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Chief Magistrate sets Mohameds' extradition case for September

AFTER a five-month interruption, the extradition case involving Opposition Leader Azruddin Mohamed and his father, businessman Nazar Mohamed, is set to resume before the Georgetown Magistrates' Court.

The matter will return for hearings in early September following a Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) ruling that cleared the way for the proceedings to continue.

Chief Magistrate Judy Latchman has scheduled the matter for September 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10 after the region's highest court lifted the stay that had brought the proceedings to a halt in March while it considered the Mohameds' legal challenge.



Ali: African ancestors' resilience built the pillars of modern Guyana

PRESIDENT Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has paid tribute to the resistance, resolve, and resilience of Guyana's African ancestors in a message marking Emancipation Day 2026, declaring that their contributions "are the very pillars upon which modern Guyana stands."

The President reflected on the horrors of the Transatlantic trade in captive Africans and the brutal system of slavery, describing it as "the most abominable system ever known to mankind." Yet, he said, enslaved Africans never surrendered their dignity, humanity, or pursuit of freedom.

President Ali noted that when emancipation finally came, the formerly enslaved did not meet their freedom with bitterness. Instead, they looked forward, determined to build a better future for generations to come.

He said freed men and women pooled resources to purchase land and establish villages that became, in his words, "the bedrock of resilience, the crucibles of culture, the seedbeds of nationhood." Their achievements across multiple spheres: education that sharpened minds, entrepreneurship that built enterprises, agriculture that fed the nation, and mining that unearthed gold, bauxite and diamonds to fuel national progress. Their influence, he added, extended into sport, the arts, politics and the professions.

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Scarborough's Centenary Hospital

New Emergency Department being built at Centenary Hospital

By Milan Maharaj
LJI REPORTER

The government of Ontario has commenced groundbreaking for a new emergency department for Centenary Hospital at Scarborough Health Network.

This is set to be the first phase in a major hospital redevelopment effort that will seek to enhance access to emergency services within one of the fastest-growing regions in the province.

The Provincial authorities note that the new Northpine Emergency Department will seek to enhance capacity, improve healthcare facilities and cut down wait times as the population of Scarborough keeps on growing.

This will form part of the province's efforts towards hospital infrastructure development geared towards meeting rising demands in health services.

As per the government, the redevelopment efforts will incorporate a bigger and more advanced emergency department that seeks to enhance patient experience, as well as facilities for healthcare professionals through updated treatment areas and equipment. It will contain additional spaces for treatment, immediate care cubicles, short-stay beds and specialized care areas.

According to officials, the new program will bring about a new emergency care model whereby physicians can be able to see patients earlier in their visit, hence starting the assessment process much faster. Scarborough Health Network says that such an approach will help in improving patient flow and decreasing time spent by patients seeking emergency care.

The new emergency department is part of the "Build It Forward" redevelopment plan of Scarborough Health Network, which involves substantial investment in the hospitals' facilities. This larger redevelopment initiative seeks to revamp aging infrastructures while at the same time increasing capacity in order to meet the demands of a growing and more diverse community.

Scarborough Health Network runs three hospitals including Centenary, General and Birchmount that offer emergency care services, surgical services, specialty programs, and community-based healthcare services.

However, representatives of the province argue that the emergency departments in the province of Ontario still see an increase in the number of patients due to growth in the community and higher demand for health services. The redevelopment of the hospitals comes after the previous provincial investments made by the government in the hospitals of the Scarborough Health Network, including investments in new patient beds and expansion of major hospitals announced within recent years. The officials from the government argue that those investments are made according to the long-term strategy of Ontario.

The health authorities have been very positive about the start of construction of the development. This is because such redevelopment will ensure the provision of modern facilities for both the patients and staff members.

The new emergency department is likely to come with state-of-the-art infection control mechanisms and advanced facilities for patients' treatment. This will enable the hospital to cope with increasing demands in an effective way.

Construction is now underway, with planning continuing throughout the various phases of the redevelopment project. While officials have not announced a final completion date, the province says the new emergency department represents another step toward expanding access to high-quality health care for residents of Scarborough and the surrounding communities.

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FIVE-MEMBER INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION BEGINS SEARCH FOR ANSWERS IN MV BARIMA TRAGEDY

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President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali with members of the MV Barima Commission of Inquiry following their swearing-in at State House. From left: Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, SC; Commissioners Dr Andrzej Jasionowski, Nyree Dawn Alfonso, Captain Hamada Fouda and Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Hayden Pritchard; President Ali; and Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips. Chair of the Commission, Justice Godfrey Smith, was sworn in virtually.



HEART INITIATIVE ACTIVATED AS PRESIDENT ALI LEADS NATIONAL SUPPORT EFFORT FOR MV BARIMA VICTIMS AND FAMILIES

PAGE 3



PUTTING CAPITAL WITHIN REACH - GUYANA DEVELOPMENT BANK SIGNED INTO LAW TO RESHAPE ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

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GUYANESE CELEBRATE FREEDOM, HERITAGE AND PROGRESS

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GUYANA LAUNCHES LARGEST MARITIME SEARCH IN NATION'S HISTORY AFTER MV BARIMA DISASTER



Joint services, volunteers and regional partners work together in the ongoing search and recovery mission

The sinking of the MV Barima triggered what officials have described as one of the largest and most complex maritime search, rescue and recovery operations ever undertaken in Guyana, mobilising military assets, aircraft, international dive teams, private operators, fisherfolk and hundreds of personnel in an unprecedented national response.

The passenger vessel departed from the Transport and Harbours Department Goods Wharf at 3:20 p.m. on July 19 bound for Port Kaituma, Region One with passengers and cargo onboard.

Just after 10:43 p.m., a distress signal was received by the Air Traffic Control Centre at Timehri. Within minutes, a chain of emergency responses was activated.

By 11:03 p.m., the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) had been alerted and immediately informed the Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard, Guyana Police Force and other agencies. Eight minutes later, the Coast Guard deployed its first response vessel from its Pomeroy

floating base while the National Search and Rescue Committee was convened shortly after.

Additional Coast Guard vessels were dispatched from Ruimveldt as the search intensified through the

At its peak, 19 state and private-sector vessels, aircraft, helicopters, sonar systems, seabed-mapping technology and specialist dive teams were deployed across an ever-expanding search



Joint services, volunteers and regional partners work together in the ongoing search and recovery mission

night.

The first survivors were rescued at 2:27 a.m. By dawn, dozens more had been pulled from the water in a dramatic race against time.

A total of 77 persons were rescued, although one survivor later succumbed.

What began as an urgent rescue operation quickly evolved into a massive recovery mission spanning sea and air.

zone stretching from the Essequibo coast to Waini Point.

A major breakthrough came on July 20 when search teams located the MV Barima resting on the seabed approximately nine miles offshore at Devonshire Castle Flats.

The discovery was made possible through information provided by local fisherfolk, coordinated efforts by ExxonMobil Guyana,

VESHI, Sealand Surveys' vessel Gilligan Island and the use of advanced sonar technology.

International support soon arrived.

France deployed 15 specialist divers while Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil contributed vessels, personnel and technical expertise to strengthen recovery efforts.

By July 22, assets from the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard and the Brazilian Navy had joined Guyanese responders in the operational area, transforming the mission into a multinational effort.

Dive teams from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, France and Brazil conducted

continuous underwater operations in challenging conditions, often working up to 10 hours daily.

Lieutenant (N) Tyler Faraz, Commanding Officer of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard vessel TTS Speyside, said divers were operating at depths of 10 to 12 metres in near-zero visibility.

"Many divers are unable to see their hands in front of their face because of the mud and sediment on the seabed," he explained.

Despite the difficult conditions, dive teams maintained a constant rotation throughout daylight hours while vessels continued extensive coastal searches for victims and possible survivors.

Technical specialists simultaneously assessed the vessel to determine the safest method of righting it and improving access to trapped sections of the wreck.



Officials and emergency responders coordinate search, rescue and recovery efforts from the Charity Command Centre

The operation kilometres, aerial continued around surveillance remained the clock under the active and divers had coordination of the completed dozens of Maritime Rescue underwater missions.

The operation became a defining symbol of national resilience and international cooperation, bringing together military personnel, emergency responders, private operators, volunteers, fisherfolk and foreign partners in a collective effort to respond to one of Guyana's darkest maritime tragedies.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips said every available resource would be deployed and every reasonable effort exhausted.

By July 24, search effort had expanded beyond 1,000 square



Officials and emergency responders coordinate search, rescue and recovery efforts from the Charity Command Centre



Officials and emergency responders coordinate search, rescue and recovery efforts from the Charity Command Centre



Officials and emergency responders coordinate search, rescue and recovery efforts from the Charity Command Centre

HEART INITIATIVE ACTIVATED AS PRESIDENT ALI LEADS NATIONAL SUPPORT EFFORT FOR MV BARIMA VICTIMS AND FAMILIES



President Ali offers comfort and support to the affected families.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has activated the HEART Initiative — Hope, Empathy, Aid, Resilience and Trust — as a national framework to provide continued support and guidance to survivors and families affected by the MV Barima tragedy. The initiative forms part of the Government’s wider humanitarian response, bringing together psychosocial and trauma counselling, social services, humanitarian assistance, spiritual support and other interventions aimed at helping families navigate the difficult period of grief and recovery. According to the Office of the President, HEART is designed to provide sustained assistance to affected families, ensuring that support extends beyond the immediate aftermath of the tragedy. The initiative is not intended as compensation, but as a demonstration of the nation’s commitment to standing alongside survivors and bereaved families for as long as necessary. Following the incident, President Ali directed a full-scale national response, with government agencies, emergency responders, healthcare workers and social services personnel mobilised to provide assistance. Emergency Family Assistance Centres were established at the Umana Yana in Georgetown, Port Kaituma and Mabaruma to provide information, counselling and support services for affected families. The Ministry of Human Services and Social Security deployed teams of psychologists, social workers, child protection officers and counsellors throughout Region One communities, with each affected family assigned a dedicated social worker as part of the psychosocial support effort. “We are working around the clock, so, when one staff goes, another staff comes,” Senior Probation and Social Services Officer Sharon Wright explained, highlighting the continued presence of support teams on the ground. President Ali personally visited Port Kaituma, Mabaruma and Charity to meet survivors and relatives of those missing, offering reassurance that every effort would be made in the search, recovery and support operations. The Head of State remained in Charity for several days, receiving updates from officials coordinating activities at the wreck site and ensuring families were kept informed. Government agencies also facilitated transportation for relatives, accommodation, medical assistance, counselling services, food hampers and care packages, while arrangements were established for the dignified recovery, identification and return of victims. The Ministry of Health and the Guyana Police Force implemented joint protocols for the recovery, transportation, storage and identification of bodies, with medical teams at Suddie Hospital assisting families throughout the identification process. As the nation continues to mourn, the HEART Initiative represents a long-term commitment to helping survivors and bereaved families rebuild, heal and move forward with dignity and support.



Officials and emergency responders coordinate search, rescue and recovery efforts from the Charity Command Centre



Officials and emergency responders coordinate search, rescue and recovery efforts from the Charity Command Centre

THREE DAYS OF MOURNING UNITE NATION AFTER MV BARIMA TRAGEDY



Honouring the victims of the MV Barima tragedy

The tragedy of the MV Barima transformed into a moment of collective national reflection as President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali declared three days of national mourning and Guyanese across the country united to honour the lives lost. The period of mourning began with a National Day of Prayer and Reflection, marked by a national service at the Kingston Seawall. Additional Nights of Reflection and Prayer were held in Port Kaituma and Mabaruma, communities deeply affected by the tragedy. Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips said that while no words could erase the pain being experienced by families, the nation would remain beside them through the difficult days ahead. Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), France, China and the European Union (EU) also extended condolences while commending the ongoing search and recovery efforts. United States Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau expressed sympathy to the people of Guyana, saying Americans shared in the country's grief and mourning. France not only offered condolences but also deployed specialist divers to support recovery operations at the wreck site. China expressed its readiness to assist Guyana, while Canada, the UK and the EU praised the dedication of responders and pledged continued solidarity. Across Guyana, volunteers, healthcare workers, religious organisations, private businesses, fisherfolk and community groups rallied to support affected families. From emergency shelters and counselling services to food distribution and transportation assistance, citizens from all walks of life contributed to the national response. Even as search and recovery operations continued, the outpouring of compassion underscored a powerful truth; the tragedy was not borne by affected families alone. It was carried by an entire nation. The response to the MV Barima disaster became more than a recovery effort. It evolved into a defining demonstration of national unity, compassion and resilience as Guyana confronted one of the darkest maritime tragedies in its history together.

