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New \$10B state-of-the-art flour mill and wharf to be built by 2027

Executives of the National Milling Company (NAMILCO) on Tuesday met with President, Dr Irfaan Ali; Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh and Minister of the Public Service, Government Efficiency, and Implementation, Zulfikar Ally, to discuss their investment plans for the company and shared their vision for future expansion.

NAMILCO, owned and managed by Seaboard Corporation, on Tuesday announced a

major \$10 billion investment to expand and modernise the country's flour-milling industry, a move that will strengthen local production, enhance export capacity and advance Guyana's role in regional food security. According to the company, the landmark project includes the construction of a state-of-the-art processing mill, expanded wheat-storage facilities and an enhanced wharf to handle growing domestic and export demand. It marks one of the largest single investments in Guyana's agro-industrial sector to date.



Full story
inside

Legal luminary given Silk posthumously by Pres. Ali

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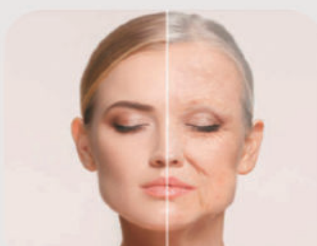
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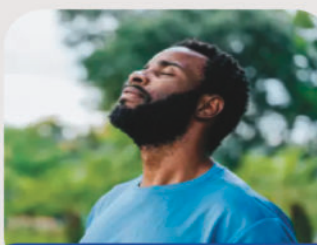
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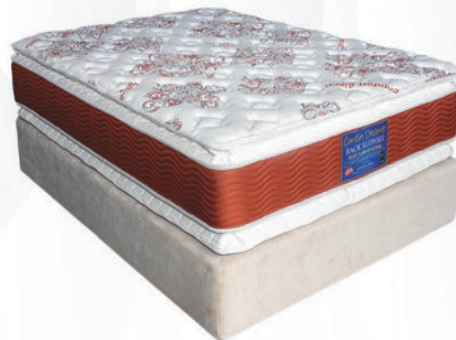
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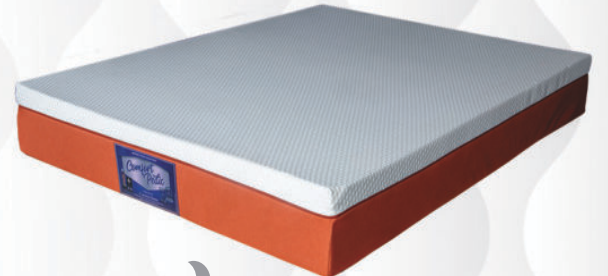
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Rinee Kissoon posthumously conferred with ‘Silk’ by President Ali

Guyanese Attorney-at-law Rinee Kissoon who died last week, has been posthumously anointed as a Senior Counsel by President Irfaan Ali in honour of her legal achievements.

President Ali confirmed the conferment as many of Kissoon’s friends and colleagues hailed the move as she will forever be remembered as Rinee Kissoon, S.C.

Kissoon passed away on October 7 and her funeral was held on October 10 where the President announced the conferment.

“She will be remembered as a highly skilled attorney-at-law whose commitment to her clients and to service within the justice system was defined by technical excellence. Whether in the courtroom or in quiet consultation, she gave of herself fully by preparing meticulously, advocating fearlessly, and upholding the noblest traditions of the Bar,” the President expressed.

“She had an unshakable sense of duty to her clients and to the law and possessed an admirable mastery of the law. Rinee’s dedication to her clients went far beyond the letter of professional obligation. She represented many who could not afford her – those whose means were modest but whose causes were just. Their inability to pay her true worth never diminished her representation of them. Even when she was unwell, her clients never saw hesitation or half-measure. She remains a shining example of what true service to the law should be.”

Ali also said that the legal profession has lost an outstanding member.

“To attain the status of Senior Counsel is an indication that one has reached the pinnacle of their career and has demonstrated excellence in the contributions they made to the development of law through active practice or otherwise,” her friend, colleague and Minister of Local Government, Priya Manickchand wrote in tribute on her Facebook Page as she expressed that it was most deserving.

The attorney and wife of Chief Justice (Ag) Navindra Singh passed away this week with tributes pouring in for the wife, mother, friend, and model lawyer.

“I have known Rinee since we were law students, that is, long before her admission to the Bar in 1995. She was brilliant, eloquent and charming. She had an air of flair and flamboyance that was uniquely hers. She can, arguably, be credited for introducing into the legal profession an inimitable fashionable mode of stylish attire, which many have since emulated. At the time Rinee entered the profession, it was still male dominated by some of the most respected and experienced legal giants. Against them, she held her own, won their respect and on many occasions prevailed over them on complex matters of law and procedures. I had the fortune of appearing in many cases against her,” Attorney General Anil Nandlall SC said on his Facebook page.



Rinee Kissoon — conferred silk on her passing

“By the time she migrated to the United States some years later, she was already a household name in Guyana and a role model, in particular, for females, in the profession. As expected, she distinguished herself at the New York Bar as well. She returned to Guyana when her husband was appointed a puisne judge. One of the last trials I did before returning to the Office of Attorney General in 2020, was a land dispute and she was the lawyer on the other side. As usual, she was a most able adversary. No doubt she would have qualified to be considered for silk. However, she was chosen for a higher elevation. The profession has lost a noble daughter. I will certainly miss her,” he added.

“Rinee Kissoon will always be remembered for her dedication and integrity that inspired others around her,” Haneen Mcnamee expressed, while Samuel Hig-

gins noted, “She was a special person, a great lawyer, an advocate, and a friend. We will all miss her.” And Naresh Persaud reflected, Rinee was a kind and beautiful soul. We grew up together at Bel Air and enjoyed August holidays at the Bee Hive estate home with the cousins. Good memories.”

Rinee Kissoon comes from a family of legal luminaries. Her father is highly re-

spected Guyanese lawyer Jailall Kissoon, while her husband is the Chief Justice of Guyana, Justice Navindra Singh.

Her uncle, the late Justice Nandram Kissoon was a Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of Guyana, and her brother, Sandil Kissoon is a sitting Puisne Judge. She leaves to mourn, in addition to them, her two children Anushka and Naveen.

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Dangers of online gambling

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, October 21, 2025

ONLINE betting and gambling have swiftly become one of the most dangerous and fast-spreading addictions of the digital era, a global phenomenon that has outpaced almost every other trend in both reach and destruction.

Behind the flashing lights and promises of quick riches lie stories of broken families, financial ruin, and mental collapse.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and The Lancet Commission have already sounded the alarm on the growing threat of online gambling addiction, warning of its dire consequences—not just for individual well-being, but also for society at large.

From depression, anxiety, and suicide to domestic violence, job loss, and family breakdowns, the costs of this silent epidemic are staggering.

Here in Guyana, Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo has emerged as one of the few leaders in the Caribbean to confront this issue head-on.

During two consecutive press conferences, he addressed the devastating social and economic toll of online gambling and signalled the government's intention to introduce regulatory controls, including access restrictions and taxation on operators.

His position is clear: no responsi-

ble government can ignore a crisis that is quietly tearing families apart.

We strongly commend and fully support the Vice-President's decisive stance. Jagdeo's advocacy is not about policing individual freedoms; it is about protecting the vulnerable—especially young people and working-class citizens—from a digital addiction that masquerades as entertainment, but functions as a social disease.

Globally, the statistics are alarming. A Lancet study estimates that families could lose over US\$700 billion annually by 2028 to online gambling.

Already, more than 450 million people worldwide are affected, with over 80 million suffering serious consequences such as job loss, financial devastation, and family disintegration.

Although Guyana has not yet conducted a comprehensive national study on the impact of online betting, the signs are visible.

From farmers and teachers to housewives and public servants, more and more citizens are being drawn into the grip of betting apps. What was once confined to glitzy casinos is now carried in our pockets, on smartphones, tablets, and computers. As a result, gambling has become accessible anywhere, anytime, by anyone.

This new digital frontier has blurred the line between leisure and addiction. It is not uncommon to hear of

sugar workers betting during field breaks, teachers gambling between classes, or housewives spending hours online instead of engaging in family life.

Even professionals and politicians have not been immune. The accessibility and anonymity of online gambling have amplified its risks exponentially.

Like the tobacco and alcohol industries before it, the online gambling sector has deployed lavish advertising and lobbying campaigns to glamorise the habit and resist regulation.

The results are predictable: mounting debt, social decline, and rising mental health crises, all while corporate operators rake in massive profits at the expense of society's most vulnerable.

Guyana currently has no regulatory framework governing online betting and gambling, which leaves citizens exposed to predatory marketing and addiction traps.

Around the world, only a few nations—mostly developed economies—have successfully imposed strong controls. In most regions, the trend is toward liberalisation rather than protection, a dangerous shift that prioritises corporate gain over public welfare.

