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Jagdeo marks Guyana's 56th in India

VICE-PRESIDENT of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo recently attended a reception hosted by the Guyana High Commission in New Delhi to commemorate Guyana's 56th Republic Anniversary.

The event brought together members of the Diplomatic Corps, officials of the Government of India, private sector representatives, and members of the Guyanese Diaspora.

In his remarks, the Vice-President reflected on Guyana's national journey, the hardships endured, and the determination, zeal, and hard work that have positioned the country on a path of development following the return to democratic rule.

He reaffirmed Guyana's enduring commitment to democracy, and underscored the Government's dedication to the values that guide the nation's development.

Dr. Jagdeo also highlighted Guyana's remarkable growth story and ongoing transformation, and outlined key Government initiatives across several sectors aimed at ensuring inclusive growth and development and improving the lives of all Guyanese.

The Honourable Vice-President is currently in India to attend the India AI Summit, and to host a series of high-level meetings.



Kamla delivers strong message to Caricom

Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, used her address at the opening of the 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 to deliver one of the most direct and politically charged interventions of the evening.

Persad-Bissessar devoted a significant portion of her remarks to national security and crime, drawing a direct link between regional security realities and her government's closer cooperation with the United States.

"Thanks to President Trump. Thanks to Secretary Rubio and the U.S. military, I say thank you... for standing firm against narco trafficking, human and armed smuggling originating from Venezuela," she said, crediting U.S. military action in the Caribbean with contributing to a 42 percent reduction in murders in T&T.

Persad-Bissessar made clear that her government would continue cooperation with the United States in what she described as efforts to "drive destabilizing and destructive forces out of our country, out of our region".

She argued that while CARICOM promotes the Caribbean as a "zone of peace", countries like Trinidad and Tobago face security threats that require decisive external partnerships. "Some of us, the crime is so bad, I cannot depend on just my military, my protective services, and certainly from you in the CARICOM," she said.

US Secretary of State Marc Rubio (pictured with the TT PM, above) was a special guest at the meeting.

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Regional faces to replace Queen's on EC\$

Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Timothy N.J. Antoine, announced that the bank is moving closer to replacing the British monarch's image on EC dollar notes with regional figures.

Speaking after the 112th meeting of the ECCB Monetary Council, Antoine said the transition will occur in phases rather than all at once.

"We expect in all likelihood that the first set of notes will be revealed and made available in 2027," he said.



For decades, the late Queen Elizabeth II has appeared on EC\$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 notes, reflecting the Eastern Caribbean's historical ties to Britain, similar to other Commonwealth nations recognizing the British monarch as head of state.

The move to redesign currency began in 2023 during the 105th ECCB Monetary Council meeting in St Vincent and the Grenadines, when the council approved replacing the monarch's image with the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) logo, subject to public consultation.

Antoine hinted the public may get an early preview of the new notes, possibly tied to the 50th anniversary of the EC dollar peg in July.

He also emphasized that introducing new notes will not immediately withdraw existing currency. "Because some of our notes are new, we did not want to simply just take them out of circulation," Antoine explained. "But as they come in and they get retired because they're mutilated and so on, then we will introduce the new notes with our regional heroes, our regional images."

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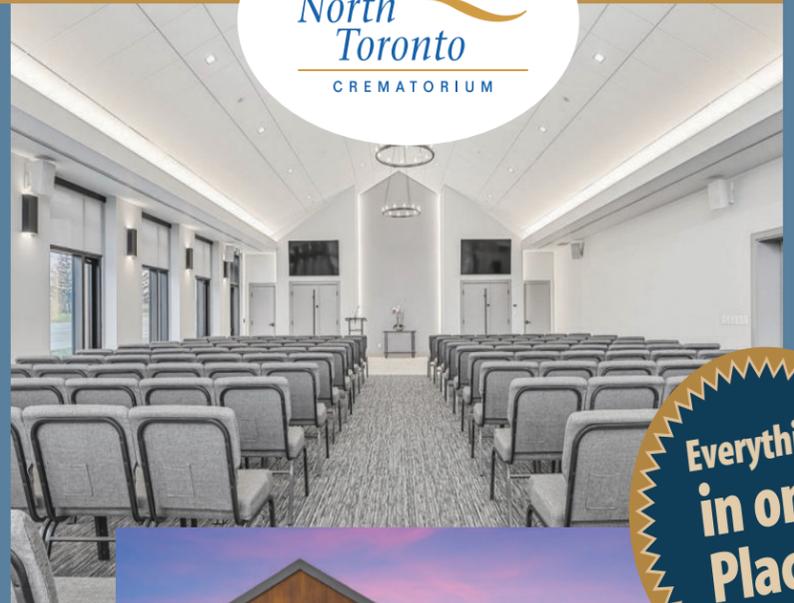
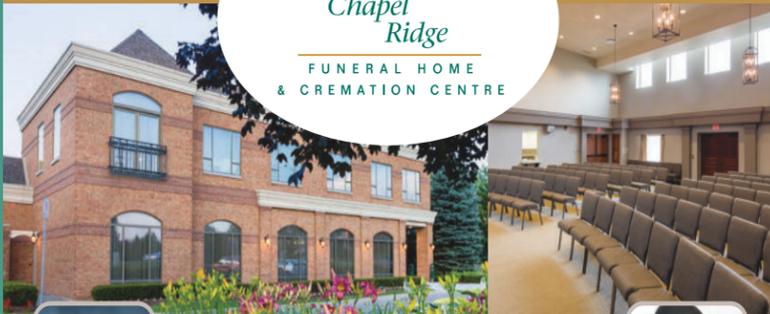
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Health Minister Highlights Life-Changing Impact of Prosthetic Outreach Programme

The Ministry of Health, through its Rehabilitation and Disability Services, continues expanding national rehabilitation care as patients fitted during the recent prosthetic outreach programme share powerful testimonies of renewed independence, dignity, and hope.

Last week, an international prosthetics and rehabilitation team worked alongside local clinicians at the Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre to assess, fit, and train 20 patients in the use of prosthetic limbs while simultaneously strengthening local technical capacity.

ProsthetiKa, a US-based organisation of international consultants whose mission is to provide appropriate and sustainable assistance for persons with disabilities in developing countries, has conducted several capacity-building programmes at the Centre's J. E. Simmons Orthotic & Prosthetic Appliance Workshops since 2018.

Led by Jon Batzdorff, Certified Orthotist/Prosthetist (CPO) and ProsthetiKa founder, this year's team also consisted of CPOs John Morales and Meghan Wright, and Clinical Physiotherapist in vascular and amputee rehabilitation, Laura Burges, Clinical Physiotherapist, ProsthetiKa.

Minister of Health, Honourable Frank Anthony, noted that the programme represents more than clinical care; it restores livelihoods and social participation.

"These services transform lives. Our goal is not only to provide prostheses but also to ensure patients regain



Health Minister Dr Frank Anthony chats with one of the beneficiaries of the programme

confidence, independence, and the ability to work and care for their families," the Minister said.

Dr Anthony expressed appreciation for the collaboration, noting that the initiative not only restored mobility but also improved the quality of life for patients.

"Many patients cannot afford prosthetic services, yet these devices transform lives. Through partnerships like this, we are improving accessibility while building our own technical expertise to sustainably serve our population," the Minister stated.

He further highlighted the impor-

tance of prevention, explaining that a significant number of amputations result from complications of diabetes. The Ministry is therefore strengthening multidisciplinary management to reduce future limb loss while expanding rehabilitation services for those already affected.

'Farmers Connect' app brings digitization to agriculture

Today marks a historic milestone as the Ministry of Agriculture officially launches the "Farmers Connect" App at the National Cultural Center!

This is the first of its kind in Guyana, representing a massive leap forward in our nation's development. We aren't just planting seeds; we are planting the future of digital innovation.

How it's Transforming Guyana's Agriculture:

Total Digitalization: We are moving agricultural services from the field to your fingertips.

Real-Time Data: Access live weather updates, soil maps, and market prices instantly.

Expert Guidance: Get region-specific advice on the best crops for your land (from Black Bush Polder to Linden!).

Efficiency: Streamlined services to help our farmers grow more, earn more, and lead the Caribbean in food security.

This app is more than just technology; it is a tool designed to empower every farmer, fisherfolk, and agro-processor across our beautiful country. We are digitizing the backbone of our economy.

— Ministry of Agriculture



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha checks out the new Farmers Connect App

Trini sentenced to nearly 5 years for smuggling over 200 firearms from US

A 36-year-old citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, Shem Wayne Alexander, extradited from Jamaica, has been sentenced to four years and nine months in a United States federal prison for conspiring to smuggle more than 200 firearms from the U.S. to his home country.

The sentence was handed down by U.S. District Judge John L. Badalamenti in the Middle District of Florida. Alexander had previously pleaded guilty and was also ordered to forfeit firearms seized during the investigation.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, between April 2019 and April 2022, Alexander and his co-conspirators unlawfully exported firearms and firearm components—including upper and lower receivers, gun parts kits, and related items—from Florida to Trinidad and Tobago.

A notable seizure occurred on April 21, 2021, when Trinidad and Tobago authorities intercepted a shipment at Piarco International Airport containing two punching bags. The shipment, falsely described as “household items,” concealed approximately:

- 11 9mm pistols
- 2 .38 caliber revolvers
- 1 12-gauge semi-automatic shotgun
- Multiple AR-15 components, magazines, and ammunition
- Hundreds of rounds of assorted firearm ammunition

Authorities said Alexander and his associates arranged the shipment with-



Shem Alexander — jailed on firearm smuggling charges in the USA

out disclosing its true contents to the shipper.

The investigation involved multiple agencies, including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (including its Transnational Organized Crime Unit and Special Investigations Unit), U.S.

Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Department of Commerce’s Office of Export Enforcement.

The case also involved international coordination, with support from the Department of Justice’s Office of International Affairs, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, and Jamaica’s Office

of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which facilitated Alexander’s extradition.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam W. McCall prosecuted the case in the Middle District of Florida.

This sentencing underscores the continued international cooperation in combating firearms trafficking across borders.

Former Guyana Education Minister Rupert Roopnarine dies at 83

Former Education Minister in Guyana Rupert Roopnarine died early Monday morning at the age of 83, according to reports from political colleagues.

Roopnarine was a professor, parliamentarian and government minister who served in the Ministries of Public Service and Education. He also led the Working People’s Alliance, where he played a prominent role in the country’s political life for decades.

His passing was confirmed during a broadcast by WPA Co-Leader David Hinds, who described Roopnarine as “one of the leading voices of our post-colonial experience” and a figure whose contributions spanned political activism, academia and public service.

Hinds reflected on Roopnarine’s decades-long involvement in Guyana’s political development, noting his role in the WPA since returning to Guyana in 1977. He highlighted Roopnarine’s advocacy for multi-ethnic politics and national unity, recalling his belief that the country’s progress depended on all communities advancing together. Hinds described him as a proponent of



Rupert Roopnarine

coalition politics and national government arrangements, referencing his involvement in discussions that later influenced the formation of A Partnership for National Unity.

