed across the country.

Meanwhile, over the weekend, the Government launched its Newborn Cash Grant initiative targeting more than 2,000 babies born in Guyana to Guyanese mothers.

Each mother will receive a grant of \$100,000. The initiative is expected to amount of \$1.3B annually.

Full story inside

New T&T PM Young calls elections

One day after he was sworn in to office, new Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Stuart Young has called a snap general election for April 28.

The notice also came 48 hours after the ruling PNM presented its 41 candidates at a lively rally at Woodford Square, Port of Spain, at which former PM Dr Keith Rowley gave his political swansong hours before bowing out as prime minister at midnight on March 16.

On March 18, in one of his first acts in office, Young advised President Christine Kangaloo (both pictured above) to dissolve Parliament at midnight Tuesday. This means the entire Cabinet which was chosen by him and sworn in on Monday evening will never sit in Parliament.

In the new Cabinet, Young replaced Colm Imbert as the Minister of Finance with diplomat Vishnu Dhanpaul, who formerly served as the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance before being appointed the country’s High Commissioner to London.

Young also replaced Fitzgerald Hinds at the embattled Ministry of National Security with Marvin Gonsalves, who held the Public Utilities portfolio under Rowley.

April 4 will be nomination day

and April 28 will be polling day.

The opposition UNC said it is ready for the polls. UNC PRO Dr Kirk Meighoo said, “We completed screening for all seats. Eleven have been announced so far, so the remaining have to be announced.”

While the PNM has been in the limelight via ministerial statements and publicity surrounding its screenings, the UNC has garnered attention by way of itinerant meetings namely the Monday night forum and the pavement report held on Thursdays, plus Sunday briefings by its shadow ministers.

UNC leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar claimed that Young hurriedly called the election to dodge a legal challenge mounted by her party about the legality of his appointment as Prime Minister.

“Young hurriedly called the date to pre-empt the UNC legal action that was coming regarding his illegitimate and illegal anointing as Prime Minister,” she said.

“Young and the PNM fully well know that his appointment is illegal and unconstitutional.

“His appointment would have been shown to be unconstitutional in the courts and he would then be forced to face a PNM internal election before the general election.”

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[Sushi Menu](#)



Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST



KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 89

PHAGWAH FESTIVITIES FILL STREETS OF GUYANA

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President Dr. Irfaan Ali and Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips playfully cover each other in powder during the Phagwah celebrations hosted by the Indian High Commission at the Georgetown Cricket Club (GCC), Bourda.



\$100,000 FOR EVERY NEWBORN- NEW LANDMARK CASH GRANT LAUNCHED

PAGE 2



500,000 TO BENEFIT FROM UNIVERSAL HEALTH VOUCHER 2025 ROLL-OUT

PAGE 3



500,000+ AND GROWING - NATIONAL CASH GRANT DISTRIBUTION CONTINUES

PAGE 3

\$100,000 FOR EVERY NEWBORN NEW LANDMARK CASH GRANT LAUNCHED



New landmark cash grant launched

In a historic move aimed at securing the future of its youngest citizens, Guyana has launched a landmark cash grant programme, providing \$100,000 to every newborn with a Guyanese mother. The initiative, officially unveiled by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre (ACCC), marks a significant investment in the nation's future welfare.

The \$100,000 grant, a cornerstone of the government's commitment to its people, will be provided to families with newborns, with retroactive payments

more than just financial assistance," President Ali emphasised during the launch. "It is a clear commitment to the nation's children, investing directly in their welfare and wellbeing." He stressed that every child born in Guyana is a vital part of the nation's future and that the grant is a right, not a privilege.

To streamline the process, mothers will receive the \$100,000 grant before leaving the hospital. For births occurring outside of hospitals, systems will be implemented to ensure families receive the funds within a week.

In addition to the financial support, the

government is investing in comprehensive maternal care, including new medical facilities and advanced technology. First Lady Arya Ali further supported the initiative by providing care packages to new families. The launch also

Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, highlighted that this initiative fulfils the government's commitment to improving the lives of Guyanese, while Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, pointed to the government's success

expressed overwhelming gratitude for the initiative.

Esther Kendell, a 22-year-old mother, said, "It's already a big help so far... I'm very much grateful, because it's a great start for our baby's life, there is



Care packages were provided to new families



New landmark cash grant launched

included the distribution of 600 birth certificates, facilitated by the General Register's Office (GRO).

The \$100,000 grant complements other government initiatives, such as the national cash grant and the "Because We Care" grant for school children, demonstrating a holistic approach to supporting families.

Minister of Human Services and Social

in reducing maternal deaths.

President Ali concluded by emphasising the lasting impact of this \$100,000 grant, stating, "Years from now, let them say they believed in us. They fought for us before we could walk. They gave us not just a gift, but a foundation."

New mothers

a lot that we can do with it. I just hope that parents don't use it to spend on stuff and they actually do something that's very important for their child. So actually, I am not spending mine. I plan to open an early savings for my baby and continue to invest from there going forward."

500,000+ AND GROWING NATIONAL CASH GRANT DISTRIBUTION CONTINUES



The distribution of the \$100,000 cash grant continues nationwide

The government's nationwide \$100,000 cash grant initiative has surpassed the 500,000-recipient mark and continues to expand, Attorney General Anil Nandlall announced.

During his "Issues in the News" commentary, AG Nandlall revealed that the distribution of cash grants, both in cash and via cheques, has reached over 500,000 individuals,

with the number steadily increasing. "We have completed the distribution of over 500,000 cheques, and indeed, cash grants...with more to be distributed," he stated, emphasising the ongoing nature of the program.

The Attorney General addressed the programme's logistical scale, acknowledging initial challenges while

highlighting its overall success. "Yes, there were some challenges along the way, but

addressed the crucial aspect of distributing grants to relatives of deceased individuals.



The distribution of the \$100,000 cash grant continues nationwide

we have successfully completed this massive and unprecedented exercise," he said. "For every one transaction that had some difficulty, 200 were conducted smoothly."

AG Nandlall also

He clarified that amendments to the Deceased Persons' Estate Administration Act, enacted last November, facilitate these payments. "Under the amended law, any person, organisation, or entity holding money for a deceased

individual can release the funds to a duly authorised relative, up to \$750,000," he explained. He reiterated that spouses and children, with proper documentation, are eligible to receive these grants and that common-law unions are also recognised.

The Attorney General reassured the public regarding any potential errors or technical glitches, stating that problematic cheques would be rectified by the Ministry of Finance. He also refuted misinformation circulating on social media, specifically addressing false claims about check validity. "Checks are ordinarily valid for six months, and for government-issued

cheques, they remain valid for as long as the Government of Guyana deems them so," he clarified.

AG Nandlall concluded by emphasising the government's unwavering commitment to the ongoing distribution of the cash grants, indicating that the programme will continue to reach more eligible citizens across Guyana.



The distribution of the \$100,000 cash grant continues nationwide

GUYANA'S FISCAL PRUDENCE WINS IMF APPROVAL AMIDST RAPID GROWTH

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has commended Guyana's sound fiscal management, highlighting its "prudence" amidst the nation's unprecedented economic expansion. This approval comes as Guyana experiences the world's highest real GDP growth, driven by its burgeoning oil sector and a robust non-oil economy.

In its 2025 Article IV Mission Concluding Statement, the IMF emphasised that Guyana's fiscal policies have played a crucial role in maintaining stability while the economy surges. The report specifically praised the government's

commitment to fiscal sustainability and its effective management of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF).

The IMF deemed Guyana's fiscal policy appropriate, emphasising the importance of gradually closing the fiscal deficit by 2031, the report stated, underscoring the government's long-term financial planning.

Despite a rapid average real GDP growth of 47% between 2022 and 2024, and projections of a 10.25% increase in 2025, Guyana has demonstrated fiscal discipline. The IMF noted the shrinking fiscal deficit, expected to decrease from 7.3% of GDP in 2024 to just

under 5% in 2025, driven by rising oil revenues.

The IMF lauded the transparency and



This approval comes as Guyana experiences the world's highest real GDP growth

accountability of the NRF, particularly the increased withdrawal ceiling in 2024, which facilitated critical infrastructure investments without compromising fiscal responsibility. Regular

reporting on the NRF's financial performance and the publication of petroleum revenue data

have further bolstered public trust.

The IMF commended Guyana's handling of its oil revenues, highlighting the effective governance of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF), the report noted.

Social transfer policies, funded by oil revenues, were also recognised for

their role in reducing poverty and increasing disposable incomes. The IMF recommended integrating these transfers into a medium-term fiscal strategy to ensure long-term sustainability.

While acknowledging potential risks from an overheated economy, the IMF's primary focus in this report was on Guyana's commendable fiscal management. The organisation advocated for continued efforts to maintain a balanced approach, including gradually reducing the fiscal deficit, maintaining a tight monetary policy, and strengthening financial supervision.

Overall, the IMF's approval of Guyana's fiscal prudence underscores the nation's commitment to responsible economic management, ensuring that its rapid growth translates into long-term prosperity for all its citizens.

500,000 TO BENEFIT FROM UNIVERSAL HEALTH VOUCHER 2025 ROLL-OUT

In a move to enhance early disease diagnosis and improve overall life expectancy, the government has launched a universal healthcare voucher programme, allocating \$5 billion to benefit 500,000 citizens. The initiative, unveiled at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, provides each citizen with a \$10,000 healthcare voucher.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali, delivering the keynote address, emphasised the government's commitment to building a world-class healthcare

system. **"Once you have this voucher, it is not only about \$10,000, but it is about the 40 to 70 percent discount on services you will receive at private hospitals and centres,"** he stated.

The voucher programme is coupled with a partnership involving over 30 local private hospitals and laboratories, offering citizens substantial discounts on medical tests. The government is also developing specific programmes to ensure access for residents of hinterland communities.

President Ali highlighted the significant investments made in healthcare infrastructure, including equipment, technology, and treatment tools, noting the private sector's role in improving service quality and delivering "seamless" healthcare.

The government's strategy focuses on shifting from treatment-based to preventative healthcare, emphasising early detection, vaccination programs, lifestyle changes, and policy interventions. The goal is to create an independent system that

minimises human bias.

Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, announced plans to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the healthcare system to further enhance the quality of care. **"We have been using it in a very limited way, but you will see us start changing and using these systems here in Guyana,"** he said. **"We are moving into the 21st century in terms of medicine, also using technology to enable us to deliver quality care to our people."**



The launch of the universal healthcare voucher programme

The universal healthcare voucher can be used for a range of essential tests, including kidney, thyroid, and liver function tests, complete blood counts, urine analyses, and

prostate antigen tests. Vouchers are accessible at community health centres, hospitals, and outreach programmes across the country.

WOMEN'S BUSINESSES GET \$1.5M LIFT FROM FIRST LADY'S GRANTS

Three women entrepreneurs are celebrating a significant boost to their small businesses, thanks to \$1.5 million in grants awarded by First Lady Mrs. Arya Ali. The financial lift, presented in celebration of International Women's Day, aims to accelerate the economic empowerment of women across the nation.

The grants, each providing crucial capital, were awarded to Saudia Edghill of Buxton, Junice Welcome of



First Lady Ali and grant recipients, with business coach Upasna Mudliar (third-right) and Leanna Barker (far left) of the Cherie Blair Foundation

Kuru Kururu, and Bena Outar of Mahaicony. These women, operating diverse businesses from agrochemical distribution to daycare services and patriotic

gift item production, were selected based on their participation in programmes like the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women's HerVenture and the Road to Growth

training.

"This \$1.5 million investment directly supports women in building sustainable businesses," stated Mrs. Ali, emphasising the vital role of economic empowerment in achieving gender parity. **"By providing these grants, we are accelerating the action needed to create a more equitable society."**

Beyond the financial injection, the First Lady's initiative includes technical assistance.

Business coaches Keon Smith and Upasna Mudliar of ActionCOACH will provide guidance to ensure the women can effectively scale their ventures and maximise the impact of the grants. The recipients expressed immense gratitude for the support, acknowledging the transformative potential of the funding. They pledged to utilise the grants to expand their businesses and create opportunities within their communities.

This initiative is

part of a broader effort by the First Lady's office to empower women through various training programmes, including maritime and offshore training for Indigenous women, cosmetology training, and skills development for domestic violence survivors. The \$1.5 million grant allocation underscores the First Lady's commitment to providing tangible support that directly strengthens women's economic independence.

DEFENDING GUYANA STANDS FIRM AGAINST

VENEZUELA DEFIES ICJ ORDER, ENTERS GUYANA'S EEZ

In a move that directly contradicts the International Court of Justice (ICJ) provisional order, a Venezuelan naval vessel entered Guyana's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), escalating tensions between the two nations. The incident, which occurred on March 1, 2025, involved Venezuelan Naval Vessel ABV Guaiqueiri PO-11, sailing dangerously close to Guyana's lawfully operating FPSO PROSPERITY.

This action disregards the ICJ's December 2023

directive, which explicitly instructed Venezuela to **"refrain from taking any action which would modify the situation that currently prevails in the territory in dispute."**

The Venezuelan vessel not only entered Guyana's EEZ but also issued threatening radio communications, claiming the FPSO was operating within Venezuela's maritime territory.

Guyana has formally protested this blatant violation, reminding Venezuela

of its obligations under international law, the UN Charter, and the ICJ order. The government emphasised that its activities within its EEZ are consistent with the 1899 Arbitral Award, which defined the boundary between the two nations.

"This latest action by the Government of Venezuela has done nothing but pose a threat to the peace, good order and security of the sovereign territory of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the stability of the

Latin American and Caribbean region," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation stated.

The incursion is seen as a deliberate escalation, particularly in light of Venezuela's recent announcements regarding elections in Guyana's Essequibo region and the buildup of military presence along the border. The ministry notes that these actions directly defy the ICJ's prohibition on actions that could aggravate the dispute.

"Such hostile acts are inconsistent with the obligation of the Parties to respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political



A Venezuelan vessel approached Guyana's assets within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ)

independence, and to resolve disputes by peaceful means, and thus can only be viewed as a threat to the peace, security and stability of the Latin American and Caribbean region," the ministry stated.

