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## Guyana, Suriname talk cooperation

Guyana's Head of State Dr. Irfaan Ali and Surinamese President, Chandrikapersad Santokhi, on Monday met at State House. Central to the meeting's agenda was intensifying cooperation between Suriname and Guyana, particularly with regards to infrastructure development, energy and trade. Of particular focus was the construction of the Corentyne River bridge, which the two leaders believe is of strategic importance for the further economic integration of both countries. The 'special political situation' in both countries, current trends, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and social media in governance, communication and modern diplomacy were also discussed. Suriname goes to the polls on May 25.









BARBADOS PROUD: Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley inset) has lauded Roston Chase for his promotion to West Indies Test captain, describing it as an "extraordinary milestone". The 33-year-old Chase was officially appointed to the post on Friday by Cricket West Indies (CWI), following a rigorous interview process where he beat out five other candidates for the position. He takes over the reins from countryman Kraigg Brathwaite. Chase becomes the 10th Barbadian to captain the West Indies and his appointment means all of the senior West Indies teams are led by a Barbadian, with Hayley Matthews the Women's captain and Shai Hope the skipper of the T20I and ODI teams. More on Page 28





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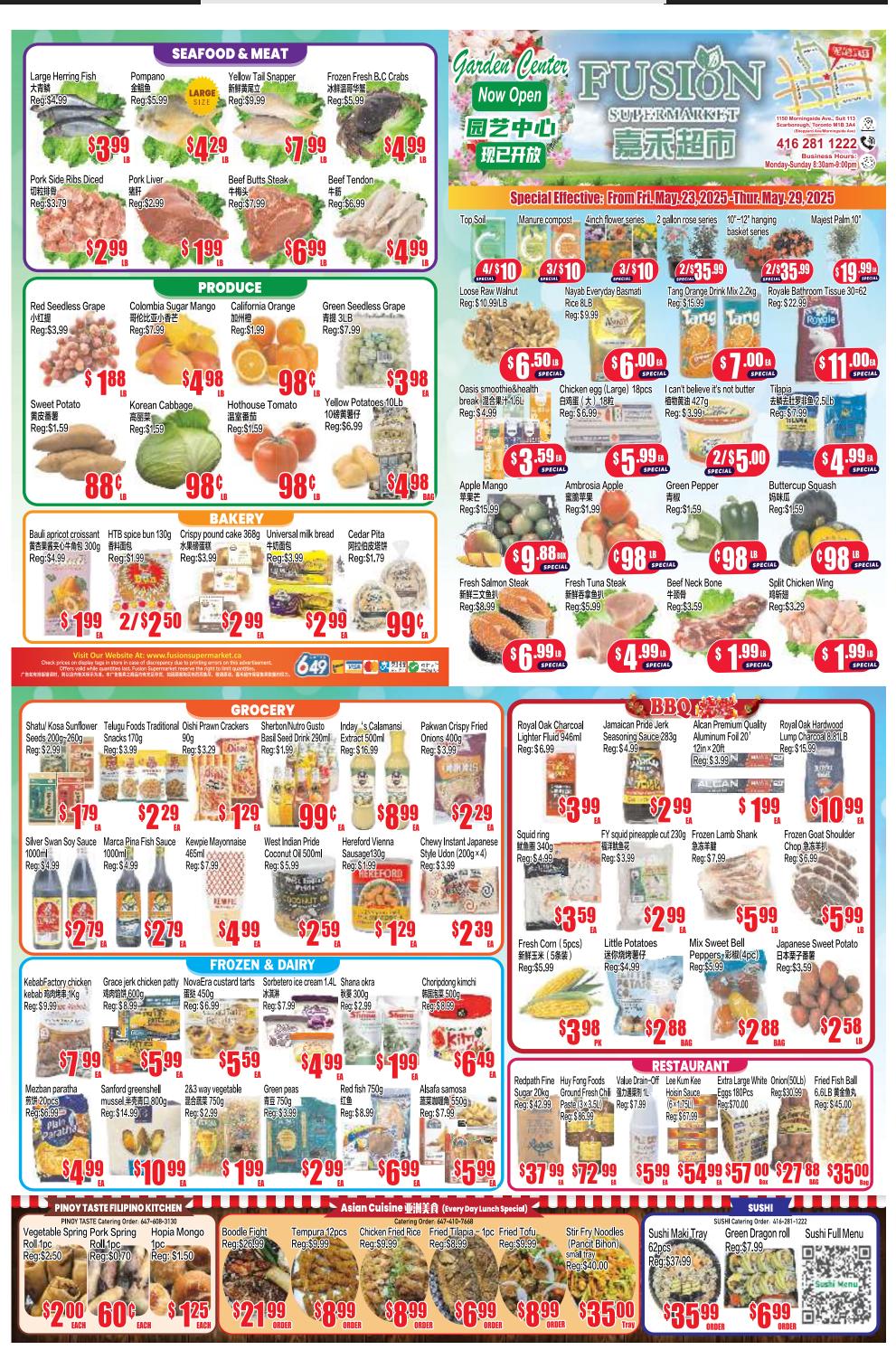
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#### **EQUALITY NEWS**



#### **THURSDAY MAY 22 2025**



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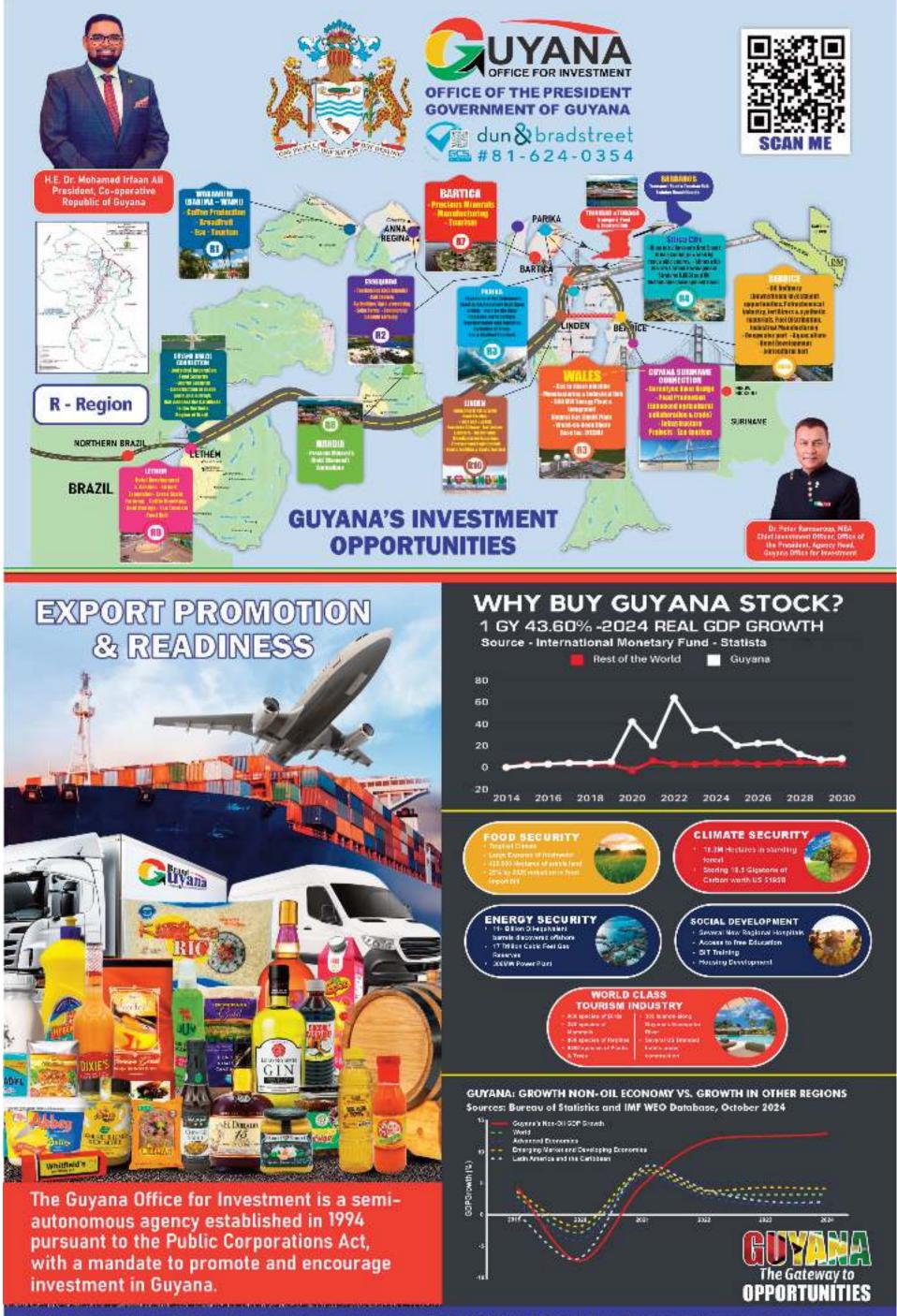
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#### **THURSDAY MAY 22 2025**

# Supreme Court ruling on TPS leaves Venezuelan families in USA in fear

A U.S Supreme Court ruling that allows the Trump administration to strip deportation protections and work permits from hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans — including many in South Florida, home to an estimated 175,000 people from the South American country — sent shock waves throughout the greater Miami region and across the Sunshine State on Monday.

"That the U.S. would terminate the protections for Venezuelans now, when nothing has improved back home, is just unbelievable," said Betsy Diaz, a Venezuelan-American in Hialeah whose two daughters, five grandchildren and several other relatives will lose the protections.

In a two-paragraph order, the nation's highest court on Monday granted an emergency request from the White House to roll back a lower court judge's order that kept in place Temporary Protected Status for about 350,000 Venezuelans.

Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans could now be at risk being sent back to a homeland deep in the throes of political repression and economic collapse.

Many TPS holders came to the U.S. to flee life-threatening dangers in Venezuela, including government persecution.