Beyond politics, Roopnarine was also regarded as an intellectual and cultural figure. A trained scholar in English and literature, he taught at the

University of Guyana and was known for his work on the poetry of Martin Carter. He was also involved in filmmaking and public scholarship and, according to Hinds, remained committed to Caribbean radical thought and working-class advocacy.

Hinds noted that Roopnarine endured periods of detention during the political struggles of earlier decades and at one point left academia to become a full-time activist.

In his tribute, Hinds said Guyana was “better in many regards because of Rupert Roopnarine,” describing him as a man who combined intellectual rigor with political conviction. While Roop-

narine had been ailing in recent years, Hinds said his name and legacy continued to carry weight in national discourse.

Tributes are expected from across the political spectrum as the country reflects on the life of a figure who played a significant role in its modern political history.



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

A Republic Renewed

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, February 24 2026

GUYANA was at a very important crossroads the night before its 56th Republic Anniversary: it was a time for both reflection and celebration.

The ceremonial rhythms that echoed across the lawns of the Public Buildings were more than just a fun show; they were a way for the country to look back on its journey and think about the responsibilities that come with progress.

President, Dr Irfaan Ali said in a speech to the nation that the country is “strong, safe, prosperous, and respected” today.

This kind of statement makes people proud and makes them think. Guyana’s rise as a recognised voice in climate action and sustainable development marks a significant change in the country’s standing in the world.

It was once seen as a minor player in global affairs. But the real test of a country’s strength is whether its citizens feel as though things are getting better in their daily lives, not just getting recognition from other

countries.

The military drills and ceremonial marches that night showed discipline, sovereignty, and strength.

They were visual signs of a republic that was sure of its independence. The cultural performances that came next reminded everyone that Guyana’s greatest strength is still its diversity.

The mix of traditions on display showed a national identity that is still changing and being written by its people.

At this point, the President’s message about development based on people-centred investment really hits home.

Infrastructural growth, better healthcare and education, and new transportation networks are not just signs of modernisation, they are tools that are meant to make things more fair and give people more chances.

If these investments succeed in making sure that prosperity reaches rural areas as well as cities, this time will be remembered as a time of change rather than a time of transition.

It was also important to recognise Indigenous empowerment, the energy

of youth, and the leadership of women. Republic Day has more meaning than just a ceremony.

February 23, 1970, was more than just a change to the Constitution; it was a clear statement that the people have the right to rule.

The republic was founded on the belief that power does not come from faraway institutions, but from the will of all Guyanese people.

With that power came a lasting duty: the people themselves must protect democracy, unity, and the integrity of their territory.

Today, protecting the republic means more than just being on the lookout for threats from outside or political instability.

It requires the same level of determination to fight poverty, ignorance, and inequality as it did to fight for political independence.

Guyana’s growing wealth, which comes from agriculture, mining, forestry, and the changing oil and gas industry, is a chance that has never happened before in this country’s history.

The problem now is as much moral as it is economic: making sure

that national resources are a blessing for everyone instead of a source of division.

For prosperity to bring people together, it needs to be widespread, clear, and long-lasting.

The demand for “One Guyana” is therefore very important. National confidence must not retreat into isolation nor yield to the fear of global transformation. The republic should be open to the world, but it should also be sure of its own sovereignty and identity.

The Golden Arrowhead should not only remind us of past struggles, but also challenge the people of today as it rises every year on Republic Day.

The republic is not something to admire from afar; it is a living project that needs people to work on it together, make sacrifices, and have a common goal.

Fifty-six years later, Guyanese have a clear job: to build a nation that is so united, fair, and rich that future generations will not only celebrate the founding of the republic, but also honour the generation that made it stronger.

An open letter to all Guyanese

Dear Editor,

GUYANESE’ success or failure increasingly depends on their sources of information.

The Irfaan Ali administration is constantly rolling out new initiatives aimed at helping Guyanese to improve their lives; however, some are failing to grasp the opportunities simply because they do not know of them or how they can access these resources.

Why? It seems to be based on who they get their information from and the bias of those sources. There are those who decry every initiative as negative and suggest that only ‘cash grants’ serve the poorer in our nation... This is patently false and does a great disservice

to the very people who need to access assistance for improving their lives.

Various influencers and media houses have taken the negative position and do not share information on opportunities in education; small-business assistance (many ways available); housing programmes; building assistance; job training; technical schools, etc. these are not shared with readership/viewers; consequently, those who depend on these persons for information are being left behind as others grasp and grab the benefits.

The onus is on all of us to let everyone know that the government is willing to help those who are willing to

help themselves; sitting at home and listening to the negative sources directly affects your well-being, as time goes, that you will be left further behind as others make progress in a booming economy, that you need to make money moves, those include, upskilling, training, certification and education.

The alternative is dire; you will not enjoy the prosperity on offer, you will join the bitter, envious crew who chant ‘friends and family’, and, while the rest of the country demands better roads, sporting and entertainment facilities, you will be in the minority waiting on the next cash grant.

No country can grow great by

catering to the segment of its population that will not make an effort to self-improve! The cry about poverty grows hollow when it is plain for all to see and evidenced by the growing prosperity of the ‘Spanish’ workers who grow in economic strength without any government assistance.

I hope this serves as a wake-up call to those who have sold themselves to negative forces and are hurting their fellow Guyanese with their greed for a quick dollar.

Wake up! Smell the coffee and seek those opportunities now! Tell your friends, yell at your family!

Robin Singh

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Federal government to implement measures to stop extortion of businesses

By Milan Maharaj

LJI REPORTER

The federal government has announced a new initiative on February 19th directed at strengthening Canada's response to extortion targeting individuals and businesses according to a release from Public Safety Canada.

The announcement outlines actions focused on enhancing financial intelligence, improving coordination between law enforcement agencies and financial institutions, and expanding information-sharing efforts. The government said the measures are intended to support investigations into criminal activity that is related to extortion, along with measures to detect suspicious activity.

Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne, alongside other federal officials, introduced the initiative in the city of Mississauga, Ontario. The release states that extortion involves the use of threats or coercion to obtain money, property, or other potential items of value, and often relies on criminal networks that move illicit proceeds across jurisdictions to avoid detection.

The government states that extortion has affected individuals and businesses in multiple regions of the country, and that incidents have involved threats made in person, over the phone, and through digital communication platforms. No specific case figures were provided, but it was noted that many law enforcement agencies across the country have reported previous and ongoing investigations.

A central component of the announcement involves the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, known as FINTRAC. The government said FINTRAC will prioritize financial intelligence related to extortion and direct additional resources toward identifying and analyzing suspicious transactions connected to activity that aligns with extortion.

The release states that FINTRAC will establish a 'Countering Extortion Partnership' with financial institutions, law enforcement, and different government departments. The partnership is intended to facilitate coordination and the exchange of information to assist police investigations.



Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne

According to the announcement, financial intelligence liaison officers will be assigned to assist and support law enforcement agencies in the regions in which extortion has been reported. These offices are expected to provide proper expertise in financial analysis and assist in identifying the patterns associated with financial activity that is connected to extortion. The government has also stated that financial institutions will receive updated guidance on recognizing transactions that may be

linked to extortion schemes. It was also noted that publishing information about how criminal proceeds are moved and concealed may help investigators and institutions detect malicious activity.

FINTRAC operates under the Proceeds of Crime and Terrorist Financing Act. They are responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disclosing financial intelligence to law enforcement and national security departments. The measures announced on February 19th fall within its existing mandate to address

money laundering schemes and other similar financial crimes.

The statements issued by the government says that financial intelligence can assist investigations by identifying transaction patterns, tracing the movement of funds and supporting evidence collection in cases involving financial crimes. It states that strengthening information-sharing mechanisms is intended to improve the timeliness of intelligence provided to police services.

Toronto Gen ranked #2 in world by Forbes

An annual hospital ranking by Newsweek magazine has deemed Toronto General the second-best in the world.

The University Health Network (UHN) hospital has moved up a spot since last year, placing just behind Rochester, Minn.-based Mayo Clinic on the U.S. magazine's 2026 World's Best Hospitals list Wednesday.

Newsweek, in partnership with Statista, ranked 250 hospitals by surveying medical experts, compiling patient experience data and quality metrics for more than 2,500 hospitals across 32 countries, with the aim of informing patients.

Ohio's Cleveland Clinic, which held second place for the past seven years, has been bumped down to third.

UHN President and Chief Executive Officer Kevin Smith says moving up in the rankings as a universally accessible institution is a reason to celebrate, and in part credits a recent push to poach Canadian talent from institutions abroad.

Toronto General Hospital has cracked the Top 10 annually since the series began in 2019, most recently holding third place for two consecutive years. It's known for cardiac care, organ transplants and complex patient needs.

"When you look down that list there are very few places in the world where you can say I can walk into a best-in-the-world hospital and it doesn't matter if I'm one of the wealthiest people in that society or one of least advantaged people in the society, I will get the same care," he said.

Smith said a withdrawal of investment in health research south of the border led to an opportunity to hire world-leading scientists who are pursuing research on viruses, vaccines and health equity, along with cancer and heart disease.

Smith said about a quarter of the 43 people recruited so far are Canadians abroad returning from the United States, in addition to candidates from Japan, Germany, France and the

Netherlands. The goal is to hire 50 in total, and have had more than 700 candidates express interest.

"I do think this is a bit of a Canadian moment. We've been advantaged by that," Smith said.

But he acknowledged there are hurdles that come with operating a publicly funded hospital compared to private models in the United States, chiefly the time it can take to receive federal approvals and provincial funding.

"What allows us to skate ahead is research. When we're doing those clinical trials, when we are bringing those new therapies here and we do research on them and test them, that means Canadians are in fact still getting them first, like a first payer environment," Smith said.

UHN operates 10 sites, which also include Toronto Western Hospital, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and Toronto Rehabilitation Institute.

Modern port legislation being drafted with international support – AG Nandlall

WITH its maritime and logistics hub continuing to rapidly accelerate, coupled with the plans for a deep-water harbour and other port facilities, Guyana is drafting modern, new port legislation with technical support from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, the United States, Canada and Jamaica, Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, SC, has disclosed.

He made the announcement on Thursday at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo which was held at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown, as discussions highlighted the growing importance of maritime infrastructure in underpinning the country's economic transformation.

"We heard a lot about deep-water harbour and modern port facilities that cannot operate without a modern legislative framework. We are working again with [the] UAE. We are working with Qatar. We are working with the Canadians, the US and Jamaica in crafting a most modern port-type legislative framework for the building out of Port Georgetown, Port Berbice, and a deep-water harbour," Nandlall told delegates.

He explained that the proposed legislation forms part of a broader legal reform agenda designed to align Guyana's regulatory environment with the demands of a fast-evolving, energy-driven economy. Several other areas of legislation are also being prepared to support emerging industries and new infrastructural investments.

The Attorney-General reiterated that Guyana's "unprecedented" national transformation is anchored in the rule of law and a strong regulatory framework, particularly within the oil and gas sector, which he said has served as a catalyst for growth across the wider economy.

"By international metrics, Guyana is by far the fastest-growing economy in the world. The transformation in the country is unprecedented. It permeates every area of human endeavour," he noted.