The government alerted the international community, including the United Nations,

the Organization of American States, CARICOM, and the Commonwealth, to Venezuela's defiance of the ICJ order and its aggressive actions. Guyana remains committed to a peaceful resolution but asserts its right to defend its sovereign territory and the operations of its licensees within its EEZ.

In a forceful address to the nation, President Dr. Irfaan Ali declared, **"We will not tolerate threats to our territorial integrity,"** as he condemned the recent incursion of a Venezuelan naval vessel into Guyana's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

This resolute statement came after reports confirmed that a Venezuelan Coast Guard patrol ship had approached Guyana's offshore assets, including the Prosperity FPSO.

President Ali, flanked by Prime Minister Brigadier (retired) Mark Phillips and Chief of Defence Staff Brigadier Omar Khan, detailed the Venezuelan vessel's actions, which included transmitting radio messages claiming to be in **"disputed international waters."** He firmly

refuted this claim, emphasising that maritime boundaries are recognised under international law.

President Ali assured the public that his government was responding with **"seriousness and responsibility,"** not **"precipitously."**

The government's immediate response

included summoning the Venezuelan ambassador to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lodge a strong protest, and instructing Guyana's embassy in Caracas to do the same. President Ali also confirmed that key international partners, including the United Kingdom, France, the United States, and CARICOM, had been

contacted and had responded positively.

The Leader of the Opposition, Aubrey Norton, was also briefed.

To reinforce Guyana's sovereignty, President Ali announced the deployment of air assets within the EEZ and the deployment of the Coast Guard even as the Defence Board, security protocols already intact, began coordinating with relevant partners, mobilising necessary resources to ensure a measured and appropriate response to any developments in Guyana's waters.

President Ali reiterated Guyana's commitment to peace and the rule of law, while firmly asserting that

"we will not tolerate threats to our territorial integrity." He emphasised adherence to the ICJ's December 2023 ruling and the Argyle Declaration.

President Ali assured the nation that the government is fully engaged, and

emphasised that **"our international partners stand resolute in support of Guyana, ensuring that our sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected."**



The meeting with the National Defence Board



President Ali with the Leader of the Opposition Aubrey Norton

GLOBAL CONDEMNATION OF VENEZUELAN INCURSION INTO GUYANA'S MARITIME TERRITORY

A wave of international condemnation has followed the recent incursion of a Venezuelan naval vessel into Guyana's

exclusive economic zone (EEZ), with nations, international organisations, and business groups alike denouncing the provocative act as a

violation of international law and a threat to regional stability.

The incident, which saw a Venezuelan vessel approach Guyana's asset, including an

ExxonMobil FPSO unit within the Stabroek Block, has triggered strong reactions from key international players.

The United States

State Department issued a stern statement, condemning the Venezuelan actions as an **"unacceptable threat"** and a **"clear violation"** of Guyana's

internationally recognised maritime territory. They reaffirmed their support for Guyana's territorial integrity and the 1899 arbitral award.

France, through its Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, expressed concern and called on Venezuela

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ESSEQUIBO ST VENEZUELA'S AGGRESSION

GLOBAL CONDEMNATION...



Caribbean leaders at a recent Heads of Government meeting in Barbados

to respect Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity, citing the ICJ's December 2023 order.

United Kingdom Foreign Secretary David Lammy reiterated Britain's unwavering support for Guyana,

condemning the "provocative act" and urging Venezuela to refrain from further actions that undermine Guyana's sovereignty.

The Commonwealth, led by Secretary-General Patricia Scotland, KC,

CONT'D FROM PG 4

expressed grave concern, reminding Venezuela of its obligations under international law and the ICJ ruling. She praised Guyana's measured response and called for international support.

The Organization of American States (OAS) unequivocally condemned the Venezuelan actions, describing them as "acts of intimidation" and a "clear violation of international law." They urged Venezuela to respect the ICJ proceedings and cease all aggressive manoeuvres.

CARICOM issued a strong statement, denouncing the incursion as a violation

of international law and the Argyle Declaration. They called for the immediate removal of the Venezuelan vessel and urged Venezuela to cease engagements with FPSO platforms.

The Liberty and Democracy Group, a collective of former heads of state, condemned the incursion as "unacceptable" and a "flagrant challenge to international law", reaffirming their support for Guyana's territorial integrity.

Local and international business organisations, including the **Private Sector Commission (PSC)**, **Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and**

Industry (GCCCI), **Guyana Shipping Association (GSA)**, **Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association**

the incursion. These organisations expressed grave concerns over the violation of Guyana's EEZ, emphasising the threat



Secretary of State Marco Rubio



UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy

(GMSA), **Guyana Oil and Gas Energy Chamber (GOGEC)**, **and the European Chamber of Commerce (ECC)**, also strongly condemned

to regional stability and economic security. They called for a peaceful diplomatic resolution and urged Venezuela to respect international law and the ICJ proceedings.

VENEZUELA'S ACTIONS 'INFANTILE' - DR JAGDEO

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has dismissed Venezuela's latest moves in the ongoing Essequibo dispute as "infantile", asserting that the neighbouring country is in a weak position while Guyana remains steadfast in its legal and diplomatic efforts.

Speaking at his weekly press conference, Dr Jagdeo criticised Venezuela's plans to hold elections for Essequibo on May 25, 2025, calling it a blatant violation of the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) rulings and the Argyle Declaration. He reaffirmed Guyana's

commitment to defending its sovereignty and engaging with international partners to counter Venezuela's claims.

"Venezuela is in a weak position," Dr Jagdeo said. **"We will continue with all of our partners. We have strong**

support from the United States State Department, the United Kingdom Government, the French Government, and the Caribbean Community."

In addition to its territorial manoeuvres, Venezuela has launched verbal attacks against

Guyana's leadership. Officials in Caracas have referred to President Dr. Irfaan Ali as the **"Caribbean Zelenskyy"**, likening him to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Dr Jagdeo dismissed these remarks as immature and irrelevant, reinforcing



Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

and diplomatic solutions. strategies to ensure the protection of Essequibo and its people.

Guyana has filed a request with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for provisional measures to halt Venezuela's planned elections in the Essequibo region, a territory integral to Guyana, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation announced on March 6, 2025.

The move comes in response to Venezuela's announcement of elections scheduled for May 25, 2025, in the Essequibo region, which Guyana argues violates the ICJ's December 1, 2023, order and fundamental principles of international law.

The Ministry noted that the planned elections, and the preparatory acts preceding them, would directly impact the Guyanese population

and infringe upon Guyana's sovereignty over its territory. In its request, Guyana is asking the ICJ to order Venezuela to refrain from any actions within or affecting its sovereign territory, specifically the Essequibo region.

Specifically, Guyana is urging the ICJ to:

Prohibit Venezuela from conducting any elections within the disputed territory.

Prevent Venezuela from taking any actions to annex or incorporate the territory.

Order Venezuela to refrain from modifying the existing situation, where Guyana administers and controls the region

This is the second

time Guyana has sought provisional measures from the ICJ in this



The ICJ

ongoing controversy surrounding the Essequibo region. The previous request resulted in the ICJ ordering Venezuela to **"refrain from taking any action which would modify the situation**

that currently prevails in the territory in dispute,

territory in dispute" blatantly disregard this existing ICJ order. The new request aims to secure confirmation of this violation and obtain an explicit directive preventing any electoral activities within or affecting the Essequibo region or its Guyanese population.

"Guyana informed the Court that the planned Venezuelan elections are scheduled to take place on 25 May 2025 and would inevitably be preceded by preparatory acts, including acts within Guyana's Essequibo region, affecting the Guyanese population and Guyana's sovereignty over its

whereby the **Co-operative Republic of Guyana administers and exercises control over that area."**

The Ministry contends that Venezuela's planned elections in "the

territory," the Ministry stated in its press release. Guyana has also requested the ICJ to hold urgent hearings on its request, seeking provisional measures before any **"serious and irreparable prejudice"** occurs to Guyana's rights. The nation is pressing for a swift decision from the Court to prevent any further escalation of the tension and to uphold the existing ICJ order.

The ICJ has since acknowledged Guyana's request. The outcome of this case holds significant implications for the resolution of this long-standing territorial dispute.

PRESIDENT ALI CELEBRATES WOMEN, PLEDGES CONTINUED EQUALITY EFFORTS

On International Women's Day 2025, President Irfaan Ali delivered a resounding message, celebrating the resilience and achievements of women across Guyana and the globe, while reaffirming his administration's unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality.

Marking the 30th anniversary of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, President Ali highlighted Guyana's progress in aligning national policies with the principles of women's empowerment. He emphasised that the



President Ali interacting with mothers at a recent event

government is actively working to create a more inclusive and equitable society where women can thrive.

"We celebrate your achievements, and I reaffirm our

pledge to advancing gender equality," President Ali stated. He outlined key initiatives designed to equip women with the necessary resources, skills, and support to

excel as entrepreneurs and leaders.

The President pointed to the success of the part-time jobs initiative, which has provided crucial financial stability for thousands of women, and the Women in Agriculture Initiative, which has opened doors to greater economic opportunities in the agricultural sector. He also lauded the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) for empowering women through education and the provision of house lots to women-headed households, promoting home ownership and financial security.

President Ali stressed the importance of increasing women's representation in decision-making roles, acknowledging their vital contributions to shaping national policies.

However, he expressed deep concern over the persistent issue of violence against women and girls, reiterating the government's commitment to eradicating this **"scourge."** He detailed measures being taken to hold perpetrators accountable and provide justice for survivors, including strengthened legal protections and

initiatives like the Spotlight Initiative.

In his address, President Ali conveyed his heartfelt best wishes to the women of Guyana and the diaspora, acknowledging their strength and indispensable contributions to the nation's development. **"Together, we will continue to build a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous Guyana where every woman can realise her full potential,"** he concluded.

GOVT PLEDGES UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS DISPLACED BY MAE'S SCHOOL FIRE

A devastating fire has destroyed Mae's School in Subryanville, leaving over 1,000 students displaced. The blaze, which erupted just before 8:00 AM on March 5, 2025 rapidly engulfed the school's main structure, affecting Nursery, Primary, and Secondary levels.

Fortunately, most students had not yet arrived, and those present were safely evacuated. The Guyana Fire Service responded promptly, working to contain the extensive fire.

Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, visited



Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand visited the scene

the scene Wednesday morning, expressing deep concern for the affected students, teachers, and families. She assured that the Ministry of Education and the Government of Guyana would provide full support to ensure the students' education continues without disruption. Special

attention will be given to Grade 6 and Grade 11 students preparing for the NGSA and CSEC examinations.

Accompanied by senior officials from the Ministry's Examinations Division and School Support Services, Minister Manickchand demonstrated the government's

commitment to prioritising the students' welfare.

Ministers Robeson Benn (Home Affairs) and Dr. Vindhya Persaud (Human Services and Social Security) also pledged their ministries' support.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali met with parents and teachers at State House, acknowledging that while Mae's is a private school, the students are **"the nation's children"**. He assured them that the government would facilitate their continued education, noting that other educational institutions had offered assistance. The Ministry of Human Services and

Social Security will provide counselling services for students, parents, and teachers.

Mae's confirmed that all students, teachers, and staff were accounted for. The school was in the process of finalising insurance, but was uninsured at the time of the fire.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Mae's management is working to provide temporary accommodations for all displaced students. Parents are advised to stay in contact with their children's teachers for updates.



President Ali meeting with parents and teachers at State House

Guyana's robust constitutional framework, progressive legislation, and effective national mechanisms have significantly advanced gender equality and women's empowerment, positioning women as key contributors to national development. This was highlighted by Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, during the 6th plenary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women at its 69th session at the United Nations Headquarters.

Minister Persaud emphasised that women in Guyana are at the

forefront of shaping transformative policies, legislation, and inclusive programmes across sectors such as health, economic empowerment, climate security, and socioeconomic development.

She credited various organisations, including the Gender Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Human Services, for their pivotal role in bridging the gender gap through campaigns on shared responsibility and gender mainstreaming. Guyana's national



Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett and Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud, flanked by Guyana's delegation

mechanism, comprising the Women and Gender Equality Commission, the Gender Affairs Bureau, and collaborations with state and civil society stakeholders has been

instrumental in this progress.

The Guyana Women's Leadership Institute has also been crucial in providing free and diverse technical vocational training

opening educational and entrepreneurial avenues for women nationwide.

Currently, women hold 39 percent of parliamentary seats and over 50 percent of judicial positions in Guyana, demonstrating the government's commitment to gender parity in decision-making.

Guyana's progress has been recognised globally, with the nation ranking 35th on the 2024 Global Gender Gap Index, which benchmarks

gender parity across economic participation, educational attainment, health, and political empowerment.

Dr. Persaud concluded, **"This is not just about ticking boxes, but about creating a society where gender equality is not an aspiration, but a reality that empowers women and girls to contribute to national progress and development."**

WORLD BANK APPROVES US\$38.5M FOR GUYANA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PUSH



The project will retrofit approximately 500 public buildings across Guyana, Grenada, and Saint Lucia

Guyana is set to significantly enhance its energy efficiency and expand its renewable energy capacity through a new US\$38.58 million project approved by the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors.

The project, part of a broader US \$131.87 million initiative across the Caribbean, aims to reduce Guyana's dependence on imported fossil fuels and build a more resilient energy sector.

The "Caribbean Efficient and Green Energy Buildings Project" will specifically focus on retrofitting approximately 500 public buildings across Guyana, Grenada, and St Lucia with energy-

efficient technologies and integrating renewable energy systems, such as rooftop solar panels. This initiative is expected to reduce energy consumption in these buildings by at least 20%, leading to both economic savings and environmental benefits.

For Guyana, the project will receive US\$30 million in concessional financing from the World Bank's International Development Association, along with an US\$8.2 million loan and a US\$0.38 million grant from the Canada Clean Energy and Forest Climate Facility. This funding will support the implementation of energy-efficient retrofits and the installation of renewable energy

systems in public infrastructure.