The tragedy resonated far beyond Guyana's shores. Messages of sympathy, support and solidarity poured in from governments, regional organisations and international partners across the world. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) paid tribute to the courage and dedication of rescue teams and reaffirmed its support for Guyana and the affected families. The United States, Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), France, China and the European Union (EU) also extended condolences while commending the ongoing search and recovery efforts. United States Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau expressed sympathy to the people of Guyana, saying Americans shared in the country's grief and mourning. France not only offered condolences but also deployed specialist divers to support recovery operations at the wreck site. China expressed its readiness to assist Guyana, while Canada, the UK and the EU praised the dedication of responders and pledged continued solidarity. Across Guyana, volunteers, healthcare workers, religious organisations, private businesses, fisherfolk and community groups rallied to support affected families. From emergency shelters and counselling services to food distribution and transportation assistance, citizens from all walks of life contributed to the national response. Even as search and recovery operations continued, the outpouring of compassion underscored a powerful truth; the tragedy was not borne by affected families alone. It was carried by an entire nation. The response to the MV Barima disaster became more than a recovery effort. It evolved into a defining demonstration of national unity, compassion and resilience as Guyana confronted one of the darkest maritime tragedies in its history together.



Honouring the victims of the MV Barima tragedy



The U.S. Embassy is deeply saddened by the sinking of the MV Barima. Our heartfelt condolences go to the families of those on board — passengers and crew alike. We honor the courage of every rescuer who answered the call in the dark hours of the night and who continue their mission today. We pray for the safe recovery of all those still missing.

Messages of sympathy and offers of assistance poured in from across the Caribbean and beyond

divers to support recovery operations at the wreck site. China expressed its readiness to assist Guyana, while Canada, the UK and the EU praised the dedication of responders and pledged continued solidarity. Across Guyana, volunteers, healthcare workers, religious organisations, private businesses, fisherfolk and community groups rallied to support affected families. From emergency shelters and counselling services to food distribution and transportation assistance, citizens from all walks of life contributed to the national response. Even as search and recovery operations continued, the outpouring of compassion underscored a powerful truth; the tragedy was not borne by affected families alone. It was carried by an entire nation. The response to the MV Barima disaster became more than a recovery effort. It evolved into a defining demonstration of national unity, compassion and resilience as Guyana confronted one of the darkest maritime tragedies in its history together.

FIVE-MEMBER INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION BEGINS SEARCH FOR ANSWERS IN MV BARIMA TRAGEDY

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has sworn in an independent international Commission of Inquiry (CoI) to investigate the circumstances surrounding the capsizing and sinking of the MV Barima, one of the deadliest maritime disasters in Guyana's history.

The five-member commission has been mandated to establish the full facts surrounding the tragedy, determine whether negligence or systemic failures contributed to the sinking, and recommend measures to strengthen Guyana's maritime safety and emergency response systems.

The panel is chaired by former Belizean Justice of Appeal Godfrey Smith and comprises internationally recognised experts in maritime engineering, maritime law, vessel safety, casualty investigations and maritime security.

Chief Magistrate Judy Latchman administered the oath of office to the commissioners during a ceremony at State House in Georgetown. Justice Smith participated virtually.

Addressing the commissioners, President Ali said

the inquiry has been entrusted with a broad and far-reaching mandate designed to examine every relevant aspect of the disaster.

"The families who have suffered unimaginable loss await these answers. Future

behind the disaster.

Among the areas to be examined are passenger boarding procedures, cargo loading practices, conditions aboard the vessel, compliance with maritime regulations, operational standards

maintenance history, seaworthiness and operational condition will come under close scrutiny, along with the impact of weather conditions, tides, currents, navigation systems and communication

"The Government will provide the Commission with the administrative, technical, financial and logistical support necessary for the effective discharge of its mandate," he said.

The President noted that the Terms of Reference were deliberately designed to be comprehensive and searching, requiring investigators not only to establish what happened but also to identify shortcomings and recommend reforms necessary to strengthen the country's maritime transportation system.

He further underscored the independence of the inquiry, noting that the composition of the Commission reflects the highest standards of professionalism, expertise and impartiality.

"Collectively, they possess expertise in law, marine engineering, maritime operations, maritime regulation and disaster investigation. Their experience, competence and integrity will enhance the professionalism, depth and credibility of this inquiry," President Ali said.

He added that the Commission would determine its own

procedures and conduct its work guided solely by the evidence and the law.

In addition to Justice Smith, the Commission comprises Captain Hamada Fouda of Jamaica, maritime legal specialist Nyree Dawn Alfonso of Trinidad and Tobago, marine engineering expert Dr Andrzej Jasionowski of Poland and Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Hayden Pritchard of Trinidad and Tobago.

Upon completion of its work, the Commission is expected to submit findings and recommendations aimed at improving maritime safety, strengthening oversight and emergency preparedness, and reducing the likelihood of similar tragedies in the future.

The establishment of the inquiry marks a significant step in the national effort to uncover the truth behind the MV Barima disaster and provide answers to families, survivors and a nation still grappling with the loss.

This version is structured as a straight hard-news lead story: strongest news at the top, tighter paragraphs, less repetition, stronger attribution, and a sharper focus on accountability, investigation, and national significance.



Presidential Commission of Inquiry (COI)

generations deserve the assurance that every lesson that can be learned from this tragedy will indeed be learned," the President stated.

He emphasised that Guyana deserves a full, fair and impartial account of what occurred, why it occurred and what must be done to ensure a similar tragedy never happens again.

The Commission's Terms of Reference require investigators to reconstruct the sequence of events leading up to the sinking of the vessel on July 18, 2026, and determine the causes and contributing factors

and emergency protocols.

The inquiry will also undertake a comprehensive review of the search, rescue and recovery operations mounted in the aftermath of the tragedy, assessing whether the response by agencies and stakeholders was coordinated, timely and effective.

Investigators have also been tasked with determining whether acts of negligence, misconduct, dereliction of duty or institutional failures contributed to the loss of lives.

The vessel's

procedures on the events leading up to the sinking.

Attention will also focus on the qualifications and conduct of the vessel's master and crew, adherence to safety regulations, passenger management systems, manifests, overcrowding concerns, cargo storage arrangements and the availability and use of life-saving equipment.

President Ali assured the commissioners that all resources required to facilitate a thorough, professional and independent investigation would be made available.

HIGHEST REGIONAL COURT REJECTS MOHAMEDS' CHALLENGE, ALLOWS EXTRADITION PROCESS TO RESUME

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) on Wednesday, July 29 dismissed an appeal brought by Opposition Leader Azzrudin Mohamed and his father, Nazar Mohamed, removing a key legal obstacle and clearing the way for extradition proceedings against them to continue in Guyana.

In a significant ruling, the region's highest court granted special leave to appeal but ultimately rejected the substantive appeal, leaving intact the decisions of the lower courts.

The judgment also lifts the interim stay on the extradition proceedings that the CCJ had imposed



CCJ rules in government's favour against Mohamed

on March 25, 2026, effectively returning the matter to Guyana's courts for continuation.

Delivering the court's decision, CCJ's President Justice Adrian Saunders said the stay would be removed, allowing the extradition process to proceed.

The court was particularly critical of the arguments advanced by the second appellant, finding that he had not approached the court with "clean hands." According to the judgment, the appellant had himself contributed to the political exchanges and verbal attacks he later complained about, having previously launched attacks on

government officials and participated in the public discourse.

The CCJ also ruled that there would be no order as to costs before the court. However, the issue of costs in the lower courts remains unresolved and will be addressed through further judicial directions, likely beginning with a case management conference.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlal, SC, welcomed the ruling, describing it as a comprehensive judgment that would contribute significantly to Caribbean jurisprudence in areas including extradition, bias and public law.

PARLIAMENT ACTS

- NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PASSES KEY BILLS, DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT MEASURES

'NO STONE WILL BE LEFT UNTURNED' IN MV BARIMA INVESTIGATION- PRESIDENT ALI



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips providing the chronological account of the Government's response following the MV Barima tragedy.

The Government has commissioned an independent international investigation into the

sinking of the MV Barima, with President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali telling the National Assembly that every effort will be made to uncover the truth behind one of Guyana's worst maritime disasters.

In a message to Parliament read by Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandall, SC, under Article 67(2) of the Constitution, President Ali declared that the Government would leave "no stone unturned" in determining what caused the tragedy and

ensuring it is never repeated.

"The people of Guyana deserve answers. Families deserve answers. History demands answers," the President said.

He announced that an independent Commission of Inquiry comprising internationally respected experts in maritime safety, accident investigation and disaster management will examine the circumstances surrounding the sinking.

"The truth must be established. The lessons must be learned. The reforms must be implemented. And where failures, negligence or wrongdoing are identified, accountability must follow," the President stated.

President Ali also detailed the unprecedented national search and recovery operation that mobilised the Guyana Defence Force, Guyana Police Force, regional authorities, volunteers, faith-based

organisations, private sector partners and international allies.

He thanked every person and organisation involved, describing the response as a reflection of "the extraordinary character of the Guyanese people."

To families still awaiting news of loved ones, he pledged that authorities "shall not rest until every possible effort has been exhausted" to account for every passenger aboard the vessel.

The President also noted the launch of the HEART Initiative, which will provide financial, humanitarian, psychosocial and counselling support to

survivors and bereaved families.

Appealing for national unity, President Ali urged Guyanese not to allow the tragedy to become a source of division.

"In the face of this heart-wrenching tragedy, our response must be greater unity, not greater division," he said.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips also presented Parliament with a detailed chronology of the Government's response, confirming that 76 people were rescued, 73 bodies recovered and that recovery operations remain ongoing.

\$54.9B SUPPLEMENTARY SPENDING PACKAGE APPROVED

The National Assembly approved a \$54.9 billion supplementary spending package, clearing the way for billions of dollars in additional investments in housing, energy, roads, agriculture and public infrastructure.

Senior Minister in the

Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, piloted Supplementary Financial Paper No. 1 of 2026 through the Assembly July 27.

The largest allocation, \$19.1 billion, will support the transformational Gas-to-

Energy Project, expected to halve electricity costs while delivering reliable power to households and businesses.

The sum of \$17.5 billion will expand the Government's housing programme as it works toward its target of constructing 40,000

homes during the current term.

The package also provides \$8.5 billion for roads, including \$2.5 billion for hinterland road works, while agriculture will receive \$8.3 billion, including funding for GUYSUCO, the Guyana Rice Development Board and the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority.

Additional

allocations include funding for coastal airstrip maintenance and expanded water infrastructure.

The supplementary financing will support the Government's continued investments in infrastructure, energy diversification, agriculture and housing aimed at improving living standards nationwide.



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh.



Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation, Zulfikar Ally.

The National Assembly passed the Guyana Development Bank Bill 2026,

paving the way for the establishment of a new state-backed financial institution that will provide interest-free, collateral-free loans of up to \$3 million to small and medium-sized businesses.

Piloting the legislation, Dr Ashni Singh said the bank addresses one of the biggest obstacles facing entrepreneurs, limited access to affordable financing.

"This bill seeks to establish a

GUYANA DEVELOPMENT BANK BILL PASSED; SMES TO ACCESS INTEREST-FREE FINANCING

development bank that will provide loans... up to \$3 million, free of interest and free of collateral," Dr Singh told the Assembly.

He said the institution will help unlock entrepreneurship during Guyana's rapid economic expansion by supporting businesses that are often unable to secure financing through

traditional commercial banks.

Supporting the bill, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha said the bank will create new opportunities for farmers, fisherfolk, agro-processors and rural entrepreneurs, while Tourism, Industry and Commerce Minister Susan Rodrigues said it would remove longstanding barriers

preventing many Guyanese from turning business ideas into successful enterprises.

Government MP Alister Charlie said the legislation will also expand opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs and hinterland communities.

The legislation forms part of the Government's wider strategy to broaden access to



Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha.

finance, stimulate private enterprise and diversify the economy.