According to Nandlall, the oil and gas industry is not operating in isolation but is driving expansion in non-oil sectors, evidenced by a commercial surge that saw 36,251 new businesses registered in 2025 alone.

He added that Guyana's legal architecture is evolving in tandem with this growth to ensure transparency, ac-



Guyana is drafting new port legislation, says AG Anil Nandlall

countability and investor confidence.

Further, the Minister of Legal Affairs highlighted that as Guyana transforms, so is its legal architecture.

Nandlall made it clear, "Guyana is transforming, and we have the legislative framework, the regulatory framework that will create the cradle from which all these industries are going to be conceived, born, weaned and flourish."

Among the major legal reforms on the horizon is a comprehensive overhaul of the Companies Act, first enacted in 1991. Nandlall acknowledged that the current legislation is inadequate for regulating the complexities of a modern, fast-paced and increasingly digital economy.

A consultant has already been engaged and consultations with the private sector and key stakeholders are expected to begin shortly.

Guyana's maritime sector has recorded a significant uptick in activity, with vessel traffic and port calls increasing by 67 per cent between 2020 and 2025. This growth, officials say, is the result of deliberate policy decisions focused on infrastructural development, regulatory strengthening and institutional reform.

Since 2020, the government has implemented a series of upgrades aimed at improving port efficiency, maritime safety and navigational capacity across the country's waterways.

Central to these efforts is the creation of a comprehensive regulatory and institutional framework to govern port operations and logistics services.

Earlier this week, President, Dr Irfaan Ali, said Guyana will intensify engagement with regional and international partners as it moves to position itself as a transshipment hub and fast-track the building of a deep-water port and other gas infrastructure projects.

Central to the government's plan is the development of the modern deep-water port that will harness Guyana's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean.

By establishing this port, Guyana and Northern Brazil can become the leading country and region in transport and logistics.

Last year, President Ali had announced plans for crafting of a new Port Act and the establishment of an independent Port Authority, both geared towards reshaping the country's maritime future.

"We want our ports to be competitive, reliable and future-ready. That is why we are designing a modern Port Act... It will govern the development, regulation and oversight of port operations in Guyana. It will ensure safety, efficiency and transparency in the maritime sector," the President had said.

President Ali explained that the independent Port Authority will pro-

vide professional, impartial oversight, ensuring the sector operates at a standard that reflects a growing, globally connected economy.

"The goal is to ensure that oversight, regulation and operations are managed professionally, independently, and in the best interest of the country," he said, adding that the legislation and regulations supporting the Authority will be aligned with international best practices.

Noting that the shipping sector has long played from the sidelines, President Ali encouraged the Association to take a more active role in shaping national development.

He also challenged shipping magnates such as John Fernandes Limited and Muneshwars Limited, two major Guyanese companies, which form a joint venture called Cranes Guyana Inc., to lead the charge in public awareness and investment collaboration while urging others to follow suit.

Last year, the two shipping rivals merged to leverage their expertise and capital to create Cranes Guyana, a joint cargo and freight company to meet the growing demands of Guyana's development. The entire project cost US\$14 million.

The two moguls are working to build a \$285 million port facility in Berbice, which is set to create some 1,000 jobs.



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Transparent, strong governance anchors Guyana's oil success

STRONG governance, fiscal discipline and institutional transparency are emerging as decisive factors shaping investor confidence in oil-producing nations, with Guyana's policy framework being highlighted as a model for sustainable resource management.

This position was advanced during a high-level panel at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo last week, where international energy and finance experts examined the risks and opportunities associated with managing petroleum wealth.

Director of Sustainable Finance Global Sovereign Solutions at Citi, Jorge Ordonez, emphasised that the mere presence of the oil resource does not guarantee long-term prosperity. Instead, he argued, the critical determinant is how effectively governments manage revenues through transparent, rules-based and forward-looking fiscal systems.

He noted that Guyana's approach, anchored in strong governance and disciplined fiscal oversight, positions the country to convert oil wealth into sustainable national development rather than short-term consumption.

Central to this framework is the Natural Resource Fund (NRF), established under the NRF Act of 2021 to manage oil revenues in a transparent and accountable manner for the benefit of present and future generations.

The legislation introduced significant governance enhancements, including the creation of an independent Board of Directors responsible for reviewing policies and monitoring the fund's performance, thereby separating operational oversight from the Minister of Finance.

The Act also requires parliamentary approval for withdrawals and provides simplified, rules-based calculations to ensure that spending aligns with long-term developmental objectives. Operational management of the fund rests with the Bank of Guyana.

Complementing this fiscal architecture are other key legislative measures, including the Local Content Act 2021, which prioritises Guyanese nationals and companies in the procurement of goods and services within the petroleum sector to build domestic capacity and deepen participation in the value chain.

Another major piece of legislation is the Petroleum Activities Act 2023, which modernised Guyana's oil and gas legal framework, replacing the 1986 Act.

Further, international and domestic investors have taken notice of the economic expansion and prudent fiscal management by the current People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) government as Guyana continues to attract global confidence and investment con-



One of the panels at the Guyana Energy Conference

tinues to expand.

The International Monetary Fund, in its 2025 Article IV Consultation Report, commended Guyana's careful and rules-based management of the NRF, describing it as a critical pillar of the country's long-term economic strategy.

Ordonez, during the panel discussion, said having access to a resource such as oil, which is a global commodity, has significant value as a "growth engine" globally.

"However, having said that whether it remains a risk or an opportunity depends on how that oil wealth is managed right and when governments have strong fiscal and governance frameworks like guarantee, discipline and transparent management of oil [wealth]," he said, adding that it is an opportunity for governments to use oil revenue to fast track development today while building a diversified, receiving economy for the future.

Ordonez further noted that sovereign wealth funds and national funds are very effective tools to help achieve sustainable development.

Robust investment, risk-management policies and checks and balances that foster accountability and transparency at the fiscal level are essential, he said, noting that governments have to have a very clear view on oil production and the expected oil revenues, spending discipline and consensus around the spending priorities.

Finally, Ordonez said there needs to

be an institutional commitment and consensus at the highest level, so an economy that is inclusive, diversified, and delivers opportunities and prosperity with transparency and accountability can be created.

Additionally, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Cooperation at the US Department of Energy, Aleshia Duncan, joined the panel discussion and underscored Washington's interest in expanding international collaboration and mobilising investment to support sustainable energy growth.

Notably, Director of Projects within the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), O'Reilly Lewis, said the institution believes that "pursuing regional interconnection is economically rational and technically beneficial and financially

bankable, so that would be our focus for the next few years.

Meanwhile, Director of EY Energy Markets Group, Josh Loftus, highlighted the importance of "bankability" in attracting sustained offshore investment, noting that Guyana's trajectory is positive, given its ability to combine technology, scale and operational expertise with a stable governance environment.

Collectively, panellists agreed that Guyana's transparent governance architecture, prudent fiscal management and strengthened institutional frameworks are anchoring its oil success and positioning the country to leverage petroleum revenues to drive inclusive, diversified and sustainable economic growth.

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New laws will protect people who use digital platforms in Guyana, says Attorney General Nandlall, inset

E-Transactions, Data Protection Laws coming - AG Nandlall announces

AS Guyana accelerates its transition from paper-based systems to secure digital platforms, Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, SC, has announced that there will soon be legislation in place for electronic transactions and the strengthening of data protection.

He made the disclosure during last Thursday's session of the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, explaining that sweeping legislative reforms are being crafted to align with the country's unprecedented economic and technological transformation.

"Of course, we are digitising the entire government structure, and we have two main legislative pillars upon which those activities are going to be conducted," Nandlall said.

He explained that the proposed electronic transactions law will provide full legal recognition for digital transactions, ensuring their validity even when conducted without traditional paper documentation, while noting that certain limited exceptions will apply.

Complementing this will be comprehensive data – protection legislation

designed to establish a robust framework for the collection, storage and management of data across multiple sectors as Guyana deepens its digitalisation drive.

"You heard the President speak elaborately on many, many platforms on the digitisation and digitalisation of Guyana, and we are laying the foundation for that to be done," the Attorney-General told stakeholders.

The legislative push forms part of a broader national strategy to modernise public administration, enhance efficiency and position Guyana as a competitive player in an increasingly digital global economy.

President, Dr Irfaan Ali has repeatedly stressed the urgency of accelerating national digitisation, warning that countries that delay risk being excluded from future economic opportunities shaped by rapid technological change.

"We must digitise and digitise quickly," the President said in recent remarks, noting that the fourth industrial revolution is reshaping major sectors of the global economy at an unprecedented pace.

Referencing the impact of earlier technological revolutions, he noted,

"In the 20th century, the computer revolution reshaped the modern economy, but it also deepened global inequality because many countries entered late and unprepared. Guyana cannot afford to repeat that mistake, not now, not when the fourth wave is moving even faster and the stakes are even higher."

President Ali said the government's push to digitise public sector services, expand online government platforms, improve data systems and support digital banking solutions is part of a deliberate strategy to transition Guyana into a modern, competitive economy.

Citizens are already interacting with the state through more online portals, he said, and financial institutions are expanding mobile banking, electronic payments and digital-wallet systems to increase efficiency and access.

Defending the scale of the government's investment, he said the direction of the world leaves no room for hesitation.

The president described a world rapidly reorganising itself around digital capability. Dr Ali said Guyana must be ready to participate in this transformation, not observe it from the sidelines.

"Guyana cannot stand on the sidelines and watch this transformation pass us by. We cannot be spectators in a game where the rules are being rewritten daily," he said.

Instead, the country must pivot fully into a new era of knowledge and innovation.

"We must move from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, from dependence on extraction to dependence on invention, industrialisation and innovation, from low-skilled labour to high-skilled digital talent."

Guyana's digitisation drive is a sweeping national effort to modernise the country by transforming public services, expanding digital education, integrating advanced technologies into healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing and transport, and strengthening secure data systems across government.

It also accelerates the use of digital banking and electronic payment platforms as the nation shifts from traditional, paper-based and resource-dependent systems to a fast, efficient and innovation-driven digital ecosystem capable of competing in the rapidly evolving global technological landscape.

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Guyana has an ‘able and capable’ team to defend its sovereignty – President Ali

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali has reaffirmed Guyana’s steadfast commitment to defending its territorial integrity, insisting that history and international law clearly support the country’s position in the long-running border controversy with Venezuela.

On the eve of Guyana’s 56th Republic Anniversary, President Ali emphasised that his administration has assembled “an able and capable team” to present Guyana’s case on the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award before the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

“When it comes to the defence of our territory, we’ve assembled an able and capable team to argue the validity of the 1899 arbitral award before the International Court of Justice,” he said, asserting further: “Let no one be mistaken. History and international law are on our side. Our borders are sacred, and we will defend them.”

The ICJ will begin hearings on the merits in the case between Guyana and Venezuela on Monday, May 4, 2026.

Back in August 2025, Venezuela filed its rejoinder in the ongoing case concerning the Arbitral Award of October 3, 1899.