Vice-President Jagdeo's proposed reforms seek to balance personal freedom with social responsibility. His approach mirrors the government's broader philosophy—allowing innova-

tion and technology to flourish, while ensuring that public welfare is safeguarded. In this regard, Jagdeo's call for regulation is both timely and necessary.

Guyana already has existing laws governing casino licensing in hotels and entertainment venues.

When these were enacted, Parliament's Special Select Committee ensured that the process was transparent and participatory, with inputs from both lawmakers and the public. The same approach should now guide the national conversation on regulating the online gambling industry.

This is not just a policy issue—it is a moral and social imperative. The government's move to address online betting should be seen as part of a broader commitment to strengthening family structures, promoting mental health, and safeguarding economic stability.

Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo's leadership on this matter exemplifies the kind of courage and foresight that Guyana needs at this juncture.

By confronting a problem that many would rather ignore, he has shown what responsible and people-centred governance truly looks like.

Guyana must rally behind this initiative. The time to act is now—before more lives are destroyed, more families are broken, and more dreams are lost to the seductive yet devastating world of online gambling.

The new public health crisis

Dear Editor,

THIS is a call to action. Online betting and gambling is a global phenomenon that has outpaced other global trends in both growth and reach, leaving in its rapidly expanding path unending stories of destroyed lives and social and economic disasters.

While reducing the digital gap is a positive aspect of digitalisation and technological advancement, corporate interests have simultaneously seized the opportunity to introduce new technology-driven behaviours that, like tobacco, alcohol, and overtly sweetened and salty

ultra-processed foods, negatively impact and destroy lives. Technology is, indeed, a two-sided Trojan horse, bringing both advantages and disadvantages.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and The Lancet Commission have warned about the addictive nature of online betting and gambling, with risks extending beyond individual well-being to affect physical and mental health, relationships, work, education, finances, and even leading to suicide and domestic abuse—with enormous societal costs.

Vice-President Bharrat Jagdeo has

spent considerable time, particularly during two successive Thursdays' press conferences and on other occasions, highlighting the problem of online betting and gambling. From his and the government's perspective, online betting and gambling have negative social consequences that are already impacting the lives of thousands of families.

From the Vice-President's standpoint, no responsible government can ignore the growing social and economic problem associated with online betting and gambling. He has therefore signalled the government's intention to introduce

policy directives to regulate this industry. While details are still forthcoming, the plans reportedly include access restrictions and taxes on operators.

Guyana already has laws governing casino licensing in hotels and entertainment venues. When these laws were enacted, Parliament's Special Select Committee facilitated open debate among Members of Parliament and invited public submissions. That same open, participatory approach should guide this new national conversation.

Dr Leslie Ramsammy



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Three Saskatchewan Employers Charged in Landmark Immigration Law Case

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

Three employers in Saskatchewan are facing charges under provincial immigration protection laws — marking the first time the province has laid charges under such legislation.

Kartikkumar Prakashkumar Patel, Rutvik Hasmukhbhai Patel, and Piyushkumar Mafatbhai Patel have each been charged under the Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act. The trio is accused of charging foreign workers fees for employment, exploiting their trust or fear, and retaliating — or threatening retaliation — against workers who took part in an investigation or filed a complaint.

The alleged offences occurred between August 2023 and February 2024 at Guac Mexi Grill in Moose Jaw. The three accused are scheduled to appear in Moose Jaw provincial court on November 25.

Although the province replaced the Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act with the Immigration Services Act in July 2024, prosecutors applied the older law because the alleged violations happened before the change.

Drew Wilby, Saskatchewan’s deputy minister of Immigration and Career Training, called the prosecution “the first of its kind in Canada under a provincial statute.”

He said the new act strengthens protections for foreign workers, giving investigators greater authority and imposing tougher penalties on employers and recruiters who exploit them.

“This is part of our new compliance model built on education, intervention, and enforcement,” Wilby said.

He noted that the Ministry’s program compliance branch, assisted by the Moose Jaw Police Service and RCMP, led the investigation. Under the previous legislation, individuals faced fines up to \$50,000, businesses up to \$100,000, and a maximum of one year in jail. The new law increases penalties dramatically — up to \$750,000 for individuals, \$1.25 million for businesses, and two years in jail — and introduces administrative monetary penalties that can be issued more quickly.



Guac Mexi Grill in Moose Jaw

Immigration lawyer Chris Veeman said the case is long overdue but represents a positive step toward accountability. “There should be strong enforcement against bad actors,” he said. “It sends a message that the province is serious about protecting vulnerable workers.”

Veeman said foreign workers often face significant power imbalances in the workplace and are at risk of exploitation. He cited cases where employers make workers return part of their wages in cash or charge illegal fees for job offers.

“The going rate is in the \$50,000 to \$60,000 range,” Veeman said of these illicit job offers.

“Sometimes people pay agents or recruiters for a job that doesn’t even exist — and employers often get a cut.”

He added that recent federal and provincial immigration cutbacks may heighten workers’ vulnerability, as fewer pathways to stay in Canada in-

crease the leverage employers have over them.

Still, Veeman hopes tougher enforcement under the Immigration Services Act will deter abuse.

The province encourages anyone who believes their rights have been violated to contact the Ministry’s program compliance branch confidentially at pcb@gov.sk.ca or 306-798-1350.

Workers do not need an employer’s permission to file a complaint,

and all information shared will remain confidential.

While the Immigration Services Act focuses on protecting temporary and foreign workers, all employees in Saskatchewan — including citizens and permanent residents — are protected under the Saskatchewan Employment Act, which sets out employment standards and occupational health and safety requirements.

—with files from CBC



Aggressive legislative momentum tied to Guyana's development push

ATTORNEY GENERAL and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, S.C., has underscored the crucial role of law-making in Guyana's development push, noting that the government's aggressive legislative agenda is directly linked to national growth objectives.

Nandlall made this known while speaking on the 'Starting Point' podcast on Sunday, during which he also noted that most policy initiatives cannot be implemented without a proper legal structure to support them.

"The reality is that you hardly can find a major policy imperative that can be implemented and successfully executed without a regulatory framework, and that regulatory framework is invariably a legislation that will govern the particular concept," he stated.

The AG using examples from several sectors, illustrated how legislative reform has been integral to enabling new systems, technologies and investments across the country.

In the health sector, he explained that efforts to modernise medical care, including initiatives such as tissue transplants and telemedicine, required new laws to ensure proper governance and protection of sensitive personal data.

"We wanted to modernise our medical-care programme and to embrace and envelop it in modern medical proce-



Attorney General Anil Nandlall

dures," Nandlall said.

"But those who wanted to promulgate that concept quickly realised that you can't do it without legislation. So, we had to pass a suite of legislation, like the tissue transplant legislation... We had to enact data-protection legislation, because you need to take people's personal data, their medical history; once you take that, you have to find a mechanism to store it and to protect it and to guard its confidentiality."



unit in that building to be owned separately... so we had to enact a Condominium Act."

As another example, he pointed to the Single Window Planning and Development Act, which provided the legal framework for the ease of doing business and acquiring permits, which was previously a bureaucratic process riddled with red tape.

He explained that the new law allows applicants to submit all necessary documents through a single-entry point, which then circulates them to relevant agencies for approval.

Nandlall also referenced emerging areas such as electronic contracting and digital signatures, which are being legislated to keep pace with global trends. "We want to use electronic signatures. We want to move from manual paper contracts to electronic contracts to e-contracts... The world has gone in that direction. How do you do that? You have to pass legislation to that effect," he said.

Further to this, speaking on the government's approach, Nandlall described legislation as the 'cradle' in which every major policy initiative must be nurtured.

It was then that he noted, "That is why we have such an aggressive legislative agenda, because we have an aggressive developmental agenda."

Shrimp farmers earn \$774.9 million as production soars

REGION Six's shrimp farmers are reaping record profits, earning nearly \$775 million up to August 2025, as Guyana's aquaculture expansion drives unprecedented growth across the agriculture sector.

Speaking at the World Food Day 2025 ceremony on Friday last, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, revealed that shrimp production in Region Six (East Berbice-Corentyne) has skyrocketed from just 9,933 kilograms per month in 2021 to 122,000 kilograms per month this year, a twelvefold increase fuelled by strategic government investment and farmer empowerment.

Minister Mustapha credited the success to the government's long-term focus on transforming agriculture into a modern, high-value industry.

"We recognise the importance of the oil and gas sector, but agriculture remains the most important sector for our country and the world because it is responsible for food security. Without food, we can't survive," he said.

Over the past five years, the government has dramatically expanded spending on agriculture from \$13 billion in 2020 to \$104 billion in 2025 to modernise infrastructure, strengthen food systems, and create sustainable income for rural communities.

The brackish water shrimp farming initiative in Region Six has become one

of the standout achievements of this transformation. Initially launched with around 80 small-scale farmers along the Corentyne Coast, the project has evolved into a thriving aquaculture industry through targeted training, technical support, and infrastructural upgrades.