NEW FINANCING AGREEMENTS ADVANCE AIRPORT, HOSPITAL AND CLIMATE INVESTMENTS

The Government has tabled a series of international financing agreements in the National Assembly to advance major national projects, including a new arrivals terminal at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport,

the new Bartica Hospital, expanded water infrastructure and environmental reforms.

Dr Singh presented the agreements, outlining a financing strategy designed to support critical infrastructure while

maintaining fiscal sustainability.

Among the agreements is a €61.43 million UK Export Finance-backed facility for the construction of a new arrivals terminal at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport

(CJIA), significantly expanding the country's international gateway.

Parliament also received details of financing for the new Bartica Hospital, a US\$50 million Caribbean Development Bank environmental

policy loan supporting the LCDS 2030, and a concessional Japanese loan to improve climate-resilient water infrastructure in Demerara-Mahaica.

The Government also tabled amendments to existing financing

arrangements for the New Demerara River Bridge and the Gas-to-Energy Project to improve financing terms and reduce costs.

Dr Singh noted that Guyana's public debt remains among the most sustainable in the region, with the IMF continuing to classify the country as facing a low risk of debt distress.

SEXUAL OFFENCES BILL SENT TO COMMITTEE; NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER DATABASE PROPOSED



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud.

A bill proposing some of the most significant reforms to Guyana's sexual offences legislation in more than a decade has been referred to a Special Select Committee for detailed examination by the National Assembly.

Presented by Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr Vindhya Persaud, the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill 2026 seeks to strengthen protections for children and vulnerable adults while creating a National Sex Offender Database.

Describing the legislation as "a moral and legal obligation", Dr Persaud said the amendments address critical gaps identified in the Sexual Offences Act following an extensive nationwide review.

"It is time to close those gaps with robust, modern and uncompromising measures," she told Parliament.

Among the proposed reforms are stronger victim privacy protections, updated legal definitions, provisions covering digital evidence, greater accountability for reporting by healthcare workers and police, and the establishment of a National Sexual Offences Task Force.

The legislation was developed following consultations involving legal and judicial stakeholders, constitutional commissions, civil society organisations, faith-based groups, Indigenous leaders and members of the disciplined services.

The bill now moves to a Special Select Committee for clause-by-clause review before returning to the Assembly.

NRF REPORT TABLED; FUND NEARS US\$4B

Guyana's Natural Resource Fund has grown to nearly US\$4 billion, as the Government tabled the Fund's 2025 Annual Report and the latest petroleum revenue updates in the National Assembly.

Dr Singh presented the report in keeping with the Natural Resource Fund Act, alongside the latest notification covering petroleum revenues deposited between April and June this year.

The report outlines the continued oversight of the Fund by its Board of Directors, Investment Committee and Public Accountability and Oversight Committee, reinforcing the Government's transparency framework for managing oil revenues.

Dr Singh also acknowledged the work of the Fund's oversight bodies in safeguarding one of Guyana's most significant national assets.

The Assembly also received the 2025 report of the Public Accountability and Oversight Committee.

The Government noted that the International Monetary Fund has commended Guyana for strengthening governance of the Natural Resource Fund and improving fiscal transparency through regular reporting to Parliament and publication of petroleum revenue receipts.



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh.

HIRE PURCHASE LAW AMENDED TO SPEED UP CONSUMER JUSTICE

The National Assembly passed amendments to Guyana's Hire Purchase Act aimed at removing legal uncertainty and making it easier for consumers and businesses to resolve disputes.

Presenting the legislation, Minister Rodrigues said the amendment clarifies that matters arising under the Hire Purchase Act can be heard in either the High Court or a Magistrate's Court, regardless of the value of the claim.

She said the reform removes procedural ambiguity that has created delays and unnecessary legal obstacles.

"For many citizens and small businesses, access to justice is not only about legal rights but also about practicality, affordability and proximity," the minister told Parliament.

The amendment allows cases to be heard closer to where parties live or conduct business, reducing legal costs while improving efficiency.

The legislation builds on the Hire Purchase Act 2022, which strengthened consumer protections by requiring notice and, in some cases, court approval before goods purchased on credit can be repossessed.



Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues.

NEW LAW REINFORCES CERTAINTY FOR LENDERS AND INVESTORS

The National Assembly has passed amendments to Guyana's Security Interests in Movable Property Act, strengthening the country's legal framework for secured lending while protecting businesses and financial institutions from disruptions caused by technical failures.

Presenting the legislation, Minister Rodrigues said the amendments address challenges that arose following the introduction of the electronic registration system under the 2024 Act.

The bill allows security interests to be registered manually whenever the electronic registry is unavailable, ensuring commercial transactions continue uninterrupted.

It also validates registrations and administrative actions completed in good faith during periods when the electronic system experienced operational challenges, preserving the legal standing of those transactions.

The legislation further extends the transitional period for registering security interests created under previous laws, preventing lenders and borrowers from being disadvantaged.

Attorney General Nandlall described the legislation as **"a timely intervention"**, saying it strengthens legal certainty and reinforces Guyana's framework for secured commercial transactions.



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

PUTTING CAPITAL WITHIN REACH

- GUYANA DEVELOPMENT BANK SIGNED INTO LAW TO RESHAPE ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES



President Dr Irfaan Ali signs the Guyana Development Bank Act

The dream of owning a business in Guyana has often encountered one major obstacle: access to affordable financing.

A farmer seeking to expand production, a young entrepreneur with a promising idea but no collateral, a community group hoping to transform local resources into sustainable income, or a small company ready to grow but unable to secure capital have all faced the same challenge. For many, the problem has never been a lack of ambition or innovation, but rather the difficulty of accessing the financial support needed to turn ideas into reality.

That reality could soon begin to change.

The passage of the Guyana Development Bank Bill in the National Assembly on July 27, followed by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali's assent to the legislation on July 30, marks a significant step in expanding opportunities for entrepreneurship and business development across Guyana.

The Act establishes the legal and institutional framework for the Guyana Development Bank, a new financial institution designed to increase access to financing, provide business support services, and stimulate investment in key productive sectors. With the legislation now in force, preparations can advance for the rollout of the bank's flagship programmes aimed at supporting small and medium-sized enterprises.

Under the proposed model, eligible businesses will be able to access zero-interest,

zero-collateral loans of up to \$3 million. Beyond financing, entrepreneurs will also benefit from mentorship, training and technical support intended to help businesses become sustainable and competitive.

Piloting the legislation in the National Assembly, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh, described small and medium-sized enterprises as the backbone of the national economy.

"Small and medium-sized businesses have been the lifeblood of the Guyanese economy since time immemorial," he



Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation, Zulfikar Ally interacts with a resident of Linden during an outreach about the Guyana Development Bank

told the House, noting that these enterprises have long provided livelihoods for families and communities throughout the country.

The Development

At the heart of the initiative is a simple principle: a good business idea should not fail because an entrepreneur lacks traditional collateral.

The bank is expected to create new opportunities for entrepreneurs in sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing, tourism, services and technology. These are areas identified as critical to diversifying the economy, creating jobs and strengthening local production.

One of the institution's distinctive features will be its emphasis on collaboration through a cluster-development approach. Rather than focusing solely on individual businesses,



the bank will encourage groups of entrepreneurs, producers and communities to work together to access larger-scale financing and develop stronger

communities could develop tourism projects, manufacturing facilities or value-added enterprises that generate jobs and retain more economic benefits locally.

President Ali has repeatedly highlighted the importance of collective ownership and community-based development as pathways to sustainable economic growth.

For many communities, particularly in rural and hinterland areas, this approach could unlock opportunities that were previously beyond reach. Groups that may have struggled to secure financing individually could now have a pathway to establishing shared enterprises capable of generating income, creating employment and strengthening local economies.

Expanding Access to Opportunity

The Development Bank is also expected to support groups that have traditionally faced greater challenges in accessing financing, including women, young people, persons with disabilities and entrepreneurs in remote communities.

Its creation builds on a wider series of government initiatives aimed at broadening economic participation and supporting local enterprise. Programmes implemented through the Small Business Bureau and partnerships with financial institutions have already helped many businesses access financing and training opportunities.

The Government has also pointed to the success of the Local Content framework, which has enabled more than 1,200 Guyanese businesses to benefit from opportunities linked to the country's rapidly expanding oil and gas sector.

The Development Bank is intended to build on that momentum by extending support to a wider cross-section of the economy and ensuring that entrepreneurship

remains accessible to citizens regardless of location or background.

Beyond Financing

While access to

members with expertise in areas such as finance, economics, banking and law.

The framework includes provisions



The GDB is designed to help entrepreneurs grow sustainable enterprises

capital is expected to be one of the institution's most visible functions, officials have emphasised that its role extends much further.

Many small businesses face challenges not only in obtaining financing but also in areas such as financial management, marketing, record-keeping and long-term planning. To address these gaps, the bank will provide mentorship, training and business advisory services designed to strengthen entrepreneurial capacity and improve the prospects for long-term success.

As businesses grow, beneficiaries will also be able to access additional financing of up to \$7 million through co-financing arrangements with financial institutions at favourable interest rates.

The objective is to create a pathway that allows entrepreneurs to move from start-up ventures to stronger, more competitive businesses capable of expanding operations, creating jobs and contributing to national development.

Building Trust Through Accountability

The legislation also establishes governance and oversight mechanisms intended to ensure transparency, accountability and long-term sustainability.

The bank will be managed by a Board of Directors comprising between five and nine

for conflict-of-interest safeguards, financial reporting requirements and oversight by the Auditor General. Annual reports on the institution's performance will also be presented to the National Assembly and made available to the public.

These measures are intended to ensure that the bank operates responsibly while maintaining public confidence in its programmes and services.

A Future Powered by Local Enterprise

The creation of the Guyana Development Bank comes at a time of unprecedented economic expansion and growing efforts to ensure that the benefits of development reach citizens in every region.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, the institution represents more than access to a loan. It offers the possibility of transforming an idea into a viable business, expanding an existing enterprise, creating employment and generating new sources of income.

For communities, it presents an opportunity to develop local industries and build stronger economic foundations. For the wider economy, it represents another step toward broadening participation in growth and encouraging greater local ownership of development.

Turning Ideas into Enterprises

PRESIDENT TAPS CARIBBEAN LEGAL EXPERT TO DEVELOP FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY MV BARIMA TRAGEDY



Some of the rescued passengers and crew

The Government is moving to formalise financial assistance for survivors of the MV *Barima* tragedy and the families of those who lost their lives, with President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announcing that a distinguished Caribbean jurist has been engaged to develop the framework for that support.

In a message to the National Assembly, read by Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, President Ali disclosed that he has invited former Attorney General and Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Belize, Eamon Harrison Courtenay, to

assist in developing the modalities for financial assistance to survivors and bereaved families.

The President stressed that the initiative should not be interpreted as compensation, but as part of the Government's broader humanitarian response to one of the darkest tragedies in Guyana's history.

"The Government remains fully committed to providing sustained material, financial, psychological and emotional support to the families of those who perished and to those who survived," President Ali said.

"Our responsibility to these families does not end with the recovery operation. It will continue for as long as necessary."

The announcement builds on the recently launched HEART Initiative, through which survivors and affected families will receive humanitarian assistance, including psychosocial support, trauma counselling, social services, spiritual guidance and other interventions aimed at helping them recover from the devastating loss.

President Ali said that while the country's immediate focus had been the unprecedented search, rescue and

recovery operation, attention must now also turn to supporting families as they begin rebuilding their lives.

The President described the sinking of the MV *Barima* as a tragedy that has **"shaken our Republic to its very foundations,"** noting that no words could adequately capture the grief experienced by families and communities across Guyana.

He reaffirmed that the Government will continue standing with survivors and bereaved families long after the recovery efforts conclude, ensuring they do not face the burden of loss alone.



Some of the rescued passengers and crew

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT ACTIVATED, TOUGHER FERRY OVERSIGHT BEGINS AFTER MV BARIMA DISASTER

The Government has moved swiftly to safeguard transport links to Region One (Barima-Waini) while strengthening safety and compliance measures across Guyana's ferry network in the wake of the MV *Barima* tragedy.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips announced that contingency arrangements are now in place to ensure the uninterrupted movement of passengers, cargo and essential supplies to the North West District, while authorities tighten enforcement of ferry operating procedures nationwide.



The MA Lisha remains in operation

Speaking on the *Jump Start* radio programme, the Prime Minister assured residents that maritime services to Region One remain operational despite the loss of the MV *Barima*.

