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Thursday April 2 2026. Volume 44, Issue #14

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Jamaica loses World Cup bid

Jamaica's Reggae Boyz suffered a final heartbreak in their bid to reach to the FIFA Men's World Cup for the first time since 1998 after they were beaten 1-0 in extra time by the Democratic Republic of Congo in their Inter-Continental play-offs at Estadio Akron in Guadalajara, Mexico on Tuesday.

After bravely battling the Central Africans to a 0-0 draw after regulation time, Axel Tuanzebe got the ball across from a corner in the 100th minute to take the DRC back to the World Cup for the first time since 1974, they qualified as Zaire. Jamaica had failed to get an automatic spot in the World Cup after they were defeated by Curacao, held to a 0-0 draw at home on the final day of qualification. The Jamaicans, however, earned a spot in the inter-continental play-off on the basis of being one of the best second-placed teams and had beaten New Caledonia of Oceania in the semi-final game last Thursday.

Above, players from both teams are captured in the heat of the action before Congo scored the winning goal in the extra-time action.



Ali: Santokhi was a trusted friend

Suriname's former president Chandrikapersad Santokhi, who governed from 2020 to 2025, died suddenly on Monday at the age of 67, his successor and the South American country's current president said.

"His many years of service in various public offices will be remembered," President Jennifer Simons said in a statement shared on social media. A cause of death was not immediately given.

Guyana President Dr Irfaan Ali has expressed profound sadness at the passing of Santokhi, describing him as a "fine statesman" and a trusted friend of Guyana.

The two are pictured above at a meeting in 2025.

In a statement issued on behalf of the Government and people of Guyana, President Ali extended heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Suriname, as well as to Santokhi's family, noting that "a voice of wisdom has fallen silent" while also adding that "a friend has left us."

Santokhi, chairman of Suriname's Progressive Reform Party, left office after last year's elections. He won more votes as a member of parliament than any other lawmaker, but his party finished closely behind Simons' National Democratic Party, which led to a coalition deal to install Simons as president.

After leaving the presidency, Santokhi continued to serve as a member of parliament.

As a former police commissioner and later, as justice minister, Santokhi investigated the 1982 killing of 15 leading government critics, and pushed for the case to move ahead. Only one person survived the massacre that happened at Fort Zeelandia.

Former President Desi Bouterse, whom Santokhi defeated in the 2020 election, was convicted in 2019 of overseeing the operation and jailed for 20 years. He later died in prison.

More on Ali's remarks on Page 21

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Taxes on new housing lowered

By Milan Maharaj
LJI REPORTER

The federal government and the Province of Ontario have announced a new partnership designed to reduce housing related taxes and increase the supply of new homes, according to an announcement on March 30 from the Prime Minister's office.

The agreement includes a combination of tax measures and infrastructure funding intended to lower upfront costs for homebuyers and support residential construction across Ontario.

Under the plan, the federal government and Ontario will work together to reduce housing related taxes on newly built homes. The announcement states that the full 13 percent Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) will be removed on new homes valued up to \$1 million. The measure would provide a maximum rebate of \$130,000 and will apply to eligible purchase agreements signed between April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027.

For homes priced above \$1 million, the rebate will gradually decline, with reduced amounts available for properties valued up to \$1.5 million and partial relief continuing for higher-priced homes. The government estimates the measure will deliver approximately \$2.2 billion in tax relief.

In addition to tax changes, the partnership includes

a commitment to lower municipal development charges, which are fees applied to new construction to fund local infrastructure. The federal and provincial governments will jointly contribute up to \$8.8 billion over 10 years to support infrastructure projects tied to housing development. The funding is intended to enable municipalities to reduce development charges by as much as 50 percent for a period of three years.

Development changes are typically used to finance infrastructure such as roads, water systems, and community services. Municipalities will be expected to participate in reducing these charges, with all three levels of government contributing to the overall approach.

Officials say the measures are intended to accelerate housing construction by lowering upfront costs for developers and homebuyers. The partnership also includes collaboration on transit and infrastructure projects designed to support population growth and housing development. Projects identified in the announcement include transit expansions in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area along the GO Train lines, a new light rail transit line in Toronto called the Waterfront East line, as well as planning work related to high speed rail connections between Toronto and Québec City.

These initiatives are intended to support access to housing and employment by improving transportation links in growing communities.

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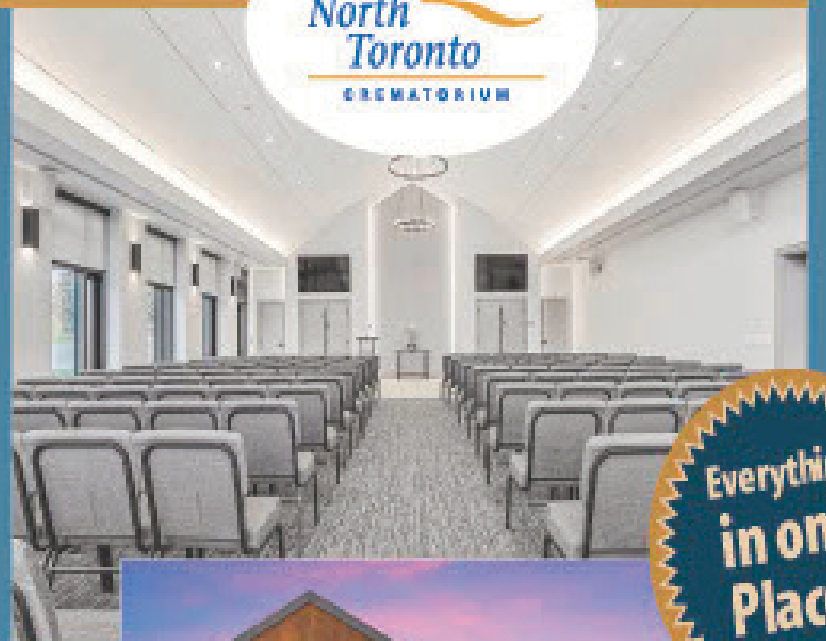
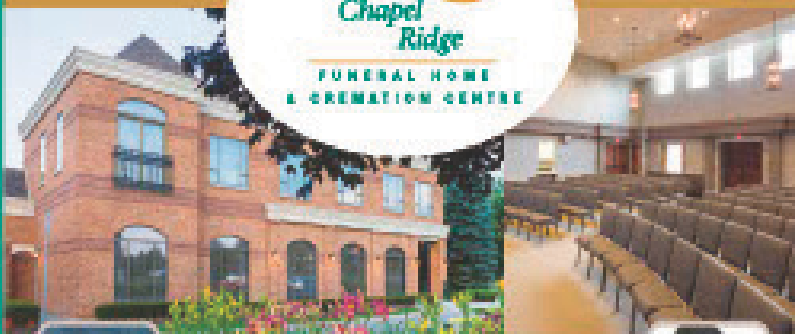
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GUYANA AND US DEEPEN SECURITY TIES - PRESIDENT ALI AND US ENVOY MEET IN GEORGETOWN

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President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and US Special Envoy and former Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem



\$100,000 CASH GRANT PORTAL NOW LIVE - OVER 48,000 PUBLIC SERVANTS ALREADY PAID

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GUYANA AND US DEEPEN SECURITY TIES - PRESIDENT ALI AND US ENVOY MEET IN GEORGETOWN



The meeting between President Ali and US Envoy Noem to tackle transnational crime

Guyana is accelerating efforts to modernise its defence and surveillance capabilities, deepening its strategic partnership with the United States (US) following high-level talks between President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and US Special Envoy and former Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

The meeting, held at State House on Main Street in Georgetown on

of the broader Shield of the Americas Initiative, a coalition of 12 countries aimed at confronting criminal networks across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Earlier this month, President Ali signed the Shield of the Americas Joint Security Declaration in Doral, Florida, reinforcing

collaboration with the US to build an integrated system capable of monitoring and protecting the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), a 200-nautical-mile offshore area rich in oil and gas resources, including the prolific Stabroek Block.

"These systems are not inexpensive;

including Venezuela's 2025 incursion into Guyana's EEZ with its patrol vessel, Guaiquerí (PO-11), which intensified concerns over sovereignty. President Ali emphasised that Guyana's approach builds on a long history of defence cooperation, including ties with the United Kingdom, Brazil,



The meeting between President Ali and US Envoy Noem to tackle transnational crime

These partnerships focus on knowledge transfer, asset integration, and broader institutional strengthening.

The engagement also included a symbolic gesture: President Ali presented Special Envoy Noem with a painting by Guyanese artist Dillon Craig, featuring the Canje Pheasant alongside the Harpy Eagle, reflecting the nation's identity and resilience.



The meeting between President Ali and US Envoy Noem to tackle transnational crime



The meeting between President Ali and US Envoy Noem to tackle transnational crime

Guyana's commitment to regional cooperation against transnational crime. The March 25 meeting advanced those discussions, with senior government ministers and officers of the Joint Services also present.

Beyond diplomacy, the talks highlighted Guyana's urgent need to strengthen its national security infrastructure. President Ali told reporters that the initiative includes

they are very expensive," the President said during the sideline of the launch of *Guyana's Revised Laws and Law Reports* at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre on March 24. He noted that such partnerships are essential to address the abuse of the EEZ and safeguard Guyana's critical economic assets.

The move comes amid heightened regional tensions,



The meeting between President Ali and US Envoy Noem to tackle transnational crime

GUYANA, SURINAME IN TALKS OVER CORENTYNE RIVER CHARGES



President Ali and Suriname's President, Dr Jennifer Geerlings-Simons

The Governments of Guyana and Suriname have initiated direct engagement following concerns raised by President Mohamed Irfaan Ali over newly introduced charges for the use of the Corentyne River, particularly affecting timber and

quarry operators. The development first described by President Ali as **"troubling"**, has prompted swift diplomatic communication between the two countries, with Suriname's Foreign Minister Melvin Bouva

reaching out to Guyana's Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud shortly after the issue was raised publicly. **"...we are hoping that this can be resolved as friends,"** President Ali told reporters, signalling a preference for dialogue and cooperation as both sides seek a resolution.

In an earlier statement, the Guyanese Head of State said the imposition of charges could have far-reaching implications for bilateral trade and longstanding cross-border arrangements, particularly for operators who depend on the Corentyne River

to transport goods.

The Government of Guyana formally lodged a protest with Surinamese authorities, raising the matter **"in the spirit of dialogue and mutual respect"**, while urging urgent attention to prevent disruption to economic activity.

President Ali cautioned that measures of this nature risk creating unnecessary barriers to commerce and could undermine business confidence, especially for companies reliant on predictable and fair operating conditions.

He also underscored

the principle of reciprocity in bilateral relations, noting that Surinamese businesses have long operated within Guyana without discrimination or restriction.

"Such steps are essential to ensuring that our relations continue to be guided by mutual respect and good neighbourliness," he said.

The issue arises at a time when both Guyana and Suriname are seeking to deepen economic ties and expand private sector opportunities. However, the introduction of

river charges has raised concerns among local operators about increased costs and potential disruptions to trade.

With diplomatic channels now engaged, both governments are expected to continue discussions aimed at resolving the matter amicably.

President Ali's intervention highlights Guyana's commitment to addressing disputes through dialogue, while maintaining a firm stance on fairness and the protection of national economic interests.

DIGITAL WALLETS COMING SOON



New Demerara Bank branch opens at Beterverwagting

The future of banking in Guyana may soon be as simple as tapping a phone.

Even as many citizens still rely on cash for everyday transactions, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has signalled a major shift, one that could change how Guyanese pay for goods, access services, and manage

their money.

Speaking at the opening of a new Demerara Bank Limited branch at Beterverwagting on the East Coast of Demerara, the President announced that a national payment platform and widespread access to digital wallets could become a reality within six months.

For shop owners,

and busy families trying to stretch their time and income, the move promises greater convenience and security. Instead of carrying cash, persons would be able to pay for groceries or services with just a tap or swipe on their mobile devices.

“In the next six months...a national payment platform must be fully operational,” the President said, noting that digital wallets will be rolled out at a national scale.

The initiative forms part of a broader push to modernise Guyana’s financial system and bring more people into formal banking. But beyond the technology, the focus remains on access, ensuring that services reach

communities that have long been underserved.

That goal is already taking shape on the East Coast. With the opening of the new Demerara Bank branch, residents in Beterverwagting and surrounding villages no longer need to travel into Georgetown to conduct basic banking. Opening an account, applying for a loan, or making transactions can now happen closer to home. For many, that means saving time, reducing travel costs, and gaining easier entry into the financial system.

The numbers reflect a growing appetite for digital services. Over the past nine months alone, the bank processed 450,000 new accounts electronically, while more than \$50 billion in transactions were conducted through digital channels.

President Ali described this as a **“remarkable”** achievement, one that points to how quickly Guyanese are adapting when given the opportunity.

Behind the scenes, the government is also working to build the infrastructure needed to support this transformation.

Supermarkets, retail outlets, and other businesses are expected to be equipped with contactless payment systems, allowing seamless transactions across the country.

At the same time, the expansion of credit is helping more citizens invest in their future. Mortgage lending has surged in recent years, reflecting a rise in home ownership and, for many families, the chance to

build long-term wealth.

“This is about families building wealth,” the President said, linking financial access directly to national development.

Demerara Bank’s own growth mirrors that wider story. From modest beginnings, it has grown into one of the country’s largest financial institutions, expanding its reach while investing in staff and infrastructure.



New Demerara Bank branch opens at Beterverwagting



New Demerara Bank branch opens at Beterverwagting



New Demerara Bank branch opens at Beterverwagting

\$100,000 CASH GRANT PORTAL NOW LIVE - OVER 48,000 PUBLIC SERVANTS ALREADY PAID

Thousands of Guyanese are now able to register for the Government’s \$100,000 cash grant, as the official online portal went live on March 26, marking the start of the second phase of distribution.

The initiative has already seen 48,858 central government employees, including public servants, teachers, and members of the disciplined services, receive their payments directly into their bank accounts, without needing to access the portal. This initial disbursement injected close to \$5 billion in additional disposable income into households across the country.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh, explained that this group was prioritised to ensure a smooth and efficient rollout.

“This was the easiest group to execute because

we already had their bank account information and were already paying their salaries electronically,” he noted.

With the launch of the online platform, the process has now been opened to all other eligible Guyanese, who are required to self-register via <https://cashgrant.gov.gy>. The portal allows persons aged 18 and older to submit their information, complete a simple verification process, and receive their funds directly into their bank accounts.

Government is strongly encouraging citizens to ensure they have an active account at a local commercial bank, as this remains the fastest and most convenient method of payment. To support this effort, local

banks are assisting with account setup, helping to expand financial access nationwide.

In addition to the digital platform, authorities have deployed personnel to assist residents in hinterland communities, while a dedicated call centre has been

established to support persons encountering difficulties during the registration process.