"Now, in 2025, we have completed about 80% of the project, and production has moved from 9,933 kilograms in 2021 to 122,000 kilograms monthly," Minister Mustapha reported.

The financial impact on local communities has been substantial. Shrimp farmers in Region Six earned approximately \$1.8 billion in 2023, and by August this year had already generated \$774.9 million, with several productive months remaining.

"We have been transforming people's lives. That's our objective, to make more opportunities available for our citizens," Minister Mustapha said.

As Guyana continues to strengthen its aquaculture and broader agri-food systems, the Region Six shrimp success story stands as a model for rural development, job creation, and economic diversification beyond oil and gas.

"The progress in Region Six shows what's possible when we invest in our people and in the future of agriculture," Minister Mustapha concluded.



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Canada’s Immigration Backlog Stuns Applicants with Wait Times of Up to 50 Years

By Denise Singh
LJI REPORTER

Processing times for Canadian immigration applications have ballooned to unprecedented levels — stretching as long as 50 years under some permanent residency programs — leaving applicants and lawyers stunned and questioning whether the system is still viable.

“We were shocked,” said Olha Kushko, whose family fled Kyiv and settled in Ottawa in 2023 under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), a temporary program launched after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

“It doesn’t make any sense. I don’t know how it’s possible, so I can’t believe it,” she said.

According to a May 2025 transition binder from the new immigration minister, families applying for permanent residence under Canada’s humanitarian and compassionate (H&C) stream now face waits ranging from 12 to 600 months — up to 50 years.

Other economic immigration programs are showing similarly extreme forecasts:

- Caregivers pathway: up to 108 months (9 years)
- Agri-food stream: up to 228 months (19 years)
- Startup visa program: up to 420 months (35 years)

Lawyers say they’ve never seen anything like it. Some fear that the Liberal government’s proposed “strong borders” legislation, which would give the immigration minister sweeping new powers, could pave the way for mass cancellations of backlogged applications.

When asked whether such cancellations were being considered, a spokesperson for Minister Lena Metlege Diab said, “We can’t presuppose any future policy decisions.”

Kushko’s family applied for permanent residence in June under the humanitarian and compassionate program, which allows applicants who don’t qualify under other immigration categories to seek PR based on hardship or the best interests of their children.

When they applied, processing was estimated at about two years. But as of Oct. 9, IRCC’s website now lists



Lawyers and others are dismayed that it could take up to 50 years to process an immigration application

the wait time for H&C applicants as “more than 10 years,” with roughly 38,100 people ahead in the queue.

“I just hope that it’s a big mistake,” Kushko said. Her youngest son, who has autism, has adjusted well to life in Ottawa.

“He doesn’t want to hear about moving. He gets scared and almost cries when he hears that he might have to leave,” she said. “He loves this place so much.”

The family’s work permits expire next spring. Returning to war-torn Ukraine, she said, isn’t an option.

“We don’t have a place to return to,” Kushko said. “I don’t want to lose my sons. I just want to keep them alive and happy.”

Others caught in the backlog share her fears. Members of the Hong Kong Pathway Alliance, a group of about 20 applicants, said they worry Canada is abandoning its humanitarian values.

“Severe negative impact is indeed happening,” said a spokesperson for the group, who requested anonymity over safety concerns.

“People are losing work permits,

suffering financial hardship, and facing family separation.”

“If these processing times are accurate, it’s shocking,” said Claire Houkayem, an immigration lawyer in Ottawa. “My clients are fully panicked.”

Houkayem called on IRCC to clarify whether the numbers reflect a technical glitch or a policy shift.

“I’ve never in my life seen 10-year processing times,” she said. “It’s not reasonable. They might as well say, ‘We’re not going to process them.’”

Steven Meurrens, a Vancouver-based immigration lawyer, said the situation reflects a “lack of good faith” by IRCC, which invited millions to Canada without clear permanent pathways.

“For it to balloon to 50 years is unheard of in Canadian immigration,” he said. “I think the government may be preparing to cancel entire streams if its border security bills pass — particularly Bill C-12.”

Canada has taken similar steps before: in 2012, the government wiped out hundreds of thousands of skilled

worker applications, and in 2014, it cancelled backlogs in investor and entrepreneur programs.

“Applicants should know the government is giving itself the power to cancel files,” Meurrens said. “They should go in with eyes wide open.”

Laura Blondeau, Diab’s director of communications, said the processing times were “not a mistake.”

“We’re being as transparent as possible,” she said. “Our commitment is to restore balance to the immigration system, and these steps are part of that effort.”

In a statement, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) said the published times are projections based on application volumes and admission targets — which have fallen sharply in the past year.

The forecasts, IRCC said, represent how long applicants “might wait” for a decision given the current intake levels and targets.

As for Bill C-12, the department said the legislation does not single out any group and that no unilateral decisions would be made.



Gov't expanding power access in Guyana's hinterland regions

VICE President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo says the government is implementing a series of energy initiatives which are aimed at improving power distribution and boosting renewable energy in remote regions.

During a recent press conference at Freedom House, Robb Street, Dr Jagdeo noted that the cabinet has already approved the creation of a loop system designed to enhance the efficiency and reliability of the national power grid.

"The big transmission main project to Berbice, that's being worked on aggressively. You recall we awarded a contract for over 30 megawatts of solar power in regions two, six and ten. Those are far advanced. We intend to expand the provision of power in the Amerindian communities in these areas," the Vice President said.

The government has made extensive efforts to improve electricity access in the country's hinterland regions through initiatives like the Hinterland Electrification Company Inc. (HECI) and the expansion of solar energy. Key developments include the installation of

solar farms in towns like Mabaruma and Mahdia, the commitment to 24-hour electricity for every village, along with other initiatives.

It was reported in July that more than 37,000 households in Amerindian, riverine, and remote communities are now enjoying access to electricity for the first time.

This is due to the Solar Photovoltaic Home Energy Systems (SHE) project, which was relaunched by the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) in July 2023. Although the target was to benefit 30,000 households, it has exceeded that number by over 7,000.

The villages targeted for the government's solar distribution project were located in areas accessible only by boat, where residents encounter significant challenges transporting diesel or fuel for their generators.

In addition, the cost of diesel in off-grid villages can be up to three times the price of diesel in Georgetown, making it difficult for families to afford. Solar panels proved to be a clean, re-

newable and cost-effective solution.

The Government of Guyana, through the HECI, continues to make significant strides in expanding stable and reliable electricity access to remote communities. Under the Hinterland Electrification Programme, free and renewable energy is being introduced to villages across the country, enhancing the living conditions of thousands of residents.

Chief Executive Officer of HECI, Horace Williams, in March of this year, outlined the company's plans to accommodate larger energy systems, with a primary focus on bridging the electricity gap between the coast and hinterland regions.

"Plans are to improve access for some households receiving electricity from solar systems that are currently limited to primary lighting and small appliances. Households want to get to the stage where they can use large appliances in their homes," Williams stated.

Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, who has oversight of the energy sector, reaffirmed the govern-

ment's commitment to addressing energy disparities, emphasising that electricity is a key driver of national development. As a result, several Amerindian villages, including Annai and Karasabai in Region Nine, have already begun reaping the benefits of these transformative efforts, ensuring long-term sustainability and improved quality of life.

With a vision to provide equal opportunities for all Guyanese, the government aims to target 30,000 households within the hinterland region, ensuring access to safe and renewable energy. Upon completion, the Hinterland Electrification Programme is expected to generate a total of 4.8 megawatts of electricity, significantly improving the standard of living for thousands of residents.

This initiative represents another step in the government's continued efforts to reduce disparities between coastal and hinterland communities, fostering greater inclusion and development for all.

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Guyana, Canada to deepen trade ties beyond raw commodities

PRESIDENT Dr Irfaan Ali has reaffirmed the government’s commitment to strengthening Guyana’s trade and investment relationship.

The Head of State was at the time speaking at the Canada-Guyana Chamber of Commerce Maple Leaf Gala, during which he emphasised the need to move beyond raw material exports and towards a diversified, knowledge-driven economy.

He stated that Guyana’s evolving economy provides an opportunity to redefine traditional trade patterns and to foster partnerships that focus on innovation, technology and long-term growth.

“We must deepen trade between our two countries beyond the export of raw materials. We must move towards the export of value-added goods and services,” he said.

He went on to add that the government’s development strategy is anchored in diversification, ensuring that the country’s oil wealth acts as a catalyst for investment in non-oil sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, energy and information and communications technology.

“Guyana is open for business, but not in the traditional sense. We are open for business in the modern sense... in which we focus on value creation, knowledge generation, innovation and technology,” he said.

To this end, he said that Canada has been a longstanding partner to Guyana, supporting key sectors including mining, finance and education, but added that the time has now come to chart a new course.

“The time has come for us to create



Minister Susan Rodrigues (second from right) was among the guests at the Maple Leaf Gala

new pathways for collaboration, pathways that are guided by innovation, technology and value addition.”