The impact in Florida will be particularly acute: Of all 350,000 TPS holders living in the state, the Congressional Research Service estimates that about 225,000 are Venezuelan.

"This administration and their cruel choices disregard any basic humanity we are seeking for," said Cecilia González Herrera, a Venezuelan TPS holder from Kissimmee and one of the individual plaintiffs in the case. "Returning to Venezuela is not safe at all."



Venezuela had seen "notable" improvements in economy, public health and crime. But Diaz, the Hialeah grandmother, pointed to a recent State Department travel advisory that warned Americans to not travel there because of the high risk of wrongful detention, torture, terrorism and kidnapping, as well as crime, civil unrest, and the country's poor health infrastructure.

"And yet they're eliminating TPS for Venezuelans?" she asked. "It doesn't make any sense."

Marisol Silva, 64, and her husband came to Doral in 2021 to reunite with their daughter, a journalist. She had fled Venezuela years before them because the country's government had persecuted her because of her work. She feared facing the same fate as several of her colleagues, imprisoned for reporting on the country's humanitarian crisis.

Silva and her husband will keep their work permits through a pending immigration process, but she's deeply worried about losing deportation protections through TPS. Still, she holds out hope that there will be other pathways to stay.

#### Cecilia González Herrera

run out in September. The Trump administration has not yet officially eliminated the protections, but will almost certainly move to do so in the coming year.

'Other Venezuelan community leaders in South Florida also expressed dismay following Monday's ruling.

Even if the courts ultimately uphold TPS for Venezuela, it won't make much of a difference for those who are deported while litigation is pending becourt judge's order.

Adelys Ferro, a Miami-based immigration activist whose organization, the Venezuelan American Caucus, is part of the lawsuit, told reporters on Monday it was a very difficult day for the Venezuelan community.

"The fight is not over. The fight does not stop. The fight is barely starting," said Ferro. "This is everyone's home. Especially those who cannot return to Venezuela under any concept."



The Orlando area is home to an estimated 66,000 Venezuelans.

For the loved ones of TPS beneficiaries, the Supreme Court decision ignites fear of family separations and the loss of livelihoods.

When it moved to revoke the TPS protections in February, the Department of Homeland Security said

"I still believe there will be other legal avenues for our community," said Silva.

Another group of 300,000 Venezuelans have protections under a separate 2021 designation that is set to

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Guyana Agriculture Minister Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha is currently attending the opening of the National Toshaos Council Conference 2025 at the Arthur Chung Conference Center. Minister Mustapha also engaged toshaos and village representatives at the event. cause the high court lifted the lower



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#### **EQUALITY NEWS**



## **EDITORIAL & OPINIONS**

## Flooding: Boots on the ground a good start

Editorial from Trinidad Newsday, May 21 2025

GOVERNMENTS like to take surface-level steps to address flooding. But few go far enough to tackle root causes.

The rainy season has begun, and, as in 2010, the new administration of Kamla Persad-Bissessar has risen to the occasion.

In response to flooding nationwide, officials have strapped on boots and hit the ground. Ravi Ratiram, Jearlean John and Khadijah Ameen were among those in the field in Aranguez on May 18. These ministers – responsible for agriculture, works and local government – should be applauded.

Within 12 hours, equipment was dispatched to clear debris. A minister promised to look afresh at compensation schemes for farmers. A total of 114 watercourse-clearing projects were earmarked.

But these activities, essential as they are, are just modest strides.

Clearing and maintaining drains, combating littering, building ponds with pumps and maintaining them, commissioning studies and sourcing international funding – there is a way in which the dogged focus on all of this by successive administrations has resulted in a myopic approach.

The central issue of land-use regulation has fallen by the wayside.

And, despite one or two equivocating references here and there in manifesto documents, we heard very little on the 2025 general election hustings about the pre-eminent existential crisis of our time: climate change.

The country's immediate flooding problem must be reckoned with. But that process needs a deeper response.

The problem does not disappear when the waters subside and when the dry season comes. The factors involved demand a far wider timeframe of planning, policymaking, resource allocation and action.

It is not just a matter of how much money local government corporations are getting annually to clear drains, and which corporations are getting more than others.

It is a question of how the central government is responding to the rapid pace of urban development, unco-ordinated land usage, resultant changes to runoff dynamics and subterranean flows and the breakdown of centuries-old infrastructure networks.

It is not just a matter of how farmers should be compensated, how much they should get and how long the process should take.

It is about the fact that flooding affects not only agricultural land but also urban spaces. The costs are, thus, far-ranging and multifaceted. Farmers lose crops. Businesses lose productive hours. Taxis stop. Schools are disrupted. The ruralurban divide has been rendered moot. Diego Martin and Trincity were this week as much flashpoints as Aranguez and St Helena.

And it is certainly not just a matter of playing a political blame game.

It is about the need to mitigate the likelihood of flooding in an era when ordinary rainfall is deadly and devastating.

Boots were on the ground this week. That's good. But it's just a start.

## Facts show PPP did better on sugar production

#### Dear Editor,

Recently, the print media was dominated with letters and commentaries on sugar production under the PPP/C Government post 2020. Of interest, one letter written on May 16, 2025, contends that:

"The PPP/C government will come and tell the people of this country during this year's elections campaign that the sugar industry produced poorly in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 because the APNU+AFC government closed sugar estates during the reorganization of the sugar industry. However, the question must be asked, how is it that despite the reorganization process, the industry still produced two to three times more sugar from 2016 to 2020, earned over US\$200M more and with less resources? Well, it is always very easy to destroy things, but very difficult, costly and time-consuming to build and rebuild things. Before I demonstrate with statistical facts, it would be remiss of me not to remind readers and the critics that the APNU+AFC government had completely disregarded its own advice not to close any of the sugar estates, vis-à-vis, the Commission of Inquiry (COI) report on the sugar industry.

Now for the facts. The APNU+AFC government closed four (4) sugar estates, namely: Skeldon, Rose Hall, Enmore and Wales. When the PPP/C government resumed office in 2020, work began to reopen only two of those estates: Rose Hall and Skeldon. As of 2022, according to the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) annual report, the reopened estates were not yet accounting for total production, which is understandable. It took a considerable amount of time and resources to put back those estates into production. It was not an easy task then, and it is still not an easy task now.

total hectares (ha) harvested was 42, 784, which generated 206,618 metric tons (MT) of sugar, with an average yield/ha of 4.8 mt in 2015. Conversely, as of 2022, a total of 15, 686 ha were harvested, which generated a total of 47, 049 mt of sugar, with an average yield/ha of 3 mt. In other words, in 2022, almost three times (3x) less sugar cane was harvested, and 4.4x less sugar was produced owing to a lower average yield way of cultivating an additional 5,000+ ha of land through the Skeldon estate.

With this in mind, the hard fact of the matter is that the sugar industry is in this current state, producing 4.4x less sugar than it did in 2015, largely because of the closure of the four estates by the APNU+AFC government in the 2015-2020 period. And the PPP/C government could have practically reopened only two of those estates. Although work began by the PPP/C government almost immediately to reopen these two estates, Rose Hall and Skeldon, they did not start producing until post 2022/23 in the case of Rose Hall and post

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per ha.

In 2024, readers would recall that the Government of Guyana (GoG) had reported on the efforts being made to increase production by 2023/24 in the case of Skeldon.

Yours respectfully, Joel Bhagwandin



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# Canada coach understands why some fans may not want to travel to US for Gold Cup

**By Denise Singh** LJI REPORTER

Canada men's national team head coach Jesse Marsch says he understands why some fans may be hesitant to travel to the United States for the upcoming CONCACAF Gold Cup, citing concerns over the current political climate and potential difficulties at the border.

"I can understand the trepidation for anyone considering travel to the U.S. right now," Marsch said during a Zoom news conference on Monday. "It's unfortunate that we even have to frame travel this way, but everyone has to make the decisions that are best for themselves and their circumstances."

Marsch's comments come amid reports of increased scrutiny at U.S. border crossings since President Donald Trump began his second term in January. Several Canadian travelers have reportedly been detained and later forced to return home at their own expense.

One notable case involved Jasmine Mooney, a Canadian actor and entrepreneur with a valid U.S. work visa, who was held for 12 days by U.S. border officials in San Diego before being released in March.

According to Statistics Canada, Canadian return trips by air from the U.S. fell 20% in April, while return trips by car dropped 35%.

Marsch, 51, was appointed as Canada's head coach in May 2024. The Wisconsin-born American previously managed clubs including CF Montréal, New York Red Bulls, Red Bull Salzburg, RB Leipzig, and Leeds United.

With Canada co-hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup alongside the U.S.



and

Mexico, the upcoming Gold Cup will serve as a key test.

Canada begins its campaign on June 17 in Vancouver against Honduras, before traveling to Houston for matches against Curaçao (June 21) and El Salvador (June 24).

"It would be a real shame if we didn't get the level of fan support our team deserves, especially with the potential we have in this tournament," Marsch said.

"We're aiming to reach the final. I know we'll have great support in Vancouver, but I hope we see that in the U.S. as well."

The 2024 CONCACAF Gold Cup runs from June 14 to July 6 across 14 venues—13 of them in the United

## 3 siblings killed in car crash

#### Canadian coach Jesse Marsch

States.

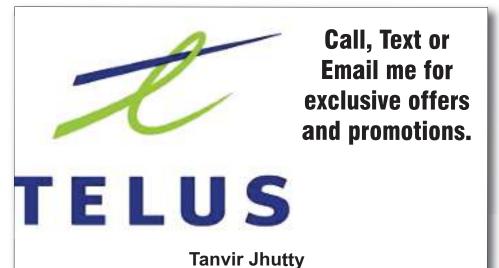
The tournament is the regional championship for North and Central America and the Caribbean.

However, Marsch will not be on the sideline for Canada's first two matches due to a two-game suspension from CONCACAF. The ban stems from his behavior toward officials and

#### re-

fusal to leave the field during a Nations League third-place match against the U.S. on March 23.