The filing, made on Monday, August 11, 2025, comes within the deadline set by the court’s order of June 14, 2024. The rejoinder responds to Guyana’s reply, which was submitted in December 2024, and marks the conclusion of the written phase of the proceedings.

These hearings will be followed by the court’s deliberations and the delivery of its final judgment. The decision, once issued, will be binding on both Guyana and Venezuela under international law.



President, Dr Irfaan Ali during his address on the eve of Guyana’s 56th Republic Anniversary

President Ali used the occasion to pay tribute to Guyana’s security forces, thanking the men and women in uniform for their “selfless service” and underscoring the nation’s collective resolve to uphold its constitutional and territorial rights.

The head of state also acknowledged members of the diplomatic corps for their “steadfast support for our country, our sovereignty and our territorial integrity,” recognising the importance of international solidarity in the ongoing legal and diplomatic efforts.

On October 3, 1899, the Arbitral Tribunal delivered its unanimous Award, which determined the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana (“the 1899 Award”). The Award was the culmination of arbitral proceedings during which the

respective territorial claims of Great Britain and Venezuela were addressed at great length and in detail by distinguished legal counsel representing the two states, including through many thousands of pages of written submissions and more than 200 hours of oral hearings before the Arbitral Tribunal.

The case before the ICJ concerns Venezuela’s contention that the 1899 Arbitral Award, which established the boundary between the two countries, is null and void. Guyana has maintained that the award is a valid and binding legal instrument that settled the border over a century ago.

In accordance with the Geneva Agreement, Guyana and Venezuela engaged in over two decades of Good Offices efforts under United Nations’ (UN)

Secretaries-General auspices, in an attempt to find a peaceful diplomatic resolution.

However, on January 30, 2018, after the process had failed to produce meaningful progress, the UN Secretary-General concluded that the Good Offices initiative had ran its course.

In accordance with Article IV (2) of the Geneva Agreement, he exercised his authority and selected judicial settlement by the ICJ as the next method of resolution.

Guyana, in accordance with the Secretary-General’s decision, filed an application with the ICJ on March 29, 2018, seeking a ruling on the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award and the boundary it established.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

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

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Targeted investments transform agriculture into profitable path

TARGETED investments and ownership-based programmes are reshaping agriculture into a viable and profitable career path for Guyana’s youth and women.

This is according to Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha, who has outlined what he describes as a deliberate shift in Guyana’s agricultural landscape, as government policies move to position young people and women at the forefront of a rapidly modernising sector.

Speaking on a recently aired “Starting Point” podcast, the minister reflected on what he described as a stark contrast between the years prior to 2020 and the present.

He noted that, in the past, few young people pursued degrees in agronomy at the University of Guyana, and even those who graduated from the Guyana School of Agriculture often found themselves in clerical roles rather than working directly in the field.

According to Mustapha, this trend prompted a deliberate policy shift. He said President Irfaan Ali had urged that greater attention be paid to engaging young people in agriculture, leading to the creation of the Agricultural Innova-

tion and Entrepreneurship Programme (AIEP).

“We formed the company, the Agricultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship Programme (AIEP). We have over 300 young people now who are shareholders in that company. They have had these shade houses across the country, and they are now owners, shareholders in that company. At the end of the year, we received dividends from the profit,” he said adding:

“But besides that, those persons who would have studied in the Guyana School of Agriculture, the University of Guyana, are making a living now in agriculture. They are now doing their own business in the agriculture sector. So that shows a transformation.”

He further explained that all new agricultural projects are required to allocate at least 35 per cent participation to young people and women.

This policy, he said, is aimed at reshaping attitudes towards agriculture, which has traditionally been viewed as physically demanding and menial work. Through greater education and investment in technology, the ministry is seeking to demonstrate that modern agriculture offers sustainable and prof-



Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha

itable career paths.

“We build almost thousands of shade houses across this country, but young people don’t want to work, do the hard, physical labour. That is why we are modernising the sector,” he said, adding:

“We have these hydroponics facilities across the country. We have the largest hydroponics farm in the Caribbean here in Guyana, at Mon Repo. We have another three in regions two, five, and 10, where young people are managing these farms.”

In the livestock sector, the government has facilitated the construction of 13 tunnel-ventilated poultry pens, each with the capacity to produce 40,000 birds every six weeks. Nine of these are expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2026. The minister said groups of between 30 and 40 young people are involved in each facility, with the government providing financial backing,

including support with bank guarantees and capital investment. He emphasised that the young participants will become owners and beneficiaries of the ventures’ profits.

“Each one of them have a capacity of 40,000 boards every six weeks, And hopefully, by the first quarter of 2026, nine will be completed. Imagine you have 30-40, young people for one tunnel, ventilated house, nine of those 30.”

“The point I’m trying to make is that these people now will be owners, and they will earn a lot of money coming out of these ventures. So that is the kind of opportunities we are building for young people,” he added.

Programmes targeting women have also been expanded. Mustapha pointed to the cut-rose project at Mon Repos, which supports women—particularly single mothers—in earning independent incomes.



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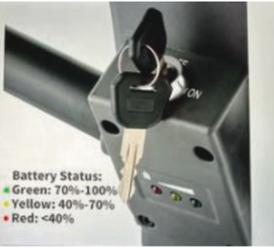
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Diaspora celebrate Flag Raising ceremony at Scarborough Civic Centre

SCORES of Guyanese from the Toronto-Canadian diaspora and friends of Guyana converged in the Rotunda of the Scarborough Civic Centre on Sunday — the eve of Guyana’s 56th anniversary as a republic — to celebrate in a spectacular Flag-raising Ceremony and Cultural Fusion.

The Republic Anniversary celebration was organised by the Guyana Consulate in Toronto, Canada and was spearheaded by Honorary Consul Mani Singh.

The event commenced with the Canadian Land Acknowledgment appropriately read by Geoff Daybutch, an Indigenous Canadian citizen, followed by the traditional hoisting of the Golden Arrowhead, the national flag of the Republic of Guyana by members of the Guyana Ex-Soldiers Association of Canada.

Inter-faith prayers were conducted by Pastor Andrew Eastman of the Grace Life Centre; Pandit Vidyarthi Sriram, Senior Pandit of the Vedic Cultural Centre and Imam Jabbar Ally of the United Muslim Association, Toronto.

Guests were then entertained by the talented Vijay Singh who sang popular Bollywood songs accompanied by Rajiv Kumarjit on the Tabla.

The diaspora also witnessed brilliant steelpan mastery by popular Toronto-based Guyanese artiste D’-Jango-Jango pan fyah (Roy Mc Crea), who has represented Guyana on many occasions and has collaborated with several internationally acclaimed artistes in the past.

The Singh Sisters, Suhana, Sumeera and Sunaya, along with their brother, featured again this year, and as anticipated, wowed the audience with a Medley of foot-tapping popular Indian, national and patriotic songs, accompanied by young Rishabh Ramessar on the keyboard and young Siddharth Ramotar on the Tabla.

Honorary Consul Singh, in brief remarks, lauded the notable ethnic and religious diversity of the members of the diaspora in attendance, adding that the fusion of cultures, dialects and dishes, which has shaped modern-day Guyana, stems from the six races which have lived in harmony for decades in both the pre and post-colonial eras, despite minor differences in opinions and approaches at times.

According to the Honorary Consul, Guyanese are living in the most fascinat-

ing, interesting and exciting times in the history of their country.... with globally unmatched rates of economic development, explosive foreign direct investment and the unprecedented roll-out of mega infrastructural projects throughout the country.

Singh updated the diaspora on the millions of US dollars the Government of Guyana is currently investing in healthcare, education, housing, physical infrastructure, and also transforming the country into a digital economy for ease of everyday financial and other transactions, and for interacting with government departments and agencies.



Consul Mani Singh (c) at the flag raising ceremony. ANDRIEKO BASIR PHOTO

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Over 4,300 health workers added to Guyanese system since 2020

THE government, through the Ministry of Health, has significantly expanded training opportunities for healthcare workers, including a marked increase in the number of medex being trained and deployed across the country's health system.

Speaking in Parliament during the 2026 Budget debate, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Director General of the Ministry of Health, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, credited the government's vision and strategic investments for the progress made in training health personnel.

"Mr Speaker in training, credit must be given to this government, the Minister of Health, and His Excellency for their vision input in training. Using the Coursera platform, we are now providing training to nursing assistants and registered nurses. Using this method of blended training, the number of staff that we could bring into the system has been multiplied. Persons did not want to leave their homes, their families, and regions to come to Georgetown to be trained. They are now being trained at home," Dr Mahadeo said.

He noted that the ministry has expanded regional training capacity, with programmes now delivered in Regions One, Two, Three, Six, Seven, and Nine. This includes training for pharmacy assistants, laboratory technicians, and, more recently, patient advocates in Regions Three, Four, Five, and Six, in accordance with directions from President Ali and the Minister of Health.

Dr Mahadeo emphasised the ministry's goal for every health centre and health post to be staffed with either a



A batch of Medex being trained in Telemedicine last year

doctor or, where a doctor is unavailable, a trained medex.

"Towards this end, we have increased the number of persons in training in the medex programme. Last year, we graduated 30 medex. Currently, we have over 50 in training for the medex programme. In total, from 2020 to now, we have increased the number of medex that are available and working in the system by 57. In total, Mr Speaker, we have added 4,309 persons who were trained, graduated, and employed by the Ministry

of Health," he told the National Assembly.

These training initiatives reflect the government's ongoing efforts to strengthen human resources for health, decentralise training access, and ensure that health services are delivered efficiently and equitably across all regions of Guyana.

The Medex programme in Guyana, historically known as the Medical Extension Officers (Medex) programme, has been a cornerstone of the country's healthcare workforce de-

velopment for nearly five decades. First introduced in the 1970s, medex are trained to provide primary and routine care, especially in rural, hinterland, and underserved areas where access to doctors is limited. Medical Extension Officers have played a vital role in expanding healthcare access and bridging service gaps in remote communities, with recent celebrations marking the programme's 48th anniversary and recognising their contribution to national health delivery.

Central Ambulance Authority to boost emergency medical services

THE Government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Health, is moving to establish a Central Ambulance Authority to strengthen and streamline emergency medical response services nationwide.

Speaking in Parliament during the 2026 Budget debate, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Director General of the Ministry of Health, Dr Vishwa Mahadeo, outlined the initiative, emphasising improvements in ambulance coverage, equipment, training, and staffing.

"Currently, Mr Speaker, every facility has its own ambulance, whether it be a vehicular ambulance, a minibus, a boat ambulance, or an ATV ambulance, and they all operate by themselves individually by the regions," Dr. Mahadeo said.

The new system will centrally coordinate ambulances and strategically position them to ensure the fastest possible response to patients.

"The Ambulance Authority will



A boat ambulance at work

be equipped, will have adequate numbers of ambulances that suit the terrain in which they have to function, whether it be an ATV, a boat, etc," he added.