According to the President, the country’s rapid infrastructure transformation, major energy projects, and investments in education are all part of the government’s efforts to establish the foundation for a modern, diversified economy that is globally competitive.

“We are investing heavily in our infrastructure, our human capital, our digital systems and our energy matrix. All of this is to make Guyana the hub for trade and services in this part of the world,” he said.

Against this backdrop, he pointed

out that Guyana’s geographic position gives the country a unique advantage within the Caribbean, as he said that the goal is to make Guyana the bridge between the Caribbean and Latin America and a bridge between the north and the south.

This, he said, places the country in a strategic position to serve as a conduit for trade and investment between markets, with growing opportunities for collaboration in logistics, agriculture, tourism, and services.

The Head of State said that while the oil and gas sector continues to drive growth, the government’s long-term objective is to ensure that revenues are

channeled into productive investments that strengthen the real economy.

“We are not only building an economy; we are building a society that is inclusive, resilient and future-ready. Canada is an important partner in that journey.”

Dr Ali went on to note that the private sector plays a crucial role in this transformation and urged Canadian investors to explore opportunities beyond the extractive industries.

“We want to see more Canadian businesses in manufacturing, ICT, education, healthcare and renewable energy,” he said.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

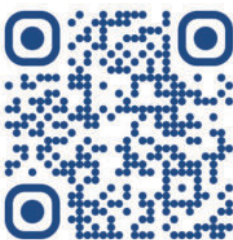
- Build a globally cohesive community with a focus on youth and women in business and civic leadership worldwide.
- Support social entrepreneurship and civic engagement in communities around the world.
- Engage diaspora communities in the social and economic development of Guyana.

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:
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Telephone: [1-800-317-0804](tel:1-800-317-0804)



Toronto’s Divali Nagar brings sights, tastes and sounds of Guyana and T&T to Canada

THE City of Mississauga came alive last Friday evening with a spectacular Diwali motorcade, lighting of the official diyas and a Hindu traditional cultural show, which Guyana’s Honorary Consul, Mani Singh, described as reminiscent of the national festivities back home in Guyana.

Honorary Consul Singh, who was invited to light the diyas and bring greetings and remarks on behalf of His Excellency, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and the people of Guyana, spoke of

Guyana being an example to the world with six distinct races, practising six different religions, and co-existing in peace and harmony with the single objective of development, progress and prosperity as ‘One Guyana’.

Additionally, three of Guyana’s six religions each enjoy two national holidays annually, and all Guyanese celebrate these occasions in their various communities in a spirit of inclusivity, tolerance, and mutual respect for each other, Mr. Singh told the large gathering.



Guyana’s Honorary Consul, Mani Singh (right), in the audience at the show

The event, called ‘Divali Nagar Canada’, and sub-themed ‘just like back home’, was held at the Mississauga’s Ram Mandir, led by spiritual leader Pandit Roopnauth (Paul) Sharma in association with Ms. Vashti Doorga of Doorga Entertainment and attended mainly by members of the Guyanese, Trinidadian and Indian diasporas.

Among the dignitaries celebrating the Festival of Lights, in observance of good over evil or light over darkness, were MPs, MPPs, Regional & City Councillors of Canada, members of the Caribbean Diplomatic Corps and leaders of the religious and business communities.

The Divali Nagar commenced with a small but beautifully lit and decorated motorcade entering the compound of the Mississauga Ram Mandir accompanied by magnificent costumes depicting Mother Lakshmi, the Goddess of Light

and Prosperity and other Hindu Dieties.

The night of fun and celebration included the crowning of the Diwali Queen, best children’s deity costume, indoor and outdoor food and other booths, traditional dances and musical renditions by internationally-recognised musicians and performers from Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago and prizes for the best dressed individual and couple.



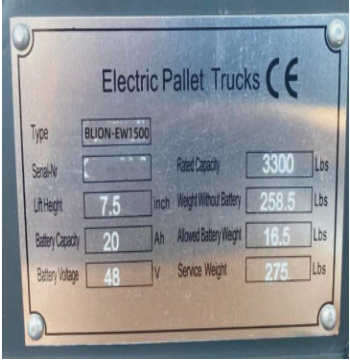


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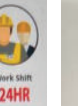


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The new airport will be built to service this existing airstrip in Lethem

Bids to be opened soon for construction of new Lethem Regional Airport

BIDS will soon be opened for the construction, financing, ownership and management of a new regional airport in Lethem, a major government-backed investment aimed at strengthening trade, tourism and cross-border connectivity with Brazil.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali made the announcement during his address at the Canada-Guyana Chamber of Commerce Maple Leaf Gala, where he outlined the administration’s broader plan to transform Guyana’s interior into a hub for agricultural and commercial expansion.

“In the coming weeks we’re going to have an expression of interest for the new regional airport in Lethem and that airport will be supported by 2,000 hectares of development, especially in agro products,” Dr. Ali said.

He explained that the project will be structured to attract both domestic and diaspora investment.

“We’re going to go out for an expression of interest for building, financing, ownership and management of that facility,” the President stated.

Dr. Ali stated that the new Lethem facility will form part of a series of

major infrastructure and industrial projects currently under review.

The President added that the Government intends to give Guyanese and the diaspora the first call on investment in such projects.

“We’re going to give each one of you and your companies the first call on investment. We’re not only going to give you that, we’re going to have a Government-backed guaranteed return on your investment,” President Ali explained.

The Airport, he said, will be a cornerstone of Guyana’s strategy to diversify beyond oil and strengthen economic links across the hinterland and with neighbouring Brazil.

The project is expected to enhance access for the tourism and agro-processing sectors, aligning with the government’s efforts to advertise new tourism investment opportunities.

Dr Ali urged private sector leaders, including those in the diaspora, to take advantage of the growing pipeline of infrastructure and energy projects.

“These are real opportunities coming your way,” he said.

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Youths must step up to the plate as Guyana pushes food production security

AS Guyana accelerates its efforts towards food production sufficiency and becoming the breadbasket of the Caribbean, youths are being called to “step up to the plate” to drive agricultural transformation.

Bounty Farm Ltd. Managing Director, David Fernandes, elaborated on this during a recent episode of the Starting Point podcast, where he focused on the government’s strong vision and growing private sector collaboration, all while Guyana continues to emerge as a key player in the Caribbean’s food security drive.

Speaking on Guyana’s food security goals, the business leader highlighted that key strides have already been made under the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)’s 25 by 2025 initiative.

While noting that it is a “fantastic vision,” which is “doable,” he opined, “I think the 2030 goals will probably be easy for us to achieve, as well as a nation.”

However, he did make note of the current global challenges-shifting geopolitical dynamics, new tariffs and logistics bottlenecks, which Fernandes explained are lengthening supply timelines and complicating investment decisions.

“If you want to get something, it takes twice as long... We have a dream of developing our industry from A to B by 2027.

“If you don’t start talking about it today; only if you talk about it in early 2026, it might get here by the end of 2027. So these are the challenges that face the world, because we are now struggling to try to solve that issue, where different inputs come from and how the tariff regimes around the world affect those costs...,” Fernandes explained.

In light of the supply chain uncertainties and fluctuating global costs, Fernandes underscored the importance of government-private sector collaboration.

He then emphasised his point about greater involvement for youth in agriculture, calling for a shift in how the sector is viewed.

“I think that the next generation of entrepreneurs need to step up to the plate as well and to try to dream big and to put their muscles to the wheel as such, and actually not just talk about it... I really think that, for us to really achieve self-reliance and self-sufficiency in agriculture, we need to have a large percentage of the population doing this task of feeding the nation,” he warned.

Guyana’s approach to food security is multi-faceted as the nation is scaling up the production of priority commodities and promoting diversification into new crops, livestock, and aquaculture.

Guyana is also targeting new markets across the Caribbean, and internationally to strengthen food trade and supply chains;

It is also investing in agricultural infrastructure, such as the construction of farm-to-market roads, modern storage facilities, upgraded ports, and improved transport links.

The nation is also modernising agriculture with technology.

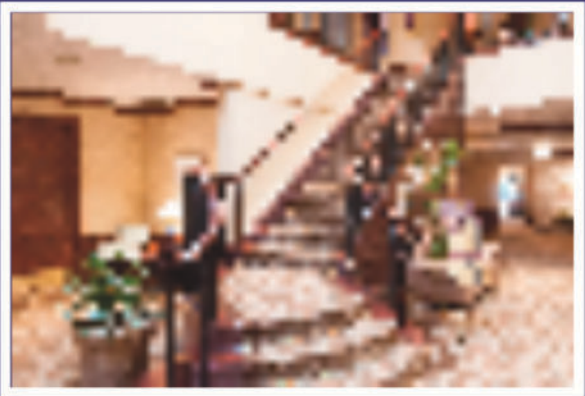


Food security is one of the Guyana Government’s priorities

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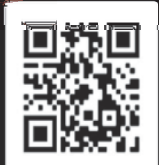
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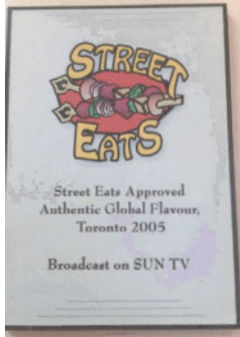
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Gov’t accelerates health-sector transformation: 4 key areas identified

SENIOR Presidential Adviser on Science and Healthcare Modernisation, Dr. Mahendra Carpen, has credited the government’s bold investment in health with transforming the sector at an unprecedented pace, noting that Guyana’s current trajectory reflects a modern, equitable, and patient-centred system that is rapidly catching up with international standards.