The MV *Ma Lisha* continues to operate between Georgetown and Kumaka, where passengers and cargo are transferred to smaller vessels for onward transport to Port Kaituma.

"There is still a service to Port Kaituma," the Prime Minister said, explaining that the temporary arrangement was designed to maintain connectivity while longer-term measures are implemented.

To further secure the supply chain, the Ministry of Public Works has introduced a dedicated cargo service using an open barge to transport goods and essential supplies to Port Kaituma free of

charge. The interim measure is intended to minimise disruptions to businesses and residents while normal shipping operations remain affected.

At the same time, the Government has begun tightening compliance with standard operating procedures throughout the ferry service following confirmation that a number of passengers boarded the MV *Barima* without tickets.

Prime Minister Phillips disclosed that an overnight review of CCTV footage established that 179 people were aboard the vessel when it sank, significantly more than reflected on the official passenger manifest.

He said the discrepancy will form a key part of the investigation by the independent Commission of Inquiry, which will examine how failures in passenger registration and ticketing occurred at the

Transport and Harbours Department.

Pending the outcome of the inquiry, authorities have already begun enforcing stricter adherence to existing ticketing, boarding and passenger management procedures to ensure manifests accurately record every person travelling aboard ferries.

The Prime Minister stressed that accurate passenger manifests are essential for effective emergency response operations, particularly search and rescue efforts, and said the Government is committed to ensuring similar lapses are never repeated while maintaining reliable transport services for Region One residents.

THIRTY-ONE HINTERLAND COMMUNITIES ACROSS REGIONS EIGHT AND NINE ARE SET TO TAKE GREATER CONTROL OF THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AS THE GOVERNMENT ROLLS OUT A \$930 MILLION INVESTMENT IN VILLAGE-LED ROAD AND BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

\$930M INFRASTRUCTURE PUSH PUTS HINTERLAND VILLAGES IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT



The funding was unlocked through Community Participation Contracts (CPCs), with each village receiving approximately \$30 million to execute priority works identified by residents themselves.

The contracts, signed at the Ministry of Public Works'

boardroom, follow Vice President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo's engagements with village leaders during the National Toshaos Council (NTC) Conference 2026, where communities outlined their most urgent development needs.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Works Vladim Persaud said the initiative represents a shift toward empowering communities to deliver larger infrastructure

projects while improving access, mobility and emergency response capabilities.

Beyond the \$930 million in contracts, Government will invest an additional \$1 billion in equipment across seven clusters in Region Eight and \$50 million in technical training to build local capacity for more complex road maintenance projects.

A road safety programme, including the installation of reflective signs along roads and bridges, will also be introduced and expanded to other hinterland regions, including Regions One, Seven and Nine.

The initiative, being advanced through collaboration between the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, is designed to create employment, strengthen village capacity and ensure infrastructure investments are driven by the priorities of the communities they serve.



Thirty-one village leaders receive \$30M maintenance contract

UNSUNG HEROES OF THE MV BARIMA SEARCH - FISHERMEN WHO ANSWERED THE CALL

As Guyana continues to mourn the lives lost in the MV Barima tragedy, a group of fishermen and volunteer boat operators have emerged as quiet heroes of one of the country's largest maritime search and recovery operations.

Leaving behind their livelihoods, families and the safety of shore, these men ventured into dangerous waters guided by experience, instinct and a determination to help those in need.

When the MV Barima capsized off Guyana's coast on July 18, local mariners were among the first to respond, joining the Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard and other emergency teams in the desperate search for survivors and missing passengers.

For them, the mission was not about recognition, it was about saving lives.



Haresh Singh

'Every second mattered'

When news of the disaster broke shortly after midnight, veteran

Essequibo fisherman Haresh Singh did not hesitate.

A call from Minister within the Ministry of Public Works Madanlall Ramraj and Region Two Chairman Devin Mohan set the rescue effort in motion.

Within minutes, Singh had contacted fellow fishermen, including his brother Deonarine, and prepared to head out.

Knowing that every second could mean the difference between life and death, the fishermen cut through the ropes securing their boats rather than waste valuable time untying them.

They pushed into rough seas and near-total darkness, heading towards the area where the passenger vessel was believed to have gone down.

Their knowledge of the waters off Hackney became critical.

Along the way, they encountered a Guyana Defence Force (GDF) Coast Guard vessel searching for the disaster area. The fishermen guided the crew through the unfamiliar waters and agreed that the military vessel would signal once it reached the location.

That signal eventually came.

In the darkness, a flashing locator light caught their attention.

Following it, the fishermen discovered a life raft carrying survivors who had spent

hours drifting helplessly at sea.

They pulled 11 people aboard, including children who were exhausted, dehydrated and traumatised after surviving the disaster.

But the rescue quickly became a race against time.

Three children lost consciousness and required urgent medical attention. Faced with a difficult decision, the fishermen abandoned their search for additional survivors and rushed back to shore to get those already rescued to safety.

They believe others may have still been in the surrounding waters, but the condition of the children forced them to prioritise the lives in their care.

The experience left a deep emotional impact.

Listening to parents



Deonarine Singh

describe how they became separated from their children and loved ones strengthened the fishermen's determination to continue assisting in the

recovery effort.

"I am sure if I had a chance to continue I would have found others," Deonarine said.

Even after that first rescue mission, the fishermen returned to sea, not only to assist search teams but also to help locate the vessel and provide answers for families still waiting for closure.

A duty to help

For veteran boat captain Randolph Ammon, better known along the Pomeroon River as "Spragga", responding to the tragedy was never a question.

"It was tough, it was difficult, but I had to make it because I need to save lives," Ammon said.

With more than 30 years navigating Guyana's waterways, Ammon received the call for assistance in the early hours following the tragedy.

Despite the risks, he answered.

"Helping is a grateful thing, and God blessed the way we could help. From day one until now, I continue to help because that's what we have to do," he said.

Ammon became part of the wider recovery operation, helping locate victims, marking recovery areas and transporting the deceased back to Port Kaituma so families could receive their loved

ones.

Local knowledge, national response

For fisherman Pramlall Singh, known as "Fineman", the waters surrounding the tragedy were familiar.

Having spent more than two decades fishing along Guyana's northwestern coastline, Singh understood the challenges of the area



Pramlall Singh-Fisherman

and joined the search as soon as he learned of the sinking.

Singh and his crew travelled through the night, first searching for survivors and later assisting teams around the wreck site.

One moment remains permanently etched in his memory.

While returning from the search area, Singh spotted a young victim at sea. He immediately alerted the GDF Coast Guard, allowing personnel to reach the location and conduct the recovery.

The actions of Singh, Ammon and other volunteer mariners demonstrated

the importance of local knowledge and community support during a national crisis.

Their efforts became part of a coordinated response involving the GDF Coast Guard, specialised divers, medical personnel, social workers, counsellors and other emergency agencies.

As search and recovery operations continue, these fishermen remain committed to helping bring answers and closure to affected families.

For Ammon, the mission was never about



Randolph Ammon-Boat operator

being called a hero.

"I know nothing can replace a life, but if we could help even one family find their loved one, then everything we went through was worth it," he said.

In the aftermath of the MV Barima tragedy, these ordinary citizens showed that courage is not only found among those wearing uniforms. Sometimes, it is found in fishermen who leave the safety of shore, enter uncertain waters and answer when their country needs them most.

GOV'T LAUNCHES MARITIME SAFETY REVIEW



Guyana launches maritime safety overhaul

In a major step to strengthen safety standards across Guyana's marine transport sector, the government has launched a comprehensive maritime safety review following the MV Barima tragedy.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has established a three-member Safety and Compliance Audit Team to conduct an in-depth assessment of vessel operations, regulatory systems and compliance with existing maritime safety requirements.

The expert team comprises former Director-General of the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD), Dr Ivor English; former Harbour Master of Guyana, Mr Volton Skeete; and Marine Officer and Surveyor of Ships, Captain Joseph Lewis.

Together, the members bring decades of technical expertise and practical experience in maritime administration, vessel inspection, ship surveying and marine operations.

The team has been

tasked with identifying gaps within the current maritime safety framework and providing recommendations to strengthen regulatory oversight, improve enforcement mechanisms and enhance accountability among vessels, operators and regulatory authorities.

The review will also examine whether existing safety measures are being effectively implemented and determine areas where additional action may be required to ensure Guyana's maritime

sector meets the highest practicable standards.

The establishment of the audit team forms part of the government's continued response following the MV Barima tragedy, as efforts continue to improve passenger and crew safety while restoring confidence in marine transportation.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to taking all necessary measures to strengthen systems that protect lives on Guyana's waterways and ensure greater accountability throughout the sector.

INDIGENOUS LEADERS CONVENE WHILE GUYANA RESPONDS TO NATIONAL TRAGEDY



Government officials, Indigenous leaders engage at the National Toshihos Council Conference 2026

The National Toshihos Council (NTC) Conference 2026 opened on Monday, July 20, under circumstances unlike any in its history, as Indigenous leaders from across Guyana gathered while the nation continued to mourn the victims of the MV Barima tragedy.

What is traditionally a week of celebration, cultural showcase and policy engagement instead began with a subdued atmosphere of reflection and solidarity following the July 19 maritime disaster that claimed lives and affected families and communities across Region One.



Government officials, Indigenous leaders engage at the National Toshihos Council Conference 2026



Government officials, Indigenous leaders engage at the National Toshihos Council Conference 2026

In recognition of the tragedy, the Government postponed the conference's formal opening ceremony, allowing President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali to remain engaged with affected families and oversee national search, recovery and support efforts.

Despite the sombre circumstances, more than 200 village leaders assembled at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre for five days

of discussions aimed at shaping the next phase of development for Indigenous communities.

The conference, which concluded on Friday, July 24, remained the country's premier forum for direct engagement between village leaders, Cabinet ministers, government agencies and national institutions.

Addressing toshaos on the opening day, Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo acknowledged

the difficult national circumstances while emphasising the importance of continuing discussions on issues affecting Indigenous communities.

Throughout the week, village leaders raised concerns and proposals relating to infrastructure, housing, healthcare, education, employment, land development, agriculture and economic opportunities.

A central message emerging from the conference was that while significant investments have transformed services and infrastructure in hinterland communities over the past five years, the next phase of development must focus increasingly on creating sustainable economic opportunities.

Government officials outlined plans to strengthen village economies through expanded support for

agriculture, tourism, forestry, small businesses and community enterprises, while continuing investments in roads, schools, healthcare facilities, telecommunications and energy systems.

The discussions reflected a broader effort to ensure that Indigenous communities are positioned, not only as beneficiaries of development but as active partners in shaping Guyana's future.

As the conference progressed, tributes to the victims of the MV



Government officials, Indigenous leaders engage at the National Toshihos Council Conference 2026



Government officials, Indigenous leaders engage at the National Toshihos Council Conference 2026



Government officials, Indigenous leaders engage at the National Toshihos Council Conference 2026

for villages across the country.

The week ultimately reflected two defining realities facing the nation; a country

mourning a profound loss, and a commitment to continue advancing development for communities throughout Guyana.



Government officials, Indigenous leaders engage at the National Toshihos Council Conference 2026

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Frozen Ox Tail 冰鮮牛尾 Reg:\$9.99 899¢ lb	Pork Stomach 豬大肚 Reg:\$2.99 199¢ lb	Cow Tongue 牛舌 Reg:\$8.99 799¢ lb	Quail 鸚鵡 Reg:\$13.99 1299¢ pk

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Frozen Squid 冰鮮魷魚 Reg:\$7.99 699¢ lb	Frozen Fresh Head-On White Shrimp 冰鮮有頭南美白蝦 Reg:\$6.99 599¢ lb		

GUYANESE CELEBRATE FREE

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali joined hundreds of Guyanese at the National Park for the annual Emancipation Day celebrations, a vibrant showcase of African heritage, culture and resilience.

The President interacted with families, performers, artisans and exhibitors as patrons gathered to celebrate the enduring legacy of emancipation through music, dance, fashion, food and cultural displays. Minister within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Steven Jacobs, also participated in the observances.

In his Emancipation Day message, President Ali urged Guyanese to honour the sacrifices of their African ancestors by recommitting to unity, equality and shared prosperity. He called on citizens to continue building a nation grounded in mutual respect, peace and opportunity for all.