Mexico leads the tournament's alltime wins with nine titles, followed by the U.S. with seven. Canada's lone Gold Cup victory came in 2000.



A 19-year-old man has been charged with impaired driving causing death after three children were killed in an overnight crash on a Highway 401 exit in Etobicoke, Toronto police say.

The crash happened at about 12:30 a.m. Sunday near Renforth Drive and Highway 401 on the eastbound off ramp, police said in a news release. The location is on the Toronto side of the border with Peel Region, police confirmed in an email.

A Dodge Caravan was heading eastbound on Highway 401 and exited at Renforth Drive, Acting Insp. Baheer Sarbanandan said. The vehicle was travelling at high speed on the exit ramp, lost control and went over a raised median.

It then collided with a Chrysler Pacifica minivan that was stopped at a red light, Sarbanandan said. Inside the minivan were a mother, her four children and an acquaintance of the family who was driving the vehicle.

A 15-year-old and a 13-year-old were pronounced dead at the scene, police said. A six-year-old girl was taken to hospital, where she was pronounced dead, Sarbanandan said. The victims cannot be identified due to a court order.

Ethan Lehouillier, of Georgetown, Ont., faces three counts each of impaired operation of a conveyance causing death and impaired operation of a conveyance causing bodily harm.

He has also been charged with three counts each of dangerous driving causing death and dangerous driving causing bodily harm.

#### Email - tanvir.jhutty@telus.com Cell - 647-577-4618



# India ready to support Guyana as Venezuelan hostily rises

INDIA has expressed strong support for a peaceful resolution to the Guyana-Venezuela border controversy, underscoring the need for adherence to international law and the ongoing proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

In a recent media engagement on Saturday, the Indian High Commissioner to Guyana, Dr. Amit Telang, emphasised India's position of non-interference, while affirming solidarity with Guyana as a strategic partner.

"We are very closely following the developments. We are maintaining a constant dialogue with the Government of Guyana," the High Commissioner said when asked about India's response to Venezuela's continued claims to Guyana's Essequibo region, a territory that comprises over two-thirds of Guyana.

The High Commissioner reaffirmed India's trust in the ICJ, where the border case is currently being heard, and supported Guyana's decision to resolve the controversy through international mechanisms.

"The matter is already in the International Court of Justice. The Government of Guyana has provided its position already in the ICJ. The matter is under consideration in the ICJ and I think Government of Guyana has already made it clear that they will respect whatever judgement would come from ICJ," he said.

Venezuela, however, has continuously disregarded the provisions of the court.

The Spanish-speaking nation recently announced that it intends to hold elections in Guyana's Essequibo region. The Venezuelan election plan, set to be executed on May 25, 2025, is seen as a violation of the Court's Order and international law.

Earlier this month, the ICJ unanimously reaffirmed the provisional measures granted in December 2023 and told Venezuela that it must refrain from conducting, or preparing to conduct, elections in the Essequibo region. from Venezuela in its attempt to assert control over Guyana's sovereign territory.

In response to these developments, the High Commissioner also referenced the Argyle Declaration signed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in December of 2023, during a meeting brokered by Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves between Presidents Irfaan Ali and Nicolás Maduro. The declaration called for dialogue and a commitment to peace.

"Our position is that they should strictly abide with that declaration, and avoid taking any actions which are against the spirit of the declaration which includes of course also the election," he said.

Asked whether India would offer direct support to Guyana in the event of aggression or escalation by Venezuela, the High Commissioner said the nature of India's assistance would depend on the request from the Guyanese government. "It depends on what kind of support the Government of Guyana wants from us. And as I said, we are constantly in touch, we keep talking to the authorities in the Government of Guyana, and when that type of situation happens and Government of Guyana approaches us, yes we will continue to support Guyana," he shared.

The Venezuelan regime is disputing the Essequibo with Guyana

He declined to speculate on military or diplomatic interventions, reiterating that India respects Guyana's sovereign decisions and is prepared to assist in accordance with its needs.

"Let us wait and as I said, we respect the position of the Government of Guyana and we will let the Government of Guyana come to us. Once support is requested, India is ready to support," the High Commissioner said.

Meanwhile, A string of armed attacks on Guyanese soldiers patrolling the disputed Essequibo region has intensified tensions.

The Guyana Defence Force reported that three separate incidents took place within a 24-hour span along the Cuyuní River, near the contested border. Armed men in civilian clothing targeted Defence Force patrols in areas between Eteringbang and Makapa. In a statement issued Thursday, the force confirmed that no soldiers were injured and characterized its responses as "measured" and "calculated." "On each occasion, the Guyana Defence Force executed a measured response, and no rank sustained any injuries," the statement read. The military added that it would "continue to respond to acts of aggression along the Guyana-Venezuela border."

This latest wave of violence marks the second such incident this year. In February, six Guyanese soldiers were wounded in an ambush allegedly carried out by masked gunmen crossing from the Venezuelan side.

The renewed hostilities come amid an increasingly volatile dispute over the Essequibo region — a sparsely populated, resource-rich area that comprises about two-thirds of Guyana's territory. Venezuela has long claimed the land as its own, despite a 1899 arbitration award that recognized it as part of Guyana.

Adding to the tension, Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López last month accused the United States of plotting to overthrow President Nicolás Maduro in order to seize control of the Essequibo.

ASIN ASIN ASIN ASIN ASIN ASIN ASIN ANTI LLES ST. LUCIA ANTI LLES ST. LUCIA BARBADOS 

The Essequibo region has been the subject of a decades-old territorial claim by Venezuela, which intensified in recent years and led to controversial statements

Speaking during a televised address Tuesday, Padrino López claimed the territory was being targeted as a "spoil of war" for U.S. interests.



# Carney expresses disapproval over UK's invitation to Trump to visit

**By Denise Singh** LJI REPORTER

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has voiced his disapproval of the UK government's invitation to former US President Donald Trump for a second state visit, saying Canadians were not "impressed" by the gesture.

Speaking to Sky News, the newly elected prime minister said the invitation—extended earlier this year—was poorly timed, as Canadians were facing repeated, provocative remarks from Trump suggesting Canada should become the 51st US state.

"To be frank, [Canadians] weren't impressed by that gesture... given the circumstance," Carney stated. "It came at a time when we were being quite clear about our concerns around sovereignty."

UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer invited Trump during a White House meeting in February.

When asked if the move was appropriate, Carney responded diplomatically: "That's a decision for the UK government and Buckingham Palace. I leave the diplomacy to them."

Both Carney's office and No 10 declined further comment when contacted.

Buckingham Palace, also approached, deferred to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Carney's criticism comes just



ahead of a high-profile visit by King Charles III and Queen Camilla to Canada later this month.

The King, who is Canada's head of state, has been invited by Carney to open the new session of Parliament—a symbolic gesture underscoring Canadian sovereignty.

"This is not coincidental," Carney said, calling the event "a reaffirming moment" amid ongoing concerns about Canada's independence.

He noted that President Trump's recent rhetoric had only amplified those concerns.

King Charles is expected to de-

Prime Minister Mark Carney

liver the Speech from the Throne, a duty typically performed by the governor general. This will mark the first time a monarch has delivered the speech since Queen Elizabeth II did so in 1977—and only the second time in Canadian history.

Trump, since returning to the White House, has reignited controversy with remarks dismissing Canada's border as an "artificially drawn line" and suggesting a closer political union with the US. Carney has firmly rejected those ideas.

"Canada is not for sale—ever," he said.

Carney met with Trump in Washington, D.C., last week to initiate talks on a new trade and security agreement. During that meeting, Trump once again floated the notion of Canada becoming the 51st state.

Pressed on those comments, Carney said Trump appeared to shift from suggesting it was inevitable to expressing a desire for it—but acknowledged Trump also seemed to understand it was unrealistic.

"He came from a place where he recognised that was not going to happen," Carney said.

#### Documentary questions the truth about Soleiman Faqiri's death in prison

**By Clarissa Ali** LJI REPORTER

On December 15, 2016, Soleiman Faqiri died in a jail cell at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ontario, while being restrained by correctional officers. He had schizoaffective disorder and had been arrested 11 days earlier following an incident in which he allegedly stabbed a neighbour during a psychotic episode. The powerful documentary My Brother, Soleiman follows the emotional journey of Faqiri's brother, Yusuf, as he seeks justice for Soleiman's death.



"You don't really understand schizophrenia, or any mental illness, until you watch someone you love go through it," Yusuf says in the documentary. "He was not the same person... This is not

At the heart of the film is a coroner's inquest that features never-before-seen security footage from inside the prison, capturing the final, harrowing moments of Faqiri's life.

Once a star athlete and engineering student at the University of Waterloo, Soleiman was known for his leadership and charisma.

"He was one of the most popular people in his class," Yusuf recalls in the film. But at age 19, after surviving a car accident, Soleiman was diagnosed with schizophrenia — a turning point that changed

#### Soleiman Faqiri: died in prison

the course of his life.

After his death, Yusuf launched a national movement, Justice for Soli, leading a seven-year campaign to uncover the truth. Despite three police investigations that resulted in no criminal charges, a 2023 coroner's inquest found that correctional officers had violated policy dozens of times on the day of Soleiman's death.

The jury's final ruling was damning: his death was classified as a homicide.

Soleiman."

Additional footage shows Faqiri, off his medication and in the grips of psychosis, barely able to communicate. Though correctional staff had raised concerns about his condition, calls for medical help were repeatedly dismissed.

On the day he died, security footage shows a sergeant striking Faqiri after he allegedly spat at him.

The situation spiraled as Faqiri was restrained and dragged into a cell. Officers placed a spit hood over his head, pepper-sprayed him twice, and struck him multiple times. He died shortly afterward.

My Brother, Soleiman exposes the systemic breakdowns that led to Soleiman Faqiri's death and shines a light on the treatment of individuals with mental illness in Ontario's correctional system.