A key aspect of the project will be to strengthen Guyana's regulatory framework for green energy investments. This includes developing and implementing guidelines for energy performance standards, net billing for solar power, and policies to integrate electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. By harmonising regulations with other Caribbean nations, Guyana will benefit from greater economies of scale and enhanced regional energy security.

The initiative also emphasises capacity-building, with a focus on increasing female participation in the energy sector. This will

ensure that Guyana has the skilled workforce necessary to support its transition to a sustainable, low-carbon future.

The project will help Guyana mitigate the challenges posed by its aging energy infrastructure and the vulnerability of its small, isolated grids to extreme weather events. By reducing energy consumption and increasing the use of renewable energy, Guyana will improve its energy security and promote sustainable economic growth.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

GUYANA, LINDSAYCA/CH4 HEAD TO ICC ARBITRATION OVER EPC CONTRACT

The Government of Guyana (GOG) has announced it will proceed with arbitration against Lindsayca/CH4 (LNDCH4) concerning their Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contract, despite ongoing construction activities at the Wales site.

The decision follows rulings issued by the Dispute Avoidance and Adjudication Board (DAAB) on January 31, which both parties had 28 days to review. Both GOG and LNDCH4 filed Notices of Dissatisfaction within this period, leading to the decision to pursue arbitration.

The arbitration



The project was signed by Permanent Secretary Derek Cummings (left), Nelson Drake and Hector Fuentes of LINDSAYCA on December 13, 2022

process will be managed by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), with hearings scheduled to take place in Washington, D.C. Due to DAAB procedures,

the specific details of the rulings remain confidential.

Despite the pending arbitration, both parties have acknowledged the project's strategic

importance to the Guyanese economy. LNDCH4 has resumed onsite activities, including piling work, with foundation work preparations underway.

Construction of a cement batching plant is also progressing, and a workers' camp is being established, with over 170 personnel mobilised.

The project, upon completion, is expected to significantly reduce electricity generation costs, enabling Guyana Power and Light Inc. (GPL) to lower tariffs by up to 50%. This reduction is anticipated to boost the Guyanese economy by driving competitive production costs and fostering broader economic growth.

ExxonMobil Guyana Limited (EMGL) has completed the gas pipeline construction, and the necessary

transmission lines and substations are expected to be completed by mid-year.

Both GOG and LNDCH4 have committed to ensuring the timely progress of the power plant and the natural gas liquids (NGL) plant, despite the arbitration. The relocation of gas and steam turbines to the Wales site is also set to proceed.

The GOG released this update on March 5, 2025, emphasising its commitment to both the legal process and the project's successful completion.

G7 BACKS GUYANA'S SOVEREIGNTY

In a powerful display of solidarity, the G7 Foreign Ministers have issued a strong condemnation of Venezuela's recent actions in Guyanese waters, reaffirming their unwavering support for Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Following a meeting in Charlevoix, Canada, on Friday, March 14, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France,

Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the High Representative of the European Union released a joint statement addressing various global concerns, including the escalating tensions between Guyana and Venezuela.

The statement explicitly denounced Venezuela's naval activities, stating, "They also agreed

Venezuelan naval vessels threatening Guyana's commercial vessels is unacceptable and an infringement of Guyana's internationally recognised sovereign rights. They reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations as an enduring value."

The G7's strong

support comes at a crucial time, reinforcing Guyana's position in the face of ongoing territorial claims and maritime incursions by Venezuela. The reaffirmation of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity serves as a powerful deterrent against further destabilising actions in the region.



SURINAME-GUYANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR OF BILATERAL TRADE GROWTH

The Suriname-Guyana Chamber of Commerce (SGCC) Inc., marked its first anniversary with a celebratory event at Cara Lodge Hotel on March 1, reflecting on a year of significant strides in fostering bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

The event, commemorating the Chamber's official launch on February 25, 2024, drew a diverse audience including government officials, diplomats, business leaders, and media representatives.

Dr. Ashni Singh, Guyana's Minister of Finance, reinforced the SGCC's crucial role in shaping the region's economic landscape. He praised the Chamber's ability to overcome market challenges and



Dr. Ashni Singh at the celebratory event

promote investment and business relations.

Dr. Singh highlighted Suriname as a natural expansion opportunity for Guyanese businesses and reaffirmed the strong bond between the two nations. He also pledged the government's commitment to infrastructural development, specifically the construction of the Corentyne River bridge, saying, "I will say to you that the bridge

across the Corentyne river will be built!"

He urged industry leaders to continue fostering cross-border trade, stating, "We want every single Guyanese company to be doing business with Suriname and in Suriname, and we think the Suriname-Guyana Chamber of Commerce has an extremely important role to play in this regard."

Dr. Singh concluded his address with warm congratulations to the SGCC, expressing confidence in the Chamber's future success. "We believe

highlighted the Chamber's rapid growth and impactful initiatives, noting the successful organisation of over a dozen trade missions, both regionally and

the Technology Conference in Houston, Texas. Dr. Doerga also emphasised the Chamber's role in facilitating trade missions for over 100 companies between Suriname and Guyana.

Surinamese Ambassador to Guyana, Liselle Blankedal echoed Dr. Doerga's sentiments, stressing the importance of unity in driving progress. She acknowledged the support from both governments and expressed optimism for future growth, emphasising, "With resolute determination, we move forward – there is no turning back. The only direction is upward, and the future holds boundless opportunities."



Dr. Ashni Singh at the celebratory event

that it's been an incredible one year. You've achieved a lot in your first year, but we believe that the best is yet to come," he said.

SGCC Chair Dr. Vishnu Doerga

internationally. These included participation in key industry events such as the International Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo in Guyana, the Suriname Energy Oil and Gas Summit, and the Offshore

KLM ROYAL DUTCH AIRLINES TO LAUNCH GUYANA SERVICE IN JUNE- TO BOOST EUROPEAN CONECTIVITY



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill along with the ministry's delegation and KLM delegation

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has announced it will begin operations in Guyana on June 4, 2025, marking a significant expansion of

international air travel to the country.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, and a delegation from his

ministry met with KLM representatives at the ministry's headquarters to finalise logistical and operational arrangements. The KLM team included Regional Manager Dirk Buitelaar, Country Sales Manager for Suriname and Guyana Nalini Kanhai, and Sales Manager for Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, Danilo De Freytas.

Discussions centered on establishing

the operational framework for KLM's service, covering regulatory compliance, infrastructure requirements, and market strategies.

Minister Edghill welcomed KLM's entry, emphasising its potential to stimulate tourism, trade, and overall economic growth. He highlighted the increased travel options that the service will provide for passengers travelling

between Guyana and Europe.

KLM's arrival aligns with the government's ongoing efforts to enhance international connectivity, particularly with European destinations. The airline will operate through the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), offering passengers access to KLM's extensive global network, which includes key destinations in

Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

The addition of KLM to Guyana's aviation landscape, alongside recent expansions by other international carriers, significantly improves the country's global connectivity. Passengers now enjoy greater access to destinations such as Houston, St. Lucia, London, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Colombia.

Blazon Hotels, a global luxury hospitality brand, has announced a partnership with Toronto-based Enso Innovations Inc., to develop a groundbreaking sustainable luxury hotel in Georgetown, Guyana.

The project will leverage innovative Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) technology, sourced from responsibly managed Canadian forests, setting a new standard for eco-conscious luxury in the region.

Supported by Caribbean Marketing Enterprises Inc., (CMEI), the development aims to meet the growing demand for premium accommodations in Guyana, driven by its

burgeoning economy and increasing global prominence. The hotel will cater to a diverse clientele including diplomats, business executives, and leisure travellers.

Blazon Hotels, under Smart Hospitality Solutions (SHS), is known for its blend of timeless sophistication and cutting-edge sustainability. This collaboration with Enso Innovations, a leader in sustainable construction, highlights a commitment to environmental stewardship.

"This collaboration marks a significant milestone in the evolution of sustainable luxury hospitality," said

Joshua Dias, Founder & CEO of Enso Innovations and Global VP Development for SHS. "By utilising Mass Timber construction, we are creating a property that not only enhances Georgetown's skyline, but also aligns with global sustainability objectives."

The hotel, designed by M|L Muller Diseño Arquitectonico, will feature luxurious guest rooms and suites, signature dining experiences,

and state-of-the-art facilities. The use of CLT, a revolutionary construction material, will minimise the environmental impact of the project while

maintaining the highest standards of luxury and quality.

As Guyana experiences unprecedented economic growth, the

need for premium accommodations has surged. This new hotel will address this demand, positioning Georgetown as a preferred destination for global business and leisure.

LUXURY SUSTAINABLE HOTEL COMING TO GEORGETOWN



An artist's impression of the new hotel

VP JAGDEO HONOURED FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN CLIMATE ACTION

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has received international recognition for his unwavering commitment to sustainable development, earning the prestigious Sustainable Development Leadership Award at the World Sustainable Development Summit in New Delhi, India.

The award, presented by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), recognises visionary global leaders who have made a profound impact

on sustainability and climate action. Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips accepted the award on Dr. Jagdeo's behalf.

According to TERI, Dr. Jagdeo was honoured for his leadership in Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), which has positioned the country as a pioneer in forest conservation and climate action. The institute also highlighted his role as a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips accepted the award on Dr. Jagdeo's behalf

Group on Climate and his efforts to Finance, noting his relentless advocacy for sustainable development and his efforts to safeguard Guyana's vast natural wealth for future generations.

Dr. Jagdeo joins an exclusive group of 15 global leaders who have been recognised for their contributions to climate action. Past honourees include former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and former Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.

A long-standing champion of climate policy, Dr. Jagdeo spearheaded Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy in 2009, securing the country's reputation

as a trailblazer in environmental protection. His leadership in global climate negotiations earned him the United Nations Champions of the Earth Award in 2010. With this latest honour, Dr. Jagdeo's legacy as a global climate leader is further cemented, reinforcing Guyana's role as a force for sustainability and environmental responsibility on the world stage.

PM PHILLIPS URGES COLLECTIVE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AT INDIA SUMMIT



Prime Minister Phillips at the WSDS 2025

Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, has urged for intensified global partnerships to combat climate change and accelerate sustainable development during his address at the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025 in New Delhi, India.

Speaking on the summit's theme, "Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions," Prime Minister Phillips

emphasised the urgency of collective action, highlighting the need for collaboration across governments, businesses, and communities to address global challenges.

He underscored Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 as a model for balancing economic growth with environmental protection, showcasing Guyana's leadership in climate finance innovation and forest conservation. He

cited the country's achievements in issuing jurisdictional carbon credits and securing significant funding through agreements like the Guyana-Norway partnership.

Prime Minister Phillips also highlighted Guyana's commitment to renewable energy, noting the significant growth in solar capacity and plans for large-scale solar projects. He emphasised the role of digital transformation in enhancing sustainability efforts through e-government services and smart infrastructure.

He called for greater equity in climate solutions, ensuring developing nations have access to necessary resources. He praised the India-Guyana partnership, particularly in renewable energy, technology transfer,

and capacity building, and commended TERI's contribution to rural electrification in Guyana.

During his visit to India, Prime Minister Phillips also engaged in several key meetings to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

He visited Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals to discuss advancements in healthcare, aiming to further collaboration between India and Guyana in this sector.

He met with RailTel Corporation executives to explore opportunities for collaboration in areas such as data centers, e-governance, and smart city development, preceding an upcoming RailTel delegation visit to Guyana.

Prime Minister Phillips also met with India's Union Minister of New and Renewable

Energy, Pralhad Joshi, to discuss continued collaboration in wind, solar, and hydropower. They agreed to renew the expired Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on New and Renewable Energy and discussed providing solar power to government buildings in Guyana and across the Caribbean.

Both leaders

extended to India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, during his visit to Guyana, as well as the conferral of Guyana's highest national honour upon him.

Prime Minister Phillips reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to playing its part in global climate action and strengthening partnerships with



Prime Minister Phillips at the Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in New Delhi

acknowledged the success of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme and expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality

India across various sectors, emphasizing the importance of unity, leadership, and innovation for a sustainable future.

DESTINATION GUYANA AND MINISTER WALROND HONOURED WITH PATWA INTERNATIONAL AWARDS FOR ECOLOGICAL TOURISM

Destination Guyana has been recognised with the prestigious PATWA International Award for 2025 as Destination of the Year - Natural Attractions.

Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce, Oneidge Walrond also received the PATWA International Award for 2025 as Tourism Minister of the Year - Ecological Tourism. This marks the second consecutive year that Guyana has received awards from the Pacific

Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA).

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

Minister Walrond expressed her pride in the awards, emphasising Guyana's commitment to protecting its natural attractions. "Receiving these awards is certainly a proud moment.

With breathtaking attractions like our interior savannahs, rare wildlife, we're fortunate to have so much natural beauty to share," she stated. "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."

PATWA, a non-profit, non-government, professional, international media organisation founded in 1999 and an affiliate member of UN Tourism, supports the sustainable



development of global tourism and related industries.

The Ministry of Tourism, Industry, and

Commerce, responsible for tourism and private sector development in Guyana, is focused on diversifying the country's economy beyond the burgeoning oil and gas sector. The ministry's mandate includes creating a business-friendly environment through policy development and implementation, ensuring sustainable growth through investments in sectors like tourism.

NINE MILLION BAGS FORECAST FOR FIRST CROP RICE HARVEST

Guyana's rice farmers are anticipating a record-breaking first crop in 2025, with an estimated 9,000,000 bags of paddy expected to be harvested. This optimistic projection was shared by Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, during a recent meeting with rice farmers from the West Coast of Demerara, Region Three.

Minister Mustapha emphasised the government's unwavering commitment to the rice industry, highlighting the substantial

investments made over the past four years. These investments have focused on bolstering infrastructure to support the expansion of the agriculture sector and providing crucial inputs to alleviate 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," Minister Mustapha stated. He pointed to the government's efforts in removing

VAT from agricultural inputs, distributing fertiliser, and actively rehabilitating and expanding seed facilities to ensure farmers have timely access to superior seed varieties that produce higher yields.