The celebration transformed the National Park into a colourful expression of culture and identity, bringing together generations of Guyanese in tribute to the struggles, achievements and contributions of African-Guyanese to the nation's development.



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2 ⁹⁹ each	3/1 ⁹⁹	1 ⁹⁹ each	1 ⁸⁹ each
 Nupak Jack Mackerel in Tomato Sauce 425 g	 Titus Sardines in Soybean Oil and Chili Pepper 125 g	 Grace Instant Oats 1 kg	 777 Traditional Basmati Rice 8 lbs
2 ²⁹ each	1 ⁶⁹ each	2/4 ⁹⁹	5 ⁹⁹ each
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GOV'T UNVEILS BILLIONS IN NEW INVESTMENTS FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



Scene from the National Toshao Conference (NTC) Conference 2026

Major investments in roads, housing, healthcare, energy, telecommunications and economic development were among the commitments announced during the NTC Conference as government officials described as the next phase of development for Indigenous communities.

Over five days of discussions from July 20–24, ministers and government agencies presented plans aimed at improving living standards while creating stronger and more sustainable village economies across the hinterland.

Among the most significant announcements was a decision to increase the ceiling for contracts directly awarded to villages from \$5 million to \$30 million, allowing communities to undertake larger projects and retain greater economic benefits.

Government also confirmed that \$10 billion has been allocated this year for hinterland road development, including continued work on the Moruca-to-Kwebanna road, upgrades to the Mabaruma-to-Wauna corridor and improvements to critical

road networks in Region Nine.

Air transportation infrastructure is also



His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali (second from left), along with former Presidents Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, Mr Donald Ramotar, and Mr Samuel Hinds

set for major upgrades under a \$4 billion programme targeting more than 30 hinterland



His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali (second from left), along with former Presidents Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, Mr Donald Ramotar, and Mr Samuel Hinds

airstrips, including facilities at Mabaruma and Port Kaituma.

Housing emerged

as another key focus area, with government announcing a \$3 billion initiative to support home construction and rehabilitation in Indigenous communities. The programme will be implemented through collaboration between the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and village councils.

Health care investments were also highlighted, including the expansion of telemedicine services from 130 sites to 200 by year-end and continued development of the Kato Regional Hospital,

One, Seven, Eight and Nine, supported by more than \$4.3 billion in investments over the past five years.

Connectivity also featured prominently in discussions. Through the National Data Management Authority, government plans to increase connected public facilities from 815 to more than 1,130 by 2030, while expanding ICT hubs, training programmes and digital services in remote communities.

A major emphasis throughout the conference was the creation of sustainable

which will provide specialist services, advanced diagnostics and emergency care for

economic opportunities.

Government announced new measures to expand honey production, livestock rearing and aquaculture projects, particularly in Regions One and Nine. Five excavators are already being used to construct fish ponds in Region Nine, while plans are underway to operationalise the Nappi hatchery and expand fingerling production.

Vice President Jagdeo also announced that Indigenous communities will receive an additional \$2.5 billion through the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 this year, bringing total village disbursements under the programme to approximately \$16.9 billion.

Officials said the overall objective is to move beyond infrastructure-led development and build stronger village economies capable of generating jobs, increasing incomes and creating long-term opportunities for future generations.



His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali (second from left), along with former Presidents Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, Mr Donald Ramotar, and Mr Samuel Hinds



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His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali (second from left), along with former Presidents Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, Mr Donald Ramotar, and Mr Samuel Hinds



Scene from the National Toshao Conference (NTC) Conference 2026

The announcements reinforced a central message of NTC Conference 2026, that Indigenous communities will continue to play a leading role in Guyana's development while benefiting from expanded investment, greater decision-making authority and new economic opportunities.



His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali (second from left), along with former Presidents Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, Mr Donald Ramotar, and Mr Samuel Hinds

Development bank’s success must be measured by jobs and opportunities, not loans

THE success of the newly passed Guyana Development Bank legislation should not be measured by the amount of money the institution lends, but by the jobs it creates, the businesses it helps to thrive and the opportunities it generates for Guyanese across the country, Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation Zulfikar Ally has said.

Ally made this known while delivering remarks recently, during which he argued that the institution’s true value would lie in its impact on people’s lives and its ability to broaden participation in the country’s rapidly expanding economy.

“The Guyana Development Bank should not be judged only by how much money it disburses,” Ally said. “It is important to consider the impact of those disbursements that it will produce.”

According to the minister, those outcomes should include the number of jobs created, the extent to which financing reaches businesses operating outside the traditional coastal communities and how many enterprises remain successful after receiving support.

He said the legislation comes at a critical time for Guyana, noting that the country is experiencing unprecedented economic growth fuelled by major investments, infrastructural development and the emergence of new industries.



Minister of Public Service Zulfikar Ally

However, he cautioned that a financing gap still exists, one that could prevent many Guyanese from participating fully in the country’s economic transformation.

“Guyana has the physical space. It has the infrastructure agenda. It has rising household income. It has tens of thousands of newly registered businesses. It has an emerging entrepreneurial class, but it also has a financing gap that, if left unresolved, will limit who participates in the country’s transformation,” Ally said.

He explained that the development bank is intended to close that gap by pro-

viding access to financing for groups that have traditionally faced challenges securing capital, including first-time borrowers, women entrepreneurs, young people, rural producers and residents of hinterland communities.

The minister also said the institution would create opportunities for persons with disabilities seeking to establish businesses, farmers looking to invest in agro-processing ventures, single mothers hoping to expand their enterprises and families striving to build businesses of their own.

Framing the legislation as more than

the creation of another financial institution, Ally said the government was establishing a disciplined and accountable development-finance platform capable of supporting enterprise development while promoting shared prosperity.

He said that since taking office in 2020, the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) administration has overseen one of the most significant periods of economic expansion in Guyana’s history through prudent financial management and sustained investment in social sectors.

As the economy continues to grow, he said, the government has a responsibility to ensure that growth is inclusive and translates into improved livelihoods, expanded opportunities and wealth creation across all communities.

“The purpose of this Bill is not simply to create a bank,” Ally told the House. “It is to create a disciplined, accountable development-finance platform that allows Guyanese enterprises to participate in the next stage of national growth.”

He added that if properly governed and rigorously managed, the development bank would finance not only businesses, but also strengthen what he described as “the social contract of shared prosperity” by ensuring that more Guyanese benefit from the country’s economic progress.

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Guyana's High Commissioner to India, Dharamkumar Seeraj (l)

Guyana, India talk biodiversity

GUYANA is exploring opportunities to strengthen international cooperation on biodiversity conservation through potential engagement with the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), following discussions between Guyana's High Commissioner to India, Dharamkumar Seeraj, and the alliance's Director General, Shri S.P. Yadav.

The discussions took place during a courtesy visit by Yadav to the Guyana High Commission in New Delhi, where High Commissioner Seeraj was accompanied by Counsellor Mrs Ronalda Edwards-Horatio.

The meeting focused on Guyana's possible involvement in the IBCA and areas for closer collaboration in wildlife and biodiversity conservation.

The IBCA is a flagship global initiative of the Government of India that brings together countries within the natural ranges of the world's seven big cat species — the lion, tiger, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar and puma. The alliance seeks to advance conservation through international cooperation, knowledge sharing, capacity building

and mutual support.

During the engagement, High Commissioner Seeraj highlighted Guyana's Global Biodiversity Alliance, noting that the two initiatives share a common vision and have complementary objectives aimed at encouraging collective action to protect the world's natural heritage.

He underscored Guyana's position that sustainable development and environmental conservation are mutually reinforcing, with effective conservation measures contributing to stronger ecosystems, improved livelihoods, greater resilience and global efforts to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

Guyana, which is home to extensive forests and a wide range of wildlife, has continued to promote international cooperation as part of its broader environmental and sustainable development agenda.

The meeting reaffirmed the importance of global partnerships in safeguarding biodiversity and advancing a more sustainable and resilient future.

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SCAN ME

GUYANA'S ECONOMY SURGES 19%, OUTLOOK REMAINS HIGHLY FAVOURABLE - IMF

Guyana's economy remains one of the fastest-growing in the world, recording more than 19 per cent growth in 2025 and maintaining a trajectory that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) says is **"highly favourable."**

The assessment came at the conclusion of the IMF's 2026 Article IV Consultation, during which the Fund engaged government officials, private sector representatives, labour organisations and other stakeholders.

According to the IMF, Guyana's economic expansion continues



The One Guyana FPSO

to be driven by strong performance in both the oil and non-oil sectors. Oil production surpassed 900,000 barrels per day by the end of 2025, representing a 35 per cent increase over the

previous year, while the non-oil economy grew by approximately 14 per cent, led by construction, agriculture, mining and manufacturing. The Fund noted that Guyana has

averaged nearly 40 per cent annual growth over 2023 and 2024, underscoring the scale of the country's economic transformation. The IMF also highlighted

improvements in the labour market, with unemployment falling to 6.2 per cent by the end of 2025, while inflation remained relatively contained despite global food and energy price pressures.

Commending the Government's economic stewardship, the IMF said prudent macroeconomic policies continue to support growth and pointed to the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030 as an important framework for diversification, resilience and sustainability. The report noted

that rising oil revenues strengthened Guyana's fiscal position, financed major investments in infrastructure, education and healthcare, and supported continued savings in the Natural Resource Fund.

Looking ahead, the IMF projects continued increases in oil production and average non-oil growth of about seven per cent annually over the next five years, while reaffirming that Guyana remains at low risk of debt distress and is well positioned for sustained long-term growth.

GUYANA'S CAROLYN RODRIGUES-BIRKETT LAYS OUT VISION TO LEAD UNITED NATIONS



Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett

Guyana's candidate for United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, has outlined a bold vision for global leadership, pledging to strengthen multilateralism, advance UN reform and ensure developing countries receive greater support in addressing today's challenges.

Speaking during an interview with *UN Insider*, Ambassador Rodrigues-Birkett said

the United Nations remains an indispensable institution despite growing geopolitical tensions, conflicts and humanitarian crises worldwide.

She said the organisation must become more efficient, effective and responsive to the evolving needs of member states while maintaining its central role in promoting peace, development and cooperation.

If elected,

Rodrigues-Birkett said her immediate priorities would include building a strong leadership team, confronting escalating global conflicts, responding to humanitarian emergencies and improving access to development financing for vulnerable nations.

She also highlighted the importance of continued UN reform, stronger diplomatic engagement to resolve conflicts and

expanded South-South cooperation to create more inclusive pathways for development.

The Guyanese diplomat said the election of the first female United Nations Secretary-General would represent a historic milestone, demonstrating that long-standing barriers can be overcome and inspiring women and girls worldwide.

The next UN Secretary-General is expected to be appointed by the General Assembly in 2027, following a recommendation from the Security Council.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR FACES NEW SAFETY PUSH



Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith

The Ministry of Labour and Manpower Planning is intensifying efforts to improve workplace safety standards across Guyana's construction sector with the continuation of its nationwide **"Putting Safety First in the Construction Sector"** campaign.

The latest phase of the initiative brought

together employers, contractors, supervisors and workers from Region Four for a safety seminar aimed at strengthening awareness, improving compliance and promoting a culture where protecting lives on the job becomes a shared responsibility.

Held at the Police Officers' Mess Annexe in Georgetown, the seminar forms part of

the ministry's region-by-region approach to addressing workplace safety challenges through education before enforcement.

Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning Keoma Griffith told participants that the campaign was created to confront gaps in Guyana's safety culture and ensure stakeholders understand that safety cannot be treated as an afterthought.

"Safety is everybody's business," the minister stressed, noting that the initiative seeks not only to raise awareness but also to assess safety practices across regions and develop targeted interventions.

He urged contractors, supervisors and workers to become advocates

for safer workplaces by promoting compliance with occupational safety and health standards.

The minister also highlighted the dangers associated with alcohol and drug use on worksites, reminding participants that maintaining a safe working environment requires discipline and responsibility from everyone.

Following the completion of the awareness campaign, the ministry will begin targeted inspections of construction sites to determine compliance with occupational safety and health regulations.

The initiative will later expand into other high-risk sectors, including mining and agriculture, as the government works to

strengthen national workplace safety standards.

Minister Griffith said the ultimate goal is to create a lasting shift in attitudes where employers and workers recognise that safety is

not just a regulation, but a fundamental responsibility.