The film is a sobering call for accountability, justice, and urgent reform.

The documentary premieres Wednesday, Nov. 13 at 9 p.m. ET on CBC Television. It is also available to stream now on CBC Gem and the CBC Docs YouTube channel.

#### **EQUALITY NEWS**



PPP General Secretary and Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo

# Guyana repositioned as a global leader on green growth and sustainability: Jagdeo

THE People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government has been forced to pick up where it left off in 2015, in the areas of environmental sustainability and economic growth, since the previous administration was unable to execute an effective strategy.

This was the view shared by General Secretary of the PPP, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, during his weekly press conference at Freedom House on Thursday.

Dr Jagdeo lambasted the former administration for its haphazard approach towards the issue of environmental sustainability. He said their strategy, the Green State Development Strategy, only accrued minimal benefits during its imA significant portion of these funds have been directed to Amerindian communities for the execution of 1500 sustainable economic projects.

This has amounted to some \$9.6 billion in the last few years, with an additional \$4 billion to be injected this year.

The remainder has been set aside for climate-proof infrastructure, such as the construction of pump stations, kokers, and Hope-like canals.

These initiatives, he said, have repositioned Guyana as a global leader on green growth and sustainability.

"I'm extremely pleased that we are also giving leadership in this regard globally," he said. tion.

Dr. Jagdeo revealed that government is now in the process of exploring whether Guyana can also receive financing from the preservation of its rich biodiversity.

"[Considering] our success with forest carbon-related financing, we're now trying to see if the same approach could be used in biodiversity financing," the general secretary, who also performs the duties of vice president, posited. Notwithstanding this, Guyana continues to be a global leader in forest conservation, with the LCDS 2030 demonstrating real results in climate finance.

It is the first country in the world to issue ART-TREES credits, issuing 33.4 million credits in late 2022.

Thus far, Guyana has sold about 30% of its credits, earning a minimum of US\$750 million in a sale to Hess Corporation. (DPI)

#### Regional security gets a boost

THE National Assembly, on Friday, passed the Advanced Passenger Information and Passenger Name

the major challenges facing the region. He pointed out that CARICOM Heads of Government have identified crime as a critical priority.Nandlall explained that the legislation provides for the collection, transmission, sharing, storage and regulation of advanced passenger information and passenger name records for individuals travelling to, departing from, or transiting through Guyana. It also operationalises the CARICOM Advance Passenger Crew Information System. With increasing passenger traffic through regional ports, the Attorney General emphasised the importance of robust border security measures.

plementation.

"He [President Granger] planted some trees in Bartica, two trees in Mabaruma that he flew in to plant, and that was their [strategy]. [He] took the solar panel that we bought for Amerindian communities [and] put it on State House. That was their Green State Strategy," he chided.

Contrasting this with the track record of the PPP/C administration, Dr Jagdeo highlighted the hundreds of millions of US dollars earned through Guyana's Expanded Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). Just last week, the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) launched a multi-day conference where delegates from around the world gathered to analyse Guyana's policy document on incentivising its environmental credentials.

The FCLP, originally initiated in 2022, comprises 32 countries with immense forest cover that collectively advocate for climate financing to enhance economic advancement.

Guyana and the United Kingdom are currently co-chairing the organisa-

Record (APIPNR) Bill, establishing a central database to enable CARICOM member states to share information on passengers and cargo transiting the region.

The legislation also aims to address transnational organised crime across the Caribbean. The bill was developed by the legislative committee of the Caribbean Community (CARI-COM) to strengthen multilateral cooperation and regional security.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, noted that crime remains one of

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#### **THURSDAY MAY 22 2025**

# India-Guyana ties strengthened through capacity building, culture

INDIAN High Commissioner to Guyana, Dr. Amit Telang, has reported a significant increase in the number of Guyanese benefitting from India's capacity building programmes over the years, marking another chapter in the deepening partnership between the two nations.

Speaking during a recent media engagement, Dr. Telang highlighted that Guyanese participation in training and scholarship opportunities, particularly under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), has grown from 50 to over 140 individuals, all in the last two years.

These initiatives cover critical sectors including agriculture, education, media and communications, and cyber security, among others.

According to a release from the High Commission of India, the broad range of training programmes reflects India's continued commitment to supporting Guyana's human resource development.

In addition to technical cooperation, Dr. Telang noted that the High Commission has been actively organising cultural and yoga events across the country in partnership with the Government of Guyana and local socio-cultural organisations.

One of the highlights is the ongoing Indian folk-art exhibition at the National Museum in Georgetown.

The exhibition, hosted in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport and the Bihar Museum in



Indian High Commissioner to Guyana, Dr. Amit Telang

India, forms part of the India-Guyana Cultural Exchange Programme initiated during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic visit to Guyana in November 2024.

Prime Minister Modi's three-day State visit marked the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Guyana in over 50 years and saw the signing of five landmark Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with President Dr. Irfaan Ali. These agreements covered areas such as co-operation to improve regulatory standards in healthcare, collaboration in oil and gas development, joint efforts to strengthen agricultural innovation and food security, alignment of medical standards and practices through pharmacopeia, and a partnership to explore the introduction of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) digital payments technology in Guyana. Additionally, India pledged further support to Guyana's defence capabilities including the provision of Dornier aircraft and extended the bilateral cultural agreement through 2027.

High Commissioner Telang affirmed that the advancements not only reflect India's strategic support but also symbolise the enduring friendship and shared values between the two nations.

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



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.



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: <u>mail@wgc-org.com</u> Telephone: 1-800-317-0804



#### **EQUALITY NEWS**

# 16-Foot Hanuman murti inaugurated at Sparta Mandir; tallest in Essequibo

HISTORY was made on Sunday at the Seeta Ram Radhay Shyaam Mandir in Sparta in Region Two, where a magnificent 16-foot murti of Lord Hanuman was officially inaugurated—becoming the tallest Hanuman statue of its kind on the Essequibo Coast.

The three-day yajna, which began on Friday, concluded with the grand unveiling of the sacred murti before a large gathering of devoted worshippers.

The spiritually uplifting event featured nightly discourses, bhajans, and cultural presentations, uniting the com-

HISTORY was made on Sunday at munity in reverence, reflection, and cel-Seeta Ram Radhay Shyaam Mandir ebration.

> This monumental murti was generously donated by the Soklall family in loving memory of their late parents. Imported from India, the murti stands not only as a symbol of devotion and strength, but also as a significant milestone for the mandir and the wider Hindu community in Region Two.

> Regional Vice Chairman, Humace Oodit, attended the second night's service and used the opportunity to congratulate the Hindu community.





#### The towering murti at Sparta mandir

Oodit said he admired the togetherness and co-operation and said that Hindus can use the opportunity to conduct puja.

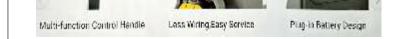
An Executive member of the Mandir, Bharat Parmanand thanked the donor and said that it was a community effort. He said that the murti will be made available to the Hindu community for worship.

He said that Lord Hanuman is known as the Hindu God of strength and courage.

Greetings on the occasion poured

Sabha and other organisations also. The inauguration of this sacred image is a testament to enduring faith and cultural pride, and it is expected to inspire generations to come.

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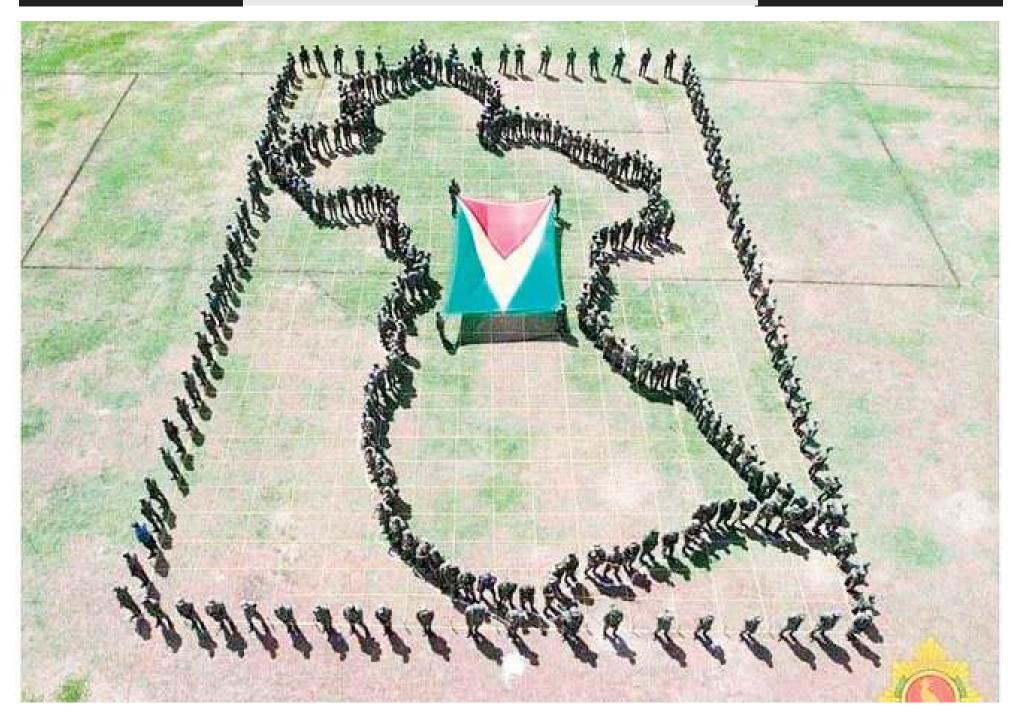
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#### **THURSDAY MAY 22 2025**



# Gov't condemns 'unpatriotic' spread of Venezuelan propaganda

THE Government of Guyana has condemned what it described as "unpatriotic and sustained efforts" by certain individuals to spread Venezuelan propaganda online, warning that such actions are aimed at sowing division and fear among the population.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation called out individuals who have been sharing misleading or fabricated content, much of which it said is either unrelated to

The warning comes amid increased online activity linked to Venezuela's disinformation campaign, which continues to falsely assert sovereignty over Guyanese territory in violation of international law.