Dr. Singh emphasised that the portal will remain open, allowing citizens ample time to apply.

“There is absolutely no reason to worry,” he said,

addressing concerns following early technical delays. **“If you can’t do it today, you can do it tomorrow or the next day.”**

The minister acknowledged that high demand shortly after the portal’s launch resulted in temporary access issues, as tens of thousands of users attempted to log on simultaneously. However, he assured that these challenges are being addressed by technical teams.

Within hours of going live, the platform, developed by a team of young Guyanese at the National Data Management Authority, recorded thousands of successful registrations, highlighting strong public interest in the programme.

The 2026 cash grant builds on previous

national support initiatives, including the 2024 \$100,000 grant, which distributed more than \$60 billion to over 600,000 citizens, and the \$25,000 household grant introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, the Government expects to inject another \$60 billion into the economy.

To qualify, applicants must be Guyanese citizens aged 18 or older as of February 28, 2026, possess a valid National ID card or passport, have a bank account in their name, and be physically present in Guyana at the time of registration.

For many citizens, the grant represents not only immediate financial relief but also an opportunity to save, invest, and engage more fully in the country’s growing digital economy.

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GUYANA AND BELIZE TEAM UP TO PROTECT FORESTS AND FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE



Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Todd and Belize's Minister of Sustainable Development, Orlando Habet

Guyana and Belize, two of the region's most forested countries, are working together to maintain their status as carbon sinks, signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance climate action and sustainable forest management. The agreement,

finalised at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, creates a framework for collaboration on forest conservation, biodiversity protection, and climate resilience. It also opens doors for joint research, technical training, and the sharing of vital environmental data.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Hugh Todd said the partnership underscores the importance of regional cooperation, noting, **"Small states cannot do it alone. We need strong partnerships at the regional and multilateral**

levels." He added that the MoU represents a united approach to climate change while safeguarding Guyana's forests.

Belize's Minister of Sustainable Development, Orlando Habet, described the agreement as **"more than a document,"** highlighting its foundation in years of technical exchanges and collaboration between both nations' climate teams. He said the partnership will focus on Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems, REDD+ initiatives, and carbon market opportunities,

while also strengthening conservation and resilience efforts.

The MoU builds on recent high-level engagements, including President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's state visit to Belize in January 2026. The five-year initiative will be implemented through joint projects and a potential technical working group.

Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to preserving their forests and leveraging natural resources to support sustainable development, ensuring that future generations inherit a healthier, greener Caribbean.



Minister of Housing Collin Croal

The International Building Expo 2026 was officially launched at the Railway Courtyard, igniting excitement for what is expected to be the largest staging of the event to date.

Set for June 25–28 at the Guyana National Stadium, the four-day expo will bring together a cross-section of Guyana's

booming housing and construction sector, developers, contractors, architects, suppliers, financial institutions, and everyday citizens, all under one roof.

But beyond the displays and deals, the event is shaping up to be a reflection of a country in transformation.

Minister of Housing and Water, Collin Croal, described the expo as more than just an exhibition, noting that it has evolved into a national platform where ideas, investments, and aspirations meet.

"Housing and infrastructure are not just development priorities, they are nation-building tools," he said, pointing to the thousands of Guyanese families who

BUILDING EXPO 2026 LAUNCHED, PROMISES BIGGEST SHOWCASE YET

have already benefitted from expanded access to land and housing.

Now in its 16th year, the expo holds special significance, as it unfolds under the theme *"Guyana at 60: Building Strong Foundations for a Sustainable Future"*, aligning with the country's upcoming 60th Independence anniversary. The concept for the expo was first introduced by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali during his tenure as housing minister, and has since grown into a flagship national event.

For Minister within the Ministry of Housing, Vanessa Benn, the expo also represents opportunity, particularly

for young professionals and skilled workers.

With government pushing to construct at least 40,000 homes within five years, demand is rising for carpenters, masons, plumbers, surveyors, and architects. **"It means jobs, it means growth, and it means opportunity,"** she said.

For prospective homeowners, small contractors, and even students, the expo offers a chance to explore financing options, discover new building technologies, and connect with industry leaders.



Largest building expo expected in June

GUYANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC STRENGTHEN TIES WITH INAUGURAL WEEK-LONG EVENT



Trade and culture in focus at Dominican Republic Week launch

The first Dominican Republic Week got underway in Georgetown on March 26, with officials from both countries taking part in a

ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Marriott Hotel. The event, attended by Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues, and

Dominican Ambassador Ernesto Torres-Pereyra, marks a historic first for Guyana.

The ceremonial ribbon cutting signified the official launch of a two-day celebration aimed at fostering cultural exchange, trade, and bilateral cooperation between the nations. As a keepsake, Minister Rodrigues and other dignitaries received pieces of the commemorative ribbon.

Dominican Republic Week features an array of activities,

including conferences, exhibitions, a fashion show, a Cigar and Fun Night, and business-to-business (B2B) meetings. Organisers say these events are designed to strengthen commercial ties, showcase Dominican products and culture, and create opportunities for networking and collaboration.

The inaugural week is expected to draw business leaders, cultural enthusiasts, and members of the public, offering a

unique opportunity to explore new avenues for collaboration and shared growth.

Organisers emphasised that this marks the beginning

of an ongoing effort to strengthen relations, promote trade, and celebrate cultural heritage, signalling a promising chapter in Guyana–Dominican Republic cooperation.



Trade and culture in focus at Dominican Republic Week launch

NEARLY 15,000 GUYANESE BUYING CARS EACH YEAR AMID GROWING OPPORTUNITIES



Dr. Singh during a live taping of BBC World Questions

Young Guyanese are entering a world of unprecedented possibility. With more jobs, affordable land, and access to education, this generation is experiencing what Finance Minister Dr. Ashni Singh calls the, **“era of opportunity”**

where long-term growth is translating into tangible improvements in daily life. Dr. Singh made the remarks during a live taping of *BBC World Questions* at the Pegasus Corporate Suites in Georgetown, where political leaders, private

sector representatives, and civil society voices discussed Guyana’s rapid economic transformation.

“Almost 15,000 persons become owners of their own car every year,” the minister said, highlighting one of many indicators of rising living standards. Beyond cars, Guyana’s unprecedented economic growth has created more than 104,000 new jobs in the past five years, a significant achievement for a nation whose population has recently surpassed one million.

The private sector is growing so fast that many businesses now struggle to find workers, reflecting

both strong demand for skilled labour and the expanding opportunities available to citizens.

Access to land has also increased, with more than 50,000 Guyanese receiving house lots, giving thousands of families the chance to own land for the first time. **“These are improvements in well-being that sometimes get glossed over, but they are very tangible and very real,”** Dr. Singh said.

Education remains central to the government’s strategy. Free education at all levels, restored tertiary access, and cash grants for school-going children aim to

equip young Guyanese with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly growing economy. These initiatives are intended to keep youth in the country and enable them to contribute to national development.

Dr. Singh also addressed governance and national unity, describing Guyana’s diversity as one of its greatest strengths. He noted that people from different ethnic backgrounds live, work, and celebrate together, while government policies promote broad national support across communities.

The discussion highlighted both the optimism surrounding Guyana’s economic

expansion and the ongoing conversation about ensuring the benefits of growth reach citizens in all regions. From job creation to car ownership and land access, Dr. Singh painted a picture of a country where economic growth is producing tangible improvements in everyday life.

“I want to urge young Guyanese people to take advantage of these opportunities,” he said. **“This is a time for you to build your future in Guyana, contribute to national development, and be part of this era of unprecedented opportunity.”**



Director of the Vreed en Hoop Shorebase Inc (VESHI), Nicholas Deygoo-Boyer

As global oil price volatility threatens to drive up inflation, Guyana has implemented a series of strategic measures designed to keep essential costs manageable. For families juggling grocery bills, transportation, and school expenses, even marginal price increases hit hard. This reality has been central to recent

policy decisions, as highlighted by Vreed-en-Hoop Shorebase Inc. (VESHI) Director Nicholas Deygoo-Boyer. Speaking on the *Starting Point* podcast, Deygoo-Boyer explained that while Guyana is not immune to global shocks, particularly with instability surrounding key oil transit routes like the Strait of Hormuz,

CUSHIONING THE BLOW - INSIDE GUYANA'S EFFORT TO KEEP COSTS DOWN

the country has used **“all the tools in the toolkit”** to prevent passing inflation on to the population. These measures include the removal of Value-Added Tax (VAT) on fertilizers, agrochemicals, and farming equipment to support the agricultural sector and stabilize food prices. Furthermore, significant allocations in Budget 2026 continue to fund cost-of-living relief programmes for vulnerable households.

However, structural challenges remain. Despite being a major crude oil producer,

Guyana currently depends on imported refined fuels like gasoline and diesel, leaving the domestic market exposed to international price swings. To bridge this gap, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has championed the development of a local oil refinery and expanded energy infrastructure, including the transformative gas-to-energy project. These initiatives are designed to grant Guyana greater control over its fuel supply and pricing, offering long-term relief to every household.

President Ali has also called on the private sector to share the responsibility of shielding the nation from mounting economic pressures. He emphasized that with government tools already maximized, the business community must now play its part. The President urged companies maintaining high profit margins to consider pricing adjustments that ease the financial burden on consumers.

He linked rising local costs to unavoidable global events, including

Middle Eastern tensions that drive up transport and insurance rates. While these are not short-term shocks, the President noted that strategic investments in deep-water ports and expanded storage facilities will eventually strengthen national energy security. By combining immediate tax relief with long-term infrastructure, Guyana aims to move toward a future where global instability no longer dictates the cost of living at home.

OVER 1,800 GUYANESE LAND JOBS THROUGH JOB BANK



Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith, on Starting Point

For many Guyanese seeking work, finding the right opportunity can feel like searching for a needle in a haystack. But the government’s Job

Bank is changing that, connecting thousands of job seekers with positions across the country.

Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith, revealed that more than 1,800 people have already secured employment through the platform. Managed by the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency, the Job Bank acts as a bridge between employers and prospective employees, ensuring that skills meet demand.

“In terms of active

employment, 1,837 persons have secured jobs through the Job Bank,” Minister Griffith shared on the *Starting Point* podcast. He explained that the platform works much like a traditional bank: employers “deposit” job vacancies, while job seekers register their qualifications and skills. The system then matches applicants with suitable positions.

Since its launch, the Job Bank has registered 16,922 vacancies and successfully placed 2,960 individuals into

employment, spanning a variety of sectors.

The minister urged more Guyanese to register with the Job Bank to access opportunities that align with their skills and ambitions. **“Tell us what you have to offer, and we will try to match you with a suitable job so that you can be productive and contribute to Guyana,”** he said.

Minister Griffith also encouraged private sector participation, highlighting that employer engagement



A section of the gathering during the launch of the part-time jobs initiative at the Diamond Secondary School

is critical to addressing labour shortages as the country’s economy grows. With initiatives like the Job Bank, finding work is no longer left to

chance, more Guyanese are now stepping into meaningful employment and contributing to the nation’s expanding economic landscape.

ESSEQUIBO 1899 JOINS GUYANA'S FPSO FLEET

Guyana's newest floating production vessel will carry a name that echoes the nation's history. President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced at the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry's 136th General Meeting that the vessel will be called **Essequibo 1899**, paying tribute to the historic 1899 Arbitral Award.

"I've chosen a name for our next FPSO, and it's called **Essequibo 1899** to refresh our memories of history," the president said, highlighting the



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali

importance of linking Guyana's rapid economic transformation to its rich heritage.

The naming comes as Guyana's oil production surges, with more than 900,000 barrels per day flowing from developments

in the Stabroek Block, including Liza Phase One and Two, Payara, and Yellowtail, operated by ExxonMobil and partners. Additional floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessels are expected as new offshore

projects come online.

President Ali also emphasised the need for Guyana to strengthen energy independence. He renewed calls for a national oil refinery, citing escalating global energy uncertainties and supply chain disruptions.

"Now, I believe we should return to the conversation of a refinery for national security," he said, noting that despite the country's growing oil output, Guyana still relies heavily on imported fuel, especially for electricity generation. Rising global energy prices make refining capacity

a strategic priority to reduce dependence, control costs, and secure long-term supply.

The president pointed to broader energy initiatives, including the gas-to-energy project, aimed at lowering reliance on imported fuels and reducing electricity costs. He stressed that collaboration between government and the private sector will be critical to navigating global uncertainties while sustaining economic growth.

For Guyana, the naming of **Essequibo 1899** is more than a

ceremonial gesture. It reflects a vision where national identity and heritage are intertwined with modern progress, symbolising the country's ambition to grow its oil sector responsibly while securing its economic future.

"This is a reminder that our history guides our present and strengthens our resolve for a resilient and prosperous Guyana," President Ali said, linking the legacy of the past with the promise of the nation's energy future.

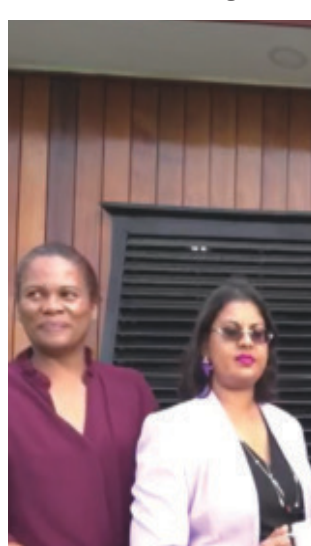
GUYANA POSITIONS NATURE AS NATIONAL ASSET

Guyana is redefining the relationship between economic growth and environmental stewardship, with its forests, biodiversity, and climate services emerging as central pillars of the nation's development under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030.

Speaking at the fourth episode of *Tea on the Terrace*, hosted at the National Mangrove Centre, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali highlighted the economic potential of the country's natural resources, framing climate and environmental services as integral to Guyana's evolving economy.

"Climate and environmental stewardship is not a gift only that we're giving to the world; it is part of our new economy," he said, emphasising

that protecting the environment can also generate sustainable livelihoods and growth



Caption: President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali flanked by: (from left) Kene Moseley, Project Coordinator, Mangrove Restoration and Management Department, NAREI, Pradeepa Bholanath, Senior Director for Climate and REDD+, Ministry of Natural Resources, Vanessa Benn, Minister within the Ministry of Housing, Shyam Nokta, Founder, Environmental Management Consultants INC., Dr Ashni Singh, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance

for citizens.

President Ali pointed to Guyana's mangrove restoration programme as a prime example of nature-based solutions delivering

multiple benefits. Beyond safeguarding coastal communities from sea level rise

and extreme weather, restored mangroves support biodiversity, tourism, agriculture, and even honey production, while creating economic opportunities for local

communities. He also noted the National Mangrove Centre's crucial role in educating

environmental and biodiversity education and research. Collaborative initiatives with universities, global organisations, and international partners are advancing innovation and knowledge-sharing in climate action and conservation. Last month, the announcement of the Commonwealth Center of Excellence for Biodiversity in Guyana further cemented this vision, offering programmes designed to engage youth, women, academia, and the private sector.