"Together, we can all benefit from a country where safety is everyone's priority," he said.



Participants at the seminar

Guyana’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, has emerged as the overwhelming favourite in a post-event poll conducted following the United Nations’ (UN) public town hall for candidates seeking to become the organisation’s next secretary-general.

The virtual forum, hosted by the Office of the President of the UN General Assembly in partnership with Bloomberg, brought together member states, UN observers, civil society representatives and UN staff to hear directly from the six officially nominated candidates competing

GUYANA’S CAROLYN RODRIGUES-BIRKETT DOMINATES UN SECRETARY-GENERAL POLL

for the world’s most influential diplomatic position.

When participants were asked which candidate was best positioned to lead the UN’s ambitious “UN80” reform agenda, Rodrigues-Birkett secured a commanding 46 per cent of the vote, more than triple the support received by her nearest competitor.

Former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet placed second with 14 per cent, followed by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Secretary-



Guyana’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett.

General Rebeca Grynspan with 13 per cent. Former President of the UN General Assembly Maria Fernanda Espinosa garnered 10 per cent, former Senegalese President Macky Sall received nine per cent, while International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi

secured eight per cent.

Rodrigues-Birkett’s strong showing was repeated in a second survey measuring which candidate delivered the most compelling presentation during the town hall.

She captured an impressive 49 per cent of the vote, finishing far ahead of Grynspan, who received 14 per cent. Espinosa earned 10 per cent, while Bachelet, Grossi and Sall each received nine per cent.

The results, while unofficial and not part of the formal selection process, provide a significant indication

of how stakeholders and observers viewed the candidates during one of the campaign’s most prominent public engagements.

The race to succeed the current UN secretary-general will ultimately be decided through recommendations from the UN Security Council and approval by the 193-member UN General Assembly. However, the latest polling places Rodrigues-Birkett firmly at the centre of the conversation as the campaign for the organisation’s top post intensifies.

PM PHILLIPS URGES CARIBBEAN TO MODERNISE ELECTRICITY NETWORKS



The CARILEC Engineering and Procurement Conference 2026

Caribbean countries must urgently modernise their electricity systems, strengthen procurement practices and build resilient energy networks capable of supporting economic growth and withstanding future shocks, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark Phillips has warned.

Addressing the opening of the Caribbean Electric Utility Services

Corporation (CARILEC) Engineering and Procurement Conference and Exhibition 2026 at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown, Prime Minister Phillips said the decisions being made by governments, utilities and industry leaders today will determine the region’s development trajectory for decades.

He stressed that electricity is no longer

simply a utility service but the backbone of modern economies, powering critical sectors including manufacturing, healthcare, education, transportation, digital services and investment.

“The Caribbean must modernise its grids, the Caribbean must procure smarter, and the Caribbean must build systems that can withstand shocks while supporting growth,” he said.

Against the backdrop of Guyana’s rapid economic expansion, the Prime Minister said the country is pursuing an ambitious energy

transformation agenda aimed not only at meeting rising electricity demand but staying ahead of it.

He highlighted the need for advanced systems, including smart substations, automated networks, advanced metering infrastructure, real-time monitoring, stronger cybersecurity, predictive maintenance, artificial intelligence-assisted operations and greater integration of renewable energy resources.

Prime Minister Phillips also outlined Guyana’s strategy to diversify its energy mix, pointing to the Gas-to-Energy Project as a major step in improving



The CARILEC Engineering and Procurement Conference 2026

reliability, reducing dependence on imported fuel and adding 300 megawatts of new generating capacity.

However, he emphasised that natural gas represents a transitional phase, with Guyana’s long-term energy future expected to include hydropower, utility-scale solar, battery storage and other clean energy technologies, including the proposed Amelia Falls Hydropower Project.

He reaffirmed Guyana’s commitment to regional cooperation through CARILEC, noting that stronger collaboration among Caribbean utilities can improve technical standards, procurement systems and knowledge-sharing.

The Prime Minister urged delegates to use the conference to forge partnerships and develop practical solutions for a modern, sustainable and future-ready Caribbean energy sector.

GUYANA WINS BID TO HOST CARIFTA GAMES 2027



Guyanese athlete Tianna Springer securing a gold medal at the CARIFTA Games in Grenada.

Guyana has secured the right to host the prestigious CARIFTA Games in 2027, marking another historic first for the country and underscoring its growing reputation as a premier destination for major regional sporting events.

The announcement was made by the North American, Central American and Caribbean

Athletic Association (NACAC), following an intervention by CARICOM Heads of Government to safeguard the future of the region’s flagship junior athletics championship. Guyana will host the 2027 edition, while Barbados has been selected to stage the games in 2028.

The decision represents a major vote

of confidence in Guyana’s rapidly expanding sports sector and the substantial investments made in modern sporting infrastructure in recent years.



The Bayroc National Stadium.

The successful bid reflects Guyana’s transformation into a country capable of staging competitions at

the highest level. New and upgraded facilities, improved transportation links and a growing hospitality industry have collectively strengthened the nation’s ability to

accommodate elite athletes, officials and thousands of visitors.

The achievement also signals how far



Team Guyana at the 53rd CARIFTA Games held in Grenada.

Guyana has progressed in sports development. Investments in internationally compliant facilities have enhanced training opportunities for local athletes while positioning the country as an attractive venue for regional championships.

Hosting CARIFTA 2027 will place Guyana at the centre

of Caribbean athletics and deliver a powerful boost to sports tourism, regional visibility and national pride. For the first time in the championship’s history, the Caribbean’s brightest young athletes will compete on Guyanese soil in what promises to be a landmark moment for the nation.

'WHEN COMMUNITIES HURT, FAITH MUST STAND STRONG' - PM PHILLIPS SALUTES WOMEN'S ROLE IN HEALING



The 42nd General Conference of the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union

At a time when Guyana continues to mourn the lives lost in the MV Barima tragedy, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips has called on Christian women across the Caribbean to continue using their faith, compassion and leadership to strengthen families and support those facing difficult moments.

Addressing the 42nd General Conference of the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union at the Ramada Princess Hotel under the theme, **"Living the Good News in Communities"** Prime Minister Phillips reflected on the nation's grief and the important role faith communities play during periods of loss. **"Our thoughts**

and prayers remain with every family whose life has been forever changed by this tragedy," he said.

The Prime Minister noted that moments of profound sorrow often bring communities closer together and remind people of the importance of family, faith and collective support. He said churches frequently become places of refuge, offering comfort, reassurance and practical assistance to families when they need it most.

He highlighted the work of congregations that continue supporting grieving families beyond moments of public attention, visiting those who have lost loved ones, providing meals, offering

prayers and helping children and families navigate difficult circumstances.

Much of that service, he noted, has historically been carried out by women.

"For generations, Christian women have helped to shape the moral life of our communities. They have nurtured families, taught children the values that sustain strong societies, cared for the elderly, encouraged young people and extended compassion to neighbours in need," Prime Minister Phillips said.

He urged delegates to continue embracing the values of love, humility, patience and service outlined in Romans 12, noting that faith is most powerful when demonstrated through action.

The Prime Minister also acknowledged the challenges confronting families and young people today, including changing social pressures and competing messages about identity, responsibility and relationships. He encouraged Christians to remain grounded in their



The 42nd General Conference of the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union

beliefs while engaging others with grace and compassion.

He emphasised that women continue to play a vital role as mentors, caregivers and community leaders, often providing support that goes unrecognised but leaves a lasting impact.

"Every woman who encourages another woman strengthens an individual, a family and, ultimately, the wider society," he said.

Prime Minister Phillips reaffirmed the Government's commitment to expanding opportunities for women through investments in

education, healthcare, entrepreneurship and skills training.

However, he cautioned that laws and policies alone cannot create caring societies.

"That work depends upon people, values and individuals who are prepared to care for others, especially when those persons are at their most vulnerable," he said.

He encouraged the conference participants to use their gathering to develop new ways to serve communities, strengthen families and inspire future generations of women to lead with purpose and faith.



The 42nd General Conference of the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union

SOUTH RUPUNUNI COMMUNITIES MOVE TO TAKE CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTS



Chief Executive Officer of the South Rupununi Development Inc Nicholas Fredericks.

Communities across the South Rupununi are moving to reclaim control of their development agenda with the formation of an Indigenous-led company designed to execute projects, create jobs and keep economic opportunities within the region.

The South Rupununi Development Inc.,

was established after community leaders recognised that major works were often being carried out by contractors from outside the district who did not always understand the realities, resources and priorities of the communities they served.

Chief Executive Officer of the company,

Nicholas Fredericks, said the initiative represents a shift towards communities becoming active participants, not just beneficiaries, of development.

"We notice that contracts were being done in our communities by persons who might not be so familiar with the community itself in terms of resources. So, we were thinking, how can we actually control some of these contracts, provide jobs for our people and have income coming into our communities?" Fredericks told the Department of Public Information (DPI) on the sidelines of the recently concluded National Toshaos Conference.

The company will undertake construction and infrastructure projects throughout the South Rupununi, with the aim of ensuring that development spending creates lasting benefits for the 21 communities within the district.

Fredericks said the initiative has received backing from President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and other government officials, with the company already receiving critical equipment, including a backhoe, dump truck and grader, to begin building its operational capacity.

The company achieved an early breakthrough during the National Toshaos Conference after securing its first contract to carry out remedial

road works, a milestone Fredericks described as a major step forward.

"It's something new. As I said, it's still a work in progress, but I know with the commitment of our government and Toshaos in the South Rupununi, we will make this company work," he said.

Beyond delivering projects, Fredericks said the venture is intended to create a sustainable economic model where Indigenous communities can generate revenue, develop technical skills and provide employment opportunities for residents.

He believes the approach could be replicated in other hinterland regions, including Regions One, Seven and Eight,

allowing communities across Guyana to establish their own development companies.

"We are talking about how they can organise themselves into such a construction company where they can have some income coming in, build their capacity in terms of construction and also have jobs provided for our Indigenous brothers and sisters back home," he said.

The company is currently being managed by a core executive drawn from several villages, with plans underway to recruit additional staff and strengthen its internal structure.

THE PEN THAT CHRONICLED THE CARIBBEAN IS SILENT - NATION MOURNS LITERARY GIANT DR IAN MCDONALD

The Caribbean has lost one of its most distinguished literary voices with the passing of Dr Ian McDonald, a poet, writer, cultural commentator and scholar whose words captured the beauty, struggles and spirit of the region.

President Dr Irfaan Ali joined the nation in mourning the loss of Dr McDonald, describing him as **“the Caribbean made flesh”** and a towering figure whose influence extended far beyond Guyana’s shores.

“Antigua’s blood ran in his veins, Trinidad cradled his first breath, Guyana claimed the fullness of his years, and the West Indies claimed his soul,” President Ali said in tribute to the celebrated writer.

For decades,

Dr McDonald’s pen chronicled the Caribbean experience, capturing its landscapes, people, passions and struggles. Through his poetry and prose, he celebrated the region’s flowers, trees, birds and natural beauty, while giving dignity to ordinary lives and honouring the achievements of Caribbean icons, particularly its legendary cricketers.

President Ali described him as **“a poet of rare grace, a scribe of eloquence, and a keeper of our fragile, fierce cultural flame.”**

Dr McDonald’s writing reflected the complexity of Caribbean life, weaving together themes of identity, resilience, hardship and hope. His work



President Dr Irfaan Ali joined the nation in mourning the loss of Dr McDonald.

demonstrated the power of language to preserve history, shape cultural consciousness and inspire generations.

Beyond his literary achievements, he became a respected voice encouraging Guyanese to embrace reading and literature through his long-running weekly columns. His reflections and recommendations introduced readers to writers, books and ideas that enriched the nation’s intellectual landscape.

Born in Trinidad on April 18, 1933, Dr McDonald proudly

described himself as “Antiguan by ancestry, Trinidadian by birth, Guyanese by adoption, and West Indian by conviction.” He later made Guyana his home, arriving in 1955 and dedicating decades of service to the country’s sugar industry.

He served as Director of Bookers, later becoming Director of the Guyana Sugar Industry and Chief Executive Officer of the Sugar Association of the Caribbean. He was also a gifted sportsman, representing and captaining Cambridge University, Guyana and the West Indies Davis Cup tennis teams, while maintaining a lifelong passion for cricket.