The warning comes as Venezuela intensifies its propaganda campaign to support its baseless claim over Guyana's Essequibo region.

The campaign has included fake news videos, manipulated AI-generated images, and disinformation spread by social media accounts linked to pro-Venezuelan interests. In some instances, videos falsely depicting border invasions have been circulated, claims which the Venezuelan government has not publicly debunked.

To this end, Nandlall related that the government continues to appeal to people to not do those things and not pay heed to those publications.

Against this backdrop, he said that the Government of Guyana will continue to intensify its public engagements on the question of the border controversy.

As part of its digital countermeasures, the Government has engaged Meta (Facebook's parent company) regarding a surge in deceptive content.

ing out of the Venezuelan government on the border controversy, explaining that the neighbouring country is involved in a massive propaganda campaign on the issue.

"So, these are all deliberate misinterpretations of the Geneva Agreement, that the government of Venezuela has been propagating and if we are not careful, I think we can get really caught and sucked into that level of propaganda," Streete said.

She describes Venezuela's continued claims over the Essequibo as increasingly ridiculous that has no basis in law and goes against the spirit of the Geneva Agreement. "Venezuela's claims became more outrageous so essentially what happened the Government of Venezuela started out by declaring that the award was invalid from this original declaration. "Venezuela then graduated her claim to the Essequibo region, and then it moved from the Essequibo belong to Venezuela to the waters off the coast of Essequibo belonging to Venezuela, then it moved from that to now claim has graduated to include the water off the Coast of even the water of Demerara and Berbice," Streete pointed out. The Government has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to peace and international legal processes.

Guyana, outdated, or entirely false.

"The Government of Guyana has noted the unpatriotic and sustained efforts of some in spreading Venezuelan propaganda; some of which is dated, some not related to Guyana and some totally fabricated. These posts are generated to create unease, tension and unnecessary worry among the population, no doubt with an ulterior political motive," the Ministry stated.

The Ministry urged citizens to rely solely on official government communications regarding matters related to Venezuela, particularly as tensions continue over that country's unlawful claim to Guyana's Essequibo region.

"We urge Guyanese to rely only on official communications on this matter and avoid falling prey to those with an alternative unpatriotic agenda," the statement added.

Previously, Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, S.C. has appealed to citizens to only listen to and read the official channels of communication regarding the ongoing border controversy.

"We caution against such publications, they do nobody any good; they certainly don't have a positive impact on the psyche of Guyanese, and they can lead not only to unnecessary apprehension, tension and stress, but can also lead to provocative acts, which can be inimical to our national interest at this point in time," he said.

Several fake pages and profiles have been created to circulate maps falsely depicting the Essequibo region as part of Venezuela.

Although some users have reported the misleading content, many of the accounts remain active.

Venezuela has ramped up its claims for Guyana's Essequibo region in recent years as oil discoveries by ExxonMobil in the prolific Stabroek Block continue to increase.

Guyana approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2018 asking it to rule on the validity of the 1899 pact which settled the land border between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Director of Frontiers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Donnette Streete, had also previously cautioned Guyanese to be careful with following some of the utterances com-

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# Home loan limit increased to \$30 million: NBSL ready to serve

PROVIDING a courteous, reliable service and cheap loans, the New Building Society Limited (NBSL), is eagerly waiting and is ready to serve persons desirous of building their own houses, with instantaneous approval of loans.

This comment follows the announcement by President, Dr Irfaan Ali that the NBS loan limit will be increased from \$20 million to \$30 million, with a capped interest rate of five per cent aimed at making homeownership more accessible to Guyanese.

The NBS's Chairman Dr Nanda Gopaul stated that with the granting of this \$30 million, homeowners can save a significant sum of money as a result of this decision by the government to ensure that persons can pay an affordable mortgage.

The capped interest rate will be applied to the entire \$30 million sum, allowing homeowners to save some \$40,000 to \$50,000 per month. There is an expectation that this will be passed on to other commercial banks, bringing further benefits to homeowners around the country.

Speaking exclusively with the Daily Chronicle on Tuesday, Dr Gopaul said that already, a number of persons have tried to capitalise on this new opportunity.

Further, the chairman noted that around 15 persons have visited the NBS to upgrade their mortgages.

"We would have been happy if we could have automatically do it and started disbursement, but there is a legal process in which the amendment to the rules will have to be gazetted by the Minister of Finance and we expect that to be done shortly," he said.

He continued: "And then a fresh application will have to be made for a second mortgage, to top up the amount from \$20 to \$30 or \$15, whatever the total is in the first mortgage, to the amount that will be required to complete the homes."

PROVIDING a courteous, reliable their own homes at these affordable ice and cheap loans, the New Build-mortgage rates.

He said that the NBS will continue to do its part as a good corporate citizen, to ensure that each applicant is given favourable consideration, as well as help to build their dream homes.

Dr Gopaul expressed, "We are looking forward for them to come in, use the opportunity that has presented itself now, and to insure without delay, because some of the repayment terms are lower than house rent. So, it is better you own your own home and put the money which you are supposed to pay as rent as an installment in your own." He noted that Guyanese should capitalise on and make good use of the benefits that are being given, to ensure that each housing scheme and community is developed.

According to the NBS Chairman, "So all the empty lots which are around, they are not doing themselves a good service. They are doing themselves a disservice with what the government has done, with the banks and for the homeowners."

Notably, the NBS has reduced all requirements needed for loan applications.



**Dr Nanda Gopaul** 

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Noting that the government's massive housing drive through the Ministry of Housing and Water, Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA) has been in full swing over the last three years, Dr Gopaul said the NBS is eagerly looking forward to being of service to the vast majority of beneficiaries, giving them courteous, reliable service and cheap loans.

He pointed out that the government has not only worked to give citizens house lots, but to enable them to build





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#### **EQUALITY NEWS**



**THURSDAY MAY 22 2025** 

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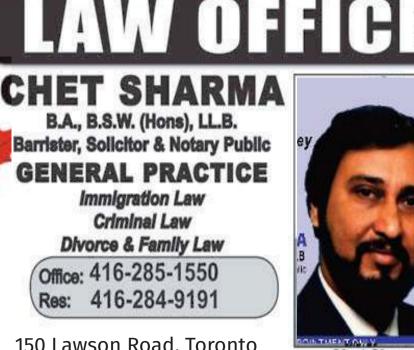
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# President Ali hails Indigenous communities for vigilance, strength

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali on Monday hailed Indigenous communities, specifically those near the Guyana-Venezuela border, for their continued vigilance and protection amidst ongoing tension with the neighbouring Spanishspeaking nation.

Dr. Ali was at the time addressing the opening ceremony of the National Toshaos Council Conference, during which he also thanked all men and women in uniform who are stationed at the country's borders defending Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Importantly, he said, "I want to thank all of you, especially those who live in the border communities, for your vigilance, for your strong protection, for your patriotism, for your strength of character, for you who stand up every day on the border, raising our Golden Arrowhead high and strong."

He went on to thank Guyana's international partners who continue to stand strong with the country, and are vocal in their support for the Rule of Law and international order and peace.

He said, "You hold a special place in the heart of Guyana and every Guyanese."

Meanwhile, Head of the National Toshaos Council, Dereck John noted that they have observed the threats coming from the neighbouring country, and called on the international community to stand by Guyana's side.

"We need the international community to stand by our side, so that we can allow the legal process to take its course," John said.

However, while he noted that some of the threats are driving fear in some bordering communities, the people there stand strong, thanks to their confidence in the President and the government.

"I know that you have a plan," John



#### President Dr. Irfaan Ali (left) and Head of the National Toshaos Council, Dereck John

sion and fear among Guyanese citizens. Guyanese to rely solely on official gov-The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has urged

ernment communications regarding matters related to Venezuela, particularly as tension continues to mount over that country's unlawful claim to Guyana's Essequibo region.



said, adding: "We have confidence in your government that you will continue to protect every single Guyanese. And we want to thank you, and we trust your government, Mr. President."

Most recently, the Government of Guyana had cause to condemn what was described as unpatriotic and sustained efforts by individuals to spread Venezuelan propaganda Online, warning that such actions are aimed at sowing divi-



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#### **EQUALITY NEWS**







## Trump's offer to mediate Kashmir conflict puts India in a tight spot

For decades, if there's one thing that's been a Trump's comments. taboo in the Indian foreign ministry, it is thirdparty mediation - particularly in the long-running dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir.

Those in the know, then, are not surprised that US President Donald Trump - known for his unorthodox diplomacy - has touched a raw nerve in Delhi.

On Saturday, he took to social media to announce that India and Pakistan - after four tense days of cross-border clashes - had agreed to a "full and immediate ceasefire", brokered by the US.

Later, in another post he said: "I will work with you both to see if, after a thousand years, a solution can be arrived at, concerning Kashmir."

The Kashmir dispute dates back to 1947, when India got independence from British rule and was partitioned to create Pakistan. Both neighbours claim the Kashmir region in whole, but administer it only in part.

Several rounds of bilateral talks over the decades have not yielded any resolution. India treats Kashmir as an integral part of its territory and rules out any negotiation, particularly through a third party.

The latest flare-up began after India carried out air strikes on what it called terrorist infrastructure inside Pakistan in the aftermath of the attack on tourists in Indian-administered Kashmir last month, killing 26 people, mainly tourists.

"We also appreciate President Trump's expressed willingness to support efforts aimed at the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute - a longstanding issue that has serious implications for peace and security in South Asia and beyond," a foreign ministry statement said..

Delhi's position on Kashmir has hardened, especially after it withdrew the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, triggering widespread protests in Kashmir.

President Trump's recent comments have irked many Indians, who see this as an attempt to "internationalise" the Kashmir dispute.