Technology is central to these efforts. Satellite imagery, drones, and advanced monitoring systems are helping to track forests and biodiversity more effectively, ensuring that conservation and economic development go hand in hand.

According to

President Ali, these initiatives are building an integrated ecosystem around environmental management, proving that economic progress and ecological protection are not mutually exclusive.

"The LCDS is a living framework that continues to deliver benefits to the country every day," he said, reinforcing that Guyana's model offers a blueprint for sustainable development that balances growth with care for the natural world.

From protecting coastlines to training the next generation of environmental leaders, Guyana's forests and biodiversity are no longer just natural treasures, they are engines for innovation, livelihoods, and a sustainable economic future.

AIRLINES TURN TO GUYANA FOR CARBON OFFSETS AS DEMAND RISES

Guyana's vast forests are doing more than preserving biodiversity, they are generating real income and helping the world tackle climate change.

Senior Director for Climate and REDD+ at the Ministry of Natural Resources, Pradeepa Bholanath, revealed that over the past 18 months, Guyana has sold forest carbon credits to 19 international airlines,

marking a significant milestone under the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

These credits, certified under the ART-TREES programme and carrying the CORSIA label, allow airlines to offset their emissions as part of global climate commitments. In its latest achievement, Guyana secured its largest tranche yet, nine

million carbon credit, reflecting growing international demand.

For Guyana, a country that absorbs more carbon dioxide than it emits, this positions its forests as a global asset. But the benefits are not only environmental, they are deeply personal for communities across the country.

Revenue from these sales is being reinvested into national

development, including solar energy projects, improved drainage and irrigation, hinterland electrification, and initiatives supporting Amerindian villages.

As global demand rises, Guyana's forests continue to tell a powerful story, one where protecting nature also creates opportunities for sustainable growth and community development.



Pradeepa Bholanath, Senior Director for Climate and REDD+, Ministry of Natural Resources



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali addressing the GPS Senior Officers' Conference

For many Guyanese, prison is often associated with punishment, but President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali is aiming to change that perception. At the recent opening of the Guyana Prison Service (GPS) Annual Senior Officers' Conference at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, he unveiled a bold vision that places prevention, rehabilitation, and community engagement at the heart of the nation's correctional strategy.

Addressing senior officers, President Ali called for the creation of a "prison avoidance system", a proactive approach designed

to address the root causes of crime before individuals ever enter prison. "We talk about rehabilitation, which is important, but before we get to prison, how do we avoid getting there?" he asked. The strategy will focus on early intervention in schools and communities, steering at-risk youths toward education, mentorship, and positive



Officers at the GPS Conference

opportunities.

The president also outlined the "seven As" to guide the prison service's future: access, accountability, ability, agility, adaptability, affordability, and awareness. These principles will underpin

reforms to modernise operations, strengthen staff capacity, and align the service with Guyana's broader development goals.

President Ali highlighted social factors contributing to crime, poverty, substance abuse, broken families, and lack of positive role

models, and cited the government's *Men on Mission* initiative as an example of a programme that provides mentorship, education, and structured activities for vulnerable youths. While prevention is a priority, investment in

modernising the prison system remains crucial. Over the past five years, the government has invested more than \$28

billion in GPS, funding infrastructure upgrades, rehabilitation systems, and staff development. Recent improvements include the new Lusignan prison headquarters, a command centre, and the first phase of a CCTV system, supported by the National Data Management Authority under the *Safe Country* initiative.

Director of Prisons (ag), Nicklon Elliot

Director of Prisons (ag), Nicklon Elliot, explained that these upgrades enhance

efficiency, coordination, and security while providing recreational facilities for officers at Lusignan and Mazaruni. Staff training, strategic planning, legal framework reviews, and revitalised prison industries are central components of GPS's ten-point improvement plan.

Minister of Home Affairs, Oneidge Walrond, stressed that correctional institutions are no longer the "forgotten arm" of justice. "What happens inside our correctional institutions has a direct impact on what

Minister of Home Affairs Oneidge Walrond



Minister of Home Affairs Oneidge Walrond

By combining leadership development with mental health expertise, the GPS is redefining the role of correctional officers, transforming them from

happens outside our communities," she said, highlighting the government's ongoing investments to transform GPS into a modern, professional, and policy-driven institution.

The conference also provided a platform for officers to exchange best practices with regional correctional specialists and explore technology integration, security intelligence, prisoner reintegration, human rights, and legislative improvements.

For President Ali and his government, the mission is clear: Guyana's prison system must prevent crime, rehabilitate offenders, and foster safer, stronger communities. Through infrastructure, training, and proactive social programmes, the nation is reimagining corrections as a cornerstone of national security and community well-being.

PRISON SERVICE OFFICERS TRAINED TO LEAD AND CARE



Deputy Director of Prisons, Kevin Pilgrim

Senior prison officers are learning more than administrative skills, new programmes are teaching them how to lead, manage crises, and care for the mental well-being of inmates, reshaping the role of

correctional staff in Guyana.

During the Annual Senior Correctional Officers Conference 2026 at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, the Guyana Prison Service (GPS) and the University of Guyana (UG) launched two specialised training programmes: **Strategic Correctional Leadership** and **Mental and Neurological Health**. For the first time, the UG is delivering tailored training designed

specifically for senior prison leadership.

Deputy Director of Prisons, Kevin Pilgrim, explained that the courses align with the conference theme, "Fostering Growth, Driving Synergy, and Securing the Future of Correction". He also emphasised GPS's commitment to regional collaboration, sharing resources, and raising standards across Caribbean correctional services.

Funded by the Inter-American Development

Bank, the Mental and Neurological Health programme equips officers to identify and manage mental, neurological, and substance-use disorders, respond effectively in emergencies, and address vulnerabilities within the prison population.

The Strategic Correctional Leadership course focuses on strengthening decision-making and leadership skills among senior officers. The 15-week, four-credit

programme targets officers with at least 10 years of service and a recognised bachelor's degree. Lecturers, including Dr. Mishel Moriah, highlighted



Prison officers in attendance at the launch of two new courses for prison officers

that the course not only enhances correctional management skills but also provides a pathway for further academic advancement.

managers of institutions into mentors and guides who can foster safer, more humane prison environments.

DIALYSIS PATIENTS GET FINANCIAL BOOST, HEALTH ADVICE



Dialysis patients in Parika, Region Three, received monetary donations to ease the burden of treatment

For patients at the Ameena Gafoor Medical and Dialysis Centre, World Kidney

Day brought more than awareness, it brought relief. Monetary donations were provided to help offset the high cost of dialysis, which costs about \$15,000 per session, or \$45,000 weekly. For many, the financial burden is as heavy as the disease itself.

Dialysis is a life-saving treatment for individuals living with chronic kidney disease, whose kidneys can no longer filter waste from

the blood. Without it, toxins accumulate, making regular treatment essential. At a programme held at De Kinderen Regional Hospital, Regional Health Officer Dr Fiaz Hassan shared that, as of December 2025, 655 patients across Guyana were receiving dialysis.

Medical professionals also used the occasion to stress early detection. Dr Nandiashaw Ramsingh noted that many patients

seek care only in advanced stages, when treatment becomes more complex and costly. She encouraged patients to follow professional guidance, reminding them that conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and obesity are major contributors to kidney disease.

For those gathered, the event was a reminder that support, both medical and financial, can make a meaningful difference. Looking

ahead, the Ministry of Health plans to expand access by constructing six new dialysis centres across Regions Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six. Locations will include Lima, De Kinderen, Diamond, Enmore, Bath, and Number 75 Village.

These centres will complement existing facilities, bring treatment closer to home, and help meet the rising demand as non-communicable diseases continue to

increase, ensuring more patients can receive timely, life-saving care.



Dialysis patients in Parika, Region Three, received monetary donations to ease the burden of treatment

VP JAGDEO URGES CARIBBEAN TO SHIFT CLIMATE STRATEGY TOWARD PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS



Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo at the 124th Special Meeting of the COTED Environment and Sustainable Development held at the Pegasus Hotel

Speaking at the 124th Special Meeting of the COTED Environment and Sustainable Development in Georgetown, Dr. Jagdeo delivered a message grounded in urgency and realism. For him, the issue is not just about global policy debates, but about how everyday people across the Caribbean are affected, through higher energy bills, economic instability and the ever-present threat of natural disasters.

“In spite of all the advances in renewable energy, we’re still so reliant on fossil fuel,” he said, pointing to recent geopolitical conflicts that have disrupted global supply chains and increased costs.

Dr. Jagdeo challenged leaders to move beyond what he

described as a rigid, “either-or” debate between fossil fuels and renewables. Instead, he argued for a more



Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo at the 124th Special Meeting of the COTED Environment and Sustainable Development held at the Pegasus Hotel

balanced and practical approach to achieving net-zero emissions, one that focuses on solutions rather than slogans.

For Caribbean

families, he noted, the stakes are high. Many countries in the region spend a significant portion of their national

policy... **it’s impossible,”** he said, recalling times when energy costs consumed up to a quarter of some countries’ GDP.

At the same time, the region remains highly vulnerable to disasters. Storms and floods can wipe out years of progress overnight, leaving communities to rebuild again and again. Dr. Jagdeo stressed the need to climate-proof infrastructure, pointing out that resilience must be a priority regardless of global climate debates.

He also highlighted the importance of protecting biodiversity, warning that the loss of coral reefs and ecosystems could have serious social and economic consequences, particularly for coastal communities.

But perhaps his strongest criticism was

reserved for the slow pace of international climate financing. **“We’ve been waiting for climate funds forever,”** he said, expressing frustration with complex systems that delay support to vulnerable nations.

Pointing to Guyana’s own success in generating revenue through forest carbon credits, Dr. Jagdeo urged Caribbean countries to act decisively rather than wait on global systems.

His message was clear: less talk, more action. For the Caribbean, the path forward lies in practical solutions that protect livelihoods, strengthen economies and build resilience in an increasingly uncertain world.

The Court of Appeal has upheld a High Court decision granting the Attorney General authority to seize assets linked to criminal activity, reinforcing Guyana’s commitment to tackling money laundering and organised crime.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, discussed the rulings on his weekly Facebook podcast, *Issues in the News*, emphasising that the decisions send a clear message: the state is determined to recover

illegal assets and protect public funds.

“These are tainted monies. These are proceeds of crime, and the courts have found that they are the proceeds of crime,” Minister Nandlall said. **“The state is taking them pursuant to our laws and depositing them in the Consolidated Fund.”**

The cases involve high-profile criminals, including Jacqueline

Caines, convicted of narcotics trafficking, from whom the government has seized over \$14 million and US\$7,800. In another ruling, Acting Chief Justice Navindra Singh authorised the Special Organised Crime Unit to confiscate more than 4,018 pennyweights of gold, valued at over \$800 million, and approximately \$81 million in cash belonging to Sebastiao de Oliveira Mora and Gago Gold

Incorporated.

Minister Nandlall revealed that several other major forfeiture proceedings, involving hundreds of millions of dollars, are ongoing. The rulings mark a significant step in strengthening the country’s financial integrity, demonstrating that crime will not pay and that justice and accountability remain at the forefront of Guyana’s legal system.



AG SLAMS MOHAMED FOR WHEELBARROW CASH STUNT, CALLS FOR RESPECT FOR JUDICIARY

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall has slammed Opposition Leader Azruddin Mohamed for publicly flouting a court order after an unusual attempt to settle a legal payment using wheelbarrows filled with cash and coins.

The incident, which included one opposition MP and a relative, drew national attention and sparked concern over respect for the



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

judiciary. Speaking live shortly after the event, AG Nandlall described the move as a blatant

disregard for the courts and a threat to the administration of justice. **“He doesn’t have**

the mental acumen to appreciate that what he is doing is destroying the legal fabric of this country and striking at the heart of the administration of justice,” the Attorney General said, condemning the public spectacle.

The payment relates to a February 4 ruling by Acting Chief Justice Navindra Singh, which dismissed a legal challenge from

the Mohamed family and ordered costs of \$500,000 each to be paid to the AG, Minister of Home Affairs, and Acting Chief Magistrate Judy Latchman. After the February 27 deadline passed without payment, enforcement steps were initiated.

AG Nandlall explained that Guyana’s laws limit the use of coins for settling debts, making the large-volume payment invalid. **“He will have to take**

it away,” he said, noting that the stunt had **“backfired”** and reflected poorly on the office of the Opposition Leader.

The Attorney General reminded the public that court orders are binding and must be respected, stressing that enforcement is inevitable and warning that **“the arms of the law are long”** for anyone who seeks to defy it.

GUYANA STRENGTHENS LEGAL SYSTEM AMID RAPID GROWTH



The launch of the Revised Laws of Guyana 2022 and the Guyana Law Reports (2008-2021)

For many Guyanese, the law is something encountered only in moments of need, resolving a dispute, buying property, or starting a business. But as the country undergoes rapid economic change, ensuring those laws are clear, current, and accessible is becoming more important than ever.

That message was at the heart of President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's remarks at the launch of the Revised Laws of Guyana 2022 and the Guyana Law Reports (2008-2021) at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

Behind the formal ceremony lies a practical reality: when laws are outdated or

difficult to access, everyday life becomes more complicated. Legal disputes take longer, businesses face uncertainty, and citizens may struggle to fully understand their rights.

"When laws are consolidated, confusion is reduced. When confusion is reduced, disputes are minimised. When disputes are minimised, justice is strengthened," the President said.

The newly revised laws aim to simplify that experience by bringing together updated statutes in a more organised and accessible format. Alongside them, the publication of over a decade of law reports

captures important court decisions, offering guidance not just to lawyers and judges, but to anyone seeking clarity on how the law is applied.

For small business owners, investors, and families making long-term decisions, that clarity can make a significant difference.

"A judgment unrecorded is a lesson lost," President Ali noted, underscoring the importance of preserving legal reasoning to ensure consistency and fairness in future cases.

As Guyana's economy

expands, attracting new investments and opportunities, the demand for a reliable legal framework is growing. The President warned that uncertainty, whether in outdated legislation or gaps in information, can undermine confidence at every level.

"Investors do not invest in uncertainty; they invest in clarity; they invest in predictability," he said.

Looking ahead, the government is also pushing to make legal information more accessible through digital



The launch of the Revised Laws of Guyana 2022 and the Guyana Law Reports (2008-2021)

platforms. The goal is to ensure that laws are not only updated regularly, but also easy to find and understand, whether by

a legal professional or an ordinary citizen.