Speaking on the country’s ongoing health reforms, Dr. Carpen pointed out that the Ministry of Health received more than \$145 billion in this year’s national budget, while a separate GY\$35 billion allocation was specifically directed toward healthcare modernisation. He described this as a “big jump” compared to the resources available in 2019, underscoring the administration’s philosophy that “the health of a nation is its true wealth.”

According to Dr. Carpen, the government’s health development strategy is anchored on four key pillars: Infra-

structure development, Human resource capacity building, Technology incorporation, and Research and data-driven management.

He explained that significant strides have already been made in the first area, with the construction and operationalisation of several new hospitals across the country. These facilities, he said, are strategically located to reduce travel time for patients, particularly those in remote or underserved areas, allowing them to access life-saving treatment much faster than before.

“The development of healthcare in Guyana is very rapid when compared to the normal pace of doing things,” Dr. Carpen stated, noting that President Dr. Irfaan Ali’s leadership has created “a motus of leapfrogging the society in every aspect of development.”

Dr. Carpen emphasised that while many nations develop incrementally over decades, Guyana is taking a faster, more dynamic approach in order to close

historical gaps in healthcare delivery.

“Guyana is starting from decades behind the rest of the world, so in order to catch up we have to move very fast,” he said. “Mistakes will happen along the way, but they give us the opportunity to assess, correct, and improve.”

He praised the support from government decision-makers, which he said has been instrumental in driving the ongoing reforms and ensuring the implementation of policies that benefit the population at large.

Responding to questions about whether the private sector is keeping pace with the rapid improvements in public healthcare, Dr. Carpen noted that the gap between the two is now narrowing.

“In the past, the private sector was always ahead,” he said. “But in the last two to three years, we’ve seen an equalisation of services and infrastructure between public and private care.”

He highlighted the Georgetown

Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) as a prime example of this progress.

“When a patient suffers a heart attack, they can be taken from the emergency room to the cath lab for an angiogram, stent placement, or bypass surgery — and it’s all done free of charge to the patient,” he explained.

“This level of care is available in the private sector as well, but at a cost. What we are doing in the public system is providing the same quality of treatment, but at no financial burden to the patient. Very few countries in the Caribbean can make that claim.”

Guyana’s health sector is rapidly evolving, with Government’s aim to maintain a healthy population

Dr. Carpen also outlined ongoing efforts to train more nurses, technicians, and medical personnel, including partnerships with established local and international institutions for advanced professional development.



Asrani died at age 84 last week

Tributes pour in for veteran actor Asrani, 'The man who made India laugh'

Tributes are pouring in for Indian actor Govardhan Asrani, who died this week at the age of 84.

Asrani, popularly known by his last name, was suffering from a brief illness and died at a hospital in Mumbai city on Monday, his manager told BBC Hindi.

Over a career spanning more than 50 years, Asrani acted in more than 300 films, mostly in comic roles. One of his most memorable performances was in the 1975 blockbuster Sholay, in which he played an eccentric jailer.

"The one who brought smiles to everyone's faces, Asrani ji is no longer among us. His passing is an irreparable loss for both Hindi cinema and our hearts," his family said in a statement posted on the actor's social media account.

His final rites were performed on Monday with family members and close friends in attendance.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Asrani a "gifted entertainer" and "versatile artist".

"He particularly added joy and laughter to countless lives through his unforgettable performances. His contribution to Indian cinema will always be cherished," Modi wrote on X.

Asrani was born in 1941 in the western Indian state of Rajasthan. He began his career as a voice artist at the state-run All India Radio before studying acting at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in the 1960s.

He made his Hindi film debut in 1967, but it was his portrayal of a bumbling jailer - meant to be a parody of Adolf Hitler - in 1975's Sholay that brought him widespread fame.

In an interview with BBC Hindi earlier this year, Asrani recalled how he prepared for the role.

The film's writer duo Salim-Javed and director Ramesh Sippy told him that the jailer "thinks he is very smart but isn't", he said.

Asrani was a familiar face on TV shows aired on state broadcaster Doordarshan in the 1980s and 90s. He played the role of the Hindu sage Narad Muni in Natkhat Narad, a popular show in the 80s. He also directed several Hindi and Gujarati films.

The actor became synonymous with comic roles in mainstream films, ranging from subtle situational humour to exaggerated performances. But he believed he was more than just a comedian.

Asrani worked in more than 300 films over five decades

Speaking to BBC Hindi, Asrani said he was proud of the recognition he received for his comic timing but did not consider himself merely a "comedian", rather "an artist who finds truth in every role".

Through his career, Asrani worked with some of the biggest actors and directors of every era.

Some of his most iconic films include Chupke Chupke (1975), Pati Patni Aur Woh (1978) and Balika Badhu (1976) - a role that won him the Filmfare award for best comic actor.

Asrani occasionally broke away from his humorous image to portray darker, more complex roles in films such as Koshish (1972) and Chaitali (1975).

As news of his death broke, coworkers paid their tributes and shared memories of working with him.

Mr Sippy, who directed Sholay, said Asrani would always be remembered for the role of the jailer, calling it the one he was born to play.

Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar shared a photo of himself with Asrani, recalling the actor's comic timing.

"From all my cult films Hera Pheri to Bhagam Bhag to De Dana Dan, Welcome and now our unreleased Bhoot Bangla and Haiwaan... I had worked and learned so much from him. What an absolute loss to our industry," he wrote on X.

Singer Adnan Sami, who worked with Asrani in one of his music videos, shared a personal memory of the actor's generosity and charm.

"I had the honour of working and spending time with him when I requested him to appear in my music video of Lift Karadey (a 1997 song) and I too wanted him to reenact his legendary 'Jailor' character for which he generously agreed," he wrote.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Like it or not you will have to put other people’s needs ahead of your own today. The good news is that by doing so you will find yourself favored by someone whose power and influence could be of use to you later on.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): You may be tempted to stray from the straight and narrow today but if you do you must make sure you know where you are going and what you are doing. If you get it wrong your rivals won’t waste any time in talking you down.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): A new moon in the most dynamic area of your chart will do wonders for your confidence but it might be wise not to commit yourself to any grand new projects, at least until later in the week. Deal with what is in front of you first.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): If your plans have to change to accommodate the needs of loved ones today it’s really no big deal. In fact, by the time the evening hours arrive you may be glad you were forced to change tack. Is the path you are on really so great?

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Let your hair down and have some fun today. Cosmic activity in the most sociable area of your chart means that even a minute spent on your own is a minute wasted, so get out there and put on a typically larger-than-life show.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): Your current crisis of confidence will pass not long after the Sun changes signs on Thursday, so don’t worry yourself silly that you should be doing more right this very moment. There is a time for everything under the Sun and your time will come.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Today’s new moon in your sign makes this the perfect time to do something different, something that marks you out from the crowd. Don’t worry that your behavior might be outrageous as that’s the sort of performance your audience wants to see.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You will have a great deal to think about today, so don’t commit yourself to activities that could take up too much of your time. Withdraw from the daily hustle and bustle and give yourself permission to ponder the big questions of life.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Forget about work and other commitments and get together with people who share your optimistic outlook. You may have felt a bit down yesterday but today you will bounce back and show those who doubt you just how resilient you can be.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): The opportunity you have been waiting for to show people in positions of authority that you have what it takes to compete at the highest level will arrive very soon, so stay alert and be ready to take forceful action at a moment’s notice.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Give your body, your mind and also your heart permission to roam and don’t worry where you might end up because it is sure to be wonderful. Stop thinking about taking a vacation and buy your ticket today. Impulse travel is under excellent stars.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Something you do in secret will bring remarkable results before the end of the year. The less other people know about it for now the better, so focus on your dream and believe every moment of every day that it WILL come true.

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CARICOM leaders discuss US radar request in Grenada

CARICOM leaders convened on Wednesday and Thursday this week, including a caucus to discuss a U.S. request to Grenada to allow the installation of radar equipment and associated technical personnel at the Maurice Bishop International Airport (MBIA), according to Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC).

The virtual caucus on Wednesday lasted just over five hours, during which leaders received “an update from the Grenada Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell,” who is currently returning from a visit to Africa.