The main opposition Congress party wanted an explanation from the government and an allparty meeting on the "ceasefire announcements made from Washington DC first".

"Have we opened the doors to third-party mediation? The Indian National Congress would like to ask if diplomatic channels between India and Pakistan are being reopened," said the Congress party spokesman Jairam Ramesh.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's statement announcing the ceasefire also said that the two countries have also agreed "to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site". This has caught the Indians by surprise.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): It's now time to step up the pace and leave your rivals behind. The Sun's change of signs today will boost both your physical and mental energy and make it easier to tackle tasks that daunt other people. You're an Aries – nothing fazes you!

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): If a loved one gives you a hard time today it will pay you to find out why. Most likely they are not being obstructive for the fun of it but because they believe you should be spending more time with them. Try not to be so emotionally distant.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): As the Sun moves into your sign today your expectations, both of yourself and of other people, will reach new levels of excellence. Don't try to go it alone though - teamwork is essential if you want to make the most of everyone's talents.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): You may not take a friend's plans seriously but that could turn out to be a mistake later in the week when they achieve something that you could have been a part of. In future, try to accept the fact that other people have good ideas too.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): If you allow minor setbacks to get you down today they could turn into major obstacles, at least in your own mind, towards the end of the week. Keep telling yourself that all things are possible, and most likely they will be.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): As the Sun moves into the area of your chart that governs your status today you must come to terms with the fact that some people are above you and some people are below you in the pecking order. Know your place and make it work for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You have been far too serious about life in recent weeks and need to find ways to approach everyday events from more light-hearted angles. The Sun's move into the most adventurous area of your chart suggests it's time for a change.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Loved ones will be very demanding today and some of the things they expect you to do for them will test your patience to the full. Let them know that you won't be doing anything of an unethical nature, no matter what the rewards may be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Reject negative thinking in all its guises and believe that you have what it takes to be the biggest and the best at what you do in life. Your cando attitude will take you far and rub off on friends and colleagues too. Climb some mountains together.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): At some stage today you will need to admit that you have been far too lenient when dealing with someone who continually lets you down. The fact that they cannot or will not keep up with your expectations means it's time to go on without them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Artistic activities are under excellent stars now the Sun is moving in your favor again, so get out your paint box or your guitar and create a new masterpiece. It may or may not impress the experts but what really matters is that it delights you.

India blames Pakistan of involvement in the incident, a charge denied by Islamabad.

Trump's intervention came as fighting between the two nuclear-armed rivals was threatening to spiral into a full-blown conflict.

The two sides were using fighter jets, missiles and drones and said they were targeting each other's military installations, mainly in the border areas.

While US mediators, alongside diplomatic backchannels, prevented a bigger conflagration, President Trump's offer has put Delhi in a spot.

"Obviously, it would not be welcome by the Indian side. It goes against our stated position for many years," Shyam Saran, a former Indian foreign secretary, said.

Islamabad, on the other hand, has welcomed

Delhi has refused to hold discussions with Islamabad, accusing its neighbour of supporting what it calls cross-border terrorism.

Historically, India has opposed any thirdparty mediation, quoting an agreement signed in 1972 after a war between the two countries a year earlier. As per the Simla agreement signed by the country's leaders, they "resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations".

Indian officials also argue that even when they reach an understanding with a civilian government in Pakistan, the country's powerful military launched operations undermining those deals. They point to the Kargil war in 1999, when another conflict between the two countries began after a group of Pakistan-backed militants occupied strategic areas in Indian-administered Kashmir.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): If you are thinking of starting a new project you should let loved ones in on your plans and invite them to help you. By doing things as a team your understanding of each other's moods and needs will grow and you will move closer together emotionally.

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# **OAS deploys Electoral Observation Mis**sion ahead of Suriname general elections

The Organization of American States (OAS) has begun deploying its Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) to Suriname in preparation for the country's upcoming general elections, scheduled for May 25, 2025.

The OAS mission, led by Chilean economist and international relations expert Irene Klinger, comprises 28 experts and observers representing 15 countries. Klinger, a former OAS Director of External Relations and Executive Secretary of the Summit of the Americas process, will oversee the team's work on the ground.

The mission's focus will include key aspects of the electoral process such as electoral organization, technology, political and campaign financing, electoral justice, and the political participation of women and Indigenous peoples.

In the lead-up to election day, Klinger and her team are expected to meet with Surinamese electoral authorities, government officials, political party representatives, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to gain insight into the electoral landscape. On May 25, observers will be present at polling stations across the country from the opening of the polls through to the vote count and the tabulation of results.

Following the election, the OAS will publish a Preliminary Report outlining the mission's observations and recommendations aimed at bolstering democratic and electoral processes in Suriname.

The deployment of this OAS mis-



Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi

sion has been made possible through financial contributions from Canada, Colombia, France, Italy, Korea, the Netherlands, Peru, and the United States.

This year's general election is notable for a significant change in Suriname's electoral system. For the first

time, all 51 seats in the National Assembly will be elected through a single nationwide party-list proportional representation system. This follows a 2022 ruling by the Constitutional Court declaring the previous system—based on ten multi-member constituencies-unconstitutional. The new framework was approved by the Assembly on October 13, 2023, following a legal challenge initiated by activist Serena Essed.

A total of 14 political parties will contest the 2025 elections as voters prepare to elect a new legislative body under the reformed system.

## No hangings possible under current law, says Trinidad PM

Hangings, though still legally a part of Trinidad and Tobago's justice system, cannot currently be carried out, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar confirmed on Thursday.

The Prime Minister said the conclusion was based on a legal report submitted to her by Attorney General John Jeremie, outlining the status of inmates on death row and the constraints imposed by existing legal precedents. Speaking during a post-Cabinet news conference at the Red House, Persad-Bissessar noted that as of May 10, 2025, there are 38 inmates on death row. Of those, only 18 fall within the timeline established by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Pratt and Morgan ruling-which sets a five-year limit for executions after sentencing.

lished by Pratt and Morgan ruling under the Privy Council," she said. "So, that is only these 18 condemned inmates under the five-year timeline... the other 20 are over the timeline as they have appeals pending."

fast-track the appeals to remain within the five-year execution window, the Prime Minister said, "I will ask my AG to adjust his mind to it. And remember, we have a whole new justice ministry now... because of delays in the justice system, it will take us a few days more than ten days. We can look at that solution." The last executions in Trinidad and Tobago occurred in 1999. Between June 4 and June 7 of that year, alleged drug kingpin Dole Chadee and eight members of his gang were hanged for the 1994 murders of the Baboolal family. On July 28, 1999, Anthony Briggs was also executed for the murder of a taxi driver during a robbery. Trinidad and Tobago had initially signed the American Convention on Human Rights on May 26, 1998, but later withdrew from it. The denunciation took effect on May 26, 1999, making the country the first to formally exit the convention. The move came



"Of these inmates, only 18 are eligible to be hanged, if we accept that these 18 have been sentenced to death and are yet under the timeline estab-

However, even those 18 cannot currently face execution. "In terms of how many inmates can face the death penalty or have the death penalty be carried out at this time... the answer is none, given the state of the law," Persad-Bissessar stated.

She elaborated that one of the 18 has an appeal before the Privy Council, while the remaining 17 have cases pending before the local appellate court-specifically, the Chamber of the Supreme Court.

"It can be said therefore that until these appeals are heard, the death penalty cannot be lawfully carried out at this time, even among the 18," she added.

Asked whether it was possible to

#### Kamla Persad-Bissessar

after concerns that the mandatory death penalty for murder clashed with the Convention's human rights standards.

# Jamaica court rules multiple SoEs to be unconstitutional

In a landmark decision handed down today, Jamaica's Constitutional Court ruled in favour of Opposition People's National Party General Secretary Dr. Dayton Campbell, declaring that the multiple states of public emergency (SOEs) declared by the government between 2018 and 2023 were unconstitutional.

EQUALITY NEWS

The court found that SOEs declared on 15 separate dates — including January 2018, March 2018, April 2019, June 2020, and as recently as February 2023 — were not made for a constitutionally valid purpose, were not demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society, and were inconsistent with the Jamaican Constitution.

The declarations mean the challenged SOEs were void and unconstitutional.

In a major rebuke of the government's use of SOEs in crime fighting, the court also ruled that three so-called rolling proclamations made by the Governor General in November and December 2022 amounted to a breach of the separation of powers. These proclamations effectively bypassed Parliament's role in extending emergency powers beyond the constitutionally permitted 14 days.

Campbell had sought declarations that:

The SOEs declared on January 18, March 18, and September 2018; April 30, July 7, and September 5, 2019; January 6 and June 14, 2020; November 14, 2021; June 17, November 15, December 6, and December 28, 2022; and February 15, 2023, "were not made for any purpose specified in Section 20 of the Constitution and were not demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society and were inconsistent with the Constitution and are void."

2. The SOE declarations by the Governor General on November 15, 2022, December 6, 2022, and December 28, 2022, which declared states of



There was a heavy police presence on the streets of Jamaica during the States of Emergency

public emergency in specified communities, "constituted a breach of the separation of powers principle in that the executive effectively purported to exercise a power that the Constitution reserved to Parliament in relation to the power to extend a state of public emergency for longer than 14 days were therefore inconsistent with the Constitution and are void."

Michael Hylton KC and attorneys Duane Allen, Alexis Robinson, and Daynia Allen represented Dr. Campbell, while Faith Hall, Director of State Proceedings, and attorney Matthew Gabbadon represented the Attorney-General's Chambers.

The court, comprised of a threejudge panel including Justices Bertram Morrison, Andrea Pettigrew Collins, and Simone Wolfe-Reece, had reserved judgment since November 26, 2024. The oral orders were read by Justice Collins, with Justice Morrison absent.

In response, the government announced its intention to appeal the decision. "As it was satisfied with the conduct of the Parliament, the government and the Governor General in declaring these states of emergency, the government will now give serious consideration to this judgment as we appeal the decision," said Attorney General Dr. Derrick McKoy.