The Deputy Speaker revealed that this measure will be implemented this year, with an update to be given at

next year's budget presentation, adding that it not only comes with the ambulances, but also with equipment and training, and it comes with a large number of persons who will have to be trained and then employed to service the people of Guyana. The initiative is being done in collaboration with

Northwell to ensure that not only top-of-the-line vehicles and equipment, but also that the training is on par with international standards, as instructed by President, Dr Irfaan Ali, in order to ensure that Guyana is providing world-class healthcare to every citizen across the country.



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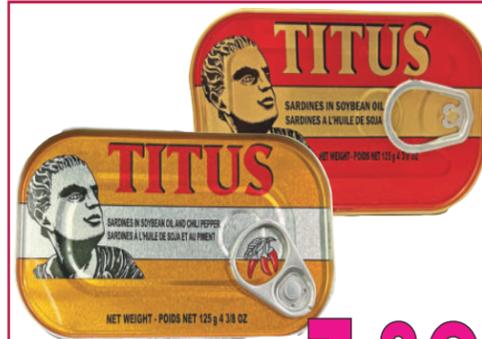
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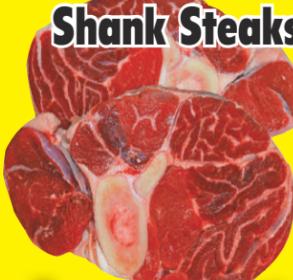
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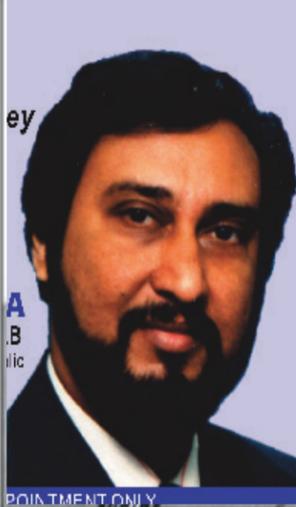
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Guyana's rapid economic transformation opening doors across Caribbean

GUYANA'S rapid ascent as a regional powerhouse could also translate into a bridge of deeper regional integration within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat has explained.

During the recent Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo's youth forum, two high school students, who are citizens of Barbados and the United States Virgin Islands, questioned the Minister on opportunities in Guyana available for CARICOM states.

Bharrat discussed the importance of collaboration between Guyana and other CARICOM countries, not only in the oil and gas sector.

First, the minister recognised the knowledge gap and stated that, as leaders, there must be further emphasis on ensuring more information is readily available to young people regarding opportunities in the oil and gas sector and emerging sectors.

Framing regional integration within Guyana's policy agenda, Minister Bharrat pointed to President Dr. Irfaan Ali's consistent message that "When Guyana is doing well, the region will do well."

He further emphasised that there

has been active engagement to bolster regional collaboration, noting, "We have already started to see the collaboration, especially in Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad, and Suriname. We have seen a lot of collaboration among these four countries. Not to say that there's no collaboration among others."

"...We have seen a lot of collaboration where we can work together, where young people from Barbados and St. Thomas can come and work in the oil and gas sector in Guyana, and where young people in Guyana can train in the hospitality institute in Berbice, and they can go and work in the five-star hotels on your island too."

"It really calls for more collaboration, especially at youth level," the minister said as he highlighted potential areas for growth and integration.

Just recently, President Ali reaffirmed that Guyana's rapid industrial and infrastructural expansion is strategically positioning the nation as a central player in South America's emerging regional integration plan.

Further, while addressing the 136th Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) annual awards and gala virtually, Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley had said that Guyana's economic ascent has po-



Vikram Bharrat

sitioned the country as an "exceptional bright spark" amid global uncertainties.

The regional leader noted that Guyana's expansive growth is not only the strength of its own economy but fundamentally the strength of the entire Caribbean region, representing the core of regional integration and the CARI-

COM family.

Prime Minister Mottley further noted that as the region looks to confront global challenges, economic policies must be shaped to ensure the region's resilience. With this objective in mind, she commended the country's efforts in supporting investments in strengthening the region.

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Mashramani 2026 draws tourists, diaspora home with culture and celebration

THE vibrant sights and sounds of Mashramani 2026 transformed the streets of Georgetown into a living showcase of culture, creativity and national pride, as visitors from across the Caribbean and beyond joined Guyanese at home to celebrate the country's Republic anniversary.

This year's festivities attracted returning members of the diaspora, regional travellers and first-time international visitors, many of whom described the experience as unforgettable, a testament to the growing global appeal of celebrations in Guyana.

Among the thousands lining the parade route was Fiona Persaud, who travelled from Canada to attend Mashramani for the first time in 30 years. Smiling as colourful floats and revellers passed, she said sharing the moment with friends made the homecoming even more meaningful.

"I am loving the celebrations here today," Persaud said. "I came back after 30 years and brought friends from Toronto who are enjoying their first Mashramani experience."

Her companions echoed that excitement, praising the dazzling costumes, energetic music and welcoming atmosphere. Surrounded by dancing bands and blaring soca rhythms, they described the celebration as vibrant and uniquely Guyanese.

"The costumes are gorgeous... we are having such a good time," one visitor said, adding that the food, culture and warm hospitality made the experience stand out. For at least one member of the group, the visit marked a memorable first encounter with the country. "Amazing – I love it," she said.

Mashramani's appeal extended beyond the diaspora. Romain Amsterdam travelled from neighbouring Suriname specifically to witness the festival after hearing about it for years.

"I came yesterday from Suriname just to enjoy," he said. "It's my first time here."

As the parade advanced through the capital, Amsterdam said the colours, decorated buses and nonstop music left the strongest impression. A self-described music lover, he noted that the rhythm and energy of the celebration made the trip worthwhile.

Asked whether he would return, his



President Irfaan Ali

response came without hesitation: "Yes, for sure. For my first time you guys did your best."

For Sanjay Kanodia of New Delhi, India, the celebration offered an entirely new cultural experience. Having arrived in Guyana only months ago, he said Mashramani deepened his appreciation for the country's traditions and diversity.

"This is the first time I am watching this carnival," he explained. "My friends told me about it and we are thrilled to see so many people in different costumes."

Standing among cheering spectators, Kanodia described the atmosphere simply as "amazing," noting that sharing the event with friends made the experience even more special.

The reactions of visitors reflected a wider trend: Mashramani is increasingly becoming more than a national observance. Through its blend of music, masquerade, culinary traditions and community spirit, the celebration is evolving into a major cultural tourism

attraction.

From emotional homecomings by returning Guyanese to first-time visitors discovering the country's heritage, Mashramani continues to project Guyana's identity onto the international stage — vibrant, welcoming and rich in creative expression.

As the final floats rolled past and revellers danced into the evening, one message was clear: the Republic Day celebration is not only honouring national history, but also strengthening Guyana's reputation as a destination where culture and celebration meet.

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A free kitchen in Punjab - much of the donated food given goes to communal kitchens

The billions given to charity by ordinary Indians every year

India's philanthropy story is usually told from the top down.

It features corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets, billionaire pledges and splashy foundations. But a new report argues that the real engine of Indian generosity is far more prosaic - and vastly larger.

The How India Gives 2025 report, produced by the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University, challenges the conventional narrative that organised, institutional money dominates the country's giving landscape. Instead, it points to a quieter colossus: households.

According to the report, India's total household giving is estimated at 540bn rupees (\$6bn) annually, including cash, in-kind contributions and volunteering.

About 68% of respondents report giving in some form. Of this, 48% is in kind - such as food, clothing or other household goods - followed by cash donations (44%) and volunteering (30%) with non-profits, religious institutions or community groups.

Much of the food given goes to communal free kitchens. Volunteering most commonly takes the form of service at religious institutions, including activities such as disaster relief organised by them.

"India is a very generous country. Our findings suggest that ordinary households play a much larger role than is commonly acknowledged. Generosity appears widespread and culturally embedded," Jinny Uppal, head of Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy at Ashoka University, told the BBC.

The headline insight: Indian philanthropy is not elite-led but mass, local and relational - driven by faith, face-to-face appeals and everyday obligation, cutting across income levels.

The survey draws on more than 7,000 interviews across 20 states, spanning urban and rural India.

The analysis is anchored to India's National Sample Survey (NSS) consumption data - a large, government-run household expenditure survey - to

build income-segmented profiles of everyday givers. Respondents self-reported how often and how much they gave over a three-month recall period. The findings were then extrapolated to produce annual estimates.

The survey looks at "everyday giving" which includes both direct, personal help - to beggars, family or friends, often seen as charity - and donations to organised, non-religious institutions, which are typically described as philanthropy.

It also examines "retail giving", typically defined as donations by ordinary individuals - not high-net-worth donors - to registered nonprofits. The survey adopts a broader lens, including informal, direct help to individuals as well as donations to religious institutions.

A lot of giving is shaped by proximity and faith, the survey found. Roughly 40-45% of giving flows to religious organisations, with a comparable share directed to beggars and destitute people, especially in urban areas. In rural India, religious institutions take the lead.

"We asked behavioural questions about motivation. For more than 90% of respondents, the underlying driver is a sense of religious duty - a moral obligation that shapes and sustains their giving," says Krishanu Chakraborty, head of research at the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy at Ashoka University.

The most common way people encounter giving opportunities is in-person requests or canvassing - meaning direct appeals at homes, religious sites or public spaces, rather than digital campaigns or formal fundraising drives.

The survey found education correlates with generosity: donor participation peaks among graduates and postgraduates. Yet, giving is not confined to the affluent. Even at low consumption levels (4,000-5,000 rupees per month), about half of households report giving; as incomes rise, participation climbs to 70-80%. Gender patterns are subtle but telling: male-headed households are slightly more inclined toward religious giving, while female-headed households lean marginally toward supporting destitute individuals.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): It may seem as if you are being swept along by forces over which you have no control but that isn't true. You always have free will and if you use it today just to say "no" occasionally you may find you have more control than you thought.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Your powers of persuasion have rarely been higher but how should you be using them? One way is to convince friends and family members that they don't need to do anything too drastic. If they keep plugging away their luck will change soon enough.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): You cannot now decide that you are going to back out of something that you agreed to do a little while ago, not unless you want your reputation to take a major hit. It may be a pain but you must see it through to the end.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): It may be tempting to cut corners and bend rules to get a project finished quickly but the planets warn it won't gain you any real advantage. It's up to you how long it is going to take, so why put yourself under needless pressure?

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): You may be snowed under with work commitments at the moment but that is not a good enough excuse to cancel an upcoming social engagement. Forget about your In tray over the next 24 hours and have fun with friends and loved ones.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): If you are going to turn your dreams into realities you must accept that you cannot do it on your own. Cosmic activity in your opposite sign means this is the perfect time to form alliances with people who share your vision of a richer future.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): Don't put too much trust in other people's opinions today because it is unlikely that they know any more about the current situation than you do. The only voice you need to pay attention to is the one that comes from inside yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Cosmic activity in your fellow Water sign of Pisces makes this one of the best times of the year, but that is not an invitation to ignore common sense and do things that could easily go wrong. Try to remember that you are not invincible.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Do you ever think about how your actions can affect other people? Well you should. What you choose to do over the next 24 hours may seem harmless enough but it could have a less than beneficial effect on a loved one, so be careful.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): Travel plans and social activities will bring a lot of joy into your life today but you must be wary of people who try to lure you into doing stuff that could be dangerous. You know what your limits are and it would be foolish to ignore them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): The more you try to get something done the further away from your goal you seem to get. Maybe you should take the hint and stop pushing yourself so hard. If you give yourself a break today you may accomplish a lot more tomorrow.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): You will need to be on your guard today and tomorrow, and maybe right up to the weekend, as Mercury begins its retrograde phase. And what you need to guard against most is your own runaway enthusiasm. Lower your sights just a little bit.