Grenada has confirmed that the United States submitted a formal request to install radar equipment and associated technical personnel at MBIA. The government emphasized that “any decisions on that matter will be made only after all technical and legal assessments are completed. We wish to assure our citizens that any decision taken will be guided by Grenada’s sovereignty, public safety, and national interest, including the protection of our tourism industry, the traveling public, and the country’s economic well-being.”

The request has met with public opposition from former Grenada Senate president and trade unionist Chester Humphrey, and former foreign affairs minister Peter David. Humphrey said he is prepared to lead a peaceful protest march, claiming that the move by Washington is a precursor to a military strike against the Nicolás Maduro government in Venezuela. David, an independent legislator, added that while Grenada values its longstanding partnerships with both the United States and Venezuela, “any actions taken must



Grenada Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell

be rooted in diplomacy, mutual respect, and regional cooperation.”

On Wednesday, U.S. Southern Command Commander Admiral Alvin Holsey met with senior officials of the Royal Grenada Police Force (RGPF). A statement issued afterwards described the meeting as “cordial and productive, reaffirming the US Southern Command’s commitment to supporting Grenada’s national security efforts.” Holsey also met with Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne. A U.S. Embassy statement said the discussions focused on “Caribbean security and the deepening of both nations’ bilateral defense partnership. This partnership is integral to the region’s col-

lective efforts to advance Caribbean security and stability. Our efforts to strengthen partnerships in the Caribbean are vital to combat transnational criminal organizations and illicit traffickers who threaten the region and our homeland.”

Reports in the U.S. media have since indicated that Holsey has resigned, amid tensions with U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth over Caribbean operations.

The Guyana-based CARICOM Secretariat has not issued an official statement regarding this week’s meetings. However, former Jamaica Prime Minister P.J. Patterson described U.S. drone attacks on vessels in Caribbean

waters as “fundamentally dangerous and a horrible erosion of regional leaders’ commitment to sovereignty in the region.”

Last month, President Donald Trump increased U.S. military presence in the southern Caribbean, deploying an amphibious squadron, a nuclear-powered attack submarine, additional P-8 Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft, several destroyers, and a guided-missile cruiser to the region. The U.S. military has carried out four airstrikes in Caribbean waters in recent weeks, targeting what Washington alleges are Caracas-backed drug traffickers, a claim denied by the Venezuelan government.

Barbados named Caribbean’s leading wedding destination

Barbados has been named the Caribbean’s leading wedding destination for the second consecutive year, cementing its position as the region’s premier spot to tie the knot.

The accolade was confirmed at the World Travel Awards (WTA) Caribbean & North American Gala Ceremony held on Oct. 4 at Sandals Grande in Saint Lucia. The annual event celebrated excellence across the travel and tourism sectors, drawing leading industry figures and contenders from across the region.

In a release from the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI), the tourism promotion agency hailed the win as a reflection of the island’s ongoing dedication to fostering a world-class wedding industry.

BTMI Chief Operations Officer Cheryl Carter said in the statement, “Barbados is deeply honoured to receive this prestigious recognition as the Caribbean’s Leading Wedding Destination. This award is a testament to the pride our nation feels when welcoming couples to begin their lives together.

“The dedication, flair, creativity, and expertise

of our many wedding planners ensure that every wedding, regardless of the size or style, is truly a memorable occasion. Over the years, Barbados has staged weddings of every description, from intimate to extravagant, drawing on our rich culture, stunning venues, and world-class hospitality. With this accolade, we reaffirm our commitment to excellence in delivering exceptional destination weddings.”

Sandals Grande played host to the third leg of WTA’s Grand Tour 2025, highlighting the region’s finest travel and tourism organizations in a red-carpet affair.

Director of BTMI’s Caribbean department, Graham Clarke, welcomed the continued recognition of Barbados in the face of tough competition from neighboring destinations.

“I am happy that the title remains in Barbados this year, as we were able to eclipse some of our neighbours who were also competing for the honour,” Clarke said in the release. He further credited local industry stakeholders for their role in securing the award.

“This honour reflects not only our island’s

unique appeal but also the dedication of our exceptional tourism stakeholders, whose hard work makes every celebration extraordinary,” he added.

WTA founder Graham Cooke described the ceremony as an opportunity to recognize the region’s highest achievers.

“Our winners are stellar examples of tourism excellence, and I congratulate each and every one for helping to raise the collective benchmark across the region,” Cooke said.

Established in 1993, the World Travel Awards are regarded as the benchmark for industry excellence, celebrating outstanding achievements in travel, tourism, and hospitality worldwide.

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CARICOM reaffirms ‘zone of peace’ as US strikes raise regional alarm

Amid escalating regional tensions following a series of deadly U.S. military strikes in Caribbean waters, Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

The statement came after the U.S. Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago on Saturday issued an unusual warning urging Americans to avoid U.S. government facilities in the country. The alert followed reports that two Trinidadian fishermen are believed to have been killed in a recent U.S. strike, which Washington said targeted suspected drug traffickers near Venezuelan waters.

During their discussions, CARICOM leaders addressed the increased security build-up across the region and its potential implications for Member States. “Save in respect of Trinidad and Tobago who reserved its position,” the statement read, the Heads of Government agreed on several key points aimed at preserving peace and stability.

They reaffirmed the principle of maintaining the Caribbean Region as a Zone of Peace and underscored “the importance of dialogue and engagement towards the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflict.” The Community also reiterated its willingness to assist in efforts to defuse tensions.

CARICOM Heads further emphasized their commitment to fighting narco-trafficking and the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, noting that such challenges should be addressed through international cooperation and in accordance with international law.

The leaders closed ranks in expressing unequivocal support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries in the Region, and for “the



A suspected drug carrying boat on fire after being hit by US missiles

safety and livelihoods of the people of the Caribbean.”

The statement follows remarks from Trinidad and Tobago’s Minister of Homeland Security, Roger Alexander, who confirmed that U.S. officials had recently briefed local authorities on

“threats directed at American citizens in the Caribbean nation,” potentially linked to the ongoing situation with Venezuela. Alexander said that security measures have been implemented to address any arising threats but declined to provide further details.

Since early September, six U.S. strikes have killed at least 28 people, according to reports, intensifying concerns about the widening reach of U.S. military operations in Caribbean waters.

Trinidad gov’t in probe of men killed in US strike

The Trinidad and Tobago government on Friday called on relatives of two men allegedly killed in a U.S. military airstrike near Venezuela earlier this week to come forward and assist authorities with the investigation.

Homeland Security Minister Roger Alexander, a former senior police officer, cast doubt on the “innocence” of the men, identified as Richie Samaroo and Chad ‘Charpo’ Joseph.

“All I can say is that what the Homeland Ministry is treating with is really newspaper reports, because we would want to get as much information as we can to assist in any way that we can in terms of identifying persons and all of that,” Alexander told I.955FM radio.

He noted irregularities in the reporting and documentation of the vessel involved. “But there are some strange activities that seem to be taking place, because you know, normally when persons travel, the amount of souls on a plane, they are able to be identified, if something is to happen and in terms of a ship, the manifest and all of that and the boats registered to leave from one port to another,” he said.

Alexander questioned media narratives and family

statements, citing inconsistencies. “So all we have is family making statements, strange and unusual statements, I must say because I heard the media interviewing the grandmother and she said that the men are all good... Normal thing, we understand that. That is the role and function of a mother... but the media never asked what type of runs he was making, was it on the cricket field... I was confused myself, but as I said before nothing has come to the Ministry of Homeland Security in terms of something happening,” he said.

He urged families to file missing persons reports and provide documentation to authorities. “So whilst we waiting and asking questions about the family members there are a number of things that’s being unearthed. But we would love for the family to come, bring documents and sit with the police and give them a comprehensive report so the police know exactly what to work with. We need something to work with other than what we are hearing in the public domain, because if I mention what we are hearing in the public domain, you will tell me put down this phone and you will move on to your next topic,” Alexander said.

Meanwhile, Gary Aboud, secretary of the NGO

Fishermen and Friends of the Sea, confirmed that Samaroo and Joseph were among six people killed in the strike. “We would like to offer our condolences to the families, friends, children, wives of the deceased. Very, very sorry that they were murdered like this. I am very very sorry,” Aboud said.

He warned that local fishers are now reluctant to go out to sea. “People are terrified at the risk of being killed at sea. Personally I am very upset with our national position of bringing American warships and allowing them to bypass the judicial process... I strongly advise fishermen not to go further than a quarter of a mile, half a mile from the shoreline. It is very dangerous to be offshore as you can be killed at any time,” he said.

Alexander also referenced past investigations involving the individuals, noting that “in 2018 persons were detained with narcotics” and that an investigation in east Trinidad involving one of the men “where persons were shot and killed” is ongoing.

The U.S. military recently intensified its presence in the Caribbean, deploying an amphibious squadron, a nuclear-powered attack submarine.