Furthermore, the introduction of three new rice varieties within the last four years underscores the government's dedication to enhancing agricultural productivity. **"The support has been tremendous over the years,"** the Minister affirmed.

To further support

the farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture will explore procuring a Jaclo sprayer, representing an investment of approximately \$6.5 million, to assist with the efficient application of chemicals. The government has also made significant investments in essential machinery, including excavators and tractor pumps, and infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads, pump stations, sluices, and dams, all aimed at fostering agricultural development.

The success of



Guyana's rice sector set for major growth in 2025

Guyana's rice sector is evident in the 2024 production figures, which surpassed targets and achieved a historic high of 725,282 metric tonnes. This milestone signifies a record-

breaking achievement in the nation's agriculture sector, demonstrating the effectiveness of the government's ongoing support and investment.

GOVT SECURES MINIMUM \$4,000 PADDY PRICE FOR FARMERS, ASSURES RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha addressing farmers from Mahaicony Creek

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha has reassured rice farmers that the government remains committed to ensuring stable paddy prices, following a recent agreement with local rice millers. The agreement, secured through negotiations spearheaded by

President Irfaan Ali, guarantees a minimum price of \$4,000 per bag of paddy.

Addressing farmers during a series of meetings spanning Regions Five and Six, Minister Mustapha explained that the negotiations were initiated proactively, before the commencement of harvesting, in response to millers' concerns about declining world market prices for rice.

"As a responsible government, we do not sit down and wait for things to happen," Minister Mustapha stated. **"President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, myself, and a team from the GRDB commenced engagements and negotiations with**

millers weeks ago because we believe farmers should have the best price for paddy."

Despite challenges presented by global

recalling a similar intervention in 2023 when they facilitated better prices by foregoing sales commissions.

He also assured farmers who had already

from the mills," he explained, adding that senior officers would be stationed at mills to oversee the process.

Richard Goopchand, a rice and cattle farmer from the MMA Scheme, expressed his gratitude for the government's intervention. **"I am very thankful to His Excellency, Dr Irfaan Ali for the timely intervention so that we can receive a good**

price for our paddy," he said, contrasting the current administration's support with past experiences.

The government's intervention aims to provide financial stability for rice farmers, particularly as the country anticipates a record-high production this year.



Rice farmers from Number 52-74 villages

market fluctuations and a surplus of rice, the government successfully secured the minimum price of \$4,000 per 143 lb bag. Minister Mustapha emphasised the government's proactive approach,

sold their paddy before the agreement that they would receive retroactive payments. **"I want to assure you that you will also benefit. Those who sold earlier will get the retro payment**



Minister Mustapha addressing farmers from the MMA Scheme

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, has made it clear that defendants who are outside the jurisdiction of Guyana cannot use virtual hearings as a means to avoid criminal proceedings.

Speaking on his weekly programme Issues in the News, AG Nandlall emphasised that while virtual court hearings have become a permanent feature of the legal system, they are not applicable to defendants who are abroad.

Virtual hearings, introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic,

have proven to be a valuable tool in facilitating access to justice, particularly for detainees who no longer need to be physically transported to court. With virtual courtrooms set up near prison facilities, detainees can appear remotely, ensuring the continuation of proceedings while reducing logistical costs.

However, AG Nandlall stressed that individuals who

leave the country after facing charges cannot expect to participate in their case virtually, indefinitely. **"This is not permissible in law,"** the Attorney General asserted, explaining that if a defendant is found guilty, the court would be unable to impose a sentence or take the necessary legal action if the individual remains outside the jurisdiction.

In cases where an accused person flees the country or refuses

to attend court, the law allows the court to proceed with the case in their absence, with a sentence potentially being imposed for their failure to appear.

AG Nandlall appealed to the judiciary to limit virtual appearances to those who are within the jurisdiction of Guyana, reinforcing the principle that the legal system cannot be used to facilitate the evasion of justice.



The opposition had neglected farmers for five years while in government

DR JAGDEO CALLS OUT OPPOSITION FOR SUDDEN CONCERN FOR RICE FARMERS

PRESIDENT ALI ENGAGES TOP U.S. OFFICIALS ON SECURITY AND ENERGY

President Dr. Irfaan Ali continued his high-level engagements with senior United States (U.S) officials, reinforcing Guyana's commitment to security cooperation, energy collaboration, and strategic partnerships.

During a series of meetings, President Ali met with U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum to discuss advancing security cooperation between Guyana and the U.S. Secretary Burgum reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining dialogue for the mutual benefit of both nations.

The Head of State also held discussions

with the newly appointed U.S. Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright, on the margins of CERAWeek 2025. Their talks centred on the strong Guyana-U.S. partnership, particularly in energy security for regional prosperity and integration.

President Ali underscored the strategic opportunities within regional security and assured that his government remains a committed and stable democratic partner. Both leaders agreed to enhance collaboration moving forward.

In another key meeting, President Ali engaged with General Randall Reed, the 15th Commander of the



The discussions with the newly appointed U.S. Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright

U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM). He provided an update on Guyana's development and security landscape while exploring potential areas for cooperation and

support within Guyana's security framework.

Furthering his presence at CERAWeek 2025, President Ali participated in a luncheon and dialogue with S&P

Global's Daniel Yergin, highlighting Guyana's growing role in global energy markets and its vision for sustainable development.

These engagements reflect Guyana's proactive approach to strengthening international partnerships, fostering security collaboration, and advancing its energy agenda on the global stage.

CERAWeek 2025 is a premier global energy conference organised by S&P Global, bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, and experts to discuss the future of energy, technology, and sustainability. Held

annually in Houston, Texas, CERAWeek serves as a key platform for dialogue on energy security, climate initiatives, innovation, and market trends.

The event features high-profile speakers, including heads of state, CEOs of major energy companies, government officials, and thought leaders. It covers topics such as the global energy transition, oil and gas markets, renewable energy and sustainability, advances in technology, including AI and energy efficiency and geopolitical influences on energy security.

GUYANA EXPLORES U.S. OIL EXPORT DEAL FOR FUEL SUPPLY AND REGIONAL SALES

Guyana is considering a strategic plan to export its burgeoning crude oil production to the United States (U.S) for refining, with the aim of importing refined fuel for domestic consumption and potential sales to neighbouring countries. President Irfaan Ali announced at a conference in Houston.

Fueled by rapidly increasing oil output from its prolific offshore oilfields, operated by a consortium led by U.S. oil giant ExxonMobil,

Guyana boasts one of the world's fastest-growing economies. The government, entitled to a share of this output as profit oil, currently exports this crude through trading firms, primarily to European markets.

Recognising the lack of domestic refining capacity, President Ali revealed that Guyana is actively exploring options to address this gap. "We are considering a plan to export crude oil to the United States

for refining and to bring back fuel for domestic supply and possibly for sale to nearby countries," he stated. Discussions are also underway with various companies and the Dominican Republic to establish a small refinery within Guyana.

President Ali's comments came during the CERAWeek 2025 conference in Houston, where he also addressed the ongoing territorial dispute with Venezuela.

"Guyana would do anything to

keep regional peace," President Ali emphasised, responding to questions about the heightened tensions. The long-standing dispute centre on the ownership of the 160,000-square-km Essequibo area, currently under review by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

"We just ask that Venezuela respect the ICJ and the rule of law," President Ali reiterated, underscoring Guyana's commitment to resolving the dispute through peaceful and



President Ali with S&P Global's Daniel Yergin at the luncheon and dialogue at CERAWeek 2025 in Houston, Texas

legal means.

The proposed oil export deal with the U.S. and the potential development of domestic refining capacity signal Guyana's strategic

approach to maximising the benefits of its oil wealth while ensuring regional stability.

(Modified from a Reuters report)

DIPLOMATIC PUSH UNDERWAY TO REVERSE US VISA BAN ON CUBAN MEDICAL PROGRAMME

A concerted diplomatic effort is underway, to reverse the United States' recent decision to impose visa restrictions on officials involved in the export of Cuban workers. The move follows widespread condemnation from Caribbean leaders, who rely heavily on Cuban expertise, particularly in healthcare.

Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo confirmed that Guyana and other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nations are actively engaging the US State Department to address



Cuban workers, particularly healthcare professionals, play a vital role in the nations' development

the controversial visa ban. "There is a regional, as well as a national engagement with the US State Department on these

matters," Dr Jagdeo stated at his weekly press conference, emphasising the importance of finding a mutually agreeable solution.

The US decision, citing allegations of "forced labour" within Cuba's medical and professional export programmes, has sparked significant regional concern. Caribbean leaders argue that Cuban workers, particularly healthcare professionals, play a vital role in their nations' development.

The diplomatic push aims to persuade the US government to reconsider its stance, highlighting the longstanding and mutually beneficial relationship between

Caribbean nations and Cuba. Dr Jagdeo reiterated the invaluable contribution of Cuban healthcare workers to Guyana's health system, emphasising the need to ensure their "free choice."

While acknowledging the strong regional reaction, Dr Jagdeo stressed Guyana's commitment to diplomatic solutions. "We don't do diplomacy in the public, and I believe that we have a strong engagement with the Trump administration and

the State Department that will allow this matter to be resolved with the satisfaction of all parties," he said.

The ongoing diplomatic efforts underscore the Caribbean's unified stance in challenging the US visa restrictions and reaffirming its support for continued collaboration with Cuban professionals. CARICOM leaders are actively seeking direct dialogue with US officials to press for a reversal of the ban and address broader concerns related to US-Cuba relations.

One Guyana Forum sponsors Iftar at the International Muslim Organization

By Sharon Chandar

On Friday, March 14th, One Guyana Forum (Canada) was honored to sponsor the evening's Iftar dinner at the International Muslims Organization (IMO) in Rexdale, Ontario. OGF (Canada) joined the community in breaking their fast (Rozadars), and partnered with IMO's executive team and youth volunteers to serve dinner to over 600 brothers and sisters from diverse backgrounds.

OGF (Canada) representatives, brother Winston Kassim, brother Mahesh Ramdeo, and I, expressed our sincere appreciation to the broader community for their dedication and commitment to IMO. We also commended IMO's executive team and youth volunteers for their exceptional coordination and flawless execution, which ensured a harmonious and successful evening.

Brother Omar Farouk, President of IMO, provided the following statement:

"We are deeply grateful to OGF for their generous sponsorship, which made this memorable evening possible.

Their kindness and unwavering



Representatives of One Guyana Forum and the IMO at the Iftar in Rexdale. PHOTO BY SHARON CHANDAR

commitment to the community have left a lasting impact, not only by providing nourishment but also by strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood among attendees. The Iftar dinner en-

abled us to come together as a community, break our fast in unison, and share in the blessings of Ramadan. This gathering was a true testament to the "One Guyana" values of inclusivity, together-

ness, and mutual respect. It highlighted the beauty of diversity and the power of shared companionship in cementing the bonds between our communities."

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

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



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

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
Email: mail@wgc-org.com
Telephone: [1-800-317-0804](tel:1-800-317-0804)

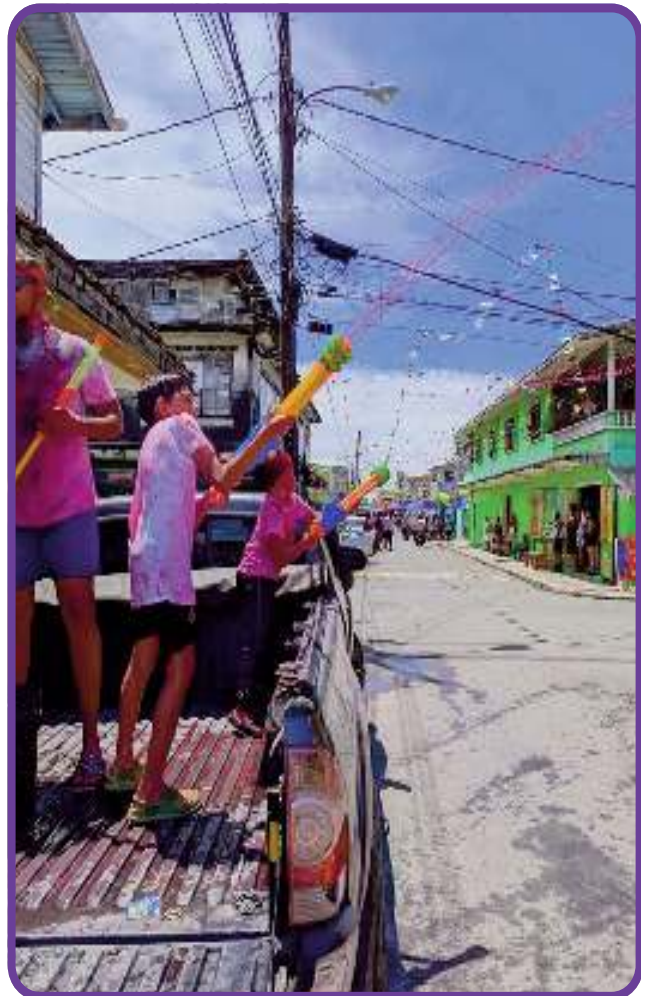


PHAGWAH FESTIVITIES

Guyana came alive in a burst of colour as Phagwah took over the streets! Vibrant powders filled the air, and the nation buzzed with laughter, music, and a deep sense of community. From dawn to dusk, a dazzling array of hues transformed the landscape, showcasing Phagwah's incredible ability to unite and spread joy throughout the land.



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1.99 each



Pearl River Bridge Mushroom Soy Sauce 500 ml

2.69 each



Diana BBQ Sauce Original Only

2.99 each



Jamaican Pride Dried Sorrel
100 g

2.29 each



Brunswick Sardine Assorted 106 g

1.89 each



Cedar Yellow Corn Meal #40
2 lb

2/\$5



Pan Pre Cook White Corn Flour 5 lb

6.99 each



Dial Hand Soap assorted 385 ml

99¢ each



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Store Hours
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Sunday 9 am to 6 pm

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Saturday 8 am to 9 pm
Sunday 9 am to 7 pm

TRIPLE WIN FOR REGION TWO AS LAND TITLES, HOUSE LOTS, AND SUBSIDIES BOOST HOMEOWNERSHIP



Close to 500 house lots were distributed

Region Two residents are celebrating a “triple win” in their pursuit of homeownership, as the government’s comprehensive housing drive delivered land titles, house lot allocations, and crucial building subsidies. This multi-faceted approach is significantly boosting homeownership across the region, transforming lives and fostering community growth.