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Trinidad pushes regional oil alliance with Guyana, Suriname to restart refinery

Roodal Moonilal, Trinidad and Tobago's Energy Minister, has expressed regret that previous administrations did not deepen collaboration with emerging Caribbean oil producers, while signalling strong interest in partnering with Guyana to help revitalise the country's refinery sector.

Moonilal made the remarks during Guyana's Energy Conference on Wednesday, where he appeared alongside Patrick Brunings, Suriname's Minister of Oil, Gas and Environment, and Vickram Bharrat, Guyana's Minister of Natural Resources.

Addressing delegates, Moonilal acknowledged that earlier Trinidadian governments had not fully capitalised on opportunities to partner with Guyana as its oil industry expanded. He said the current administration led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar is committed to strengthening energy ties with both Guyana and Suriname to advance mutual development.

A central component of the proposed collaboration is the potential restart of the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery, formerly operated by Petrotrin. The facility, which closed in 2018, has a processing capacity of about 150,000

barrels of oil per day. Moonilal suggested that crude from regional producers, including Guyana, could support efforts to reopen and sustain operations at the refinery.

He noted that Trinidad and Tobago also has several petrochemical facilities—from ammonia plants to liquefied natural gas operations—currently operating below optimal capacity, which could be leveraged to support wider regional energy initiatives.

Moonilal further proposed the establishment of a regional forum bringing together Caribbean energy ministers on a regular basis to coordinate development strategies, avoid duplication of projects and strengthen collaboration across the sector.

Bharrat confirmed that discussions among Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname are ongoing, adding that closer cooperation among the three energy-producing nations could help meet regional energy needs. He also indicated that investors operating in Guyana are being encouraged to explore additional opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago as part of expanding regional partnerships.



Trinidad & Tobago Energy Minister Dr Roodal Moonilal

Trinidad and Tobago removed from EU tax blacklist

After years of effort, Trinidad and Tobago has been officially removed from the European Union's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, following a decision by the EU's Economic and Financial Affairs Council on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar welcomed the development, declaring that the country "is no longer blacklisted."

"Our country has officially been removed from the European Union's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes – a designation applied to countries that fail to meet international standards for tax transparency. This is a major step forward," she said.

Persad-Bissessar argued that the previous administration did not secure compliance and removal, and maintained that her Government acted decisively after assuming office. "Through legislative reform, sustained international engagement, and stronger institutions, we restored credibility and rebuilt trust. Blacklisting constrained investment, limited opportunity, and weakened confidence in our financial system. In less than a year, we strengthened our laws, enhanced transparency, and put Trinidad and Tobago back on the right track."

She added that the removal from the list signals clearly to the world that

this country has met its commitments and reclaimed its standing on the global stage.

"Investor interest is rising. Confidence is returning. Momentum is building. T&T is open for business, compliant, and ready for sustainable growth."

The EU tax listing process forms part of global efforts to combat tax evasion and avoidance risks, strengthen transparency, and promote fair taxation. Removal signals that a jurisdiction has met internationally agreed standards on tax good governance.

EU Ambassador Cécile Tassin also welcomed the development, stating: "The progress made by T&T on the path towards meeting the internationally agreed standards on tax good governance is impressive. These efforts should be commended. They are a positive sign for the continued strengthening of our partnership."

Minister of Finance Davendranath Tancoo also addressed the decision yesterday, describing it as the result of sustained engagement with European authorities.

"This milestone reflects my Government's sustained commitment to transparency, fairness, and adherence to internationally accepted standards."

He said, "This achievement un-

derscores our dedication to implementing robust global tax standards and strengthens confidence in our economic and regulatory frameworks. We express our appreciation to our partners in the European Union for recognizing the reforms we have undertaken, and we look forward to deepening our collaboration as we continue building a modern, competitive, and globally integrated economy."

A key element of the reform programme was the replacement of the former Free Trade Zone regime, which had been deemed harmful, with a Spe-

cial Economic Zone framework aligned with international standards.

Between 2024 and 2025, T&T strengthened its tax transparency architecture. In November 2024, the country signed the OECD Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, significantly expanding its exchange of information network.

In July 2025, the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes awarded T&T a "Largely Compliant" rating on exchange of information on request.



St. Vincent government awaiting US response on third-country deportees

Prime Minister Godwin Friday says his new administration is awaiting a response from the United States after Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was asked to facilitate third-country refugees being sent to the island when Washington cannot return them to their state of birth or origin.

Speaking on state-owned NBC Radio, Friday said Kingstown had already sent a response to Washington and is now waiting for further information regarding the migration policy.

“Yes, we have been approached with respect to that and a number of other countries in the OECS, I think all of them have. We have been presented with a memorandum of understanding for us to review. We have engaged in that process with the US authorities and have responded with a draft that we seek to negotiate.

“And this is something that other countries in the region have done, and that process is continuing,” said Friday, who also serves as chairman of the eight-member Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.

He noted that both the OECS and the wider Caribbean Community grouping were created to promote regional integration and cooperation, although he acknowledged that the bloc has faced challenges coordinating foreign policy over the years.

“... but we never stopped trying, and certainly with this issue, with respect to this initiative for the third country deportees, this is something we have discussed with our OECS colleagues, and we essentially seek to coordinate a response with respect to that.”

Friday said that while each OECS country has been approached, the initiatives are being pursued bilaterally between the United States and individual countries.

“But, as I said, CARICOM and OECS were put together for a particular purpose, and we use that in a way for us to seek to have common approaches to them,” he said, noting that the OECS has free movement of people and that any arrangement allowing individuals to enter one country could affect the others.

Friday said it therefore “makes sense for us to ... take advice from one another, and to discuss these matters and to seek to coordinate our responses.

“So that is part of what we are doing. And we know that the US, in terms of their requests and so forth, they understand that that’s part of the process, and that we have to look as well for the security and ask questions about how we are going to, how would that programme would be opera-



St Vincent Prime Minister Godwin Friday

tionalised, and some of those matters we are discussing at the moment,” Friday said, adding that the issue of third-country deportees “raises a number of concerns for us.

“We want to be helpful and be cooperative and to have good relations with all of the countries that we’ve had historically good relations with, including the United States, and where we

can be of assistance, we always say that we would, and we expect reciprocity in that regard,” Friday said.

JA PM Holness to collect \$28.6M salary

Jamaica’s Prime Minister Andrew Holness is now receiving a revised salary package in keeping with the Government’s public sector compensation review, which set the annual basic salary for the office at \$28.6 million as of April 1, 2024.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) confirmed the development in a statement on Friday, noting that the decision followed internal consultations.

“After careful review and internal consultations, it was agreed that the prime minister should conform to the established emoluments and remuneration for the office,” the statement said.

Holness had previously declined the adjusted compensation in May 2023 amid public backlash over substantial salary increases for members of the political directorate. At the time, he indicated that he would continue collecting only one salary of \$9 million annually despite holding several government roles.

According to the OPM, Holness had also signalled then that the matter could be revisited under a new mandate or by a future prime minister.

The office said the decision to implement the salary ad-

justment was taken last year after the governing Jamaica Labour Party secured a third consecutive term in government following the September 3 general election. Implementation was later delayed due to the impact of Hurricane Melissa, which struck the island on October 28.

Parliament has since been advised to effect the change as of September 2025. The move will also trigger corresponding adjustments for former prime ministers and their surviving spouses, whose pensions are tied to the salary of the sitting head of government.

Holness’ earlier decision to reject the increase had effectively frozen the salary level for past and future office-holders, including pensions for former prime ministers P. J. Patterson, Portia Simpson-Miller, and Bruce Golding.

The salary adjustments stem from a broader overhaul of public sector compensation, under which the prime minister’s pay moved from about \$9.1 million in 2021 to \$25.6 million in April 2023, before rising to \$28.6 million in April 2024.

At the time he declined the increase, Holness said the move was meant to show that he understood the public concern over both the scale and timing of the increases.

Jamaica's PM Holness raises concern over 24% decline in Jamaica's birth rate

Prime Minister Andrew Holness is urging Jamaicans to pay closer attention to the country's declining birth rate, warning that the trend could have serious long-term consequences for the economy and workforce.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Jamaica's total fertility rate has declined to 1.9 children per woman, below the replacement level of 2.1 required to maintain a stable population. The country's population is now estimated at 2.7 million, with a 0.1 percent decline recorded in 2024.

Speaking recently, Holness said the drop in births over the last several years has been significant.

"It may shock you to learn that since 2018, our birth rate has fallen by 24 percent," he said while addressing members of what he described as the country's most productive and fertile generation.

Holness noted that many people assume a falling birth rate could ease pressure on government spending, particularly in areas such as education and social services. However, he cautioned that the reality is more complex and could ultimately create new challenges.

"Surprisingly, but counter-intuitively, there is a view that your education budget should be reduced and you don't have to worry about funding all kinds of social services," he said. "But it means less people to support the pension system... less people available for the labour force."

According to the prime minister, a shrinking labour pool combined with inefficiencies in the public system could slow national productivity and complicate economic growth.

"If you lay inefficient bureaucracy on a tightening labour pool, wages are going to go way up and productivity is going to go way down," Holness said. "It's a serious social issue that we face."

He also used the opportunity to call on members of the Jamaican diaspora to consider returning home, saying the country needs a net gain of talent to support development. "I am very happy when I hear Jamaicans who have migrated saying, 'You know what, I want to come back home,'" he said. "We need to stimulate a net return, a net gain of talent back into Jamaica."

Holness acknowledged that some



Decline in childbirth numbers is cause for concern

Jamaicans overseas cite issues such as infrastructure and bureaucracy as barriers to returning, but he said the government is working to improve efficiency across the public sector.

"We can't continue to see things the same way we have seen them for the last 50 years," he said, emphasizing the need for new thinking and cultural change.

Holness added that improving efficiency must become a national priority alongside security and fiscal stability,

arguing that a shift in mindset will be necessary for Jamaica to achieve sustained growth. "Efficiency is a key driver for growth," he said, expressing

hope that the next generation will help move the country toward becoming a prosperous place to live, work, raise families, do business and retire.

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‘11 million civilians facing punishment,’ PJ Patterson says of Cuba

Former Jamaican Prime Minister P. J. Patterson says he has been experiencing “indescribable” personal torment over the deepening political and humanitarian crisis in Cuba, warning that the Caribbean must not remain silent as conditions worsen.

Patterson was among 10 former Caribbean prime ministers who issued a joint statement as the situation on the island deteriorates amid reported fuel shortages. Speaking on Beyond the Headlines on Radio Jamaica, he said the present moment stands in sharp contrast to the bold leadership shown by the region decades ago.