The revision process itself was a collaborative effort involving the Law Revision Commission, the Attorney General's Chambers, and international partners through the IMPACT Justice Project.

Attorney General Mohabir Anil Nandlall emphasised that the rule of law remains the foundation of economic progress and social stability, especially at a time of rapid national transformation.

For Guyanese navigating a changing economy, the message is simple: as the country grows, so too must the systems that protect fairness, guide decisions, and build trust.



The launch of the Revised Laws of Guyana 2022 and the Guyana Law Reports (2008-2021)

AG NANDLALL URGES LAW STUDENTS TO PUT JUSTICE BEFORE PROFIT

As law students prepared to take their next step into the profession, they were urged to remember the people behind every case, not just the paperwork.

For dozens of students gathered at the Police Officers' Mess Annexe in Eve Leary, their pinning ceremony marked more than a milestone; it was a moment to reflect on the kind of lawyers they hope to become.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall urged the aspiring attorneys to see their future profession as a calling, not just a career.

"The legal profession is not an ordinary profession," he told them, reminding students that behind every case lies a human story shaped by the pursuit of justice, fairness, and freedom.



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall addressing the aspiring attorneys

Hosted by the University of Guyana Law Society, the ceremony celebrated students stepping closer to the courtroom. But the Attorney General's message carried a deeper weight, one grounded in the realities many citizens face when

seeking legal help. He spoke candidly about complaints from communities across the country: clients who feel neglected, unheard, or burdened despite paying significant legal fees. Such experiences, he warned, erode trust in a profession meant to

uphold the rule of law.

In response, he pointed to reforms to strengthen accountability, including structured attachments to ensure young lawyers gain practical experience before entering independent practice.

Still, his strongest appeal was for encouraged students to revive the tradition of pro bono work, reminding them that justice must remain accessible to all, not just those who can afford it.

As the students received their pins, they also took on a quiet challenge, to use their knowledge, integrity, and even modern technology to serve not just the law, but the people behind it.



The gathering at the pinning ceremony

SUGAR INDUSTRY VITAL TO RURAL SURVIVAL - PRESIDENT AT GAWU'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY



President Ali delivers at GAWU's 50th Anniversary held at ACCC

The survival of Guyana's sugar industry remains essential to the stability of rural communities, President Mohamed Irfaan Ali declared, as he reflected on the hardships faced by thousands of workers and their families between 2015 and 2020. Speaking at the 50th anniversary of the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU) at the Arthur

Conference Centre, the President painted a sobering picture of a period marked by widespread job losses, abandoned agricultural lands, and struggling villages.

Nearly 7,000 sugar workers were displaced during that time, he noted, triggering ripple effects across entire communities where the industry once served as the backbone of economic life.

“Entire communities depend on it, not only for employment, but for social stability and economic activity,” President Ali said, underscoring that shops, schools, transportation systems, and small businesses are all closely tied to the fortunes of sugar.

He maintained that the industry is too critical to be allowed to collapse, defending the government's continued investments since 2020 to revive production and restore livelihoods.

Those efforts have included reopening estates, reinvesting in mechanisation, and rehiring approximately 4,600 workers. Today, employment in the sector has grown to around 8,100 workers, reflecting what the President described as steady progress in rebuilding capacity.

However, he acknowledged that recovery will take time, given the extent of the sector's decline.

“Let us combine our efforts, our experience, and our shared commitment

to restore the sugar industry to its state of viability,” he urged, calling for unity among workers, unions, and policymakers.

The President also highlighted broader measures aimed at supporting workers, including a five per cent retroactive wage increase for sugar workers valued at \$212 million, \$1.3

billion in cash grants for those previously laid off, and \$285 million in payments to workers affected by factory downtime.

Beyond sugar, he pointed to wider recovery efforts in traditional sectors such as bauxite and forestry, where thousands also experienced job losses during the same period.

GAWU's President Seepaul Narine echoed the President's remarks, describing the 2015–2020 period as one of the most difficult chapters in the industry's history, while acknowledging renewed hope in recent years.

Founded on principles of workers' rights and advocacy, GAWU, formally recognised in 1976, is marking 50 years under the theme *“Born of Struggle, Built for Justice”*.

President Ali praised the union's enduring role in defending fair wages, improved working conditions, and dignity for workers, describing it as a central force in Guyana's labour movement.



Members of GAWU

NEW PUSH FOR SAFER, HIGHER-QUALITY CARE PUTS PATIENTS AT THE CENTRE OF HEALTH REFORM



Dr Frank Anthony, Minister of Health

For patients across Guyana, a visit to the hospital could soon mean shorter waiting times, clearer communication, and more attentive care, as the Ministry of Health rolls out a new national initiative aimed at improving quality and patient safety.

Launched in partnership with Mount

Sinai Health System, the programme signals a shift in focus, from expanding access to care, to improving the experience and outcomes for every patient who walks through a hospital door.

Minister of Health Frank Anthony said the country is now moving **“away from just**

talk to getting into action”, acknowledging that while Guyana has made major investments in healthcare infrastructure and staffing, more must be done to ensure patients feel cared for.

Over the past four years, the sector has grown to some 450 facilities, supported by an additional 5,000 healthcare workers. But for many patients, challenges such as long waiting times and limited communication still shape their experience.

“It doesn't take much to check on a patient,” Dr. Anthony said, urging healthcare

workers to show greater empathy and responsiveness.

The initiative will introduce new systems to track and improve care, including a national hospital quality improvement council and regional committees to monitor performance. Hospitals will also begin aligning with international standards, supported by expertise linked to Joint Commission International.

Behind the scenes, technology will play a growing role. Electronic health records, e-prescriptions, and integrated lab systems

are already being piloted, while artificial intelligence tools are being introduced to assist doctors in diagnosing patients more accurately.

For Rachel Vreeman, Executive Director of Mount Sinai Guyana, the effort is just the beginning. She noted

that the goal is to build a system where quality care is consistent, not occasional.

Ultimately, officials say the changes are about restoring confidence, ensuring that every patient, regardless of where they live, can expect safe, respectful, and reliable care.



Health professionals at the workshop

ELECTIONS CASE STILL MOVING - AG REASSURES NATION



ISSUES IN THE NEWS with Hon. Mohabir A. Nandlall, SC,MP

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, said progress is being made in the ongoing elections-related case, even as the pace of proceedings remains slow.

Speaking on his weekly programme, *Issues in the News*, AG Nandlall noted that several hearing dates have already been scheduled through June 2026, with

additional tentative dates identified for July. While acknowledging delays, he said multiple witnesses have already completed their testimony, signalling steady movement in the case.

For many Guyanese following the matter closely, the timeline has been a source of concern. However, the Attorney General emphasised that the government has no control over how quickly

cases move through the courts, pointing to the constitutional separation of powers.

“We do not control the judiciary or the magistracy,” he said, stressing that judges and magistrates are appointed through an independent process involving the Judicial Service Commission. **“What the public is entitled to is fairness, professionalism and ethical conduct.”**

AG Nandlall also highlighted the importance of accountability within public institutions, noting that significant resources are invested in the justice system.

Despite the challenges, he expressed confidence that the case will continue to progress and ultimately reach its conclusion, reassuring citizens that the judicial process is working, even if slowly.

PRESIDENT ALI ENCOURAGES UNITY AND REFLECTION DURING NAVRATRI OBSERVANCES

As the rhythmic chants of Navratri filled the air across the coastland, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali joined devotees at the Better Hope and Satya Jyoti Vishnu Mandirs, turning a season of ancient tradition into a modern call for national introspection. Amidst the vibrant offerings and sacred prayers, the President’s message was clear: spiritual purification is the bedrock of a resilient nation.

Stepping away from the rigors of statecraft, President Ali urged Guyanese to use the nine nights of devotion to “dig deep within,” identifying the season as a necessary “internal purification” to strip away the shadows of jealousy, pride, and hatred. He described Navratri as a spiritual cleaning, a time to recalibrate the soul so that citizens can connect more authentically with their inner light and their neighbors.

“Many times in life, we are preoccupied with so much discontentment that we cannot appreciate what is before us,” the President remarked. He issued a poignant reminder to value the “living blessings” in our homes, specifically calling for deeper reverence for parents and the elderly, while encouraging parents to weave their children into the spiritual fabric of the mandir.

The President didn’t just focus on the metaphysical; he bridged the gap between faith and the tangible progress seen across the Guyanese landscape. He framed the nation’s rapid development, new highways, hospitals, and the surge in homeownership, not merely as economic stats, but as collective blessings that require a spirit of gratitude to maintain.

“The very fact that we are alive, the opportunities for our young people to own homes, to have jobs... these are blessings that we must never take for granted,” he asserted.

Echoing this sentiment of harmony, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlal SC urged the gathered crowds to reject the “divisive tactics” that often plague social discourse, reinforcing the administration’s “One Guyana” philosophy. By praising the Mandirs for producing selfless leaders who serve humanity beyond the temple walls, President Ali underscored his core belief: that a person’s devotion is best measured by their contribution to the human family.



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Cantaloupe 粗皮瓜 Reg:\$3.99 2.99 ea	Avocado In Bag 袋裝牛油果 Reg:\$3.99 2.99 bag	Blueberry 藍莓 Reg:\$3.99 2.99 pk	Green Grape 青提 Reg:\$4.99 3.59 lb	Vietnam Red Meat Pomelo 越南青柚 Reg:\$6.99 4.99 ea	Ataulfo Mango 145 呂宋芒 Reg:\$17.99 14.99 case		

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Grace Dry Lima Beans 利馬豆罐頭(540ml) Reg:\$2.99 1.69 ea	Grace Chicken Soup 雞湯調味包 60g Reg:\$1.29/ea 3/\$2.00	PAN Pre-Cooked White Corn Meal 1kg 白玉米面 Reg:\$3.99 2.79 ea
Cock Brand Sweet Chili Sauce Series 650ml-700ml 甜辣醬 Reg:\$4.99 3.29 ea	Aroy-D Coconut Milk 椰奶 400ml Reg:\$2.99 1.79 ea	Kingsford's Corn Starch 玉米粉 454g Reg:\$2.59 1.69 ea
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Gold Kili Instant Matcha Latte 250g 即沖抹茶拿鐵 Reg:\$5.99 3.59 ea	Stik-O Wafer 280g 威化棒 Reg:\$3.99 2.39 ea	Fudgee Barr 蛋糕 Reg:\$4.99 2.59 ea
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GUYANA MAR

Hundreds of Guyanese Muslims came together at the Muslim Youth Organisation of Guyana (MYO) on Woolford Avenue in Georgetown to celebrate Eid -ul-Fitr, the joyful festival marking the end of Ramadan. The air was filled with excitement, camaraderie, and a shared sense of spiritual reflection.

Among the worshippers was President Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who joined the gathering for the Eid prayer and delivered a heartfelt message on inner peace, unity, and compassion. Reflecting on the lessons of Ramadan, he urged attendees to carry the values of patience, humility, charity, and mindfulness into their daily lives.

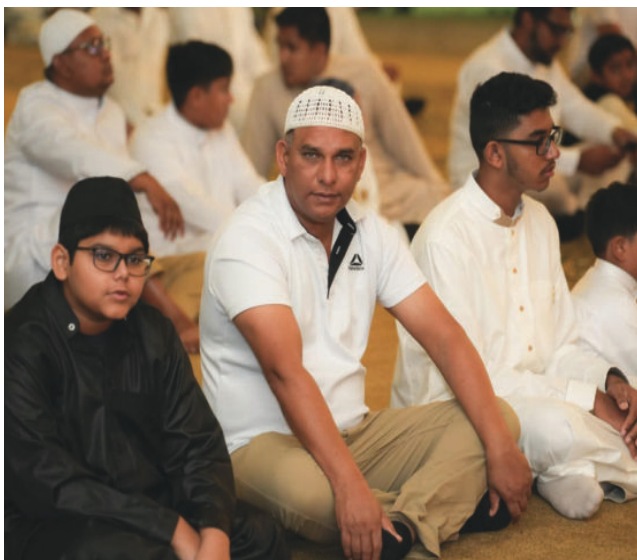
“Ramadan was that period that allowed us to demonstrate and prove to ourselves that we are capable of executing these responsibilities...that we are capable of sharing love, that we are capable of being charitable, and that we are capable of honouring our parents and elders,” President Ali told the crowd.

Quoting the Quran, he reminded worshippers that “in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest”, emphasising that prayer and faith foster a direct connection with God and the inner peace necessary to spread joy and patience to others. He also highlighted the importance of family bonds, encouraging citizens to reconcile with relatives and care for parents and elders, key tenets of Islam.

After the prayers, the president continued his annual Eid observances, visiting his childhood home in Leguan and his residence in Leonora, where he hosted a traditional Eid breakfast with an open buffet for guests. He also visited several families, sharing greetings and joining in their personal celebrations, embodying the generosity and community spirit that define the occasion.



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CRUISE SHIP ARRIVAL SIGNALS GROWING GLOBAL INTEREST IN GUYANA'S TOURISM



Guyana welcomes MS Hebridean Sky cruise ship

The sight of the MS Hebridean Sky docking in Georgetown on March 18 signalled more than just another cruise call, it reflected Guyana's steady rise on the global tourism map.

Docked at the GuySuCo Sugar Terminal in West Ruimveldt, the London-based vessel was welcomed by Minister of Tourism,

Industry and Commerce Susan Rodrigues, who described the visit as an important step in expanding the country's presence in the global cruise market.

For three days, the visitors immersed themselves in Guyana's unique blend of nature and culture. Their itinerary included a city tour of Georgetown, a

trip to the breathtaking Kaiaeteur Falls, a peaceful boat ride along the Mahaica River, and birdwatching at the Georgetown Botanical Gardens. They also experience traditional

artisans, and small business owners, visits like these represent opportunity. Each excursion booked, each handcrafted item purchased, and each meal enjoyed contributes

is still relatively new to Guyana, it is gaining momentum. Minister Rodrigues noted that the government is investing in infrastructure and strengthening partnerships with international cruise lines to attract more niche, high-end expedition vessels.

That effort will continue on the international stage at Seatrade Cruise Global, set for April in Miami Beach, where Guyana will promote its offerings and seek new partnerships.

Captain Philippa Ann Bowden of the Hebridean Sky said the

vessel's operators, Noble Caledonia, are drawn to Guyana's authenticity.

"We recognise the beauty and experiences that you can offer here in terms of heritage, wildlife and nature," she said, adding that the company hopes to make regular visits.

As Guyana positions itself as a destination for small, sustainable cruise tourism, each arrival tells a larger story, of a country opening its doors to the world while ensuring that its people and natural treasures remain at the heart of the experience.



Guyana welcomes MS Hebridean Sky cruise ship

flavours, including the beloved seven-curry.

For local tour guides,

directly to livelihoods across the country.