“triple win” began with the distribution of land titles to over 150 residents, granting them legal ownership and unlocking financial opportunities. This crucial step allows individuals to secure loans for business ventures and home improvements, laying the groundwork for economic empowerment. Simultaneously, house lot allocations brought joy to 500 families at the Onderneeming Housing

Scheme Phase IV extension. Single mother Shawnella Johnson, along with numerous other residents, expressed immense gratitude for the opportunity to build their dream homes. Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal emphasised the government’s commitment to expediting land access, pledging that all allocations this year will have titles issued by

2025. Completing the triple win, 22 families received vital building subsidies in the form of steel and cement vouchers. This initiative, launched in 2022, provides crucial financial assistance, easing the burden of construction costs. Beneficiaries like Myrtle Vanlange, Cletus DaSilva, and Gregory Tyrell highlighted the significant impact of these subsidies on their



Part of the outreach

ability to build secure homes. Beyond these direct benefits, the government is actively investing in infrastructure development to support the growing communities. Minister Croal announced plans to commence infrastructure work at Onderneeming Phase IV extension by the end of March. Additionally, the government is tackling flooding issues at Buxton and St. Joseph in Charity,

with the NDIA initiating desilting operations and plans for a new drainage canal. The triple win approach also included direct engagement between ministers and residents, allowing for open dialogue on housing and water concerns. This interactive approach underscored the government’s commitment to responsive governance.



Over 150 Region Two residents receive agreements of sale, land titles



Part of the exercise in Region Seven

Over 500 families in Bartica, Region Seven, celebrated a major milestone as they received house lots in the Five Miles Housing Scheme Extension and Block CHPA. The emotional land allocation exercise, led by Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal, marked a significant step towards fulfilling the dreams of homeownership for many residents. The event, held at the Bartica Community Centre Ground,

saw tears of joy and expressions of gratitude as families received their allocations. Tracy Anne Persaud, a mother of two, expressed her overwhelming happiness, stating, “It means more than what I can explain. It is something that I’ve never had.” Mohamed Ishak, who applied for his lot in 2022, echoed this sentiment, calling it a “dream come true” that would allow him to provide a better future for

500+ LOTS ALLOTTED IN BARTICA

his children. Similarly, Tracey Benjamin, after years of waiting, was thrilled to secure a lot for her three sons, ensuring they would have a

residents received steel and cement subsidies to aid in home construction. George Benjamin, who received his land in 2020 but faced financial

providing a stable home for their children. Minister Croal highlighted the government’s significant investment in developing housing areas in Region Seven. Over \$2.5 billion has been spent on infrastructure at Five Miles, Five Miles Extension, and Block CHPA, with an additional \$1.1 billion allocated for Plantation Bartica (Tract Bar). He emphasised that these housing areas

are heavily subsidised, ensuring affordability for allottees. The minister also announced plans for an additional 128 lots at the Mora Camp area, being developed by the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. With approximately 900 pending applicants in Region Seven, the government is committed to meeting the housing needs of the region.



Part of the exercise in Region Seven



Part of the exercise in Region Seven

HOUSING MINISTRY ASSURES RECORDS INTACT AFTER ANNEX BREAK-IN

The Ministry of Housing and Water has reassured the public that all records remain secure and intact following a break-in at its Annex office located at 42 Croal and United Nations Place. The incident, which occurred between 8:00

PM on March 2 and 7:00 AM on March 3, saw the Community Development Department, housed within the Annex building, ransacked. However, the Ministry has confirmed that no documents or valuable items were lost.

“We are pleased to report that all records remain intact, and nothing valuable has been lost,” the Ministry stated in a press release. Contrary to some initial reports, the Ministry’s main headquarters at Brickdam and United

Nations Place was not affected by the break-in. The Ministry believes the incident was a random act of burglary, with CCTV footage showing a lone suspect entering the premises. Despite security measures in place, including a

security guard on duty, the suspect gained entry through a window in a secluded area. The Guyana Police Force was immediately notified and has launched an investigation into the incident. Officers have processed the scene and retrieved CCTV footage

to assist in identifying and apprehending the suspect. Following the incident, Ministry staff conducted a thorough examination of the office to verify the security of all records and files, confirming that everything was accounted for. The Ministry reiterated its commitment to ensuring the safety and security of its records and operations.

Ali: I have no plans to meet Maduro once violations continue

PRESIDENT, Dr. Irfaan Ali has made it clear that he will not be meeting with Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro, as the Bolivarian Republic continues to blatantly violate the Argyle Declaration.

The Guyanese Head-of-State, in an invited comment to the media on Saturday, said: "I have made it very clear that we are not going to be bullied and I am not going to be bullied. This country and all of us in this country, we're going to stand firm on our sovereignty and territorial integrity."

President Ali also underscored Guyana's commitment to the Argyle Declaration and the orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and demanded that Venezuela do the same.

"Let us be clear on something, Guyana has never breached the Argyle Agreement. We have never done anything to disrupt peace in this region or to annoy, much less disrupt what happens in Venezuela. It is Venezuela who would have consistently breached the Argyle Declaration," President Ali said.

To further highlight how it is Venezuela that has continued to disrupt peace within the region, Dr. Ali pointed to the South American nation's intention of conducting electoral activities in Guyana's territory.

The President said that he has made Guyana's position very clear to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Chair that this controversy will be decided at the ICJ.

Guyana will not go into any discussion with Venezuela when the country is "blatantly disregarding" the Argyle Declaration, the President firmly stated.

"They cannot continue with their plans of electing a governor in territory that does not belong to them, that forms part of our sovereignty and territorial integrity. I'm not going to meet in such blatant violations of the Argyle Declaration," President Ali firmly said.

Dr. Ali went on to say: "There can be no expectation of a meeting when Venezuela continues to act in clear violation of the Argyle Declaration. They must be prepared to stop every action and all action that is not in keeping with the Argyle Declaration and the ICJ orders."

Given Venezuela's growing aggressive actions, Guyana has filed a request for provisional measures with the ICJ to ensure that Venezuela refrains from conducting any electoral activities in the Essequibo region.

Guyana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation noted that the country has informed the Court that the planned Venezuelan elections are scheduled to take place on May 25, 2025, and would inevitably be pre-



President Irfaan Ali

ceded by preparatory acts, including acts within Guyana's Essequibo region, affecting the Guyanese population and Guyana's sovereignty over its territory.

The ICJ has since officially acknowledged Guyana's request for provisional measures.

The genesis of the border controversy goes back to the 1899 Arbitral Award, a landmark decision that delineated the boundary between British Guiana (now Guyana) and Venezuela. Decades after this historic award, Venezuela reignited tensions by chal-

lenging its validity.

In 2018, Guyana took a decisive step by approaching the International Court of Justice (ICJ) seeking affirmation of the award's legitimacy.


Venezuela initially claimed that the ICJ lacked jurisdiction, a contention flatly rejected by the World Court in a crucial ruling in December 2020. The door was thus opened for the ICJ to delve into the merits of the substantive case.


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CUTTING TIES WITH MOHAMEDS PROTECTS GUYANA FROM FINANCIAL FALLOUT - DR JAGDEO

The Guyana government has severed all business ties with the Mohamed family to protect the country's financial system from potential collapse, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo declared.

Responding to claims made by businessman Nazar 'Shell' Mohamed that the government is blocking him and his companies from operating locally, Dr. Jagdeo dismissed the accusations as an attempt to mislead the public and vilify the administration. He emphasised that the

government's stance is driven solely by the need to safeguard Guyana's economy and national interest.

"This is not about vindictiveness or hatred," Dr. Jagdeo asserted at his weekly press conference. **"The government cannot and will not risk the livelihoods of thousands of Guyanese by ignoring the consequences of these sanctions."**

The decision follows sanctions imposed by the US Department of Treasury's Office for Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on

the Mohameds and their businesses over allegations of evading nearly GY\$11 billion in taxes on gold sales. Dr. Jagdeo stressed that maintaining financial dealings with the sanctioned group could have put Guyana's banking sector in jeopardy, exposing it to severe international restrictions.

"We could shut down the entire financial system if the Mohameds had continued owning a cambio license. The banks have already cut all ties—if they hadn't, they could



General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo

have been subjected to US sanctions," he warned.

The Vice President also challenged Mohamed to disclose the name of a gold trader allegedly conducting business with Venezuela—a country

under US sanctions.

"He should expose this now. Give the name to the US government or the authorities. If he believes there is a conspiracy, then he should put the facts out there," Dr. Jagdeo

urged.

Dr. Jagdeo also called on the Mohamed family to fully cooperate with law enforcement over an alleged assassination plot against Azruddin Mohamed.

Meanwhile, US Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot revealed that the sanctions were the result of more than two -and- a- half years of investigations by American authorities.

With Guyana's financial integrity at stake, Dr Jagdeo made it clear that no business entity—regardless of influence—will be placed above national interest.



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

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, has called for immediate action following reports that the Buxton/Foulis Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) has been selling and leasing state lands illegally. The minister's warning has prompted a criminal investigation

into the unlawful transactions.

In a recent statement on the 'Issues in the News' programme, AG Nandlall expressed his concern over the matter, emphasising that the sale of state lands by local government authorities is a clear violation of the law. Under the constitution, only President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali holds the legal authority to manage and dispose of state lands.

"These elected officials at the NDC have no constitutional or legal power to sell or lease state lands.

The President of Guyana is the legal custodian of these lands," AG Nandlall stated, underscoring that the constitution does not empower local bodies to make such decisions.

The AG also revealed that the matter has been formally reported to the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and an investigation is underway. He hopes the swift action by the authorities will serve as a deterrent against similar unlawful practices in the future.

"I have seen the signed documents from the chairman

ILLEGAL SALE OF STATE LANDS TRIGGERS CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION



of the Buxton/Foulis NDC and the individuals involved in the transactions. The evidence is clear, and I expect the police to act promptly," AG Nandlall added.

The Local Government Act strictly prohibits NDCs and municipalities from selling or leasing reserved state lands within their jurisdictions. However, reports have

surfaced over the past two years about several local organs engaging in illegal sales and leases of state lands. These actions, according to the Attorney General, are punishable by law, and the government is committed to taking firm steps to uphold the legal framework surrounding the management of state assets.

The ongoing investigation is expected to shed light on the full extent of the illegal transactions, and AG Nandlall has vowed to pursue all legal avenues to hold those responsible accountable.

BIT PARTNERS WITH MINING COMPANY TO TRAIN 200 REGION SEVEN RESIDENTS

The Board of Industrial Training (BIT) and international mining company G-MIN Ventures Guyana Inc., will provide 200 residents of Region Seven with crucial skill training and guaranteed employment. The initiative aims to address labour shortages in the region and empower residents with qualifications necessary for entry-level positions at G-MIN Ventures.

The competency-based training courses will provide participants with recognised qualifications, ensuring immediate employment

upon completion. Minister of Labour, Joseph Hamilton, officially launched the programme in Bartica, expressing strong support for the initiative.

"The training is important to people's development. It is important to community development. It is important to develop this country of ours," Minister Hamilton stated, emphasising the programme's vital role in regional and national development.

This collaboration builds on BIT's

successful track record in Region Seven, where 366 individuals have graduated from 26 programmes over the past four years. The partnership aligns with the government's commitment to continued development

and addressing unemployment.

Looking ahead, plans are in place to train thousands of Guyanese to work on the Oko West Gold Project, one of Guyana's largest gold mines, further bolstering employment

opportunities in the region.

Minister Hamilton highlighted the government's broader vision to revolutionise education in Guyana, emphasising the importance of technical and vocational training. **"Our long-term programme as a nation must be that we retool, remodel and revolutionise education delivery in this country. The major problem we have that we must fix as a nation is making technical vocational education**



Team from G-MIN



Minister of Labour Joseph Hamilton addressing the programme launch

and training as prominent as academic education," he said.

This programme, along with other BIT initiatives, is expected to significantly improve livelihoods and transform the labour market in Region Seven.

IMF VALIDATES GUYANA'S ECONOMIC PLAN—DR JAGDEO



Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has welcomed the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest assessment of Guyana's economy, emphasising that the global financial institution's endorsement reaffirms

the government's sound economic strategy.

Speaking at his weekly press conference, Dr Jagdeo underscored the significance of the IMF's **Staff Concluding Statement for the 2025 Article IV Mission**, which praised Guyana's commitment to **macroeconomic stability, fiscal sustainability, and inclusive growth**. The report described the government's economic framework as **sustainable**, with no signs of overheating but advised continued monitoring to prevent

imbalances.

Dr Jagdeo was particularly keen on highlighting the IMF's **independent evaluation**, noting that the institution dispatched a team of economists who conducted rigorous assessments.

"The IMF is a technically competent, globally recognised body. Their assessment validates the policies we have implemented to ensure long-term economic stability and shared prosperity," Dr Jagdeo stated.

He further noted that the IMF's report acknowledged the **positive impact of social transfer policies**, which have **boosted disposable income and reduced poverty**. The body also recommended **targeted transfers** to strengthen Guyana's progress toward its **sustainable development goals**.

In a direct response to critics of the government's economic policies, Dr Jagdeo stressed that the IMF's findings carry far greater credibility than politically motivated local analyses.

"This isn't speculation or political rhetoric—the IMF conducted

independent engagements and confirmed that we are on the right path," he asserted.