Jamaica’s first luxury casino coming at Princess Grand Resort

From the pulsating beat of reggae and dancehall music to electrifying live performances, Jamaica’s newest luxury resort, Princess Grand Jamaica, located in Green Island, Hanover, has quickly established itself as a favorite among travellers from North America and beyond, looking for fun, frolic, and authenticity in the paradise island.

Marketing & Public Relations Manager Serene Lloyd said that entertainment plays an important role in how the resort connects with its guests.

“We want our international guests to feel immersed in the authentic Jamaican experience,” Lloyd explained.

“We truly focus on multi-generational fun. There’s something for every generation. So whether you’re 4 years old, 14 years old, 40 years old, or above, there’s something here at the resort for you. And it’s really diverse in terms of our entertainment and our activities, so everyone can have a fantastic time at Princess Grand Jamaica,” she said.

New for 2026 at the Princess Grand Jamaica will be the opening of Jamaica’s first-ever Vegas-style casino that will mark a bold new chapter for Jamaica’s luxury tourism sector.

“Our casino opens next year, and we’re super excited,” Lloyd said. “It will be the first casino of its kind in Jamaica, and we’re happy that it is coming to Princess Hotel and Resorts. It is something new for the area and the people here.”

The Princess Grand includes two world-class, all-inclusive properties: the family-friendly Princess Grand Jamaica, offering 590 spacious suites; and Princess Senses The Mangrove, a serene adults-only retreat featuring 401 ocean-view suites and 14 ultra-luxurious over-water villas with infinity pools and glass floor panels.

Lloyd bragged about the culinary treat at both properties, explaining that the offering includes a choice of 14 restaurants and 15 bars.

“Our culinary philosophy is rooted in diversity and authenticity, so you’ll find Jamaican, Italian, seafood, steakhouse, and fusion dining all in one place,” said Lloyd.

“We also have authentic Jamaican cuisine in one of our à la carte restaurants. That’s an elevated gastronomic experience, truly focusing on Jamaican food,” she informed.

Lloyd explained that guests at the



The Princess Grand Resort and Casino

resort are treated to Jamaica’s rich cultural tapestry each night.

“The entertainment team that we have here, they participate in all of our nightly shows. They are energetic, and they know how to bring that Jamaican warmth across. All of our amazing staff, they’ll definitely make you feel like you’re back at home,” she said, adding, “You will hear a mix of authentic Jamaican songs, not just Bob Marley, but all the other amazing Jamaican artists.

Our entertainers are energetic, talented, and they know how to bring that Jamaican warmth across,” Lloyd shared.

For families, the resort’s entertainment is designed for multi-generational fun, from the seven-zone kids’ club and virtual reality gaming center to themed nights and beach parties for adults. Even though the resort has been in operation for less than a year, Lloyd said repeat North American guests are growing fast, with visitors returning to the resort for its

blend of modern luxury and island soul.

“Many of our guests from the U.S. and Canada come back within months,” Lloyd noted. “They tell us it feels like coming home, and that’s exactly what we aim for.”

Last June, seventy (70) of the top-selling U.S.-based travel specialists were treated to a luxurious and immersive tour of both properties at the Princess Grand, where they experienced firsthand the resort’s exciting hospitality offerings.

Belize, US sign third country pact

Belize and the United States have signed a “Safe Third Country Agreement” designed to expand cooperation on asylum processing and migration management — a decision that has already drawn criticism from opposition leaders in Belize.

The agreement, signed by Belize’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Culture and Immigration Hon. Francis Fonseca and Ms. Katharine Beamer, Chargé d’Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Belize, outlines procedures for the examination of protection requests. It also reinforces both countries’ commitment to international law and humanitarian principles, according to a government press release.

Under the agreement, Belize “retains an absolute veto over transfers, with restrictions on nationalities, a cap on transferees, and comprehensive security screenings. No person who is deemed to be a threat to the public safety or national security will be allowed to enter or stay in Belize.

Additionally, the United States may also provide, upon request, financial and technical assistance to enhance Belize’s migration and asylum management system.”

The deal will only take effect after Senate ratification and the establishment of operating procedures, and will remain in force for two years unless terminated earlier by either side.

The deal closely resembles an agreement signed in August between the United States and Paraguay, which allows asylum seekers currently in the U.S. to pursue their protection claims in Paraguay — part of what U.S. officials described as a shared effort to manage illegal immigration and prevent abuse of the asylum system.

But not everyone is on board. Tracy Taegar Panton, an opposition leader in Belize’s parliament, sharply criticized the agreement, warning that it could “reshape Belize’s immigration and asylum systems.

79,000 Jamaicans still living in multi-dimensional poverty

Nearly 79,000 Jamaicans, or 2.8 per cent of the population, remain trapped in multidimensional poverty, according to the newly released 2025 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).

The report, titled *Overlapping Hardships: Poverty and Climate Hazard*, finds that while Jamaica’s monetary poverty rate dropped to a record low of 8.2 per cent in 2023, down from 16.7 per cent in 2021, thousands continue to face overlapping deprivations in health, education, and living standards.

Multidimensional poverty goes beyond income levels, capturing broader aspects of deprivation that affect well-being. It examines access to nutrition, healthcare, education, housing, sanitation, electricity, and clean cooking fuel — offering a fuller picture of how poverty shapes daily life.

According to the 2025 MPI, 52.2 per cent of multidimensionally poor Jamaicans are deprived in health, 20.9 per cent in education, and 26.9 per cent in standard of living. The average intensity of deprivation — the degree to which people experience overlapping hardships — stands at 38.9 per cent, while the country’s overall MPI value is 0.011.

In comparison, the Dominican Republic recorded an MPI value of 0.009, and Trinidad and Tobago just 0.002, placing Jamaica slightly behind its regional peers.

The findings also reveal that 142,000 Jamaicans — roughly five per cent of the population — are consid-



Many Jamaicans are still living in poverty

ered vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, meaning a small shock could push them into deprivation. Another 0.2 per cent of Jamaicans live in severe multidimensional poverty.

The report notes that Jamaica’s incidence of multidimensional poverty (2.8 per cent) is 1.4 percentage points higher than its monetary poverty rate (1.4 per cent), showing that “individuals living above the monetary poverty line may still suffer deprivations in health, education and/or standard of living.”

Despite those challenges, Jamaica fares better than the Latin America and

Caribbean average, where 5.6 per cent of people live in multidimensional poverty, with an average deprivation intensity of 42.4 per cent.

This year’s global MPI update includes data from 109 countries and 1,359 regions, covering 6.3 billion people worldwide. It finds that 1.1 billion people — more than one in six globally — live in acute multidimensional poverty, and over half are children.

Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia together account for 83.2 per cent of the world’s multidimensionally poor, with Sub-Saharan Africa alone home to 565 million people living in acute poverty. The report highlights that 83.5 per cent of the multidimensionally poor live in rural areas, even though these areas represent just over half of the global population.

At the other end of the scale, countries like Serbia (0.1 per cent), Armenia (0.2 per cent), and Azerbaijan (0.2 per cent) have nearly eliminated acute multidimensional poverty, while Chad (84.2 per cent), the Central African Republic (80.4 per cent), and Niger (79.9 per cent) have the highest poverty rates.

The report also integrates climate hazard data for the first time, revealing that nearly eight in ten of those living in multidimensional poverty — 887 million people — are directly exposed to extreme heat, drought, flooding, or air pollution. Of those, 651 million face two or more climate hazards, while 309 million experience three or four simultaneously.

“The findings show that poverty is not just a standalone socio-economic issue, but one deeply interlinked with planetary pressures and instability,” the report concludes.

Bahamas minister urges citizens to avoid go-fast boats

Bahamas National Security Minister Wayne Munroe is urging citizens to “stay out of go-fast boats leaving Venezuela” as the United States continues its military build-up targeting suspected drug traffickers operating out of the South American country.

“We’re not going to be doing what the Americans are doing, but you would do well to stay out of their way,” Munroe told reporters.

The warning comes after a recent meeting of CARICOM heads in Guyana, where regional leaders discussed security concerns in parts of the Caribbean and their potential impact on member states. The CARICOM Secretariat noted that Trinidad and Tobago did not endorse the position taken during the meeting.

The advisory follows a series of deadly U.S. strikes targeting suspected drug-trafficking vessels off Venezuela’s coast, including one that reportedly



A Go Fast drug boat is intercepted in the Caribbean Sea

claimed the lives of two Trinidadians.

“Save in respect of Trinidad and Tobago, which reserved its position, Heads agreed on the following: They reaffirmed the principle of maintaining the Caribbean Region as a Zone of Peace and the importance of dialogue and engagement towards the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflict. CARICOM remains willing to assist towards that objective,” the Secretariat said in a statement.