While cruise tourism

LETHEM GEARS UP FOR RUPUNUNI RANCHERS RODEO 2026



Minister Rodrigues meeting with newly established Kumu Village Tourism Committee before the Rupununi Rancher Rodeo

With just weeks to go before one of Guyana's most anticipated cultural events, excitement is steadily building in Lethem as preparations intensify for the Rupununi Ranchers Rodeo 2026.

During a recent two-day visit to the region, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues, along with Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority,

Kamrul Baksh, met with residents, organisers, and tourism stakeholders to get a firsthand look at how the community is gearing up for the April 3-5 spectacle.

At the heart of the preparations is the iconic Triple 'R' Rodeo Ground, where upgrades are already transforming the venue. New bleachers are being installed to accommodate larger crowds, while expanded

vending areas, improved viewing sections, and a modernised media booth promise a better experience for both patrons and participants. A dedicated VIP section is also in the works.

But beyond infrastructure, this year's rodeo is shaping up to be a celebration of culture and community. Plans are underway for a History and Art booth that will showcase the story of ranching in the Rupununi alongside Amerindian craftsmanship. A Farmers' Market, featuring produce and goods from 16 villages, will give visitors a taste of authentic, locally made products.

For many, the rodeo is an economic lifeline. In Kumu Village, residents

are organising tourism offerings like guided tours and camping near the stunning Kumu Falls. Local guide Peter Joseph is preparing to meet growing demand with expanded services. At Ariwa Beach, tour operator Johnathan Joseph and community members are blending eco-tourism with cultural experiences to ensure visitors leave with a deeper appreciation of the Rupununi's natural beauty.

Minister Rodrigues emphasised the importance of this balance, encouraging sustainable practices that protect the environment while creating opportunities for residents. Through the Guyana Tourism Authority, support is



Business etiquette training being conducted ahead of the Rupununi Ranchers Rodeo

also being provided in areas such as training, marketing, and product development.

Meanwhile, complementary works are underway to support the event. Roads in and around Lethem are being upgraded, and additional lighting and power infrastructure are being installed to improve safety and convenience.

From artisans carving balata pieces to photographers capturing the arena's thrills, the rodeo highlights the region's "orange economy," where culture and talent generate real opportunities. As thousands of visitors prepare to descend on Lethem, one thing is clear: the Rupununi is ready to welcome the world.

MASHRAMANI AWARDS HONOUR DESIGNERS AND PERFORMERS



TRE_2370

Designers and performers from across Guyana were honoured at Castellani House for their role in bringing colour, energy, and cultural pride to this year's Mashramani celebrations.

The awards ceremony and concert capped off two weeks of more than 20 events, highlighting the dedication and creativity behind one of Guyana's most vibrant national celebrations.

Minister of Culture,

Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr, praised the teams for their remarkable effort. "I will challenge anybody anywhere to put together a team that can successfully deliver 20 events in that time to such a high standard," he said.

He explained that this year's parade benefited from a new approach: funds were released earlier, and designers were engaged months ahead, giving

them the time to fully develop their floats and costumes. More than \$200 million was invested in floats alone, allowing for more elaborate and imaginative displays that delighted crowds across the country.

Minister within the Ministry, Steven Jacobs, also commended the creatives, noting that Mashramani continues to unite communities and provide a platform for everyone, from children to veteran performers, to showcase their talents. "This is one of the few national events that spans the entire country, celebrating

our culture and giving our creatives a space to shine," he said.

He encouraged ongoing collaboration with the private sector to further grow the celebration and strengthen opportunities in the creative economy.

For participants, the awards were more than recognition, they were a moment to celebrate passion, perseverance, and the joy of bringing Guyana's vibrant culture to life.

President Ali describes former Suriname President Santokhi as ‘trusted friend’

PRESIDENT Dr Irfaan Ali has expressed profound sadness at the passing of former President of Suriname, Chandrikapersad Santokhi, describing him as a “fine statesman” and a trusted friend of Guyana.

In a statement issued on behalf of the Government and people of Guyana, President Ali extended heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Suriname, as well as to Santokhi’s family, noting that “a voice of wisdom has fallen silent” while also adding that “a friend has left us.”

Reflecting on their relationship, President Ali said the late Surinamese leader was “a brother forged not by blood but by conviction.”

The Head of State highlighted the strong personal and professional bond they shared during their time in office.

He noted that both leaders worked closely together in advancing regional integration and cooperation, particularly within CARICOM.

“We were brothers in regionalism, standing shoulder to shoulder in the councils of CARICOM, labouring in the vineyards of unity when the harvest seemed distant, and the work was hard,” Dr Ali said.

President Ali also credited Santokhi with strengthening bilateral relations between Guyana and Suriname, noting that under his leadership, ties between the two neighbouring countries blossomed.

He underscored the shared history and interconnected future of both nations, stating that the river which divides the two countries also connects them and that the prosperity of one country cannot be separated from the other.

Describing Santokhi as a leader of “quiet strength,” the President said he served his country with dedication and humility, leaving behind

a legacy that will endure.

On a personal note, he added that Santokhi’s friendship made “the burdens of leadership lighter and the triumphs sweeter.”

“The region has lost a fine statesman... Guyana has lost a friend, one who gave of himself freely and without pretence,” he said.

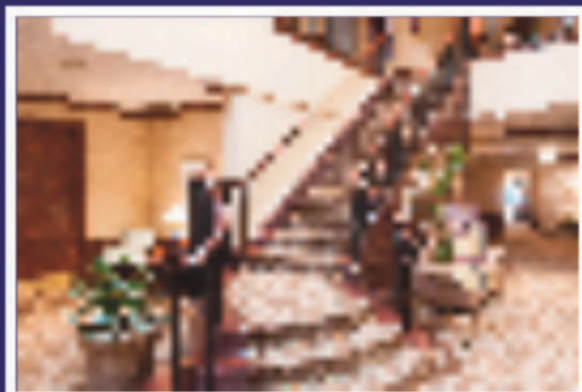
President Ali further offered comfort to Santokhi’s family, expressing hope that they find solace in his legacy, and honouring his life as one well lived, noting: “The sun sets now on a life well lived... but the light of his example will not fade.”



Chandrikapersad Santokhi — passed away

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100 KILOMETRES OF LINDEN-MABURA ROAD PAVED



100 kilometres of Linden-Mabura Road paved

For thousands of Guyanese, the journey between the coast and the interior is about to become smoother and faster. The Linden to Mabura road project has reached a major milestone, with 100 of the 110 kilometres of paving now completed, the Ministry of Public

Works announced. The project, which stretches through Region Nine, is not only vital for daily commuters and transporters of goods but also comes just ahead of the much-anticipated Rupununi Ranchers' Rodeo Easter weekend in Lethem. For residents and visitors alike, the improved roadway promises safer and quicker travel.

Construction efforts have intensified in recent weeks. Contractor Alya Construtora has

deployed an additional 100 workers, increasing the workforce to approximately 900, and continues to focus on heavy structural engineering, road surfacing, and the installation of safety features.

Signed in 2023, the historic project is part of a broader government plan to enhance connectivity between the coast and hinterland while eventually linking to Brazil. Once completed, the corridor

is expected to reduce travel times, boost economic and cultural ties between Guyana and northern Brazil, opening new doors for commerce and regional integration.



Drone shot of works on the road



Drone image of Wales Commercial Zone under development

Work is steadily progressing on a \$4.9 billion project to develop a truck park and auto zone at the Wales Housing Development on the West Bank of Demerara, a move the government says will create a dedicated space for heavy-duty machinery and related commercial activity. Recently, Minister of Housing, Collin Croal, and Minister within the Ministry, Vanessa Benn, visited the site to assess progress. They were joined by Permanent Secretary Bishram Kuppen, engineers,

WALES COMMERCIAL ZONE SET TO BOOST TRUCKING AND AUTO INDUSTRY

and technical staff overseeing the project. During the visit, the ministers also met with nine contractors working across more than 400 acres of commercial land.

Minister Croal acknowledged early challenges with site access but expressed satisfaction with the overall progress. **"There were some delays at the start, but we are pleased with how the project is advancing,"**

he said.

Minister Benn highlighted the importance of the project for the local economy and the community. **"This commercial zone is vital. We want owners of heavy-duty machinery and equipment to have a coordinated, dedicated space to operate. It's about supporting organised economic activity and making life easier for businesses,"** she

explained. She stressed that proper zoning is critical as communities grow. The Wales Housing Development is part of the government's broader plan to create sustainable communities by integrating residential, commercial, and economic spaces, ensuring that development keeps pace with population growth. The government has also invited bids for additional truck parking facilities in Regions Three, Four, Five, and Six. Locations include Meten-Meer-Zorg Phase Two, Hermitage to Wales, Hope to Enmore, Smithson Place in East Canje, and Number 75 Village on the Corentyne. These facilities aim to support the growing demand for structured spaces for trucks and heavy machinery while fostering organised commercial activity across the country.

REGIONAL HOSPITALS GET NEW AMBULANCES

Patients across Guyana will soon experience faster emergency care as a result of the delivery of six new ambulances to recently commissioned regional hospitals.

Minister of Health, Dr. Frank Anthony, personally handed over the vehicles to support operations at Lima, De Kinderen, Diamond, Enmore, Bath, and



Regional hospitals get new ambulances

Number 75 Village Regional Hospitals, facilities that were recently opened as part of the government's push to modernise and expand the country's healthcare system.

Each ambulance, procured at \$18 million, is equipped to respond quickly to emergencies, helping to reduce delays in transferring patients and providing timely

access to critical care. **"These ambulances are more than vehicles, they are lifelines that will strengthen our emergency services and ensure people get the care they need when every second counts,"** Dr. Anthony said. The new fleet will integrate seamlessly with the hospitals' operations, supporting staff as they provide essential services in their communities. This delivery underscores the government's commitment to creating a healthcare system that is accessible, efficient, and responsive. By equipping hospitals with modern infrastructure and emergency transport, citizens across Guyana can look forward to safer, faster, and more reliable medical services.

NEW ONLINE TINT WAIVER SYSTEM MAKES COMPLIANCE EASIER FOR MOTORISTS



New tint waiver portal launched

Motorists across Guyana now have a simpler, faster way to apply for tint exemptions thanks to a new online Tint Waiver Application System launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the Guyana Police Force (GPF).

The digital platform allows individuals, companies, and organisations to submit applications, upload documents, track

progress, and download approved waivers, all from the comfort of their homes. Once approved, the waiver is linked directly to the vehicle's registration, allowing officers to instantly verify compliance during traffic stops.

Minister of Home Affairs, Oneidge Walrond, said the system strengthens transparency and reduces human bias, while making

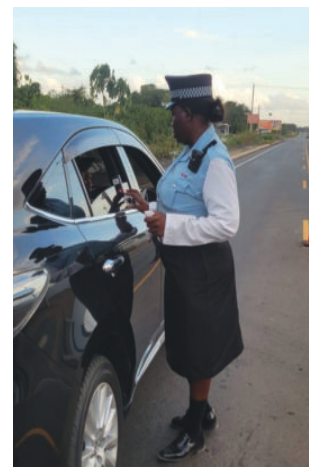
government services more accessible to the public.

The move comes as new national tint regulations are fully enforced starting March 31, 2026. Under these rules, front side windows must allow at least 25% visible light, rear side windows and the rear windscreen 20%, and no tint is permitted on the front windscreen except for a six-inch visor strip. Non-compliance after

the amnesty period carries a \$30,000 fine.

To help drivers meet the standards, 47 testing sites across the country are equipped with calibrated tint meters, maintained through the Guyana National Bureau of Standards.

Motorists are encouraged to check their vehicles and, if needed, apply for a waiver at <https://tint.moha.gov.gy> before full enforcement begins.



A trained certification officer conducts tint test on vehicles

29 FAMILIES RECEIVE NEW HOMES



29 families benefit from \$5.8B housing programme

Twenty-nine families are now proud homeowners after receiving the keys to their new houses under the Affordable Housing and Urban Accessibility Programme (AHUAP), part of a \$5.8 billion national investment aimed at improving living conditions across Guyana.

The programme, launched in 2017, is funded primarily by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with additional support from the Government of Guyana. It was designed to assist low-income and vulnerable households in accessing safe, affordable housing.

Communities across 19 areas, from La Parfaite Harmonie on the West Bank of Demerara to Mon Repos on the East Coast, have benefitted

from the initiative.

At the recent handover ceremony, Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal described the moment as a significant milestone for the beneficiaries. He noted that the achievement reflects years of collaboration among the government, international partners, and the communities themselves.

“This is your moment,” he told recipients. **“What we do is in service to the people to respond to a need and a necessity.”**

The AHUAP initiative goes beyond the construction of homes. It also focuses on building sustainable communities through

improved infrastructure. Works completed under the programme include more than 24 kilometres of asphaltic roads, installation of LED street lighting, bridges, and enhanced community facilities.

Additionally, the programme has supported residents through skills training and financial assistance, helping to strengthen livelihoods and long-term stability.

Minister within the Ministry of Housing and Water, Vanessa Benn, highlighted the importance of community involvement, noting that beneficiaries contributed financially and played an active role in the process. She encouraged homeowners



29 families benefit from \$5.8B housing programme



29 families benefit from \$5.8B housing programme

to maintain their properties and take full advantage of available government support services.

Meanwhile, IDB Chief of Operations Ivan Gaviria described the initiative as one of the most fulfilling projects of his career. He emphasised that the programme is not just about infrastructure, but about improving lives.

Each home, he said, represents perseverance,

sacrifice and hope, providing families with a safe and dignified environment to grow.

To date, approximately 1,100 individuals and families have directly benefitted from the programme through new homes and home improvement support, marking a major step forward in Guyana’s housing development efforts.

KATHY SMITH BECOMES FIRST FEMALE CHAIRPERSON OF BIT



Ms. Kathy Smith has now become the first woman to chair the Board of Industrial Training

Following her historic tenure as the first female President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Kathy Smith has now made history again, becoming the first woman to chair the Board of Industrial Training (BIT) in Guyana.

Appointed by the Cabinet of the Government of Guyana, Ms. Smith will serve as Chairperson for the 2026–2027 term, bringing decades of experience in business leadership, workforce development, and private sector advocacy to the role. She has expressed her commitment to

transforming technical and vocational education and training (TVET), addressing skills gaps, and fostering stronger partnerships with the private sector to support the nation’s growing economy.

Joining Ms. Smith on the newly inducted Board are Vice-Chair Mr. Ganesh Singh, members including Mr. John Edghill, Ms. Andrea Benjamin, Mr. Yannick Garraway, Ms. Sheila Verasammy, Mrs. Karen Roopchand, Mrs. Desa Liverpool, Ms. Penelope Harris, Mr. Michael Turner, Mr. Krishn Sharma, and Mr. Suresh Singh, as well

as ex-officio members Ms. Indrani Ramnarine, Mr. Jainarine Sarjoo Sookpaul, and Mr. Richard Maughn.

Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma D. Griffith, expressed confidence in the Board’s ability to advance national workforce development and expand opportunities for skills training across the country.

Over the past five years, more than 9,300 women have been empowered through BIT programmes, gaining skills that directly contribute to national growth. Minister Griffith highlighted a significant



BIT CEO Richard Maughn flanked by recent batch of female graduates

shift in women’s participation, noting that they are moving beyond traditional courses like cooking and garment construction to training that opens real economic opportunities.

BIT offers over 80 free courses nationwide, including heavy-duty equipment operation, electrical installation, welding, information technology, cosmetology, and commercial food preparation. Materials,

equipment, and stipends are provided to ensure successful course completion. Open to anyone aged 16 and above, even without prior qualifications, the programme has also trained over 16,000 individuals and nearly 500 persons living with disabilities, including a visually impaired graduate who was able to establish a business using the skills acquired.

PROJECT ECHO BRINGS EXPERT MEDICAL GUIDANCE TO FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE WORKERS



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony, along with Executive Director of Mount Sinai Guyana, Dr Rachel Vreeman [left] and Director of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) programme, Dr Lacthmie Lall [right]

Guyanese can now look forward to improved healthcare services as the Ministry of Health has launched Project ECHO, a cutting-edge platform designed to strengthen clinical knowledge sharing and patient care nationwide. Project ECHO, which stands for Extension for

Community Healthcare Outcomes, connects frontline healthcare workers with local and international specialists through regular virtual sessions, case discussions, and expert guidance. Using a hub-and-spoke model, the platform ensures that even healthcare providers in remote and hinterland communities can access timely clinical support.

The initiative was officially launched at the Ministry of Health’s headquarters in

Brickdam, Georgetown, in a collaboration between the ministry and Mount Sinai. Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony explained that the platform complements ongoing investments in healthcare infrastructure by building the skills and expertise of medical professionals.

“This platform allows healthcare workers to present complex cases and receive guidance from a network of specialists,” Dr Anthony said. **“By**

learning from real-life cases and sharing experiences, we can standardise care, reduce medical errors, and ultimately improve patient outcomes across Guyana.”

Dr Rachel Vreeman, Executive Director of Mount Sinai Guyana, emphasised the platform’s proven success in supporting clinicians in underserved regions. **“Project ECHO creates a network where healthcare providers, no matter**

their location, can access expert advice and provide the same standard of care to patients,” she said.

The Ministry of Health plans to use the platform to improve chronic disease management, disseminate new clinical guidelines, and strengthen collaboration among healthcare professionals. With Guyana’s telemedicine network expected to expand to nearly 200 sites by the end of the year, Project ECHO is set to empower medical workers and enhance patient care nationwide.

CARIBBEAN URGED TO TURN VULNERABILITIES INTO OPPORTUNITIES AT IDB ANNUAL MEETINGS



Dr. Ashni Singh at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Annual Meetings in Paraguay

As Caribbean nations face growing climate, economic, and social pressures, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh, used the 2026 Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Annual Meetings in Paraguay to advocate for financing solutions that truly match the region's realities. From disaster preparedness to private-sector development, he highlighted how the Bank can play a pivotal role in helping countries transform vulnerability into opportunity.

Speaking at the event in Asunción, Dr. Singh commended the IDB for its progress in moving from reforms to implementation in 2025, while urging the institution to expand and tailor its lending instruments to specific country contexts and make greater use of local systems. **"The countries in the Caribbean remain**

amongst the most vulnerable in the world to more frequent and extreme natural disasters, external shocks, and global economic volatility. Our access

engagement, and targeted interventions to overcome structural constraints. He highlighted the importance of disaster risk management instruments, including



Dr. Ashni Singh at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Annual Meetings in Paraguay

to resources and financing remains limited, while our fiscal space remains tight," he said.

Dr. Singh emphasised that the region needs flexible financing tools, stronger private-sector contingent credit facilities, catastrophe insurance, and climate-resilient financing, noting their role in helping Caribbean nations strengthen fiscal resilience and prepare for future shocks.

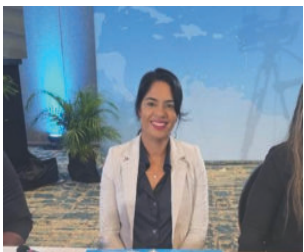
Guyana, the finance minister pointed to the increased approvals and net financial flows from the IDB Group, underscoring the success of policy-based lending in areas such as justice reform, competitiveness, financial sector strengthening, and human services. He also welcomed the expanding role of IDB Invest in supporting emerging opportunities in transport, energy, infrastructure, and trade, encouraging the Bank to use equity and local-currency financing to scale projects effectively.

Dr. Singh also highlighted the importance of IDB Lab's continued focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, and scalable private-sector solutions as critical for economic diversification and long-term resilience.

He concluded by reaffirming Guyana's strong support for the IDB Group and its reform agenda, expressing confidence that with the capitalisation of IDB Invest and replenishment of IDB Lab, the Bank would become an even stronger and more responsive partner for the Caribbean.

Accompanying Dr. Singh in Paraguay were Ms. Navita Ramroop, Executive Director in the Caribbean Office of the IDB, Director of Projects, and Senior Economic and Financial Analyst Bernard Lord, along with Ms. Ronette Hetsberger. Together, they represented Guyana in promoting the region's development priorities, resilience, and opportunities on an international stage.

TECHNOLOGY MUST SUPPORT, NOT REPLACE, CARIBBEAN TEACHERS - MINISTER PARAG



Minister of Education, Sonia Parag

At a pivotal moment for Caribbean education, Minister of Education Sonia Parag is calling for a region-wide rethink of how students are assessed and taught in an era dominated by artificial intelligence.

Speaking at the inaugural Caribbean Examination Council's Regional Education Conference in Kingston, Jamaica, Minister Parag urged a move away from traditional "test-taking" models toward evaluations

that prioritise critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world application.

"When a machine can generate an answer, the value shifts from the answer itself to the thinking behind it," she said, highlighting AI's ability to produce essays, images, videos, and solutions to complex problems in seconds. **"Connectivity without competence is merely noise,"** she added, stressing that technology alone cannot replace foundational skills like literacy and numeracy.

Minister Parag



Minister of Education Sonia Parag, addressing the 2026 Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Ministerial Forum

emphasised that AI should support teachers, not replace them. **"An algorithm can provide a fact, but it cannot provide mentorship, emotional intelligence, or moral guidance,"** she said. She urged the region to assess how students question, verify, and

defend their reasoning, ensuring that learning fosters curiosity and understanding rather than rote memorisation. She also highlighted Guyana's efforts to bridge educational gaps through initiatives such as literacy improvement programmes, community-based learning, second-chance

education pathways, and the launch of the Guyana Digital School, a live, interactive platform aligned with the CXC curriculum, designed to provide high-quality education to students across CARICOM.

Minister Parag acknowledged both opportunities and risks of AI, including personalised learning, immediate feedback, academic dishonesty, data privacy concerns, and cyberbullying, calling for structured ethical frameworks to guide its integration.

She stressed the need for inclusive collaboration across the

region. **"The question before us is not whether change is coming. It is whether we as a region are prepared to shape it,"** she said, urging leaders to move from dialogue to actionable reforms.

Concluding her address, Minister Parag emphasised that the future of Caribbean education depends on thoughtful innovation, shared vision, and a steadfast commitment to equipping students with the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world, where technology enhances reasoning, rather than replaces it.

NEW VOCATIONAL CENTRE FOR THOMAS LANDS

A new vocational centre is set to rise in Thomas Lands, Georgetown, as part of the government's ongoing efforts to expand access to high-quality technical and vocational education. The initiative aims to equip Guyanese with practical skills that meet the demands of a modern labour market, ensuring more citizens can build secure and sustainable careers.

Over the past five years, the government has established practical training facilities in

locations including Bartica, St. Ignatius, the North West District, Beterverwagting, Fellowship, and Hopetown, benefiting over 3,900 individuals. This expansion demonstrates a strong commitment to workforce development and inclusive opportunities for all.

For 2026, \$2.5 billion has been allocated to support Technical and

Vocational Education Training (TVET) programmes nationwide, with \$723.1 million specifically earmarked to train an additional 2,000 people. The Thomas Lands centre will further strengthen this effort, providing modern classrooms, workshops, and resources for students seeking hands-on skills in fields ranging from electrical installation to

heavy-duty machinery operation.

With the Thomas Lands facility, the government is reinforcing its commitment to empowering citizens through practical education, preparing them for employment, entrepreneurship, and meaningful participation in Guyana's growing economy.



Students from the Government Technical Institute are partaking in TVET courses

PM PHILLIPS PUSHES PARTNERSHIPS AMID GLOBAL 'POLYCRISIS'

“Polycrisis” was the word Prime Minister Mark Phillips used to describe the world’s challenges, geopolitical tension, economic instability, and climate change, before outlining how Guyana and its partners are stepping up to face them.

Speaking at the X Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in Colombia, the Prime Minister stressed that these global pressures carry far-reaching implications for peace, security, and development, particularly for small and vulnerable nations like Guyana.

He described CELAC



Prime Minister, Brigadier (Ret’d), Mark Phillips

as a vital platform for dialogue and collaboration, enabling member states to tackle shared challenges and pursue growth opportunities together. **“These meetings have been both valuable and productive, auguring well for the development of strategic partnerships,”** he noted, highlighting

engagements with extra-regional partners as a key step toward comprehensive cooperation.

Food security and agriculture featured prominently in his address. Guyana, leading on these issues within CARICOM, is advocating for modernised farming, stronger logistics, and climate-resilient

practices to ensure stable food systems. The Prime Minister urged collaboration across CELAC to strengthen capacity, boost productivity, and safeguard communities against future crises.

Climate change, he said, remains a serious threat to development, particularly for low-lying coastal states. Phillips highlighted

Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, which balances economic growth with environmental stewardship through renewable energy, forest preservation, and low-carbon infrastructure. He also pointed to the Global Biodiversity Alliance as part of international efforts to address environmental challenges.

At the CELAC-Africa High-Level Forum, he expanded his vision, calling for deeper cooperation between Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. He encouraged shared technological solutions, joint research programs, and coordinated strategies for climate-resilient agriculture, healthcare, and digital

connectivity. The Prime Minister underscored the historical and cultural ties linking the Caribbean and Africa and emphasised continued advocacy for reparatory justice through CARICOM’s ten-point plan. He also called for expanded trade, investment, and transport links to strengthen economic cooperation.

Looking forward, Prime Minister Phillips urged institutionalising the CELAC–Africa partnership through a joint commission to ensure sustained engagement and tangible results. He congratulated Colombia and Burundi for convening the forum and reaffirmed Guyana’s commitment to democracy, sovereignty, regional integration, and sustainable development.

INTENSE TRAINING FOR STAKEHOLDERS BOOSTS SKILLS FOR SAFER FLIGHTS



The training brought together a broad cross-section of key aviation stakeholders



The training brought together a broad cross-section of key aviation stakeholders



The training brought together a broad cross-section of key aviation stakeholders

For aviation professionals and passengers alike, a week of intensive training in Georgetown promises safer, smarter, and more efficient air travel across

Guyana. From March 16 to 20, the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) hosted a five-day technical workshop at its Head Office, bringing together

senior representatives from the Cheddi Jagan and Eugene F. Correia International Airports, local airlines, the Air Navigation Service Provider, the Guyana

Tourism Authority, and the Civil Aviation Training School. The sessions were facilitated by Mr. Roberto Sosa, an International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) expert with extensive international experience.

Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar, described the training as timely, noting it supports the government’s development of a Civil Aviation Master Plan (CAMP) that aligns with President Irfaan Ali’s vision and incorporates stakeholder input.

Director General Lt. Col. (ret’d) Egbert Field explained that the training strengthens technical capacity and equips participants with the analytical tools needed to modernise the national aviation sector. CAMP serves as a strategic roadmap addressing infrastructure, airspace management, safety, security, and economic regulation, ensuring aviation growth aligns with broader national development goals.

The initiative comes as the government invests in the sector,

including a second terminal and new Air Traffic Control Tower at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, new municipal airports at Lethem and Rosehall, and the rehabilitation of over 30 hinterland airstrips.

Funded by the Government of Japan and conducted by ICAO’s Global Aviation Training Office, the workshop underscores Guyana’s commitment to expanding access, improving services, and shaping a safer, more connected aviation future.

\$157M RECOVERED FOR SHOPPERS



Certificate of Compliance being presented to a compliant supplier

For many Guyanese, everyday purchases now come with greater confidence, thanks to the country’s strengthened consumer

protection system. In 2025 alone, more than 1,300 inspections were conducted and \$157 million was secured in redress for citizens

who experienced unfair business practices.

The progress was highlighted by Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues, as Guyana observed World Consumer Rights Day under the theme **“Safe Products, Confident Consumers”**.

“While our economy is growing rapidly, protecting consumers remains a priority. Development must go hand in hand with fairness,

transparency, and accountability,” Minister Rodrigues said.

The Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission (CCAC) carried out 1,331 inspections across the country to ensure businesses complied with the Consumer Affairs Acts, issuing 259 compliance certificates to companies demonstrating responsible operations.

The commission also resolved 428 complaints in 2025, representing 85% of matters received,

showing that the system is delivering tangible results. Beyond enforcement, CCAC conducts nationwide sensitisation programmes and school outreach initiatives to educate citizens about their rights. Leonora Secondary School students, for example, recently learned key provisions of the Consumer Affairs Act, empowering them to recognise and act on unfair practices.

Minister Rodrigues emphasised that awareness alone isn’t enough, but enforcement

is critical. She credited inspections and compliance monitoring, as well as the Guyana National Bureau of Standards, for preventing unsafe or substandard products from reaching the market.

For Guyanese, these efforts mean greater confidence when shopping, knowing the government is actively ensuring businesses uphold their obligations, and that help is available if their rights are violated.

CARIBBEAN AIDS DEATHS DOWN BY OVER 60% SINCE 2010



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony

AIDS-related deaths in the Caribbean have fallen sharply, a testament to regional collaboration and improved healthcare, Guyana's Health Minister Frank Anthony told the 10th Meeting of the National AIDS Programme in Trinidad and Tobago. The milestone, showing a decline of more than 60 percent since 2010, reflects the sustained efforts of governments, healthcare workers, and community organisations across the region.

shows us something important: that when the Caribbean commits to a

significant decline in deaths, Dr. Anthony cautioned that the Caribbean still records

methods, and specialised laboratory equipment to monitor viral loads. Integration of HIV

emerging technologies, emphasising the importance of a people-centered approach that prioritises vulnerable populations. "We have proven that we can deliver results. Now, we must decide, will we manage AIDS, or will we end it?" he urged.