With Guyana's rapid economic expansion, fueled by **strong fiscal management and social investment initiatives**, Dr Jagdeo reaffirmed that the government remains committed to **stability, growth, and equitable wealth distribution**—a position now **validated by the IMF's latest report**.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

GUYANA LEADS CARIBBEAN IN SECURING DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY WITH HISPASAT

Guyana has taken a significant step towards bridging the digital divide and strengthening its data sovereignty by forging a partnership with Spanish satellite operator Hispasat.

The initiative, part of a broader Caribbean-wide effort, aims to leverage cutting-edge space technology to enhance digital connectivity across the region.

Prime Minister **Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips emphasised Guyana's commitment to the project, stating, "Guyana stands ready to engage in meaningful partnerships that drive progress and uplift communities**

through innovation and technology." His comments came during the inaugural meeting focused on designing the CONDOSAT (CARISAT) project, a high-tech satellite infrastructure initiative for Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states.

The partnership stems from a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) and Hispasat in Barbados last February. The CONDOSAT project seeks to provide robust satellite connectivity, crucial for sectors like public administration, banking, national security, and election



The inaugural meeting focused on designing the CONDOSAT (CARISAT) project

management.

Hispasat's President Pedro Duque highlighted the company's commitment to delivering secure and sovereign digital infrastructure, stating, "We will use the highest performance satellite technology existing... to

ensure data integrity in all cases." He also noted Hispasat's readiness to deploy existing Caribbean systems immediately.

The project has garnered significant support from the European Union (EU). EU Ambassador to

Guyana, Rene van Nes, underscored the project's contribution to digital sovereignty, noting, **"This technology will really allow CARICOM to participate in satellite technology -and to the latest state-of-the-art that is there... this will provide them with sovereignty over their own digital connection."**

Guyana's participation in CONDOSAT is expected to accelerate its ongoing digital transformation efforts. Discussions are also underway regarding Guyana's potential membership in RedCLARA, Latin America's research and education network, to foster academic

partnerships and expand access to advanced digital tools.

Prime Minister Phillips reiterated Guyana's long-standing recognition of satellite technology's transformative potential, particularly for underserved communities, and its commitment to regional collaboration and technological inclusion.

As the CONDOSAT project advances, stakeholders anticipate that the high-tech satellite infrastructure will empower communities, expand economic opportunities, and strengthen digital sovereignty across the Caribbean.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, SC, has condemned the misuse of the legal system for political purposes, with businessman Terrence Campbell's recent legal challenge to the government's management of the Natural Resources Fund (NRF) being the latest example.

Campbell, a critic of the ruling People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), has filed a judicial review application, questioning the transparency and management of the NRF, which is designed to manage the country's

oil and gas revenues. His legal action targets the Attorney General and the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh, as respondents.

However, AG Nandlall has criticised Campbell's move, arguing that the filing is not a genuine legal concern, but rather a politically motivated attempt to gain public attention and score political points against the government.

OPPOSITION EXPLOITING JUDICIARY FOR POLITICAL GAIN IN NRF CASE - ATTORNEY GENERAL

"The courts are not a tool for political gain," AG Nandlall stated during his weekly 'Issues in the News' programme. **"They are funded by taxpayers to resolve legitimate legal issues, not to advance political agendas."**

The Attorney General emphasised that the legal challenge was an attempt to exploit the judiciary for personal or political purposes, urging that the courts should not be used to settle political grievances. **"This is**

about people trying to use the judiciary to interfere in matters that are within the exclusive domain of the executive and legislative branches of government," he said.

Campbell's filing asks the court to interpret the provisions of the Natural Resources Fund Act and issue orders that the Attorney General argues would undermine the separation of powers doctrine, which keeps the executive, legislative, and judicial branches

distinct. The legal application essentially seeks to direct how the government should prioritise national development, a responsibility the Attorney General insists belongs to the executive, not the courts.

AG Nandlall pointed out that Campbell's legal challenge has not established any violation of the Natural Resources Fund Act, a framework created to ensure that the country's oil and gas wealth is used sustainably and



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

transparently for national development.

The Attorney General called on the courts to take a firm stance against the abuse of the judicial system for political purposes.

CSEC PREP, DIGITISED

- NEW ONLINE PLATFORM OFFERS 13 SUBJECTS, AI-DRIVEN LEARNING



Minister of Education launches awareness outreach to promote the Guyana Digital School

The Ministry of Education has initiated a nationwide awareness outreach to promote the Guyana Digital School, a groundbreaking platform designed to transform education delivery through technology. Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, kicked off the initiative on March 4, 2025, visiting St. Rose's High School and North Ruimveldt Multilateral School in Georgetown.

The Guyana Digital School, set for an official launch by President Irfaan Ali in the coming weeks, aims to provide students with enhanced access to high-quality educational resources, particularly for Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations. The platform is being guided by the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL).

During her visits, Minister Manickchand and a technical team demonstrated the platform's features, including digital textbooks, video lessons, interactive games, quizzes, and practice

tests. **"What the digital school will do... is provide all the content required for CSEC in multiple formats, ensuring that students have a richer, more engaging learning experience,"** she explained.

A key innovation is the integration of artificial intelligence (AI), which analyses student performance and provides personalised learning recommendations. This ensures targeted support for each student, regardless of their learning style or location.

The platform emphasises inclusivity,

allowing any student in Guyana to register, regardless of their school or learning environment. The initial target is 5,000 students, but the system can accommodate significantly more. Currently, 13 CSEC subjects are available, with plans to expand the offerings.

Students can register for any or all subjects, including Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, IT, Business, Accounting, EDPM, Office Administration, Integrated Science, English A, Spanish, and Social Studies. The self-paced learning model allows students

to progress at their own speed, with all materials accessible for a year.

"The Guyana Digital School represents a major investment in 21st-century education," Minister Manickchand stated, highlighting its role in developing digital literacy, critical thinking, and independent learning.

The first cohort of students is expected to begin using the platform soon. The Ministry of Education is confident that the Guyana Digital School will improve learning outcomes and bridge educational gaps across the nation.

SKILLSCONNECT APP LAUNCHED TO REVOLUTIONISE EMPLOYMENT IN GUYANA

Guyana's labour market is poised for a significant transformation with the launch of the Ministry of Labour's innovative SkillsConnect app. Developed by the National Data Management Authority (NDMA), the app aims to bridge the gap between employers and job seekers across the nation through a user-friendly digital platform.

Minister of Labour, Joseph Hamilton, officially launched the SkillsConnect app, highlighting its potential

to address existing challenges in Guyana's labour force. The app allows employers to post job advertisements and potential employees to showcase their skills and qualifications, regardless of their location.

SkillsConnect boasts several innovative features designed to enhance the job-seeking and hiring process:

- Spanish Translation:** Catering to the growing number of foreign workers, the app offers Spanish translation

capabilities.

- Rating System:** Both employers and employees can rate each other, fostering accountability and transparency.

- Real-Time Updates:** Users receive instant notifications on application statuses and job postings.

- Direct Communication:** The app facilitates seamless communication between employers and potential employees.



A view of the app's user interface

The launch of SkillsConnect aligns with President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's vision for a digitised Guyana, characterised by efficient and functional systems.

It follows the successful implementation of similar digital platforms by other government ministries, such as the Ministry of Housing and Water's Central Housing and Planning Authority's (CHPA) Electronic Planning and Development Single Window System.

Minister Hamilton emphasised the government's commitment to digital transformation, stating, **"At every level of government, we want to, in the shortest time possible,**

have all agencies or government facilities, all ministries having a more systematic and efficient relationship with the public."

The Labour Ministry plans to further expand its digital offerings, with future apps focused on diversifying the labour market and enhancing training opportunities.

SkillsConnect is now available for download on the Google Play Store and Apple Store, making it accessible to a wide range of users.

INDIA HOSTS GUYANESE MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

A contingent of Guyanese journalists and media professionals are at the forefront of an international training programme focused on "Media Management" currently underway at the prestigious Dr. MCR HRD Institute in Hyderabad, India.

The two-week intensive programme, which commenced on March 4, is sponsored by the ITEC Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and includes participants from Suriname, Tanzania, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Dr. Shashank Goel,

IAS, Director General of the Institute and Special Chief Secretary to the Government of Telangana, highlighted the critical role of media in democratic societies during his inaugural address, particularly emphasising the contributions of professionals from nations like Guyana. **"Journalism and media relations... serve as the voice of the people, hold power to account, facilitate informed decision-making, and promote transparency in governance,"** he

stated, acknowledging the vital role Guyanese journalists play in their nation's development.

With Guyana experiencing rapid economic growth and increased global attention, the training programme's focus on adapting to the evolving media landscape is particularly relevant. Dr. Goel stressed the importance of staying abreast of technological advancements, including the impact of social media and artificial intelligence, and maintaining ethical standards. This is crucial for Guyanese media



Part of the inaugural ceremony

professionals as they navigate the complexities of reporting in a dynamic environment.

"As these countries, continue their journey of economic development and integration into the global community, a free and responsible press has an important role to play in fostering democracy and promoting socio-economic progress," Dr. Goel noted. He also

underscored the value of learning from global best practices, which is particularly significant for Guyanese journalists seeking to enhance their professional skills in a global context.

The programme offers a unique blend of classroom learning and practical experience, with field visits to prominent media houses and cultural sites in Hyderabad, Warangal, and Nagarjunasagar Dam. This immersive approach will equip the

Guyanese delegation with a comprehensive understanding of media management, enabling them to contribute effectively to the development of Guyana's media landscape.

Dr. Ravulapati Madhavi, Course Director, Professor (i/c.) and Head of the Centre for Leadership and Public Policy (CLP), welcomed the participants, emphasising the programme's focus on providing a holistic understanding of the media landscape. The release of the Course Manual by Dr. Goel further underscores the programme's commitment to providing valuable resources to the participating Guyanese and international journalists.



Professor Jacob Opadeyi, Director of GOAL

Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) has moved to reassure scholarship recipients that degree programmes offered through Staffordshire University are legitimate, despite recent disruptions caused by internal administrative changes at the UK institution.

Concerns arose

GOAL'S STAFFORDSHIRE SCHOLARSHIPS VALID, RESOLUTION IMMINENT

following a change in leadership at Staffordshire University, leading to a disagreement with their UK education facilitator, the International Skill Development Corporation (ISDC). Professor Jacob Opadeyi, Director of GOAL, clarified that the dispute stemmed from this leadership change and not from any fraudulent activity.

"When we investigated what is the problem, we were made to realise that there is a change of leadership at

Staffordshire and the new leadership did not like the agreement with ISDC," Professor Opadeyi explained. He emphasised that both Staffordshire University and ISDC are accredited bodies.

GOAL, which facilitates access to Staffordshire University programmes through its partnership with ISDC, has actively engaged both institutions to resolve the issue. Professor Opadeyi stated that a resolution is anticipated within two weeks.

"There is nothing

like anything fake in all of this because the two institutions are accredited bodies," he reiterated during a virtual town hall meeting with students.

To address students' concerns, GOAL has offered several options. Students who wish to continue under the existing ISDC/Staffordshire arrangement are asked to allow two weeks for the resolution process.

GOAL is also offering support to transfer students to other universities within its network, facilitating

credit transfers to ensure prior coursework is recognised. Students can transfer to similar or completely different programmes.

Further, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, has assured that if the partnership cannot be resolved, students will be placed at two other universities in the United Kingdom that will accept their earned credits.

Dr. Jagdeo reinforced the government's commitment to ensuring no student is left behind. **"It's not fake,**

nothing is fake," he stated during a press conference, expressing confidence in Professor Opadeyi's ability to resolve the situation.

The GOAL programme, a key initiative of the PPP/C Administration, aims to enhance Guyana's human resource pool. To date, nearly 30,000 Guyanese have received scholarships, with thousands successfully completing various programmes. GOAL has provided documentation to students confirming the initial validity of the programme.

GOAL CELEBRATES OVER 300 NEW MASTER'S GRADUATES, BOOSTING GUYANA'S HUMAN CAPITAL

The Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) is celebrating another milestone, announcing the graduation of over 300 scholars who have earned their master's degrees through partnerships with UNICAF and its affiliated universities. This achievement underscores GOAL's commitment to transforming lives through accessible postgraduate education.

In 2025 alone, 271 Guyanese citizens successfully completed their master's programmes through GOAL, building on the 94 graduates from 2024. This brings the total number of GOAL scholars who have earned their master's degrees via the GOAL/UNICAF partnership to 365.

The graduates represent a diverse range of disciplines, highlighting the breadth of educational opportunities offered. Programmes were delivered in collaboration with prestigious institutions, including Liverpool John Moores University (UK), the University of East London (UK), UNICAF University, Malawi, and UNICAF University, Zambia.

A detailed breakdown of the 2025 graduates reveals a wide spectrum of expertise:

- **Liverpool John Moores University (through UNICAF):** Graduates specialised in fields such as Education (90), International Public Health

- (23), Criminology and Social Policy (3), Leadership in Education (6), International Relations (1), Mass Communications (2), and Law (LLM) (5).

- **UNICAF University, Malawi:** Four scholars completed their MSc in Organisational Psychology.

- **UNICAF University, Zambia:** A significant number of graduates earned degrees in Educational Leadership and Management (61), along with Master's degrees in English Language and Literature (4), Public Administration (10), Education

- (2), Business Administration (MBA) (5), Healthcare Management (9), and Oil and Gas with Energy Management (1).

- **University of East London (through UNICAF):** Graduates achieved master's degrees in Business Administration (MBA) (9), Law (LLM) (6), Data Science (1), International Relations (3), Construction Engineering Management (4), Oil and Gas with Energy Management (6), International Business Management (11), and Information Security and Digital Forensics (5).

"The success of these scholars reflects both the quality and breadth

of educational opportunities provided through this strategic



To date, nearly 30,000 Guyanese have received scholarships, with thousands successfully completing various programmes

partnership," stated Professor Jacob Opadeyi, GOAL's Director. **"Ultimately, this contributes to the strengthening of Guyana's human capital and the realisation of the nation's development goals."**

By offering

programmes in crucial areas such as education, public health, international relations, law, and business administration, GOAL, through its partnership with UNICAF, is empowering Guyanese

citizens to specialise in fields vital to the nation's progress. This initiative is playing a key role in equipping individuals with the advanced skills and knowledge needed to excel in their respective fields and contribute to Guyana's continued development.