A prolific writer, Dr McDonald authored 11 books of poetry, the novel *The Hummingbird* *Tree*, which was adapted into a BBC drama, and edited major anthologies of West Indian writing.

President Ali said Dr McDonald’s passing comes at a difficult time for Guyana as the nation continues to grieve.

“At this time when grief drapes our nation, we need more than ever his words to steady us, to console us, to remind us that even in loss, there is the promise of renewal,” the President said.

As Guyana and the wider Caribbean remember Dr Ian McDonald, his voice may have fallen silent, but the legacy written through his words will endure.

The pen that chronicled the Caribbean has come to rest, but its story remains.

GPL, PACIFIC AND AURO POWER TEAM UP TO EXPLORE MAJOR ENERGY PROJECTS



MoU inked between GPL and Pacific and Auro Power Inc

Guyana’s electricity sector is set for further expansion and modernisation following a new partnership between the Guyana Power and Light Inc. (GPL) and Pacific and Auro Power Inc. aimed at identifying and developing future energy infrastructure projects.

The two entities have signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) establishing

a framework for collaboration on potential investments across the power sector.

The agreement, signed by GPL’s Head of the Executive Management Committee Kesh Nandlall, does not commit either party to financing or executing any specific project. Instead, it creates a pathway for jointly identifying priority initiatives, assessing their feasibility and preparing proposals for possible implementation.

The areas targeted under the partnership include transmission and distribution networks, substations, power generation, renewable energy projects, battery energy storage systems and wider grid modernisation efforts.

Each proposed project will undergo individual technical, financial, commercial and regulatory assessments before any decision is made to

proceed.

GPL said the partnership supports its ongoing efforts to strengthen Guyana’s electricity infrastructure through strategic collaborations that improve reliability, resilience and capacity.

The initiative also aligns with the government’s broader energy agenda of expanding and upgrading the national grid to support economic growth while advancing sustainable energy solutions.

WARRIORS RETAIN TITLE AS GSL FINAL BACKS MV BARIMA FAMILIES



Warriors lift GSL trophy

The ExxonMobil Guyana Global Super League (GSL) final delivered high drama on the field and a powerful show of national solidarity off it, as all proceeds from ticket sales were dedicated to

supporting educational and humanitarian relief efforts for families affected by the MV Barima tragedy.

The championship match, held on August 1 at the National Stadium, Providence, saw

defending champions Guyana Amazon Warriors edge the San Francisco Unicorns by six runs to retain the coveted T20 title.

After winning the toss and electing to bat, the Warriors found themselves in dire straits at 29-8 before recovering to post 85 all out in 18.5 overs. The Unicorns appeared poised for victory but were bowled out for 79, with Shimron Hetmyer producing a decisive direct hit to run out last man Callum Stow and seal a memorable win.

Beyond the cricket, however, the final carried

a deeper purpose.

The event brought together players, officials and supporters in tribute to those affected by the MV Barima tragedy of July 18, which claimed lives and left families across Guyana mourning while search and recovery efforts continue.

Former West Indies captain and GSL Chairman Sir Clive Lloyd said the tragedy has resonated deeply throughout the tournament.

“The MV Barima tragedy has deeply affected all of us here in Guyana, as well



GSL final gives back to MV Barima families

as the players and support staff visiting Guyana for the League,” Lloyd said.

He noted that the decision to dedicate proceeds from the final was intended to provide meaningful assistance to grieving families and affected communities.

The initiative builds on earlier contributions from Guyana Amazon Warriors players Gudakesh Motie and Rovman Powell, both of whom pledged their Player of the Match prize money to support relief efforts, reinforcing the tournament’s message of compassion, unity and national support.

HOUSE LOT BACKLOGS TO SHRINK AS NEW COMMUNITIES TAKE SHAPE ACROSS REGIONS TWO, THREE, FOUR AND SIX



Housing schemes are being established around the regions

For thousands of Guyanese families waiting for the opportunity to own a piece of land and build a home, the future is increasingly taking shape beyond the traditional housing corridors surrounding Georgetown.

As demand for housing continues to grow, particularly in Region Four, the government is opening new communities, expanding infrastructure networks and acquiring additional lands to create thousands of new opportunities for homeownership.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali recently outlined the scale of the challenge and the government's response during a live social media broadcast, describing housing as one of the country's fastest-growing areas of demand.

Region Four: Meeting the Greatest Demand

Region Four remains at the centre of Guyana's housing demand. At the end of December 2025, the region recorded

allocated, reducing the backlog to 48,806. A further 1,090 lots are available for distribution.

Despite ongoing allocations, demand continues to outpace supply. According to President Ali, the lands currently being acquired and prepared for development will only address about half of the existing backlog by the end of 2027.

"The amount of land being acquired in Region Four currently can only clear 50 per cent of this backlog by the end of 2027," the president explained.

To address the remaining demand, the government is pursuing a broader strategy that extends beyond traditional residential areas and focuses on developing new growth centres supported by modern transportation infrastructure.

A key component of that strategy is Silica City, the planned smart city along the Soesdyke-Linden corridor. Designed as a modern urban centre, Silica City will integrate residential communities with

The president noted that new highways and road networks are being constructed to support housing expansion along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway and in emerging communities beyond Georgetown. The aim is to ensure that new housing developments remain within reasonable commuting distance of the capital while creating room for long-term population growth and economic activity.

Region Three Emerging as a Major Housing Hub

The government's housing expansion strategy extends well beyond Region Four.

In Region Three

Those investments have supported the opening of new housing areas and the allocation of approximately 11,000 house lots.

Major developments are currently underway at Wales, Leonora, Groenveldt, Stewartville, Meten-Meer-Zorg, Anna Catherina and De Kinderen.

At Leonora and Groenveldt, construction is progressing on new three-bedroom concrete homes, while the government's Foundation Programme is assisting allottees in beginning construction on their own properties.

Expanding Opportunities Along the Essequibo Coast



New roads, new communities taking shape as housing drive expands

(Essequibo Islands-West Demerara), more than 26,000 new house lots are being developed as part of an ambitious plan to eliminate the region's housing backlog by 2027.

Since January, 329 house lots have been allocated, reducing the backlog to 10,819 applications. Another 526 lots are available for immediate distribution.

President Ali said Region Three will also play a crucial role in helping to accommodate housing demand from Region Four as transportation links continue to improve between the two regions.

"While this seems an adequate number to clear the Region Three backlog, we will have to also invest more in Region Three, where there is land available to help to clear the Region Four backlog," he stated.

Over the past five years, more than \$32 billion has been invested in housing infrastructure across the region.

Housing demand is also increasing in Region Two.

At the end of 2025, the region's housing backlog stood at 2,523 applications. Since the beginning of 2026, 192 house lots have been allocated, reducing the backlog to 2,331.

Another 314 lots are ready for distribution, while plans are already advancing for the development of an additional 2,625 lots.

To meet both current and future demand, the government is preparing to acquire additional private lands.

"We have to buy private lands, and I want people to understand this," President Ali said. **"In Region Two, the government will now have to acquire private lands to clear the backlog and also to cater for future demand."**

New housing schemes are continuing to emerge across the region, including developments at



An housing scheme being developed along the East Coast Demerara

Charity, Lima Sands, Onderneeming and Hoff Van Aurich.

The Ministry of Housing is also advancing moderate- and low-income housing projects while investing in supporting infrastructure such as roads, drainage systems and utilities to ensure communities are ready for occupation.

Region Six on Track to Clear Its Backlog

In Region Six, government officials are confident that the housing backlog can be eliminated by 2027.

The region recorded a backlog of 7,925 applications at the end of 2025. Since the beginning of this year, 292 house lots have been distributed, reducing the figure to 7,633.

An additional 1,100 lots are currently available for allocation, while 7,520 lots are under development to satisfy existing demand.

The president indicated that the pace of infrastructure development underway in the region will allow the backlog to be addressed within the next two years.

Even as work continues to meet current demand, preparations are already being made

to accommodate future growth. Discussions are ongoing regarding the acquisition of an additional 230 acres of land to support future housing expansion.

The latest initiatives build on years of investment in housing development throughout Region Six.

Thousands of house lots have already been allocated in communities such as Palmyra, Williamsburg/Hampshire, Ordinance Fortlands, Moleson Creek and Number 79 Village. These developments have been supported by investments in roads, drainage, water and electricity infrastructure to create fully serviced communities.

In addition to land allocation, the government has expanded access to turnkey and core homes, helping more families achieve homeownership while supporting the growth of sustainable communities throughout East Berbice-Corentyne.

Taken together, the developments in Regions Two, Three, Four and Six reflect a broader national effort to ensure that homeownership remains within reach for thousands of Guyanese families.



New roads, new communities taking shape as housing drive expands

a backlog of 50,375 housing applications, the largest in the country.

Since the start of 2026, some 1,569 house lots have already been

commercial, educational, recreational and business facilities. Once fully developed, it is expected to accommodate approximately 60,000 residents.



One of the housing schemes in Region Six

CELEBRATING LIVES LOST AND MEMORIES SHARED

Through tears, prayers and embraces, families laid their loved ones to rest. These moments capture the grief, courage and enduring love shown as communities came together to honour those lost in the MV Barima tragedy.



CELEBRATING LIVES LOST AND MEMORIES SHARED



GOV'T, PAHO/WHO PARTNER TO BUILD STRONGER DISEASE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM



Guyana strengthens pandemic preparedness through \$1.78M One Health Project

Guyana is moving to strengthen its ability to detect, prevent and respond to future public health threats through a major partnership aimed at upgrading laboratory systems, expanding disease surveillance and improving emergency preparedness. The Ministry of Health has signed a Service Delivery Agreement with the Pan American World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO) to advance the implementation of the Guyana One Health Project, which is supported through approximately US\$1.78 million in funding from the World Bank's Pandemic Fund Grant and International Development Association (IDA) Credit. The project will enhance Guyana's capacity to manage emerging and zoonotic diseases by strengthening coordination across human, animal and environmental health sectors. It will also support improvements in focus of the initiative, International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacities, including laboratory readiness, disease monitoring, emergency response systems and workforce development.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony said building human resource capacity will be a key focus of the initiative, noting that skilled personnel are essential to achieving the project's objectives.

“We will train and hire new people under this project because, to achieve what we intend to do, we currently do not have all the human resources that are required,” Minister Anthony said.

He added that while Guyana has made significant advances in strengthening its health system, continued investment is needed to create stronger and more resilient structures capable of responding to future challenges. “This technical component that we will be working on with PAHO is extremely important,” the Minister said, urging health officials and partner agencies to fully engage with the initiative. Through the

“This technical component that we will be working on with PAHO is extremely important,” the Minister said, urging health officials and partner agencies to fully engage with the initiative. Through the

Guyana strengthens pandemic preparedness through \$1.78M One Health Project

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agreement, PAHO/WHO will provide technical support in areas including laboratory strengthening, surveillance, emergency response, workforce training and coordination among agencies involved in One Health efforts.

The signing ceremony was attended by World Bank Country Office Representative Hubert Forrester, PAHO/WHO Representative for Guyana Dr Kim Eva Dickson, and Technical Lead for the Guyana One Health Project Dr Anand Persaud.

The Government said the project represents a critical step in strengthening national health security and protecting Guyana against evolving public health risks.

GUYANA WELCOMES RENEWED COLOMBIAN ENGAGEMENT AFTER RETURN OF RESIDENT EMBASSY



PM Phillips highlights expanding Guyana-Colombia partnership at 216th Independence Anniversary

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips has reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Colombia, as both countries highlighted expanding areas of cooperation during Colombia's 216th Independence Anniversary celebration held at the National Cultural Centre. Addressing the gathering, Prime Minister Phillips congratulated the Government and people of Colombia while welcoming progress made since the reopening of the Colombian Embassy in Georgetown and the appointment of a resident Ambassador one year ago. The Prime Minister said the restoration of Colombia's diplomatic presence has created new opportunities for collaboration between both countries, allowing for increased engagement among governments, institutions and the private sector.

presence has created new opportunities for collaboration between both countries, allowing for increased engagement among governments, institutions and the private sector.

“The opportunities for collaboration between Guyana and Colombia are many, and our Government remains committed to strengthening this relationship,” he said.