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony, with the multi-sectoral team at the Tenth Meeting of the National AIDS Programme

challenge, it can deliver results," he said.

The four-day meeting, held from March 17 to 20, focused on reviewing regional achievements, strengthening coordination, and identifying emerging challenges. Despite the

roughly 15,000 new HIV infections annually, with young people remaining among the most vulnerable.

He highlighted the range of tools now available to the region, including improved HIV testing services, expanded antiretroviral therapy access, innovative prevention

services into primary healthcare has improved accessibility, while targeted prevention programmes focus on key populations to reduce new infections.

Dr. Anthony also called for enhanced regional cooperation to secure affordable medicines and

Reaffirming Guyana's commitment to working with regional and international partners, the minister stressed that coordinated action will be crucial to ending AIDS in the Caribbean. For healthcare workers, patients, and families alike, the message was clear: through dedication, collaboration, and compassion, the region can turn a public health challenge into a story of hope, resilience, and progress.

NEW TOOLS BRING FASTER CERVICAL CANCER CARE TO WOMEN

A small device, a big impact: Guyana is stepping up its fight against cervical cancer with new tools that promise faster, more accessible treatment for women nationwide.

At the Diamond Regional Hospital, a quiet but meaningful step forward in women's health unfolded recently, one that could change the experience of care for thousands of Guyanese women.

Standing alongside regional health officials

and international partners, Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony witnessed the handover of new thermal ablation devices, small but powerful tools that will make treatment for cervical pre-cancer faster, simpler, and more accessible.

For women living with Human Papillomavirus (HPV), the leading cause of cervical cancer, the devices mean fewer delays and less invasive care. Instead of long



The handing over of the devices

waits or referrals, treatment can now happen closer to home.

The moment was part of a broader push to eliminate cervical cancer in Guyana. During the session, supported by the Pan American Health Organization and experts from MD Anderson Cancer Center, officials outlined a national plan focused on prevention, early detection, and timely treatment.

Equally important is the training happening behind the scenes. Healthcare

workers across the country are receiving specialised instruction in colposcopy, helping them identify and treat abnormalities earlier.

For many women, these changes represent more than policy, they offer reassurance. In communities where distance and cost often delay care, the promise is simple: quicker help, closer to home, and a better chance at a healthy future.

PATIENTS EMBRACE ONLINE BOOKING AT FESTIVAL CITY POLYCLINIC

Patients are increasingly turning to technology to access healthcare, as Guyana's digital booking system continues to gain momentum. Since its launch on January 17, 2026, nearly 500 appointments have been scheduled online, signalling a growing shift in how patients engage with the public health system.

At the Festival City Polyclinic, the introduction of the Electronic Health Record (EHR) system is streamlining services and

improving efficiency. The platform allows patients to book appointments digitally while enabling healthcare providers to store and access medical records in a single, secure database.

The results are already evident. Prior to the system's implementation, the clinic saw an average of 79 patients daily. That figure has since increased to approximately 129 patients per day, with an average of 128 clinical assessments now being conducted using the EHR system.

Beyond improved access, the system ensures continuity of care. Patients visiting different departments, including chronic disease, surgery, and cardiology, now benefit from a unified medical record, giving doctors immediate access to critical health information.

As more patients adopt the platform, the initiative is proving to be a key step toward a more efficient, connected, and patient-centred healthcare system in Guyana.



EHR system will bring about many benefits to Guyana's health sector

BLACK BELLY SHEEP PROJECT GAINS GROUND



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha with Barbados' Minister of Agriculture and Food and Nutritional Security, Dr. Shantal Munro-Knight

What started with just over 100 sheep is now growing into a national effort to put more locally produced meat on Guyanese tables.

On a farm at Mon Repos, the birth of a lamb nicknamed "Ruth" is a small but meaningful sign of that progress. Behind it lies a rapidly expanding Black Belly Sheep programme

in Region Five in March 2022 by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha shared the update during a recent meeting with a delegation from Barbados, headed by Minister of Agriculture and Food and Nutritional Security, Dr. Shantal Munro-Knight. He outlined how initial imports of just over 100 sheep have been steadily expanded through multiple shipments, laying the foundation for a sustainable industry.

But beyond herd numbers, the programme is already reaching communities.

Across Region Five,

dozens of farmers have been allocated five-acre plots to establish small-ruminant production units. These farms are expected to begin production by the second quarter of 2026, offering participants a new income stream and a chance to be part of a growing national industry.

The structured approach is designed to improve efficiency across the supply chain, from rearing to processing and distribution, while ensuring consistent, high-quality meat for the local market.

A key goal is to reduce the Caribbean's reliance on imported

mutton, particularly from countries like New Zealand, while positioning Guyana as a future supplier within the region. The initiative also aligns with CARICOM's "25 by 2025 + 5" target to cut the regional food import bill by 25 per cent by 2030.

Minister Mustapha said the project is expected to significantly increase local production in the coming years, with a target of more than 7,000 tonnes of mutton by year five.

For farmers preparing to start production, the programme represents an opportunity. And with each new lamb



The lamb nicknamed "Ruth"

born, Guyana moves one step closer to building a stronger, more self-sufficient agricultural future.

US AGRIBUSINESS GIANT SEABOARD EXPLORES FEASIBILITY OF PORK INDUSTRY IN GUYANA

Seaboard is exploring the potential to bring a sustainable pork industry to Guyana, a move that could strengthen the country's agriculture sector and enhance food security. Recently, the United States-based agribusiness giant partnered with international consultancy Gira Food to assess the feasibility of local pork production, conducting consultations and site visits across the country.

The initiative aligns with President Irfaan Ali's vision to diversify Guyana's economy and reduce CARICOM's

reliance on imported food by building regional production capacity. Representatives of Gira Food, a globally recognised firm in the food and agriculture sector, met with government officials, including Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha and Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency, and Implementation Zulfikar Ally, as well as representatives from the Guyana Livestock Development Authority and key industry stakeholders, such as local farmers, processors, retailers, butchers, and restaurant

operators.

The consultations focused on understanding market demand, infrastructure capacity, and the opportunities and challenges of developing a domestic pork sector. Seaboard, which operates U.S. brands including Prairie Fresh, Daily's Premium Meats, Seaboard Farms, and St. Joe Pork, brings decades of experience in integrated pork production, processing, and distribution.

"This initiative represents an important step in exploring how Guyana can

strengthen its agricultural sector, enhance food security, and create new economic opportunities," said Seaboard Overseas Trading Group President Jack Bresky.

If the assessment confirms viability, the project could attract investment beyond Seaboard's previously announced GYD \$10 billion upgrade of the National Milling Company of Guyana (NAMILCO), expanding agro-industrial capacity and supporting value-added production. Collaboration with government and local



Part of the assessment on the feasibility of establishing a sustainable pork industry within the country



Part of the assessment on the feasibility of establishing a sustainable pork industry within the country

stakeholders will remain central as the project progresses, with

updates expected as the assessment continues.

FARMERS REAP BENEFIT FROM SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha

Georgetown recently played host to the Project Completion Exit Workshop for the Sustainable Agricultural Development Programme (SADP), held at the World Trade Centre. The event, organised by the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with

the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), celebrated the successes of a programme that has positively impacted thousands of farmers across the country.

Through SADP, more than 6,000 farmers gained access to modern technology, equipment, and practical training, while over 200 extension officers received capacity-building support to improve the delivery of agricultural services. These efforts have helped farmers enhance productivity, increase income, and adopt more sustainable practices.

Speaking at the workshop, Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha highlighted the programme's achievements and its alignment with national development priorities. "The SADP clearly achieves its objectives of assisting farmers to enhance their productivity and improve their livelihoods. It has also strengthened our agricultural institutions and modernised the systems that guide the sector in Guyana," he said.

Minister Mustapha noted that SADP goes



IDB Country Representative Lorena Solórzano-Salazar

beyond improving farm output. The programme has supported broader government policy commitments, upgraded drainage and irrigation systems, provided essential inputs to farmers, and reinforced sustainable resource management. He emphasised that these

initiatives demonstrate Guyana's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals while advancing agriculture and protecting the environment.

A key outcome of the programme, Minister Mustapha added, is the enhancement of agricultural data systems, including the Agriculture Information System (AIS) and the completion of comprehensive surveys to support evidence-based policymaking.

IDB Country Representative Lorena Solórzano-Salazar praised the programme, calling it one of the most successful the Bank has funded in Guyana. "These are not isolated interventions.

Together, they reflect a broader vision of a sector that is better informed, better equipped, institutionally stronger, and more responsive to the needs of farmers, consumers, and markets," she said.

The SADP has provided farmers with technological packages now adopted nationwide, strengthened extension services, and improved access to training, making Guyana's agricultural sector more resilient, productive, and sustainable, benefiting not just individual farmers, but the country's economy and communities as a whole.

MARUDI MINING OPERATIONS EMBRACE COMPLIANCE, BRING BENEFITS TO MANY RESIDENTS



David Benjamin, a miner since 1988

A recent visit to Marudi Mountain in Region Nine is offering a different perspective on mining in the area, one shaped not by speculation, but by first-hand observation and direct engagement with miners, regulators, and community leaders.

What emerges is a more structured and closely monitored operation than is often portrayed in public discussions.

Mining at Marudi is now guided by a 2021 agreement involving the Rupununi Miners Association Co-operative Society Limited (RMA), companies Aurous and Romanex, and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC). The agreement

allows small and medium-scale mining under a Special Mining Permit (SMP), with strict limits on participation and clear operational guidelines.

Under this system, two medium-scale operators handle the initial extraction and processing of material, which is then sold to small miners. The arrangement has introduced a more organised flow of activity, replacing what miners describe as a once fragmented and physically demanding process.

“We used to break the big rocks with our hands and sledge,” said miner David Benjamin, who has worked in Marudi for decades. **“Now we have crushers... the whole process is far easier.”**

Beyond improved efficiency, the shift has also brought greater oversight. The GGMC maintains a visible presence in the area, enforcing compliance with environmental

and operational standards. Mining under the SMP requires adherence to mine plans, environmental management strategies, and strict conditions, including a ban on mercury use.

Community involvement has also become more



Chairman of the SRDC, Toshao Nicholas Fredericks

pronounced. Leaders from the South Rupununi District Council (SRDC), which represents 21 Amerindian villages, were recently taken on a guided tour of the mining operations. The visit allowed them to observe practices on the ground and raise concerns directly with stakeholders.

“It was unregulated, and

now you can see that the main players are here,” said SRDC Chairman Nicholas Fredericks, who noted that while progress is evident, there is still room for improvement.

Other village leaders echoed similar sentiments, describing the engagements as informative and necessary. Toshao Timothy Williams of Aishalton said the operations are now **“much more organised”**, while Toshao Roxanne Beck noted that the visit helped clarify issues that had previously been misunderstood.

These consultations form part of a broader effort by the Ministry of Natural Resources to ensure ongoing dialogue with communities. More than a dozen meetings have been held since 2020, with a focus on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Following the 2021 agreement, approximately 180 residents from the Deep South signalled

their support for the resumption of mining through a petition.

At the same time, mining is bringing tangible economic benefits. Hundreds of residents are employed in the area, while revenues have supported community projects

Brazilians, in technical roles. Stakeholders say there are plans to address this through training and capacity-building programmes.

For many community leaders, the path forward lies in balance, ensuring that mining continues to generate



GGMC along with the RMA took leaders of the SRDC on a guided tour around the mining operations in Marudi

and local development initiatives. In some villages, funds are managed through elected committees and reported publicly, reinforcing transparency.

Still, challenges remain. A shortage of specialised local skills has led to the employment of foreign workers, particularly

economic opportunities while safeguarding the environment and maintaining strong community involvement.

What is clear now is that a mining operation is evolving toward greater structure, oversight, and inclusion, even as it works to meet the expectations of the communities it affects.



The activity to relocate the vendors from the roadway

Longtime roadside vendors at La Grange/Bagotville finally have a safer place to sell, following a government initiative that relocated them to designated spaces away from traffic hazards.

The 109 vendors participated in a lottery to determine their new vending spots, organised by the Ministry of Public Works to move sellers from the roadway into a more structured, secure environment.

Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, personally assisted with the verification and lottery process. He explained that the new system will allow vendors to continue operating on Sundays in a safer environment. **“We have a space set so that people on the roadway can sell safely. When they (are) finished, they will collapse their tables and stalls, and we will continue to improve the tarmac to a more all-weather surface,”** the minister said.

VENDORS RELOCATED TO SAFER SPACES AT LAGRANGE

Previously, the area was not a designated market, and several stalls extended onto the carriageway, creating safety concerns for both vendors and motorists. Following consultations with vendors, the ministry identified two locations for vending: a street leading to the La Grange Police Station and an additional space along the southern side of the Number One Canal.

Vendor Jessica

King, who has been selling produce for over 12 years and follows in her mother’s nearly 30-year vending tradition, expressed her gratitude. **“I’m happy with the number I pulled since I will be at the front part. I’m glad the minister came out so we can have more space on the road,”** she said.

The lottery system was transparent, free, and fair, giving each vendor a clearly assigned

space. Ministry staff also conducted walkthroughs to document existing vending activity, ensuring the process was inclusive and accurate.

The initiative reflects the government’s commitment to balancing infrastructure development with support for local livelihoods, giving vendors a safer, structured environment while allowing them to continue earning a living.

ACCELERATEHER 2026 COHORT TO SOON START TRAINING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

A new wave of opportunity is opening for women in business as the Centre for Local Business Development rolls out its AccelerateHer Programme for 2026, aimed at helping female entrepreneurs take their ventures to the next level.

Delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Human Services and Social

Security and the Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry Guyana, with support from the Greater Guyana Initiative, the four-month programme offers hands-on support through workshops, mentorship, and tailored weekly courses. Applications for the 2026 cohort close on April 3.

For many women balancing business ambitions with limited access to financing and networks, initiatives like AccelerateHer are proving transformative. More than 100 participants have already benefitted, gaining practical skills in financial management, strategic planning, and expanding into new

markets. Beyond individual success stories, the programme is helping to strengthen Guyana’s economy by encouraging innovation, supporting job creation, and increasing women’s participation in entrepreneurship.



Guyanese women who completed the AccelerateHer Programme

NEW GENERATION OF GUYANESE SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES



President Ali and Komal Samaroo, Chairman of Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL) and Demerara Bank Limited (DBL)

A new generation of Guyanese is rising through the ranks, building careers, owning homes and launching businesses due to the country's rapid development which is opening doors once out of reach.

Speaking during his podcast "Tea on the Terrace", the President brought together private sector leaders and young professionals to examine how economic growth is transforming lives. Among them

was Komal Samaroo, Chairman of Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL) and Demerara Bank Limited, who pointed to expanding business opportunities driven by government policies and a booming economy.