Munroe acknowledged that The Bahamas would be unable to challenge

the U.S. militarily. “If they determined to, for instance, deploy in international waters between The Bahamas and the U.S., what can we do to restrict them in finding what they say is their national interest?” he said, adding, “I do not see the government being able to restrict the U.S. in the steps they see necessary to defend their national interest.”

He emphasized that Bahamians should exercise caution to avoid falling victim to military action. “If they decide to do that, we would have to seek to give our citizens a warning to prevent them from falling victim, perhaps, to a military strike,” Munroe said.

The minister also noted that even if U.S. vessels entered Bahamian harbors, there would be little the government could do beyond issuing a complaint.

Munroe concluded that individuals suspected of illegal activity should be brought before the courts.

Trinidad and Tobago’s UN Security Council bid faces regional pushback

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has brushed aside suggestions that Trinidad and Tobago’s bid for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) could lose regional backing, saying she is unfazed by any potential fallout from her government’s support of U.S. military operations in the Caribbean.

“I simply do not care if anyone withdraws their support. That is their choice,” Persad-Bissessar told the Trinidad Guardian on Monday in response to a Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) report suggesting that Port of Spain’s alignment with Washington could jeopardize its 2027–2028 Security Council nomination.

CMC quoted regional sources as saying that several CARICOM leaders were unhappy with Trinidad and Tobago’s position, which diverged from the bloc’s reaffirmation of the Caribbean as a “Zone of Peace.”

“You should ask CARICOM leaders about this. Quite frankly, my only care and concern is for the people of Trinidad and Tobago,” Persad-Bissessar told reporters. “I have made it explicitly clear that Trinidad and Tobago will always come first under my leadership. No other country besides the U.S. is willing to assist us to aggressively fight the drug and arms traffickers. I am not going to toe CARICOM’s line while our country is going to hell with drugs, out-of-control violent crime and murders for the last 20 years. Added to that, we have tens of thousands of illegal Venezuelan immigrants here who are putting a strain on our services.”

Her comments come amid re-



Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar

gional unease over U.S. military activities in the Caribbean, which Washington says are aimed at combating narco- and human trafficking. The CARICOM Secretariat confirmed that Trinidad and Tobago was the lone member state to withhold endorsement of a collective statement last weekend reaffirming the region’s commitment to peace and diplomacy. Sources said that Port of Spain’s break from regional consensus has raised questions about its suitability to represent CARICOM on the Security Council — a nomination originally secured under a previous administration. They also warned that Persad-Bisses-

sar’s remarks endorsing U.S. operations “to kill traffickers violently” could strain Trinidad and Tobago’s relations within CARICOM, the wider Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), and the A+3 coalition of African and Caribbean countries that coordinate on UN matters.

Venezuelan Ambassador to Dominica Jose Durabio Moros Savelli has urged Caribbean nations to oppose the U.S. military buildup, warning it could spark regional instability. “If the United States start a war in the Caribbean, it will be bad for all of us — our economy, our people,” he said.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Colombia’s government have also publicly criticized the U.S. deployment of naval forces, calling it a “source of tension” that undermines regional peace.

Despite the criticism, Port of Spain on Sunday reaffirmed its support for U.S. operations, emphasizing that they target criminal networks, not law-abiding citizens. “The government of Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its commitment to the people of the Caribbean for the creation of a safer, stronger, and more prosperous region,” its statement said.



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Guyana leader defends Global Super League, rebukes India’s closed-door policy

President Dr Irfaan Ali has launched a fierce critique of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), condemning its long-standing policy that bars Indian players from participating in overseas Twenty20 leagues — a restriction that also impacts Guyana’s newly launched Global Super League (GSL).

Calling the move “unsustainable,” Dr Ali said India’s cricket board had leveraged its dominance to impose an exclusionary system that threatens the game’s global future. “India holds the cricketing nuclear button,” he declared. “Control through exclusion and market dominance may yield short-term gains, but an open, level playing field is the only sustainable model for long-term growth.”

While the Indian Premier League (IPL) remains the world’s most lucrative T20 competition, the BCCI’s ban prevents active Indian players from joining any rival leagues — including the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), Pakistan Super League (PSL), Big Bash League (BBL), and the UAE’s IIT20.

Dr Ali argued that this isolationism is ultimately self-defeating. “India cannot be developing the level of talent it is developing just for its borders,” he said pointedly. “It’s like boxing — you can’t be a world champion if you only want to fight in your borders. The

BCCI is doing an enormous disservice to the magnitude of talent that India has by not allowing participation in this league.”

Dr Ali cautioned that India’s approach could backfire as emerging powers enter the sporting arena. “Nations like Saudi Arabia are investing strategically in sports,” he noted. “That can quickly reshape the balance of power.”

He urged the BCCI to return to a more cooperative spirit, emphasizing that global cricket’s vitality depends on shared growth rather than monopolistic control.

Positioned as a unifying venture, the Guyana-based Global Super League — backed by Cricket West Indies — aims to bring together the champions of major T20 competitions like the CPL, PSL, and BBL in a champions-league format.

Dr Ali stressed that the GSL is designed to complement, not compete with, existing leagues. “On the economic side, we strongly believe that the product we have launched — the Global Super League — is not meant to be in competition with any product. It is meant to be in partnership with all the different T20 products,” he explained.

He added with conviction, “In the first year, I believe it has ruffled enough feathers and created enough



Players in action at the Guyana Super League in July

news for people to understand this is a serious league.”

Dr Ali’s remarks resonated beyond Guyana’s borders — a clarion call for reform in a sport increasingly shaped by power and money. His message was clear: cricket’s survival as a truly global game depends on openness, collaboration, and respect for shared growth.

Hope, Campbell lead WI charge up ICC ladder

Following their defiant centuries in Delhi, West Indies batsmen Shai Hope and John Campbell have made major leaps in the latest ICC Test batting rankings, underscoring their resurgence amid the team’s evolving Test revival.

Hope, who crafted a polished 103 in the second innings of the final Test against India — his first Test hundred since 2017 — surged an impressive 34 places, rocketing from 100th to 66th. Campbell, whose fluent 115 marked his maiden Test century, rose six places, climbing from 74th to 68th.

The pair’s efforts were the heart of a stirring fightback in Delhi that earned the West Indies widespread admiration, even as India clinched the series 2-0.

All-rounder Justin Greaves, who stood tall with an unbeaten fifty in that same innings, also saw his consistency rewarded, jumping five spots to 71st. His composed performance under pressure further underlined the growing depth in the Caribbean batting order.

Despite missing the series against India, Kraigg Brathwaite remains the highest-ranked West Indian batsman, holding 58th place after a marginal



West Indies Shai Hope

two-place drop. Alick Athanaze follows at 62nd, maintaining his upward trajectory after a strong year.

Further down, Joshua Da Silva slipped three spots to 75th, Roston Chase fell one to 82nd, while Tagenarine Chanderpaul edged up two places to 96th, joining spinner Gudakesh

Motie in that position.

The latest bowling rankings brought a mix of movement and milestones. Injured speedster Shamar Joseph dipped one spot to 16th, while Jayden Seales, who endured a challenging tour of India, slid four places to 17th.

Left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican, the leading wicket-taker for the West Indies on the tour, climbed two spots to 30th, sitting just behind pacer Alzarri Joseph. Meanwhile, captain Roston Chase made steady progress, rising four places to 57th following his valuable contributions with the ball.

Though the rankings reflect individual gains, they tell a broader story of resilience and renewal. The Delhi fightback not only produced long-awaited centuries but also signaled a renewed competitive edge within the West Indies camp — a glimpse of the grit that head coach Daren Sammy and his team have been working to restore.

With several players climbing the global charts, the message is clear: the West Indies are not just rebuilding; they are re-emerging.



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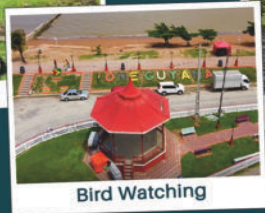
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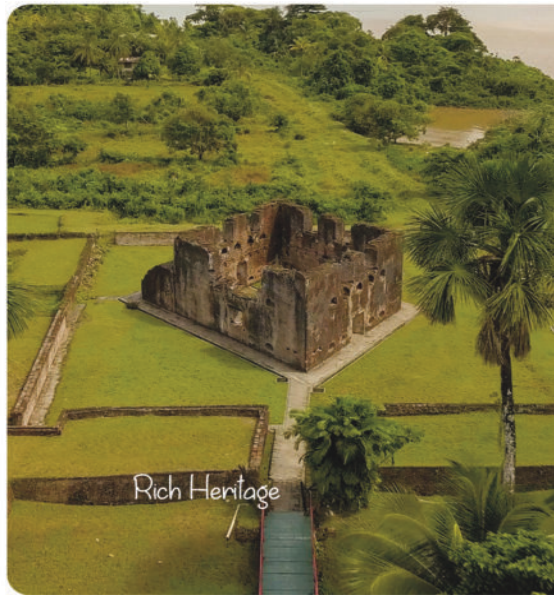
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