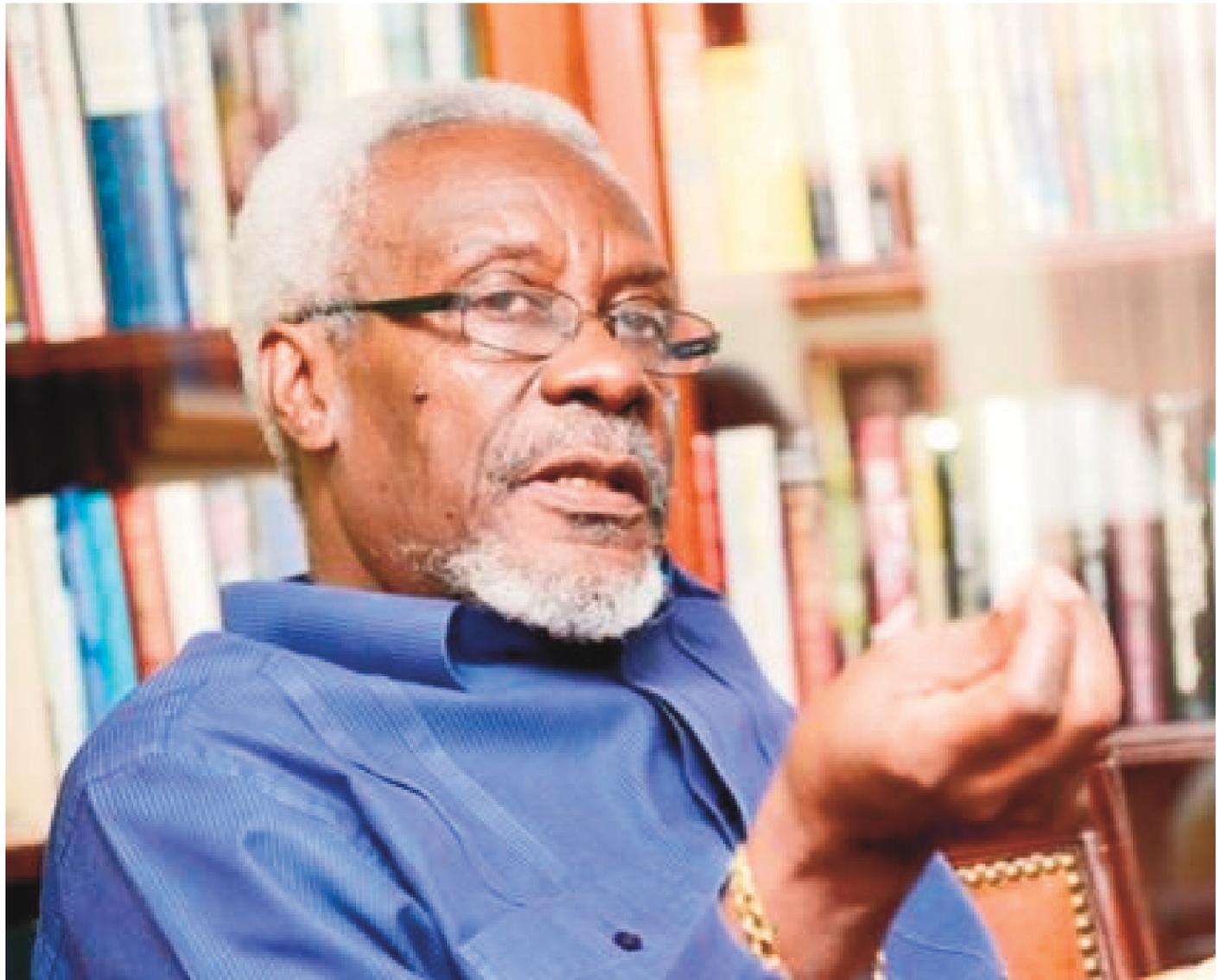
“I have been undergoing a level of personal torment which is indescribable because what I see is a total reverse of the courage, the boldness, the foresight, a willingness to fight formidable odds, which were all evident in the meeting of December 8, 1972, and the present time,” he said.

On that date, leaders of four independent Caribbean states met in Chaguaramas, Trinidad, and agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba despite the United States’ embargo — a move strongly associated with the leadership of Michael Manley.

Patterson said he felt compelled to break his long-standing rule about avoiding public comment.

“I’m often quoted for saying silence cannot be misquoted, but I’m also aware of that passage in Ecclesiastes, which says there’s a time to be silent and a time to refrain from silence. And in my mind, in my torment, in my agony, the time had come to refrain from silence.

“And so, I reached out to a number of former colleagues who have served at various times as heads of



Former Jamaican Prime Minister PJ Patterson

state and government in the Caribbean. We are not a formal organisation, and as we have all retired from active service, we are not in the kind of regular contact which previously obtained,” he said.

The initial signatories included Jamaica’s Bruce Golding and Patterson, St. Lucia’s Kenny Anthony, Barbados’ Freundel Stuart, Guyana’s Donald

Ramotar, Trinidad and Tobago’s Keith Rowley, Grenada’s Tillman Thomas and Dominica’s Edison James. Antigua and Barbuda’s Baldwin Spencer and Belize’s Said Musa later added their names.

Patterson stressed that the former leaders are mindful that they no longer hold political power.

“We are aware that we no longer

exercise political control, and we are acutely conscious of the challenges and responsibilities of those in whose hands that power presently resides. And our statement was intended and is designed to set out the very clear principles on which our relationships with Cuba has been based over many years of association,” he said.

Bahamian Deputy PM denies any links to Epstein

The Bahamas Deputy Prime Minister Chester Cooper has dismissed as “fake” a document circulating on social media alleging that he met with the late convicted United States sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and received a campaign contribution from him.

“Let me state unequivocally: I have never met Jeffrey Epstein or anyone who claimed to be associated with him.

“I have never communicated with him or anyone who claimed to be associated with him. I have never received any campaign contribution — directly or indirectly — from him or anyone acting on his behalf,” Cooper said in a statement.

Epstein died in a New York prison cell on August 10, 2019 while awaiting trial without the chance of bail on sex trafficking charges.

It came more than a decade after his conviction for soliciting prostitution

from a minor, for which he was registered as a sex offender.

Epstein was known to have maintained relationships with several high-profile figures, including Prince Andrew, the British royal, who was arrested on Thursday on a charge of misbehaviour in public office, which is not related to crimes connected to Epstein.

In his statement, Cooper said he had received a press inquiry regarding claims circulating online referencing what is purported to be an email exchange connected to the so-called Epstein files alleging that he met with Epstein and received a campaign contribution from him.

But he insisted that the document being circulated contains basic factual errors that call its authenticity into question.

“The fake email is dated, ‘Tuesday, March 14, 2016,’ when March 14, 2016

was in fact a Monday. The other is dated ‘Monday, March 20, 2016,’ when March 20, 2016 was a Sunday.

“When a document cannot correctly identify something as simple and independently verifiable as calendar dates, it raises serious concerns about its reliability,” he said.

Cooper, who is contesting the upcoming general election for the ruling Progressive Liberal Party, urged voters to be cautious about information circulating online as the campaign season intensifies.

“We are living in a time when AI-generated documents, manipulated screenshots, and fabricated images can be created and circulated within minutes. Not everything that appears formatted or official is authentic.

“My public record and campaign disclosures are transparent and available for review. I categorically reject any at-

tempt to associate my name with Mr. Epstein or his activities and remain focused on serving the people of The Exumas and Ragged Island and The Bahamas,” Cooper added.

Last month, two other candidates from the Progressive Liberal Party also denied any association with Epstein after their names surfaced in an FBI document summarizing interviews conducted on May 20, 2021. The file was included in the Epstein files.

Cooper, who also serves as Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation, warned that knowingly spreading false information that harms reputations could have legal consequences.

“Knowingly spreading false information that damages reputations is not harmless — it may constitute criminal libel and is an offense under the law.

“I encourage everyone to think carefully before sharing material.”

Rubio to visit St. Kitts and Nevis for CARICOM Heads meeting

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio will travel to Saint Kitts and Nevis on February 25 to participate in the 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community.

According to a statement attributed to Principal Deputy Spokesperson Thomas 'Tommy' Pigott, Rubio is expected to engage with Caribbean leaders on a range of shared priorities. These include strengthening regional security, expanding cooperation to combat illegal immigration and illicit trafficking, and promoting economic growth, health initiatives, and energy security across the Caribbean. The visit is also expected to reaffirm the United States' commitment to working with CARICOM member states to support stability and prosperity across the hemisphere.

The CARICOM summit will be held February 24-27 in Basseterre under the chairmanship of Terrance Drew, prime minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, who is serving as CARICOM chair from January 1 to June 30, 2026.

Leaders scheduled to speak at the opening ceremony on February 24 include Jamaica's prime Minister Andrew Holness, who is the outgoing CARICOM chair; Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago; Jennifer Geerlings-Simons of Suriname; Godwin Friday; and Carla Barnett, secretary-general of CARICOM.

The meeting brings together regional leaders to address major issues affecting the Caribbean, including economic development, regional cooperation, and security.

Secretary Rubio will engage with Caribbean leaders to advance shared pri-



Marco Rubio

orities, including strengthening regional security, deepening cooperation to combat illegal immigration and illicit trafficking, and promoting economic growth, health, and energy security across the Caribbean. During his visit, the Secretary will reaffirm the United

States' commitment to working with CARICOM member states to enhance stability and prosperity in the hemisphere.

In numerous group and bilateral meetings at the CARICOM meeting, Rubio intends to discuss ways to pro-

mote regional security and stability, trade and economic growth, the State Department said in a statement Monday. It was unclear which officials Rubio would meet with in Basseterre, the capital of the two-island nation.



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Sri Lanka's spin web strangles West Indies in ODI thriller

Sri Lanka's slow bowlers delivered a masterclass in control and composure, squeezing out a tense 10-run victory over the West Indies women in the opening One-Day International at the National Stadium Friday to seize a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

In a match that lurched dramatically between ascendancy and anxiety, the visitors assembled a sturdy 240 for six before their spinners methodically dismantled the chase, dismissing the hosts for 230 with only two balls remaining. The late collapse left the sparse Grenadian crowd in stunned quiet.

Sri Lanka's innings was anchored by a superb 66 from Harshitha Samarawickrama, whose 105-ball effort blended patience with purposeful aggression. Opener Hasini Perera matched her composure, striking a fluent 61 from 81 deliveries to ignite the early momentum.

Together, the pair lifted Sri Lanka from a cautious 49 for one to a commanding 135 in the 32nd over before Perera fell to Aaliyah Alleyne.

When the West Indies threatened to seize control through disciplined spells from captain Hayley Matthews (2-46) and Karishma Ramharack (2-57), Samarawickrama shifted gears, guiding the lower order through a crucial late push that carried the total beyond the 230 mark.

Captain Chamari Athapaththu contributed 27, Kavisha Dilhari added a brisk 22, and Vishmi Gunaratne remained unbeaten on 16 as Sri Lanka's tail wagged effectively.