"We see tremendous opportunities opening up," Samaroo said, noting that DDL is diversifying, entering new markets and investing in modern technology. He revealed that the company is also

exploring new ventures, including a dairy project that could create jobs and stimulate economic activity along the Linden Highway corridor.

In the financial sector, Dowlat Parbhu, Chief Executive Officer of Demerara Bank, highlighted a surge in home ownership among Guyanese. Housing loans now make up nearly half of the bank's lending portfolio, with more than 6,000 applications received in recent years. Lower interest rates and increased competition, he explained, are making it easier for citizens to own homes and build wealth.

But beyond traditional banking, the future is digital. Parbhu outlined plans for mobile platforms that will allow customers

to check loan eligibility and access services within minutes. The bank has also launched initiatives to support entrepreneurs, including grant programmes for innovative startups and tools to help small businesses manage finances and access funding.

For young professionals like Kenesha Collins, these developments are life-changing. She encouraged young Guyanese to take advantage of technology, which has removed many of the barriers that once limited education and career growth. "You can sit in your living room and empower yourself," she said, highlighting how access to knowledge is opening doors to new industries.

Dr. Ashni Singh, of a young bank Senior Minister in the Office of the President manager who rose from a teller position



President Ali and the Demerara Bank Limited Beterverwagting Branch Manager

with responsibility for Finance, emphasised that Guyana's transformation goes beyond infrastructure. While roads and bridges are visible signs of progress, he said the real change lies in improved quality of life, expanded opportunities and a more dynamic economy.

President Ali reinforced this message by sharing the story to leadership through hard work, education and opportunity. For the President, this journey represents what is now possible for thousands of young Guyanese. "This is the story we want for every young person in Guyana," he said, stressing that the nation's future depends on empowering its people to succeed.

HEALTH WORKERS SHARPEN SKILLS IN MASS CASUALTY TRAINING

For four days in March, health and emergency workers from across Guyana came together at the Civil Defence Commission's (CDC) Headquarters to sharpen their skills in saving lives during large-scale emergencies. The Mass Casualty Management (MCM) training, conducted under the LAMAT 2026 Medical Mission in partnership with the University of Miami and the United States Air Force, aimed to boost the country's national emergency response capacity.

The programme uses a trainer-of-trainers



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony, along with participants and representatives from the University of Miami and the US Air Force, at the mass casualty management training

approach, ensuring that participants not only gain critical life-saving skills but are also prepared to share their knowledge with colleagues across regions. Minister of Health, Dr Frank

Anthony, highlighted the importance of preparedness, teamwork, and continuous learning, stressing that such initiatives are vital for public health and

national resilience.

Participants came from regional health departments, port health, emergency medical services, the CDC, disciplined services, and the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. They engaged in internationally recognised disaster-response methods, including scenario-based simulations designed to prepare them for natural disasters, industrial accidents, and other emergencies.

By equipping

personnel to respond effectively and pass on their expertise, the training strengthens Guyana's capacity to protect lives, particularly in hinterland and remote

communities where timely assistance can be a matter of life and death. This initiative reflects a proactive commitment to building a resilient, well-prepared nation.



Participants attending the mass casualty management training

COMMUNITIES THRIVE WITH NEW GROUNDS

Across Guyana, once ordinary open spaces are being transformed into vibrant hubs for recreation, socialising, and healthy living, thanks to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport's nationwide community grounds development programme.

Minister Charles Ramson Jr recently visited Mon Repos, Enmore Hope West, and Pigeon Island to engage with residents about ongoing upgrades and gather input for future improvements. These consultations allow communities to influence the design and functionality of their recreational spaces, ensuring upgrades



Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr, is engaging with residents

reflect local needs. Over the past four years, the ministry has invested in more than 650 community grounds, with lighting installed in over 145 locations. For residents, these improvements have made a tangible difference, allowing physical activity, evening gatherings, and social engagement long after

the sun sets. "This transformation has brought life to the communities at night," Minister Ramson said. "Now people have safe spaces to sit, relax, and exercise. Families can come together, and everyone has a place

to enjoy outdoor activities, even after hours."

Residents highlighted the benefits of the upgrades, with priorities for future development including washroom facilities, modern pavilions, and accessible walkways, particularly important during the rainy season. To support maintenance, the ministry will also provide essential tools such as lawn mowers, ensuring the grounds remain safe and welcoming.

Beyond the infrastructure, the programme is enhancing quality of

life and strengthening community bonds. Spaces that were once underutilised are now centres of activity, promoting healthier lifestyles, social cohesion, and safe environments for all ages.

Looking ahead, the ministry plans to expand the initiative with new

stadiums and indoor complexes, further increasing access to sport and recreational facilities nationwide. With these investments, Guyana's communities are not just gaining upgraded grounds, they are gaining vibrant, inclusive spaces where people can live healthier, more connected lives.



Lights installed at the Good Hope community ground

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PRESIDENT ALI LEADS EAST RUIIMVELDT WALKABOUT, ANNOUNCES UPGRADES



President Irfaan Ali interacting with a resident of East Ruimveldt

Residents of East Ruimveldt, Georgetown can expect a series of community improvements following a recent walkabout led by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

Accompanied by government ministers, technical teams and community representatives, the president met directly with residents to hear their concerns and assess conditions on the ground. The visit



President Irfaan Ali interacting with a resident of East Ruimveldt

Construction at the Palmyra Multipurpose Stadium and New Amsterdam Synthetic Track in East Berbice-Corentyne is advancing rapidly, bringing the region closer to a state-of-the-art facility for sports, recreation, and cultural events.

During a recent site inspection, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr, confirmed that the Palmyra Multipurpose Stadium remain on track to meet the end-of-May deadline, despite the complexity of coordinating multiple work streams and sourcing materials from different countries. **“Even though this stand is already assembled and the roof is being installed, the sealant only arrived ... The sealant is critical for it to be installed before the seats go in,”** he explained, highlighting the careful



Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr, inspects ongoing works at the stadium

sequencing required logistical, but quality remains the top priority. The stadium is designed as a multipurpose facility capable of hosting cricket, athletics, basketball, futsal, concerts, festivals, and community events. **“You have a huge tarmac, so you can have lots of sports being played there... Everybody**

highlighted several priority areas, including drainage, sanitation, housing and recreational facilities.

Speaking with residents, President Ali said the engagement reflects the government’s hands-on approach to addressing community challenges.

“We were able to walk the community



President Irfaan Ali interacting with a resident of East Ruimveldt

today and identify some key issues,” he said, while commending parents for encouraging education and positive activities among children.

Among the concerns raised were inadequate internal drainage systems, poor sanitation and the need for better community infrastructure. While

acknowledging that some of these matters fall under municipal responsibility, the president made it clear that the government intends to take a more direct role.

“We can’t wait anymore. We are here to work directly with the communities to address key issues,” he said.

To begin addressing the concerns, technical teams are expected to return to the area to conduct detailed assessments of drainage networks and sanitation systems. Plans are also in place to improve the overall environment, including tree planting initiatives, with a focus on fruit trees to enhance community spaces.

Housing support is also on the agenda, particularly for vulnerable families in need of roof repairs. In addition, recreational facilities will be upgraded to better serve young people, senior citizens and the wider community.

The government is also exploring the creation of a designated

commercial area to better accommodate vendors. The proposed development will feature a tarmacked, courtyard-style space designed to provide a more organised and dignified setting for small businesses.

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Priya Manickchand, said preparations are already

underway to tackle several of the issues identified. Planned works include the construction of concrete drains, as well as the rehabilitation of the community market and football ground.

“We want to ensure your children have a clean, wholesome space,” she told residents, noting that the government will work closely with the community to improve living standards.

Meanwhile, Minister within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Steven Jacobs, said ongoing interventions in the area will be expanded, with added support for sports teams to help young people develop their talents.

Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith, also highlighted plans to bring training and employment opportunities directly to residents, aimed at strengthening skills and creating pathways to jobs.

President Ali emphasised that continued collaboration between residents and the government will be key to achieving lasting improvements in East Ruimveldt.

EAST BERBICE PREPARES FOR NEW STADIUM AND SYNTHETIC TRACK

who wants to use the facility now has that space,” the minister said.

Meanwhile, the New Amsterdam Synthetic Track is approximately 85 per cent complete and is being built to international standards, with a specialised technical team from REGUPOL supervising the installation of the track surface, a critical step for global certification. Once completed, the facility will feature an all-weather football field with advanced drainage, modern spectator stands for around 2,000 people, and year-round accessibility for athletes and fitness enthusiasts.

Minister Ramson highlighted that the projects are transformational investments for the

region, expected to boost sporting infrastructure while creating cultural and economic opportunities. **“This stadium will catalyse development, similar to what was seen around the Guyana National Stadium in Providence,”** he said.

For residents of East Berbice-Corentyne, the

Palmyra Multipurpose Stadium and New Amsterdam Synthetic Track promise more than sporting excellence, they represent new spaces for community engagement, recreation, and pride, poised to leave a lasting impact for generations to come.



New Amsterdam Synthetic Track



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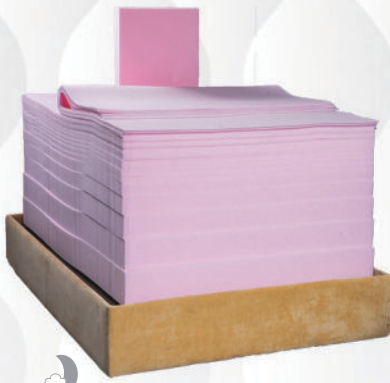
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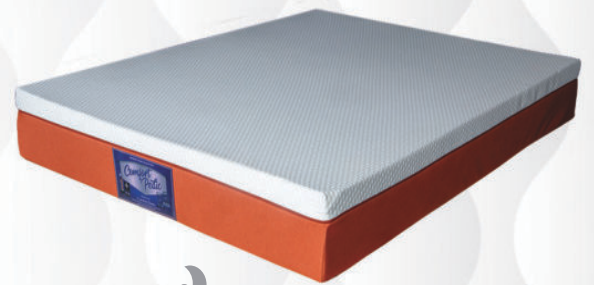
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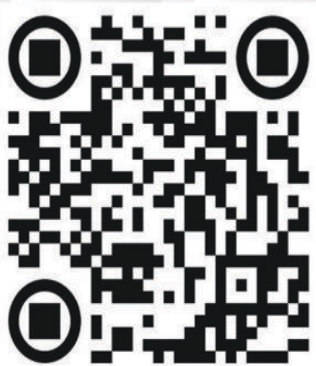
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\$6.2 billion already disbursed to citizens as cash grants continue

SOME \$6.2 billion has been disbursed to 62,026 citizens directly into their bank accounts, in what Senior Minister in the office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh has described as an early but significant step towards a fully digital Guyana.

In an update on the national cash grant initiative on Monday, Dr Singh recalled that the rollout began with central government employees, including public servants, teachers and members of the disciplined services.

In this first phase, 48,858 such employees had their grants credited directly to their bank accounts.

Meanwhile, in the subsequent phase which focused on wider public access via a dedicated online portal at cashgrant.gov.gy, saw some 26,639 people successfully completing self-registration.

Of these, payments have already been processed for 13,168 people, who have begun receiving their grants and are expected to have all funds credited within 24 hours.

Meanwhile, a further 22,611 individuals have started the process and are at various stages of completion.

Dr Singh urged those who have not yet completed registration to log in

again, particularly at times of lower traffic, acknowledging that heavy demand has caused delays for some users.

He stressed that the online cash grant system marks “an early step” in building a culture in which Guyanese routinely apply for and receive government services online.

“We’re trying to build up a culture where people become accustomed to applying for things online and receiving the delivery of their services online, and we recognise that this is going to be a learning process for everybody,” the finance minister said.

Linking the initiative to President Dr Irfaan Ali’s wider “Digital Guyana” vision, Dr Singh said the long-term goal is for citizens to be able to access a broad range of services remotely, including birth and marriage certificates, passports, driver’s licences, tax returns, and national insurance scheme (NIS) services.

“It’s going to be a learning process for us as we develop these platforms and as we refine them, and it’s going to be a learning process for our citizens too as they become comfortable submitting applications digitally and receiving services digitally,” he said, adding: “We’re going to con-

tinue to work to refine the ease with which and the smoothness with which the platform is working.”

He reassured the public that no eligible person would be left out, even if they face persistent difficulties with the portal or do not have a bank account.

While citizens are encouraged to open accounts to benefit from direct transfers, Dr Singh said a subsequent phase would cater specifically for those without bank accounts, ensuring they still receive their grants.

“We encourage you to open a bank account, and if you choose not to open a bank account or not to use your bank account to receive this cash grant, you’re still going to get your cash grant, because a subsequent phase is going to be rolled out to address those people who don’t have bank accounts,” he affirmed.

He stressed that the government remains at the service to the people and is committed to improving the quality at which services are delivered.



Finance Minister, Dr Ashni Singh



Mustapha eyes corn, soybeans industry

As part of the Government’s ongoing efforts to monitor and support large-scale agricultural investments, Agriculture Minister Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha met on Tuesday with representatives of the consortium spearheading the commercial cultivation of corn and soya beans in Guyana to receive an update on cultivation and production activities.

During the engagement, the consortium provided an overview of the initiative, noting that current production levels indicate Guyana is moving closer to becoming self-sufficient and a net exporter of both commodities.

The initiative forms a central component of Guyana’s strategy to reduce dependence on imported corn and soya, which are vital inputs for livestock and poultry feed.

His Excellency, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali has underscored that the development of a robust corn and soya industry will position Guyana not only to achieve self-sufficiency, but also to become a major supplier within the Caribbean, supporting regional food security and reducing vulnerability to external supply shocks.



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2PM-8PM	ELYSIUM THE PALMS EDITION
-----7PM	EL DORADO STINGINGNETTLES
	FRI 22ND MAY
4PM-12AM	CHAMPAGNE LIFE
5PM-1AM	SOCA SUPPER
-----5PM	FLORAL MEETS THIRST
11PM - 6AM	XTRA STINK X DUTTY JOUVERT
	SAT 23RD MAY
-----8PM	CHUTNEY RAVE
-----8PM	MAGNUM BADERATION

	SUN 24TH MAY
3AM-8AM	DAY BREAK
10AM-4PM	JAMMERS ON THE WATER
-----2PM	SOCA AND WINE - REFLECTIONS
	MON 25TH MAY
-----10AM	FIRESIDE GRILL BRUNCH
-----4PM	KABISA KOOLOUT
-----6PM	SIMPLICITY IN THE SKY
-----9PM	SHELL DOWN MONDAY
	TUE 26TH MAY
-----10AM	INDEPENDENCE ROAD PARADE
	DIAMOND AMPLIFIED
-----9PM	SUNDANCE
	WED 27TH MAY
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