Guyana's Ambassador to Colombia, Graybern Livingston Forbes, said the return of Colombia's resident diplomatic presence after more than two decades marked

an important step in rebuilding trust and expanding cooperation. He said the focus moving forward must be on converting dialogue into practical programmes and creating shared opportunities through stronger economic, cultural and institutional ties.

Ambassador Forbes highlighted areas of cooperation including climate action, disaster management, agriculture, food security, regional peace and deeper engagement within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Over the past year, Guyana and

Colombia have advanced cooperation through agreements in security and investment. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Guyana Defence Force and Colombia's Ministry of National Defence aims to strengthen aerial surveillance and regional security, while another agreement between the Guyana Office for Investment and ProColombia supports investment opportunities in tourism, energy, infrastructure, technology, agribusiness and logistics.

Prime Minister Phillips noted that Guyana's economic growth continues to

create opportunities for greater South-South cooperation in trade, investment, renewable energy and technology.

He also highlighted direct air connectivity to Bogotá as a factor supporting increased travel and people-to-people exchanges between the two nations.

The anniversary programme opened with a moment of silence for those affected by the MV Barima tragedy. Ambassador Forbes extended Colombia's condolences and solidarity to Guyana.

The event concluded with a cultural presentation by the Sacred Voices of Colombia, showcasing the country's diverse heritage.



Community patrols get a mobility upgrade

Community Policing Groups (CPGs) in five regions are now better prepared to serve their communities after receiving new all-terrain vehicles to support patrols and emergency responses. The vehicles, valued at \$15 million, were provided by the Government through the Ministry of Home Affairs as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen community safety and improve access to hard-to-reach areas. During a handover ceremony at the Ministry's Brickdam

ATVS GIVE COMMUNITY POLICING GROUPS A BOOST IN REMOTE AREAS

office, Deputy Permanent Secretary Dwayne Adams presented five Kawasaki ATVs to CPGs from Mabaruma in Region One, Onderneeming Sand Pit in Region Two, Wakenaam (Zeelandia) in Region Three, Cotton Tree in Region Five, and Toka in Region Nine.

The new equipment will allow volunteers to move more easily through challenging terrain, conduct regular patrols, and respond more quickly when

communities need assistance.

Working alongside the Guyana Police Force and other local partners, CPG members continue to play an important role in crime prevention and promoting safer neighbourhoods.

The Ministry said the investment reflects the Government's continued commitment to supporting community-led approaches to public safety across Guyana.



Community patrols get a mobility upgrade

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OVER 300 PARTICIPANTS TAKE PART IN 2026 SPORTS SEMINAR TO STRENGTHEN GUYANA'S SPORTING SECTOR



Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport Charles Ramson

More than 300 athletes, coaches, administrators and sporting officials participated in the 2026 Sports Seminar aimed at strengthening leadership, governance and development across Guyana's sporting sector.

The two-day event, hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport in collaboration with Deakin University and the ExxonMobil Guyana Global Super League, was held under the theme, **"Strengthening Sport in Guyana Through Education."**

Delivering the feature address at the opening ceremony, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport Charles Ramson said the seminar forms part of the Government's wider effort to ensure athletes and sports professionals are equipped with the skills needed to succeed both on and off the field.

The Minister highlighted what he

described as significant growth in Guyana's sporting landscape over the past five years, including increased partnerships with local and international sporting organisations, greater participation in overseas competitions, and expanded investment in national

sporting programmes.

He noted that Guyana has achieved more international medals and championship titles during this period than any other time in the country's history, while pointing to initiatives such as local tournaments, national team development and

the ongoing expansion of the National Sports Academy.

Minister Ramson also disclosed that discussions are underway with English football club Manchester United to explore opportunities for Guyanese teams to train with the renowned organisation.

Encouraging participants to maximise the opportunity, the Minister said the knowledge gained during the seminar would contribute to their long-term growth and development.

Minister within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport Steven Jacobs urged

participants to actively engage in discussions, noting that the seminar was designed to promote dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

Meanwhile, ExxonMobil Guyana Global Super League Director Jamie Stewart said the tournament remains committed to supporting initiatives that create a lasting impact on sport beyond cricket.

The seminar featured presentations by Professor Pamm Phillips of Deakin University on sports governance, leadership, education and sustainable sports development.



Athletes and sports professionals at the seminar

\$8M INITIATIVE GIVES YOUNG GUYANESE PATHWAY FROM SKILLS TRAINING TO BUSINESS OWNERSHIP



65 students complete entrepreneurship programme, receive support to launch businesses

For more than 65 students from technical and vocational institutions across Guyana, an idea has moved one step closer to becoming a business reality.

The students

have completed the inaugural Tertiary Entrepreneurship Award Programme, an initiative designed to equip young Guyanese with the practical skills needed to create and manage successful

businesses.

Implemented by the Small Business Bureau (SBB) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the programme provided training in key areas including marketing, financial management, record-keeping, business proposal development and small business operations.

With an investment of more than \$8 million, participants developed business proposals and presented their ideas to a panel of judges. Fifteen of the most promising proposals were selected

to receive grants of up to \$400,000 to support the launch of their businesses.

At the award ceremony held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce Susan Rodrigues encouraged the graduates to approach entrepreneurship with commitment, discipline and resilience.

"Today doesn't end our journey with you. We're only just beginning. This is the start," the Minister told

participants, assuring them that continued training, mentorship and financing support would be available through government programmes.

Minister Rodrigues highlighted initiatives aimed at improving access to funding for entrepreneurs, including the Small Business Bureau's Loan Guarantee Programme, the Security Interest in Movable Property Act, and legislation establishing the Guyana Development Bank.

She said the new bank will provide

collateral-free, interest-free loans of up to \$3 million, opening more opportunities for entrepreneurs to grow their ventures.

The programme included students from the Government Technical Institute, Guyana Industrial Training Centre, Carnegie School of Home Economics, Mahaicony Technical and Vocational Training Centre, and Leonora Technical and Vocational Training Centre.

YARROW DAM RESIDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM BIG LIFT CLEANUP INITIATIVE

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Priya Manickchand conducted a walkthrough of Yarrow Dam and Sideline Dam, where residents highlighted long-standing drainage, sanitation, and infrastructure challenges affecting the communities.

The visit formed part of preparations for the Ministry's "Big Lift" waste collection exercise scheduled for Monday, August 3, while also providing an opportunity for officials



Residents raise drainage, garbage concerns during Minister Priya Manickchand's Yarrow Dam walkthrough

to engage directly with residents and assess pressing concerns.

During the walkthrough, residents pointed to severe drainage problems that have been worsened by recent heavy rainfall. They also raised concerns about non-functioning street lights and disruptions in garbage collection services, which they said have contributed to improper waste disposal and blocked drainage systems.

Responding to the concerns, Minister Manickchand assured residents that

immediate steps would be taken to address the garbage backlog. She said interim measures, including the deployment of a canter, would be implemented before the end of the week to clear accumulated waste.

"You will see changes. That's changing before this week is out," the Minister told residents.

Community members also expressed concern over the accumulation of bulky waste, including discarded furniture and appliances, which they said has created

breeding grounds for rodents and disease-carrying vectors.

To address the issue, residents were encouraged to participate in the upcoming Big Lift exercise. The initiative allows households to dispose of bulky waste items, including old furniture, mattresses, tyres, and appliances, free of charge.

The Ministry said the programme forms part of the Government's broader efforts to improve environmental management, reduce illegal dumping, and support cleaner, healthier communities through direct collaboration with residents.

Guyanese
DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 124

A NEW HOME FOR HOUSING

The Ministry of Housing is one step closer to relocating to its new headquarters at Plantation Houston, East Bank Demerara. Minister Collin Croal and Minister within the Ministry Vanessa Benn recently toured the modern facility, reviewing the final works ahead of occupancy. Designed to accommodate more than 400 staff members, the new headquarters will strengthen the Ministry's capacity to deliver efficient and improved services to the public.



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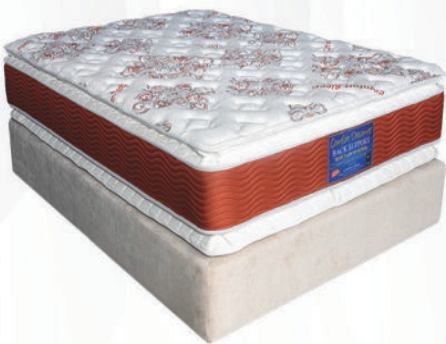
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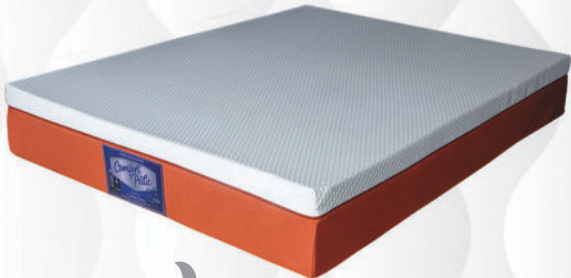
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‘National prosperity must translate into community prosperity’: President Ali

PRESIDENT Dr Irfaan Ali has rolled out an ambitious, nationwide village development programme built around four pillars: connectivity, community, commerce and care, that will touch every village in Guyana.

Addressing the beginning of the public consultations on this “Model Village initiative” in Leonora on the West Coast Demerara on Monday, Dr Ali told residents that national prosperity must translate into “community prosperity,” and warned that rapid growth must not turn villages into mere “dormitories” where people only sleep.

“If development does not reach the level of the village, then development has not fully reached the people,” Dr Ali said, adding: “We are launching a programme that would eventually touch every single village in our country.”

Citing the 2022 national census, the President noted that almost three out of every four Guyanese still reside in villages, even with the increase in the number of towns.

He described the coastland as “essentially a ribbon of villages, stretching from Crabwood Creek to Charity,” arguing that any serious development strategy must start where most people actually live.

Consultations continued throughout Monday at Zeelugt, Goed Fortuin, Parfait Harmonie and Tuschen, before concluding at the Pouderoyen Market.

The exercise moves to Region Four today, with sessions scheduled for Kaneville, Grove and Diamond along the East Bank of Demerara.

Dr Ali stressed that residents, not the government alone, must drive the design of their villages, since they understand local needs best.

“We are not here simply to tell you what the village should look like. We are here to listen, because the people who live in the village know that village better than anyone else,” he said, adding: “You know where the roads are needed. You know where the drainage problems are. You know where the children play. You know where the businesses are. You know where the heavy machinery creates problems. You know where lighting is needed. You know where the playground should be. You know where services are missing. You know what makes your village special.”

While the government will improve infrastructure, services and the policy environment, the President said villages should be seen as an “ecosystem” that produces food, skills, businesses, artisans and community leaders, not simply a cluster of houses.

He described the village as the historic cradle of the nation, where schools, churches, mosques, temples, farms and workshops were first built, and where artisans once passed their skills from generation to generation.

Laying out his vision for a model village, Dr Ali explained that such a community is not defined merely by

paved roads or streetlights, but by a place where people can live well, work, learn, raise families, worship, build businesses, access services and feel a strong sense of belonging.

“It should be physically sound, socially connected, economically productive, environmentally attractive and safe. And importantly, it should retain its own character,” he said, noting: “We do not want to erase the character of our communities. We want to develop villages that are well planned while preserving what makes each village unique.”

On connectivity, the President said the focus will be on proper roads, bridges, culverts, reliable drainage, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, parking, and designated areas for heavy-duty machinery, while ensuring residents are efficiently linked to schools, workplaces, markets and services.

He said the key questions are whether children can get to school safely, whether farmers can transport produce to market, whether emergency



President Irfaan Ali

services can respond quickly, and whether businesses can operate efficiently.

On the community front, Dr Ali said the aim is to rebuild the social fabric so that villages become more than a collection of houses, while on commerce, he argued that villages cannot thrive if

residents must leave daily to find economic opportunity elsewhere.

Instead, the government wants to make villages economically self-sustaining, with space for agriculture, markets, shops, workshops, light manufacturing, digital businesses and other forms of entrepreneurship.

The final pillar, care, speaks to the quality, dignity and well-being of residents, Dr Ali said, including access to education, health services, safety and security, and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

It also covers stewardship of the physical environment, such as proper waste management, clean drains, maintained bridges, green spaces and trees.

“The village must be a place of care and concern, a place of cradling the future,” he said, noting: “Care must become a community value. We must develop a culture in which people say, ‘This is my village, and I have a responsibility for how it looks and how people live in it.’”



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