The West Indies reply never settled. Early losses left the hosts wobbling at 49 for three and later reeling at 80 for five as veteran left-arm spinner Inoka Ranaweera tightened the vise.

The 40-year-old delivered a spell of relentless accuracy, finishing with exceptional figures of 10 overs, one maiden, four for 44, a performance that drained momentum and belief from the chase.

Just as the contest appeared to be slipping away, 22-year-old Jannillea Glasgow announced herself on the international stage with a poised maiden ODI half-century. Alongside the experienced Stafanie Taylor, she orchestrated a stirring recovery.

Their 89-run, sixth-wicket partnership transformed the atmosphere, lifting the crowd and restoring belief. Taylor, elegant and authoritative, seemed destined to steer her side to victory before calamity struck, a run-out ended her superb 66 from 83 balls, an innings decorated with five boundaries and a six.

Taylor's dismissal proved decisive. As the required rate climbed, the pressure intensified. Glasgow reached her milestone in style but soon followed, and



Sri Lankan captain Chamari Athapaththu

the lower order faltered under the weight of expectation.

Sri Lanka sensed their moment. Dilhari returned to claim three for 49, dismantling the tail as the final four wickets fell for just 61 runs. Alleyne remained stranded on 24 not out when the innings ended.

Ranaweera, whose middle-overs mastery suffocated the chase, was deservedly named Player of the Match.

With Sri Lanka holding the advantage, the teams will meet again Sunday in the second ODI, the West Indies seeking redemption and the visitors aiming to seal the series.

Jamaica ends 21st, T&T crashes out in Bobsled races

Jamaica's four-man bobsled team delivered a determined performance at the 2026 Winter Olympics, finishing joint-21st after three heats in a fiercely contested field where fractions of a second defined success and heartbreak.

The quartet, pilot Shane Pitter alongside push athletes Junior Harris, Tyquendo Tracey, and Joel Fearon, combined power and precision to post a total time of 2:46.02 minutes. Their effort reflected both technical discipline and the unmistakable fighting spirit that has long defined Jamaica's presence on the Winter Olympic stage.

Across three runs, the Jamaican sled produced remarkably steady times of 55.28, 55.29, and 55.45 seconds. The near-identical splits underscored a crew that maintained composure and rhythm despite the unforgiving demands of Olympic competition.

Their aggregate time matched that of Liechtenstein, leaving the two nations tied in 21st place, a testament to just how thin the margins were on the ice.

Only the top 20 teams advanced to the fourth and deciding run, leaving Jamaica agonizingly close to extending their campaign. The cutoff proved painfully narrow: Canada secured the 20th and final qualifying position in

2:45.87, just 0.15 seconds ahead.

That sliver of time, less than the blink of an eye, ultimately separated Jamaica from another opportunity to climb the standings.

While the final placement fell just outside the top tier, the performance represented another chapter in Jamaica's enduring Winter Olympic story, one built on resilience, ambition, and the courage to compete far from tropical shores.

The team's consistency across all three heats demonstrated a program continuing to mature, proving once again that Jamaica's bobsledders belong on the sport's grandest stage.

Their finish may read 21st on paper, but the effort spoke of progress, and of unfinished business still waiting at the next Olympic descent.

Meanwhile, it was a bittersweet moment for T&T's four-man bobsleigh team of Axel Brown, Xaverri Williams, Shakeel John, and De Aundre John on the final day of the Winter Olympics on Saturday.

Besides the history-making moment of being the first four-man T&T bobsleigh team to compete at the Winter Olympic Games, the chorus increased in decibels when the team delivered a 55.72 time in heat 1 to fin-



The Jamaican bobsled team in Milan

ish in the 27th position, which led to an expected improved time in the other heat.

However, tragedy struck when the sled lost its line and came off rhythm on the track, forcing a DNF (did not finish) for the T&T team. The development caused Team Austria not to finish its ride also. Despite the incident, Brown and company emerged unhurt and were able to wave to cheering supporters.

The incident comes on the heels of a pair of impressive performances in the two-man bobsleigh last week.

Last weekend, the country's two-man bobsleigh team of Brown and De

Aundre John finished 25th with a combined time of 1:54.19 from two races.

In their first heat, the pair of Brown and John stopped the clock at 57.22, as they finished behind by 2.54 for a 25th spot. In the second heat, the T&T duo did not finish too far off the first, crossing the line in 56.97 for another overall 25th place.

Head of Delegation and Chef de Mission of the T&T contingent, Lovie Santana, said the mishap was only the nature of the sport. "Today marks the conclusion of competition for Team TTO at the Milano Winter Olympic Games. It is a bittersweet ending, but one filled with immense pride."

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Guyana is 'one of the most compelling nature capitals in the world'

GUYANA is "one of the most compelling nature capitals in the world," Country Representative of IDB in Guyana, Lorena Salazar, recently stated as she underscored the economic potential of its vast ecosystem.

During a panel discussion at the Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, she said the ecosystem services across the Amazon region, which includes Guyana that has more than 80 per cent of its territory covered by forests, are estimated to be worth more than USD \$1 trillion per year.

Those services translate into flood regulations, carbon sequestration, water purification, coastal protections, but also the culture and economic foundation of communities and indigenous people, to name a few.

"Guyana is part of the Amazon, the relevance of the economic value of this ecosystem is immense," she said.

Salazar had noted that preserving forests must go hand in hand with building sustainable economic infrastructure and a central example of this is Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 and its partnership with the Government of Norway, which targets the expansion of Guyana's renewable energy capacity through the construction of eight large-scale solar farms.

For context, in 2022, Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) signed a US\$83.3 million agreement to advance transformative solar power projects under the Guyana Utility Scale Solar Photovoltaic Programme (GUYSOL).

Just last month, GUYSOL held a community meeting at the Watooka Lodge to engage residents, local leaders, and community representatives on



A Solar PV Farm in Region Six

the plans for the upcoming implementation of solar farms at Retrieve, Block 37, and Dakoura.

Recently, the US\$8.14 million, 3 MWp Charity Solar Farm was commissioned and is set to benefit over 3,000 residents of Region Two (Pomeroon-Supenaam).

Last November, a US\$10.4M solar farm was commissioned at Onderneeming. This, together with the one at Charity, is expected to offset more than 9,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually. Investments in remote-controlled substations and real-time monitoring systems are also expected to improve grid reliability and

responsiveness. The two facilities contribute 8MWp of solar capacity and 12MWh of battery storage to the regional grid.

Under the GUYSOL programme, Berbice has also benefitted from the addition of 10MWp of solar capacity through the commissioning of solar farms at Hampshire, Prospect, and Trafalgar, strengthening energy security in Regions Five and Six.

Salazar stated: "20 per cent or 25 per cent of the population when we finish this project is going to be serviced by renewable energy, but it's not just that. That means more schools, more hospitals."

Interestingly, as highlighted by the IDB country representative, under these projects, more than 30 women have been trained.

"Today they are part of the labour force in these solar farms. People with disabilities are already a part," she said, adding, "So it's all these aggregates as a result of this agreement, and the nature-how it translates into the economic infrastructure, that is, the solar and renewable energies on the other side, the IDB is also working in other countries. How does it translate? because it's not just keeping the forest, but also the biodiversity in the nature capital itself."

CARICOM at a 'decisive hour' as leaders push for unity

CHAIRMAN of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis Dr. Terrence Drew, has noted that the community stands at a decisive hour as mounting global shocks threaten the stability and development of small states within the region.

The Chairman made this known while delivering the feature address at the opening ceremony of the 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, held in St. Kitts.

During his address, the Prime Minister cautioned that in a rapidly shifting global order, disunity would only deepen the Caribbean's vulnerability.

"CARICOM stands at a decisive hour," he said, at which point he noted the many challenges plaguing the region, such as unstable supply chains, fluctuating energy markets, and intensifying climate shocks.

"In such a world, fragmentation breeds vulnerability. By contrast, togetherness generates resilience," he said.

To this end, he indicated that despite criticism that has been levelled against the regional movement, the full attendance of CARICOM heads of government at this 50th meeting signals a renewed commitment to re-

gionalism and further described it as an opportunity for the community to reaffirm its purpose at a time of global uncertainty.

"This Caribbean of ours might be going through challenges and difficulties," Drew said, "but in adversity, there is opportunity."

With this, he told leaders to ensure the meeting is remembered for action that strengthens the region's collective capacity to withstand external shocks.

The CARICOM Chairman stressed that no single member state, regardless of size or resources, can effectively confront today's global pressures alone. "No one is coming to save us; we must save ourselves," he said.

As such, Dr. Drew called for disciplined coordination and measurable outcomes that advance the interests of Caribbean people.

Against this backdrop, he noted that the conference must focus on the shared challenges confronting the region, including climate change, economic volatility, security threats, and geopolitical instability.

To this end, he indicated that unity was no longer a political aspiration but a strategic necessity for survival in an increasingly unpredictable international en-

vironment.

Meanwhile, CARICOM Secretary-General Dr. Carla Barnett shared similar sentiments, stating that recent years have been among the most testing in the history of the regional integration movement.

"Without question, 2025 was one of the most challenging years in the history of our regional integration movement," Dr. Barnett said as she cited extreme weather events, geopolitical tensions, economic pressures and growing challenges to multilateralism.

She disclosed that these forces tested the region and threatened hard-won development gains in various areas.

Dr. Barnett pointed to the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa across several Caribbean territories as a stark reminder of the region's exposure to climate-related disasters.

However, she noted that the response demonstrated both the risks facing small states and the value of collective action, as regional institutions mobilised quickly to provide humanitarian and technical support.

"CARICOM demonstrated our characteristic resilience, the strength of our collective resolve and the value of mutual support," she said.



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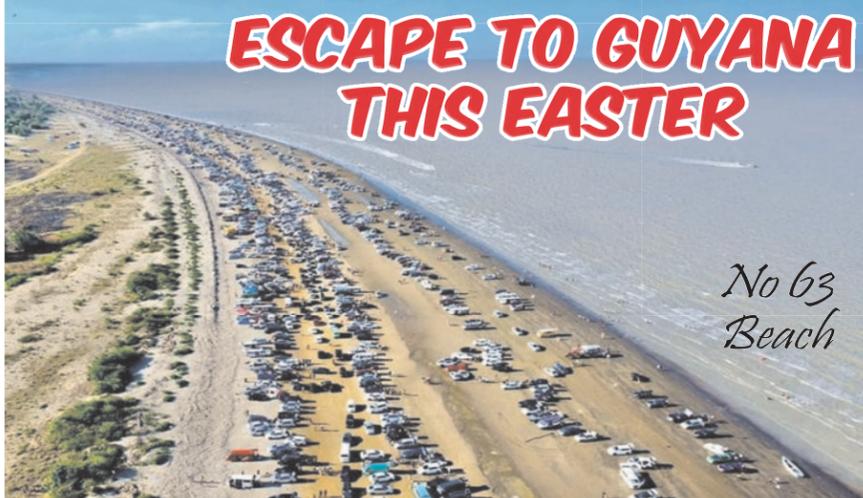


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