The government highlighted the reduction in Jamaica's murder rate as evidence of the effectiveness of SOEs. "The people of Jamaica are experiencing a historic reduction in crime thanks to effective crime-fighting strategies, historic investment in policing infrastructure, increases in the number of police officers, implementation of enhanced intelligence operations, and SOEs. Jamaica recorded 132 fewer murders in the first quarter of 2025, representing the third straight quarterly decline since the second quarter of 2024. Additionally, incidents of shootings, rapes, robberies, and break-ins have all declined consistently over the past six quarters, beginning in the third quarter of 2023," the government's statement said.

The government reaffirmed its commitment to supporting security forces and maintaining public safety while respecting the rule of law. The Attorney General's Chambers is currently undertaking a thorough review of the legal and constitutional implications of the court's decision in preparation for the appeal.

## **T&T to impose restrictions on Kartel concert**

Trinidad and Tobago's Defence Minister, Wayne Sturge, is considering imposing restrictions on the upcoming One Unity Music Festival, which is set to be headlined by Jamaican dancehall star Vybz Kartel.

The proposed measures include limiting the concert to patrons aged 18 and over and barring certain songs from being performed.

The move follows growing public backlash over the explicit content of some of Kartel's lyrics, which critics, including religious groups, have condemned as vulgar and offensive—particularly a song that controversially compares the quality of a woman's genitalia to Jesus.

In a statement released on Friday,

Minister Sturge acknowledged the need to balance the artiste's right to freedom of expression with concerns about national security, the public interest, and the protection of minors.

"In so doing, the Honourable Minister has given consideration to restricting attendance to the concert to be held on May 31 to persons of the age of 18 and over. Upon receipt of a legal opinion, a decision would be made on this issue," a statement from the Ministry of National Security read.

Minister Sturge also confirmed he is exercising his discretion to prohibit Kartel from performing the controversial track Good like Jesus within Trinidad and Tobago, citing its potential to offend those who hold Christian beliefs. The restriction would extend to "any song containing similar content," while still acknowledging the artiste's right to express himself.

In addition, the Minister is reviewing the possibility of amending the performance permit granted to Kartel, potentially barring him from making any radio or television appearances during his visit to the country.

Authorities have already restricted the deejay from participating in several promotional events previously scheduled by the show's promoter, including a morning radio interview, a midday television appearance, a visit to a school or youth centre, and a cultural lunch with local leaders. Responding in a social media video, Kartel distanced himself from the cancelled appearances, stating:

"There is no problem with Vybz Kartel performing in Trinidad. The necessary permits were granted. The problem lies with the promoter who took it upon themselves to try to fill Vybz Kartel's itinerary with things that have nothing to do with Vybz Kartel's performance," he said.

"Rightfully so, the Defence Minister pulled the plug on part of the itinerary and there's no problem there because Vybz Kartel represents Trinidad, Jamaica, and the entire Caribbean. My job is to come and perform for the people of Trinidad and Tobago."

# PM Skerrit defends push for electoral reform in Dominica

Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit has firmly defended the ruling Dominica Labour Party's (DLP) decision to introduce electoral reform, insisting the party will not allow opposition forces to "weaken" the country. His remarks came ahead of the DLP's 70th anniversary celebrations on June 1.

In a statement addressing recent political tensions, Skerrit accused opposition groups of feigning concern for democracy to undermine the government's efforts.

"We started electoral reform. We brought in international experts. We put money behind the process. We made it happen. So do not let anyone twist the truth. We are not afraid of reform. We are ready for it. We invited it. But we will not allow confusion and lies to weaken this country," Skerrit said.

The government's electoral reform legislation was approved by Parliament in March amid protests from opposition supporters who criticized the process for lacking transparency. Police clashed with demonstrators, using tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse crowds.

The reforms include three key bills: the Electoral Commission Bill 2024, House of Assembly (Elections) Bill 2024, and Registration of Electors Bill 2024. These bills were introduced late last year following recommendations from former Caribbean Court of Justice President Sir Dennis Byron's June 2023 report.

During parliamentary debate, opposition legislator Anthony Charles broke ranks to support the legislation, emphasizing the long-standing need for electoral reform in Dominica.

"I stand for the bills to be passed," Charles said to applause. "This is not



Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness extends his sympathy to Usain Bolt at the funeral

about political parties showing how strong they are... This is about democracy."

Among the reforms, the Registration of Electors Act mandates a 12month voter confirmation period requiring valid identification. Overseas Dominicans must reconfirm their registration in person on the island. New Voter Identification Cards will include photographs and advanced security features.

The legislation also strengthens the Electoral Commission's independence by establishing an Electoral Commission Fund and empowering it to oversee free and fair elections. It introduces technology for voter registration and record management, plans for electronic voting, equal media access, and enhanced accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Skerrit called on Dominicans to unite around the reforms, urging supporters not to allow the opposition to weaponize the process for confusion.

"There comes a time in every nation's story when the people must rise, not in anger but in purpose. Not in fear, but in unity. Dominica, that time is now," he said.

"We are a nation rooted in service, tested by time, and proven by our ability to rise, again and again. When others falter, we endure. When others divide, we unite. That is the Dominica we know."

Skerrit ended with a call to arms for the DLP ahead of the anniversary, underscoring the party's resolve.

"Labour will not be bullied. Labour will not be silenced. Labour will not retreat. June 1 is more than just a date on a calendar. It is a declaration—a signal to Dominica, to the region, to the world, that this party is not just alive, it is mobilized," he said.

"June 1 is about pride, protection, and proving that this country belongs to the people—and the people stand with Labour."

## 21 Trinidadians in ICE custody face deportation

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has

holding our international obligations while ensuring

confirmed that 21 of its nationals currently in the custody of U.S. immigration authorities are set to be repatriated next week.

The Ministry of Homeland Security announced in a media release that it had received a formal request from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to facilitate the return of the individuals, who include 17 men and 4 women.

A special charter flight, coordinated in collaboration with ICE, is scheduled to arrive in Port of Spain on Friday, May 23. The ministry explained that a single repatriation flight was chosen over multiple commercial flights to manage the process more efficiently, especially given the current number of nationals pending removal.

According to the release, Trinidad and Tobago officials are working closely with ICE to ensure that all protocols—both local and international—are met before and during the transfer. The manifest and itinerary are being finalized.

The Ministry of Homeland Security, together



#### 17 men and 4 women will be deported

with the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, reaffirmed its commitment to upholding international obligations while protecting the country's immigration policies.

"The Ministry reaffirms its commitment to up-

the integrity of our national immigration processes," the statement said.

The identities and individual circumstances of the returning nationals were not disclosed.



# UWI south T&T campus to open 15 years after being built

THE management of the UWI, St Augustine campus has announced the start of classes at its south campus in Debe in August.

In a statement on Monday May 19, UWI said during the last two years, a comprehensive review was done on operations, re-calibrating and systematically implementing the south campus' focus and key goals.

"The campus will be the home of the newly launched Global School of Medicine (GSM) leveraging the worldranked reputation of the UWI and especially the UWI's Faculty of Medicine (FMS), to serve primarily international students pursuing the Doctor of Medicine (MD) programme."

UWI said, "This will bring in much needed foreign exchange to the country. Currently, applications are open for this new, competitive programme."

The campus will also host several other traditional programmes from other faculties (such as Food & Agriculture, Humanities and Education) and the FMS "in blended formats."

UWI said the campus has a full, sophisticated information technology network, complete with state of the art "smart" classrooms. One hall of residence has been completed at the campus.

UWI added, "The GSM, together



The UWI South Campus — was built 15 years ago but never opened by the previous government

with the Couva Training Facility linked to the Couva Hospital forms part of an exciting initiative to develop a South/ Central–North medical artery of services, creating a specialised hub of excellence in medicine, innovation and medical research."

UWI recalled the role the south campus played as part of the parallel health care system during the covid pandemic to help patients recover from the virus.

Campus principal and Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine said the campus is excited to work with government as a key developmental partner in its shared goals of strengthening the education, skills-base and research imperatives of Trinidad and Tobago.

"Maximising the capacity of the south campus to ensure that the country's productive resources are put to optimum use is an important facet of these laudable goals."

The south campus was built under the UNC-led People's Partnership coalition government in the 2010 period but was never opened.

Speaking in the House of Representatives last November, then education minister Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly outlined plans for the GSM at the south campus. She said, "The UWI's proposal involves the university raising financing for the project via a public bond of \$335 million and financing from the government for recurrent expenditure until the proposed offshore medical school becomes profitable and generates positive cash flow."

Gadsby-Dolly added government was awaiting further information from UWI on what was needed from government for the \$335 million bond financing and whether the bond had received all internal approvals to proceed.

She said she could not give a time frame for the project's completion until she received this information.

## JA government to review sex offenders registry

The Jamaican government is moving to review legislation governing access to the country's sex offenders registry, following mounting public pressure and national outrage over a recent surge in brutal attacks on women and children.

Gender Minister Olivia "Babsy" Grange made the announcement Monday as she joined scores of nurses, medical professionals, university students, and advocacy groups protesting violence against women and girls in the Corporate Area.

"We're going to look into the act that governs the sex offenders registry," Grange told reporters. "I remember when we were debating the legislation in Parliament, there were those advocates who said we must protect the rights of the offenders, although they are offenders, and therefore the registry wasn't made public. But the information can be accessed. But the ordinary woman, the little girl, and their families do not understand the bureaucracy. They don't understand how to access this information. And so we have to make the information more available and more accessible." The protest began at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI), where a nurse—recently the victim of a violent road rage attack-works. Demonstrators then marched to East Street, near Heroes Circle, calling for justice and stronger protections for women and children. Grange was joined by several high-ranking officials, including Health and Wellness Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton, Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security Juliet Cuthbert-Flynn, Government Senator Dr. Saphire Longmore, and Opposition spokesperson on health Dr. Alfred Dawes.