JC CHANDISINGH'S \$200M EXPANSION PROMISES ENHANCED LEARNING

Minister of Education, Priya Manickchand, turned the sod for the construction of a new wing at the JC Chandisingh Secondary School in Berbice. The ceremony was attended by Regional Education Officer Sattish Udit, other government officials, and the school's headmistress.

The new extension, which will cost approximately

\$200 million, will be constructed at the back of the school compound and will feature modern educational facilities, including a multipurpose hall, classrooms, a computer lab, a science lab, a visual arts room, a home economics room, smart classroom among others.

Minister Manickchand said that this initiative is part of a broader national effort

to improve and expand educational facilities across the country. She noted that JC Chandisingh Secondary School has a strong academic reputation, attracting students who could have chosen national schools in Georgetown but instead opted to study in Berbice.

She added that while this expansion is a significant investment, the ministry is also



The turning of the sod

considering an even further extension to comprehensively meet the school's needs, based on recommendations

from parents and the school board.

Board Chair of the JC Chandisingh Secondary School,

Adrian Anamayah, expressed gratitude for the project and lauded the government's commitment to education. He stated that the vision is to ensure that everything available at Queen's College is also available at JC Chandisingh so that students who choose to study there receive the same quality of education.

He noted that this massive undertaking would not be possible without the Ministry of Education and the Government of Guyana.

ENMORE, LITTLE DIAMOND LEAD SIX-MONTH HOSPITAL LAUNCH BLITZ

A surge in healthcare infrastructure is underway in Guyana as the Enmore Regional Hospital and the Little Diamond Regional Hospital are poised to open their doors, spearheading a “launch blitz” of six new hospitals within the next six months.

Health Minister Dr. Frank Anthony confirmed the accelerated progress, revealing the government’s aggressive timeline for enhancing healthcare access across the nation.

The Enmore and Little Diamond facilities, both strategically located in Region Four, are at the forefront of this rapid expansion. Dr. Anthony, during a site visit to the Enmore location, emphasised the near-completion



Scene from the Enmore Regional Hospital site visit

status. **“We are on track to open six new hospitals in the next six months, with the Enmore and Little Diamond hospitals being the first to launch,”** he stated. **“The construction is progressing steadily. All the rooms are complete, electrical**

work is finished, and gas installations have been made. The next step is to install the medical equipment, most of which is already on-site.”

The Enmore Regional Hospital, set to replace the existing polyclinic, will significantly bolster healthcare services for

East Coast Demerara residents. Residents will soon have access to a wider range of services, including surgery, childbirth, and specialised care such as ophthalmology, dermatology, and dental services, all conveniently located closer to home. Similarly, the Little

Diamond Regional Hospital aims to alleviate pressure on the Diamond Diagnostic Centre, expanding healthcare capacity in the region.

This “launch blitz” is part of a broader government initiative to build a total of 12 new hospitals across Guyana. Other facilities under construction include the Bath Settlement Hospital in Region Five, the De Kinderen facility in Region Three, and the Lima Regional Hospital in Region Two.

In addition to the regional hospitals, the government is also advancing the construction of a new Paediatric and Maternal

Hospital in Ogle, East Coast Demerara, and a state-of-the-art five-level hospital in New Amsterdam, Region Six. These specialised facilities will further enhance the nation’s healthcare capabilities.

Existing hospitals are also undergoing substantial upgrades, including the Linden Hospital Complex, West Demerara Regional Hospital, and Bartica Hospital. Furthermore, four new telemedicine-equipped hospitals are being built in hinterland communities, ensuring improved access for residents in remote areas.

TUITION-FREE PROGRAMME TO BUILD GUYANA'S DIGITAL HEALTH EXPERTISE

A groundbreaking, tuition-free programme has been launched in Guyana, designed to rapidly expand the nation’s digital health expertise and revolutionise its healthcare sector. The National Health Information Systems and Technology (HIST) workforce development programme, funded by the US\$100 million Greater Guyana Initiative, aims to cultivate a skilled workforce capable of implementing and managing cutting-edge digital health solutions.

The programme, unveiled at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown,

addresses a critical need for digital literacy within Guyana’s healthcare system. By removing financial barriers to education, the initiative ensures that individuals from all 10 regions have the opportunity to gain essential skills in health information systems and technology.

“This is not just about having more IT specialists for the country,” said Dr. Rachel Vreeman, Director of Mount Sinai – Guyana. **“This initiative is providing the resources to really grow the capacity of the public health clinical staff and of leaders**

such as physicians and hospital administrators, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to strategically implement digital health solutions for Guyana.”

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Mount Sinai is establishing the Guyana Digital Health Training Institute, which will offer tuition-free training across all 10 regions. The programme features a modular curriculum with cutting-edge content, stipends during training, guaranteed employment upon completion, and welcomes individuals without prior IT



The programme was unveiled at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown

experience. The programme’s focus on building local expertise is essential for the successful implementation and maintenance of the national electronic health records system, a cornerstone of Guyana’s digital healthcare

transformation. **“Under this transformational programme, over 250 health information systems and technology workers will be trained to implement, manage, and maintain the national electronic**

health records system,” stated Alicia Bess-Anderson, Lead of the Greater Guyana Initiative.

Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, emphasised the importance of digitalisation in modern healthcare, stating, **“If we don’t digitalise, it is going to be a problem for us, and we recognise that. If everything remains paper-based, efficiency will always be limited.”**

This tuition-free programme represents a significant investment in Guyana’s future, empowering its citizens with the skills needed to drive digital innovation and improve healthcare outcomes across the nation.



Dr. Karina Omari (sitting) along with Representative from One Lambda and local training participants

The Guyana Human Organ and Tissue Transplant Agency (HOATTA) has taken a significant step forward in enhancing the nation’s organ and tissue transplant capabilities with the establishment of a Human Leukocyte

Antigen (HLA) laboratory. This development will provide essential local testing, eliminating the need for costly and time-consuming overseas procedures.

HOATTA has been actively building

LOCAL HLA TESTING NOW AVAILABLE AS GUYANA ADVANCES TRANSPLANT CARE

robust systems for both living and deceased organ donation and transplantation. This includes extensive capacity building at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), now certified as the country’s sole transplant centre. Healthcare professionals have undergone advanced training in Barcelona, and standardised operating procedures have been established.

A crucial component of successful transplant programmes is

HLA testing, which determines donor-recipient compatibility. To bring this vital service in-house, the Ministry of Health has invested USD \$150,000 in state-of-the-art equipment, including a Luminex machine, centrifuge, thermocycler, and reagents.

From February 24-28, 2025, 15 laboratory personnel received specialised training at the National Public Health Reference Laboratory. The training was led by Dr. Karina Omari, an HLA laboratory expert from

One Lambda, a U.S.-based biotechnology company specialising in HLA typing and antibody detection for transplantation.

At a briefing meeting, Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, emphasised the transformative impact of the new HLA laboratory. **“This marks a transformative step in our efforts to enhance organ and tissue transplantation in Guyana,”** Dr. Anthony stated. **“With local HLA testing, patients**

will no longer face high overseas testing costs, and results will be available much faster, improving transplant efficiency and success.”

Dr. Anthony thanked Dr. Pedro Lewis, Director of the National Blood Transfusion Services and HOATTA’s HLA Laboratory Focal Point, for his leadership in this initiative. Dr. Lewis encouraged the medical technologists to continue practicing and refining their skills to ensure accurate and reliable results.

HAGUE BACKLANDS TO GET NEW ROADS, HEALTH CENTRE, AND SHADE HOUSE FARMING

Residents of Hague Backlands, West Coast Demerara, are set to benefit from a series of transformative initiatives aimed at boosting agriculture, infrastructure, and overall community well-being.

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali made the announcement during a community engagement in Region Three, emphasising the government's commitment to enhancing livelihoods and stimulating the local economy.

As part of the initiative, two acres of land will be cleared and empoldered to

support small-scale farmers. Additionally, the government is collaborating with farmers to establish a shade house project to increase the production of high-value crops such as tomatoes, sweet peppers, and celery.

President Ali highlighted the economic potential of this project, explaining that just 10 acres of pasture land could accommodate 40 shade houses, each generating more income than traditional five-acre farms. He also noted that similar projects could be expanded to areas such as Vergenoegen and Den Amstel.

The Ministry of

Agriculture will provide essential support, including training, farming materials, and technical assistance. To further assist farmers, the government has also pledged to secure markets for their produce, including plantains and sweet potatoes.

"We need to develop an optimal business model, and for that to happen, farmers must work together," President Ali stated, encouraging collaboration within the farming community. He proposed forming a committee of 200 farmers cultivating 2,000 acres collectively, which

would improve efficiency and productivity.

Residents will also see significant improvements in infrastructure, with plans to enhance road accessibility. The president announced that all dams in the area will be upgraded with a crusher run surface and proper drainage.

"The intention is to make all these dams crush-surface and build roads with shoulders for drainage before production starts," he explained.

To improve security, streetlights will be installed throughout the community.

residents. Further enhancing community life, the government has committed to



The meeting in Hague

Additionally, a government team will visit Hague Backlands to design a blueprint for a new health centre, ensuring better access to medical services for

constructing a new ballfield, providing a safe recreational space for residents, especially youths.

OVER 50% ESSEQUIBO RESIDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM TREATED WATER - ONDERNEEMING PLANT SOON TO BE COMMISSIONED

Residents from Supenaam to Taymouth Manor along the Essequibo Coast are poised to benefit from a significantly improved water supply as the new \$1.18 billion water treatment plant at Onderneeming has been completed and is now in its testing phase.

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, announced the development during a housing outreach in Anna Regina, revealing that the plant is expected to be commissioned soon. **"More than half of the residents on the Essequibo Coast will get treated water [from this plant],"** Minister Croal stated.

This milestone marks

a substantial step toward ensuring reliable access to treated water for communities along the Essequibo Coast. Further enhancing the region's water infrastructure, a new treatment plant is also under construction at Maria's Lodge, which will serve residents from Charity to Queenstown. This contract has recently been signed, signalling continued investment in the region's water resources.

Residents of Lima are already experiencing improved water quality and 24-hour service following the



Onderneeming water treatment plant

rehabilitation of their water treatment plant, a significant upgrade from the previous 16-hour daily supply.

Minister Croal also outlined plans for additional interventions to expand access to treated water

throughout the region. Wells will be drilled in several communities, including Bethany, St. Monica, Dredge Creek, and Karawab, with the Guyana Water Incorporated's (GWI) in-house team also drilling wells at St. John's, Jacklow, Abraham's Creek, and St. Denny's.

Wells have already been completed in Akawini, Wakapoa, Hackney, Friendship, and Malborough, and a well is currently being drilled in Siriki. Wakapoa, Kabakaburi, and Mainstay will also benefit from similar

projects. These initiatives are part of the government's ambitious programme to provide 100 percent access to potable water to all communities by the end of the year. The completion of the Onderneeming plant and the ongoing efforts to expand water infrastructure underscore the government's commitment to improving the quality of life for residents across the Essequibo Coast.



Deeds and commercial Registries building in Region Two

Residents of Region Two are set to benefit from enhanced legal services with the upcoming opening of a new \$447.8 million Deeds and Commercial Registries Authority building in Suddie. The state-of-the-art facility will replace the current office located on the ground floor of the

Suddie High Court. The three-storey structure will feature a residential facility for the authority's manager, along with two floors dedicated to providing comprehensive legal and business transaction services. According to Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall,

SC, this substantial investment will ensure citizens enjoy modern amenities, including air-conditioned rooms, elevators, parking, and a secure document storage vault.

"That is the transformation that we are speaking about. All the modern services

that are offered in Georgetown will now be offered in, I would dare say, a better atmosphere on the Essequibo coast," Minister Nandlall stated. The Deeds and Commercial Registries Authority, tasked with administering laws related to land, trademarks, patents, and copyrights, will offer vital services such as notarisation, business registration, and land dispute resolution.

Constructed by JAICAM Constructions and Services Inc., the new building will also

facilitate the issuance of land transports to approximately 200 residents of Walton Hall, whose lands were previously owned by a defunct co-op society. The government bore the cost of regularising these land titles.

This initiative is part of the government's broader plan to establish Deeds and Commercial Registries Authority offices across Guyana.

New court for East Bank Demerara In addition to the Suddie registry, a new \$388 million Magistrate's Court will

be commissioned at Friendship on the East Bank of Demerara, bringing judicial services closer to residents.

"I've said on many occasions that access to justice is as important as access to health care, education, housing and water. If you are denied your rights and freedoms, none of these other things matter. And that is why we are building courts across the country," Attorney General Nandlall emphasised.

GOVT TO CHARGE ANY GUYANESE WHO ACCEPTS VENEZUELA'S ESSEQUIBO APPOINTMENTS



Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn inspecting officers during the opening ceremony of the Inspectors and Sergeants conference

person for treason and lock them up—each and every one of them,” Minister Benn declared. “Anybody who is supporting them will also be charged.”

His statement comes as Guyana formally requests provisional measures from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) following Venezuela’s announcement to hold elections on May 25—just one day before Guyana’s 59th Independence anniversary.

Stronger Protection for Police Officers

In the same address, Minister Benn condemned the growing disrespect toward police officers, stating that attacks on

law enforcement must end immediately. He announced that all patrol officers will now be equipped with pepper

altercation with a civilian. Minister Benn described the incident as a “complete breakdown in law

stated. Minister Benn emphasised that providing police with protective tools is standard practice in other jurisdictions and necessary to maintain order.

“We must act



Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn (centre) surrounded by members of the Guyana Police Force

Home Affairs Minister Robeson Benn has issued a stern warning that any Guyanese supporting Venezuela’s illegal election to appoint officials for the Essequibo region will face treason charges.

Speaking at a police conference, Minister Benn revealed that authorities are aware of Venezuelan “sleepers”—

secret agents—operating in Guyana and have already removed some. He made it clear that anyone accepting an appointment as governor or other official under Venezuela’s election will be prosecuted.