Protesters want more do be done about violence against women and girls

Dr. Tufton emphasized the need for greater respect and safety for front-line workers. "What that nurse suffered last week should not have occurred," he said. "It is really an attack on society when our civil servants are assaulted. Their work saves lives—we must send a strong message that they are not alone and the law will take its course."

Deputy Prime Minister and National Security Minister Dr. Horace Chang also weighed in, condemning what he described as "deeply troubling" crimes that have "shaken the moral conscience of society." In a statement Monday, Dr. Chang referenced a string of horrifying incidents, including: The May 7 sexual assault of two young girls, aged nine and ten, in Old Harbour, St. Catherine.

The May 9 killing of nine-year-old Kelsey Ferrigon, who was found strangled in Spanish Town.







The Onyx Field has revealed a substantial gas deposit

# **Trinidad and Tobago welcomes major** gas discovery at Perenco's Onyx Field

The government of Trinidad and Tobago is celebrating what it calls a "very positive development" for the country's energy sector following the successful appraisal of the Onyx Field, operated by Perenco Trinidad and Tobago Limited.

The Onyx Field, located offshore in the Columbus Basin between the Teak and Poui fields, has revealed gas-bearing sands after appraisal drilling operations began in January 2025. Perenco, which holds a 70 percent working interest in the field, began drilling the ONYX-02B01 appraisal well and a planned sidetrack on January 17.

Last week, Perenco confirmed the discovery of "significant columns" of natural gas in two separate geological

T&T PM builds a wall

compartments on the eastern section of area—a joint venture between Perenco the Onyx Field. The find, made at a depth of 180 feet, marks a major milestone for the company and potentially for Trinidad and Tobago's future gas supply.

"Our objective was to prove sufficient gas reserves to unlock field development," said Gregoire De Courcelles, General Manager of Perenco Trinidad and Tobago. "The wells' findings are testimony to the hydrocarbon potential which remains in the TSP acreage and highlight Perenco's commitment to providing future supplies of natural gas to Trinidad and Tobago."

The Onyx Field was initially discovered during exploration drilling in the Columbus Basin and lies within the Teak, Samaan, and Poui (TSP) license

#### TT, Heritage Petroleum Company Limited, and the National Gas Company (NGC). Perenco is currently reviewing subsurface data, with development options expected to be evaluated ahead of a final investment decision.

In a statement released on Monday, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries noted that the appraisal results bolster national energy security and align with the government's broader goal of maximizing the production of natural resources.

"We continue to work with stakeholders such as Perenco to ensure that the development of Trinidad and Tobago's hydrocarbon potential benefits all citizens," the ministry said.

The successful appraisal of the Onyx Field offers new hope for revitalizing Trinidad and Tobago's gas production and strengthens the country's position as a key player in the regional energy landscape.



The Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister has replaced intricate wrought iron fence on the perimetre walls of her Phillipine home with brick and mortar.

Workers were spotted outside her home on May 17 plastering and painting over the recently bricked-up sections of the wall.

Asked if the measures were as a result of a security threat, Kamla Persad-Bissessar said it was done for additional privacy.

Persad-Bissessar spent her first few days as Prime Minister working out of her home.

During this time, members of her cabinet were seen entering and leaving the property, presumably following meetings with her.

At the time, Minister in the Office

of the Prime Minister Barry Padarath said both Whitehall and the Diplomatic Centre, the Prime Minister's official residence, were in disrepair and unfit for her to occupy.

Flooding, mould and other infrastructural concerns were raised at Whitehall and a contract has been awarded to repair the building. Padarath said it would take about \$5 million to repair the Diplomatic Centre following a tour of the property.

The Prime Minister's decision to work from her home has been met with mixed reviews, some endorsing the move in the post-covid19 era, where working from home was once the norm, while others expected the head of government to occupy state offices.

# West Indies makes Test cricket free for all Caribbean children

In an unprecedented move that merges passion with policy, Cricket West Indies (CWI) has flung open the gates of Test cricket to every child in the Caribbean—free of charge.

Whether at the storied Kensington Oval in Barbados, the picturesque Grenada National Stadium, or historic Sabina Park in Jamaica, young fans will be able to witness the West Indies-Australia Test series next month without paying a cent.

This bold new direction was unveiled during the official launch of the "WI Home – Full Ah Energy" campaign at Kensington Oval, where CWI's new CEO, Chris Dehring, declared that attending Test cricket is no longer a privilege—it is a right.

"At CWI, we believe it is a human right for every child to have access to Test cricket. To be able to come to Test cricket it's a human right in the Caribbean," Dehring proclaimed to thunderous applause.

Emphasizing the transformative power of sport and culture, Dehring explained that the initiative isn't just about attendance; it's about redefining access and inclusion.

"You don't need a ticket, it is your right. A ticket is something for paid patrons, not your right, and if it is a right of our children, then it is the duty of our parents and our associations and our governments and every adult to ensure that our children have access to that right."

The initiative is the centerpiece of a revitalized strategy aimed at restoring vibrancy and crowd engagement in regional cricket, especially at the Test level. With Australia's formidable side set to tour the Caribbean, the timing couldn't be more perfect to energize the stands with youthful spirit and unfiltered joy.

CWI President Dr. Kishore Shallow echoed Dehring's vision, hailing the decision as a transformative moment for cricket across the region.



West Indies Men's Test players in a celebratory moment

diums, the hope is that players can feed off the electrifying energy of thousands of young fans cheering from the stands.

"...We are going to be there rallying with those players on the field. It's critical that the players have our support, they are putting in the work preparing to represent us, but we have to fight and battle with them."

The "Full Ah Energy" campaign isn't just a marketing slogan—it's a cultural awakening. It's a call for families to bring their children, not just to the cricket but into the heart of Caribbean sporting heritage.

By stripping away the financial

barriers and infusing stadiums with youthful enthusiasm, CWI isn't merely promoting Test cricket—they're securing its legacy.

In the Caribbean, cricket isn't just a game, it's identity. And now, it belongs to every child.

#### Mottley hails Roston Chase's rise to WI Test captain

With a voice rich in pride and reverence for the legacy of Caribbean cricket, Prime Minister Mia Mottley hailed the elevation of Roston Chase to West Indies Test captain as a "historic moment" for Barbados and the region.

The 33-year-old all-rounder was officially named captain by Cricket West Indies (CWI) following a comMottley connected Chase's appointment to a rich continuum of Barbadian cricketing leadership, spanning nearly a century—from the elegant stylings of Teddy Hoad to the revolutionary legacy of Frank Worrell.

"Today, we witness history. Roston Chase, a humble son of the soil, is now the 10th Barbadian to captain the West Indies team — an extraordinary tive figure for our region. To Garry Sobers, one of our two living national heroes and the greatest cricketer the world has ever seen. Clyde Walcott, one of the immortal Three Ws. Desmond Haynes, steady and reliable at the helm, who served as an ODI captain."

"We remember too Floyd Reifer, called to lead during a time of great challenge in 2009 when a players' strike left a void - and it was to Barbados the region turned, because Barbados has always shown leadership, and dependability." For Prime Minister Mottley, Chase's appointment is about more than runs or wickets—it's a reward for unshakeable commitment and humility. She lauded the man behind the statistics: a player defined by grit rather than glory. "Roston Chase stands tall among these giants. Not a flashy player, but one who quietly goes about his work," she said.

"We, of course, are grateful to our new policy established by our new CEO that every single kid across the Caribbean will be able to attend our matches absolutely free," said Dr. Shallow. "No more do you need a ticket, you just walk to the stadium and once you are a child,d you will get free access to the venues."

Dr. Shallow emphasized that the move was not only about the future of the game but also about supporting the players in the present. With packed stapetitive and thorough selection process in which he emerged ahead of five other candidates.

Chase, who takes over from fellow Barbadian Kraigg Brathwaite, now becomes the 10th Barbadian to lead the West Indies in Test cricket. His appointment also underscores an unprecedented moment in regional sport—all senior West Indies teams are currently under Barbadian leadership: Shai Hope for the white-ball teams, Hayley Matthews for the women's squad, and now Roston Chase for the Test side.

In a powerful written tribute,

milestone not just for him, but for every Barbadian who believes in discipline, dignity, and quiet determination."

She went on to recount the icons who shaped the narrative of West Indies cricket—Sir Garry Sobers, Clyde Walcott, Desmond Haynes, Jason Holder, and more—noting how each brought distinct leadership at critical moments in regional history.

"From Teddy Hoad in 1929 during the inaugural home Test against England, to Frank Worrell, the first black man to captain the West Indies in a full series. He was a transforma-

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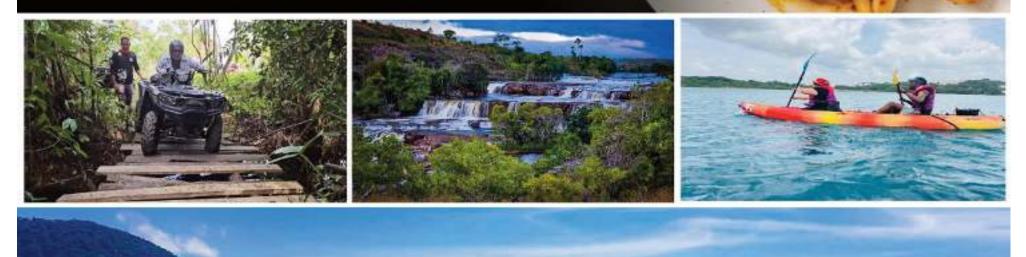
"We are going to ensure that the calendar of activities will expand our tourism footprint and will bring more traffic into Guyana to ensure the hotel rooms are filled, to ensure that the bed-and-breakfast facilities are filled, to ensure that next year, collectively, we work on championing the prosperity for each other and of each other." - H.E., Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-Opertaive Republic of Guyana.



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