“If it’s a Guyanese who is appointed to be Governor of Essequibo and placed at Anna Regina, we will charge that

spray, batons, and tasers to defend themselves.

“I don’t want policemen and women beaten on the road,” he said. “Police must be protected.”

The decision follows public outrage over a recent viral video showing two police officers in a physical

and order” and stressed that officers must have the means to respond appropriately.

“If we have to pull out the baton and strike them on the knee, we can do so. They must think twice or thrice before they attempt to strike a policeman,” he

quickly. Those who provide protection for peace and development cannot be beaten on the road,” he said.

The measures aim to reinforce respect for law enforcement while ensuring officers can effectively carry out their duties.

MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS ROBESON BENN (CENTRE) SURROUNDED BY MEMBERS OF THE GUYANA POLICE FORCE

The Guyana Defence Force (GDF) has dispatched an advance contingent to St. Vincent and the Grenadines to assist in rebuilding efforts following the devastating impact of Hurricane Beryl. The deployment comes in response to President Dr. Irfaan Ali’s pledge to support the Caribbean nation during its recovery.

The advance team’s deployment follows

a prior assessment mission conducted by a GDF delegation led by Colonel Roger Nurse. The delegation visited Union Island in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to evaluate the damage and collaborate with local authorities on planning the humanitarian operation.

The advance contingent will continue the needs analysis and prepare for the arrival of the main



The advance contingent (GDF photo)

GDF deployment. Their mission is to identify priority areas for

assistance and ensure the full contingent is well-equipped to

contribute effectively to the reconstruction of Union Island.

This initiative underscores Guyana’s commitment to regional solidarity and its dedication to aiding CARICOM sister states during humanitarian crises. The GDF’s involvement highlights the importance of regional cooperation in disaster response and recovery, as CARICOM nations unite to build resilience and support affected communities.

FROM FLOOR MATS TO FRESH STARTS GUYANA'S PRISON REFORM PROGRESSES



Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn delivering the keynote address

focused on providing “Fresh Starts” through rehabilitation and reintegration.

Minister of Home Affairs Robeson Benn highlighted this progress during the Guyana Prison Service Senior Officers’ Conference 2025, emphasising that the government’s efforts extend far beyond mere infrastructure improvements.

This encapsulates the government’s commitment to addressing the systemic issues that plagued the prison system before 2020. Minister Benn acknowledged the previously “barely

livable” conditions and underscored the ongoing construction at Mazaruni and Lusignan Prisons aimed at improving living and working conditions for both inmates and staff.

However, the core of this transformation lies in the government’s focus on prisoner reform and tackling the root causes of crime. The Fresh Start initiative, providing occupational training to inmates, exemplifies this commitment. This programme, along with access to education, vocational training, and psychological support, represents the Fresh Starts now being offered

to those within the correctional system.

Minister Benn advocated for a more humane approach, condemning instances of maltreatment and emphasising the

need to address the “experiences in life, issues of poverty, maltreatment, self-denial and self-demeaning” that contribute to criminal behaviour.



Attendees at the conference

Guyana’s prison system is undergoing a significant transformation, moving from a past marked by dire conditions – where inmates often slept on floor mats – to a future

The success of juvenile correctional programmes, with teenagers achieving CSEC Mathematics passes, further demonstrates the progress being made. The government’s plan to expand its “Do the Right Thing” campaign reflects its commitment to influencing positive change beyond prison walls.

By focusing on rehabilitation and reintegration, the government is moving away from the past of floor mats and inadequate conditions, towards a future where inmates are given the opportunity for “Fresh Starts” and a chance to contribute positively to society.

OGLE TO ECCLES ROAD PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION, TRAFFIC WOES TO EASE

Commuters travelling between the East Coast and East Bank of Demerara can soon expect significant relief from traffic congestion as the US\$106.4 million Ogle to Eccles Road

surface already paved, the project is on track for completion within weeks.

The Ministry of Public Works' Technical Services Manager, Nigel Erskine, announced

"We anticipate that within five days, this stretch up to the East Coast of Demerara highway will be completed," Erskine stated during a site inspection.

The road's double bituminous surface treatment (DBST), involving two layers of asphalt binder and aggregate, is designed to enhance durability and water resistance. This crucial feature will ensure the road's longevity and resilience against Guyana's tropical climate.

Despite facing several challenges, including delayed utility relocations in populated areas, shipping delays for construction materials, and land acquisition

issues related to the Ogle Railway Embankment roundabout, the project has made significant strides. Adjustments were also necessary to divert the Ogle main canal.

Erskine praised the contractor, Ashoka Buildcon Limited, for their dedication and performance in overcoming these obstacles.

The project includes the construction of 23 box culverts, six pipe culverts, eight minor bridges, and a major bridge over the Lamaha canal. These structures are essential for drainage and maintaining the structural integrity of the approximately 11.5-kilometer highway.

The four-lane



Paving works underway at the Ogle to Eccles bypass road project



Ministry of Public Works' Technical Services Manager, Nigel Erskine engaging the contractor Ashoka Buildcon Limited and team

project has reached its final stages. With 70% of the double bituminous

that paving works, which began recently, are progressing rapidly.

highway will feature 3.6-meter-wide lanes and a central median ranging from four to 40 meters in width. It will connect the East Coast public road and the Ogle public road via intersections, extending south for 7.8 kilometres before linking to the Heroes Highway.

Ashoka Buildcon's

Project Manager, Ramachan Dar, confirmed that his team is fully mobilised and working around the clock to finalise the project. The completion of this vital infrastructure project will significantly improve connectivity and reduce travel times, benefiting thousands of commuters daily.

Residents of Mara, on the East Bank Berbice in Region Six, are eagerly awaiting the completion of a much-needed road upgrade, bringing relief from years of challenging travel conditions.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, during a site inspection, reported significant progress on the project. Four lots, each spanning 750 meters and valued at \$4 million, were awarded for the upgrades. Two of these lots are now complete, while the remaining two are in the crusher-run phase and are slated for paving

PAVING WORKS UNDERWAY AT THE OGLE TO ECCLES BYPASS ROAD PROJECT



Ongoing works on the Mara road project

shortly. The current upgrade is just the beginning of a larger initiative to improve the Mara thoroughfare. Minister Edghill announced that the World Bank

is preparing to finance the comprehensive rehabilitation of the entire 26-mile road link connecting Mara to New Amsterdam.

"The sections already done will receive additional improvements, such as pavements, road safety signs, and shoulder enhancements," explained Minister Edghill, emphasising the long-term vision for the road.

The estimated cost for the full-scale rehabilitation project is US\$120 million. Minister Edghill is scheduled to engage with the World Bank from March 10 to 12 to discuss the financing details. Furthermore, a technical team from the Ministry of Public Works will attend training in Trinidad and Tobago to ensure they meet the necessary international financing requirements. This road project

aligns with the PPP/C government's commitment to enhancing infrastructure nationwide, aimed at improving the livelihoods of Guyanese citizens. The completion of the current upgrade and the planned World Bank-funded rehabilitation will significantly improve transportation for Mara residents, fostering economic development and enhancing connectivity in the region.

MV KIMBIA RESUMES OPERATIONS AFTER \$75M OVERHAUL

The MV Kimbia has resumed its crucial service between Georgetown and Region One, following a \$75 million overhaul that included the installation of two new engines and gearboxes. The 44-year-old ferry, a vital transport link for communities in the region, is back in operation after being docked for extensive repairs since December.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, announced the vessel's return after an inspection at the dockyard. He emphasised the importance of the MV

Kimbia's resumption in alleviating transportation challenges, particularly for businesses, and residents who are dependent on the ferry for the delivery of goods and supplies.

"I would have announced before that the MV Kimbia is being prepared to expedite the movement of cargo in and out of Region One," Minister Edghill stated. **"We have the MV Barima and the MV Malisha handling passengers and some cargo. Due to the accelerated pace of**



MV Kimbia in dry dock

development and the boost in agriculture in the region, there is a greater need for cargo movement."

The extensive repairs

included the removal and replacement of the vessel's old engines and gearboxes, along with crucial underwater work. Additional maintenance,

such as hull scraping to remove marine growth and the installation of anodes to prevent corrosion, was also carried out.

Before returning to full service, the MV Kimbia underwent thorough test runs to ensure it meets all safety standards.

The MV Kanawan is also undergoing similar repairs and is expected to return to service shortly. This vessel, docked on February 20, is receiving general dry-docking, superstructure maintenance, and underwater repairs.

The government is

further strengthening transportation services to Region One by procuring new ferry vessels through the 2025 budget. This initiative will increase the frequency and capacity of ferry services on the route. The service has already expanded from operating twice a month to several trips per month, with further improvements anticipated once the new vessels are acquired. The return of the MV Kimbia, and the planned introduction of new vessels, signifies the government's commitment to improving connectivity and supporting economic development in Region One.

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GUYANA INTEGRATES CLIMATE RESILIENCE INTO ROAD NETWORK MODERNISATION



Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, delivering remarks at the World Bank's inaugural sustainable transport ministerial roundtable

As Guyana modernises its road networks, an unprecedented economic surge, the government is proactively integrating climate resilience into the rehabilitation and

and rising sea levels.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, emphasised the importance of climate-resilient infrastructure designs during his participation in the World Bank's inaugural sustainable transport ministerial roundtable, part of the Transforming Transportation 2025 conference in Washington, D.C.

"We plan, develop, and construct infrastructure that can withstand the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, rising temperatures, sea-level

flooding and other environmental stresses," Minister Edghill explained.

A key strategy is elevating roads above anticipated flood levels, especially in coastal and flood-prone areas. This measure is being implemented in projects like the Linden to Mabura road and the Ogle to Eccles bypass, ensuring vital transportation routes remain functional during adverse weather.

Minister Edghill also highlighted the importance of connecting urban centres and rural communities through climate-resilient infrastructure. **"In some cases, alternative**

routes or detours are considered to ensure that transportation remains available even when a major road is temporarily closed due to extreme weather," he said.

Regular inspections and preventive maintenance techniques are being conducted to extend the lifespan of roads. Collaborations with regional and international partners, including the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank, have provided Guyana with essential funding and technical expertise.

These partnerships

have facilitated access to updated road technical standards, which consider the latest climate change weather patterns, under a recently approved World Bank project. Technical capacity building and engagement with local communities are also boosting the country's developing transportation infrastructure.

The World Bank's conference focused on the skills, policies, and resources needed for the implementation of equitable, sustainable, and resilient transportation systems.

KWAKWANI TO GET \$248M AIRSTRIP, IMPROVED RIVERINE ACCESS

Residents of Kwakwani, a key mining and logging community in Region Ten, are set to benefit from significantly improved transportation access with the construction of a new \$248 million airstrip.

The contract for the building and asphaltic paving of the facility has been awarded to Associated Construction Services.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, announced that the new airstrip will address existing

concerns that have deterred airlines from operating in the area. The project will involve laying a strong base before asphaltic paving to ensure durability and longevity. The airstrip will measure 2,500 feet long and 50 feet wide, with construction expected to be completed within five months.

In addition to the airstrip, the Ministry of Public Works will also undertake extensive rehabilitation of community landings and revetments from De Velde to Hururu.



Kwakwani Airstrip

"Contracts will be executed in every riverine area to deal with the landings," Minister Edghill stated.

To further enhance accessibility, concrete footpaths will be constructed from boat landings to key

community facilities such as schools and health centres. These footpaths will be built by residents of the respective communities, providing local employment opportunities.

"When we say we are giving you improved livelihood, we are not just talking like the people who told you, 'you are going to have a better life' and you didn't see it. I heard these days people are saying 'better must come', so when they

come around tell them better come already," Minister Edghill emphasised.

Furthermore, all roads within Kwakwani are currently being upgraded by small contractors from the area, with these projects slated for completion by April.

These initiatives are part of the government's broader strategy to improve infrastructure and enhance living conditions in remote communities.

MON REPOS FISHERFOLK TO BENEFIT FROM \$300M LANDING SITE UPGRADE

Fisherfolk operating from the Mon Repos/North De Endgragt landing site on the East Coast of Demerara will soon enjoy improved facilities, following a \$300 million rehabilitation project.

The upgrade, a commitment made by President Dr. Irfaan Ali during a visit last July, is expected to be completed within two months.

Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, during a site visit, outlined the scope of the rehabilitation works, emphasising the government's

commitment to developing landing sites across the country. **"This is a commitment that was made by the President,"** Minister Mustapha stated. **"A shed and landing area were built, and the contractor is now working on the other phase. In that phase, a ramp will be built to give fishermen easier access to bring up their boats. We will also do a revetment with a small wharf."**

The project will include landscaping, electrical works, and the installation of additional

solar lights and fish cleaning tables. Dredging of the waterway is also planned to address challenges caused by shallow waters.

"Approximately 100 boats operate from this area because this is one of the major landing sites on the East Coast," Minister Mustapha explained. **"This is another area that we are developing to enhance the facilities where fisherfolk operate."**

Minister Mustapha highlighted the

government's ongoing efforts to improve landing sites nationwide, citing recent developments at the Meadow Bank wharf, where a new wharf, sheds, tarmac, lights, washrooms, and water facilities were constructed.

"To date, we've developed a number of landing sites around the country," he noted. **"With these upgrades, fishermen have access to better facilities, security, and channels to manoeuvre their vessels."**

The contract for the

the East Coast.

Minister Mustapha also mentioned similar rehabilitation works completed at landing sites in Annandale, Ogle, and in the Berbice region.

Fishing is a vital economic activity in North Mon Repos, supporting approximately 500 people.



A section of the shed that was constructed



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At Leonora Track and Field, the nation's finest young athletes are giving their all in the 2025 National Secondary Schools Championships. This annual showcase provides a vital platform for aspiring champions, fostering a spirit of sportsmanship and healthy competition. As students from across Guyana pursue national glory, these championships stand as a powerful testament to the government's commitment to youth development and the pursuit of athletic excellence.





“ 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.

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